

**“ADULT LEARNING & COMMUNITIES IN A WORLD ON THE MOVE: BETWEEN NATIONAL TENSIONS AND TRANSNATIONAL CHALLENGES”**

UNIVERSITY OF LOWER SILESIA, FACULTY OF EDUCATION,  
WROCLAW, STRZEGOMSKA ST. 55

25TH – 27TH MAY, 2017

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**Refugee social movements campaigning and educating in asylum markets**

This paper is based on activist research ((Choudry and Kuyek 2012) and solidarity campaigning (Featherstone 2012) with asylum housing tenants in a South Yorkshire migrant and asylum rights organisation – SYMAAG (South Yorkshire Migration and Asylum Action Group), and recent research (2016) across the island of Ireland. Data has been collected from around seventy discussions with asylum tenants challenging their landlord G4S the largest security company in the world in Yorkshire, the North East of England, and in the East Midlands regions of the U.K. Interviews were held with Serco asylum tenants in Belfast and residents in Direct Provision centres in Dublin, Newbridge and Tralee. Further data has been gathered in SYMAAG campaigning and through discussions and interviews with NICRAS (Northern Ireland Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers), and Housing 4 All, in Belfast; and with Newbridge Asylum Seeker Support Group in Maynooth; and MASl (Movement of Asylum Seekers in Ireland) in Dublin.

Research, and popular adult education in SYMAAG, and in Irish refugee organisations has exposed the existence and scope of international asylum markets, where national reception policies for refugees are now dominated by ownership of housing and reception centres by private equity companies (Equistone Partners in London own contracts for all federal asylum housing and refugee centres in Switzerland, Austria and Southern Germany); and transnational corporations (G4S and Serco in U.K. manage detention centres and asylum housing and reception centres in the U.K. and AMOCO oil manages three Direct Provision centres in Ireland) Campaigning against G4S and against the commodification of refugees and their homes, has demonstrated that the activist research process<sup>1</sup> can itself become an integral part of a social movement educational process, rooted in community-based research, creating and mobilising 'really useful knowledge' for action by social movements in communities. This knowledge production is built on the notion that interviews, and group discussions with, and alongside, refugees and migrants, can not only be transformed into leaflets, posters for demonstrations, workshops, newsletters and websites but also can develop theory and knowledge to 'change the world' (see Bevington and Dixon 2004).

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<sup>1</sup> This paper reports on continuing research and earlier papers appeared as presentations to HSA (Housing Studies Association) Conference, York University U.K., 6-8 April 2016, International Conference on Migration, Irregularisation and Activism: Challenging Contemporary Border Regimes, Racism and Subordination 15-16 of June 2016, Malmö, Sweden, and in *Concept* vol 7 no 2. The Irish research has not previously been presented or published..

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