

## **ESREA Migration, Transnationalism and Racisms network presents bimonthly zoominars**

The social and political developments in various parts of the contemporary world, have witnessed the resurgence of nationalist politics and intensification of hatred in the lives of societies. This phenomenon is accompanied by the growing vulnerability of groups and communities targeted by proponents of restricting trans-border movement of people, opposition to multiculturalism and construction of monolithic racial identities. Racism and other forms of xenophobia, anti-Muslim sentiments, blaming of and violence against refugees and other migrants, antisemitism – all these and related social dynamics have become an urgent international public issue.

We invite participants of varying perspectives and experiences, who are connected by a critical view of the abovementioned issues and by an involvement in efforts aimed at achieving more inclusive and more solidly democratic society. Our intention is to bring together individuals and teams for whom adult education and learning constitute crucial and critical factors in such efforts.

**The first zoominar: Oct 18, 2021, 4pm-5pm UK time (virtual)**

**Dr Sara Carpenter and Shirin Haghgou, *Anti-Colonial Teaching and Learning through Contradictions: Migration and Resettlement on Occupied Land***

### **ABSTRACT**

In the fall of 2018, we piloted an English Language Learning (ELL) course as part of a research project investigating the processes of migration, transition and re/settlement of young adults migrating to Toronto, Canada from conflict zones in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). A key finding of this research identified the lack of post-secondary level English language learning courses available to refugee young adults, which in turn created barriers for access to educational transitions. Keeping in mind Calls 93 and 94 of the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which focus on the resettlement of immigrants and the role that migration has played in the constitution of the Canadian nation-state and the subjugation of indigenous sovereignty, we aimed to develop an anti-colonial ELL curriculum at the post-secondary level that could explore questions of forced migration in relation to settler colonialism. This resulted in the development of a 10-week course built around a critical engagement with Canadian histories of colonialism.

This paper provides an overview and description of the project as well as initial findings from participant observation and participant interviews. While participants recognized the value of the curriculum, we have identified three ways in which participants navigated contradictions between forced migration and indigenous sovereignty. The first was their attachment to the notion of creating ‘equality’ for Indigenous people of Canada, and the participants’ own role in that process. The second was their inclination to rationalize Canada’s violent history through the process of victim-blaming. Lastly, we observed a process of hyper-individualization by the participants where questions around their own identity as either settler, refugee, or newcomer became salient, as well as notions of legality and choice as markers of differentiation and legitimation in their own process of migration.

In this paper our aim is to conceptualize our understanding of contradictions, as well as the contradictions that framed the course, dialectically and to understand how these contradictions are provoked and addressed pedagogically. To do this we draw heavily from Bertell Ollman’s theorization of a dialectical contradiction and interpret Paula Allmans’ theorization of critical consciousness and praxis for pedagogical processes. We argue that the ideologies and forms of contradictions our students struggled with through the course are not confined geographically or by populations, but are rather the central contradictions between settler colonialism and liberal democracy that all educative attempts at anti-racism work must address.

**Sara Carpenter** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Policy Studies at the University of Alberta, where she specializes in Adult, Community, & Higher Education. Her research examines the relationships between education, learning, and social change, with particular attention to community-based processes, social movements, and organizational change. She is co-author, with Shahrzad Mojab, of *Revolutionary Learning: Marxism, Feminism, & Knowledge* (2017, Pluto). Her most recent book is *The Ideology of Civic Engagement* (2021, SUNY Press).

**Shirin Haghgou** is a PhD student in the Adult Education and Community Development program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. Her research explores young refugee resettlement and de-radicalization policies and programs.