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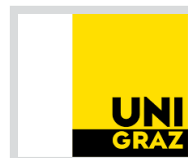


Navigating Uncertainty: Migration and Anti-Democratic Challenges Today

**6th International Conference of the
ESREA Migration, Transnationalism and Racisms Network**

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Book of abstracts



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Foreword

This book brings together abstracts from the ESREA Migration, Transnationalism and Racisms Network conference, *Navigating Uncertainty: Migration and Anti-Democratic Challenges Today*, held on 22-23 May 2025 at the Department of Educational Science, University of Graz, Austria. The collected proposals explore critical issues related to migration, transnationalism, and the rise of anti-democratic forces, offering diverse perspectives and insights into contemporary challenges and responses.

Migration is a defining issue of the 21st century, and forced migration continues to be a prominent pattern, with millions displaced due to war, persecution, climate change, and other reasons (UNHCR, 2023, *Global Trends Report: Forced Displacement in 2022*). At the same time, migrants' participation in society takes place in a world that is itself characterized by increasing complexity, uncertainty, and fluidity. This complexity is further heightened by the rise of anti-democratic tendencies, including populism and racism, which can create hostile environments for newcomers and for society in general. Uncertainties and hopelessness are used by right-wing populist groups to channel people's fears and dissatisfaction for their own purposes. It often goes along with the normalization of racist discourses. With international security shaken by the invasion against Ukraine, the anti-democratic politics pursued by the Russian Federation regime (disinformation, support for far-right and far-left movements, manipulation of postcolonial discourse, and further military threats) become a transnational challenge for adult education and social movements that target racism and other forms of injustice. Many other tensions and conflicts between authoritarian and democratic forces throughout the globe, often cutting across North/South or West/East divisions, also contribute to the complexity and uncertainty in knowledge and public choices.

This conference focuses on the intersection of migration, anti-democratic trends, and the role of adult education in our uncertain times. It explores the difficulties and threats faced by migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and, more generally, civic societies opposing discrimination and racism. The conference aims to reflect on how adult education can offer responses to those challenges.

Against the backdrop of migration, adult education can be seen as a catalyst for democratic participation, social change, and collective growth. Historically, it has played a pivotal role in facilitating transitions and overcoming crises amidst societal upheavals. This conference, however, seeks to move beyond framing migration as solely a crisis. The collected proposals explore also the transformative potential of migration for individuals and societies. There is a growing emphasis on approaches that empower migrants to share their voices and contribute to the development of more inclusive and better-informed societies.

This book offers a selection of abstracts that provide a glimpse into current discussions on migration, transnationalism, and anti-democratic challenges. These contributions show a variety of perspectives and research approaches, highlighting key issues and potential responses. We hope it serves as a helpful reference for those engaged in these fields.

About the ESREA Migration, Transnationalism and Racisms Network: The network creates a space to explore the role of adult education and learning in all its forms (formal and informal), and locations (community, workplace, institutional), in relation to migration, transnationalism and the new lines of exclusion and social hierarchies created. It encourages critical dialogue in this emerging field with the aim of developing new theoretical and methodological resources and understandings. The network will explore these themes through concepts such as belonging, democratic citizenship, anti-racism, community solidarity, and activism; it will seek to challenge and problematize policy responses and 'othering' processes in relation to migration. The network also aims to create a space for self-critical reflection on migration research and its contribution to hegemonic discourses on migration.

Tetyana Hoggan-Kloubert, Angela Pilch-Ortega, Annette Sprung and Marcin Starnawski

KEYNOTE

LINDA MORRICE:

Where is the hope? Post-colonial logics and racialised borders in refugee access to Higher Education

In the context of ever-increasing numbers of forcible displaced people, the global community has come together with declarations and promises of action, for example, the Global Compact for Refugees, UNHCR's target of 15% of refugees accessing higher and tertiary education by 2030, and Sustainable Development Goal 4 which promises lifelong learning for all, including refugees. But these promises are largely devolved to the nation state to deliver, and under the framework of shared responsibility wealthier countries in the global north are being asked to step up and take on more responsibility. This comes at a time of growth in right wing and populist movements which have led to increasing Islamophobia, antisemitism, and anti-Black racism, alongside a permanently hostile environment towards migrants and especially people seeking asylum. In this keynote I use the lenses of post-colonialism and racialised borders to explore how these forces are shaping access to Europe and educational opportunities for different groups of refugees. In particular, I trace the malleability of the higher education border in the UK in relation to some refugee groups, while constructed others as ineligible and excludable. In doing so I highlight the mechanisms through which race is used to curtail and control access to higher education while appearing to be racially-neutral.

SESSION: EDUCATIONAL AND ECONOMIC CAREER MOBILITY

EUGENA KWON:

Advancing Equity in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics): Examining Challenges and Barriers in Academic and Career Mobility for Racialized Immigrant Young Adults in Canada

Keywords: STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), Academic and career mobility, Racialized immigrant young adults, Anti-Racism

This mixed-methods project employs the **intersectional life-course approach** as its theoretical framework to explore how institutional resources incorporating Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

principles influence the academic and career mobility of racialized immigrant young adults in STEM across Canada. By leveraging an intersectional lens, the study examines how various social dimensions of inequality intersect, interact, and compound to exacerbate disadvantages and reproduce systemic inequities (Acker, 2006; Choo & Ferree, 2010; Holvino, 2010).

Research shows that racialized immigrant young adults in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) frequently face barriers to academic and career mobility due to systemic inequities, discrimination, and the complexities of navigating Canadian academic and professional spaces. Addressing these post-migration integration challenges requires an understanding of how transnational identities, anti-racism, and experiences of inclusion and social belonging shape their educational and career trajectories. Institutional resources are essential for reducing these inequities and fostering an environment where racialized immigrant young adults can thrive.

Drawing on the intersectional life-course approach as a theoretical framework, this mixed-method project examines how institutional resources that incorporate Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) principles impact the academic and career mobility of racialized immigrant young adults in STEM across Canada. The study focuses on individuals currently working in the STEM industry, as well as those in their senior years of post-secondary STEM programs. Our methodology is twofold: (1) a needs assessment survey of racialized immigrant young adults in STEM fields (N=650) and (2) focus group interviews with survey participants to further explore their challenges and barriers (N=45). Key emerging themes include transnationalism and anti-racism, with an emphasis on how these young adults negotiate identity within academic and career contexts.

The project also addresses geographic differences by comparing young adults in small to mid-sized cities with those in larger urban centres, assessing whether tailored support systems are needed to address region-specific challenges. By evaluating EDI-informed resources—such as experiential learning, anti-racism practices, and culturally inclusive networking—this research aligns with the conference theme of navigating uncertainty amid rising anti-democratic challenges. It provides valuable insights to strengthen anti-racist practices and institutional EDI, ultimately informing policies that foster equitable access and inclusion for racialized immigrant young adults in STEM—enhancing academic/career readiness and creating a more inclusive STEM environment in Canada, where transnational identities are recognized and valued.

WENFU ZHANG:
**Chinese Übermenschen: Mobility Capital and the Entrepreneurial Experiences of Young
Privileged Chinese Migrants**

Keywords: Mobility Capital; Elite Migration; Adult Education; Entrepreneurship

This study focuses on young, socioeconomically privileged migrants from mainland China, examining why they choose to migrate, how they maintain continuous mobility and migrant entrepreneurship in different regions, and the long-term goals they pursue. Through three years of field observations and interviews with 30 young Chinese migrant entrepreneurs in the UK, the findings reveal that their primary motivation for leaving China is to evade an increasingly apparent “risk society”, characterized by diminished social and personal freedoms, a hostile business environment, and intense competition in professional and entrepreneurial fields. In post-Brexit Britain, income-driven immigration controls—such as high IELTS requirements and financial thresholds—effectively pre-select young Chinese elites who possess sufficient language proficiency and economic capital. These neoliberal immigration controls, create a favourable institutional pathway for this privileged migrant group. Meanwhile, these young Chinese migrant entrepreneurs are typically well-educated, and possess strong cross-cultural communication skills, ample funds, and extensive networks, enabling a smoother transition and expansion of business activities in the UK. Their substantial “mobility capital” also reduces the necessity for deep local embeddedness or integration - this also includes showing disdain for xenophobia and racism and moving forward by circumventing them. Based on this context, this study also finds that traditional adult education programs designed for disadvantaged migrant populations—such as language instruction or socio-cultural adaptation training—do not meet the needs of these privileged migrants. They have minimal requirements for language or cultural integration and are instead more concerned with accessing strategic business learning and global collaboration resources. As cross-border mobility continues to rise, the educational needs of migrants are becoming increasingly diverse, prompting adult education policies and scholarly research to re-examine and reposition the learning methods and resource allocation for these emerging transnational entrepreneurs to better align with their global development needs.

CHRISTY M. RHODES:
Educational Aspirations of First-Generation Latinos in a New Gateway State

Keywords: integration, lifelong learning, social capital

Communities thrive when individuals work together and are willing and able to engage with fellow community members (Putnam, 2000). In diverse communities, this involves bonding with people of similar backgrounds while also interacting with people of different backgrounds to expand their access to different knowledge and networks. As noted by McHugh & Doxsee (2018), this process lasts for many years and affects multiple generations. Since the 1990's, North Carolina has experienced rapid and high rates of formerly unseen immigration. This demographic change has influenced the economy, educational systems, and the sociological fabric of communities in this "New Gateway" state (Gill, 2010; Rong, Hillburn, & Sun, 2017). With limited history of immigration, New Gateway states have struggled to provide equitable and inclusive lifelong learning opportunities for immigrants and their families (Rong, Hillburn, & Sun, 2017).

The purpose of this participatory phenomenological research study was to explore the factors influential to the educational aspirations of first-generation Latinos/as in a rural region of North Carolina. In online interviews and a culminating focus group, 21 participants described the supports and challenges they experienced in their schools and local communities. Using a conceptual foundation of social capital and immigrant integration theories, an integrated analysis team of university and Latino community members found four overarching themes: multi-dimensional sense of belonging, family expectations, academic success, and immigration status. Participants noted feeling proud of their heritage culture and language and acknowledged the difficulty of deepening their knowledge, due to the dearth of formal and informal learning resources as well as acceptance from non-Latino community members. In this session, the researcher will describe additional findings related to the importance of rigorous and inclusive formative education and public policies supportive of multiple and varied immigrant integration strategies.

SESSION: CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS AND LEARNING FROM MIGRANTS' STRUGGLE

HELGA RAMSEY-KURZ:

Why not let the subaltern speak? - A plea for learning about migration from refugees

Keywords: inclusive education – participatory research – implication – refugee narratives – politics of expulsion

The past two decades have seen a thorough rethinking of migration lending Bauman's postulation of a "hierarchy of mobility" new traction as a means of differentiating between legal or "regular" transnational movements and illegal, irregular, or in Anderson's words, "unruly" border crossings. Nonetheless the Global North seems far removed from any deeper understanding of the latter, and its governments, as a result, woefully entrapped in a lethal "politics of expulsion" (Herd) persistently compromising the ethical basis of peaceful coexistence. Despite the high-held imperative of integration, the categorical exclusion of refugees from this coexistence has been normalized to a point where, even in scholarship, the notion that refugees might be able to enrich the discourse of migration with their special knowledge of persecution, flight, displacement and sanctuary has received staggeringly little consideration.

Only on occasion has it done so, for instance, in the context of the internationally renowned initiative, Refugee Tales (refugeetales.org) whose initiators believe that collective ignorance of refugees' stories is to the detriment not only of migrants, but of civil societies at large. A similar rationale underlies ARENA (www.uibk.ac.at/en/anglistik/arena/), a project developed at the University of Innsbruck. It involves students of English working with individual refugees and writing down their stories. The resultant texts mirror not only the insights students gain into migrants' experiences of persecution, flight and displacement, but also a deeper understanding they develop of their "implication" (Rothberg), as non-refugees, in the fates of refugees. I shall speak to this implication or what Rothberg also describes as "entanglement" in the lives of others, show how it manifests in the students' texts and explain what conclusions it urges for me, as a literary critic, concerning theorizations of forced displacement that eclipse the voice of refugees and thus fail to "let the subaltern speak" (Spivak).

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J. ADAM PERRY:

Is this research really ‘emancipatory’? Reflecting on collective theatre-creation with migrant farm workers in Canada

Keywords: Arts-based pedagogies; Migrant farm workers; Unfree labour; Jacques Rancière; Canada

For this presentation I will explore some of the possibilities and contradictions of engaging in community-based arts in the context of unfree labour relations, a condition that highlights the extraction of labour power through the restrictive application of temporary labour migration status. This presentation will focus on an analysis of a community-based arts-focused research project with a group of migrant agricultural workers in Southern Ontario, Canada. Drawing from techniques derived from collective theatre creation, during this project, a small group of migrant workers came together as a community in order to examine issues relevant to their lives through physicality, play, and group discussion. The collective creation process revealed a conundrum associated with participants’ desires to come together as a community as set against the perceived need to remain hidden in order to sustain their ongoing participation in Canada’s Temporary Foreign Worker Program. Building on contemporary discussions related to emancipatory education grounded in the work of Jacques Rancière, the presentation will explore the intrinsic value of artistic experimentation for migrant workers. Based on participant observation and interviews with participants, the findings suggest that research participants’ decisions to spend their leisure time creating art collectively could be viewed as a daring and potentially emancipatory endeavour, regardless of the social and research outcomes. Specifically, I argue that physically engaging migrant farm workers in the creation of a work of art, especially a work of art that is grounded in the collective exploration of unfree labour relations, is a clear disruption of the prescribed subject position of ‘migrant farm worker’. This artistic participation becomes an overt assertion of worker subjectivity, challenging a broader political context where civic engagement is tightly controlled.

BARBARA SAMALUK:

Migrant led communities of struggle: what can we learn from them?

Keywords: radical adult education, migration, communities of struggle, Slovenia

Global neoliberalization is characterised by unprecedented mobility and migration that also generate various anti-democratic tendencies that pit local populations and migrants against each other. On the other hand, these adverse conditions also stimulate (self-) organisation and mobilisation of various migrant and other precarious and activist groups, where also education can play a crucial role in building 'communities of struggle' (Pero', 2020) that enable collective fight against oppression and divisive politics (Pistotnik et al., 2016; Samaluk and Kunz 2022; Grayson, 2014). This paper departs from radical adult education theory, which is grounded within Marxist thought and Freirean critical pedagogy and has further developed within decolonial, feminist, antiracist and global justice struggles (Samaluk and Kunz 2022; Holst, 2018; Kump, 2012), to examine the role of education in the work of two advocacy organisations, namely the Worker's Counselling Office and Ambasada ROG that have developed in Slovenia over the last decade to empower and (self-)organize precarious migrants. The analysis is based on extensive field research conducted in Slovenia between 2015 and 2024 and includes, in-depth interviews with activists and key informants as well as the analysis of secondary data sources such as books, social media posts and observations at public events organised and run by precarious migrants in collaboration with these organisations.

The findings show that radical adult education in these organisations involved mutual dialogical learning among activists, migrants and other precarious groups that led to the empowerment of migrants and brought to the formation of migrant led communities of struggle that raise public awareness about migrants' conditions and put pressure on the government to change its migration policies. Radical adult education has thus played a central role not only in the conscientization and in building communities of struggle among oppressed migrant groups, but also in conscientization of the oppressors and the wider society. By claiming their presence and voice and by popularising their stories and newly built relations within the wider society (self)organised migrants and their emerging communities of struggle became agents of change able to build solidarity amongst divers groups and to a certain extent also transform policies which oppress them.

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SESSION: RACISM AND ADULT EDUCATION

JENNIFER DANQUAH:

Racism-critical change in adult education centers: a multi-level perspective from Germany

Keywords: German Volkshochschule, Adult Education Centers, organizational change, anti-racism, multi-level perspective

Adult education organizations, such as the German Volkshochschule (Adult Education Center), play an important role in fostering democratic participation (Heinemann, 2018) and in counteracting anti-democratic tendencies including racial exclusions (DeZIM-Institut, 2022). Their commitment to education for all also entails adopting racism-critical perspectives, grounded in approaches such as Racism-criticism (Mecheril, 2004) and Critical Race Theory (Delgado et al., 2017; Morgan et al., 2009). Subsequently, this contribution argues that racism-critical organizational change can occur both within the organization – through internal initiatives and strategies (Ruhlandt, 2016) – and through the organization, by shaping broader societal and institutional contexts (Egetenmeyer et al., 2019).

Through a multi-level approach, this contribution investigates the interdependencies shaping racism-critical organizational change in adult education. Specifically, it addresses the question: How do interdependencies between the organization and its institutional and societal context influence racism-critical organizational change in the case of the German Volkshochschule? Drawing on findings from an ongoing qualitative case study of one Volkshochschule, the study combines one group discussion (Liebing & Nentwig-Gesemann, 2009), a document analysis (Hoffmann 2018) and 18 expert interviews (Gläser & Laudel, 2012) with (non-)permanent staff from the case Volkshochschule, as well as stakeholders from city administrations and local/national agencies. The interviews have been analyzed through qualitative content analysis (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2022).

Preliminary results demonstrate that social discourses, laws, and local politics influence racism-critical organizational change at the Volkshochschule. Simultaneously, racism-critical strategies such as critical leadership and community-oriented program planning within these organizations shape broader institutional and societal contexts. These findings contribute to understand how adult education providers can respond to racism and anti-democratic challenges and can contribute to global debates on migration, anti-racism, and social justice.

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FURAT KHALAF KUTI AND HEIKE WENDT:
Exclusionary mechanisms in accessing higher education in conflict and post conflict settings: the case of the Yazidi minority in Iraq

Keywords: Education in Emergencies; Educational exclusion, higher education; conflict and post-conflict settings; minority education

The impact of displacement on exclusion from education is not well understood or well documented given the difficulties of studying complex and highly dynamic situations in conflict regions (Hilker & Fraser, 2009). This chapter therefore reviews the literature on access to higher education in conflict and post-conflict settings (Wendt et al., 2022), particularly the mechanisms of exclusion (Done & Knowler, 2023) at the transition points between emergency education and regular state provision, in the context of Iraq (Shanks, 2019), where members of the Yazidi minority (approximately half a million) were displaced in recent conflicts after 2014 and unable to return to the Sinjar region (IOM Iraq, 2019). While it is known that displacement and war-related trauma affect the educational opportunities of young people in general (Benoni et al., 2024), little is known about the access and barriers to higher education for these minority students (Wendt et al., 2022). The chapter focuses on the mechanisms of exclusion for Yazidi minority students in Iraq at the transition to higher education and from emergency and regular state education, drawing on survey data collected from 2016 to 2019. Insights are provided around drop out and the study conditions of students from the Yazidi minority, especially women. External factors such as finances and security are obstacles to studying. The responsibility of universities to ensure safe study environments is also considered along with how the regulation of university admissions at the interface between two different education systems in Iraq has reinforced exclusionary mechanisms, especially at transition points and when returning to regular higher education provision.

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JINGZHOU LIU, SINELA JURKOVA AND SHIBAO GUO:
Revisiting systemic racism: an intersectional analysis of racialized immigrants' experiences
in Canada

Keywords: systemic racism, intersectionality, anti-racism education

Canada is often portrayed as a country committed to diversity, celebrated for its welcoming stance towards immigrants from diverse backgrounds. However, this external image of inclusivity and acceptance masks a deeper, more complex reality of systemic racism that shapes racialized immigrants' experiences at their local sites. This three-year research is led by the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, one of Canada's largest immigrant service organizations, in collaboration with the University of Calgary in Canada.

Drawing on intersectionality as its theoretical framework and narrative inquiry as its methodology, our study highlights systemic oppression faced by eight racialized immigrants in Canada, operating across institutional, ideological, and structural domains. This approach allowed us to examine the ambiguous interrelations between the social domains and systemic power dynamics in shaping experiences of racism and discrimination. In workplaces, institutional racism manifests through the devaluation of foreign credentials and discriminatory hiring practices, perpetuating underemployment and limiting career progression.

Participants shared experiences of exclusion driven by requirements for the "Canadian experience," which reinforces racial hierarchies and marginalizes skilled immigrants. Gendered ideological racism in public spaces disproportionately affects racialized women, as intersecting biases based on race and gender expose them to microaggressions, harassment, and unequal treatment. Visible cultural markers, such as hijabs, often exacerbate their exclusion, undermining their sense of belonging and social participation. Structural racism compounds these inequities through precarious living conditions, as participants reported being confined to substandard, overcrowded housing due to discriminatory rental practices and low wages from unstable employment.

Our research findings emphasize the vital role of adult education in addressing systemic racism by fostering inclusive and responsive anti-racism education programs. Such initiatives can empower racialized immigrants, promote critical awareness, and equip individuals to navigate and challenge discriminatory systems. Adult education must prioritize dismantling institutional barriers, addressing ideological biases, and rectifying structural inequities. By integrating an intersectional framework, adult educators and policymakers can advance social justice and create equitable opportunities, ensuring all individuals can participate meaningfully in an inclusive and just society in Canada.

Theoretical and methodological framework of the research:

Intersectionality serves as a theoretical framework for this study. This framework emphasizes the importance of gender, race, and class as distinct yet interconnected social categories that shape people's lived experiences. It also critically dissects the intricacies of individuals' daily realities, examining the interplay between gender, race, class, and additional social dimensions as they collectively inform experiences of social disparity. This analysis is conceptualized as a metaphorical lens through which the confluence of various social identities could be examined, suggesting a novel approach to understanding the complex dynamics of social stratification and inequality. Through this metaphorical framing, intersectionality emerges as an analytical tool for conjectural discourse. By focusing on the multifaceted nature of social identities, intersectionality facilitates a comprehensive

analysis that goes beyond traditional single-axis frameworks, highlighting how marginalized individuals are embedded and articulated within the broader context of social hierarchy and institutional stratification.

This research employs narrative inquiry as its methodology, focusing on stories (in this research, eight stories of racialized immigrants residing in Western Canada) as lived experiences and recognizing the inherent human tendency to re-interpret these stories as a fundamental method of knowledge construction (Clandinin et al., 2017). This approach punctuates three core elements: individual stories, living experiences, and knowledge formation. Firstly, stories act as gateways through which individuals can engage with the world, making their experiences personally meaningful (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). Secondly, the process of experiencing is continually shaped by narrating and re-narrating, influenced by both external conditions, such as social and cultural contexts, and internal conditions, such as personal beliefs and emotions (Caine et al., 2022). Lastly, knowledge generation within narrative inquiry is deeply entwined with action; narratives reflect and shape our actions and understandings (Blix et al., 2024). By foregrounding the narrative nature of experience and knowledge, narrative inquiry offers a powerful tool for exploring how individuals make sense of their lives and the world around them.

Employing narrative inquiry alongside intersectionality offers a recondite methodological synergy for dissecting the complex phenomena of systemic racism as experienced by racialized immigrants. This endorsement allows us to capture the rich, detailed narratives of individuals, which reveal their encounters with racism and how these experiences intersect with other identity facets such as race, gender, and class (Collins, 2020).

SESSION: POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS

BATIKAN BULUT:

Shaping the diaspora: Turkey's new diaspora regime and the role of associations in Germany

Keywords: transnationalism, diaspora, long-distanced nationalism, citizenship, competitive authoritarianism

This paper argues that under the AKP's rule, Turkey has expanded its competitive authoritarian regime transnationally, positioning its diaspora as a central site for political influence and control. The Turkish diaspora in Germany, initially rooted in labor migration of the 1960s and shaped by subsequent migration flows, has become a focal point for the AKP's political influence and social engineering. Turkey has leveraged diaspora associations as instruments of ethnic lobbying and political loyalty, blending pre-2002 policies with post-2002 strategies. Specifically, state-endorsed associations act as proxies to promote a unified national identity, marginalizing groups such as Kurds and Alevis, who often face exclusion or criminalization. This selective engagement reinforces the state's vision of "acceptable citizens" loyal to Turkey. In this context, diaspora associations have emerged as critical sites for political participation, where civic education and integration efforts bolster state-sanctioned narratives of Turkish identity, often suppressing dissenting perspectives. Programs in civic education, Turkish language instruction, and religious education further this agenda by aligning diasporic identity with state-approved narratives while simultaneously impeding broader integration into German society. These efforts blur the boundaries between political participation and nation-building, constructing a transnational model of citizenship that prioritizes allegiance to Turkey. This study employs a comparative historical analysis of Turkish parliamentary minutes and government publications—specifically those by the Diyanet and the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB)—related to the Turkish diaspora in Germany from 1961 to 2025. Through narrative analysis, it examines moments of policy continuity (path dependence) and transformation (path departure), tracing discourses on identity, education, and diaspora communities. Referring to Benedict Anderson, Anthony Smith, and Nina Glick Schiller, the study explores tensions between inclusive and exclusive nationalisms and their implications for citizenship and belonging policies through the long-distanced nationalism theory. By analyzing these dynamics, the paper provides a deeper understanding of the evolving role of the diaspora in Turkey's transnational political project and the AKP's strategic policy choices to navigate domestic pressures and consolidate diaspora loyalties.

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MICHAEL BERNHARD, BETÜL KARAKOÇ-KAFKAS AND CHRISTIANE HOF:
**Community learning spaces as sites of practice: navigating migrant participation in
changing landscapes**

Keywords: practice theory, doing migration, community learning, inclusion, organisation

This study investigates community learning spaces as important yet underexplored sites of learning and migrant inclusion. Part of an international project that studies adult learning and education conducive to immigrant integration, this research explores grassroots approaches to participation within migrant communities as complement and alternatives to formalized and state-led programs. Drawing on a doing migration perspective which views migration as a relational process shaped through social practices (Amelina, 2020), we map community learning spaces and the practices of inclusion that emerge within them in Frankfurt am Main, a city characterized by a large and diverse immigrant population.

Informed by practice theory perspectives (Bernhard & Van Daele, 2023; Kemmis, 2019; Kemmis et al., 2024) and the concept of situated learning (Lave, 2019; Lave et al., 2025; Lave & Wenger, 1991/2008), our paper examines community learning spaces, such as local organizations, religious groups, and neighbourhood associations as environments where migrants engage in identity negotiation, empowerment, and civic participation. These community-based spaces may serve as hubs of co-participation and adaptation, where learning is embedded within everyday practices. Following a grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006), we conduct document analysis and interviews, mapping the landscape that migrants navigate as they seek opportunities for participation and belonging. This mapping illuminates how such spaces foster local agency, resilience, and self-determination, thereby counteracting the exclusionary and uncertain contexts migrants often face.

Early finding indicate that these community learning spaces not only provide migrants with essential supports – for instance pertaining housing and employment – but also provide opportunities to shape their roles in society. This study underscores that inclusion is not merely an outcome of formal programs, but an ongoing, community-centred process shaped by a variety of social practices. By highlighting the agency within grassroots and diaspora networks, this research contributes to understanding transnational communities as active agents navigating and mapping pathways to inclusion through collective learning and adaptive practices.

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SESSION: WOMEN, EDUCATION AND LEARNING

FILIZ KESER ASCHENBERGER:

Navigating life transitions through learning: educational trajectories of Turkish migrant women in Germany and Austria

Keywords: Migration, life course transitions, learning biographies, gender and migration, educational trajectories

Migration entails opportunities for learning, transformation, and transitions which are shaped by social, cultural and individual factors such as gender, family structure or education level (Bagci, 2019; Jögi & Ümarik, 2022). The intersection of education, migration, and gender in shaping not only individual experiences but also social inclusion and integration processes within hosting societies has been a focal point in educational research and sociology (Bagci, 2019; Fejes & Dahlstedt, 2017; Shan, 2015). However, despite recent critical and feminist inquiries into migrant women's experiences, there remains a noticeable gap in representation, particularly concerning their learning biographies and transitions in their learning biographies (Erel, 2007). This study aims to address this gap by exploring the transitions in the biographies of Turkish migrant women in Germany and Austria, examining how their educational trajectories intersect with migration histories and shape their personal lives during their life transitions. Following Alheit and Dausien's proposition that learning within one's life history is a dynamic interplay of social interaction and individual orientation, life histories in line with learning is important to understand. They argue that while learning is influenced by the layered structure of personal experiences, it also follows its distinct "individual logic" and while the biographical framework doesn't dictate the learning process, it significantly shapes how new experiences are incorporated into the ongoing process of learning (p.16). Moreover, as Bernhard (2023) underlined transitions, particularly in skilled migration, are not just events that individuals pass through but are relational processes shaped by social practices and accompanied by learning experiences. He emphasizes the importance of understanding how individuals navigate transitions and learn from their experiences. Utilizing a life course approach (Wingens et al., 2011, p. 6), this study employs in-depth narrative interviews with Turkish migrant women in Germany and Austria to investigate the dynamic interplay between learning experiences and broader life trajectories with a focus on transitions. Through this lens, following guiding research question is posed: How do the learning trajectories of Turkish migrant women intersect with their life course transitions and broader life trajectories? While the study is ongoing (I am recruiting and conducting interviews at the moment from Austria), preliminary insights from initial interviews with five women from Germany, highlight the alignment of educational biographies with integration and self-identification processes. Initial findings suggest that formal learning experiences have a significant impact on participants' perceptions of education and their integration within the host society and transitions to further education, work and marriage.

EMILY DOBRICH:
**Supporting intercultural sharing and community building for transnational migrant women
through embodied learning**

Keywords: embodied learning; community; gender

Background: This presentation will share empirical findings from a pedagogical intervention that used embodied learning to strengthen intercultural sharing and solidarity building between migrant women from different cultural backgrounds in Canada.

Objective: To explore the potential of embodied learning practices for supporting the self-determination and situated solidarity building between migrant women.

Theoretical Lens: This research was guided by theories of embodied learning as decolonial praxis (Ng, 2018; Simpson, 2014) as well as transnational feminist perspectives (Mohanty, 2003; Alexander, 2005), situated solidarity building (Nagar & Geiger, 2007) and diasporic space theory (Brah, 1996). Situated solidarity building is of particular interest because it provides theoretical insight for addressing the anti-democratic challenges of today with the concern for dismantling hierarchies in knowledge production and raising the voices of the less privileged.

Methodological base: This is a qualitative feminist and decolonial research project (Mohanty, 2003; Smith, 2021). The pedagogical intervention that was developed and evaluated had twelve sessions. Each session had an embodied movement activity followed by a reflective discussion component. Data was collected through a multi-modal approach from participant interviews, embodied ethnographic methods and participant's reflective journals.

Results: Participants experienced improved levels of confidence and self-awareness which substantially enhanced their perceived self-determination and ability to more openly share their perspectives and cultural knowleges with one another. The courage that came through this intercultural sharing and knowledge co-creation was significant for reducing uncertainty in navigating their migrant journeys.

Implications: The findings and implications of this study will be of interest to researchers and practitioners in adult education, critical migration studies, feminist community solidarity research and social justice activism. The project provides an example of the positive impacts from employing more diverse, engaged and culturally respectful community-oriented learning opportunities in transnational migration learning contexts.

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SESSION: EDUCATORS AND LEARNING

HANNA ACHREMOWICZ AND MARCIN STARNAWSKI:

Intercultural assistants: advocates in migrant education, in need of structured training

Keywords: educational integration, intercultural assistants, migrant education, refugees from Ukraine in Poland

In Poland, intercultural assistants are key figures within schools, supporting migrant and refugee students in adapting to a new educational and cultural environment. These professionals act as linguistic and cultural mediators between students, parents, and teachers. Their work involves facilitating communication, translating, and providing social and emotional support to help migrant students navigate challenges in their new schools. Need for intercultural assistants was discussed before, but the issue has become particularly relevant with the admission of thousands of refugee students from Ukraine after February 2022, when 185 000 Ukrainian children joined Polish educational system (Chrostowska, 2023). Despite their vital role, intercultural assistants are not formally recognized in Poland's educational system, and their preparation is typically ad hoc, relying on personal experience and informal training. The lack of a coherent policy framework may be seen as limiting the effectiveness and consistency of their work. The absence of structured technical-organizational support—such as defined roles, resources, and formal training—limits their effectiveness (Illeris, 2011). Assistants often rely on personal experience and prior education, which, while valuable, may lack the broader theoretical and transferable knowledge needed to navigate systemic inequities effectively (Kolb, 1984). Similar to many workplace roles, the immediate demands on intercultural assistants leave little room for reflective, structured learning. This ad hoc approach undermines their potential to grow into fully competent mediators and advocates (Eraut, 2004).

Drawing on empirical research conducted in 2024, this paper provides an in-depth analysis of the roles and challenges faced by intercultural assistants. Using a mixed-methods approach (Creswell, 2009), including self-assessment questionnaires and structured interviews with 36 assistants and 25 school leaders based in Wrocław, Poland, the research highlights the critical contributions of intercultural assistants:

1. Providing linguistic, emotional, and academic support essential for the adaptation of migrant students.
2. Bridging communication gaps between schools and migrant families, facilitating cultural integration.
3. Informally educating teachers about cultural diversity and inclusive practices through consultations.
4. Addressing systemic inequities and promoting resilience within migrant communities.

The findings underscore the indispensable nature of intercultural assistants in navigating the complexities of migrant education. However, the lack of formalized training and standardized preparation for these roles presents considerable challenges, including inconsistent practices and underutilization of their potential. This paper thus advocates for the development of specialized educational programs and professional training pathways aimed at equipping intercultural assistants with the skills and knowledge necessary to perform their roles effectively, enhancing their impact on migrant students, families, and school communities.

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FRANCESCA PERESSON, ANNA SERBATI AND PAOLA VENUTI:
**Educational strategies for equity: the role of career guidance in the university transition of
migrant students in Italy**

Keywords: higher education, career guidance, migrant students, superdiversity, equity.

This contribution analyzes the crucial role of tertiary education, supported by effective guidance and tutoring systems, in fostering inclusion (Habermas, 1998) and empowerment (Zimmermann, 2000) of young people with a migration background, encompassing both second-generation students and asylum seekers and refugees. These systems not only promote individual social mobility, guiding students towards informed educational and professional choices, but also contribute to building active and conscious participation in society, providing them with tools to fully realize their potential.

Italian school and academic classrooms are configured as educational contexts of high socio-cultural and linguistic complexity, requiring advanced skills from education professionals to interpret and respond to this complexity (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Hannerz, 1997; McCall, 2005; Valentine, 2007; Vervotec, 2007; Gillborn, 2008; Burgio, 2022; Gross, 2022). The transition to tertiary education for students with a migration background represents a crucial challenge for promoting quality, inclusion, and equity in education systems (Marmolejo et al., 2008; Morgan, Houghton, 2011; Schlossberg, 2011; Tarozzi, 2015; OECD, 2022), as also highlighted in international experiences, for example with support programs for migrants in countries such as Germany and Sweden.

The study, conducted in two Italian universities (Yin, 2005; Stake, 2006), analyzes the diverse experiences of migrant students during their academic journey, focusing on how educational institutions can support and guide them in the delicate phase of transition and academic success. Furthermore, it highlights the transformative potential of tertiary education in fostering inclusion and the ability to plan their future consciously and autonomously.

This contribution aims to enrich the international debate by demonstrating how educational and professional guidance systems (Savickas et al., 2009; Domenici, 2009; Hooley, Sultana, & Thomsen, 2018; Biagioli, 2023) can transform migration into a resource for democratic and collective growth, contributing to a more equitable and inclusive global society.

Theoretical lens and methodological base for research papers

The contribution is based on the theoretical framework of intercultural pedagogy and social justice, analyzing the transition of migrant students to tertiary education through the concepts of superdiversity, intersectionality, and complexity. Furthermore, the role of educational guidance is explored as a tool to promote equity and inclusion. The research employs a mixed-methods design, combining qualitative and quantitative data, with a focus on two significant case studies.

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NIKOS PSOCHIOS, MARIA-GRAZIA IMPERIALE, DAMIAN ROSS AND GIOVANNA FASSETTA:
LINES: Learning for informal and nonformal Educators in Lebanon and Jordan

Keywords: teachers; agency; identity; refugees; participatory methodologies.

The proposed contribution delves into the relationship between teacher identity, agency, and community in the context of refugee education in Lebanon and Jordan. By employing participatory methodologies, including arts-based workshops, the LINES project aimed to understand and strengthen the professional identity and agency of educators working with refugee students in non-formal education settings. Teacher identity and agency can sometimes seem vague concepts, perhaps because they are so fluid and multifaceted, and consequently can be defined in different ways. For the purposes of this report, we see teacher identity as the hopes, beliefs, values and purpose a teacher holds, which are informed and influenced by inter-related factors such as their personal and professional experiences, the contexts in which they live and work, and the perceptions and behaviour of those around them. After Mockler (2011), we see the teacher identity “project”, as a continual process of understanding, articulating and then trying to align this identity with action. As such, it is a fundamental aspect of ongoing teacher education and development which we feel is often overlooked or under-emphasised. Teacher agency, then, can be seen as the ability to act and make changes in accordance with your values and purpose at the various levels of the eco-system (not necessarily just in the classroom), in relation to the various factors which enable or hinder this process, and agency and identity are inter-dependent (see also Imperiale et al, 2021).

Our research highlights the pivotal role of refugee teachers in shaping the educational experiences of refugee children. Through their lived experiences and deep connections with the community, the educators can develop a strong sense of purpose and responsibility, prioritising holistic development addressing both academic and socio-emotional needs, while also advocating for their students' rights and aspirations. The study emphasises the importance of strong leadership and supportive communities in nurturing teacher identity and agency. By fostering a sense of belonging and shared purpose, teachers can overcome challenges, innovate pedagogical approaches, and create inclusive learning environments.

To support educators, we developed two open-access resources: a) “ACTIVITIES FOR NON-FORMAL LEARNING IN REFUGEE SETTINGS: A Teacher’s Guide,” which provides a collection of practical activities that can be adapted to diverse contexts, empowering teachers to engage their students in meaningful and creative learning experiences, and b) “THE TREE OF LIFE AND THE IDEAL TEACHER: Two Approaches to Working on Identity and Agency with Refugee Teachers,” a resource which offers a framework for exploring and developing teacher identity and agency, enabling educators to reflect on their values, beliefs, and aspirations. By sharing these resources and fostering international collaboration, we aim to contribute to the ongoing dialogue on refugee education and support the professional development of refugee educators worldwide.

SESSION: MIGRATION AND (CULTURAL) IDENTITIES

MEHMET RAUF KESICI:

An exploration of the relationship between economic outcomes and the salience of religious identities of Kurdish and Turkish migrants and their descendants in Germany: the role of multiple and hybrid identities

Keywords: descendants, economic outcomes, migrants, multiple and hybrid identities, religious identities

This research examines the link between economic outcomes and the salience of religious identities, with a focus on multiple and hybrid identities. The study is based on fieldwork conducted in Berlin, Germany, within a research project running from 2023 to 2025. After initial exploratory research and observations, fifty interviews were conducted with individuals from Turkey or their descendants who were either born or educated in Germany.

A mixed-methods design (Creswell, 2021) was used to collect data through surveys and semi-structured interviews, capturing participants' religious affiliations and economic outcomes in Germany. The collected data were analysed using an integrative approach that combined thematic, narrative, and interpretive methodologies, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the subject. Participants identified as Alevi, atheist, or Muslim, with some holding multiple and hybrid religious identities. They were classified into four economic categories: economically successful, moderately successful, moderately unsuccessful, and unsuccessful.

The key research questions include: How does the salience of Muslim, Alevi, and atheist identities influence the economic success of Kurdish and Turkish migrants and their descendants? How does possessing more than one religious identity and the changing weights (relative importance) in these identities over time influence individuals' economic achievements within labour market contexts? Through what mechanisms do religious identities shape economic outcomes, and what factors mediate these processes?

To address these questions, the study integrates theoretical frameworks pertaining to the economic adaptation of migrants (Akerlof and Kranton, 2010; Constant and Zimmermann, 2008), network theory (Massey et al., 1993), human and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Chiswick, 1978; Putnam, 2000), and the ethnic enclave perspective (Portes and Jensen, 1989). By synthesizing these theoretical perspectives, this study aims to offer an in-depth analysis of the mechanisms through which religious identities influence economic trajectories among migrants and their descendants, thereby contributing to the broader discourse on identity and economic integration.

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GRETE ERCKMANN:

Migration – social inequality – conduct of everyday life: identity negotiation and social participation of youths with migration (family) experiences in Germany

Keywords: ethnography, biographical research, social inequality, belonging, identity

Migration from the Global South to the North and lived experiences of educational, social and global inequality along the dimensions of class, race, gender and dis_ability are intertwined and interrelated. The superordinate reasons for migration from the Global South to the North are primarily (forced) displacement, persecution, wars, environmental degradation and, as a result, (impending) poverty – linked to the processes of exploitation of ‘the Global South’ by ‘the Global North’. On the one hand, there is a close interrelation between migration opportunities to the Global North and the societal positioning of a person in the abovementioned inequality relations; on the other hand, societal positioning is linked to life chances in the countries of emigration and immigration. Questions of belonging and identity are negotiated in the conduct of everyday life in the face of experiences of inequality regarding economic living, education and social participation opportunities – leading to the question: How do societal belonging, identity participation and experiences of othering change over the course of live in different stages and different countries/ places of migration experience?

The here presented work-in-progress research project is based on qualitative research methodology, the interpretative paradigm and in particular on biographical and ethnographic research methodology. The research style is based on Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 2017), more precisely on its constructivist refinement (Charmaz, 2014). Through biographical research with co-researchers collective dimensions of experience in relation to inequality relations/ structures can be drawn and elaborated on.

After a brief introduction to the research project and the research methodology, preliminary research findings based on excerpts from biographical interviews are presented. Finally, conclusions are drawn in the form of recommendations for adult education as a facilitator of democratic participation, social change and collective growth.

PAULUS BAGUS SUGIYONO:

Educational mobility, ethnicity, and sense of belonging as a nation: a preliminary note on the case study of Perantau students in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Keywords: Educational mobility, ethnicity, sense of belonging, perantau students, Indonesia.

Previous studies on educational mobility and ethnicity in Indonesia often focus more on the interrelation between newcomers and the host society. These discussions have a notable limitation, as they reflect on ethnicity in a narrower sense, primarily emphasising differences between ethnic groups. I aim, therefore, to expand the discussion by situating it within a broader context, analysing the sense of belonging as a nation. This perspective is particularly significant as this study attempts to both highlight the essence of Indonesia's national identity, "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika," referred to as "unity in diversity," and discover how the current young generation experiences this national identity in contemporary times through their own educational mobility experiences. This study addresses one question: To what extent does educational mobility contribute across Indonesia to the making sense of belonging as a nation? To answer this question, I draw on a case study of perantau students who come across Indonesia and study for higher education in Yogyakarta, a city located in the heart of Java, known as the "student city." This study presents that the experience of merantau for educational purposes may at least leave two profound impressions on perantau students on their sense of belonging as Indonesian nation. First, it allows them to grasp the idea of how big Indonesia as a nation is from the geographical perspective. Through interactions with friends from all corners of the country—sometimes from places they had never heard of—they gain a tangible sense of this impression. Second, they may experience Indonesia's rich ethnic diversity firsthand. This merantau experience "brings to earth" the abstract idea of Indonesian identity as "unity in diversity." While they may have learnt about this idea in classrooms, it is through the lived experience of merantau that they truly begin to understand and embody it.

SESSION: ALTERNATIVE LEARNING

BRIGITTE KUKOVETZ:

Civic learning through alternative perspectives on border and migration regimes

Keywords: civic education, migration regimes, border, utopian thinking

An increasingly interconnected world marked by geopolitical conflicts and global warming leads to an increase in international migration. The number of international migrants has risen from 84 million in 1970 to 281 million in 2020 (IOM, 2024). Societal transformation processes become necessary. At the same time, our world is characterized by increasingly illiberal and anti-democratic socio-political developments (e.g. Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2024).

Transformations can be driven by civic education using utopias as critical counter-images of the present (cf. Bremer & Kuhnhenne, 2017; Sargisson, 2012). Thus, it might be assumed, that alternative narratives are needed in order to suggest positive changes against these illiberal tendencies.

In two seminars of the Bachelor's degree program in Educational Sciences (2022 and 2023), border and migration regimes and their manifestations in a globalized world, their functions and effects (e.g. Mau, 2021) were first critically analyzed. Then, the students immersed themselves in utopian thinking on alternatives to the injustices of existing border and migration regimes and reflected the process within learning journals. Through a participatory research process, they analyzed their respective learning journals and drew conclusions with regards to their learning processes.

The proposed contribution focuses on the theoretical assumptions linking utopia and civic education (Holzer, 2021), the implementation of the research design, and the results. The students' analysis will be supplemented by my own interpretative-reconstructive analysis of the data. I will answer the question of how the promotion of utopian thinking stimulates learning processes, and its potential impact on civic education in countering illiberal tendencies.

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KAREN M. MAGRO:
Encouraging global competencies and transcultural learning in a time of conflict:
encouraging pedagogies of peace and creativity

Keywords: Global Competencies; Transcultural Learning; Transformative Learning

Drawing on narrative inquiry and document analysis of Canadian curricula in secondary English language arts and adult literacy education, this presentation will explore the connections between transcultural learning, transformative learning, and the development of Global Competencies (GC). Global Competencies (GC) include emotional and social literacies (connection to self and others), creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and global citizenship education. One of the most significant social dramas today is the movement of people from their ancestral homelands to new destination like Canada. Some are drawn by the prospect of employment and education and others are forced to flee zones of conflict and war. We are, as Vertovec (2022) asserts, living in a time of superdiversity where different cultures, traditions, languages, and lifestyles are interconnecting; moreover, uncertainties and conflict in the world today have furthered awareness that we are citizens of a larger world community (Hall, 2002). Barber (2003) asserts that citizenship in a global world “is a dynamic relationship among strangers who are transformed into neighbors, whose commonality derives from expanding consciousness, rather than geographical proximity (p.27).” Establishing a learning climate that is dynamic, interdisciplinary, multimodal, and evolving can be a catalyst to transcultural awareness and potentially transformative learning in adult learning (Hoggan and Finnegan, 2023). This presentation will exemplify the way five adult literacy educators working with newcomers and immigrants in Winnipeg, Canada used culturally diverse texts and arts based pedagogies to encourage creative and transformative learning in courses such as English language arts, psychology, and world issues. Visual art, music, drama, storytelling, inquiry, and creative writing have the potential to open new possibilities of learning that and “pedagogies of hope” and transcultural awareness (Kidd, 2020; Magro, 2024). Conceptions of transculturalism reflect a more complex mindset (Epstein, 2009; Jurkova and Guo, 2018; Magro and Honeyford, 2019). Mikhail Epstein (2009) writes that “transculture is a new sphere of cultural development that transcends the borders of traditional cultures (ethnic, national, racial, religious, gender, sexual, and professional)” (p. 330). Valuing multiple perspectives of belonging and identity, viewing linguistic diversity as an asset, and encouraging multimodal learning are among the ways adult educators can encourage transcultural learning.

MARTINA NORDQVIST FÄRNSKOG:

5 Ventures for learning: migrant capability and church language cafés

The “open-heart policy” that characterized Sweden’s response to the 2015-2016 migration event has largely been abandoned, replaced by near-closed borders for refugees today. For those who still manage to cross the border for education or work, Sweden offers a generous and comprehensive formal adult education system, including effectively mandatory language courses for migrants, designed to facilitate integration. However, under ongoing scrutiny and increasing pressure to prioritize efficiency and employability, research indicates that this system may be poorly suited to its intended goals, resulting in high dropout rates and continued high unemployment among foreign-borns.

Alongside governmental efforts, civic society contributions - though often underfunded and unrecognized - have provided consistent and multifaceted support for migrants over the years, particularly through local church-based language cafés. These non-formal/informal learning spaces offer alternative opportunities for language acquisition and community-building, providing fellowship and assisting migrants in navigating their new society.

This study explores the educational practices of church language cafés in a mid-sized Swedish town. First, I trace the roots of these practices back to the 19th-century religious revival movement and discuss the so-called “Readers movement” as an integral part of the Folkbildning tradition of study circles. Second, I present results from ethnographically inspired fieldwork, including participant observation, informal conversations, artifacts, and in-depth interviews. Using the concept of “ventures” I investigate five different participant learning practices through the framework of Nussbaum’s central capabilities (2011):

1. The Setting Out - the capability of Practical Reason, as in planning one’s life according to what is good for oneself.
2. The Stepping In - the capability of Affiliation, as in participating in a meaningful community.
3. The Circular Learning - the capability of Senses, Imagination, and Thought, as in partaking in adequate education.
4. The Moving Out - the capability of Control over One’s Environment, as in aiming for employment and the prospect of being able to work as a human being.
5. The Movement Within - the capability of Senses, Imagination, and Thought, as in seeking and engaging in religious faith.

This work highlights aspects of adult learning in non-formal/informal settings and their contributions to both learning and the overall well-being of migrants. The paper calls on adult educators to draw inspiration from these community-based models, which may offer valuable insights into the possibilities offered by empowering practices in adult education for migrants.

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SESSION: MEDIA AND NARRATIVES

PATRYCJA ROZBICKA AND ALEKSANDRA MATYJA:

Visual narratives of migration: comparative analysis of media coverage in Poland during the 2015 and 2022 refugee crises

Keywords: migration, refugees, media discourse, visual communication, civil society

This article examines the visual narratives of migration and refugees in Polish media during two key periods: the 2015 migration of non-European refugees and the 2022 influx of Ukrainian refugees. By "visual narratives," this study refers to the use of images, symbols, and visual tropes in media coverage to communicate messages, evoke emotions, and shape perceptions of migration. Employing a content and semiotic analysis of press coverage and articles, the study delves into how political, social, and cultural attitudes are reflected and constructed in these narratives.

The comparative analysis highlights differences in the portrayal of these two refugee groups, addressing questions of ideological framing and societal response. For instance, the 2022 refugee wave saw an unprecedented mobilization of Polish civil society to assist Ukrainians – rooted in shared history, cultural proximity, and empathy towards the victims of the Russian invasion. Over 5 million Ukrainian citizens have been welcomed since February 2022, with 77% of Poles actively participating in aid efforts. Social media platforms played a key role, fostering grassroots initiatives to provide material, psychological, and logistical support. This societal response contrasts with the more polarized reception of non-European refugees in 2015.

The study also critically explores civil society's contribution to refugee support and its interaction with official media narratives. By examining both liberal and conservative press, the analysis reveals how ideological orientations shape coverage: liberal outlets often focus on humanitarian and solidarity narratives, while conservative media emphasize security concerns, cultural identity, and economic impact. These divergent portrayals illuminate the role of media in constructing societal discourse on migration.

The findings suggest significant disparities in the visual and textual narratives across media platforms. The study examines how cultural myths, symbolic language, and media framing influence public perception, civil society engagement, and policy-making. This research contributes to understanding the role of media in shaping public attitudes and political discourse, with an emphasis on the implications for civil society's role in addressing migration crises.

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ANGELA PILCH ORTEGA:

Countering anti-democratic tendencies and disinformation on social media: an exploration of collaborative activism on X in view of increasing uncertainty

Our world has changed dramatically. The current man-made catastrophes have in common that they unfold unprecedented destructive power, which shake the social structures of our communal coexistence (Heinlein & Dimbath 2020). Against the backdrop of increasing uncertainty, we currently observe the rise of far right-wing and far-left wing populist extremists which threaten our democracies and living together. Social media plays a crucial role in the information space and the formation of opinion. In addition, social platforms are increasingly perceived as conducive to the creation of ideological echo-chambers eroding the space for public dialogue. Hence, they are seen as fostering polarisation, radicalisation, de-politicisation, spreading misinformation and subject to manipulation. The domination of the information space is also part of hybrid warfare with the aim to undermine public opinions and the creation of a common sense. Since Elon Musk took over Twitter, X(itter) was transformed into a super-spreader of disinformation, hate speech and conspiracy theories in order to gain power over the formation of opinions.

This paper explores social responses to anti-democratic tendencies, disinformation and conspiracy theories on social media. In particular, the analysis focuses on tweets and interactions of different hashtag and thread discussions on the online platform X which are related to counter disinformation and hate speech in view of the Russian full-scale invasion into Ukraine. The exploration highlights different strategies of the grassroots movement NAFO, a decentralized alliance of different X(itter) users, who use dodge memes relying on humour to push back extremist propaganda. The ongoing research is based on Grounded Theory Methodology, theoretical perspectives of biographical research, social learning and social media analysis accompanied by an auto-ethnographic perspective. The presentation will discuss social learning processes and the development of collective actions as a response to anti-democratic tendencies. Ultimately, the discussion serves as an offset to reflect on the development of critical media literacy and on impacts for adult education.

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ENRICO VIGNANDO AND DAVIDE ZOLETTO:
AI literacies in superdiverse adult education

Keywords: Adult education and learning; Super-diversity; Teachers' professional development; AI literacy; Participatory action research.

In the discussion of today's so-called digital revolution, there is a general agreement on the importance of equipping teachers with the relevant competencies in artificial intelligence, as described by many recent international frameworks, reports, and guidelines. Keeping a human-centered approach to AI also makes researchers consider what capabilities are enhanced rather than hindered by AI. When interacting with AI, particularly Generative AI, which leverages natural language, there could be the risk that some cultural layers of this artificial communication could go unnoticed by teachers, especially those who could integrate AI-generated content in classrooms characterized by sociocultural complexities and superdiversity. Teachers' professional development in AI literacy should also focus on these matters instead of providing teachers with just technical knowledge about AI, especially if we acknowledge that AI systems are cultural objects assembled by a culturally dominant technology industry. To address a discussion about teachers' AI literacy according to these considerations, we aim to conduct a participatory action research with teachers who work in adult education centers in northeastern Italy. In these educational institutions, multilayered challenges to teaching and learning literacies emerge as they are generally marked by a high number of adult students from migratory backgrounds and, in some cases, low literacy levels. The goal of the participatory action research is to create a space for teachers' reflection on the use of AI in their specific contexts against disinformation. Our objective is to contribute to teachers' professional development by experiencing participatory methodologies and adopting a capability approach to discussing AI in the education of adult migrants, contrasting institutional racism and considering migrants' role in the community and as future citizens.

Theoretical lens and methodological base: Super-diversity and participatory action research

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SESSION: MIGRATION AND COMMUNITY ACTIVISM

YAN GUO:

Migrant community activism: advocating equitable education policy for English as an additional language (EAL) learners

Keywords: Migrant community activism, education policy, English as an additional language (EAL) learners, advocacy, equity

Language policy research puts little emphasis on migrant parental agency. This study explores how migrant parents and community members advocated for more equitable policies and practices for English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners in Alberta, Canada. The study takes policy as discursive practice and examines how policy is experienced and constructed locally by migrant parents (Dagenais, 2013). One way in which migrant parents construct their knowledge of language policy is through informal learning. Livingstone (2001) highlights three major criticisms pertaining to research on informal learning: individualistic bias, dominant class bias, and learning question bias. This study attempts to address these criticisms by exploring the informal learning experience of migrant parents in advocating on behalf of their children for equitable language policy. Data were collected through policy documentation, interviews with 35 migrant parents and community members as well as two focus group discussions involving parents and policymakers.

Migrant parents found there were systemic inequities of language policies that disadvantage EALs. They engaged in intentional informal learning (e.g. workshops, role playing) to acquire knowledge of the EAL system and develop advocacy strategies. They adopted two forms of strategies to advocate for better EAL programs, including a) organized forms of advocacy (e.g. protest and presenting to policymakers); b) everyday forms of advocacy constituting of individual critiques about unjust policies and practices in school. The study analyzes how migrant parental advocacy groups informed educational change for new Canadians. It brings new voices of migrant community into the educational policy process and challenges the deficit perspective that educators hold against migrant parents. It contributes to the conference themes of diaspora communities' self-empowerment and political participation.

SHIBAO GUO AND LING LEI:

Combating racism in multicultural Canada: theorizing a form of new social movement learning

Keywords: social movement learning, adult education, actor-network theory, socio-materiality, anti-racism

This paper theorizes a form of new social movement learning by exploring learning through social activism in three major ongoing anti-racism movements in Canada, namely anti-Asian racism, anti-Black racism, and anti-Indigenous racism. The discussion is informed by critical race theory (CRT) with race as the primary construct to understand and analyze disadvantage and injustice in society (Crenshaw et al., 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2023). Following CRT, this paper adopts the sociomaterial approach of actor-network theory (ANT) (Fenwick et al., 2011; Passoth et al., 2012) to focus on the role of various actors, both human and nonhuman, in the process of coming together in building assemblages for learning in the anti-racism movements based on the discursive texts produced in and surrounding the movements.

NIKOLAOS PSOCHIOS:
Endurance work: refugees' tactics of living sideways in contemporary Greece

Keywords: refugeehood; humanitarianism; endurance; bordering.

Drawing from the preliminary findings of the PhD research "The Borderlands of Care: Palliative Interventions, Minimalist Humanitarianism, and Education for Adult Refugees in Contemporary Greece," this presentation delves into the intricate tactics refugees employ to endure the daily challenges of border policies. Building upon Redfield's (2005) concept of "minimalist humanitarianism" and de Certeau's (2004) notion of "tactics of everyday life," this research explores how refugees, including those facing additional challenges due to their homoeroticism, utilise a range of strategies to survive and resist bordering structures.

Through ethnographic work (narrative inquiry and reflective diary) and poetic inquiry, four key manifestations of endurance work are examined: a) refugees' use of minimalist education, b) detachment/dissociation, c) the strategic use of concealment of homoeroticism and d) strategic resource acquisition. Minimalist education, often provided by grassroots organizations, serves as a form of palliative support, offering relief while refugees await relocation. Detachment and dissociation become necessary coping mechanisms to mitigate the affective and material economies of bordering. Concealment of homoerotic desires, a common strategy for navigating hostile environments and maintaining a sense of autonomy, takes various forms, including the "closet" for refugees who fear discrimination based on their sexuality. Strategic resource acquisition, including bargaining, stealing, and demanding, enables refugees to challenge the power dynamics of humanitarian aid and secure essential resources. By analysing these strategies, the presentation contributes to a deeper understanding of the diverse experiences of refugees and the limitations of humanitarian interventions.

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SESSION: AUTOETHNOGRAPHY AND BIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVES

ÜLKÜ GÜNEY:

Beyond integration: challenging colonial discourses through autoethnography

Keywords: Autoethnography; Postcolonial migration studies; Empowerment; Othering; Integration

The use of autoethnography in the context of postcolonial migration studies has proven to be a transformative tool for both research and teaching about migration, offering a platform for those who have long been underrepresented in academic discourse.

This paper aims to reflect on and bring attention to migrants' experiences in the context of hegemonic racializing discourses. In doing this, I advocate for the use of autoethnography as a means of (self) empowering migrant scholars and students alike, raising their agency and resilience while combating colonising discourses of othering.

The Othering practices of migrants in German-speaking countries materialise, among others, through the discourse of integration. Integration as an undefined and diffuse political concept foregrounds deficiency, representing migrants as lacking abilities that would qualify them to live with the majority society. Although, in recent times, it has been challenged by a few scholars such as Yildiz & Hill (2015), Foroutan (2018) and Lingen-Ali & Mecheril (2020) the idea is persistent in such a way that it is embodied obediently also by the students of migration background. This pervasiveness of the notion of integration and the adoption of the discourse by those students is reflected in their self-perception. Thus, by employing autoethnography as a methodological approach to teaching and supervision, as a reflexive dialogue between teacher and student, I aim to increase awareness and critical thinking to challenge colonially informed othering practices. This also entails emphasizing the political significance of autoethnographic writing about postcolonial migration. In doing this, I refer to embodied experiences and positionality, in line with the principle that 'the personal is political'.

TETYANA HOGGAN-KLOUBERT AND CHAD HOGGAN:
Objects, transitions, and learning: biographical insights from Ukrainian refugees

Keywords: Evocative objects, Material culture, Biographical Narratives, Transformative Learning, Ukraine

In the paper, we will explore the stories of women whom the Russian invasion in 2022 forced to leave behind their homes and communities, embarking on a journey into uncertainty, requiring profound transitions and potential transformations, and therefore also forced learning. As anchors to these stories, we turn our attention to the evocative objects (Turtle, 2011) they chose to accompany them on this tumultuous path. Our focus is on the experiences and meanings attached to these objects, revealing how they serve as conduits between the past, present, and future, physical touchpoints through transitional and transformational experiences through which the women learn to be able to navigate their displaced lives.

Methodologically, the presentation integrates narrative vignettes and visual data, including artistic photographs of participants and their chosen objects, to illustrate the lived experiences of forced migration (Yi-Neumann et al., 2022). The thematic analysis is organized into key stages: escape, arrival, initial adjustments, and the emotional duality experienced as participants straddle their old and new worlds.

The objects of migration not only carry individual stories but also reflect collective narratives (Nohl, 2011). They can maintain a sense of continuity and document the challenges and transformations associated with flight and war. The data presented are analyzed through three lenses: the concept of evocative objects, transition theory, and transformative learning theory. The analysis of the cultural and social connotations of specific objects—whether clothing, jewelry, household items, or other artifacts—is central to understanding migration experiences of learning, transition, and transformation.

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TETYANA PANCHENKO:
**Transformational experience of Ukrainian displaced people in Germany: between
integration and transnationalism**

The Russian aggressor war against Ukraine has caused a large-scale wave of forced migration, which has a huge impact on the host and the society of origin. Ukrainian displaced people learn to integrate into host society, often preserving their identity, ties to their homeland, or creating new transnational networks. Since the beginning of the full-scale war in Ukraine, we have been studying how the transformative experience of Ukrainian refugees affects their integration into the host society and is related to their long-term plans to stay in the host country or return to Ukraine. In this study, we draw on theories of transnational migration and transformative learning and use a mixed-methods approach. From May 2022 to February 2024, five online surveys on social networks were conducted, each involving 651 to 1644 displaced Ukrainians, and in May-June 2022, guided semi-structured interviews with elements of biographical narrative interviewing were conducted with 19 displaced Ukrainians, 17 of whom were also interviewed again in 1.5-2.5 years.

The results of the quantitative surveys allowed us to trace the dynamics of changes in the characteristics of Ukrainian refugees, their efforts to integrate into the labour market, education institutions and social life, as well as their return intentions. The results of the first round of qualitative interviews allowed us to develop a typology of behavioural patterns of Ukrainian refugees that reflects and explains their lifelong learning strategies. After using a grounded theory approach and clustering, 5 of the 6 hypothesized types of behavior were empirically confirmed. The results of the follow-up qualitative interviews allowed not only to upgrade the typology of behavioural patterns, but also to identify new challenges and opportunities in lifelong learning due to migration, as well as possibilities of transnationalism and diaspora communities for adult education.

SESSION: HEALTH, WELL-BEING, AND AGING

ANNETTE SPRUNG:

Migration, ageing and caring societies

Keywords: migration, ageing, care, educational gerontology

Two phenomena of demographic change – migration and ageing – significantly influence the dynamics of contemporary and future societies. This proposed contribution delves into the complexities of fostering solidarity, facilitating democratic engagement, driving societal transformation, and nurturing collective advancement in the context of migration and ageing. It particularly explores the concept of "caring societies" and its implications for adult education and learning.

The idea of a "caring society" originates from feminist discourse and presents a fundamental critique of existing structures and policies (Dowling, 2022). It advocates for a "care revolution" (Winker, 2015) to enhance democracy and social equality. This perspective intersects with migration by addressing dignified ageing for all individuals and recognizing the gendered and racialized implications of care work.

The presentation will address three main topics: It provides an overview of current research on the migration-ageing nexus (Torres & Hunter, 2023). Additionally, it analyzes the political and scientific discourse surrounding "caring societies" in relation to migration-related phenomena and challenges. Furthermore, it explores the potential role of adult education in shaping a caring society (with a focus on critical educational gerontology).

While grounding itself in theoretical analysis, the presentation also is informed by insights from a participatory research project that investigated the potential of older citizens, particularly migrants facing precarious life situations, in the development of caring communities in urban areas. The empirical research does not take center stage in the presentation; however, it will offer examples to illustrate the theoretical exploration.

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ALICJA SZOSTKIEWICZ:

The phenomenon of loneliness of immigrants in Poland and its significance for their adaptation in the host country. Educational and cultural implications

Keywords: Immigrants, loneliness, culture of peace, intercultural education, mental health prevention.

The aim of the presented considerations is to recognize and describe the phenomenon of loneliness of immigrants living in Poland in the context of their entry into the host society. During the adaptation process, foreigners experience loneliness, which may translate into their poorer social functioning, lower their mental well-being and affect their somatic health. The empirical material for identifying the experiences of immigrants was collected through four categorized in-depth interviews conducted with immigrants living in the following voivodeships: Pomerania and Kuyavian-Pomeranian. The collected research material was analyzed using OpenCode software supporting the process of searching and coding text data, which was used to distinguish the most important conditions concerning the loneliness of immigrants. As a result of the analysis of the empirical material, three pillars of educational solutions were identified in response to the challenges related to the phenomenon of immigrant loneliness in Poland.

SESSION: GOVERNANCE AND REGIMES

KIRSTIN SONNE:

Between implementation and contestation: understanding the role of the UK's refugee third sector in relation to asylum and migration governance

Keywords: Refugee third sector, migrant solidarity, migration and asylum governance, NGOs, UK immigration

In the UK, civil society organisations advocating for refugees and migrants play an important role in contesting the mainstreaming of anti-immigration rhetoric and policies. Meanwhile, years of austerity and a mismanaged asylum system have pushed these same organisations into a service provision role, “filling the gaps” in a system that they themselves oppose. The importance of this role, crucial to an increasingly precarious migrant population at risk of detention, destitution and deportation, stands in marked contrast to the limited influence the sector has on migration and asylum policy. Their leverage as “policy ameliorators” at the national level has increasingly been curtailed, at the same time as collaborations with local authorities have increased. Drawing on decolonial critiques of the “humanitarian border regime” and emerging conceptions of translocal solidarity, this paper, which is part of an ongoing PhD project, explores how organisations have adapted their political imaginaries in response to these conflicting developments. How do organisations reconcile their role in both implementing *and* contesting migration governance, and navigate the tensions between helping migrants integrate into society *and* advocating for social change, reforming *and* transforming the migration and asylum system? To explore these questions, I consider organisations’ discursive and non-discursive work, combining documentary analysis of organisations’ manifestos with in-depth interviews with members. Participating organisations include voluntary, faith-based, migrant-led and advocacy groups that are active at both the local and national level, allowing a multi-scalar analysis that reflects the sector’s diversity. The paper thus aims to contribute to our understanding of the sector’s changing role in migration and asylum governance and policy, its capacity to empower migrants and non-migrants, and its potential for transformative action beyond issues relating to migration and asylum. By doing so, the research also questions the boundaries between “political” and “apolitical” activism and “humanitarian” and “solidarian” forms of organising.

PINAR AKSU:
Everyday bordering: migration, communities and access to justice

Keywords: Migration, justice, communities, art, law

People seeking asylum and refuge experience the notion of everyday bordering as life becomes still and future becomes unknown. From being placed in hotel accommodation across various parts of the country, to not having the right to work and being exposed to tensions within communities on a daily basis. In recent years, narratives on migration significantly changed across the globe which are also reflected within immigration laws, such as the Illegal Migration Act 2023.

This presentation focuses on the key findings from the PhD research titled 'Art and Law in Migration: art practices for social change and access to justice'. Bringing Augusto Boal's 'Theatre of the Oppressed' methodology, Paulo Freire's 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed' and 'The performance of Law' from Randy Gordon, it examines the everyday bordering experienced by people navigating the immigration system. Specifically, it explores a) barriers to accessing justice, (cuts to legal aid, access to education, information not being available and/or accessibility), and b) the impact of the recent changes with the immigration laws for communities, highlighting the role of art practices for social change and creating alternatives to bordering and borders. This presentation contributes to having a deeper understanding of the experiences of people navigating the immigration system, connecting art and law, and unpacking how creative methods can be used within research.

SESSION: CITIZEN SCIENCE

KAROLA CAFANTARIS, ANKE GROTLÜSCHEN AND KLAUS BUDDEBERG:

Right-wing influences regarding community education centres in Germany: a qualitative Citizen Science study

Theories on racism (e.g. Mafaalani, 2021, Messerschmidt, 2006), as well as adult education research (e.g. Grotlüschen et al., 2009; Heinemann, 2014, Grotlüschen et al., 2020) agree that the German integration system fails to include (recent) immigrants into full acceptance and participation in Germany. Recently, right-wing influences intensify the discussion because of substantial election results for the AfD, who influence education (Hanschmann, 2024). Right-wing parties search for agreement with Conservatives (Nikolai, 2024) and gain influence by setting discourses (Hussain & Yunus, 2021). This leads to the research question: What kind of right-wing influences do community education centres report? In which ways are services for recent migrants affected? What counter strategies do the educational practitioners and democratic policy makers apply?

This research employs a citizen science approach through a participatory research project (Unger, 2014). The development of the qualitative interview protocol and sampling strategy was conducted collaboratively with community education centres. The collected data is subjected to thematic analysis. This fosters community involvement and enhances the relevance and applicability of the findings to real-world contexts.

The collection of influences is organized by levels (Boeren, 2019, Lima & Guimaraes, 2011). On the micro-level, reports point to racism within integration courses. On the meso-level, the AfD tries to attack associations, that aim at “diversity”. Moreover, the Saxonian financial court claims that receivers of public funding would need to be “neutral”, meaning that they should not receive funding if their courses aim at fighting the rise of right-wing populism and extremism. Local and national governments constantly publish counter-statements¹. On the macro-level, AfD keeps using “Questions (Anfragen)” to the parliaments, discrediting integration course participants as unwilling to learn. The institutions are discredited as “Migration Industry”. In all cases, counter strategies are reported by practitioners and democratic institutions.

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CLARA HOLZINGER AND ANNA-KATHARINA DRAXL :

Interpreting ethnoracial exclusion - including multiple perspectives through Citizen Science

Keywords: ethnoracial exclusion, citizen science, interpretative research, East-West EU migration

The paper presents first insights from an ongoing Citizen Science project in the Austrian capital of Vienna, which investigates ethnoracial exclusion from an interpretative sociological perspective. The project's aim is to deepen the sociological understanding of ethnoracial exclusion by expanding the interpretations of us researchers through the inclusion of the perspectives of people with different horizons of knowledge and experiences (who are in part potentially affected by ethnoracial exclusion themselves and/or have themselves migrated to Austria). We assume that this approach fosters the critical reflection of us researchers in regard to the embeddedness of research in racialized societal structures. The Citizen Science project complements a larger research project (see <https://demico.univie.ac.at/>) which investigates labour market discrimination of EU-citizens from Central and Eastern European countries in Austria, a group that is still largely unexplored in terms of racism. Building on the methodological basis of the interpretive paradigm and Constructivist Grounded Theory, we are organising interpretation workshops with citizen scientists. The aim is to develop and discuss potentially more diverse and complex readings and interpretations of data gathered within the previous project (interviews with CEE citizens working in Austria). Thereby, we assume that research should be conceived as a communicative process and that the multiplication of perspectives fosters knowledge production. The project thus aims to make an innovative contribution to methodological development, as the involvement of citizens in interpretation workshops is still exceptional in qualitative social research. Also, we aim to contribute to a better understanding of ethnoracial exclusion by treading new paths in knowledge production processes.

AYSHAN MAMMADZADA:

Climate-induced skilled migration from the global south to the global north: resilience, identity and responses to anti-democratic challenges

Climate change has emerged as a critical driver of skilled migration from the Global South to the Global North, presenting both challenges and opportunities. This conceptual paper examines climate-induced skilled migration through the lenses of resilience, identity negotiation, and socio-political barriers. It explores how migration is increasingly framed as a resilience strategy in policy discourses, as reflected in UN and EU adaptation measures, which prioritize migration as a rational response to unavoidable climate impacts rather than a crisis to be managed. However, these shifts often depoliticize migration, transferring the burden of adaptation onto migrants while neglecting systemic inequities.

The paper critiques the gendered dimensions of resilience narratives, which frequently portray women as passive victims of climate impacts rather than active agents of adaptation. For instance, skilled women migrants navigating structural barriers in sectors like healthcare often face compounded challenges of underemployment and systemic discrimination. The socio-economic drivers of migration, such as resource insecurities and urban pressures in Southern Africa, are discussed with a focus on nexus planning approaches that align migration strategies with regional development goals. Furthermore, the securitization of migration policies, which frame migrants as potential threats, exacerbates social integration challenges, mental health issues, and systemic violence in receiving societies.

Guided by the research question—How do skilled migrants from the Global South navigate climate-induced displacement and systemic barriers in the Global North?—this paper utilizes resilience theory and intersectionality to analyze these dynamics. The findings emphasize the need for inclusive migration policies that address systemic barriers, mitigate mental health challenges, and foster social integration, thereby enabling skilled migrants to contribute to their new communities.

ROUND TABLES

SERGIO CARVAJAL LEONI:

The beating heart of America: an entertainment-education model for bridging cultures

Keywords: entertainment-education, transcultural competence, migration, Sabido methodology, storytelling

With over 8 million Venezuelans displaced globally, the Venezuelan diaspora faces profound challenges integrating into host societies, where cultural, linguistic, and economic barriers intersect with hostile sociopolitical climates. At the same time, university language programs often operate in isolation, failing to connect students with the lived realities of the communities they are studying. This project proposes an innovative entertainment-education (EE) model that uses a dual-audience soap opera to foster transcultural competence among both Venezuelan migrants and university students studying Spanish.

The soap opera, *The Beating Heart of America*, follows the lives of Venezuelan migrants and their interactions with their host communities, exploring themes of resilience, identity, and cultural exchange. What makes this project unique is its dual-audience approach: it simultaneously engages Venezuelan migrants and university students studying Spanish, fostering mutual understanding and transcultural competence. For university classrooms, episodes act as springboards for role-playing and creative exercises, promoting empathy and intercultural dialogue. For migrant communities, the series provides relatable narratives and language-learning opportunities, encouraging adaptation and empowerment.

This roundtable session will demonstrate how such a model can be applied in educational and community contexts. Participants will engage in an interactive exercise inspired by the soap opera. A scripted scene, portraying the tension-filled dynamics of a migrant family and their neighbors, will be read aloud, followed by a reflection on the script and mock exercise. Participants will collaboratively discuss its potential and the challenges of applying such a model to second language acquisition (SLA) classrooms.

Theoretical Framework: The session is grounded in the principles of entertainment-education (EE), as outlined by Singhal and Rogers (1999), with a focus on the Sabido methodology. This approach emphasizes the use of character archetypes (positive, negative, and transitional) to model desired behaviors and spark audience reflection. The proposed dual-audience application is an innovative extension of EE, demonstrating how storytelling can simultaneously address the needs of diverse groups, fostering dialogue between migrants and host communities.

Session Format

1. Introduction (10 minutes): Overview of the EE model and its proposed dual-audience application.
2. Interactive Exercise (30 minutes): Participants will read and act out a scripted scene, using role-playing to explore character perspectives and conflicts.

3. Reflection and Knowledge Co-Creation (20 minutes): Participants will collaboratively reflect on the script, discuss its potential as a teaching tool, and explore the challenges of applying such models to SLA classrooms.

Objectives

- Demonstrate the power of EE interventions for addressing migration-related challenges.
- Provide participants with practical strategies for fostering transcultural competence through storytelling.
- Inspire interdisciplinary collaboration to create educational experiences that engage diverse audiences.

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NORMA MERCADO, TAIWO OLATUNJI AND CHERI HATCHER:
**Migration as transformation: empowering migrants through education and resilience to
shape inclusive societies**

Through the lens of transformative learning, using a collective inquiry methodology, three researchers propose to present their work in a roundtable reporting their findings of three disparate but intersecting studies. These studies highlight the transformative potential of migration and advocate for empowering migrants to share their voices, fostering their contributions to more inclusive and informed societies (Jacobs & Kreisberg, 2018).

The first study explored the cross-cultural and transformative learning experiences of Nigerian immigrants in Italy and the United States. This multiple-case study design reveals how migrants navigate cultural dissonance, social isolation, and systemic barriers.

The second study investigated the professional experiences of skilled immigrant women in the United States who often struggle to fulfill their professional aspirations, relegated to roles traditionally categorized as "care work" (Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2003; Kittay, 1999). This phenomenon leads to "deskilling" or "downskilling," contributing to a gendered brain drain, as discussed by Dumont and Monso (2007) and Batalova et al. (2016).

The third study examined the experiences of immigrants in rural Texas. Highlighting the participants' resilience and adaptability in navigating complex societal systems, a finding consistent with Cervantes and Brito's (2015) observations on the resilience of this population. The study emphasized shifting the narrative away from a deficit-based approach that focuses solely on trauma to one acknowledging immigrants' strengths and contributions.

Together, these studies illustrate migration's dual role as a driver of challenges and opportunities. By fostering personal growth, identity negotiation, and reflective learning, migration emerged as a transformative process that underscores the role of adult education in facilitating cross-cultural understanding and integration (Bonanno, 2005; Schlossberg, 2011). The researchers demonstrate how migration narratives empower migrants to share their experiences, dismantle stereotypes, and actively shape inclusive and equitable societies. When paired with education, migration becomes a catalyst for personal and societal transformation.

The roundtable session will provide an interactive and collaborative space for researchers and attendees to engage in meaningful dialogue about the transformative learning experiences of migrants. Structured as a facilitated discussion rather than formal presentations, this format allows for an in-depth exploration of the three intersecting studies, encouraging active participation and knowledge exchange among researchers, practitioners, and audience members.

Each researcher will briefly introduce their study, highlighting key findings and implications for migration, identity, and social integration. Following these introductions, the session will transition into a guided discussion where attendees can ask questions, share insights, and contribute their perspectives. The roundtable will emphasize the collective inquiry methodology, fostering a participatory atmosphere that encourages diverse viewpoints and critical reflections on migration as both a challenge and an opportunity.

Key discussion themes will include:

- The role of transformative learning in migration experiences
- Cultural adaptation and resilience strategies
- The intersection of migration, gender, and professional identity
- The importance of shifting narratives from deficits to strengths
- The role of adult education in fostering cross-cultural understanding

The session will conclude with an open dialogue where participants collaboratively identify key takeaways and future research directions. By centering migrant voices and experiences, this roundtable aims to advance a more inclusive and informed discourse on migration's impact on individuals and societies.

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GENEVIEVE RITCHIE AND SARA CARPENTER:
Accessing post-secondary: markets, migration, and elided education

Keywords: migration, access, post-secondary education, neoliberalism, human capital

In much educational scholarship, access to postsecondary education is positioned as a panacea to a vast array of societal problems. In relation to the realities of forced displacement, post-secondary education is often seen as a way out, both spatially and in terms of the various material crises associated with displacement. Similarly, for many fleeing stagnated social conditions of deprivation or political conditions of repression, migrating through or for education appears as a means to seek freedom. In other words, migration plus education is assumed to create mobility, both transnational mobility and class mobility. Questions must be asked, however, about the relationship between education, migration, and mobility, specifically as the conflation of these realities may obscure more than it reveals. This roundtable utilizes Marxist feminist perspectives to offer discussion on the reconfiguration of the relationship between adult education and migrating peoples in the context of the neoliberalization of postsecondary education. Drawing from several different research projects utilizing historical and ethnographic methods as well as theorizing from research and policy literature, presenters will consider the extent to which non-governmental organizations, student volunteer programs, English language providers, immigration policy makers, and post-secondary institutions are hooked into the web of relationships reshaping the meaning and material realities of migration and education, particularly for peoples' migrating from the Global South. Through these investigations we will explore if the paths of mobility, access, and freedom offered through current market-based configurations of post-secondary education offer critical avenues for migrating peoples to make sense of their own lived experiences and utilize those experiences to understand forces of displacement.

Roundtable Format: This roundtable will proceed in a discussion-based format. The presenters will provide the group with a series of short presentations (~5 minutes) and provocations around the assumed relationship between migration and higher education, particularly for young adults from the Global South. Following each short presentation, the presenters will facilitate discussion and reflection amongst participants concerning how a more complicated narrative around accessing post-secondary education might inform future research.

PANELS

ERGÜN ÖZGÜR, BAHAR AYÇA OKÇUOĞLU, MUSTAFA ŞENER, GÜNEŞ KOÇ AND AYHAN KAYA: Critical contributions, transnational networks, political activism and continuous education: diasporas, immigrants and refugees

Keywords: diasporas-immigrants-refugees, transnational solidarity, critical participation, political activism, highly qualified Syrian Circassians, art-cultural resistance- education change.

The world is facing increasing displacement due to conflicts and wars, natural disasters, rising nationalism and authoritarianism. According to UNHCR (2024), the war in Syria (2011) has displaced around 12 million people. Turkey hosts 3 million, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon about 2 million, and about 1 million Syrian refugees are in Europe. In addition, the Russian invasion of Ukraine (2022) has created more than 6.7 million refugees, with around 6 million in Europe (UNHCR, 2024). Moreover, the growing number of refugees has become the focus of controversy and increasing nationalism in host countries such as Austria or Germany. On the other hand, the participation of refugees in receiving societies has been shaped by the arrangements in the host countries and by the efforts of refugees as agents with their artistic, academic, cultural, educational and political contributions.

This panel of four papers discusses diasporas, immigrants and refugees and aims to contribute to discussions on transnationalism and diasporic communities as spaces of educational practice, identity negotiation, self-empowerment and political participation. The first paper examines the question of performance, artistic engagement, the possibilities of resistance of post-migrant societies and their contribution to the plurality of public space and cultural change in Austria and Germany. The second paper focuses on the political activism of immigrants from Turkey and their political organisations, the struggles within these organisations and their contributions to German society. The last two papers focus on Syrian Circassian refugees, the first discussing the ‘double diaspora’ nature of Syrian Circassian refugees in Turkey, analysing individual and organisational diasporic identity transformations and transnational solidarity practices. The last paper focuses on the different refugee and participation experiences of highly qualified Syrian Circassians in Berlin and Amsterdam, examining the role of ethno-cultural and professional networks in their participation in host societies and their integration into the labour market, as well as the key challenges they faced.

Güneş Koç,: The Role of Art and Cultural Resistance in Post-Migration Societies

Keywords: Art, resistance, cultural change, post-migrant societies

In this paper, I want to discuss migration societies from the perspective of artists and cultural producers as agents of change. It will question the contribution of migrant artistic activism to public space as a deliberation of public space and argue how migrant artistic participation contributes to the plurality of public discourses against racism and transforms public discourses in terms of plurality in post-migration societies and cultural change. As Benedict Anderson (1991) states, art and cultural activities have the potential to effectuate a cultural change. The homogenous imagined community is challenged by immigrant art. Homi Bhabha (2004) claims that the artistic and cultural practices of immigrants and their descendants can initiate cultural change in these imagined communities. He argues: “Increasingly,

“national” cultures are being produced from the perspective of disenfranchised minorities” (2004, p. 8). Literature is one example of the migrant cultural contribution and also activism. The performative art is another example of migrant activism which contributes to the transformation of the space with critical participation of migrant communities. Examples can be seen in the literature and performance art of Feridun Zaimoglu. I will discuss with some examples from Austria and Germany the question of performance, cultural change, possibilities of resistance in the migrant and refugee artistic involvement.

Mustafa Şener: Forced Political Migration from Turkey to Germany: An Intergenerational Comparison

Keywords: Political migration, migrant organizations, Turkish political migrants, political activities, different generations

This presentation focuses on political migrants and refugees who have been forced to migrate from Turkey to Germany in waves since the 1960s. It analyses this migration in two periods (1970-90 and 2015-present) and identifies the similarities and differences between the experiences of different generations of political migrants. Although the individual and human vulnerabilities and difficulties experienced by these migrants and their strategies for survival in Germany are also the subject of the study, the presentation will focus primarily on the political lives and activities of these migrants in Germany. The basis of his study is an oral history with about 50 political migrants from different generations.

The main aim of this study is to go beyond treating migrants as objects of social policy or integration efforts, as is generally done in migration studies, and to try to understand their efforts to exist as 'political subjects' in their 'new country.' In order to uncover the social and political history of migrants, the focus will be on the political organizations they have established in Germany and the struggles they have waged within these organizations. The relationship of these migrant organizations with political and civil society organisations in Germany will also be examined.

Bahar Ayça Okçuoğlu, Double Diaspora Revisited: Syrian Circassians in Turkey

Keywords: Syrian Circassians, identity, diaspora, transnational solidarity

This research aims to analyse diasporic identity transformations and transnational solidarity practices in the context of the term “double diasporas” with their individual and organizational dimensions. In 2011, the civil war in Syria caused a significant displacement of the population, including Syrian Circassians, who dispersed to neighbouring countries. The research will provide insights into the experiences of displaced Syrian Circassians and the role of transnational solidarity connections in supporting their diasporic identity and cultural continuity. First, how Syrian Circassians, a diasporic community living in Turkey, construct and maintain their diasporic identity after forced displacement; and second, how transnational kinship ties provide solidarity for them; third, the role of Circassian civil society organizations in transnational solidarity. The unique value of the research will be to make theoretical and conceptual contributions to the literature on the concept of double diaspora, which has been the subject of limited research to date and has only been addressed through the return of diasporic communities to their homelands (Guo, 2016; Erciyes, 2008; Hang, 1995), by examining it through forced displacement again; and in doing so, to take Syrian Circassians as an empirical example.

Ergün Özgür: Highly-Qualified Syrian Circassian Refugees: Amsterdam and Berlin

Keywords: Highly qualified refugees, Syrian Circassians, Amsterdam-Berlin, transnational solidarity networks, participation.

Focusing on Syrian Circassian refugees, including academics, artists and journalists in Berlin and Amsterdam, this research argues that highly qualified refugees face several challenges in host countries, particularly in maintaining their professional status due to bureaucratic barriers and discrimination in the labour market (Özgür, 2022). It also argues that established ethnocultural and professional solidarity networks support the participation of highly qualified refugees in society and their labour market integration.

Based on focus group discussions and semi-structured qualitative interviews, the findings show that the different refugee 'integration' policies and practices in Berlin and Amsterdam significantly shape the participation of Syrian Circassians in these cities. Ethno-cultural and professional solidarity networks play a crucial role in their social participation, enabling them to overcome the challenges. On the other hand, issues such as bureaucratic delays in the recognition of qualifications, competitive market conditions and discriminatory practices hinder their successful integration into the labour market. These barriers, together with the proficiency of the host country's language, determine how effectively refugees can re-establish themselves professionally while participating in the host society and labour market.

MARÍA DO MAR CASTRO VARELA, MERAL APAK, MÜJGAN ŞENEL, ZAFER YILMAZ:
Exiled academics as parrhesiastes: a challenge to 'national' adult education

Keywords: exiled academics – parrhesia – authoritarianism – future of university - emancipation

The panel is composed by members of the research team “Sage SAGE! The establishment of system-relevant academization in a manner that is conducive to gender and diversity” and will examine the pivotal role of exiled scholars as “truth-tellers” or “parrhesiastes,” focusing on how their unique perspectives illuminate contemporary challenges, such as the rise of authoritarianism, through acts of speaking truth to power. Displaced intellectuals, often positioned outside mainstream discourse, question dominant narratives and ideologies by drawing on both personal experiences of displacement and their expertise in critical theoretical frameworks.

The discussion will highlight the courage and ethical commitments of exiled scholars, whose positions at the margins can enable them to offer radical critiques that challenge social and political norms. Exile, in this sense, not only amplifies their voices but also empowers them to provide transformative perspectives that might otherwise remain unseen within conventional academic settings.

Additionally, the panel will explore how the experiences of exiled scholars can enrich and challenge “national” adult education by introducing alternative viewpoints shaped by exile.

The theoretical contributions foster a more inclusive, reflective approach to education, encouraging critical thinking, empathy, and transcultural understanding among adult learners. The conversation will emphasize the potential of exiled intellectuals to reshape educational paradigms, broaden national discourses, and act as a powerful form of resistance against growing authoritarianism in Europe and beyond.

Meral Apak, Alice Salomon University of Applied Science Lost and Found in Exile:

Parrhesiastes and the Transformative Power of Meaning Amid Displacement

This presentation examines the psychosocial experiences of exiled scholars over the past decade, focusing on their personal struggles with political oppression in their home countries and systemic discrimination in host nations. Drawing on Viktor Frankl's existential psychology, particularly his concepts of “tragic optimism” and “finding meaning in suffering,” and supported by empirical research, it examines how these scholars turn adversity into a sense of purpose.

By navigating both structural obstacles and personal challenges, they demonstrate the potential to become catalysts for academic and societal transformation. This study highlights the complex interplay between individual resilience and the potential for systemic change (Victor Frankl).

María do Mar Castro Varela: Intellectual Exile, Secular Critic in Adult Education

The paper critically examines Edward Said's concepts of “intellectual exile” and “secular critic” in relation to the intellectual experience within a rather hostile academic environment. Said argues that the secular critic, while deeply aware of the demands and assumptions of the dominant culture, maintains a consciousness that remains vigilant and critically examines its flaws and blind spots. This critical distance allows the intellectual to resist ideological conformity, promoting a more expansive and inclusive understanding of truth.

Said's idea of the critic's "worldly self-situating" underscores the vital link between secularism and internationalism, highlighting how the secular perspective transcends national boundaries and cultural confines. Secularism, as he envisions it, becomes a powerful organizing framework for radical intellectualism—one that, in contrast to nationalism, embraces the transnational exchange and movement central to the experience of exilic displacement. This framework allows exiled intellectuals to critique the limitations of national narratives and to propose new, border-crossing approaches to knowledge and justice. By situating the critic within a global perspective, Said emphasizes that intellectual exile enables a unique vantage point that challenges parochialism, fostering instead a commitment to a more universally oriented critique that speaks to human rights and shared values across borders. This paper thus explores how the secular critic, through a consciously exilic lens, both embodies and advances a mode of intellectual engagement that resists the narrow constraints of nationalist ideology.

Müjgan Şenel: Freedom is always and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently

In 1918, Rosa Luxemburg critiqued systems of power with the declaration that “freedom is always and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently.” Her words serve as a call to critically examine democratically structured societies, questioning to what extent the freedom of dissenters is truly upheld across all areas of life. Democracies must, therefore, be scrutinized for their genuine commitment to inclusivity and tolerance, especially in their treatment of those with divergent views. The paper explores the role of exiled academics as political subjects who challenge the fundamental tenets of democracy, such as the freedom of dissent, even within their host countries. Detached from the label of mere “victims,” these individuals draw on their unique socio-political histories and experiences of forced migration to offer a critical perspective. By questioning whether foundational democratic values are genuinely upheld in practice, exiled scholars compel their host societies to re-evaluate the strength of their commitment to freedom and diversity. In doing so, they not only enrich the discourse on democracy but also test the boundaries of inclusivity within supposedly open societies and often unquestioned pedagogical approaches.

Zafer Yilmaz: Reintroducing Parrhesia in Academia: Exiled Scholars Challenging Despotic Academic Dispositifs

We are living in times marked by multiple crises and emergencies. The suppression of free speech, erosion of the rule of law, and the collapse of truth regimes accompany the global decline of representative liberal democracy. These overlapping crises create an environment conducive to the persecution and large-scale exile of academics. This presentation aims to examine the role of academics in relation to truth-telling during 'dark times,' such as the current interregnum period, in which "the old is dying but the new cannot be born" (Antonio Gramsci).

The focus will be on newly exiled academics and how this emerging group challenges the dominant academic power structures, the suppression of truth-telling, and explores the potential of these scholars in the context of the global decline of the public intellectual. Drawing on Foucault's concept of “parrhesia”, the presentation will discuss the new conditions for truth-telling, the courage to challenge recent authoritarian political and social backlashes, and the potential for new emancipatory ways of knowledge production among newly exiled academics.