

# YOUNG MIGRANT WOMEN IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Promoting Integration  
and Mutual Understanding  
through Dialogue and Exchange**



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and Mutual Understanding  
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## INTRODUCTION

### **Background**

In recent years the issues of gender and migration have received more attention by scholars, researchers and policy makers in different national contexts as well as on an EU level. However, despite acknowledgement that gender matters, the experience of migrant girls in school still remains unexplored (Untlerhalter, E. 2007; Mirza, H.S 2009). Migrant girls, like migrant children, are left out of most policy frames for integration since they are either perceived as accompanying 'luggage' for migrating adults or offspring of migration itself, i.e. children born in the host country to migrant parents - or at least to one migrant parent. Within this context, the gendered aspects of educational experiences and outcomes of migrant children, and particularly young migrant women, remain under-analysed and under-theorised.

Policies developed for the integration of migrant children in schools usually recognise the fluid and multiple aspects of cultural and language identities, but less so the dynamic character of gender in relation to the transnational experience of migrants. Having abandoned past assimilation approaches, schools in many European countries now try to build integration or social cohesion policies and develop practices on the basis of respect for cultural diversity. However, gender mainstreaming is absent from such policies, practices and strategies.

### **The Project**

This book is the result of an 18-month research project entitled "Integration of Young Migrant Women in the Secondary Education: Promoting Integration and Mutual Understanding through Dialogue and Exchange". This project was funded by the European Fund for the Integration of Third Country Nationals of the European Commission and coordinated by the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS) in partnership with the Centre of Research in Theories and Practices that Overcome Inequalities (CREA) at the University of Barcelona, the Centre for Rights, Equalities and Social Justice (CRESJ) at the Institute of Education, University of London, the Department of Sociology at Panteion University, and the Euro- Mediterranean Centre for the Educational Research (EMCER) at the University of Malta.

The main objective of the project was to identify and understand how the intersection of gender and ethnic stereotyping produces forms of exclusion and marginalization as experienced by young migrant women in secondary education. The aim was to develop recommendations for policies and measures aimed at improving the quality of services and structures in the educational context and to recognize and respond to the different needs of young migrant women in the educational context.

The research aimed to address the gap between integration policy and the gendered negotiation of marginalisation and acculturation experienced by young migrant women in secondary education. It focused on gender as a key constitutive element of the displacement, settlement and integration experience, rather than as a simple variable in the study of migration flows or a subcategory under integration benchmarks.

To achieve this, the methodological framework used throughout the research period focused on intersectionality. Mirza and Metoo (Chapter 6) describe intersectionality as an evolving approach that is increasingly being applied to understand inequalities and identities. Intersectionality refers to aspects of identity and how they interact and affect equality. As Gregoriou and Christou explain in the chapter on Cyprus, “Intersectionality is a methodological framework that addresses the multiple, multi-sited and interlayered realities and social inequalities of migration as a gendered experience”. By examining the ways in which gender, race and nation intersect in migration contexts, researchers can map new forms of marginality as well as new positionalities for agency. The application of intersectionality in migration studies raises the need to rearticulate and re-emphasize the meaning of intersectionality beyond an additive understanding of marginalities and identities (as in “double-disadvantage”, “multiple jeopardy”, “triple oppression”, etc.).

The book compiles the results of the qualitative research implemented in all five partner countries. A case study approach was used with the aim to bring to the fore the voices and experiences of young migrant women within the educational context. Each chapter begins by providing an overview of the existing national educational policy context which was the starting point of the research study: to map the current policies that exist in the educational context in relation to the integration of young migrant women and to explore how these have been translated into practice. Interestingly, despite what one would expect, those countries with “more history on migration” and where gender equality is a seemingly a basic principle both in theory and practice (as for example the UK), we nevertheless see that questions are still being raised as to the extent to which the apparent commitment to gender, racial and ethnic equality is being translated into practice. Whereas practices of integration and multiculturalism have been “tried and tested” in the past and failed, as for example in the UK and Germany, in countries such as Spain, Cyprus, Malta, and Greece where it is claimed that the migration phenomenon is relatively new, these “failed strategies” are now being introduced. On the one hand, this makes one wonder why countries with “new” migratory phenomena have not consulted or cooperated with countries with a history of migration flows to see what has been successfully implemented or not. On the other hand, questions still remain unanswered in relation to policy frameworks

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such as integration, multiculturalism, assimilation, and social cohesion and whether the results of all these leads to the same common denominator: the exclusion and/or invisibility of migrant women.

The first introductory chapter discusses and exposes gender blindness in integration discourses and policies, but at the same time it also problematizes forms of gender awareness and gender rationality that obscure, as it is argued, the relevance of gender to integration. The following chapters include the results of the national policy reviews, methodologies used, a critical analysis of the results of national case studies, as well as recommendations for policy measures that recognize and respond to the different needs of young migrant women in secondary education and improve the quality of services and structures in this context.

The present book is an invaluable scholarly contribution to our understanding of complex issues relating to gender, migration, and integration, and will be of use to all those with a particular interest in this field whether in academia, civil society, or policy making. As project leader and on behalf of MIGS I would like to take this opportunity to warmly thank our project partners for their knowledge, commitment, and professionalism without which this publication would not have been possible. Special thanks are also extended to Christina McRoy and Carrie Rodomar at the University of Nicosia Press for their editorial support.

**Josie Christodoulou**

ZELIA GREGORIOU

# Questioning the location of gender in integration discourses and policies

## 1. Questioning the 'gender questions'

European Policy on integration has been marked by references to gender since its onset. These references, however, even though infused with normative inferences on the importance of gender equality and the need to take into account the unique situation of migrant women and children, they are vague and often theoretically incongruent and this makes difficult the gender mainstreaming of integration policies. Sometimes gender is invoked in relation to the civic content of orientation courses. For example, in the first edition of the Handbook on Integration (2004) it is stated that "orientation about gender equality and children's rights are important components of many programs" (p.17). Sometimes gender is invoked in relation to gender relations "in migrant communities" and there are serious discrepancies between stereotypical perceptions about migrant women and these women's actual situation. For example, in the Third (most recent) edition of the Handbook on Integration (2010) it is stated that:

*The stereotype of the immigrant woman as dependent and oppressed homemakers is not only a perception out-of-step with the current feminization of immigration flows, but in itself can create barriers to their participation in the labour market and social life. Information can be produced and disseminated about the diverse situations and profiles of immigrant women and the changing gender relations in migrant communities. The first step is providing more detailed statistics, taking gender questions into account. The next step is giving a voice and face to migrant women, both those who are empowered and those who are the victims of exploitation (p.62).*

What is never talked about when discussing gender, migrants and integration is the gender of integration policies, the gender structures of the institutions and arenas where integration programs are implemented, and the gender implications of concepts such as adjustment, acceptance, and effort. The theoretical blindness of the gender aspects of the Europeanization of immigrant integration perpetuates to a great extent the traditional gender blindness of theories of citizenship and rights. Our project has been premised, as the Handbook reckons, on the awareness that an essential step in integration is to give "voice and face to migrant women [and girls], both those who are empowered and those who are the victims of exploitation". Our findings suggest that asking questions and "giving voice" cannot be two successive steps

in a predetermined algorithmic process. The “gender questions [to be taken] into account” which the Handbook invokes cannot be considered as ‘given’. Instead, the “gender questions” need to be asked again.

In this introductory chapter we attempt to expose some kinds of gender blindness in integration discourses and policies, but also to problematize some other kinds of gender awareness and gender rationality that obscure, as we will argue, the relevance of gender to integration. We argue that the increased awareness in integration discourses that ‘gender matters’ is perpetuating three kinds of misconstrued assumptions:

- (a) that it is ‘the gender of migrants’ that matters and not the gender norms and structures of migration policies and migrant-receiving institutions and mechanisms;
- (b) that migrant women, and particularly girls, experience gender oppression in the form of containment by backwards ethnic cultures and top-down prohibitive power exercised in patriarchal migrant families by the [assumingly traditional] omnipotent *pater familias*, and not by the “headless body” of contemporary patriarchal capitalism (Hart, 2005);<sup>1</sup>
- (c) that gender equality is not an (ongoing) social struggle but a basic European value well ingrained in EU member states’ national values, (thus newcomers’ integration is supposed to instigate, along with the thinning of ethnic identifications, a process of transculturation amicable to gender equality).

## 2. Shifts in the gendering of EU integration discourse

With the development of a joint EU immigration policy, that was put on the agenda with the 1997 Amsterdam Treaty, inaugurated with the Tampere 1999 Council call for “a more vigorous integration policy” aiming at granting third country nationals rights and obligations “comparable to those of EU citizens”, and taking flesh through a series of Council Decisions, Communications, Ministerial Meetings, Handbooks etc., old national models of migrant incorporation appeared to recede against a new approach to migration policy. This new approach framed the management of migration flows and integration as inseparable processes and acknowledged difference-friendly multiculturalism as more attuned to the democratic liberal ideal and more conducive than cultural assimilation models towards producing social cohesion in diverse societies. This framing was based on the growing awareness that immigration to Europe was not just a historical phase and a horde of menacing albeit containable influxes but, instead, a continuous and highly needed force of biopower which, if managed well, would promote the economic rejuvenation of an aging Europe. The bonding of migration management with integration policies was originally received with enthusiasm by supporters of both multiculturalism and universal rights. It meant that extended residence qualified migrants for participation in integration programmes, legally enforceable protection from racial discrimination and labour exploitation, and for civic (including voting) rights. It meant that policies and measures regulating migrants’ *bios* and *life* would not evade EU and

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<sup>1</sup> This head-less, defused and defusing capitalism invests its extractive power in migrant biopower: through an “interior infrastructure” of service and servitude (Hart, 2005) that depends on the restructuring of the migrant family, the de-centering of its original organization around family life/time and its reorganization around patterns of multiple, flexible and universal labour [all family members are expected to work hard!], the decomposition of its endogenous ‘nurturing’ capital (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990; Lynch, 2007) and the reinvestment of the vision of growth and security into the children’s duty (more mildly imposed but, also, more relentlessly assumed in the case of daughters), to work hard, to strive against all odds, to do well in school and to succeed.

national laws by state of exception (Agamben, 1998, 2005), and that granting migrants rights was increasingly understood as a catalyst for integration.

This joint migration-and-integration policy, however, takes up a new meaning with the shift from a *social* to a *civic* framing of integration. As migrant receiving countries are beginning to transpose the Basic Principles of Integration into national laws on migrant naturalization, they have come to frame migrant integration (now re-articulated as competence in civic education and cultural assimilation) as a prerequisite for granting rights. A paradox that cuts across the rather celebratory appraisal of the shift from assimilation to integration and from cultural to civic integration from the mid-'90s up to the mid-'00s, is the gender blind nature of integration discourse as well as the de-gendered understanding of polity, rights, civic integration and social cohesion. Adopting the normative frameworks of transnational studies and world-level structures of human rights in his study of the incorporation and membership of guest-workers in the mid-90s, Yasemin Nuhoğlu Soysal challenges the predominant assumption that national citizenship is imperative to participation in polity. He argues that the recent guest-worker experience reflects a transition from the model of national citizenship to new new model of "postnational citizenship": "Postnational citizenship confers upon every person the right and duty of participation in the authority structures and public life of a polity, regardless of their historical or cultural Rights to that community" (Soysal, 1994, p. 3). This ultra-optimistic assessment of the transformative impact of postnational forces and structures on immigrant integration will be prevalent in the years to follow. Even as late as 2007, Christian Joppke deems that with immigrant integration coming increasingly "into the ambit of EC law" (Joppke, 2007, p.4), immigrants will enjoy equal participation and member states will abandon models based on cultural assimilation and segregation. Unlike Soysal, Joppke attributes this transformation to the force of EU legally binding policies and instruments rather than to transnational social forces:

*Only Europeanization explains why there is convergence in the new integration policies. Europe is burying the national models of old in two ways: through legal mandate and through cultural standardization. With respect to legal mandate, the entire migration function is slowly but steadily coming under the purview of European Community (EC) law (ibid, p. 4).*

With the exception of some reproving remarks on some "repressive variants of civic integration" in Switzerland, Joppke sustains an optimistic account of the Europeanization of integration, an account which is equally gender-blind to Soysal's vision of expanded "polity". Interestingly, Joppke cites as milestones in the area of immigrant integration the 2000 Race Directive, the 2003 Directive on the status of non-EU nationals who are long-term residents, and the November 2004 Council (of the European Union) Decision on Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU, but none of the milestones in the area of gender equality.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Some of these legislative instruments and policy documents are: Council Directive 76/207/EEC of 9 February 1976 (later consolidated in DIRECTIVE 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation), Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services, Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality, 2001-2005 (COM(2000) 335) and the Roadmap for Equality Between Women and Men 2006-2010 (COM(2006) 92).

As the feminization of immigration to Europe becomes increasingly acknowledged not only as a demographic fact but also as a socioeconomic condition that affects and is affected by gender regimes, any heralding of the integration turn of EU migration policy that remains blind to gender remains also blind to structures of inequality and exclusion. Persistent structural gender inequalities in Europe are less likely to be diagnosed, and even less likely to be linked to the gender politics of immigrant integration, as the pumping of cheap and flexible migrant care labour from the global south to Europe is easing the political pressure caused by the dismantling of the social state and helping recuperate the gender division of labour. Critical studies of migration and integration cannot afford to maintain a gender-blind vision of citizenship. With restrictive policies on immigrant citizenship rights bolstering racilogies (Gilroy, 2005) of unskilled female labour and producing millions of female denizens across Europe (Agamben, 2005),<sup>3</sup> a gender indifferent theorization of polity and immigrant integration risks rendering invisible and, further, naturalizing exclusions. This is why recent theorizations of the “public ethic of care”<sup>4</sup> become indispensable both in debunking invisible gender inequalities and in gendering the analysis and assessment of migrant integration, citizenship politics and school integration.

The feminization of immigration does not just mean that women are now migrating autonomously in greater numbers than what they did before, or that there are more female migrants than male migrants, or that the increase of female migrants has induced the social vulnerability of migrants and intensified the need for special attention to migrant marginality (with women being cited in parataxis next to children as the most vulnerable in most EU policy documents on integration), or that there are more immigrant children in schools now than before, or that there are now scarved girls in schools across Europe. Feminization of migration means that the structures of gender inequality themselves are changing. This change is not of an additive nature. As we argue in this chapter, migration control policies and integration regimes are changing the way gender exclusion intersects with migrant status, race, class, sexuality, etc, both in relation to the precariousness of migrants, as well as in relation to the patriarchal outlook of the state and state institutions, even institutions like schools that appear to take up the burden of receptivity and to extend to others’ children the gift of acceptance.

Communications from the Commission and Council decisions on issues of integration that followed the Tampere mandate have drawn attention to the many different categories of migrants to be targeted by integration policies,<sup>5</sup> with “women and children” being the most

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3 “Denizens” is a neologism used by Giorgio Agamben to refer to the “permanently resident mass of non-citizens” who though they reside within the nation state they do not enjoy rights of protection and constitutional political participation (Agamben, 2000, p. 23). Agamben argues that, as a neologism, “denizens” “has the merit of showing how the concept of citizen is no longer adequate for describing the socio-political reality of modern states” (ibid., 23).

4 Eva Kittay has argued that a fully adequate conception of justice requires better, more reliable structures that offer more options to people with “dependency responsibilities” and entitles the women who do the caring labour for wages for a far better treatment than they currently receive. Eva Kittay, along with others (Bubeck, 1995; Fineman, 1995; Fraser, 1997; Kittay, 1999), stress the importance of “a public ethic of care,” one in which “the obligation to care for dependents and to properly support those women who engage in the work of care is recognized as a shared social responsibility” (Kittay 2008, p. 139). Such a conception of justice implicates a radical restructuring of the policies regulating female migration to Europe, not limited to the recognition and rights of migrant carers, but also extending to care for the carers and care for migrants’ children.

5 In COM(2000) 757, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament

frequently cited case of a vulnerable group. These references are usually general, without the nature of this vulnerability ever being analyzed. Is this a socially or a culturally based vulnerability? Does it have to do with these women and children's ethnic/race origin, their new socioeconomic status, or the structures of the migrant family? Or, does this vulnerability have to do with structures of inequality and hegemonies already operating in the receiving societies and institutions (with schools not constituting exceptional settings)? One of the few policy documents to elaborate on this vulnerability is COM(2003) 336 on Immigration, Integration and Employment, which devotes a separate section (Section 3.5.2) on gender. We cite this section at length as it illustrates what we consider to be the major fault of gender aware framings of integration policy. First, discrimination and exclusion are assumed to result from the intersection of *their* [i.e., migrants'] gender norms with [*their*] ethnicity and not from the intersection of migrant status with structures of gender inequality which are already in place in the receiving society; and second, the intersecting of gender with ethnicity is located in the private domain of the migrant family (where traditional values and ethnic patriarchies are assumed to operate) and not in public locations of intercultural interaction:

### 3.5.2 Gender issues

*Another important category is that of **women** [bold in the original] bearing in mind that nearly half the immigrants entering the EU every year are now female and that an increasing percentage are coming in their own right to work, many as nurses or in the caring professions or as domestic servants. Immigrant women may suffer from double discrimination due to their gender as well as to their ethnic origin. Special attention is therefore needed to ensure equal access to the labour market and adequate education and training and in particular access to lifelong learning. Language learning, awareness of human, civic and social rights, including norms and values in the host society as well as training for new skills and competences are essential tools for integrating both men and women. This is particularly important for women, given their role as carriers of cultural traditions in the family and their ability to influence future generations.*

*Even though the role of the **family** [bold in the original] varies from one culture to another, it generally plays a central role in the integration process as it represents a fixed point of reference for immigrants in the new host country. Family reunification with the nuclear family is a key tool in this respect. It is mainly women who benefit from family reunification arrangements and as a consequence are often depending on a family member with respect to their residence status. They may have difficulty obtaining a job, which may result in them moving into the informal sector. For this reason the Directive on family reunification provides that women have access to the labour market and, if they are in a particularly difficult situation, are granted an independent residence status (European Commission, 2003, p. 25).*

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on a Community Immigration Policy, the Commission draws attention to the many different categories of immigrants to be targeted by integration policies. COM(2001) 387, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on an open method of coordination for the community immigration policy recommends that Member States “promote the social integration of women and men at risk of facing persistent poverty because they belong to a group experiencing particular integration problems” (European Commission, 2001, p. 5). COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 2003/86/EC of 22 September 2003 on the Right to Family Reunification states that: “The right to family reunification should be exercised in proper compliance with the values and principles recognised by the Member States, in particular with respect to the rights of women and of children; such compliance justifies the possible taking of restrictive measures against applications for family reunification of polygamous households” (p. 11).

While the reference to migrant women's "double discrimination" appears to bring intersectionality into the analysis of exclusion, the intersection of gender with ethnicity is understood as an additive process of ethnicization, with both structural and political intersectionality being obscured.<sup>6</sup> In other words, "double discrimination" is attributed to what immigrant women bring with them from countries of origin and what they [continue to] owe to ethnic traditions and patriarchies and not explained in relation to the structures of inequality and patterns of subordination and precariousness in migrant experiences. In other words, gender is perceived as the forefront of ethnicity and the organizing axis of the newcomers' cultural identity and not as a matter of social structures and patterns of exclusion which are endemic to the precariousness of migrants' legal status. On the one hand, female migrants as gendered beings are framed as both symbols and carriers of cultural identity. On the other hand, as wives and mothers they are framed as catalysts for integration and anchors of social cohesion since they are considered to provide the reproductive labour that keeps the nuclear immigrant family together.

### 3. The cultural turn in civic integration policy frames

Putting the gendering of integration policies in a chronological perspective, we could say that from the 1999 Tampere Council to the two major Council Directives in 2003 (Council Directive 2003/86/EC on the right to family reunification and Council Directive 2003/109/EC concerning the status of third-country nationals who are long-term residents), integration policies remain, at large, de-gendered, with women being occasionally cited as beneficiaries of integration policies (particularly with regards to the Directive on family reunification) and as a vulnerable group in need of extra attention. Ethnic gender values about women's place are diagnosed as barriers to women's participation in the labour market and the negative impact of gender (ethnic women's gender) on integration is assessed though the normative framework of participation in the workplace, social cohesion, and equal rights (which is the guiding principle of the Tampere mandate). It is the gender of migrant women that matters, and it matters in relation to *their* social and labour participation.

The codification of "the common principles on integration" by the JHA Council on 19 November 2004 will be considered a landmark in integration policy and will be heavily cited in policy documents to follow since, including the Handbook on Integration, Calls for Actions under the European Integration Fund, etc.<sup>7</sup> It is debatable, however, whether the interrelationship between migration and integration is still defined within the spirit of the Tampere mandate

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6 In explaining the intersectionality of race and gender with regards to domestic violence, Kimberle Crenshaw (1991) describes how both legal frameworks and cultural barriers, related to immigrant life and immigrant legal status correspondingly, obstruct immigrant women from reporting or escaping battering situations. With The marriage fraud provisions of the Act defining "properly" married for two years as a basic condition for applying for permanent resident status, many immigrant women are reluctant to leave even the most abusive of partners for fear of being deported: "When faced with the choice between protection from their batterers and protection against deportation, many immigrant women chose the latter" (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1247). To illustrate the nature of cultural barriers she cites Hodgkin's (1991) description of migrant women living in an extended family where several generations live together, without privacy on the telephone, no opportunity to leave the house and no understanding of public phones.

7 The Common Basic Principles on Integration (CBP) were adopted by the Justice and Home Affairs Council on 19 November 2004 (2618th Council Meeting).

or within the post 9/11 securitization framework which was augmented by the Hague Program. The presidency conclusions of the Brussels Council of 8 December 2004 mirror a securitization alert: “The security of the European Union and its Member States has acquired a new urgency, especially in the light of the terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September 2001 and in Madrid on 11 March 2004” (Council of the European Union, 2004, p. 4).

The Tampere motto that integration starts simultaneously with migration (even with pre-departure programs) was perhaps meant as a preventive measure against the social and economic marginalization of migrants. It meant that no migrant would be excluded from integration measures. With the transposition of integration policy into national laws, however, the fusion of migration and integration became operationalized as a state machine for migrant deterrence and a means for reclaiming national identity. It now means that no migrant will be offered hospitality and considered loyal and benign unless he/she is integrated first. It also means that non-integration, non-integratability and unwillingness to integrate acquire an ontological (*quasi* cultural) status and provide the grounds for declaring multiculturalism’s inefficiency and justifying restrictive measures. Joppke (2010), although debunking both “minimalist” and “maximalist” objections’ to the new citizenship tests in Europe, codifies most poignantly this overturn of policy frames: “Indeed, a key characteristic of the new civic integration policy, of which citizenship tests are but the logical tail-end, is to fuse immigrant integration and immigration control concerns, which so far had been neatly divided up into two separate policies” (Joppke, 2010). The “Common Principles on Integration”, so heavily cited as normative pillars of a legally binding EU framing of integration, now start to take up a different meaning. Even though the “Basic Principles” are cited in the Hague Programme, two crucial principles are left out:

*Principle 5. Efforts in education are critical to preparing immigrants, and particularly their descendants, to be more successful and more active participants in society.*

*Principle 9. The participation of immigrants in the democratic process and in the formulation of integration policies and measures, especially at the local level, supports their integration.*

Even more crucial than this omission is the change in the interpretation of the “Basic Principles”. Taking Principle One, for example, we can see how normative readings and uses change as the original pronouncements are put into policies and institutional mechanisms. Principle One states that: “Integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States”. In its 19 November 2004 Decision, the EU Council elaborates that integration “is a dynamic, long-term, and continuous two-way process of mutual accommodation, not a static outcome” (Justice Home Affairs Council, 2004, p. 19). It involves “adaptation” by immigrants and provision of opportunities by the receiving society “for the immigrants’ full economic, social, cultural, and political participation”. In this context, “mutual” means that there are two partners involved and that the process of integration affects both. By the end of the decade, however, the articulation of “mutuality” will be modified. “Two way” does not refer to the involvement and interaction of the “two” partners (i.e., immigrants and receiving society) and to the over-determined nature of the process, but to the double role immigrants (now framed as the sole actor in integration policies) are expected to carry out so that the outcome (of integration) will be controlled, i.e. national identity will not be changed. Mutuality is re-construed as a contractual ‘give and take’ condition: *they* must work hard, show *they* are trying hard to belong, proof *their* national fitness and take back some (or some kind of) citizenship rights. Integration is now framed not as a process but as an outcome. Accordingly, the relation

between integration and citizenship attribution also changes: citizenship rights are meant as a reward for successful integration. As Theodora Kostakopoulou poignantly puts it, citizenship is not a right but something to be earned:

*Western European governments require that migrants make an effort to learn the language of the host state, its values, traditions, history and ways of life, attend courses and pay for them, take part in official examinations and engage in voluntary work in order to obtain secure residence status and naturalisation. Citizenship, allegedly, must be 'earned' and immigrants are willing to work hard and 'integrate', they will succeed (Kostakopoulou, 2010, p. 935).*

Probationary citizenship,<sup>8</sup> integration requirements<sup>9</sup> and integration contracts<sup>10</sup> are cited by many authors as examples of this new approach. Not only is the meaning of integration shifting from process to achievement but in addition, as Kostakopoulou notes, responsibility for attaining integration is shifting from the system or the country of settlement to the individual.<sup>11</sup>

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8 For a critical discussion of the progression from temporary residence to probationary citizenship in UK and particularly with regards to the concretization of the idea of probationary citizenship in Home Office documents “The Path to Citizenship: Next Steps in Reforming the Immigration System” (2008) and “Tough New Points System for Earning Citizenship” (2009), see D. Kostakopoulou, Dora (2010b) ‘Matters of Control: Integration Tests, Naturalisation Reform and Probationary Citizenship in the United Kingdom’, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 5, pp. 829-846.

9 As Kostakopoulou (2010a) points out, integration requirements are not confined to naturalisation but are also associated, variously, across EU, with entry and/or permanent residence (Netherlands, Austria, UK, Germany, Denmark, France and recently Luxembourg), family reunification (Netherlands, Germany, France, Denmark) and access to social benefits (Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, France and UK). Vink and de Groot (2010) also note that integration was always “measured” in West European countries, but now measurement takes up a more formal character, with formal exams and ‘citizenship ceremonies’ highlighting a “broader ‘thickening’ of citizenship” (p. 726). Finally, Goodman’s comparative analysis of civic integration requirements in EU countries shows that differences between traditionally assimilationist national models (integration requirements being used as a deterrence factor) and multiculturalist national models (integration requirements being used as an enabling condition) tend to thin out as contractual integration emerges as a more dominant model (France and UK, for example, who used to be considered exemplary cases of these opposite traditions, are now grouped, together with Netherlands, in the contractual integration cluster of states). With integration requirements increasingly taking up increasingly a deterrent character (sometime even as a discriminatory device for screening migrants on grounds of origin), integration policy becomes re-oriented to the strategic goal of “controlling the inflow and impact of immigration” rather than combating discrimination and social marginalization. Like Kostakopoulou, Sara Wallace Goodman also argues that integration requirements might have the opposite effect: “This is where civic integration requirements have the reverse intent of actual integration; obligatory requirements, by definition, vet and exclude applicants” (Goodman, 2010, p. 767)

10 Goodman refers to all these as “civil hardware”: “To promote civic skills and value commitments for newcomers, governments have put into place a variety of requirements or ‘civic hardware’, including integration contracts, classes, tests and ceremonies (Goodman, 2010, p. 754).

11 The test-based approach to integration become more prevalent as the Council Directives on Immigrant Resident and Family Reunification had to be transposed into national migration laws, and rules and regulations. Immigrants are required to pay tuition for Language and civic education courses required for long-term residence acquisition in the Netherlands, France, Germany, Denmark, Luxembourg and the UK (Kostakopoulou, 2010a). Vink and de Groot (2010) present a more mixed picture concerning naturalization fees. According to these authors, whereas Belgium (2000), France (2000) and Luxembourg (2001) abolished the fees for naturalisation altogether, there was a considerable increase of costs in the Nether-

#### 4. Unpacking the centrality of the veil debate/s; or, how the gendering of integration veils structural gender inequalities

The shift from social inclusion to civic integration is closely linked with the gendering of integration policy. Adherence to traditional ethnic gender norms and patriarchal values is increasingly delimited as a zone of incommensurability between ethnicization and the ‘thinning’ of national identity, cultural affinities and individual autonomy, resistance to integration and adherence to ‘common values’. At the same time, migrants’ belief in gender equality is becoming deployed as a testable terrain of civic competence, national fidelity and adherence to European values. As in the post-Hague approach to the overall management of migration (with a shift from combating structural problems of migrant unemployment and discrimination to individualizing integration), the gendering of integration takes up a dual culturalist *and* individualistic turn.

The Netherlands and Germany, both among the EU countries to enact stricter socio-cultural integration requirements for naturalisation and to frame citizenship rights as a reward for integration (Ersanilli and Koopmans, 2010), are the two national cases most critically discussed as examples of the gendering of civic integration (Korteweg 2005; Roggeband and Verloo 2007; Saharso and Letting 2008). From the perspective of our project, it is important to understand the ideologies and mechanisms of this kind of gendering and to explore whether gendering takes the same form in the countries participating in our project. In the case of Germany and Switzerland, gendered ethnicity, particularly perceived as backwardness and traditionalism, is over-diagnosed as a cause for non-integration whereas gendered raciology<sup>12</sup> in the economy and patterns of subordination in the lives of migrant women and girls are rendered inconsequential. Immigrant gender codes and their presumed incompatibility with gender equality values are framed as crucial, not only with regards to migrants’ cultural affinity with patriarchal cultures and the ethnicization of the resistance to emancipation, but also with regards to “our”, i.e. European and national, common values. Women’s emancipation is re-signified from a frame of social policy for gender equality to a national value and treated as a long-ago established principle of social order and, *vice-versa*, perceived differences between immigrant and national gender values are treated as dangerous for sustaining European values and as potential axes of recalcitrant ethnic resistance to integration (the veil case constitutes the paradigmatic example of this gendering of civic integration).

Anna Korteweg (2005, 2006), one of the first sociologists to debunk the gender aspects of integration management in Dutch society, elaborates how language and cultural competency requirements for new immigrants are informed by the belief that “gender differences are a major obstacle to immigrants’ ability to integrate into Dutch society” (p. 2).<sup>13</sup> She further

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lands in 2003 and Austria in 2006, particularly because applicants must now also pay for their integration and language tests. (Vink and de Groot’s data seem to be older than Kostakopoulou’s.)

12 For a use of the concept of “raciology” to expose the neoliberal rationality of multiculturalism and the integration agenda see Jodi Melamed (2006) ‘The Spirit of Neoliberalism: From Racial Liberalism to Neoliberal Multiculturalism’, *Social Text* 89, Vol. 24, No. 4, pp. 1-24 and Alana Lentin (2008) ‘Europe and the Silence about Race’, *European Journal of Social Theory*, Vol. 11, No. 4, pp. 487–503.

13 According to Korteweg (2005), current proposals for civic competency requirements require that non-Western immigrants (predominantly from Morocco and Turkey) pass an exam testing Dutch language skills and knowledge of Dutch culture before obtaining an entry permit to the Netherlands. The video provided by the Dutch government to acquaint these prospective immigrants with Dutch culture includes

argues that perceived differences in gendered practices between Muslim immigrants and non-immigrant Dutch are at the core of the battle over integration that is currently being played out in the Netherlands: “In the end, the way gender differences are currently managed by the highest level of policy makers seems to reinforce perceptions of the gendered practices of minority women and girls (as well as men and boys) that have given rise to calls for strong forms of assimilation” (Korteweg, 2005, pp. 23-24).

In a more recent article, Conny Roggeband and Mieke Verloo (2007) problematize the exclusive focus on immigrant women in Dutch society and the convergence of policy frames for immigrant integration with the policy frames for the “emancipation of immigrant women.” They argue that the intertwining of these two policy shifts, of the gendering of integration policy and the ethnicization of gender equality policies, entails ramifications not only for migration policy but also for gender equality policy in Dutch society at large. They note that, on the one hand, the gendering of integration policy is combined with a reframing of problem diagnosis, from a problem of structural inequality to a cultural problem of irreducible differences:

*Unequal gender relations in minority groups (particularly among Muslims) are now seen as a core problem, demonstrating the ‘backward’ character of Islam and the gap between the ‘modern’ Dutch culture and the imported culture of immigrants. This problem is principally located in men and a negative masculine culture. Contradictions prevail when it comes to women. Migrant women are not only represented as victims of this misogynous culture, but – surprisingly – also as the principal key to solving problems of integration and emancipation (Roggeband and Verloo, 2007, p. 272).*

On the other hand, this cultural turn is combined with an overall neo-liberal restructuring of integration policy, with cultural assimilation considered as the condition for, and individual effort the means to, integration. This not only hides structural problems related to immigrants such as discrimination and unemployment but changes, retrospectively, the historical outlook of decades of struggles for gender equality in Dutch society. As the authors point out, emancipation was the result of structural reform and communal action and not the accomplishment of (or reward to) individual effort, and retrospective neoliberal reconstructions of social movements and social change have a legitimizing effect on the abandonment from social responsibility, both with regards to immigrant empowerment and the ongoing process of gender equality.

One of the questions we have been asking in analyzing our data is whether this kind of gendering also characterizes school integration policies and whether such a gendering of integration is also intertwined with the ethnicization of equality policies. The debate on the use of the veil by Muslim girls in schools has definitely been a persistent one in several EU countries, re-igniting questions on migrant integration and the limits of multiculturalism in public discussion. Debates about head and body covering of Muslim women in public space have emerged not only in relation to schools but also other institutions, such as the civil service and the courts. The 1994 French ban on the use of the headscarf in public schools<sup>14</sup> reiterated the

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pictures of topless women sunbathing as an example of Dutch gender practices.

<sup>14</sup> The debate on the use of the headscarf in public school has been a hot issue in France since 1989. On March 15 2004, the French government passed a law prohibiting the wearing of garments that represent ‘conspicuous signs’ of religious affiliation in public schools. The government was careful in phrasing the law in a way that ethnic profiling was avoided (no words like burqa or hijab were used and the term ‘conspicuous

idea that the headscarf symbolizes Muslim women's oppression and framed the female body as a symbolic territory where ethnicization and integration are played out as oppositional and incommensurable. The French debate on the headscarf, however, is not exclusively French anymore. Even though the French ideal of *laïcité* (which was claimed to be at risk by the use of the head-headscarf in the original debate) is historically linked with the French version of republicanism, the headscarf debate is spreading and becoming re-enacted across many different national contexts in Europe. This raises two questions. First, how do we understand the generalizability and persistency of this 'debate'? Second, what are the repercussions of this debate for educational policy and educational research?

The headscarf debate, as the term "debate" suggests, promotes a polarized way of thinking on migrant/ethnic students: Are they integrated or do they maintain their religious cultural affiliations? Are they willing to integrate or not? The perceived particularity of the head-scarf as a female garment (on/off switch: you wear it or you do not wear it; you are covered or you are not covered; you are oppressed or you are liberated) misconstrues the girls' participation in multiple cultures and their ability to negotiate the symbolic 'tests' for fidelity to both school's and society's rules. The salience and recurrence of this controversy has had another kind of inaugural effect in education, specifically with regards to the theory and methodology of educational research on migration, ethnicity and education. It has established the headscarf controversy as the *paradigmatic example* of how gender and ethnicity intersect in the lives of female migrant students in Europe. As with the ethnicization of gender equality policies in Dutch society (Roggeband and Verloo, 2007), the debate on the admissibility of the head-scarf in the public school has normalized the idea that the origins of gender violence in the lives of young Muslim girls are cultural and not structural.<sup>15</sup>

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signs' of religion was used instead; the latter applied to Moslem scarves in as much as it applied to other religious garments such as Jewish skullcaps and Sikh turbans. Many analysts however argue the law was designed primarily to target Muslim girls wearing headscarves (Bowen, 2007; Scott, 2007).

15 For a survey on public debates and regulations of the wearing of the hijab in public schools in France Belgium, Netherlands, Sweden, UK, Germany and Ireland see J. Césari et al (2004) 'Islam and Fundamental Rights in Europe', final report. Brussels: European Commission, Directorate-General Justice and Home Affairs.

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# The Dubious Gift/Debt of Integration: Patriarchal Regimes, Ethnicity and Sexuality in the School Lives of Migrant Girls in Cyprus

## 1. Introduction

This national case study on school integration policies and the school lives of migrant girls takes place at a time when both migrant integration and gender equality are undergoing crucial political, conceptual and policy related restructuring.

As argued in the introductory chapter, the social responsibility of integration is becoming increasingly individualized as migrants' duty, with the genderization of ethnicity intensifying neo-colonial perceptions of migrant women and girls as oppressed by backward cultures and rendering invisible structurally embedded patterns of subordination in the school lives of migrant girls. Whereas integration was originally framed as the catalyst for promoting social inclusion and rights for migrants, today many EU Member States implement civic integration policies as deterrence measures against migration. The principle of a "two way mutual process" of integration is also redefined in being transposed from a political principle to a policy principle. It does not refer to a mutual relation between two actors, or two sides (a formulation that despite its polarized simplicity would still reflect the agonistic nature of politics) but to a contractual condition that binds migrants to various technologies of control, including: the individualization of the responsibility to become integrated and the prolongation of the ambivalent status of the integrated migrant (neither citizen nor foreigner but a beneficiary who has to exhibit evidence of integratable-ness).

Policy frame shifts in integration are accompanied by changes in gender equality policy, more specifically, the shift from equal treatment and equal opportunity policies to gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming is fundamentally transforming. The purpose of gender equality policies is not to slot women into existing organizations (in our case, migrant girls into secondary education) but to change the nature of organizations (i.e., schools) and the process of policy making to effect social change from below and from within. Yet, in the case of Cyprus, the absence of expertise from previous social movements or equality

programs renders the implementation of gender mainstreaming and, especially, the gender analysis of policies, susceptible to relapses of essentialist gender thinking. Introducing gender mainstreaming to school policies for migrant student integration stumbles onto another problem: the focus on the culture of 'others' and the cultural interpretation of conflict and exclusion has compromised the ability to think about the workings of gender in mainstream school policies and school settings and arenas.

In our study we examine how the conditionality of integration and the culturalism of gender inequality are played out in the conceptualization and implementation of integration policies for migrant female students. Because access to education is considered a fundamental (i.e., non-negotiable, unconditional) right for every child, one would assume that the neoliberal restructuring of migrant integration would not apply to migrant students' school rights, or at least not to rights of access. Our research, however, shows that integration policies and measures as designed and implemented in Cypriot schools, have multiple results and effects. Primarily, they convert foreign students ("*allóglissoi*") into integrated migrant students. However, in pursuing this, integration mechanisms and policies have another impact: they produce a new kind of student, or, to frame this in more philosophical terms, a new student subject: the migrant student. In the process of becoming integrated, integration's migrant subject becomes subjectable to conditions of precarity and negotiation, fear and desire, that compromise her freedom to confront gender violence and her right to have rights.

From the official viewpoint of policy makers, integration consists of promoting Greek language competence and mainstreaming migrant students as flexibly as possible within the regular classroom and regular school life. Our theoretical and methodological framework unpacks this binary framing of foreignness-integration as distinct and developmentally arrayed states of cultural transformation, desegregation and learning competence. We trace migrant girls' multiple itineraries of migration and resettlement, including those taking place in their school lives, inside and around school, and focus on both states of precarity and states of transformation that occur as these girls negotiate their burden of otherness with 'integration'.

In doing research on exclusion and empowerment in the school lives of migrant girls we came to realize that in a post-intercultural education epoch, as researchers and teachers we need to re-educate ourselves on how culture, gender, race and power operate at a macro- and a micro level. Furthermore, we need to understand how migrant girls' experiences of racism and gender violence underpin processes of gender identity formation and recognize that ethnicity is contemporaneous with social exclusion and not its antecedent or its cause.. Schools are inscribed by structures of gender inequality and patriarchal regimes of thought and it becomes difficult to unpack any of these when gendered forms of migrant student subordination (or insubordination) are normalized through culturalist interpretations. Finally, we need to examine how migrant girls pursue or disavow the dream of success by negotiating the gendered burden (or refuge) of ethnicity with the fashioning of an integrated or non-integrated, loyal or defiant new self.

## **2. Integrating integration in the Cypriot Public Schools: the national context**

Up until the early 1970s, Cyprus was a country of emigration with an important number of its inhabitants migrating (mostly to the UK but also to other destinations) for better work opportunities, a phenomenon that continued after the ethnic clashes and the Turkish invasion and occupation of 1974. Regular migration flows of migrant workers into Cyprus

began during the 1980s and 1990s and were the result of the Cyprus government's attempt to address national shortages in a number of employment sectors (Zervidou, 2008). It is important however to note that because migration at this initial stage was perceived by the state as something temporary (addressing current shortages), the newly formed migration policies facilitated only short-term employment and permits for migrants. This initial accommodation of the phenomenon of migration into Cyprus did not seem to translate into policy measures for long-term permits and more comprehensive social, political and labour rights for migrants until after 2004, when processes for accession into EU were intensified and the Cyprus government had to align its legislation to EU directives (Country Report Cyprus on Migration and Asylum, 2003). Despite this alignment, policies that were implemented in relation to migration continued to frame the latter as a temporary phenomenon and therefore justifying the failure to introduce a wide-ranging integration policy for migrants residing in the country. Furthermore, issues such as the inclusion and equal treatment of minorities, migrants, women and other disadvantaged groups were for years treated as marginal issues in all social policy sectors including education, due to the dominance of the 'national question', e.g., the ethnic relations between Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

In Cypriot schools the phenomenon of multiculturalism was first acknowledged in the years 2001-2002 with a Circular (2002) sent to primary schools entitled 'Intercultural Education'. The provisions in this circular 'accommodated' the intercultural element of the school population by envisioning the provision of language support to non-speakers of Greek and measures 'for the smooth integration of other-language children' (this particular phrase was adopted in many of the following official documents on the subject). In the initial stage, the need to form educational policies to deal with this phenomenon was described in a rather derogative manner categorizing 'multiculturalism' within a historical discourse of 'victimhood' and 'suffering' where Cyprus is seen as an island that 'suffered' many misfortunes in the past and is now called upon once more to deal with another 'problem' despite its overloaded 'historical past'.

Placing multiculturalism within such a historical framing provides for a clear distinction between 'us', the national population of Cyprus, and 'them', the immigrants, which corresponds to binary and monolithic divisions often made in Cypriot education and teaching, for which the educational system has been heavily criticized (Committee for Educational Reform, 2004, Spyrou, 2000). At the same time these monolithic divisions overshadow more subtle differentiations within these groupings relating for example to gender and class, thus rendering them invisible or inconsequential.

In relation to the us/them distinction, the new measures adopted to accommodate the needs of non-indigenous/migrant students referred to the latter as *alloglossoi* (speakers of another language), a fact that to a large extent outlined intercultural education mainly as the teaching of Greek as a second language. As indicated in previous research, the emphasis given to the *otherness* of the students pointed to a deficiency on their part that must be amended in order for them to fit in with the general ethnic school population (Angelides *et al*, 2004; Panayiotopoulos and Nicolaidou, 2007). For this reason, intercultural education policies have been largely restricted to the linguistic 'needs' of migrant students. Thus, as has been argued elsewhere, cultural difference is perceived not as a social condition but rather as a migrant condition and as a result educational policy has been limited to providing language support and accommodating 'the need of intercultural awareness' (mainly understood in terms of being acquainted with the culture of the other) while refraining from undertaking action to address structural racism and inequality (Gregoriou, 2009).

Consequently, from 2002 to 2008, when ‘intercultural dialogue’ was set as a yearly goal for the school years 2007 to 2009, ‘multiculturalism’ shifted from being an addition to Cyprus’s many sufferings to a reason for celebration because of its contribution to cultural diversity in Cypriot society. However, emphasis was placed more on the cultural aspect related to the various migrant communities inhabiting in Cyprus, rather than challenging racial perceptions and understandings of the whole school population. This emphasis is illustrated in the main aims included in the Action Plan of the Cypriot Ministry for Education and Culture (Moec) for the years of Intercultural Dialogue which refer to ‘enhancing the knowledge and understanding of the cultural characteristics of others’ and ‘developing social skills relevant to diversity and enhancement of the understanding of various civilizations’(Moec, 2008: 134). This type of emphasis on cultural difference framed migrant students mainly as carriers of cultural rights that needed to be respected instead of emphasizing concepts such as equality and non-discrimination. This ‘integrationist’ model as it was called, which was also applied previously in Britain, resulted in policies that ‘were rooted in essentialised notions of cultural difference and directed towards individual, rather than structural, change’ (Beckett and Macey, 2001, p. 311).

Moreover, until 2008, intercultural education policy was implemented only in primary schools. When similar measures started to be implemented in secondary education these were clustered under the term ‘integration’ measures. This development can be attributed mainly to European Commission funding provided under the Integration Fund for Third Country Nationals, rather than any substantial shift in the philosophy of educational policies towards migrant children. These integration measures, like those for intercultural education, mostly refer to the learning of Greek as a second language. This restricted perception of integration assumes that as soon as language barriers are removed the migrant students will automatically integrate into the local school environment. However, this assumption not only emphasizes the ‘otherness’ and ‘shortcomings’ of foreign children as mentioned above, but it also simplifies and minimizes the appropriate measures that need to be undertaken for this purpose.

Language support has therefore been the main, if not the only measure undertaken to enhance the ‘smooth integration’ of migrant students in both primary and secondary schools. Non-indigenous students are mainstreamed into the same lessons as Greek-speaking students, but they are then exempted from certain classes in order to follow a specific intensive Greek language course. The students attending this course are further divided into two categories depending on their comprehension and competence in Greek. The first category is the ‘akroates’ (auditors), who are new students that don’t speak any Greek. Although they follow the same classes as everyone else, this group is not requested to participate actively in the class, or do homework and they don’t receive grades. The second category comprises students who already possess a certain level of Greek and fully participate in the school program. They receive evaluation but are still required to attend the intensive Greek language program in order to improve their Greek. The competency level in Greek of these students as well as the newcomers is tested at the beginning of every school year through a test developed by Moec, entitled ‘Test on knowledge of Greek’ (*test hellinomátheias*). This test can be taken a number of times during the school life of these students.

After completing one school year, ‘akroates’ students are requested to undertake the final school examinations to determine whether they can proceed to the next year as ‘regular’ students<sup>1</sup>. This verbally and institutionally defined ‘irregularity’ within the school context is a

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1 Term used by both students and teachers during the interviews for this chapter.

contributing factor to the further alienation of these students inside and outside the classroom as their mere presence in the classroom does not by itself guarantee integration and acceptance. At the same time, the symbolic connotations attached to dividing students hierarchically on the basis of their knowledge of Greek language and culture can lead to stigmatization and categorization within the school context (Zembylas, 2010). This compromises Moec's aim of protecting all members of Cypriot society from racial discrimination and social exclusion.

Another category of measures, related to migrant students but not defined as integration policy per se, are the Zones of Educational Priority (ZEP) which were first implemented during the school year 2001-2002. These measures aimed to enhance the kindergarten, primary and secondary education of children in socio-economically deprived areas. They are based on the philosophy and model of the French Zones of Educational Priority that aimed at eradicating school failure and student drop-out rate in disadvantaged areas. In the National report of 2008 by Moec it is mentioned that, according to the principle of positive discrimination, public education is responsible for providing adequate means and resources to support the student population coming from disadvantaged socio-educational strata. Within this context, the ZEP are given additional financial support while a Committee, constituted by teachers, is set for each ZEP with relative flexibility in managing the budget provided to enhance the educational and social capabilities of the students. Other measures include less number of students in each classroom, free breakfast and a counsellor particularly employed for the schools within the ZEP. These measures are framed both as a social inclusion policy but are also contextualized under measures of health education as health policy issues, since throughout this section of the National report the 'preventive role' of the ZEP is emphasized in terms of issues like the use of drugs, juvenile delinquency and violence. This is done while there is no available research data to indicate that these phenomena are exacerbated among youth in the geographical areas marked within the ZEP. It is therefore assumed that such risk factors were identified in the Cypriot ZEP, while the fact that these schools are overpopulated by migrant or other non-indigenous children is not stated within the report. Thus, no explanation is given of how the migration factor is mainstreamed through the variety of measures undertaken within the implementation of the ZEP. Furthermore, the fact that there is a trend currently developing of reluctance of Greek Cypriots to register their children in the ZEP schools or in other schools with a high number of migrant/ethnic students intensifies the turn of ZEP schools into ethnic schools and contributes to a developing segregation on ethnic terms among the student population. In the same vein, organized parents' associations deny the transformation of some primary schools into all-day schools because this change might attract the registration of migrant students and therefore alter the profile of these schools. Despite this growing ethnic segregation, the Ministry's official policy remains that of non-concentration of *alloglossoi* in particular schools and claims to be successful in integrating migrants. Technically, this claim holds since integration is equalized with language learning, and the production of 'integrated' subjects which are no longer considered to be in need of any kind of support within the regular classroom.

Problematic as that may be, it further implies an assumption from the Moec that Greek Cypriot children do not have any racist attitudes and are welcoming migrant children despite evidence to the contrary. Recent incidents in Cypriot schools and research studies have indicated racist attitudes towards migrant/non-indigenous children while the Ombudsman's office in a relevant report (2008) has called for the creation of a system to track down and analyze the variety of racial incidents that occur (Charakis, 2005; Vasou, 2011; Theodoulou, 2008; CARDET, 2010).

Considering the different framings of migrant students under the various policies implemented by the Moec e.g. intercultural education/integration and the ZEP, a general silence can be observed in relation to defining one as migrant and accommodating any issues associated to this phenomenon. Rather, the migration condition is covered or hidden under terms such as *alloglossoi* or health education measures and therefore policies for its accommodation remain problematic, lacking and inadequate. In this lack of recognition of the migration condition in school environments and the understanding of difference solely from a point of developing awareness on cultural traditions and customs, comes to be added a tendency by the Moec as well as individual school units to include racial incidents within the wider sphere of anti-social behavior and juvenile delinquency therefore rendering them invisible (Nikolaou, 2010). As mentioned in the Commissioner's of Administration report (2008), this illustrates the limitations on the part of stakeholders dealing with education in identifying incidents as racial or not and in handling such cases effectively. Moreover, this also demonstrates the reluctance of the educational and state authorities to name incidents of such nature as 'racial' and/or 'xenophobic'. Furthermore, the classification of such incidents under the seemingly non-political categories of juvenile delinquency and discipline problems, not only impedes the formulation of policy goals, mechanisms and practices to combat racist violence but it also exacerbates the generalized (but nevertheless targeted) view that the quality of public schooling is declining, that criminality is increasing and that this is not irrelevant to the 'influx' of migrants.

In relation to this silence on racist incidences, other factors such as gender also remain unidentified by the use of these general terms and therefore not exposed, while girls, as a specific group, are not considered when drafting policies in relation to education and youth. Furthermore, gender mainstreaming is completely absent from educational policies on the integration of migrant children, and therefore the specific needs of girls in this category are neither researched nor adequately recorded.

This institutionalized gender blindness fails to address important issues that affect migrant girls in the school context from pre-primary to secondary education, such as the stereotypical pre-conceptions made about them by their fellow classmates. Research has shown that Greek Cypriot children tend to perceive migrant children in terms of racialized categories that are often connected with the type of work and socio-economic status of their parents. In the specific case of migrant girls, race intersects with gender to formulate stereotypes on the status of these girls and their abilities. This reflects a wider public perception of migrant women in Cyprus, especially women coming from countries outside the EU, which is intensified by the pre-determined labour categories set by the state through which they can migrate and be employed in Cyprus. These labour categories form low skill/low wage sectors which allow migrant workers to be employed in sectors with shortages in terms of Cypriot or EU personnel. Furthermore, research has shown that migrant girls are in many cases stigmatized as sexually promiscuous, while this promiscuity was justified by students as a way to become more visible in school or was thought to be associated with unfavorable family circumstances existing in migrant families (Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, 2008). This attitude could also reflect a prevailing public view of migrant women in Cypriot society, particularly of Eastern European origin, as more sexually available and 'immoral' than other women (Vassiliadou, 2004). The construction of these women as 'immoral' and therefore 'easily accessible' is based on the fact that many women from these areas migrate to Cyprus to work in the entertainment sector, and more particularly in cabaret establishments. The latter however have been directly associated with prostitution and trafficking in Cyprus for the purposes of sexual exploitation

(for relevant information on the issue of trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation in Cyprus see Commissioner for Administration report, 2003; Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, 2007). These latter categorizations transfer to the school context and intermix with traditional patriarchal norms that are still strongly entrenched in Cypriot society which require women to sustain notions of ‘purity’ and ‘propriety’, on the achievement of which girls are classified and evaluated (Skapoulli, 2009).

### **3. The case study: Understanding exclusion and empowerment in the school lives of migrant girls**

#### **3.1 Methodology**

##### **Research Questions**

In our research we adopted an intersectional methodological framework in order to examine: (a) how educational policy actors’ articulation of integration discourse relates to dominant discourses of [multi]culturalism and neoliberalism to produce gendered, degendered or gender-blind framings of migrant students’ needs and prospects in the public Cypriot schools; (b) how migrant status operates in school settings simultaneously with different categories of social positioning – ethnicity/race, gender, sexuality – to produce various degrees of risk, disadvantage or advantage for migrant girls; (c) how migrant girls negotiate this risk, disadvantage or advantage in constructing their school selves as integrated school subjects and successful students.

##### **Methodological framework**

Intersectionality is a methodological framework that addresses the multiple, multi-sited and interlayered realities and social inequalities of migration as a gendered experience (Lutz, 1997; Hirsch, 1999; Anderson, 2000; Parreñas 2001; 2005; Yeates, 2005). By examining the ways in which gender, race and nation intersect in migration contexts, researchers can map new forms of marginality as well as new positionalities for agency. The application of intersectionality in migration studies brings up the need to rearticulate and re-emphasize intersectionality’s meaning beyond an additive understanding of marginalities and identities (as in “double-disadvantage”, “multiple jeopardy”, “triple oppression”, etc.). Building on the 1990s scholarship from Black Women’s Studies, researchers deploying the various definitions of intersectionality often cite Crenshaw’s (1991) definition of interlocking systems of oppression, Collins’ (1990) conceptualization of interwoven patterns of inequality as a “matrix of domination” (Collins, 1990), Shields’s (2008) framework of “mutually constitutive relations among social identities” and Yuval-Davis’ (2006) “ways multiple identities converge to create and exacerbate women’s subordination”.

These formulations, however, especially when they are separated from the patterns of experience in individual lives and social contexts, tend to overemphasize the “mutually constituting” character of social identities such as race and gender while downplaying the structures of inequality and the power dynamics that produce subordination in the first place. For example, the intersection of ethnicity and gender is seen as a condition that reinforces the disadvantage of each social positioning and augments people’s urgency for ethnic identifications. A more dynamic formulation of intersectionality that avoids the trap of identity politics is figured by Stuart Hall. In Hall’s formulation, intersectionality explores how

systems of oppression “articulate” with one another. As Collins (1998) observes, certain ideas and practices surface repeatedly across multiple systems of oppression and serve as “focal points or privileged social locations” for these intersecting systems of oppression. Adopting this theorization, we focused our research on the multiple strata of migrant girls’ school experience: ‘ordinary’ interactions, academic itineraries of good girls and girls that struggle to achieve integration, the micro-webs of power that develop in situations of bullying but also ‘networks’ of peer support.

Specific attention has also been placed on how formal school organization and flexible schemes that aim to the accommodation of migrant students influence and are influenced by the social mirrorings of sexualized and racialized stereotypes of migrants as these are reiterated-reinforced or disavowed—in conflictual and/or competitive school settings. In our analysis we explore particularly how formal organizational structures and social categorizations of identities interlink with neo-colonial economies of sexual desire and migrant labour to inform migrant girls’ perceptions of the risks and gains with regards to integration and their resistance or submission to social mirrorings and school-based gender violence.

### **Data collection**

We had ten individual semi-structured interviews with migrant girls attending secondary education in the city of Nicosia and seven interviews with education policy makers (one high-ranking official from Moec who is responsible for developing and supervising the implementation of educational policies and measures in relation to integration), administrators (one school principal and one school vice-principal) and teaching personnel (including ZEP counselors). Besides the interviews, we had a focus group discussion with migrant girls and one workshop with policy makers where we presented some preliminary findings. The focus group comprised five girls attending a ZEP secondary school in Nicosia. The purpose of the focus group was to encourage interaction between the girls and to see how, based on their (different) positionalities, they negotiate in different ways ethnicity and gender in critical instances. In order to avoid forcing onto them a burden to “confess” the self as ‘other’, an approach which would both aggravate their precarious condition as migrants but also their feeling of ‘debt’ (since they had been solicited to the meeting by a staff member whom they highly respected), we used excerpts from migrant girls narratives in order to elicit responses. Because issues of racialization and resistance had not emerged as central points in the individual interviews, we wanted to see how these girls would relate or not relate to other girls’ experiences of racialization. One of the excerpts we used a girl from Romania describes her experience of sexual and racial harassment at school as her peers, re-iterating stereotypical discourse on Romanian women, were interpellating her into a subject position as a racialized and sexualized Romanian (e.g., asking her, “What’s the job of your mother?” and so on).

### **Transcription, translation and quoting**

The quotes cited from the interviews have been translated by the authors. One difficulty we had in translating from Greek to English was how to preserve the grammatical gender of Greek language (in Greek, most nouns and substantives have male or female gender), as it is indicative of normative gender perceptions and contextualizations in the Cypriot society. We resolved this issue by transcribing also in Latin characters the original noun or phrase where the noun is used and using ‘M’ ‘F’ and ‘N’ next to the Latin transcription to mark the gender of the original noun (Masculine, Female, Neutral).

### Data analysis

For the purpose of analyzing and organizing our data we developed eight categories of codes, which resulted from a first analysis of the transcription. The eight categories we developed were: a) transnational condition and mobilities; b) migrant status and its impact on girls' marginalization/processes of integration; c) transformations of family structures and dynamics of mixed families; d) negotiating the social construction of gender identities; e) racial thinking, structures and processes of racialization; f) school and student identities, g) school policies for migrant integration; h) emotions (empowering/disempowering, alienation/belongingness). The analysis that resulted from this eight-axis structure was quite rich and complex as it revealed the variety of migrant girls' experience across various localities (family, school, extra-curricular social settings) but also with regard to various modes of marginalization. As we struggle to group these different experiences and make associations between the different categories of codes, we came to realize the uniqueness of each girl's itinerary but also the rigidity of Othering to which these girls are subjected as they become migration subjects and integration subjects in our research.

For the purposes and limits of this project, we limited our analysis to the codes which refer to the girls' negotiation of socially constructed gender identities, racial thinking, race structures and racialization processes, school and student identities, and school policies and measures for migrant integration.

### Profiles of migrant girls

These profiles are based on information we received directly from the girls or other key informants (teachers, counselors, close friends) and participatory ethnography (in some cases we were able to trace their 'portraits' and social networking habits on Facebook).

*Anna* is from Moldova and she has been living in Cyprus for 4 years with her mother, also from Moldova, who is now re-married to a Cypriot. Anna's father is in Moldova. Anna entered the Cypriot educational system in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade of primary school<sup>2</sup>. She has very good grades, and speaks Greek well, and sustains a good network of friends. She is considered 'attractive' among her peers and, with attractiveness being a main qualifier for a girl to be popular in Cypriot schools, Anna finds herself in a more 'privileged' position in terms of being accepted and well integrated within the school community (Christou, 2010).

*Niki* is an ethnic Greek Pontian from the Black Sea area of Russia. Her family falls under the category of "repatriates" which is assigned to migrants of ethnic Greek origin. Since "repatriates" are given Greek citizenship rights, they are entitled to permanent residence and employment across all sectors of economic activity, which makes their status less precarious than other migrants'. Niki came to Cyprus when she was 7 years old and is now in a ZEP secondary school. She is one of the best students in her school, acts like a tomboy, and her appearance is quite boyish, with short hair and baggy clothes. In Cyprus she is part of a large ethnic family network.

*Rose* is a Filipina who migrated in Cyprus with her two older siblings after her mother was re-married to a Cypriot. Rose entered Cypriot school at grade one of elementary school. She attended an elementary school with a majority of Greek Cypriots but at secondary education she enrolled a ZEP school with a dominant ethnic profile. Within the ZEP school context, Rose is considered quite a good student.

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2 As was revealed in many of the interviews children entering in primary school learned Greek much easier than children entering on secondary level, a fact that enhanced their ability to follow classes and do better in school.

*Bellen* is of Kurdish origin. Her family (parents and five siblings) migrated to Cyprus from Turkey when *Bellen* was 12 and were granted refugee status. Despite being of secondary school age at the time of their migration, *Bellen* was placed in primary school due to her lack of knowledge of Greek. While she was attending secondary education at a ZEP school her parents separated. Her father (the family leader with regard to refugee benefits) re-married and her mother was forced by her former husband to return to Turkey (and thus stripped of any refugee rights). As *Bellen* and her siblings never accepted these new family circumstances, they moved out of the house and *Bellen* dropped out of school at the age of 16 in order to work and support her younger siblings (they were no longer entitled to refugee social protection since the father ‘transferred’ refugee status to new dependents).

*Amber* and *Afaf* are both from Syria and their fathers are employed in Cyprus on temporary work permit. *Amber* has been an auditor for two years. *Afaf*’s parents moved to Cyprus when she was three months old and from then on they had been engaged in a continuous effort to renew their employment permits in order to remain in Cyprus.

Finally, *Lisa* is child of a mixed marriage. Her parents are from Ukraine and Scotland. *Lisa* is currently attending a secondary education school within the ZEP of Nicosia, and she also attended the primary school within the same ZEP.

### **3.2 Acting subjects and subjects of integration: Caring ‘Fathers’ and cared for populations**

*Our philosophy is humanitarian and democratic, with [emphasis on] equal rights and with a wholesome embrace of love. I would also say exclusion of exclusion, for this year we had (and it still runs) the ‘year against poverty and exclusion’. (Moec Official)*

Questions on integration school policies were received by the interviewed administrators as ‘right on target’ and were treated with a certain verbal fecundity. The responses also bore a sense of certainty comfort, and unfolded like ready-mades, like they had been tried out already and had proved to be adequate. The interviewees seemed very much ‘at home’ using a rather technical terminology which seemed more similar to the discourse of migration control than that of humanitarian school reform: “inflows”, “nuclei”, “populations” “concentrations” of others; “directives”, “combating”, “rules”. At the same time, a sense of happiness emanated from the repetitive outlining of the normative frameworks: democratic, inclusive, caring; multicultural. In contrast to the comfy articulation of ‘others’ and ‘otherness’, the gendered questions had an uncanny effect. We first asked the interviewees to comment on gender and integration in general and then presented some examples from the school lives of migrant girls and asked them consider whether gender was relevant to the difficulties the girls faced. This ‘turn’ of the interview was treated as redundant to the topics of migrants and school inclusion, cultural difference and school adjustment.

Addressing the general question on gender, a school vice-head comments that he might not have much to say because the migrant students in his school are mostly girls:

Vice-Principal: *It is mostly girls that I encountered in classrooms. Last year I met boys in two classrooms. They were most difficult.*

Interviewer: *With regards to ... learning?*

Vice-Principal: *Learning and adaptability. Girls adapt more easily. And many female [migrant] students [mathítries, F] are much better than ours [apó tis díkes mas, F].*

From the administrator's perspective, school organization and student discipline are cardinal school principles, and 'gender' becomes meaningful only when linked with problems of order and adaptability. With migrant girls perceived as more adaptable than migrant boys to national school norms, gender is also assumed to make no difference in migrant girls' school lives.

In the interview with the Principal of another school (this is a school with relative high percentage (10%) of Arab student enrolment), we get a very different framing of gender:

*There has to be difference [gender difference] because of the peculiarities of all these babies [morá; N] coming from Moslem countries. Because we know that in some societies the position of the woman is very different than in Europe or in the West in general. Thus we must consider the issue of their tradition, the way they see things, so we do not reach to the point of some other separation, so that we integrate them in ours [missing noun]. (School Principal, Larnaca)*

In this approach, gender is ethnicised and ethnicity is gendered. In other words, gender is perceived to make a difference (almost, all "the" difference) because the scarf makes a difference.

Despite their different framings and assessments of the role of gender in integration, the two approaches are quite complementary with respect to their gendered articulation of integration as a process of containment and control. They tend to feminize the other when the other appears to have taken up successfully the burden of cultural adjustment and to masculinise the other when the other turns out to be a troublesome (or potentially troublesome) dissident. In the latter case, the other is someone they would either have to control through means of suppression (the "difficult" male students) or to deal with through less invasive means (Moslems whose cultural norms prescribe the 'covering' of women). The crucial question, never considered by the administrators we interviewed, is who is the other's 'other'? The school? The school principal? The state? The nation? The law? The ethical law of hospitality or the juridical law of migrant reception? The administrators' discourse renders this other so immediate and so immanent that their own perspective as state subjects fuses in with the universal position of an ethical subject which is paradoxically reserved for "We": we receive (ethical action); they adjust (cultural response).

The gender of the subjects (the three administrators we interviewed were all men) and the gender of school administration in Cyprus—even though the teaching profession is feminized in terms of demographics, disproportionately more male than female teachers are promoted to administrative positions—is not unrelated to the gendering of the integration discourse. Migrant students are, variously, framed as male when migrant enrolment is related to the handling of discipline problems and infantilized ("babies" [morá]) when framed as benign/adjustable subjects of integration. The female category is treated as redundant. This comes through more strongly in the rhetoric of the third administrator we interviewed, a high rank Moec official. He systematically evades all questions and eliciting remarks on gender. When confronted explicitly with the question of whether the examples of migrant girls cited to him show that some of the difficulties migrants face are gender specific and whether this might relate to school structures, he snaps at the interviewer for being persistent and insinuates that gender is superfluous to a more comprehensive analysis of the problem:

*What I already said, that "migrants are a problem", does not seem to satisfy you [your question]... The migrant [o metanástis, M] has many problems, not only in terms of education and language. He also has*

*family, financial, social problems which definitely reflect on his success (Moec Official).*

Whereas the content analysis of the interviews with administrators confirms research findings on gendered perceptions of diligent girls and troublesome boys, a more discourse-oriented analysis of the data suggests that a different kind of gender discourse might be operating with regard to the signification of school integration. In particular, what we noticed in the interviews is the idealization of the school as a self-conscious paternal subject whose decisions and actions embody the patriarchal benevolence of the state. Under the aegis of this conceptualization of school, administrators are assigned the role of givers and migrant students the role of beneficiaries. Education for migrants is simultaneously viewed as common and as exceptional: as a gift rather than a right. This comes through more strongly in the interview with the third administrator. Asked to elaborate on the philosophy and aims behind the 'auditors' scheme, he insists on highlighting the 'softness' and 'caring' character of this scheme:

*Notice this element that we are calling "humanistic" and "democratic"! We do not want to give them a hard time; we want to facilitate them. You realize that they are dealing with difficult conditions, they need help, and this [auditors' scheme] is our way to help them. He/she will move on to the next grade--he/she has the right to move on to the next grade--but will still be on auditor status. So that he/she can try to pass the four [examined] subjects of the advanced grade [where is auditor is currently enrolled] plus the subjects of the previous grade [where the auditor was enrolled the year before], for he/she still 'owes' the previous grade - when he/she was also an auditor. It is easier of course, if he/she passes grade three to also pass [retrospectively] grade two, and thus to have one more chance to become integrated on a regular basis (Moec Official).*

The speaker refers to rights, chances and second chances, and uses figurations of mobility to describe how the system facilitates *alloglossoi*. It does not occur to him that the mechanism he is describing can offer opportunities but at the same time can produce deficit, accumulate learning difficulties and establish pits and thresholds between integration and its opposite (the opposite of successful integration is always implied; never acknowledged or named). The paradoxical rationality of this model lies on three principles that are invoked and violated at the same time: gift, care and integration.

### ***The paralogical gift***<sup>3</sup>

Allowing students to move from one grade to another without passing the previous grade's exams is constructed as a gift (a normal student would not be allowed to do this). Yet this is a gift that not only takes away from migrant students the status of the regular student and empties

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3 Jean-François Lyotard introduces the term "paralogy" in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) to refer to postmodern education's, science education's particularly, opportunity to avoid stagnation by allowing new ideas and concepts to enter language games, to contest procedural rules, and to disrupt and destabilize previously existing consensuses (Fritzman, 1990). In Lyotard's philosophy, however, paralogy "a model of legitimation that has nothing to do with maximized performance, but has as its basis difference understood as paralogy" (Lyotard 1984, p. 60). As Patti Lather clarifies, paralogy "displaces both the criterion of efficiency and the Habermasian drive for consensus" (Lather, 1994, p. 679). In this case we use paralogy in almost a reverse way: the school system (monolingual and homogeneous classes, hierarchical and linear organization of skills along grades and vertical organization of knowledge across subjects) internalizes exceptions and flexes its rules to accommodate difference while still preserving its own logic.

his/her performance of a student identity of any seriousness but also absolves the school of the responsibility to provide funds and resources for the development and implementation of a mixed ability curriculum. This kind of ‘facilitating’ others means accommodating difference by rendering sameness operationally flexible. The fact that this flexibility unnerves the others’ affective powers - their hope and pride as learners - is treated as a collateral kind of loss, irrelevant to systemic aspects. Below, the same administrator elaborates on another practice of ‘flexible mobility’ in accommodating immigrant students, that is, showing leniency and allowing exit from the separate classroom and enrolment in the regular class without achieving full mastery of Greek:

*After a very careful analysis we gave them this leeway [efheria] so as to make it as easy for them as possible, that is, to integrate them very, very humanistically and democratically. We will give him [here student referred to as male] the chance. I would even say that when one student is at the verge of saying that he wants or does not want [to move on to the next grade on auditor status]—the choice is yours you know--, ‘I can do it’ or ‘Eh, that’s not so important, fine, I have some weaknesses but I will attend like a regular so I do not miss the courses.’, we still allow him to, that is, we have flexibility. That is, if the required mark in the language test is 95 out of 100 but 100/100 in order to be able to leave [means to leave from the Greek language classroom for newcomers and to be mainstreamed with the rest] and lets say you mark 92, and the philologist [language instructor] says, ‘you know, this baby is studious and don’t worry’ –because from that point on he will be exposed to seven hours of instruction in Greek daily—you realize that is he is also diligent he will make it, and several of them make it (Moec Official).*

The student subject is formally gendered here (even though student in Greek is properly referred to as male) and there is no particular reference to female migrant students. At the same time, integration management is rhetorically gendered. The school, the teaching staff, the school administration, the Ministry, the speaking subject, all are solidified and represented under an over-arching, all-inclusive and generalized “We”. The authority of this “We” is established on grounds of rationality and quality control but also through figuration of home and mastery. The master of the house (school, state), the Patriarch, verifies his authority by bestowing gifts on migrant students: flexible accommodation, provisional mobility, chances to ‘make it’. What we encounter here is an educational re-instantiation of the same policy shift that we analyzed with regard to migration and integration policies at EU and National level, from the Tampere mandate to the Hague conditionality (see chapter “Questioning the location of gender”). The school is not responsible to establish conditions that respond to the full potential of migrant students as young learners. It is only *responsible* to offer them ‘chances’ to become integrated, chances to break from exclusion, but it is not *responsible* for their success.

### ***Paralogical care***

But what about the embrace of love? Whereas the patriarchal subject of integration policies legitimizes his authority through the discourse of managerial rationality, the school adjustments, the tentative rules, the ‘feminized’ care operate according to a not so rational mode of flexibility and exception. The caring school becomes more “flexible” to allow migrant students “leeways”. Care, even though the word is used because of its ethical undertones, is conflated with the authority to allow exceptions (which eventually operate to establish the sovereign power of the school over those cared for). Caring for the migrant students means facilitating their mobility through the system (and also facilitating the system to sustain its

homeostasis despite the change of needs and goals).<sup>4</sup> The figurations of embracing, acceptance and receptivity allude to a feminine ethic of care (Noddings, 1984; Gilligan, 1995) when in fact the policies of flexible accommodation (leeways, exceptions and conditional mobility) undermine the conditions for an ethic of care. The ethic of care is diametrically different from benevolence or even accommodation. It is relational and based on a dynamic relationship between two ethical subjects, the caring and the cared for.<sup>5</sup> Caring to tackle the ‘disturbances’ that occur in the usual organization of a school because of the entry of unusual learners (caring about the administration of the language test, introducing new taxonomies of learners, putting up multicultural fairs) does not translate into an ethic of care if it does not translate also into care for the students (migrants and non-migrants), if it does not aim to their growth and their future development as caring and autonomous actors. Caring implies an ongoing responsibility and commitment (Tronto, 1993). Giving chances is not enough. Giving only chances is educationally dangerous if it produces disempowered learners and beneficiaries whose sense of hope, faith and security is boycotted by the condition a debt.

### *Paralogical integration*

Another paradox that comes through in interviews with male administrators is that, on the one hand, integration is invoked as a goal and an ideal (which implies that it is pursued through continuous policies and practices) but, on the other hand, the adjective “integrated” is used to refer to as a distinct and final stage (and status) of students. In describing integration policies and their positive results, administrators refer to the “previous” state of the newcomers and their current state (“integrated”). There are non-integrated *alloglossoi* (used as a language category) and there are integrated *alloglossoi* (used as an ethnic category), but there are no in-between students, that is, there are no students in the process of being integrated:

*The only problem we face is that of communication. Since translators [metafrástries, F] have been appointed and we have special classes for alloglossoi in order to be able to become mainstreamed in regular classrooms, then I see no other problem beyond this one. Where students are conscientiously integrated in society—they want to settle [here], they want to learn—they have all it takes to succeed. We have even examples of this here in school. Female and male students who came one or two years ago are excelling today. They learned the language and after that they can work like all other students. (School Principal, Larnaca)*

*They used to organize themselves into cliques and so on but I do not think there is a problem now ... Now*

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4 Claiming to care and to recognize the need for more care is becoming increasingly established an indicator of successful personnel management in many organizations, not only schools and not only schools that take pride in catering for diverse populations of students. Research, however, shows that there is often limited evidence of an ethic of care in the school policies and practices (Green and Tucker, 2011; Grummell, Devine and Lynch, 2009; Hudson and Zgaga, 2008) ADD IN REFS: Hudson, B. and Zgaga, P. (2008) Teacher education policy in Europe: A voice of higher education institutions University of Umea, Umea.

5 The paradox of caring is that it must sustain mutuality of subjects in contexts where relationships are essentially asymmetric. In the school context teachers and students are asymmetrically positioned in the relationship because of asymmetries of power, knowledge and age. In our case the caring relation is rendered even more paradoxical by additional asymmetries between nationals and immigrants: those who authorize actions of integration and claim the position of universal subjectivity and those who are being integrated and are treated as beneficiaries rather than being addressed as subjects. This synchronic asymmetry, however, in the case of education, is countered by the diachronic depth of the relation and the principle of growth.

*they socialize together [...] they were alone during the recess but now they attend school celebration and also hung out with the rest of the kids [...] they felt inferior ... Now they hung out with the Greek Cypriot students [...] many children participate in the chorus. I see [in the chorus] Russian girls, I see Pontian girls [...] When you see them in dance, in music, athletes [M], when you see foreigners everywhere it means that teachers are offering equal opportunities to students.* (Vice-Principal, Nicosia)

Asked to clarify how exactly the Ministry uses school statistics on “*alloglossoi*” to plan integration policies the superintended explains:

*We ask schools to tell us which alloglossoi are in need of Greek language instruction. That is our criterion. Because, in secondary education, there are some numbers of alloglossoi who have already been integrated successfully. They have already been through some procedure ... some kids came from Elementary school where the same program [TGSOL], in some other form, runs and some other from, and some others from our program, they benefit from our intervention, and have been integrated, and thus we exempt these kids [from the alloglossoi count].* (Moec Official)

The narration integration as a three stage story—before (being other, excluded; non-academic presence), intervention (benefitting, opportunities) and after (being integrated; academic success; participation)—eliminates from the framing of integration two dynamic aspects of education: first, students are in an open state of growth and, second, school experiences have educational value only when they are meaningful to them, organized in such a way that connects their past to their present (principle of continuity), and help to open up, rather than shut down, their access to future growth experiences (Dewey, 1938).

This theorization of experience provides the grounds for a critical analysis of the educational uses of the discourse of integration. In assessing integration policies and practices as successful by counting visible outcomes (participating in school events, not causing problems, etc), school administrators exempt from assessment the educational value of students’ experiences while in a process of becoming integrated (a process which is not finalized but intensified and multiplied when immigrant students become academically and socially mainstreamed). In addition, from the perspective of social policy, learning Greek and becoming mainstreamed can be framed as a benchmark of integration. From the perspective of theory of education, attending class and abstaining from trouble are experiences, which have no pre-ordained value. So, what we are suggesting here is that benchmarks of social integration are overshadowing criteria for educational experiences and particularly, growth, and, *vice versa*, the educational/managerial shift to digital measures of school success (not irrelevant to the increasing, global pressure on national educational systems to produce comparable codifications of outcomes and to perform well in the knowledge economy, as in the case of the Lisbon agenda) overshadow the continuous and open-ended character of integration as a social and political process. Testing the acquisition of Greek as a foreign/other language on a pass/fail scale, for example, is a useful tool for assessing student needs and organizing learning settings and learning experiences, but a normative framing and sharp classification of immigrant students as either *alloglossoi* (non-integrated) or integrated is obscuring the appreciation of their needs, their growth, their power and their precariousness as persons and learners. What we are also suggesting is that the traditionally patriarchal discourse of school administration (often resonating with the state discourse of welfare benevolence) is intensifying both the focus on benchmarks and the downplaying of integration as a continuous and open-ended *agon* for all the actors involved.

Finally, what is also interesting from a gender perspective is how gender stereotypes affect the conflation of integration benchmarks with value of educational experiences and visibility with equality. Social and civic integration in the school community is often associated with participation in special school events. Because these events often include chorus performances and dances, and because participation in these activities is constructed as “girly”, immigrant girls’ participation is perceived as a sign of integration (and of absence of barriers to integration). Similarly, “not causing problems” (not getting into fights with peers, not arguing with teachers, not being disruptive in class) is framed as another sign of integration. Because immigrant girls are not causing “immigrant problems”, it is assumed that they are more integrated. However, the attribution of symbolic participation (as in dance) and absence of disciplinary trouble to effective integration policies is a hypothesis to be examined rather than an outcome to be celebrated. If immigrant student disobedience is framed in the school context as an indicator of not being integrated (on not being integratable), could it be possible that girls are abstaining from trouble not because they are integrated but because they do not want to be framed as immigrant others? In other words, could the “signs taken for wonders” (to cite a phrase from Homi Bhabha’s essay on colonial encounters) be understood as positionalities by female immigrant students as the latter negotiate empowerment and silence in a terrain where there is a lot to be earned and risked than just integration? Are there ways for an immigrant girl to fail integration, but to fail it well? Or, *vice versa*, could the school perpetuate a migrant girl’s marginalization even when this girl ‘moving on’ through integration? In the next two sections we analyze data from interviews with migrant girls and try to unpack the binary constructions of the “integrated” and “non-integrated” girl.

### **3.3 Negotiating the gendered burden of Otherness: reclaiming multiple positionalities**

In the context of school life, teenage girls adapt and proclaim a variety of identities: from the diligent student to the rebellious teenager, from the feminine-looking-magazine-cover girl to the tomboy, from the obedient student to the careless teenager. Fashioning such identities, often seen as typical going ‘through phases’ for teenagers, acquires a different dynamic for migrant girls in schools as they are also interpellated by discourses that racialize-genderize-sexualize them specifically as migrant, female and others. In managing competitive identifications, migrant girls attain agency but at the same time find themselves in a variety of vulnerable positions established by asymmetrical power relations which are systemically sustained. Different kinds and levels of vulnerability result from the intersection of various axes of othering, such as colour and ethnic origin, as well as precarious conditions inflicted by migration legal regimes. In our research we found that these different levels and kinds of vulnerability intersect with another condition in the lives of migrant girls: the investment placed by girls (and their parents) in school achievement and the idealization of school effort as the means for acquiring a better quality of life. In this section, a deeper exploration of this investment will be performed in relation to migrant girls’ reactions when faced with real or perceived challenges to integration.

In the case of Anna, school achievement seems to be her main focus. She appears to be in control and aware of the limits of becoming disobedient and naughty in school in terms of not risking a shift of attention from studying, as she understands that this shift might engage risks to her imagined future. After describing herself as a ‘realist’ and ‘down to earth’ and when confronted with the question ‘why do you try to stay down to earth?’ she responded in this way:

*Maybe we should also think a bit about the future, for example I'm already 16 years old, in 2 years I will go to university studies, then I will begin working [...] and these things that others do at school, wasting their time for example, are not very interesting to me, I sometimes might be carried away in doing something stupid, but I quickly get back to who I am.*

In this quotation 'who I am' translates into 'down to earth' and 'realist' emphasising that she has a target to achieve therefore she wouldn't allow herself to get carried away too much by the 'stupid' things her classmates do. Anna's constant state of being alert is associated with a perception of time for frivolity as *loss* but ultimately with maintaining a good status as a student in order not to risk her desired future. From her own positionality of successful student (in terms of future prospects) Anna cannot afford time to lose, which also seems to enhance her feeling that she is able to control her peers' behaviour in terms of defining when it's time to be serious and when it's time to fool around:

*For example when something serious happens and I need to talk in a serious manner, in whatever situation the other person might be, I can make him talk seriously in order to learn what I need to learn, and then I leave him and if he wants to stop being serious he can do that. I am able to influence people.*

This awareness of being able to control situations to one's benefit and not be a mere reactor/passive receiver to the behaviour of others, considered within the context of migrant integration can be indicative of a student who is in the process of becoming well –integrated and empowered. Nevertheless, as indicated in the quote above, there is always a negotiation in order not to risk future investment as well as a perception of time as loss if not spent focusing on future goals.<sup>6</sup>

However, this dynamic quality with which Anna responds to situations within the school context seems to collapse once she comes to face sexual advances (sexual innuendos, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature) by her male peers. In this case Anna's response has a totally different quality:

*Boys respect me because they know that if they try to do anything, I will be very angry and they know that they better not push their luck [...] I first tell them to stop and not do it again, then if they continue I go mad, I shout at them, I might hit them and they see that I am sort of a nutcase when I get angry and they stop.*

As depicted here, when she encounters sexual advances by her classmates, Anna does not respond with the integrity and composure that characterizes her other reactions. Rather, the strategy that she employs is to become out of order (out of control) by undertaking an aggressive/defensive attitude which has the effect of making her unattractive to the boys, thus she succeeds in avoiding more touching or verbal abuse. She becomes a 'nutcase'. It is interesting that when it comes to a behaviour which attempts to mark her as a sexually-desired subject but at the same time affects her reputation in school, she reacts in contrast to the integrity with which

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6 This perception of time as loss has been identified in a number of interviews with girls in the context of this research. It seems that due to the type of the integration system in Cyprus which places migrant students first as auditors and then as 'normal' students, migrant students feel that time spent without full participation in school is time lost. This enhances the stress and the precarious position that these students find themselves in, in relation to their academic and professional future expectations.

she describes herself, in order not to be further abused or stigmatized as a 'bad girl' within the school community. In this case 'bad girl' is associated with ethical connotations that are directly connected with women's sexuality. As indicated by Skapoulli (2009, p. 90) in her fieldwork in a Cypriot secondary school 'girls are placed on a fabricated and culturally widespread 'virgin-whore' continuum: those who militantly defend the idea of virginity represent one end of the continuum, whereas girls who are considered to be 'easy', 'loose', 'sluts' and 'whores' are located to the other end of the continuum'. Taking into consideration the latter contextualization of female sexuality, Anna's intense, radical and immediate reaction in the face of risk of being stigmatized as sexually promiscuous could be understood and further related to the Cypriot social construction of female migrant women from Eastern European countries as sexually more available than other women. As manifested through the interview, Anna is very aware of this construction of Eastern European women in Cypriot society:

*We had this girl that was Ukrainian-Russian and supposedly they said that she is Ukrainian-Russian and they were teasing that girl and she, ok she didn't say anything and boys continued to tease her and they gave her a bad reputation [...] supposedly in those countries girls are more free, you hear rumours that Ukrainians and Russians, you know, and allegedly they were testing the girl and when they saw that she didn't answer back to them they made out a bad reputation for her.*

It seems that being a Moldavian (Eastern European) in Cyprus runs a greater risk of slandering and alienation in the school community, therefore, in being verbally or physically challenged Anna is interpellated to prove that she does not fall within the 'slut' category. These latter challenges go on to show that the process of integrating within Cypriot society is not as clear-cut as learning the local language. On the contrary, migrant girls come to face a variety of challenges to avoid stigmatization and the possible repercussions that this might engage, while at the same time being on constant alert in order not to compromise school investment. Moreover, in the case of Anna it is also interesting that at no point has she considered reacting to the sexual abuse by bringing such behaviours to the attention of the school. On the contrary, as shown in the quotes above, she repeatedly justifies the continuous slandering of the Ukrainian-Russian girl as she considers it a personal responsibility to react to this kind of stigmatization:

*Interviewer: They made a bad reputation for her without her doing anything?*

*Anna: Since the girl wasn't reacting (to the verbal comments)*

*Interviewer: How could she react?*

*Anna: I mean that she didn't say anything to the boys [...] and the boys continued and gave her a bad reputation [...] now most boys tease girls by grabbing them and such kind of things and if the girl doesn't say anything boys continue more intensely.*

This fact reflects her perception of gender as a personal issue and gendered violence as something that needs to be dealt individually. This privatization of gender related -- as well as in this case racial -- violence reflects the way the school administration deals with this kind of abuse in school and the normalization of the silence around such incidents. This silence also enhances the taboos surrounding gendered violence and therefore aggravates the precarious position of the victims, who are left alone to deal with this issue. As evidenced in other contexts, this silence and normalization in light of no other alternatives can lead to the internalization of the violence by the victim, thus contributing to the maintenance of the

systemic character of this type of violence (Jiwani, 2005).

Whereas in the case of Anna sexual harassment and its management are individualized, perceived as a personal problem and a personal challenge to resist, in the case of Niki, reacting to this kind of abuse is only made possible from a masculine positionality. Through her discourse Niki claims emphatically her identification with the Greek Pontian community in which traditional gender roles seem to be quite rigid (Gregoriou, 2009).<sup>7</sup> By frequently hanging out with her male co-ethnics and appearing as a tomboy, Niki seems to strongly associate herself with the male Greek Pontian prototype (which as she describes is strongly associated to behaviours that depict machismo, like being aggressive, talking back, refraining from beautifying oneself), therefore claiming an alternative gender identity to the traditional canons applied to Pontian women. This 'macho' performativity however is downplayed when she is called upon to respond to sexist behaviour in which case she undertakes a rather submissive stance. In the context of a discussion with a group of migrant girls, after reading the excerpt from an interview which related to the sexist stigmatization of a girl from Eastern Europe, attitudes like swearing, answering back or in other ways reacting to gendered violence were considered by Niki and other girls in the discussion group as a male privilege, where reacting against insulting sexualized statements was conceived as a legitimate response when it came from a male position. This restrictive conceptualization of reaction seemed to be further compromised by considering the addressee's migrant status, as Niki comments:

*Who likes that? Do boys like to be sworeed at? But I know why, why girls can't, on the other hand you can't hit the person, you can't hit a boy, he will do something worse to you for sure, and secondly you feel like a foreigner, you already feel like a foreigner in this country, when you do something with someone you make it worse.*

Niki's acknowledgment of this double vulnerability of migrant girls in Cyprus points to the limits of integration. Being an integrated subject compromises her potential reaction to gendered violence, as she considers that talking back would result in an intensification of her exclusion.

However, while acknowledging this double vulnerability for migrant girls in Cyprus, at the same time she distances herself from those considered 'bad' girls or 'immoral' like those coming from Eastern Europe who, as seen above, are necessarily called upon to disassociate themselves from a pre-imposed reputation. This distance is further accompanied by a re-affirmation, and therefore an enhancement, of the 'veracity' of this reputation:

*Boys of our age do this as well, for example if I go to a friend (filo, M) of mine and say I have a girlfriend from Romania, he will tell me 'Introduce me to her' because, you know madam, girls from these countries[...]they (the boys) say it on purpose because they know that most Romanian and Russian girls, Bulgarians whatever are like that [...] most of them go and do this kind of work, that is why they are labeled this way...ok most of them end up there.*

The word 'there' refers to the bars or cabarets associated with prostitution. What is clearly evident here is that migrant children's perceptions are also influenced and defined by the racial and patriarchal discourses of the host society to which they adjust, a fact that is usually ignored when drafting policies on integration and intercultural education. As seen in this case,

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7 However, no empirical research has yet been undertaken to establish this statement.

Niki adopted the stereotypical narrative related to the sexuality of these women as existing in the Cypriot imagination. This indicates that Othering is a continuous process at once defined by the cultural perceptions and historical myths/events of one's own ethnic community, but also developed and adjusted to the Otherings found in the new country of residence.

Thus there is a process of Othering, which is constant, where girls are called upon to prove themselves as integrated and well-suited subjects for the host society. However, this integration has many other pre-suppositions besides language learning on which officials base the differentiation between integrated and non-integrated subjects. Negotiating reactions in relation to sexist verbal or physical harassment in order not to gamble the integration process is made more complex and intense depending on different levels of vulnerability associated with ethnic origin. As seen in the examples mentioned above girls with an Eastern European background face greater risks of sexist stigmatization by a number of agents such as boys, other migrant girls who wish to distance themselves from this reputation and the Cypriot society in its constant preservation of a common national self. As one Romanian girl mentioned, "this question, I really didn't like it 'where does your mother work?' They ask it all the time, mothers, teachers, everybody does it at some point."

The way this Othering is performed, as well as reactions to it, can take various forms also related to different ethnic backgrounds and racialized collective narratives. For example, in primary school Rose, the girl from Philippines, was verbally bullied by her classmates, isolated and called upon to do certain errands for them like carry their school bags, and bring them food from the school canteen. These requests from her Cypriot classmates should be understood within a larger framework of how Filipino women are perceived in Cyprus due to the nature and context of their employment as domestic workers. They are considered low-skilled, colored, and disposable in the sense that the employer can hire another one every 4 years, and they are often exploited by being forced to attend to all the workload in a household as well as in relatives' households.<sup>8</sup> These characteristics attributed to Filipino women exactly define the violence experienced by Rose in school. While initially reacting to this by answering back to the bullying by swearing in Greek (but not knowing what it meant at the beginning) and therefore claiming a more 'Cypriot school student' identity, after being told off by her peers and seeing that this enhanced her marginalization, she then withdrew in her 'pleaser' identity in terms of following orders from others as well as later on being compliant to the expectations from her current group of friends in order to feel belonging/acceptance. In saying this, it is important to recognize that her resistance to such violence is further downplayed as she also struggles with the gendered socialization from her own family in the Philippines where she was taught to be obedient, polite, to please everyone, not to swear and to respect her elders. As Rose said:

*Only when I was in primary school they did this[...] it's not like they order me if they say 'please', I might take their schoolbag because I am obedient to others, whatever others say to me I want to do it so that they don't say anything against me at the end[...]my grandmother taught me but also when my mother returned to the Philippines she told me to be obedient to others, for example you ask me something right now, I won't say 'go and get it yourself', it's shameful, whatever others tell me I do it.*

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<sup>8</sup> The fact that female migrant domestic workers are usually accommodated in their employer's residence has been one of the main causes for their exploitation in terms of workload and unclear working hours, as the labour department is restricted by law from entering the family home in order to monitor the implementation of humane working conditions.

The form of violence experienced by Rose shows that culture and structure should not be considered as separate but rather in relation to one another (Yuval-Davies, 2006). As depicted in this case, the limiting gendered nature of employment opportunities for third country women in Cyprus encompassed in state migration policies works relationally with the patriarchal socialization of girls in Philippines to define Rose's experience with her classmates and group of friends. Moreover, the blindness of the educational system to her racialization and racist experiences in school force her yet again to submit to her 'pleaser' identity, and reproduce the violence she experiences.

On the other hand, it seems that Rose and her family undergo a process of hybridization in terms of adjusting to new cultural realities. For example, while Rose mentions that she doesn't swear, many times during her interview she uses language not considered 'proper' to describe different issues that relate to her everyday reality, a language very common among local teenagers. Moreover, while she mentions that her older brother strongly objects to her having relationships with boys, Rose continues to socialize with her male peers and develops strategies to escape her brother's monitoring, like erasing any messages she receives from boys on her mobile. In the same vein, throughout her interview Rose makes constant references to her social life which seems to be quite active with regular outings with her peers, without restrictive monitoring. This hybridization process subverts the perception of culture as a static entity, which is usually adopted by Moec as well as the corresponding policies developed, as it seems that cultural norms, including gender norms, are flexible for adjustment to new circumstances. Therefore, while developing a level of intercultural awareness is important as a policy of active engagement with other cultures, framing intercultural policies on a static perception of culture disregards the significant hybridization processes that take place in daily life, thus making such policies irrelevant to the everyday realities in schools. In fact, the racial marginalization that Rose is facing seems to come more from the outside rather than from her own setting of cultural limits. In relation to this, the fact that Rose's Otherness is already inscribed on her, is already something visible, restricts her from being able to completely disengage from her national origin. Therefore, she proceeds to racialize herself first by stating that she is an 'original Filipino' before others impose this identity upon her. This claim to national identity however, seems to be indicative of the racism that she experiences from the wider society.

By contrast, in her narrative Anna does not claim any national identity, neither Moldavian nor Cypriot. She subverts any identification with ethnicity by emphasizing that everything depends on the level of personal effort involved as well as by presenting herself in non-ethnic terms as a realist, focused on her school achievement and future prospects. In this way she shifts attention from her ethnic Otherness to her own 'individual character' as she says. This comes in contradiction to other migrant girls who find themselves in a position of more intense vulnerability, like children of temporary economic migrants threatened with expulsion after their parents' visa expires. Syrian girls participating in the research for example, strongly claimed and embraced Cypriotness, in an effort to enhance their right of stay in Cyprus, as Cyprus for them is equated with a number of freedoms like being able to work and study at university level, as well as avoid early marriage.

For Bellen, a girl from the Kurdish community in Turkey, being able to work and earn her own living as well as adjusting to Cypriot gender norms was to a certain degree a liberating experience. At the same time however she is under another type of patriarchal surveillance: the one inflicted upon her by the male members of her community. The latter report to her father if they see her going out for a coffee or for a walk with her colleagues after work.

However, like Rose, Bellen develops strategies to resist and overcome this regulatory context: to avoid negative comments she never serves Kurds if they come at the shop where she works, she avoids socializing with boys, while her boss and colleagues cover up for her in case she arranges to go out at night. So despite the rigid surveillance coming mostly from her own community, she still finds ways to maneuver and maintain a certain space for expressing her own individuality, through her appearance, and socialization outside the community. The hybridization identified in the case of Rose is also evident in the case of Bellen and her family. As she says:

*Things change, you feel weird too, for example you say 'she wears that, why shouldn't I wear that too?' or 'she doesn't wear the headscarf, why should I wear it?'[...] and my mother and father are a bit progressive, my father was often abroad from a young age and he knows the world [...] he knows that they will see you differently if you don't wear the headscarf, and (in relation to arranged marriages) my family wouldn't say 'ok, let's arrange to marry them' without asking us first.*

However, the awareness of different treatment in light of maintaining cultural symbols betrays the levels of intolerance of the wider society.

This hybridization stemming from the experience of movement and adjustment to new circumstances is overlooked by the emphasis placed by the educational authorities on the cultural difference of migrant students though 'intercultural awareness/dialogue activities', which mainly translate into actions related to learning about the national culture of the other. This emphasis might be based on a rather common misconception that the migration experience definitely enhances migrants' need for ethnic identification instead of making them more prone to adopting and experiencing different lifestyles (Korteweg, 2006). In following this philosophy, Moec's integration policies failed to consider two very important variables defining migrants' school experience: the openness of migrants to adaptation to the norms of the host country as well as the fact that migrant students also get introduced and accustomed to prevalent racist and sexist discourses existent in Cypriot society. The latter discourses seem to be enhanced by the distinction made between integration policies and actions related to 'intercultural awareness/dialogue', which limited the latter to more informal, occasional and celebratory actions instead of concrete policies for challenging social repertoires of racism and inequality. Finally, in order to effectively challenge these discriminatory repertoires, the particularities of the patriarchal discourses of the receiving society must also be taken into account.

### **3.4 School Achievement: Education as an individual predicament of struggle and indebtedness**

#### **3.4.1 The High achievers: Disowning diligence and ethnicity, normalizing academic success**

All three girls came to Cyprus when they were still at Elementary school age and were placed directly at their age and grade level class. Though they are excellent students they do not advertise it and only incidentally mention that they are doing "well". They do not hesitate to make evaluative (negative) comments about some teachers' methods, their low performance in some subjects, the reputation of their class or their school, and the academic value of some subjects. Like any Cypriot student who feels confident about her academic profile, they treat success as a personal characteristic and disavow the identity of the diligent girl. What seems to differentiate them from Cypriot female high achievers is that they disavow particularly intensely

the gender characteristics of niceness and softness which are associated with the stereotype of the diligent girl. They make scornful remarks about excessive effort, fashion coolness and machismo, and, variously, stress their affinities with boys and boy cultures. Anna stresses how much she likes to play soccer with boys; Lisa keeps talking about boys she likes but also brags about ‘dismissing’ boyfriends quickly and easily; Niki mentions that she buys clothes only from men’s departments and cites events and conversations about hanging out with guys.

They know the school and classroom rules and norms, but they also know that between diligence and delinquency there is a border zone of defiant troublemaking wherein they can fashion their adolescent insurgency without pernicious consequences. Anna’s effort to discredit the school image of her class as “well behaved” is characteristic of this machismo: *When we were at first grade high school we had removed a door, at second grade we broke the lock, we keep writing on the desks.* School truancy is also cited as emblematic of this collective delinquency:

*When it’s ‘time of fit’ [óra pelláras] and we’re getting into something, we are all influenced by each other [...] For example, at the beginning of the year, around that time when we have these commemorations at school, when all students play truant, supposedly to demonstrate [...], everybody takes off, just a couple stay behind.*

Despite her narrative identification with the collective subject of trouble and school truancy, Anna is not among the individuals who orchestrate or carry out the acts she cites: “I just happened to play truant once but I came back because I did not want to get an absence.” Although diligent identity is disavowed the necessity to conform to school norms is confirmed, interestingly, by citing how “others” fail school because they fail to adjust to these norms. Paradoxically, it is the “others” who fail, i.e., the two “Romanians” enrolled in her class as auditors, who are attributed the burden of both ethnicity (enclosed in that) and normative school culture (outsiders to that):

*They did not try much [...] they were indifferent, did not pay attention to class, just waiting for class to finish, ok, this coming September they will take exams, how can they possible take exams [...] I don’t know [...] they came to class and left from class on will [ópote thélan], they did whatever they wanted.*

Very similar to Anna’s is Lisa’s reading of the auditors’ predicament. On the one hand, she ascribes to her school a kind of academic flimsiness--she concedes that all students, herself included, take class very lightly (*xalará*). On the other hand, she blames non regular students for not taking class seriously: *There is no check on us by the school whereas in other schools ... [speaker’s ellipses], but basically it is not the class’s fault, it’s their fault [...] because during class time they fool around, live in their world (paízoun pelló; havá).* In the same way high performance is assumed and construed as a personal story, school failure (others’ school failure) is viewed as an individual matter and immigrant classmates are blamed for not trying enough. Implicit in these references to failing students is the discrediting of the auditor scheme as inadequate and inappropriate. Nowhere, however, does this evolve into a full grown complaint or at least a negative remark about the system in general, the school, the teachers, the school’s or the state’s policies for immigrant student reception. Instead, the inadequacy of the auditor scheme is misplaced onto auditors. From the perspective of high achievers like Anna and Lisa, there are passive subjects of mainstreaming mechanisms, TGSOL (Teaching Greek as a Second-Other Language) and other remedial courses, but no actors responsible for,

of or about integration policy. Success or failure is something to be attributed to individuals, their academic commitment or their lack of academic commitment, their adjustability or lack of adjustability, their being down to earth or being carried away, their defiance or compliance.

High achievers, however, can still be critical of school when their sense of academic security is destabilized. Anna brags about getting into a fierce confrontation with a teacher when the latter unjustifiably marks her as absent. Lisa, more timidly than Anna but still more concerned about the overall academic quality of the school than about personal misgivings, makes scornful remarks about the “presumably special care” “they” show to her school. Asked to clarify on this she concedes:

Lisa: *Because it is the strangest school.*

Interviewer: *Strange?*

Lisa: *Yes, not just because it is old ... it is in the middle of Ledra Street, there are shops around, and things like that.*

Interviewer: *Yes ...*

Lisa: *Because enrolment is very low compared to other schools, because classes are much easier*

Interviewer: *Do you think easier than in other schools?*

Lisa: *Yes! That's the truth!* [Emphatically]

What Lisa says, without being able to phrase it in academic discourse, is that her “cared for” school is actually an ethnic inner-city school. And despite her earlier identification with the non-studious, “loose” attitude of students, she now expresses real concerns about the academic level of the education she receives:

Lisa: *Is our program of studies good??* [Question addressed very abruptly to the I when the latter mentions that she knows the staff member who develops the Course Schedule; very anxious tone]

Interviewer: *Yours?*

Lisa: *Do they have this in all other schools?*

Interviewer: *Yours is more complicated. Some students are taken from the mainstream class for remedial courses; there are multiple tracks for the language class.*

Lisa: *That's why I'm telling you that classes here are different. Why, let's say, are still in the middle of the textbook whereas in the other school they have finished it.*

### **3.4.2 The diligent girls: Reckoning with burdens of otherness, struggling to appear worthy**

In contrast to the “high achiever”, Afaf, Amber and, to a lesser degree, Rose, claim the gendered identity of the diligent girl. They underline how much they but also their families have invested in their schooling and depict their educational itinerary as a continuous struggle (some in a heroic and others in a self-effacing manner). All three are also conscious of their migrant otherness. For the first two (from Syria, their families are on temporary/irregular residence permit), otherness is experienced as a condition of legal/residence/life/future precarity. In the case of Rose, migrant otherness is not played out as legal/residence precarity (her mother, a Filipina re-married to a Cypriot brought her three children to Cyprus after her marriage).<sup>9</sup> Her otherness is prescribed, first, by her being visibly marked as a racial

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<sup>9</sup> It is not clear in Rose's interview whether it was the mother who brought them after she changed her visa status (using the Family reunification article of the Immigration Law) or the stepfather (by adopting them).

other (and thus vulnerable to racialization and ethnic stereotyping) and, second, through split cultural affiliations. More than any of the girls we interviewed, Rose is caught between two poles of gender-and-cultural identification, both with regard to her student and her adolescent identity: her Filipino upbringing into patience and respectfulness and her current conflictual school identity that demands that she be more of a fighter.

With intersecting forms of otherness rendering these girls emotionally, socially and academically vulnerable than the previous girls, educational interventions and support measures become crucial for their empowerment. In our interviews with them, however, we trace various kinds and degrees of discrepancy between their conceptions of belongingness and their constructions of their of student identities, as well as between the official goals of integration policies, and the ways integration practices are actually played out *in situ*.

At the time of the interview, Amber had just completed grade two but was still (after two years) an auditor. It is very interesting how she frames her status and school progress in contractual terms. Asked to clarify whether she refers to the auditor scheme she replies:

*Yes, but it's ok, they told me this is the last time, they told me if you want to take the exams, you can do so, it's ok, but you have to pass [the exams] in order to go on to grade three as regular student, you pass the exams and you go to third grade. I told them, 'yes, I will do the exams.'*

In becoming repetitive, by delineating anxiously the [assumed] takings and givings, and by anthropomorphising the school as both gatekeeper and magistrate of transactions, Amber is at pains to draw our attention to what she understands as a bilateral agreement, an agreement which, as she will later report in disdain, the school did not honour. Even though she has scored below 'pass' in her finals, she feels that she will have been cheated (by the school, "them") if "they" do not let her move on to grade three on regular status. In her eyes, what matters more than her scores in the final exams, is her effort and commitment during the previous school year/s. And even though at the beginning of the interview she underlines the conditional character of her student status, she later undermines this conditionality's authoritative status by invoking a more primary kind of bind: her commitment to school and her right to be/become regular (and stay in Cyprus where she has come to belong by now):

*Amber: Yes, and so I said to myself I will be studying very, very hard to move on as a regular student, to show that I'm trying. [na káno óti prospathó]*

*Interviewer: Yes, yes ...*

*Amber: I tried very hard to study, and I did study very, very much for the exams, and I had [exams in] five subjects, Physics, Chemistry, Language [Greek], Math and Ancient Greek.*

In the eyes of both Amber and her parents, one factor that renders this investment (and the expectations attached to it) more binding than the conditionality of student status (and TCM temporary residence status) is that it is a collective (family) life investment. As she explains (or arbitrates), her attainment of regular status as a student secures the extension of

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What is clear though that, regardless of the legal pathway used, Rose feels that she owes her reunification with her mother (and residence rights) to her Cypriot stepfather: My stepfather decided to take us [apofásise o patriós mou na maw piásei] and my mother of course to bring us to Cyprus to be with her."

her family's legal residence status.<sup>10</sup> Her father, who attends parts of the interview, seconds this account:

*Amber: I took these exams to pass; I did all this so that we can stay in Cyprus, if I don't pass (the exams) we will go to Syria because our visa will expire...we have one year, if I don't pass and we don't do well in school they won't let us (stay in Cyprus)...we have to go to Syria and we don't want that because we are studying in Cyprus.*

*Father: so what can we do to stay here...my daughter has to do well in school.*

*Amber: We need to be regular.*

The 'confirmation' of Amber's 'statement' by other 'sources' (her father's commentary and the actual applicability of legal regulations) provides here what many researchers would celebrate as 'triangulation' of data. Such an empirical framing of the interview, however, would secure verification for the validity of qualitative data but, at the same time, would do injustice both to the phenomenological understanding of the persons' lives and voices and to the critical analysis of the interview's power structure. In investigating the intersecting axes of marginality in the lives of migrant girls, we are not interested in verifying the legal truth of their statements (that would actually render our inquiry indistinguishable from the policing inquiry conducted by an immigration officer or a welfare counsellor). Rather, we are interested in understanding how these girls construct themselves as school subjects, as civic subjects and as political subjects *in and through* the process of becoming integrated. What is particularly interesting in Amber's case is her ontological precariousness with regard to both school and life, but also, her own reclaiming of this precariousness in order to reposition herself: from a 'family dependent' (the only possible migration status accorded to a child or wife within a patriarchal framing of TCM residence permits to families) to a powerful, potentially beneficial, agent for her family; from a victim of structural school marginalization to a claimant of leeway and opportunities. To phrase this in more simple but politically more pungent terms, in articulating the intersecting terms and rules of school, state and patriarchy, Amber claims the contractual entitlement to the protection and opportunities conferred upon her as a subject of integration while, at the same time, she is socialized into the mentality of having no "right to have rights" (which for Hannah Arendt constitutes the primary guarantee for human rights and a fundamental right worth "fighting for").<sup>11</sup>

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10 TCM Families on temporary residence permit whose permit expires are not deported and their permit is renewed if they have school age children enrolled in school. The rationale for this is that a possible deportation would disrupt the school life of the children and violate the children's rights. Amber's family faces the risk of non-renewal for two reasons. First, her father has already been in Cyprus for three years and his permit can be renewed for one more year only (New migration regulations stipulate that TCM work permits cannot be renewed beyond the time length of four years. By imposing a ceiling on the length of renewable temporary work/residence, the government blocked the eligibility of almost all TCMs (most urgently the eligibility of thousands of domestics) in Cyprus to apply for long-term resident permit, since the latter requires, among others, a minimum stay of five years. Second, the exception of families with school age children (a security leeway for families such as that of Amber) is suspended by an internal exception: child school enrollment can be grounds of exception provided that the child is a student, i.e., a "regular student" and not an auditing student.

11 Arendt's aporetic conceptualization confirms the fragility of human rights but, at the same time, rearticulates this fragility as the condition for shifting the meaning of human rights from legalistic order to political action. In other words, human rights exist only they are re-enacted--affirmed and reinvented--through

Afaf's family is caught in a similar precarious position--the four-year non-renewable [by migration regulations, not by law] visa expired a long time ago and they have been waiting to hear about their application for a 6-month extension. Even though Afaf and her brother are both enrolled as 'regular' students, Afaf does not consider (as Amber does) that regular status constitutes grounds for residence permit renewal. Whereas for Amber the irregularity of her student status jettisons the family's chances to stay, for Afaf it is the other way around: the legal irregularity of her family's stay threatens to jettison the regularity of her school progress and her chances for a good future: *I'm in grade three now...if, let's say, I go to Syria, I will lose my future [egó enná xáso to méllon mou]... there's nothing to do there ...and I cannot read or write [in Arabic; implied]...that's why we are still here, but nothing.* Her/her family's precarious position does not only put at risk her future as such, but also the investment of the future in her present commitment to her studies. While she is unravelling with enthusiasm her plans for future (wants to become a criminologist and work for the government), she backs off to express her worries:

Interviewer: *So, you are going to 'hunt after' this dream.*

Afaf: *Yes ... if I stay here*

Interviewer: *So this is an issue.*

Afaf: *Yes...*

Interviewer: *You are worried ...*

Afaf: *Yes, very much so ... let's say, "now I am afraid to continue—to continue and at the end to go to Syria".*

Afaf is an example of what teachers cite in interviews on integration as a very good [foreign] student and as the proof that integration works. She did not need to take remedial classes in Greek, her grades are good and she never failed a class. She is always respectful of her teachers, her peers do not tease her (any more) and she gets along with some close girlfriends (though she does not socialize with them outside school) and even "taught them a little bit of Arabic". In short, she is well integrated. This is also her view of herself, and that's why, in her eyes, her commitment to her studies constitutes her investment in her future. As it turns out, however, the measure of her school progress is primarily her social and cultural acculturation and only to a lesser degree her overall academic performance. She measures her school achievement through both negative and positive identifications. When we point out that even migrant newcomers can overcome the language deficit through TGSOL courses and do well in school, she is adept at distinguishing her status from those students: "E..., those are completely retarded [E, tzeínoi en kathisteriménoi télia]...ok, they teach Greek to you, but still ... the year/time is gone [pále o chrónos páei], let's say".<sup>12</sup> Though she mentions "those who don't study at all, who had all D's and E's last year" she declines to make any projections about their future and reclaims instead her being focuses: "I never thought, let's say, what will happen and to whom, I'm concerned about myself only [skéftomai móno ton eaftó mou]." She takes pride in being an "excellent student in Religious Education and loves Language, particularly Literature, because "it gives you the freedom" and she rebukes those who fail. Asked to explain whether her parents had any reservations about her attending Religious Education (RE), she replies:

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human action in new political-historical contexts.

12 It is very difficult to preserve in the English translation the crucial amphisemy of some Greek terms. Here Afaf uses the term "chronos" which means both time and year. The offer of Greek lessons (an 'offer' of time) is mediated as an educational loss ('losing' a school year).

Afaf: *They had no problem, no... it was the School Principal [i Dieythítria, F] who taught RE in Elementary School and, ok, she did not know I was not a Christian*

Interviewer: *Oh, she did not know, e...*

Afaf: *No, but eventually, ok, she told me, "if do not want to attend there is no problem," and I told her "it's ok, I don't have a problem"... same thing at Gymnasium, they told me [about opting out] and I told them 'no'...and I was a good student, got all A's in R... would not leave from class, no... I was 'regular'.*

Her excellence in RE (with academic achievement in the specific subject and zealous commitment to class being inextricably combined) becomes emblematic of her school identity as a good student. This self-identity appears sustainable despite the fact that she confesses to manage "nothing" with/in other subjects, such as history, chemistry, physics and particularly math. Her performance in these subjects is framed more like a difficult relationship rather than low achievement, with the difficulty being attributed either to the nature of the subject matter or, in the case of Math, to discrepancies between the learning style required for Math and her own preferences. In examining how integration, school achievement and the relation between the two is construed by migrant girls, it is important to notice that for low or average students self-perceived successful school integration operates as an alibi for low performance. In projecting the self-image of a good student—a projection highly gendered in highlighting effort, patience, diligence, and acceptance by peers--the two girls treat academic failure (Amber) and learning difficulties in specific, yet crucial, subjects as redundant. Furthermore, commitment to the school and investment in education are construed as the means for actualizing a self that is primarily in need of proving itself as worthy. Explaining why she wants to become a criminologist, Afaf tells us: "Something in the government [public] sector... let's say someone died, something happened, I would go and do the search, find out, you feel nice, let's say, pride in discovering something."

Rose is the third example of a "good [migrant] student". She came to Cyprus when she was six and attended first grade Elementary School. She appears very shy and low profile and she's particular respectful of adults (the researchers included). She is an average student, very diligent, very committed to her studies. She mentions in the same way that one would tell of a naughty but sweet secret that "sometimes she and her friends like to fool around" but, unlike Anna and Lisa, she is not into bravado and she is definitely not defying the diligent girl identity. Rose likes to fool around a bit with friends because she cannot afford not to be one of them. Her most verbally pronounced commitment is to studying; her least pronounced commitment and yet the most dramatically inscribed on her throughout her school life is her emotional closeness, dependence on her girlfriends. What distinguishes Rose from all the other girls we interviewed are her split cultural identifications and the rootedness, but also indebtedness, of the self to micro webs of relationships, emotional ties to significant others, and a collective narrativization of school experiences and events.

To be a girl is to be able to identify collectively with a group of girls: "We are always attentive [prosektikoi], we the girls, ok, sometimes we fool around... We the girls approach our teachers during the break and ask them 'what is this...' so that we comprehend better." Whereas Afaf projects her successful school identity against ethnic un-successful others, Rose's projection is collectively mediated and sharply gendered: "The others are even worse, ok, in our class they also misbehave every day, but only the boys, the girls do not have any problem with the teachers, the teachers do not have complains whatsoever." When this identification with the 'good student' is articulated in a more personal mode it becomes more academically focused and is also linked to her and her family's migrant positionality: she wants to be an excellent

student, to have only As and Bs. Her determination is mediated as both a family obligation and a family predicament. Being the youngest when her and her siblings came to Cyprus, she was immersed earlier in the Greek language and parental expectations for success lie heavier on her: “I want to be always a good student because of my family, my siblings, I am the best. Yes, I comprehend it [Greek language and lesson conflated] better, and they expect me to have higher grades than my siblings, and I will have a better life.”

Research on adolescent Asian migrant girls suggests that even though their personal conduct as females is strictly moralized (and ethnicized) and their interpersonal relations are controlled by traditional gender norms, they appear less ethnicized and more adept at “crossing” ethnic borders when it comes to developing support networks with peers and teachers. This is often cited in the literature on migrant girls’ academic achievement an example of successful segmented accommodation with regards to school acculturation. On the one hand, ethnicization of gender behaviour keeps them ‘out of the streets’ (out of conflictual social settings and out of trouble) and, on the other hand, establishing “support networks” helps them adjust to school norms and to the dominant culture of learning, develop a sense of school belongingness and perform well as students. In her study on immigrant students’ adaptation in schools, Qin-Hilliard (2003) reports that immigrant minority girls do better in school and are more academically oriented than immigrant minority boys, especially towards the later years of school. She suggests that this is happening because girls may be “protected” from risk factors like harsh school environment by a “supportive network” of teachers, peers and parents while boys are more likely to be negatively influenced by their friends. This “protective network of supportive relations” is viewed as “a form of social capital” which can be instrumental in promoting educational outcomes of immigrant girls. The case of Rose, however, puts in a different perspective this reading of girls’ school adaptability and empowerment through ‘support networks’. Rose’s case suggests that cultural accommodation in a social environment that is highly dominated by emotional ‘girly’ bullying implicates a forceful adaptation to the polarized roles of bullying, i.e., to be a bully or a victim, a popular one or a loner.

The normative framing of social networks excludes from consideration the multiple micro-webs of power which operate in school settings and arenas and the fragility of subjects. Just as joining a network establishes the newcomer’s authority as a subject, it also inaugurates the newcomer’s subjection to the possibility of eviction (and disgrace), a structural possibility that can transform into an ontological condition of fear when the newcomer is mediated at the same time as ‘a girl like us’ and a racial other, a fellow student in need of support and a disposable friend. Rose’s narrative shows that the *intimate others* (also migrant) on which she depends for academic support (a girl who translates from Greek for her, other girls she does her homework or exam review with) or girly bonding can easily turn into indifferent, distant and punitive others. This ‘turn’ cannot be attributed to the evil other girls in the same way Rose’s obedience cannot be attributed to endogenous, cultural or emotional, characteristics. What needs to be critically re-examined is the specific school environment, which can be as strenuous and antagonistic as any other school. What exacerbates this problem in this specific case is that the strenuousness and antagonism of the social school environment are rendered invisible or un-nameable by the normative cultural framing of the school as an exemplary multicultural school, with “acceptance” and “living together with others” being celebrated as prerogatives of the school culture.

With Rose starting first grade immediately after her arrival, her integration became mediated as a presumably easy process of cultural accommodation through language

immersion. Not achieving full native speaker competence in Greek constitutes for Rose throughout her school life a permanent source of vulnerability and insecurity with regard to both her racialization as a Filipina and her precariousness as a learner. Between not understanding a single word (grade one) and being picked on for some mistakes in Greek (now), her linguistic vulnerability is often accompanied by dependence on peer support but also exposure to othering, since her strategic accommodation in positions of dependency (which helps her survive incomprehensibility through peer translation/mediation) is often racialized as passivity, usability and inconsequentiality.

Rose: *I have patience, but she [reference to female peer] has to be nicer as well. I don't like this ... ok, say, at the beginning they treated me any way they wanted 'cause I knew nothing. Some of my friends use me any way they want.*

Interviewer: *What sort of things? Giving orders...?*

Rose: *Every once in a while they order me to go here and there and I cannot, I am tired, and they keep doing it and I do not like it.*

Interviewer: *I'm not sure I understand this.*

Rose: *Before, it used to be much more, when I was in X (mentions the name of her primary school) my friends [oi files mou, F] would stay in the classroom and order me to go to the kantine [to buy snacks for them], to leave the class and go to the Kantine. Or to carry their school bags, and various other things. But now, I do not want this to happen again.*

Immediately after Rose declares her frustration she is trying to revise her depiction of the situation and to exonerate the girls from any blame:

*Only when I was in Elementary School did they do that, ok, they do not do any harm to me but I do not want this to happen again. It's not that they order me, if they ask me politely to carry their bags is not that ... It is because I am obedient to others, I want to do whatever they ask me so that they do not say Rose this and Rose that...I do not like this.*

Rose attributes her being obedient to the way she was socialized as a child growing up in the Philippines:

*In my country we do not talk back, we show respect to those older than us and to others, we do not act like we are somebody [den eímaste kápoioi].*

As she tells us, both her grandmother who brought her up and her mother, when she went back to Philippines to bring Rose and her siblings to Cyprus, always told her to be respectful to those older than her. A common misconception about migrants' or ethnic minorities' cultural characteristics as students is that the culture of the 'home' is 'transferred' to the school where it works either antagonistically or in synergy with the dominant cultural codes of the school. This conception of cultural transfer fails to recognize that culture changes inasmuch as it is transferred, as well as that the power dynamics of home (whether that is the actual home, kinship back in the homeland) and the power dynamics school are very different. The ethical imperative (and not just cultural code) "to be respectful to older people" takes up a different content and a different kind of performative urgency when 'transferred' to the Cypriot school. In the Cypriot school she is not Rose but a 'little' Filipina. At the particular phase of her life intersecting axes of othering and inequality reposition her as a migrant, an Asian, a Filipina

and not just as a child. Respectfulness (to those older than her) becomes transposed in the new power context as obedience whereas the familial circles where love and care are unconditional are replaced by peer relationships which are affected by structural inequality and adolescent vulnerability to the anxious need to belong: *At the end I do whatever they ask me to, I cannot say no.* The cost for clashing with friends, is unbearable:

*Once, we [I] did not talk to anyone [kamiá, F] and this lasted for a whole week, each one was in her own world [...] the worst was at the Gymnasium when I got into a fight with her because she called me 'stupid' in front of everyone else [...] did not like this [...] sometimes I was all alone in school [...] nobody else was on my side because they knew her, and they had to be with her[ ...] I did not have anyone.*

In the same way the relationship with friends appears double edged, enabling-and-disabling, enveloping the self with the joys of intimacy and exposing the self to the possible horrors of abandonment and isolation, the relationship with teachers is also ambiguous. Rose's love and respect for her teachers is a constant reference point for her relationship to her school. Building a self image of a loving girl and committed student secures a sense of belongingness inasmuch as it implicates the burden of preserving this image. Being good is like dancing on thin ice. Acting as if integrated without being really integrated is like dancing on thin *and* broken ice. Disclosing her difficulties as a non-native speaker/learner is perceived as a condition for maintaining her credibility as a good student. Even though she is not (and has never been) an auditor (and thus her advancement is not 'in debt'), her academic status as a student is still flimsy. The auditor's 'other' is not the regular student but the high achiever. Administrators, in mapping the state of integration, planning interventions, estimating needs, and assessing success, assess the numbers of *Allóglissoi* and mainstreamed (integrated) and the rates of transition from one state to the other. Rose's situation shows that there is also a gap between mere mainstreaming and being empowered as a learner. To bridge this gap requires school transformation and not integration measures. It requires more labour, better planning, more resources, caring attention to the learning difficulties of those students in-between (as in any other class and not just the multicultural class). They need tutoring, translation, cultivation of Greek language skills beyond the communication level to learn advanced subject matter. Without such support practices in place, Rose's difficulties can be identified only as an endogenous deficit. For students like Rose, postponing the revelation of 'deficit' and avoiding disgrace constitutes a condition for 'saving face' as a learner. Towards this condition, various kinds of tactics are conscribed: pretending to comprehend, memorizing parts of the text and reproducing it in exams without understanding it, becoming dependent on peers to translate and/or explain, disclosing weakness from teachers, resisting boredom. And even though disclosure of weakness aims to protect access to advancement, when and where advancement is reached--codified and certified with an 'A'—the learner feels advantaged rather than vindicated:

*Mrs Onoyfriou, my English teacher—it's ok, it's my subject—is very nice, let's say, I can fool around a little bit in that class ... ok, I take this back. She gave me an A and I want to show her that I deserve the grade she gave me in English.*

## 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

### *Conclusions*

As suggested in the chapter “**The location of gender in integration discourse**”, the “gender questions” need to be asked again when examining how gender intersects with other axes of subordination in the lives of migrant women and girls. This is a different task particularly when gender questions (like race questions) are treated as non-signifiable, redundant or even discriminatory by a community of education policy actors and administrators who understand difference only as cultural difference. In doing research on the school lives of migrant girls we came to realize that in order to understand exclusion and empowerment it is not just the gender identities of the girls or the gendered --burden or refuge--of ethnicity that we need to investigate but also the gender structures, relations and norms of the school. The latter are often rendered unnoticeable when teachers, school counsellors, school administrators, ministries and other policy makers deal with the question of exclusion and consider locations and modes of intervention. In our research we have observed several ways in which gender aspects of exclusion become unnoticeable: (a) they are naturalized under the veil of ordinariness and normality (e.g., ‘this is how teenagers tease each other’), (b) they are normalized under the aegis of transparent administrative procedures (‘all kids know that ‘8’ is not a passing grade, ...they know that they have to pass final exams in all subjects to go to they next grade ... it is listed in the Orientation Manual/ School Guide for Foreign students), (c) the structural intersectionality of gender with migrant status, family status and other conditions of disempowerment is difficult to be understood by teachers and other educational agents whose intercultural training trained them to focus on identities and to validate factors and conditions with criteria of representability and generalizability.

Understanding intersectionality and interrupting chains of exclusion requires recognizing intersecting structures of racism and sexism as well as patterns of subordination in the experiences of migrant girls along *life’s spectrum*. Learning to understand exclusion from individual lives is often downplayed by the synchronic focus on cultural identity, the algorithmic and binary framing of integration (there is only pre-integration and post-integration; there are only integrated and non-integrated students) and delegitimized by narrow research criteria of validity and generalizability.

Our research on the school lives of migrant girls in Cypriot Secondary Education suggests that integration constitutes a process of subjectification which bestows on migrant girls the authority of the integrated which they use to negotiate the burden of otherness, but at the same time subjects them to kinds of precarity that compromise both their rebelliousness against violence and their right to have rights.

This has significant ramifications for the appraisal of integration as an educational experience. Integration policies related to residence and naturalization have been critiqued from the perspective of fundamental rights for rendering cultural assimilation a prerequisite for integration. Integration policies related to school access have been left outside the scope of this critique. One possible explanation for this is that school inclusion is not tied to citizenship rights. Another possible reason is that integration policies in the field of education have been accompanied (often also conflated) with intercultural education. Our analysis troubles this apolitical framing of educational policies and practices of integration. It shows that in the lives of migrant girls investments in schooling intersect with precarity (including sexual gender violence, probational regular student status, a bottomless and exhausting effort to prove the self worthy of integration) in ways that render contractual binds paramount to rights. This contractual understanding of

school is almost always accompanied by an individualization of the self's academic success and the others' academic failure, a process which not only renders structural inequality invisible but also renders ethnic othering an essential supplement for the ritualization and symbolic mediation of integration. Between those who fail in integration and those who are integrated effortlessly lies the majority of those who have reached the liminal zone of an incomplete integration, those who feel they will always be in debt regardless of how hard they have tried. Essentially, those whose national or ethnic identities will have 'thinned' enough to pass as culturally integrated but whose competences as autonomous learners will not be strong enough to guarantee that their investment in school will be redeemed as the secure future they have dreamed.

In an age of economic crisis, disjointedness and precarity, migrant girls are investing in their integration the dream of security, but at the same time integration policies impose on these girls kinds of negotiations that compromise their psychic powers. They are becoming integrated in the name of human rights but at the same time they are learning, through integration's lessons, to exempt themselves from a politics of human rights. In short, integration sabotages citizenship education as it comes to produce happy and competent claimants rather than critical citizens.

### ***Policy Recommendations***

#### ***Skills Development for Multicultural Schools***

- Allocation of adequate school time for explaining concepts to students such as non-discrimination, sexism, racism, human rights as well as for providing a holistic understanding of the phenomenon of migration. In contrast to repetitive celebrations of diversity, this will provide a better understanding of diversity from a human rights perspective rather than simply from a cultural perspective;
- Compulsory and systematic specialist training to help teachers feel more confident about teaching multicultural and diverse classes.

#### ***Develop Specific School Policies to Confront Sexism and Racism***

- Break the culture of silence in relation to sexist and racist incidents in schools by allowing open dialogue on such issues and by implementing pedagogical measures instead of simply disciplinary measures when such incidents occur in schools;
- Set in place mechanisms where girls feel safe in bringing complaints of gendered/racial violence to the school authorities;
- Racist and sexist incidences in schools should be archived in a data collection system so that corresponding policies can be drafted on the basis of such data;
- Provide incentives for Greek-Cypriot families to register their children in schools with high percentages of migrant/non-indigenous children.

#### ***Provide Adequate Information and More Inclusive Policies***

- Clarity and provision of substantial information to migrant students and their families in relation to the process of and requirements for becoming full-time students, attending all classes, and receiving evaluation, thus moving from the status of auditors to full participation in the school learning environment;
- Intensify the process for the de-installation of the institution of auditors in schools. New definitions must be considered as well as a more inclusive process of integrating migrant students into the school and educational system of Cyprus, which will recognize their value as individuals and students in the school setting.

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# Girls of Migrant Background in Greece: Conflicting loyalties and troubling hierarchies

## National context

It is generally admitted that Greece was transformed from an emigration country to an immigration one in the early 1990s, just after the collapse of socialist regimes in the Balkans and in Eastern Europe. This remains the dominant representation, in public and in academic discourse, of the Greek migration paradigm, although it has been challenged on several occasions (Psimmenos, 2000; Parsanoglou, 2007, 2009). However, the 1990s mark a quantitative shift in the migration history of the country in which pre-existing tendencies and patterns are intensified. The new phase in the history of migrant mobility in Greece has been classified by researchers under the general scheme of the so-called 'new immigration in Southern Europe' (King and Black, 1997; King, 2000).

We categorise new immigration to Greece in three distinct types/waves: *Greek returning migrants* who decided to return home<sup>1</sup> after a period of stay in north-western European countries, but also in North America and Oceania; *migrants of Greek ethnic origin from the Former Soviet Union*, who were designated by the state as 'repatriated' [παλιννοστούντες] migrants<sup>2</sup> even if they had never lived in Greece;<sup>3</sup> *international foreign migrants* who appear from the mid-1970s onwards, and especially during the 1990s, when they became the dominant actors of mobility in the Greek context.<sup>4</sup>

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1 According to the *Statistical Yearbook of Greece, 1969-1978* of the National Statistical Service of Greece (Markou, 1995, p. 33), this flow began as early as the late 1960s and contributed significantly to the reversal of the migratory balance in 1975 (237,524 persons from 1968 to 1977).

2 The equivalent of the *Aussiedler* in Germany.

3 According to the Census conducted by the General Secretariat of Repatriated Greeks from August 1997 to October 2000 (Kamenidis, 2000), they started to arrive in a more or less regulated way during the mid-1980s and particularly during the 1990s (155,319 persons from 1977 to 2000).

4 The figure of 797,091 reported by the 2001 Census of Population and Housing is today estimated to be about a million.

As far as nationalities among the foreign population are concerned, apart from Albanians who comprise by far the largest migrant community in Greece (55.6% of the total foreign population), the largest nationalities are: Georgians (2.9%), Russians (2.3%), Ukrainians (1.8%), Pakistanis (1.4%), Turks (1%), Egyptians (1%), Armenians (1%), Indians (0.9%), Iraqis (0.9%) and Filipinos (0.9%).<sup>5</sup>

As can be seen in Table 1,<sup>6</sup> women constitute a very significant part of migrant population in Greece. For some nationalities in particular, such as Russian, Ukrainian, Filipino and Moldovan, women are dominant, whereas migration from Pakistan and Bangladesh are the only cases where women are absent. Although immigration to Greece is clearly ‘feminised’, and even though gender is increasingly gaining ground as a subject of academic research and debate,<sup>7</sup> migration policies do not seem to follow the same pattern. As suggested by Kambouri and Hatzopoulos (2009, p. 14), female migrants in Greece tend to be represented in policy, either as a ‘complement’ to male migration in the framework of family reunification where women are implicitly considered as ‘protected members of the family’, or as ‘victims’ of trafficking networks controlled by men, both Greeks and foreigners. This representation reflects a certain ‘sexist myopia’ (Lazaridis, 2000) that characterises Greek migration policy.

In a similar vein, young people of migrant background are in principle confronted with an obvious contradiction: in public discourse and space they find they are not “young”, but mainly “Albanians”, “Roma”, “dangerous”, “inclined to delinquency” or “vulnerable” (Marvakis and Pavlou, 2006). At the same time, ironically, non-nationals as a whole are often represented in the media in ways that feminise them *vis-à-vis* nationals, as indicated by Golfinopoulos (2007, p. 44-46). This is undoubtedly connected to the way in which gender is articulated within migrant subjectivities, by both boys and girls who share public spaces, such as schools, with Greeks. Nonetheless, gender is totally absent even in the ‘second generation debate’ that gained ground in the public agenda especially after the riots of the French suburbs. Public concern with the influx of immigrants, and the ‘problem’ of the children they have and raise culminated in the recent discussion following the proposal of the Law for the ‘Amendment of the Greek Nationality Code and the political participation of co-ethnics and legally residing migrants’ which passed in March 2010.

## National policy context on education and migrants

The Greek state has not yet resolved essential issues concerning migration, such as the legal status of people who have lived and work in the country for several years. Even after three regularisation programmes (1998, 2001 and 2005), the regularisation of migrants remains an

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5 Bulgarians and Romanians are also very significant nationalities (4.7%, and 2.9% respectively). Even though they are counted as EU citizens since January 2007, they entered Greece as third country nationals. In addition, migration from these two countries was in a transitional phase until 2009, during which Bulgarian and Romanian citizens did not have the right to stay and work in Greece (or in many other countries of the EU), but they had to follow the conditions imposed by the Immigration Law 3386/2005: see Circular 30269/09/02/2007 of the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection and 22/13/03/2007 of the Ministry of Interior, Public Administration and Decentralisation.

6 See Appendix, p.

7 For a collection of current research on gender and migration, see Vaiou and Stratigaki, 2009 and, with a focus on domestic labour, Papataxiarchis, Topali and Athanassopoulou, 2008. For an overview of some of the literature on gender and migration in Greece, see Lafazani, 2008.

open question<sup>8</sup> and undocumented migrants are still a significant proportion of the migrant population (Lianos *et al.*, 2008; Maroukis, 2008). This reality clearly illustrates the inefficiency of migration policy in Greece.<sup>9</sup>

Education policy is the only area in which some measures addressing migrant issues have been implemented. As early as the 1980s, the *Ministry of Education* legislated special measures to facilitate the integration of repatriated Greek children into the educational system. In 1980, a Ministerial Decision (4139/20-10-1980) provided for the creation of *reception classes* (orientation classes) for children coming from abroad in order to support, mainly through language courses, their integration in the Greek educational system and society. In 1983, reception classes as well as tutorial classes were enforced by law (the law 1404/1983). The same year, Presidential Decree 1404 provided for the creation of reception classes for students coming from countries inside and outside the European Economic Community, with the aim of integrating them into the Greek social environment.

These initial steps were followed by a redefinition of educational policy *vis-à-vis* migrant children in the aftermath of massive inflows from Eastern Europe and especially Albania (Law 1894/1990). This law provided for the first reception classes for students coming from non-EC member states. In 1994, a Ministerial Decision (2//378/Γ1/1124, 3ε) stipulated the possibility of employing foreign teachers (on an hourly wage basis) for teaching the language and culture of countries of origin. However, this Ministerial Decision has remained ineffective, since such employment never took place.

In 1996 a legislative framework for intercultural education was established for the first time. The law 2413/1996 provided for the transformation of some public schools into specifically intercultural public schools, and also made it possible for private non-profit organisations to set up intercultural schools. The mission of intercultural schools is to apply “the curricula of corresponding public schools in such a way that they are adjusted to the particular educational, social, cultural and learning needs of their students.” (2413/1996, article 34, paragraph 2). Intercultural Education has not yet been mainstreamed into the general education system and does not yet embrace all students, either Greek or foreign. At present, there are only 26 intercultural schools, of which 13 are primary schools, 9 are junior high schools and 4 are senior high schools.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, it is worth noting that during 1997-2000 and 2000-2004, several research projects on immigrant students and cultural diversity issues were carried out in the framework of the *Operational Programme for Educational and Initial Vocational Training* (ΕΠΕΑΕΚ). The most significant ones were the “Integration of Roma children in School” (University of Ioannina, <http://projects.rc.uoi.gr/projects/?lang=el&keID=18>), the “Education of Repatriated Greek and Foreign Students” (University of Athens, [www.keda.gr](http://www.keda.gr)), and the “Education of

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8 In January 2007, ten years after the first regularization programme, the Minister of the Interior, Prokopis Pavlopoulos proclaimed in Parliament that ‘the government would not leave any migrant in illegality’ and he apologized to migrants for ‘their suffering from the bureaucracy’ (*Kathimerini*, 25/01/2007).

9 The Prime Minister, George Papandreou, admitting the diachronic inadequacy of Greek administration stated, during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Global Forum for Migration and Development (GFMD) held in Athens, in November 2009, that “Greece will adopt standard procedures of restoring legitimacy to migrants who have been deprived of it because of technicalities”. As the hunger strike of 300 undocumented migrants in early 2011 demonstrates, no progress has been achieved with regard to this issue. For more on the hunger strike, see <http://hungerstrike300.espivblogs.net/>.

10 Ministry of Education, [http://ypepth.gr/en\\_ec\\_page1547.htm](http://ypepth.gr/en_ec_page1547.htm)

Muslim children” (University of Athens, <http://www.museduc.gr/index.php>). In addition, two extensive research projects adopted a critical approach to the problem of racism and nationalism in Greece, specifically from the perspective of the low birth rate and the large influx of migrants during the 1990s. This research resulted in two books that examine the specificities of Greek nationalism and its consequences in the formation of normative gender and sexualities (Halkias 2004) and of motherhood (Paxson 2004).

### **Educational policy issues specific to migrant girls**

Although ‘gender mainstreaming’ has gained popularity as a priority in designing educational policy in Greece, at least at an experimental level, no specific measures regarding migrant girls have been taken. In fact, as shown in Table 3, the official statistical data related to the foreign student population does not take gender into account. It is also clear that there is very little concrete interest in gender issues in Greek educational policy because there are no education policies that deal with girls, either migrant or non-migrant.

The project “Production of Supporting Educational Material for the Introduction of Issues Concerning Gender in the Educational Process”, implemented by the University of Ioannina (2000-2006) is one example of a research project that refers indirectly to gender issues in the context of migration. Under the auspices of the Operational Programme for Educational and Initial Vocational Training II (EPEAEK) and monitored by the General Secretariat for Gender Equality, the aim of this project was to support gender equality in Primary and Secondary Education.<sup>11</sup>

Gender is treated as a significant factor in numerous studies of educational processes despite a general lack of attention paid to gender in educational policy (Kladouhou, 2010).<sup>12</sup> Several research projects, studying both teachers and students, focus on the reproduction of gender stereotypes during the educational process (Vidali, 1997, Freiderikou, 1995, Freiderikou and Folerou, 1991, Maragoudaki, 1997, Vasilou-Papageorgiou, 1995, Ziogou *et al.*, 2000), while others examine specifically the representations of gender in textbooks (Kogidou, 1995, Deligianni- Kouimtzi, 2000a, 2000b, Frosi, 2000).

In sum, we found a complete lack of policies focusing on the gendered aspects of the experience of students with migrant background at all levels of the Greek educational system. This is no doubt related to a generalised gender-blind perception of both migration and educational issues at the level of policy design and implementation in Greece.

### **Gender and cultural identities in the educational experiences of young migrant women**

Both gender and cultural identities were found to play an important role in the experience of school by girls of migrant background. The initial response of all interviewees to the ques-

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11 For more, see [http://www.isotita-epeaek.gr/ipostiriktiko\\_iliko.htm](http://www.isotita-epeaek.gr/ipostiriktiko_iliko.htm).

12 As an example of the naturalisation of gender relations within the school system, and the obstacles to not only changing them but also even studying them, see the reference that Fotis Politis makes about the suspicion of the headmasters and teachers he was faced with during his fieldwork on masculinities in primary school (Politis, 2008, p.151). Also, with regard to the position of the Ministry of Education towards measures concerning gender equality, Stratigaki (2008) suggests that such measures are viewed as “necessary harm” resulting from the need to adjust national policies to the EU standard.

tion whether gender or ethnic origin has an impact on school life and relations, was negative: “there is no difference among girls and boys, neither among migrants and Greeks”, was the leitmotiv of each interview. Most of the girls told us that their friends are boys and girls, both Greeks and non-Greeks. However, despite firm declarations regarding gender and ethnic ‘blindness,’ both in the choice of friends and in terms of educational practices, gender and national identity emerged as charged sites of tension in the course of the discussions with all the girls of migrant background.

With regard to the social life of students, ‘friends’ are typically restricted to the same gender and, in many cases, to the same ethnic group. Maya, a girl of Filipino origin who attends a well-known public experimental<sup>13</sup> school in Athens, stated repeatedly that there is no distinction made between students of different ethnic origin in her school, but said she had only one friend at school, a boy from Seychelles. In addition, as she told us in response to a direct question near the end of the interview, she had never participated in any gatherings or parties organised by schoolmates, she had never visited the house of a Greek schoolmate, nor had a Greek schoolmate ever visited her. During leisure time and during holidays, she almost exclusively ‘hangs out’ with young people of Filipino origin who she meets through the Catholic cathedral of St Dionysus, at the centre of Athens, that she and her mother attend every Sunday.

Similarly, race emerges as a very significant realm of differentiation for girls of African origin. Skin colour was referred to in many instances, particularly when it became part of competitive gender dynamics. “*Lefkes*” and “*mavres*”, “white (girls)” and “black (girls)” respectively, were labels commonly used by the girls of African descent to denote Greeks and other nationals of pale skin, on the one hand, and themselves on the other. As the girls explained to us, their darker skin colour is made to signify a potentially contagious form of dirt. We were told that white girls (both Greek and Albanian apparently) mutter, ostensibly to one another, as they brush by, “watch out, if they touch, you’ll turn black.” Also, referring to space outside the schoolyard, girls from Nigeria told us, during the second interview, that they feel many Greeks see them as “all alike.” It was made clear, moreover, though the word itself wasn’t said, that what was meant was that their bodies are viewed as those of prostitutes:

*And now about that other issue, it’s because, you know, now there are the girls who have come from Africa and they do that job [sex workers]... A black girl who is a student is not going to want to dress in a certain way because she will hear many comments in the street, a lot of dirty talking.*

Q: *Have you ever been in a similar situation?*

A: *Yes, this is something that happens to us, too. When a man sees you wearing jeans and all-star shoes he gets confused. He wonders who is she... They don’t understand. Because basically they think that all blacks (female) are the same. They don’t know you are that age and what job another woman is doing. That’s why if you wear a mini skirt, men are going to think that...*

Q: *Let’s say about Ukrainians [female]... it was always said that... But this is happening with you too?*

A (girl): *Our colour plays a role.*

A (boy): *It’s mostly about black women. I remember we were going home from a prom and a friend of mine (girl) was wearing a short dress and there was a guy in a car who saw her and he stopped the car and said, “Hey, how much does an hour go for?” Because she is black. And my friend was insulted and*

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13 Experimental schools (*πειραματικά σχολεία*) are schools of primary and secondary education that are linked to universities and particularly to faculties and departments of Education. Educational research and pilot methods are supposed to be supported and implemented in these schools.

got angry and told him “Okay asshole, what are you talking about? What are you saying? Because you see me wearing this thing?” They think everybody is the same, but it’s not right.

A (girl): They say “are you working?” Whatever you may wear, it’s irrelevant. It’s the colour, I don’t know, it attracts them more.

The conflation of racism with sexism experienced by girls of African origin is further illuminated in another instance. In the context of one of our conversations they reported being treated on many occasions by boys “not with racism, but in a sexual way; look, here comes the ‘hottie’ (*kavla*)” This is a comment black girls say they hear at the beach or when they enter a coffee shop in some areas.

Race clearly matters and it does so in gender-specific ways. Moreover, as noted most clearly in the ‘dirt’ example, societal perception of ‘blackness’ does not follow only ‘exotic’ paths. According to the two girls from Nigeria, different skin colour makes some more ‘foreign’ than others. On the ladder of ‘foreignness’, those who come from European countries (even the Balkans and Eastern Europe) are conceived to be closer to Greeks than Africans are. Their own lack of proximity is what, for them, explains “the inability of Africans to get ‘normal’ jobs. A Greek won’t hire an African. He would prefer an Albanian”.<sup>14</sup>

In the case of Albanians, the largest migrant group in the country, even if ethnic origin is not considered as significant as in the case of girls of Filipino or African origin, it plays a role in the construction of friendship networks here as well. The stories that unfolded during the interviews show that being a ‘migrant’<sup>15</sup> or having a different ethnic-cultural background, plays a significant role in shaping the relationships formed within the school context. In most cases, even if Greeks and ‘migrants’ are involved in different exchanges in the school environment, ‘migrant’ girls tend to relate more, and more strongly, with girls who are ‘migrant’.

So, with the exception of Dina, who told us that her best friend was Greek, the other three interviewees of Albanian origin, much like all the other girls interviewed, also told us that their friends were mostly schoolmates of migrant background if not, more specifically, of the same ethnic origin. An interesting case, that suggests the significance of ‘migrant status’ per se, along with the flexible limits of ‘migrant realities’, is the case of Adrianna, born in Albania, a student in the second class of upper high school (*Lyceum*). Her best friend is a Greek girl who was born in Germany, of Greek migrants to Germany, and moved ‘back’ to Greece some years ago. As Adrianna said of her friend, “she is in some way a migrant herself”.

Another aspect of identity that emerged as significant in the educational experiences of young women with migrant background is social class. Two sisters of Albanian origin, Brianna and Stella, 18 and 15 years old, stated that their schoolmates are not very friendly with ‘migrant’ girls. According to them, this has to do with the fact that their Greek schoolmates are, more or less, *plousiopaída* (rich kids, the children of rich people). It is important to note that they live in a middle class suburb of Athens. They reported facing discrimination both as Albanians (immigrants) and as ‘poor’.

This is not the case for interviewees who live and attend public schools in the inner-city, and particularly in working-class neighbourhoods where the concentration of migrant

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14 This was said by a girl of Nigerian origin whose mother works as a street vendor.

15 Although many of these girls are not actually migrants, as they themselves have not immigrated to Greece. They fall under this category because of the policy and their legal status.

residents is high, such as Kypseli and Patissia.<sup>16</sup> Economic inequality exists but to a lesser extent. Once again, the ways with which gender complicates things is evident. The specifically gendered articulations of class inequality are interesting. Clothing emerged as a prime site of class status inscription, and conflict. Almost all girls confirmed that there are great differences in how girls are dressed at school. Some of them wear expensive clothes while others dress in 'street clothes'. 'Expensive clothes', distinguished primarily by name brand, function as status symbols producing something like a 'clothing-status hierarchy'. As an Albanian girl who lives in Nikea, a mainly working-class suburb of Piraeus, said: "In my school some girls wear D&G clothes and others get their clothes from the *laiki* (street market)." At the same time, several of the interviewees told us that "for boys, it's different, it doesn't really matter what they wear."<sup>17</sup>

## Between reproducing and overcoming gender stereotyping

Discussing gender issues specifically with the girls of our sample revealed interesting contradictions. All reported an initial general standpoint of gender-blindness wherein "there are no differences between girls and boys." Yet, like the claim about "no racism at school," this claim was not supported by the stories we were told. What is especially interesting is a certain tension or contradiction between the reproduction of gender certainties or even stereotypes on one level and the challenging of stereotypes at the level of certain choices and practices.

Assumptions about differences between girls and boys were reiterated in all interviews along the given path of gender labelling: girls are most inclined to 'theoretical' courses, such as Letters (language and literature) and Humanities, while boys prefer 'hard' sciences, such as Mathematics; girls study more than boys; girls are more mature than boys and so on. Nevertheless, all interviewees reported that their teachers did not distinguish between girls and boys in any significant manner and, in terms of the girls' school life more generally, this discursive reproduction of gender stereotypes is in conflict with choices and everyday practices reported during the interviews.

With regard to a sexual division of inclinations, or 'talent', it is surprising that this assumption was expressed by girls whose actual choices are in the opposite direction. Adrianna from Albania, for example, who insisted that boys tend to be better in courses of the 'positive' or 'technological' directions<sup>18</sup> has herself chosen the 'positive' direction and she is going to take exams for the Faculty of Architecture. Similarly, Dina, also from Albania, wants to go to military school in order "to prove that women are not inferior to men".

The girls of Nigerian origin reported that most mothers of 'black' girls are quite adamant that they want their children, both boys and girls, to become one of two things, doctors or

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16 For more information and socio-spatial analysis on the above-mentioned districts, see Vaiou (2007). It is important to note here that apart from the two sisters and A. (all three of Albanian origin) who live respectively in a middle-class suburb in the north of Athens and in a working-class suburb of Piraeus, the other girls live in the city centre, mainly in Kypseli and Victoria square.

17 In one instance, during the second of three interview meetings with two girls of African descent, the boy who had come with them for our conversation nodded his head firmly in agreement with this comment.

18 Within the two last classes of Upper high school (*Lyceum*) in Greece, students have to choose which option they will follow among the following three: 'Theoretical' (consisting mostly of courses in the Humanities, 'Positive' (mathematics, physics etc.) and 'Technological' (mathematics, chemistry, I/T applications etc.). According to the direction they have chosen, and to their performance in the final exams, they go to the respective University faculty.

lawyers. They apparently are quite firm in their expectation that their children pursue 'serious' occupations, and, as one of the girls told us, they are especially firm that the girls need to pursue such jobs, so that they have independence.<sup>19</sup> Here the contradiction between the stories told about gender, and the related practices, seems to shift in a different direction. The girl who shared this story also told us, when we asked, that she herself has started thinking that becoming a pharmacist is 'better' because medical school is difficult, and getting in is also difficult.

Similarly, Maya, of Filipino origin, told us at some length that she aspired to become a doctor, and was encouraged to do so by her mother. Upon further questioning she actually told us she has decided nursing school is better, as it is easier to get in, and easier to find a job later. Economic considerations, potentially interwoven with latent and more traditional gender expectations, may help to explain this 'doubling back' from a more 'progressive' track of educational, and occupational choices. Indeed these considerations seem significant not only in terms of future prospects but also in terms of the cost of a university education. While the education system remains public in Greece, with no tuition, relocating to a different city entails significant expenditure for students and their families. Thus, when explaining her reasoning to us, the Filipino girl hoping to study nursing in Athens or in Patras stated that the advantage of Athens is that "she can stay with her mother and [she] won't have to pay for rent." It may also be significant that her mother was herself a nurse in the Philippines though in Greece she is a domestic worker. Overall, the choice of studies and occupation seems to involve a negotiation of the alleged gender-based inclinations or talents, along with a more 'independent' desire to challenge these stereotypes and economic considerations. The ambivalence seems to be resolved, in the end, by according primacy to the latter.

Another piece of information that indicates some degree of trouble with regard to traditional gender stereotypes in the school environment relates to the binary opposition of 'quiet or good' girls as opposed to 'trouble-making' boys. Almost all girls described a highly competitive culture among girls at school. According to Dina, of Albanian origin, "girls are much more in for gossip, even aggressive gossip, (*θάψιμο*), while boys are very shy." At least two of the interviewees (Gella and Dina of Bulgarian and Albanian origin respectively) stated that girls in general are far more dynamic than boys at school. In this context, we were told that even violent behaviour is not a boys' monopoly any more. Gella referred to some cases of girls bullying girls and mentioned incidents of clear physical violence perpetrated by girls.

Similar incidents were mentioned by one of the teachers we interviewed who emphatically stated that "violence is not at all a male privilege anymore." He described a serious fight between girls during a school visit to the new Acropolis Museum. This fight continued afterwards with threats written in notes sent from one girl to the other. Interestingly, the Albanian girl who allegedly wrote these notes (she has not admitted it) apparently wrote in one of these notes to the other girl, of Greek origin, that "she would send three Albanians to beat her up".

One of the issues around which highly competitive culture develops is popularity. Competition is mostly about appearance and (hetero)sexual relations. As one of the girls stated, "there are always in every school some popular girls. Generally speaking, these girls are mostly white-Greek, dressed in expensive famous-brand clothes, have many friends and they are dating popular boys." In this context, girls of migrant background have clear disadvantages for negotiating their position within the competitive field of girl-girl relations within the school.

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19 As Emma stated, parents urge students to become doctors or lawyers, "because these professions bring prestige and economic independency".

Boys' popularity seems to be a different story. Although having many friends and dating 'popular' girls is a strong element, as noted earlier, clothes are not that significant for boys. Dina and Adrianna report that "boys don't have to wear something special to look good. Almost all of them wear large, hip-hop trousers in a way that their underwear can be seen, and t-shirts. For a girl to be popular, or just look pretty, things are far more difficult. She has to wear make-up and be dressed "expensive-looking"" In addition, racial and ethnic background seems not to be significant handicaps for boys at school. The popular boys are not only Greeks. Putting together different stories from the girls interviewed, there are 'popular' boys among Greeks, Poles, and also Africans. It seems that a key aspect of boys' popularity is related to appearing 'bad' or 'tough'. Popular boys are usually 'tough guys', they smoke, they have many girlfriends and sometimes they are not afraid of getting into trouble.

Girls' performativity of 'tough guy' masculinities, at times resulting in actual violent behaviour, may reflect a strategic deployment of practices that seem to promise a certain form of social power. However the interviews suggest that, once again, things are not as simple for girls. Many girls also smoke, a few have many boyfriends and some of them often get into trouble. But in the common sense of school, these girls are not in fact represented as 'popular.' There seems to be a thin line between being 'famous' and being a 'bitch.' What matters here is the 'quantity' of each element: a girl can smoke, but a little; she can wear sexy clothes but not too sexy, if she doesn't want to be called a 'slut'; she can have a boyfriend, but not many. Girls, whether of migrant or non migrant background, have to be cautious if they want to keep their proximity to popular status.

Finally, a strong stereotype that emerged from almost all the interviews is that of 'immature boys,' contrary to 'mature women,' as girls in general seem to be represented. Boys' behaviour is generally configured as 'childish.' This may explain the preference of girls for older boys, "who are not immature, who are not kids, like [their] schoolmates; who are actually men" as it may also reflect the school economy's designation of hegemonic masculinity, performed at the site of either white or non-white male bodies specifically, if not equally so, as a steady site of privilege. All in all, traditional gender stereotypes seem to be troubled to a degree by migrant girls' professional aspirations, and their occasional involvements in the aggressive-violent behaviour exhibited by some of their Greek peers. The stereotypes are supported, however, in large part, by their eventual educational choices, even though these are presented as 'inevitable' due to economic considerations, and by the girls' designations of criteria for popularity and eroticised subjects.

## **The family/(back)/home**

Family life and the home are important arenas in which gender cultural assumptions and representations of young women of migrant background are tested. The intersection between racial/ethnic origin and gender becomes quite clear when it comes to family attitudes towards gender relations. For example, while black boys who go out with white girls are perceived if not always positively, at least neutrally by their families, the same does not hold for girls. The girls we interviewed explained that parents have in mind that "girls have to follow the boy in case of marriage, the white girl will follow the boy, whereas the girl (non-white) will have to follow the white boy". This notion of who "follows" whom seems to reflect not only a differentiated approach of parents *vis-à-vis* their children according to their gender, but also an implicit expectation that the traditions of the country of origin will be maintained even if, and perhaps more so because, the family is not exactly expecting to geographically go 'back home.'

Another way in which gender interplays with a generational discontinuity among children and parents is in the perception of the 'home country.' For interviewees of Albanian origin, for example, it was repeatedly mentioned that even though relations with their country of origin were maintained, a sense of uneasiness prevails whenever they visit Albania. This uneasiness does not emanate simply from the fact that "they are perceived as the rich ones, since they are living in Greece." Rather it seems to be connected to the different way gender roles are perceived in Albania: "If they see you walking with a boy who is not a member of your family in the street, there is a problem; they perceive you as a whore. People are backward back there." There are two other issues with regard to the gendered construction of households: the 'sexual division of labour' within the household, and the patriarchal hierarchies that affect relations between parents and children, and among siblings. The former is an additional burden for migrant girls who are expected to help mothers keep the household. As the interviewees of Nigerian origin pointed out:

"Boys after school can do their homework or go out and find their friends. Girls cannot. They have to do the housework (if mother is at work) or help her if she is at home. In addition to cooking and doing the dishes, girls have to take care of siblings and only when they are done can they move on to do their homework for school. As mothers keep saying, 'if you don't know how to cook or do the house work, nobody is going to marry you.'"

For other girls, contributing to the household entails work during holidays, especially summer holidays. Most of the interviewed girls, in particular those who had finished their exams, were searching for a temporary job. In some cases, as with a Filipino and an Albanian interviewee, girls work with their mothers: the former helps her mother in the houses where she works as a domestic worker and the latter works during summers in her mother's wedding decoration business in Albania. Just how important finding a job outside the home is to the girls we talked with is clearly illustrated by Brianna's closing remark, as we finished the interview and were preparing to leave. She turned to us spontaneously and said "Do you perhaps know of any jobs I can try for?"

Patriarchy in family relations is an issue, particularly for girls of Albanian origin. All interviewees from Albania said that Albanian men (fathers) and Albanian families are in general far stricter with girls than Greeks. Dina described her family as a 'patriarchy in degradation': "My father would like to be as strict as others, but it's not his type/he can't (*δεν το έχει*); so he is cool". She emphatically explained that in the 'Albanian mentality,' "there's no such thing as friendship between a boy and a girl in Albania. If a boy and a girl walk in the street together everybody thinks they are engaged." Although they believe the situation is better here in Greece, all four girls said that they face very rigid control of their 'outdoor' life. They have to report where they are going and they have to return early. These restrictions apply only to girls. As they stated, boys (in Albanian families) are free to go out, come back late, have girlfriends and so on.<sup>20</sup>

To summarise, gender and cultural assumptions clearly do matter; they play a significant role in the educational and broader social experiences of girls of migrant background attending school in Athens. What is also important though is that these assumptions are interwoven in ways that generate contradictory attitudes and practices, challenging a static and deterministic view of 'the role of gender' or 'the role of ethnic background.' Perhaps the

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20 It is important to note the many faces of patriarchal power relations. Similar dynamics were described by the girls of Filipino and African origin, despite the fact that all of their homes have a female head of household.

only clear 'constant' that we can refer to is the fact that all the girls, in different ways, reported aspects of their everyday lives in which they feel they carry a heavier burden than their male counterparts.

### **Forms of exclusion and marginalization: The specific 'burden' of nationalism**

That Greek nationalism is present within school is patently clear. This, and the dense intertwining of nationalism with racism (Gilroy, 2002), is starkly illustrated in an issue that revolves around the choice of student to carry the Greek flag during the school parades for the national holidays of March 25<sup>th</sup> (anniversary of the War of Independence from the Ottoman Empire) and October 28<sup>th</sup> (War against Italians in 1940). The tradition is that the student with the highest grades in a given class carries the flag during the parade. Over the past two decades, there have been several cases reported in the media where migrant students have been selected to carry the flag in recognition of their excellence. Angry protests by local people who cannot accept that "a foreigner holds our national symbol" (especially when this foreigner is an Albanian) have been reported throughout the country (Tzanelli, 2006).

Similar experiences were reported by two interviewees. Adrianna told us, prodded by her mother, that when she was in elementary school, she was the one who should carry the flag, but a schoolmate, of Greek origin, insisted that he should carry it. Her teacher stood by her arguing that she had the best grades in the class. In the end, Adrianna dropped the issue, encouraged by her mother, mainly out of fear that it would grow out of proportion. She now interprets the incident as more a matter of competitiveness on the part of her classmate than an expression of pure nationalism or racism. Her mother, who intervened in the discussion, said that it was not really a problem raised by her schoolmate but by his family. Interestingly, in a similar case reported by a girl of Sierra Leonean origin, her cousin finally carried the flag without succumbing to the fear of potential nationalist and/or racist reactions.

Thus, along with clear evidence of nationalism within Greek schools, we note a circumscribed perception of it by the girls we interviewed. Another part of 'Greekness,' the normative aspects of Greek orthodox religion, also seems not to be noticed by the girls as 'a problem.' School programmes and curriculum related to history or religious affairs in Greece are marked by a presumed superiority of Greek Orthodoxy, despite the increasing secularisation of the Greek state.<sup>21</sup> Yet most of the girls reported not being especially interested in religious issues.<sup>22</sup> All interviewees reported that there is no religious discrimination at school. For all, finally, taking part in the formal morning prayer that is still held in Greek schools was presented as a chore, as it is for all their classmates, rather than as a form of discrimination.

This perception of nationalism and its concomitant racism, along with its markedly

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21 Indicative of this tendency is the controversial reform concerning the information included in the identity cards. In 2000, after the Decision 510-17-15.05.2000 of the Hellenic Data Protection Authority (HDPA), information concerning religious faith has been removed from identity cards, since, according to the justification of the decision, "it refers to the inner world of the individual and it is therefore neither appropriate nor necessary in order to prove one's identity." The reaction of the Greek Orthodox Church was fierce, though without any result.

22 Even for girls that come from a different religious background, such as Emma and Eva from Nigeria who come from Protestant families, following the school's Religious Studies course was not considered a problem. One reason they cited is that "there is no big difference between Protestants and Greek Orthodox. After all, they are both Christians". Another reason, mentioned by all interviewees, is that teachers are casual on the issue and students of different faiths can be excused from attending religious courses.

gendered articulations, appears in other (everyday) circumstances in the public space surrounding the school. Two of the girls we talked with told us that there are occasionally 'problems' with the police. One of them (of Nigerian origin) stated that Greek police officers very often stop 'blacks' in order to check their 'papers'. However, as she explained, things are somehow different for black girls than for black boys. Although not a very common experience for a non-white girl, "they mostly stop the boys", Emma said, she was stopped herself once: "When the policeman saw my papers and realised that I was born here, and when he heard the way I spoke Greek, he said 'Oh, you are a Greek girl' (*Eisai Ellinida.*)". The way she quoted the words of the Greek police officer revealed a victorious tone. Although the colour of her skin positioned her as the 'foreigner', the representative of a state authority acknowledged her as a member of the 'national community'. The possibility of any irony on the part of the officer was not entertained.

Dina, an Albanian girl also referred to the police, and particularly to police controls in the street. As she told us, she never had any really close encounter with the police. She confirmed the gender stereotype that leads police officers to focus on boys and told us that "cops stop and check boys of Albanian origin based on their appearance". We asked her if she could be more specific about how someone can tell if a boy is 'Albanian' or not. She said *she* could identify Albanians and that sometimes she plays that 'game' with a Greek friend of hers. Many Albanians look like "peasants" (*horiates*), she said, men and women, boys and girls. "They usually wear flashy clothes, they have old-fashioned hair, and many of them have an Albanian-like accent". Dina described in detail – and subscribed to – the dominant stereotype of the 'peasantry-rooted' Albanian (both male and female) as opposed to the 'civilised-urban' Greek. She, as a girl raised in Athens, the capital of Greece, safely remote from her Albanian 'roots', could 'understand' and even agree with the (stereotypic) way Greeks identify Albanians.

These incidents illustrate the gendered ways in which nationalism and racism are articulated in areas of life connected to school though not directly in school. At the same time, they display the circumscribed form of their perception, and a strong sense of personal agency, that the girls we talked with evidenced. Further, it must be said that these incidents offer suggestive evidence of social formations that are based not only on different aspects of ideological constructions that characterise Greek society, but of a specifically defined *regime*.<sup>23</sup>

Within the context of institutionally and socially constructed nationalism, girls of migrant origin are confined to the limits that their *de jure* condition imposes; the Greek state defines and identifies them as 'immigrants', even though many of them were born in Greece or have entered the country at a very young age, i.e., before starting school. This means that unlike 'real' Greeks, children of migrant background have to 'justify' their presence in the country where they were born and/or raised by holding and keeping valid residence permits. There have been numerous examples in the press of young people who faced insurmountable administrative obstacles during the processing of their residence permit (Kaitanidi, 2005; Tsatsis *et al.*, 2006; Kapllani, 2006).

The recent new law concerning citizenship may present a challenge to this migrant regime.

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23 For more on the notion of regime, see Walther 2006. This regime includes "existing institutional settings that have a history structured not only by conflicts and the interest of specific social actors but also by the set of values and interpretations which they constantly reproduce, [and within which] institutions and concepts merge into what is conceived of as a 'normal' in a given context, which also includes a 'normal' relation between individual entitlements and collective demands."

For the first time in recent Greek history<sup>24</sup> this inequality, linked to the predominance of *jus sanguinis* seems to be challenged by a 'smooth' turn to regulations inscribed in the logic of *jus soli*. The reform of the code of citizenship, enacted by the Law 3838/2010, passed in March 2010, creates the possibility – under certain conditions – for migrants' children, born or raised in Greece, to access full citizenship. This law is expected to grant citizenship to large numbers of the so-called 'second generation' immigrants. For the moment, however, many administrative barriers have been reported by migrants who attempt to benefit from the new regulations. It is indicative that although all girls we interviewed knew about the new law and seemed interested in making use of its provisions, none of them had applied for citizenship, nor knew of anyone who had. In fact, they knew almost nothing about the specific provisions and procedures and because of this they had a pessimistic view of the process. For example, almost all the girls and some of the parents we interviewed thought that the cost for the application was much higher than 100 Euros; two girls of Nigerian origin thought that the cost was 1000 Euros. We also observed an almost complete lack of information concerning the conditions and specific procedures stipulated by the law. This fact demonstrates that the new code of citizenship is far from a concrete reality for those who are its stated target population.

### **Everyday 'tensions' in and around the school**

As far as the school environment is concerned, most of the girls stated quite firmly that their school life is generally 'normal' and they face no discrimination based on their (non-Greek) origin. Nevertheless, here too, this 'general' statement is not always verified when it comes to details. We have already referred to subtle or direct tensions among students, expressed via implicit or explicit comments or actions (e.g., comments on colour of skin or appearance more generally). Interviewees reported that teachers expressed discrimination against migrant students. To give one example, a girl whose family came from Sierra Leone told us that a teacher at her school "didn't like immigrant students and especially Albanians":

*And every time he got to a name that was not Greek, he (the teacher) would ask "Where are you from?", and the student would say "I'm from Albania," and the teacher used to say "Oh, Albania!" And then, well, he'd see more names and say "Ah, so you are from Albania too?" and the children would say, "There are Poles as well," and then every name he'd see he'd say "And you are from Albania too?" And he'd say this with so much irony; it was like he was saying "We are full of Albanians here." And then he saw my name (which is not Greek)*

Q: *And he said again "you are from Albania?"*

A: *"No", he said "It's obvious..." [that you're not from Albania]*

Ethnic stereotyping on the part of teachers surfaced in the girls' narratives in disparate ways. As Bea, a girl of Filipino origin stated, one of her teachers, a woman who teaches the course of religion, during a conversation about child exploitation, mentioned in class that Filipinos are usually involved in paedophilic pornographic networks. Bea said that she got very upset with this negative generalization about Filipinos, but she didn't say anything in class; even when she discussed it with some Filipino boys in her class, they weren't really

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24 Exception to this could be considered the special case of the naturalisation and acquisition of citizenship for immigrants coming from the countries of the Former Soviet Union who could prove they were of Greek ethnic origin: see Law 2790/2000, *Restoration of repatriated Greeks from the Former Soviet Union*.

interested in doing anything about it. Her mother, however, who understood that something was bothering her daughter and elicited a response from her, was very angry. She wanted to find the teacher and tell her that she thought this was a problem, but her daughter was adamant that she did not want her to do so.

Another problem, more subtle, has to do with a reported disinterest shown by teachers to the fact that migrant students do not have help with their homework at home. Eva, of Nigerian origin, told us that a major problem she faced during elementary school and early classes of lower high-school, was that her single mother could not help her with homework. She couldn't read or write Greek and the only person who helped her was a Greek woman who lived in a neighbouring apartment.

In the context of secondary school, this problem, of a lack of attention from teachers, is exacerbated by the fact that even students of Greek origin are expected to attend afternoon classes offered by the private, and expensive, *frontistirio*. The other interviewee of Nigerian origin reported that she faced significant problems particularly in upper high school because of the lack of extra-school support. Her family, and this holds for the families of a great number of 'migrant' students, cannot afford *frontistirio* courses.<sup>25</sup> This fact leads to the formation of a two-tier classroom. The upper tier consists of those who have the support of the after-school lessons, while the lower one comprises those who do not have this possibility:

*Q: If you think of all the years in the Lyceum, all those years, what was the most difficult thing for you?*

*A: Generally, in the first two years I had a problem just with Physics. In the third year I had a problem with Math because especially during the two last years it was difficult for me to catch up. Because I wasn't going to a frontistirio, but everybody else did, I would participate but not as much. I didn't go while everybody else knew everything better than me, from the summer already.*

*Q: Did the situation with the frontistirio bother you? How was this for you?*

*A: Yes, it bothered me a little because some teachers used to say "Oh, all right, you already know this and that from the frontistirio." But for the students who did not go to frontistirio, myself and another girl that is, it was a little difficult.*

In Greece, like elsewhere, ethnicity/nationality seems to intersect with class. None of the girls' parents held a high-status job.<sup>26</sup> Economic/class status seems to represent a very strong aspect of inequality that determines the everyday life of migrant girls both inside and outside school. On the one hand, youth of migrant background tend to be of lower social class. On the other hand, all the girls we talked with referred to a clear hierarchy within schools that is organised around the question of who is 'rich' (and how rich someone is) and who is not. For girls, this hierarchy is then remapped on to a hierarchy of 'popularity' or 'beauty' which itself carries a heavier price tag for them. We have already referred to how (expensive) clothes surfaced as important territory in the battle of competition among girls. Given the lower class

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<sup>25</sup> Greek secondary school, especially Lyceum, is a highly competitive institution focused on the University exams. This one-dimensional orientation is coupled with the "tradition" of a "shadow" school that offers a kind of private group-tutorial course, in all subjects examined, which prepares students for the final exams. *Frontistirio* takes up a great part of the family budget, even for many middle-class Greeks.

<sup>26</sup> Some are workers (construction workers, factory workers, domestic workers) one is unemployed, and some of them, of African origin, are street peddlers.

status of girls of migrant background it is clear that they grapple with structural handicaps here as well.

The precarious economic status of almost all girls, and the specific burden this creates for them, is not confined only within the limited boundaries of school; it is reflected in their after-school activities, particularly in their leisure time. Some of the interviewees, such as those of Nigerian origin, reported that they face severe economic problems and they sometimes cannot afford the bus tickets to go to the beach in the summer. They seldom go to cafeterias and bars or to the cinema. For those who enjoy going to the mall, they often ‘hang out’ in its ‘public’ spaces rather than sit in one of the cafeterias. Usually they meet their friends at home and when they go out they prefer public spaces, such as local squares, or they just ‘hang out’ around the block.

All told, while the girls’ resourcefulness in asking for help with homework from neighbours, teachers or occasionally from one another is important, the discrimination they suffer remains significant. The ethnic and national stereotyping expressed directly by some teachers, and the class discrimination evinced indirectly from the very structure of the school system with its reliance on the private *frontistirio*, and expressed directly in the common classroom practice of ‘indifference’ by over-worked public school teachers are all quite clear. In addition, the disparate and markedly gendered articulations of the lower class position of the families of migrant girls, is exacerbated by the fact that the girls of migrant background are also expected to help their mothers (often domestic workers) at home. Almost all the girls interviewed reported that they were obliged to spend a lot of their time doing housework, before they could go on to do their homework. Thus, even disparities, such as class position, that seem to be gender-neutral and that reside ‘outside’ school, reach the heart of the schooling experience in ways that are firmly sexist.

## Educational policies and practices

There are no policies – either at the level of legislation or at the level of pilot programmes – that address both gender and ethnic origin. Some small legislative steps have been taken towards the integration of migrant children in the educational system with ambiguous results so far. With regard to gender, educational policies do not exist<sup>27</sup> with the exception of a few pilot projects mentioned above, the outputs of which have not been incorporated into mainstream educational institutions. Thus the issue is how existing practices, formal and informal, affect girls of migrant origin.

Mono-cultural and mono-linguistic premises and orientations interplay with concentrated and non-flexible educational methods. As far as the former is concerned, even ‘intercultural schools’ in principle follow the curriculum and annual study programme of mainstream schools. The language used is Greek and the main aim is to “organize and enable primary and secondary education schools to offer education to young people with educational, social and cultural particularities [...] In these intercultural schools the curriculum of their counterpart state schools is applied, adapted to the particular educational, social and cultural needs of their

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27 It is important to note here that when preparing the Discussion Group among students, parents and relevant stakeholders, we asked for the participation of representatives of the General Secretariat for Gender Equality, the Government body which is responsible for gender equality policy. In declining to attend, the General Secretariat noted that “no such policies or activities are produced within the Secretariat.”

pupils (Law 2413/1996, article 34).<sup>28</sup> This general call for “adaptation to the particular needs of the pupils” has remained until today general, if not vague, without any specific content and, more importantly, no effort has been made to incorporate intercultural principles into the mainstream educational system.

All the interviewees in Athens, students and teachers, confirmed the concentrated and inflexible character of education procedures and methods. Predominantly, if not exclusively, exam-oriented school classes do not allow any ‘deviance’ from what has to be taught and learned during the school year. There is no place, and particularly no time, for additional activities linked to specific issues that concern students. Giorgos, a teacher of sociology in a secondary school, was direct on this point:

For a two-hour (per week) course, the total hours of teaching per year are 60. If you deduct the hours missed because of holidays, strikes or other ‘extraordinary’ events, and if you take into account the amount of material you have to cover as prescribed by the Ministry [of Education], it is impossible to work on different issues apart from those foreseen in the *Curriculum Guide (Vivlio Ylis)*.<sup>29</sup>

This intense rhythm is reported as well by the students as one of the biggest problems with school life. Along with problems with specific teachers who either “do not care” or “do not have the necessary skills for transmitting knowledge”, all girls – particularly those who were attending the last two years of high school – mentioned heavy workload and lack of free time as the main problems in their school lives.

We have already mentioned that education is one of the first areas where policies relevant to immigration were designed. However, the actual implementation of permanent or even temporary policies that address the target group we are examining here, is problematic. Teachers from both primary and secondary education confirmed that reception classes that are designed to integrate ‘foreign’<sup>30</sup> students have been abandoned in recent years. In fact, due to the government’s cost-cutting policies, all supportive structures – such as *reception-classes*, *tutorial classes* and *supportive teaching* – planned for the integration of ‘foreign’ students, have almost disappeared. According to Vasso, a member of the teachers’ union, there were no reception classes at all during the previous year within the limits of the First Direction of Education in Athens, which covers the centre of the city.

At present, the only kind of support available for students of different ethnic backgrounds seems to be offered within the framework of (mainly EU-funded) projects, where “flexible work relations prevail and people who are hired are mainly ignorant; they are people who have just finished university, they attend 14 hours of theoretical training about immigration in general and they are sent to work in the reception classes”, according to a teacher in an elementary school of Athens inner-city. Giorgos, a secondary school teacher adds, “the main purpose of these projects is to absorb funding; every now and then they send calls for proposals to us teachers, for us to propose the inclusion of certain activities, but the main reason for that is so the program can absorb disposable funding.”

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28 Translation by the Greek Ministry’s 2006 EURYDICE report, section 5.20.3; cited in Triandafyllidou and Gropas, 2007, 10.

29 For every course there is a *Vivlio Ylis (Curriculum Book)* which defines the material that must be taught during the academic year and the methods.

30 We use this term here just to highlight the official term used to designate students without Greek citizenship, *allodapi*; this term was reproduced by all four teachers we have interviewed.

The same happens with research, material and teaching tools produced in the framework of projects oriented toward gender issues. Although gender has been incorporated as a significant factor in numerous studies about education, and although an important quantity of educational material already exists, this material has not yet been circulated in schools. Although the teachers with whom we spoke were largely familiar with the existence of such projects, they all stated that relevant material is not used in the classrooms in any systematic way.

## Language barriers and challenges

Poor Greek language skills undermine the equal participation of migrant students, both boys and girls, in the educational process. In fact, for all four of the teachers we interviewed, insufficient knowledge of Greek is considered the most serious obstacle in the 'regular adjustment' of bilingual students to the demands of a strictly monolingual school. This issue does not concern only secondary education but the whole Greek educational system, which does not seem ready to adjust to multicultural social realities or to deal with a *de facto* multilingual student population. In the metropolitan area of Athens alone, an estimated 25-30% of students are of migrant background.

Levels of language difficulty vary among students with migrant background according to several factors. One factor is the length of residence in the country. According to Vasso, at the school in the centre of Athens where she taught almost all students are of migrant background and language exclusion is the most serious problem that these students face. However, there is a great difference between children who were born in Greece and those who came recently. In her experience, language difficulties are more important for newcomers, and particularly for those who come from Asia, than for students from Balkan countries who were born and raised in Greece.

In addition to the existing gap in language competence and in school performance there are also tensions related to schoolyard racism between newcomers from Asia or Africa and more seasoned students from the Balkan region. Children from Asia, who mostly come from the three refugee shelters in the district,<sup>31</sup> whether they are of Afghani, Iraqi or of other origin, are designated pejoratively by other students of migrant origin, as "refugees". Vasso also reported instances of ethnic/class-based arrogance by some students, particularly children of Chinese shop owners,<sup>32</sup> who are against the other 'poor' migrants.

Even in this context, i.e., in a school where multiculturalism and multilingualism is the rule, there are no reception classes. Moreover, no specific provisions, activities or tools are used in order to facilitate students' participation, let alone 'integration'. The only 'extra' measure undertaken in this school is the steady restriction of the number of students in each classroom; on the initiative of the teachers of the particular school, no more than 15 students per class are allowed. Nevertheless, the situation at the school is "chaos" as the teacher put it.

Giorgos also confirmed that language is the most important problem for students with migrant background. He shares the perception that insufficient knowledge of the Greek language is a problem that affects boys and girls equally. He confirmed that there are no special educational structures focusing on students of migrant origin, regardless of sex, even though problems of 'regular adjustment' are continuously discussed among teachers. He notes, "there

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31 Run by the Red Cross, the Médecins du Monde and the Municipality of Athens.

32 The school in question is situated near the heart of the Athenian version of 'Chinatown', where Chinese shops, particularly with imported clothes, flourish.

is a concern among colleagues about the performance of 'foreign' students but very rarely are the deeper causes of this handicap examined; typically discussions remain at a superficial level." During his long (23 years) experience in many schools in several districts of the region of Attica, the extended region of the capital of Greece, there was a Greek-language learning programme in only one of them. However, it was not a permanent structure but a course included in a project run by the University of Ioannina. As he told us, "it was not really good after all, because it did not have any concrete positive impact."

His opinion about the integration of 'foreign' students of Balkan origin was totally different. Even though the majority speak Greek very well, there are severe problems when it comes to written language: "many 'foreign' students, even Albanians who were born here, when they come and even when they finish secondary education, cannot even write their name correctly". The multilingual situation of migrant-origin students seems to be the product of a multifaceted exclusion: "They face exclusion here as Albanians and when they go to Albania every summer they face exclusion there too, as foreigners. Inside their families they speak Albanian, but they just speak, they don't write. They also don't know how to write Greek properly. They lack in-depth knowledge of both languages and they end up using a Greek-Albanian idiom, a slang for communicating with each other."

For Giorgos, it is specifically the issue of language that lies behind the high failure and drop-out rate among migrant students. According to him, a small minority of 'foreigners,' both male and female, become 'good' students. What is interesting is the ambivalent way students perceive multilingualism within the school context, especially in *de facto* multicultural schools, as most schools in Athens inner-city are. Most interviewed girls stated that they can speak (and write) their 'home' country language quite well.<sup>33</sup> They also reported that even though Greek is the common language used by all students, school yards are essentially multilingual. Albanian, Polish, Bulgarian, Greek and English are used at the same time. Interestingly, language is deployed at times to relative advantage by 'migrant' girls, and gives them the opportunity to create a communication space inaccessible to others. As Emma and Eva from Nigeria told us, as well as the girls from Albania and Bulgaria, when they want to talk privately with co-ethnics and they don't want to be understood by others, they turn from Greek to their second/'native' language.<sup>34</sup>

However, multilingualism is not just an issue of 'foreigners,' or '*xenes*' as girls of migrant background typically referred to their status as daughters of migrants. As ethnically mixed relationships constitute a reality of school life, Greek students also seem to be engaged in a multilingual situation. Most of the girls said that many Greeks, boys and girls, have learned a little Albanian, Bulgarian or Polish, especially swearwords. Almost all interviewees confirmed that a multi-lingual mosaic of swearing and street-talk flourishes in yards of multiethnic schools of Athens. Greeks apparently want to know if something 'bad' is said about them, and then they are interested in learning "how to say it". As mentioned above, the cousins (boys) of a girl whose parents are from Sierra Leone are very 'popular' at school for their 'gang-like' style. She told us that many Greeks and others ask them to teach them the right way to talk

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33 In the case of the Nigerian girls, they reported some knowledge of the specific language-dialect of their mothers' region of origin

34 This 'code switching' is something that we also observed in action, during our visit to the school of Grava. As we stood within the schoolyard, near the exit, two high-school girls started a heated discussion-disagreement in Albanian. They were near the tail of the stream of students leaving the building at the end of the school day, but there were still some classmates walking around them as they spoke to one another.

‘gangsta’ English. What is funny about this, according to S., is that “sometimes they make fun of Greeks by giving wrong information about slang words, and Greeks become ridiculous using wrong words in front of other Africans”. In a similar vein, Adrianna reported that her best friend (who comes from Germany as we have already mentioned) has learnt some Albanian and A. has learnt some German; so they communicate using, along with Greek, Albanian and German expressions.

As far as professional ‘inclinations’ and choices are concerned, Giorgos, who also teaches the ‘professional orientation’ course in his school, states that ‘foreign’ students show a clear preference for manual labour jobs, and want to work as plumbers, electricians, car mechanics, cooling engineers etc. The same applies for girls of migrant origin as well, he noted (inadvertently suggesting a sexist distinction between the norm of ‘foreign students’ and the special case of foreign girls). Nonetheless, he describes a clearly ‘gendered pattern’: for girls the dominant choices are those of hair-dressers and cosmeticians. According to Giorgos, these preferences are explained by the fact that ‘foreign’ students, even girls “who are in general more hard-working”, have internalised their ‘inferiority’, so they limit themselves to low-status jobs that can yield an income in a short period rather than trying to go to university.

Interestingly, our findings from the student interviews on this score are less clear-cut. Several girls reported at least having thought of becoming doctors, though they eventually decided to list nursing school or pharmaceutical school as their preference. None reported wanting to become a hair-dresser, only one a cosmetician, and one said she was conflicted between wanting to become a lawyer or an air-stewardess, but is leaning towards the latter “because of the opportunity to travel.”<sup>35</sup> We also interviewed one girl of Albanian descent who stated she intends to join the military. Further, all the girls we interviewed demonstrated fluency in spoken Greek throughout the two hours or more that the interviews lasted.

It is possible that what figures as ‘*the problem*’ to teachers, namely inadequate Greek, is that aspect of the problem which causes teachers, who have an investment in not seeing themselves as carriers of racist, nationalist and sexist beliefs, the most frustration in the course of doing their work. The remedial work needed to help students of migrant background “get up to speed” with the pre-university exam curriculum coursework is a service that is not structurally provided by the school and which surely appears as something ‘the teachers’ should be doing for the students. Be the knowledge of Greek language what it may, as it is for Greek students as well according to some recent studies, our material from the interviews shows that girls of migrant background are in fact stigmatised, in different ways, not only ‘out there’ in life around school, but by their classmates in the schoolyard and by what transpires within the classroom, including the use of language, as well.

### **There ain’t no racism or sexism in our schools?**

An issue raised by some of the girls we interviewed, as we have mentioned in the previous part of this report, is discriminatory practices exercised by teachers within the school context. Even if openly racist behaviour is not common, reproduction of ethnic stereotypes is notable. These stereotypes are sometimes expressed in a direct way, through assumptions, such as “foreigners don’t understand”, “they are of low cultural level” etc. For example, Vasso, referring

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35 When she said this as we waited to begin the Discussion Group, we commented that if she became a successful lawyer she would be able to pay to travel wherever she likes, and she seemed skeptical, while her mother intervened adding, “and that way you can also help the community.”

to her experience teaching in elementary schools, said that racist attitudes among teachers are typically expressed as a “cultural discontentment” with the ‘foreigners’ “who are too many.” In general, Giorgos asserted that in discussions among teachers any reference to students of migrant origin, boys and girls, is marked by the notion of ‘a problem.’ Regardless of the standpoint of the teacher, whether it is positive or negative for migrants, whether it is gender-sensitive or not, reference to these children is almost always in terms of a concern for them or for the other children.

Reproduction of stereotypes – and the inequalities that emanate from the reproduction of stereotypes – usually take a more latent or even concealed form. For example, behind a supposedly lenient attitude *vis-à-vis* ‘foreign’ students, the majority of teachers pay limited attention to the performance of these students who can complete their school life without obtaining even essential skills, such as writing. Poor performance is perpetuated, according to Giorgos, because as ‘foreign’ students “they are tossed like a ball, from one class to another and from one level to another, without assuring that they have acquired the skills to meet the requirements.” Regardless of the intentions of teachers, socially defined handicaps are reproduced through this ‘soft’ treatment.

The dysfunction of the educational process has roots that exceed the limits and power of teachers. All other elements aside, the private counterforce of the public school, the *frontistirio*, determines the educational process to a great extent, especially at upper-high school levels. According to teachers, it is not only the rhythm of the work in the classroom, which is quite fast but insufficiently thorough from the perspective of students, that leads those who have the financial capacity, mostly Greeks, to attend *frontistirio* courses. The whole functioning of the classroom is hindered by the fact that many students attend these private lessons, and this decreases their interest and attention to public school obligations.

School life reflects inequalities that exist in the broader society. The lack of specific policies that challenge these inequalities is combined with the scarcity and inadequacy of individually or collectively-driven practices implemented by teachers at some schools. School authorities and teachers sometimes reproduce a ‘filtering by exclusion’ process by following clearly discriminatory patterns within everyday interactions in school. Ironically perhaps, the interview with Giorgos yielded a stark piece of evidence in this regard. From an informal research study he conducted in the two high schools where he works, he found that ‘non-Greek’ students tend to be punished much more often than those of Greek origin. He found that ‘foreigners’, who constitute roughly 1/3 of the total student population of his sample, received approximately 70% of the punishments. Also, he added, although punishment is a traditional male ‘privilege’, girls of migrant origin are the recipients of punishment much more frequently than girls of Greek descent. He referred to a specific case of drug possession, where five girls were involved and where any semblance of ethnically-blind justice disappeared; only two of them, those who were of migrant-origin, were punished.

The educational system is dominated by a narrow definition of Greek culture, including rhetoric of the heightened importance of the Greek language, to which students of migrant background have to conform if they want to be free of having a serious handicap compared to ‘real Greeks.’ In general, students of migrant background constitute a ‘problem’ for the Greek educational system. Both Vasso and Giorgos said that reception classes, tutorial classes and supportive teaching constitute structures that are urgently needed. Eleni, who worked as a temporary teacher for some years in tutorial classes, confirmed not only the necessity of these structures, but also the interest expressed in them by ‘foreign’ students, and particularly girls. She insisted that the majority of students who attend these additional classes are female and

of migrant – in her case mostly Albanian – origin.

Despite these needs which are confirmed by concrete experiences reported at all levels of the education system, and despite the fact that ‘success stories’ exist – each of the four teachers we interviewed mentioned examples of migrant student achievements – specific policies that address the issues of gender and ethnic inequality do not exist and sporadic practices that intend to address forms of this inequality lack support. This happens not only for financial reasons, but also because of insufficient planning for the implementation of such practices.

With regard to the new Law 3848/2010, passed in May 2010, for “the new school” as the Ministry of Education referred to it, all teachers were reluctant, if not pessimistic, concerning the outcome. Although they were informed of the main provisions of this law, and particularly of the creation of the so-called ‘Zones of Educational Priority’ under which the issues we examine here fall, no one expressed any optimism for substantive implementation. And maybe this is the main problem that stands as an obstacle to the extension and generalisation of existing efforts;<sup>36</sup> the lack of assistance and coordination of these sparse initiatives fosters isolation and fragmentation among those who invest themselves in trying to overcome social inequalities in the system.

## Policy recommendations

The main problems within school life reported by girls of migrant background, but also by teachers are summarized as follows:

- Heavy school workload, particularly at the upper high-school, due to the essentially exam-oriented educational system
- Heavy at-home workload for girls of migrant background who live with siblings and a typically single working mother
- The extensive use of private after-school courses by Greek students-- whether private at-home one-on-one tutorials or group tutorials held at the private *frontistiria*, that dramatically affect the educational procedure within public schools
- The predominantly Greek-orthodox-male character of curriculum and orientation of otherwise *de facto* multicultural schools
- The lack of specific policies addressing gender issues
- The lack of policies aimed at supporting the integration of students of migrant background
- The lack of implementation of those policy regulations which exist with regard to the integration of migrant children in the educational system
- The lack of structures that could support and monitor the progress of students with specific needs, with regard to language etc.
- The disjointedness of initiatives undertaken either within the framework of funded projects or through teachers’ individual efforts

Within these constraints, even small steps towards a more inclusive approach of cultural, ethnic and gender differences and specificities would be a sign of progress. To begin with, the Greek state could “put its money where its mouth is” in that there already exists a legislative framework for reception and tutorial classes as well as intercultural education. In the case of

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36 Like the ‘Back Desks,’ program, an extra-public school initiative for free language courses for migrants, where two of the teachers we spoke with offer volunteer work.

reception and tutorial classes, there is a legislative framework far more generous than ever implemented. For example, as mentioned above, there is the provision to employ ‘foreign’ teachers in order to facilitate students’ inclusion in the mainstream classroom through the strategic use of their native language; nonetheless, no such hiring has taken place. Moreover, the law stipulates after-school *in-school* tutorial classes to provide additional help to students. This would be a real relief for students and their families, both educationally and financially.

The so-called intercultural education experience remains monocultural with regard to formal curricula – neither other languages nor other countries’ history and culture are taught – while the number of intercultural schools has remained the same for more than a decade. There is a strong need for mainstreaming intercultural approaches at all stages/levels of the Greek educational system, instead of keeping some ‘special’ schools or ‘educational enclaves’.

Apart from the need to respect and implement the existing legal framework several additional steps can be taken with regard to gender issues. Educational material promoting gender sensitivity in the classroom has been produced from research projects run mainly by universities. None of this material has been incorporated in a systematic and sustainable way in the curriculum or in extra-curricular activities. Issues that result from gender inequality and gender stereotyping are increasingly tackled within social scientific research, yet authorities have yet to integrate even part of the results into classroom procedure.

In sum, apart from interventions for the improvement of educational conditions such as hiring skilled personnel or developing additional educational material which are costly, there could be at minimum an institutionalized way of encouraging existing good practices. Also, creative collaborative activities that enhance students’ proactive participation and raise awareness of multicultural issues could be promoted in all schools. Some of these could be integrated as a module within courses such as *History*, *Sociology*, or *Citizens’ Education* (*Αγωγή του Πολίτη*). From the results of our research, we note the following as possible options:

1. School-wide ‘Antiracist Festivals,’ or ‘Ways of Approaching Difference’ events;
2. ‘Gender Sensitivity’ events, one per grade per year potentially, where students are encouraged to use different media to address femininity and masculinity issues as they interplay in the school context;
3. Informal in-classroom sessions of ‘social analysis’ that would involve using real incidents within the school, of multi-cultural instances of communication with or without expressed conflict;
4. Special components of performance for the existing national holiday special events that are officially organized at schools which would involve students in collectively writing short texts that would form the basis for brief theatrical “sketches.” The purpose of these need not be the portrayal of how Greece is not, and was never, made up only of Greeks. These mini dramatic performances, designed by students with the help of their teachers, could both portray and work through cross-cultural differences as they emerge during the school year in the context of school life (for example, a sketch of what happens if the best student in the class, who would normally be chosen to carry the flag, is of African, or other, origin).

## Conclusion

Gender, race and culture clearly do matter; they play a significant role in the educational and social experiences of girls of migrant background attending school in Athens. What is also important though is that assumptions relating to these aspects of identity are interwoven in ways that generate contradictory attitudes and practices, and challenge any static and

deterministic view of ‘the role of gender’ or ‘the role of ethnic background.’ Gender, ethnic and racial origin, as well as social class centrally affects the construction of social relations and practices at school, and ‘around’ school.

Perhaps the only ‘constant’ that we can refer to is the fact that all the girls, in different ways, reported aspects of their everyday lives in which they feel they carry a heavier burden than their male counterparts. In some ways, ‘the double shift’ phenomenon, extensively researched in the social sciences as the syndrome of adult women who work outside the home, could be seen as a useful metaphor for what these girls seem to experience. In the case of girls of migrant background, moreover, the disparate work-shifts do not map out simply on to ‘school’ and ‘home’ but rather are refracted within time and space so that these girls can be seen as doing a double (or *multiple*) shift *within* the school, for example, and also within the sphere of time that is off-school but nonetheless school-related.<sup>37</sup>

Another domain shaping the possibilities of girls of migrant background to integrate into the Greek school and society at large is the nationalist content of formal and informal definitions of ‘national community’ inside and outside the school. The Greek educational system remains predominantly mono-cultural, even as steps towards a more inclusive definition of community are being taken. Within a tightly circumscribed ‘Greekness,’ youth of migrant background must constantly negotiate their access to essential resources, such as equal educational and professional opportunities, social mobility, and even unhindered residence in the country.

Within the given limits and constraints, we think it is also very important to note that the dynamics that develop in the multicultural environment of Greek schools can be reframed from being “a problem” to being “a resource”. Ethnic and gender relations and boundaries seem to be renegotiated and reconfigured through hybrid everyday practices that yield fertile ground for the re-crafting of subjectivities along different lines. The monolingualism and monoculturalism that characterise the formal level of school interactions go hand in hand with multilingual and multicultural practices that prevail at the informal level. The more fundamental challenge facing Greek society in the future is likely this—how the tension, and friction, between complex hybrid social realities which co-exist within the social space of “school” might produce a shift in national normative narratives concerning identity, and national normative classroom practices concerning truth, such as to yield a school environment that is more conducive to the equal development of abilities, and talent, for all.

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37 In an intriguing analysis Chong (2009), argues that emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983), the work undertaken primarily by women both within and without the home and family in order to preserve relationships, can be a useful concept for understanding the social process through which workers of different race, for example, “put on a good face” and perform their jobs without indexing the oppression they experience. Seen through such a perspective, the girls we talked to in Athens, are likely engaged in this form of labour, as well, along with the disparate other shifts of (somewhat) more readily recognizable work. Indeed, the common refrain of the interviews, that the girls see no racism or sexism within their schools, might be an excellent example of this process.

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# Young Migrant Women in the Making: Educational Experiences in Maltese Secondary Schools

## **Introduction**

This chapter explores the educational trajectories of young migrant women in two secondary girls' schools, focusing on their positions as migrant and women and how these play out in the formation of their own selves within Maltese educational contexts. Our main objective is to address the general assumption that migrant students are a homogenous group and to reflect on educational policies and practices that ignore the particular situatedness of young migrant women. In thinking about the development of the migrant feminine selves as educational journeys that are constantly in process, we look at the contexts of the schools and how, in complex ways, they enable and at the same time limit the educational opportunities of migrant young women.

Policies of educational inclusion that have developed in the Maltese context during the last ten years have strengthened political and ethical grounds for claiming an improved educational provision for migrant students. We acknowledge the importance of a continuous implementation of inclusive educational practices. However we maintain that inclusive policies can enhance the education of young migrant women if they reflect on the cultural intersections of race, gender and ethnicity and make use of the power structures and relations that are involved in bringing about pedagogical changes needed for a socially just education that benefits all young women in schools.

The experiences of young migrant women mentioned in this chapter are themselves considered to be educational. Young migrant women actively participate in their constructions of their feminine selves through engagement with the varying cultures of school, home and friends. Their motivations to succeed academically at school also contribute to attempts at making themselves present at school. This chapter however draws attention to their many painful struggles in dealing with experiences of racialisation and feminisation that seek to essentialise them and limit their ways of being young migrant women. Their acceptance, rejection and playing with established dominant discourses give them opportunities to shift and move between worlds. Yet we argue that educational practices and policies in Malta can provide more formal, safe, caring environments committed to quality education of young migrant women.

The chapter starts with a critical account of the various contexts of the study: socio-cultural, educational, as well as the theoretical and methodological grounds that we have drawn upon in giving meaning to experiences in the field. Our analyses of experiences of young migrant women are also informed by our critical reflection on the shortcomings of existing provisions and how these could be improved.

## Contexts of Migration and Education

The rapid increase in immigration is a relatively recent phenomenon in Malta. The largest group of foreigners living in Malta are Maltese emigrants or descendants of Maltese emigrants returning to Malta or citizens of other EU member states, with British expatriates being the main group (Attard, 1997). The National Statistics Office uses the terms '**returned migrants**' and '**non-Maltese nationals**', referring respectively to Maltese who are former emigrants returning to Malta and people of other nationalities settling in Malta (European Commission, 2004). Migrant workers include both EU citizens and non-EU citizens who move to Malta for employment purposes (Farrugia, 2007). There has been an increase of 'irregular immigrants', illegal and asylum seekers from sub-Saharan Africa since 2002. This has contributed to the popular perception that migrants take up the limited spaces, resources, employment and economic opportunities of Maltese nationals. There are other well-established groups of migrants who have integrated fully into Maltese society while retaining their roots. These include the Indian migrants generally belonging to a respected business community, the 'Arab-Muslim' community, predominantly constituted by Libyans, and the smaller Nigerian and Albanian communities. The 'Arab-Muslim' community in Malta generally enjoys freedom and tolerance in spite of the prevailing prejudice and racist attitudes towards them.

Malta's negotiations with the EU on free movements of persons secured it a special deal, allowing for restrictions in case of a big influx of EU workers into the country to be adopted unilaterally, while ensuring that Maltese citizens can move freely to seek work in other EU countries from the first day of membership. For a period of seven years after membership, Malta can apply safeguards on the right of EU nationals to work in the country. Malta has been a full member of the European Union since 2004 and now, as part of the Schengen zone, has removed immigration controls to facilitate freedom of movement between EU member states. As a result, the number of migrant workers, especially those from Eastern Europe, is steadily increasing (General Workers Union, 2000).

The main legislative instruments that regulate the life of migrants are the Citizenship Act, the Immigration Act and the Refugees Act (Republic of Malta, 1964; 2001; 2008). Legal migrants in Malta enjoy full security and the few ethnic communities that exist are fully integrated and benefit from all that is available to the Maltese (Vassallo, 2006). The main identifiable and distinct groups of migrants in Malta are actively involved in ethnic associations, self-help networks, religious groups and children's school activities that support their processes of integration. Non-governmental organisations however play an important role in facilitating the integration of other migrants also, through informal educational activities directed at the general public as well as the particular migrant communities.

All children of compulsory school age, irrespective of their citizenship or immigration status, have the right to education and holistic personal development. The children of migrants therefore, regardless of their legal status, have a right to formal schooling and educational opportunities. Most of the migrant children in Malta are mainly included in Government schools, and some also attend Church schools. The fundamental values of love, family, respect,

inclusion, social justice, solidarity, democracy, commitment and responsibility are promoted in the National Minimum Curriculum (NMC) and several of its objectives, and its principles promote the idea of equal opportunity for everyone, irrespective of race, country of origin, political views, colour, religious beliefs, gender, age and physical or mental ability (Ministry of Education, 1999).

## Educational Inclusions

Recent developments in Maltese educational policies show a general educational philosophy of inclusion and political commitment toward social justice and solidarity cultivated through educational processes - '*Creating the Future Together: National Minimum Curriculum*' (1999), '*For All Children to Succeed*' (2005), '*Early Childhood Education and Care*' (2006), '*Further and Higher Education Strategy 2020*' (2009). Equal access to the educational system, irrespective of the child's ability, age, gender, religion, race, country of origin, political views, socio-cultural and economic background is grounded in principles of equity and entitlement for quality education and resources that maximize the learning opportunities and outcomes of all children.

It is acknowledged that Maltese society is becoming increasingly multicultural and as a result the education system should enable students to develop a sense of respect, cooperation and solidarity among cultures. Principles that foster respect for cultural diversity, multicultural dialogue and anti-racism through education have been advocated by a number of Maltese educators and researchers who have put forward recommendations for an adequate provision of multicultural / intercultural education in Malta (Borg and Mayo, 2006; Borg and Mayo, 2007; Camilleri, 2007; Mayo, 2007; Mercieca, 2007; Azzopardi, 2008; Bartolo, 2008; Camilleri and Camilleri, 2008; Galea, 2008). A number of formal initiatives promoting multiculturalism have also taken place in schools, including Comenius projects, networking with partner schools, the 'Europe at School' project and the 'Global Education Programme' of the Council of Europe (The Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice, 2004a), to name a few.

Important policies such as the National Minimum Curriculum emphasise the principle of respect for cultural difference. One important political development in understanding educational contexts and practices of integration of young migrant women within schools is the '*Creating Inclusive Schools*' document (2002). This document is aimed at encouraging the implementation of inclusionary politics of an education that builds upon students' individual difference and their various needs, interests and potential. The document acknowledges that student diversity arises "from any factor and not just disability (as e.g. also giftedness)" (Ministry of Education, 2002 p. 2). The policy however clearly explains that notions of inclusion have historically developed in relation to the education of students experiencing learning difficulties, as the introductory paragraph immediately explains:

"Inclusion is a National Minimum Curriculum (NMC) commitment that concerns the education of *all* students. Issues of inclusive education have arisen from a consideration of the difficulties faced by students with Individual Educational Needs (IEN) to participate fully in mainstream education. However, the same issues are now seen as of concern to all students and the education system as a whole. Thus, inclusive education is an essential part of the first principle underlying the whole NMC exercise for ensuring 'a quality education for all'" (Ministry of Education, 2002 p. 1)

As we shall argue in a later section in this chapter, there are shortcomings in taking up general policies of inclusion to address the educational entitlements of migrant students. One

of the limitations arises from perceiving the education of migrant students only in terms of their learning difficulties so that their migrant identities in schools become essentially characterised by learning and teaching difficulties. This does not mean that efforts made by the education authorities to include migrant students in the system and provide complementary education to help those students whose educational level is not equivalent to their age group (The Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice, 2004a) are not important. Migrant students qualify for special support given to pupils facing learning difficulties (Bezzina and Grima, 2008) and are provided with the services of support teachers for literacy, numeracy and social skills. They are also provided with special examination arrangements where these are indicated (The Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice, 2004a). Nevertheless these educational arrangements point to a predominant tendency to fit migrant students in existing school cultures, reinforcing trends of their assimilation within the system.

Local literature also acknowledges that education authorities are not in a position to analyse the existing systems to provide migrant students with an adequate inclusive education, nor to study the impact that these students are having on the system at different levels (Bezzina and Grima, 2008). Although measures to assist the children of migrant workers are supposed to have been introduced by May 2004, the date Malta entered the EU (European Commission, 2004), it is observed that Malta still has a long way to go to ensure equitable provision to children belonging to minorities (Martinelli, 2006; Calleja, Cauchi and Grech, 2010) and it is generally considered difficult to cater for the specific needs of migrant children (European Commission, 2007).

Most of the educational difficulties of migrant students are attributed to general linguistic, social and cultural barriers (The Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice, 2004a) or to the migratory experiences themselves that are considered to disrupt the educational development of the migrant child. The need for policies and measures to improve the communication between schools and the families of migrant students, and to teach the heritage language of the migrant students, cannot be underestimated. There are no provisions for smaller class sizes and intensive teaching of the language of instruction, as one finds in Italy, nor is there any additional support for learning and adaptation of assessment procedures as in the UK. (Martinelli, 2006). A number of methods have been applied in other European countries in order to address these needs, but these have not yet been introduced in Malta. (European Commission, 2009). Official data regarding the number of migrant students in any sector of education, the special provisions (if any) made available and the migrant students' educational attainment is also sorely lacking (The Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice, 2004a; European Commission, 2010).

These factors show the contextual complexities in understanding the positions of young migrant women in Maltese cultural political and educational contexts. Legally, migrant students have full rights to receive the quality education described above and it is frequently assumed that they enjoy and exercise these rights. The literature and research has therefore focused more on political claims for the educational rights and needs of irregular migrants whose subjugated positions are more clearly evident. Within the Maltese context the educational experiences of regular migrants remain unexplored due to assumptions about their equal entitlement to regular educational provisions.

Furthermore, migrants are frequently considered a homogeneous group and this is particularly evident in claims and suggestions for improved educational opportunities and outcomes similar to those of Maltese students. Diversifying factors such as race, social class, age, ethnicity and particularly gender that affect the educational experiences of migrant

students are rarely taken into consideration. This highlights the importance of reflecting critically on the use of general inclusive educational policies to address the educational entitlements of migrant students. It is also important to analyse the intersectional aspects of the educational experience of the migrant children and to pay particular attention to gender in thinking about a policy that addresses the education of young migrant women.

## **Intersections of gender and migration**

The homogenisation of migrant students, regardless of their sex, class, sexual orientation, ability age and religion can be highly problematic (Bilge, 2010). It essentially perceives them as migrants without considering how intersections with other aspects are relevant to their educational development. This generally results in a reductive analyses of power based on a single axis of social division, be it race, class or gender (Bilge, 2010) and a simplistic understanding of the ways in which migrant women live their educational experiences within formal and informal school settings. Conceiving migrants as a homogenous group limits perspectives on educational opportunities that are to be provided in addressing unjust or oppressive practices that arise from their complex experiences of being women within different cultural contexts. Losing sight of subjects' heterogeneity and their individual uniqueness (Wane, 2009) ends up in single issue politics focusing on one aspect of the students belonging to a group (e.g., migrants) at the expense of others (e.g., women, class, age or sexual orientation). Such politics are not effective in challenging the taken-for-granted, stereotyped and undifferentiated representation of migrant women. Moreover, these politics fail to grasp the complexities of belonging to different groups at the same time and the overlaps of discrimination that position migrants women in particular ways. Women have different multiple experiences in terms of their age, sexuality, disability, religion and culture. Racism, patriarchy, social class and other systems of oppression simultaneously structure the relative position of these women at any one time, creating specific and varied patterns of inequality and discrimination (Mirza, 2009).

One other factor that is marked through an intersectional approach in studying the experiences of young migrant women is their relational aspect of their belonging to a group; the fact that their experiences cannot be considered in isolation from other students, the different social and political contexts and ethnic and educational cultures that they live (Yuval-Davis et al., 2005). This means that alliances of young migrant women with Maltese women become important in understanding their experiences. The relations they develop with their particular cultural groups and ethnic communities are also important for an understanding of their belongings in differing groups as complexly in process.

The work of Yuval-Davis renders visible the power relations through which the migrant women are positioned (Pheonix, 2009) and shows how they are constructed as devalued, unacceptable, undesirable and inadequate learners through a simultaneous genderisation and racialisation of their subjectivities (Pheonix, 2009). The intersections of power, ideology and identity demonstrate patterns of inequality and discrimination (Mirza, 2009) and the changes in the educational experiences of migrant women. An intersectional approach however makes it possible to highlight powerful instances where one can identify their play with subjectivities rather than simply focusing on their oppressive positions. This does not imply that a research study that focuses on students as migrants only is not relevant to enhancing the politics of educational provision to migrants. Yet it runs the risk of perceiving migrant students predominantly through their migratory status. An intersectional approach shows

that becoming a migrant is not devoid of the cultural meanings attributed to gender and how the varying meanings are essential to an understanding of the making of the migrant girl.

Ohrn (2009) contends that ethnicity is important for understanding gender relations. Social and ethnic family background impact significantly on the position and situation of migrant students in school and gender takes on different meanings for different social groups (Ohrn, 2009). This notion leads to the understanding that gender roles are socially constructed and thus are different in different societies and cultures (Hatoss and Huijser, 2010). Different gender and migration regimes in different places create and are created by different gendered outcomes in the quotidian life of migrants as women; such regimes are influenced by class, nationality and concomitant immigration status (McIlwaine, 2010). Moreover, gender ideologies and practices transform as people move and hence, as McIlwaine maintains, it is important to move beyond "... stereotyped notions of how migration entails shifts from traditional gender regimes to so-called modern ones to emphasise a more nuanced picture with reference to the everyday experiences of different migrants ..." (McIlwaine, 2010 p. 282).

A range of studies conceptualise gender identities as intersectional (Suárez-Orozco and Qin, 2006; Yuval-Davis, 2006; Hilsdon and Giridharan, 2008; Christensen, 2009; Phoenix, 2009; Qin, 2009; Cuban, 2010; Giddings and Hovorka, 2010; Park, 2010; Song, 2010). These studies reveal a multidimensional view of identity that includes varying social factors such as gender, age, class, ethnicity, culture and sexual orientation. These social factors, as Yuval-Davis et al. (2006) contend, are themselves unstable as they shift and are contested, but they have crucial effects on the ways different political projects of belonging construct and represent them. As most of these studies demonstrate, it is common for girls and boys, regardless of ethnicity, to face different expectations during adolescence across different domains. Migrant adolescents from different ethnic backgrounds have to fight other gender-related stereotypes that are often intersected with their ethnicity and minority status (Qin, 2009).

This study draws on a growing body of valuable work that recognises the links and overlaps of ethnic and gender cultures, sexual identities and social background in becoming a migrant adolescent (Youdell, 2004). An intersectional perspective attempts to separate the different levels in which social divisions are constructed and analyse how they are intermeshed with each other in specific historical situations. The nuanced intersections of social class, ethnicity, gender and location which we have dealt with in our research are very significant in the way we choose to understand and present the data. We have considered the multiple and complex structures of power that reproduce social divisions in the everyday lives of the migrant women being researched. We have explored other intersections of power, gender, ethnicity and education to read social injustices and possible patterns of gendered and racialised inequality within specific spatial, cultural and histories of our different globalised locations (Mirza, 2009). We have been attentive to the relational aspects that inform the young migrant women's own construction and performance of their subjectivities. The presentation and understanding of the formation of young migrant women as intersectional also needs to be understood in relation to our own different positionings, political and particularly theoretical, as will be explained (Youdell, 2006).

The intersectional perspective adopted in this study draws on post-structuralist feminist thought that problematises notions that women inherently share some common characteristics and experiences. It deconstructs essentialist notions of female and femininity and seeks a continuing re-definition of femininity as a process based on experiences (De Lauretis, 1987a). This brings out a multiplicity of meanings, positions and discourses regarding the feminine that are also "fictitious" (Haraway, 1991a) and "situated" (Haraway, 1991b): "... there is nothing

about being female that naturally binds women. There is not even such a state as ‘being’ female, itself a highly complex category constructed in contested sexual scientific discourses and other social practices” (Haraway, 1991a, p. 155).

This applies to the young migrant women in this study. Although for political reasons migrant women need to be spoken about, we have avoided universalising the migrant girl. Our methodology is located within postmodern feminist principles, which affirm different ways of being female, and which position gender as social, cultural and discursive constructs (De Lauretis, 1987a; Haraway, 1989, 1991a, 1991c; Nicholson, 1990; Weeden, 1997; Butler, 1999). It therefore strengthens the research’s aims towards the affirmation of social and cultural differences of migrant women and addresses the interrelated dynamics of integration and gender. It especially seeks to understand how these work out within the particular contexts of the research fields so that the knowledges generated from the research are conceived as, in Haraway’s term, situated.

## Researching the field

This research has been conducted in two girls’ secondary schools situated in the north of Malta. State secondary schools and church schools in Malta are single-sex; independent schools are co-ed. The majority of the students attending these two researched schools are Maltese, but the schools also host a small number of migrant students from Asia, Canada, Australia, US, UK, Europe and North Africa. Migrant students are dispersed across all schools in Malta, but one tends to find a bigger concentration of them in schools situated in the north. This is because a higher population of migrants reside in these catchment areas.

Schools were chosen on the basis of the number of migrant students who could contribute to the data collection. The researchers chose the two schools that had the biggest number of regular migrants who were willing to participate in this research. The two schools that accepted to take part in the research were convinced that the research project would help them reflect on the challenges as well as the opportunities of having migrant women in schools and to network with others, outside the school, on this issue. Once the schools were approached, the necessary permissions obtained and the research objectives discussed, the researchers met with the participants and tried to fit in their appointments around the busy school schedules and the scholastic year calendar. Gaining access to students, parents, teachers and administrators was challenging, nevertheless all the participants were eager to share their views and experiences.

Most of the data was collected between February and May of 2010. This comprised one-to-one semi-structured interviews with young migrant women attending the mentioned schools and semi-structured interviews with a number of subject teachers and with members of the administration from the two schools. We also organised discussion groups with migrant students, and mini-action groups with both migrant and Maltese students. Towards the end of 2010 we also held focus groups with teachers, students and parents, and an interview with a policymaker from the Education Directorate working in the area of integration of migrant students.

The main participants in this research project are eight migrant women whom we interviewed on a one-to-one basis. The young women come from different countries and are clearly different in appearance from their Maltese peers. Because of this they are given labels related to their looks such as ‘blonde and sexy’, ‘dark’, or ‘narrow, squinted eyes’. Yet in other ways, they appear to mingle very effectively with the Maltese students – they have a smart

appearance in their school uniform, play games and engage in activities like the rest of their peers. The women are very polite and all of them were eager to participate in the interview; indeed some of them have a strong sense of respect towards authority and they felt obliged to contribute to this research. Notwithstanding the difficulties they were experiencing with the new language, most of the women were very articulate and participated actively every time they were involved in data-gathering situations.

The interviews and other recorded contributions have been transcribed. This data was linked with observation notes taken during some of the research sessions. Grounded theory was used to make sense of this data, to elicit codes, classify them into categories and to find corresponding links between all the participants of the research. Coding was based on a qualitative evaluation of each sentence of each interview. Using an open coding approach, we interpreted the data to generate meanings from the data.

During this process, interactions recorded through interviews, discussions and lessons have been compared with others for similarities and differences. They have also been given conceptual labels. In this way, conceptually similar interactions have been grouped together to form categories and subcategories. This method has helped us to stimulate generative and comparative questions to guide us upon return to the field. We have been sensitised to new issues and to their empirical implications (theoretical sensitivity); at the same time, comparisons helped to give each category, specificity (Corbin and Strauss, 1990). Different categories, themes and patterns were constantly sifted, rearranged and examined throughout the data collection and data analysis phases. This process has driven the sampling and in order to test the boundaries or refine an emerging category or pattern, we have sought new cases to investigate.

As researchers we bore an ethical responsibility to clearly outline and explain the aims of the research and the relevant methodological procedures to the informants concerned. Permission to conduct the research was granted from the University of Malta Research Ethics Committee after it had reviewed all the stages of the proposed research. Permission to conduct the research in both schools was also granted by the heads of the two schools and by the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education. The migrant students and their parents gave their signed consent to participate in the research.

Because some of the data that we have collected was of a sensitive nature, we discussed our role and our responsibilities towards the participants and towards the study itself, and our obligation to protect the participants' identities. Respecting the confidentiality of our participants was extremely important as the context was small and the participants and their experiences would be relatively easy to identify. At all stages of the research process, we treated each participant with respect, care and dignity and confidentiality was maintained throughout. Pseudonyms were used and care was taken not to mention the migrants' country of origin in order not to identify them. Guidelines for ethical standards were constantly adhered to, even when these were at times in conflict with our role as educators. As Birman (2005) maintains, research on migrants and refugees is not morally neutral. Overall the procedures taken to ensure ethical conduct were effective and instrumental in gaining valuable insights into the lived experiences of the migrant students, their parents and teachers.

## **Grounded Methodologies, Feminist Theorisations**

The study draws on two methodological approaches - grounded theory and poststructuralist feminist theory. This method of analysis has evolved from our different backgrounds and diverse ways of working epistemologically. We acknowledge that combining the

poststructuralist approach with perspectives derived from grounded theory has been an exploratory undertaking. Grounded theory is a qualitative approach that generates theory from observation. According to Glaser and Strauss (Sage, 2009) theories are either deduced from logical assumptions or generated from observation. It provides the structure often lacking in other qualitative approaches without sacrificing flexibility or rigor. The resulting theory is an explanation of categories, their properties, and the relationships among them. The results lead to an evolutionary body of knowledge that is grounded in data. With this way of doing research, theory is built from the inductive analysis of data. Rather than starting with a theoretical framework or perspective, the grounded theorist builds the theory directly from the data. The focus is on building, generating, or constructing a theory rather than testing an existing theory (Sage, 2009). The goal is to become immersed in the data in order to see embedded meanings and relationships. A noted difference between using the grounded theory method and other methods is that the line between data collection and data analysis is blurred, meaning that the two activities are conducted iteratively (collect data, analyze data, collect data, analyze data, etc.) as well as simultaneously (i.e., the researcher continually considers the theoretical meaning of the data while the data is being collected).

The theoretical backgrounds to this research seek situational maps and analyses that enable us to better grasp the complexities of social life. Grounded theory is being 'regrounded' through postmodernist perspectives (Clarke, 2003) that address complex interrelated and interactive global situations while simultaneously acknowledging the 'ungraspable of this world' (Usher, 1997). This renders research different and as Haraway (1999d) explains, in order to address the needs and desires for empirical understandings of the complex and heterogeneous worlds, new methods are needed. Grounded theory recognizes the partial, tenuous, shifting, and unstable nature of the empirical world as constructed (Clarke, 2003). It gives the researcher the ability to understand the instability of situations and porous boundaries of both social worlds and arenas. Situational analyses supplements basic grounded theory with postmodern theoretical and methodological concerns about differences and complexities of social life.

In employing such a methodology, it is our intention to promote an understanding of the diversities and the complexities of the different migrant students. The articulations of these women are regarded as attempts to reformulate themselves and be reformulated through multiple understandings of gender. The interactions of social class, status, upbringing, family set-up and nationality within a particular location and time place them within social contexts that connect the personal, the political and the cultural. These connections however, are not easily demarcated: "As they zoom backward and forward, inward and outward, distinctions between the personal and cultural become blurred, sometimes beyond distinct recognition" (Ellis and Bochner, 2000 p. 739).

Haraway's notion of multiple subjectivities and the split self (1991c) has also provided an important ground for our analysis. Earlier we acknowledged that the term 'migrant women', as we use it to refer to the informants, can be problematic, as it tends to present them as a homogenous group. We contend that the young migrant women's voices in this study present unique accounts of their gendered experiences of migration, pointing to common and particular challenges that are useful in identifying political measures that address their entitlement to quality education. For example, the migrant women's attempts to adapt to Maltese life by befriending women who are also migrants are experienced by each migrant woman participating in this research. Yet accounts of how each and every participant lives out her own unique experience do not hinder an identification of measures that can be taken by schools to facilitate this process.

Our feminist conception of the making of the young migrant girl as always in process does not hinder an exploration of the macro-conditions by which migrant feminine selves take shape, as De Lauretis explains:

Through that process one places oneself or is placed in social reality, and so perceives and comprehends as subjective (referring to, even originating in, oneself) those relations - material, economic, and interpersonal - which are in fact social, and in a larger perspective, historical. (De Lauretis, 1987b, p. 159)

These poststructural feminist perspectives recognise the multiplicity of discursive practices (Mama, 1995) to explain how subjects are constituted through their own active positioning in relations of power and knowledge. The particular discursive positions are interrelated to the particular relevant images, metaphors, story lines and concepts (Davies, 1992). This perspective provided us with the conceptual tools to understand the ways in which cultural and educational spaces are both dynamic, activating and constraining the processes of these young women's self-identifications (Joseph, 2009).

Word limit constraints do not allow us to present detailed insights of all the significant data we have collected or to discuss all the educational, political issues that arise within the research contexts. Our views of migrant women's subjectivities as constantly changing, fluid, dynamic, complex and in process (Bhopal, 2009) highlight the importance of understanding them as shifting and that the research processes present partial views of their experiences in schools. Furthermore the knowledge generated here is partial in that we conceive the participants capable of incorporating new modes of being and that the research process itself contributes to the making of the young migrant women.

## Presenting Herself as Migrant

The arrival of migrants in Malta during the past decade has occurred within the context of competing Maltese identities (Abela, 2006) and concurrently with the struggle of Maltese citizens to come to terms with their colonial past (Borg and Mayo, 2006). Within this context, and whilst facing the demands of globalization, both Maltese and migrant students share the same sort of compartmentalized world. This implies that the concept of a national identity seems to be blurred, unstable and fluid not just for the migrant women but for Maltese students as well. Yet, whilst both Maltese and migrant students struggle with issues of belonging and integration within school and home cultures, migrant women's shifting identities are conceived as more accentuated due to their identifications as migrants.

A number of migrant students affirmed their national identity, which they understood to be related to their country of origin. In some cases, this did not refer to just one single country. Some migrants described their hybrid nationality as they introduced themselves: *"I'm half Canadian and half Lebanese."* These students did not define themselves by a single culture and articulated their subjectivities in terms of multiple ethnic identities. For some migrants' belief that they were only going to stay in Malta for a short time, or their indecision over the time of departure created uncertainties. Their instabilities could impact on their acculturation process and their strategies to sink roots into the school and in the wider community:

Dalisay: ... *I don't want to be so very close to one person because I am not sure if I am going to study here or not, so I don't want to ...*

Michelle: *You are afraid of making very close friends cause if you leave ...*

Dalisay: *Yes*

The phenomenon of acculturation, that is, the process of adapting to a new culture is widely discussed in research related to migrants and migration (Stiles et al., 1998; Liebkind et al., 2004; Berry et al., 2006; Khanlou and Crawford, 2006; Qin, 2009; Mahonen et al., 2010). Adapting to new rules, norms and expectations required the migrant women to develop acculturation strategies in order to avoid being marginalised, which happens when individuals, or groups, are out of cultural and psychological contact with both their heritage culture and the larger society (Neto, 2002). While at times students managed to make themselves visible by successfully employing acculturation strategies to become more Maltese or use their cultural differences to enter Maltese student groups, at other times the power networks with older women in the group made them feel as if they are insignificant:

Michelle: ... Yes, you also mentioned that in Form 1 you are invisible and nobody took any notice of you, at school, but then in Form 2 some students really wanted you to be with them, and they asked you many times to join them.

Nada: Well, invisible for Form 3s, Form 4s ... and the rest ...

Michelle: For the older students you are invisible ...

Nada: Yeah, none of them wanted ... and I just had Senka, that hangs out with me, I used to sit all time with her, so nobody took notice, as if we're never there.

This means that for some of the students, adapting to Maltese life did not mean that they had to negate their roots, which were established in their country of origin. They made it clear that they are not Maltese: "Because I like to be like Bulgarian not like Maltese." Despite such claims, most migrant women seemed to be aware of the need to open up to different cultures in order to adapt and cope. Some of them framed this need in terms of a learning experience. For example, some migrant women stated that they have learnt Maltese: "... they (Maltese friends) talk to me in Maltese so I had to learn it (the Maltese language)."

The transitions of identities towards and away from those of the host country are varied but they are often strategically used by the migrant women to deal with episodes of acceptance and rejection. While some of them mentioned positive episodes and talked highly of the Maltese who made them feel welcome, others complained of students and teachers who made this transition difficult, who teased them for their appearance and showed lack of understanding and sympathy when these students struggled with the new language, norms and traditions. Presenting themselves as 'Bulgarian' and at the same time retaining the possibilities of finding cultural commonalities with the Maltese helped the students survive, adapt, define and redefine their migrant selves as well as present themselves differently, according to situations they find themselves in. As Mirza (2010, p. 135) puts it, they have learnt "how to move between worlds."

Nevertheless many migrant women's accounts presented their attempt to conform and integrate, rather than highlight the differences between the different ethnicities and the challenges involved in adapting to the host society. This was especially evident during the discussion party research activities. Migrant students kept playing down these differences and emphasised the common elements present in their own culture and that of the Maltese: "The Maltese are like us" (Eastern European migrant). A migrant from the Middle East introduced herself by saying "I'm Maltese." She spoke the Maltese language fluently and only switched to English when she was not understood. The migrant students who reported positive acculturation experiences seemed to undertake an assimilation process through a positive affiliation with the host country, perhaps out of their gratitude towards the new kind of life it

offered them and/or in order to be able to adapt socially. When asked repeatedly about how they negotiated different viewpoints and values amongst their school peers, migrant students did not articulate any conflicts. During the discussion party, the migrant women were asked whether they felt accepted by Maltese students. They stated that they did and that they perceived their Maltese schoolmates as “friendly”, minimising differences between students of various nationalities. Some migrant women also affirmed that linguistic differences are not a barrier, as they manage to communicate well with Maltese schoolmates. Differences in the migrants’ physical features were also described as not affecting friendships and interactions.

This suggests that some might have difficulties in grasping the meaning of their experiences of ‘in-betweenness’ and might still be at the point of coming to terms with their new world away from their native land, and therefore cannot analyse the social circumstances and consequences of their life in Malta. Integration might come at a cost, in the sense that in order to feel part of a group of friends and be accepted they might have to render ‘invisible’ important aspects of themselves. Yet these ‘invisible’ aspects of themselves are still present and as Derrida (1987) explains, these present absences may allow for a play with centralised notions of what it is to be ‘Maltese’ and ‘Bulgarian’.

For example, some of the students’ peer groups, made up of Maltese and migrants seem to bring together elements of the multiple cultural worlds they inhabit. Some migrant students reaffirmed the importance of “*being yourself*,” and expressed disapproval at the idea of trying to please others. They worked out ways of getting along well among themselves by arriving at certain shared understandings rather than making their migrant selves invisible. Many women demonstrated feelings of excitement about being present in a new culture and reported that they felt empowered to adapt to the school environment. This can be attributed to increasing opportunities for migrant student home cultures to be included in school cultures, to the fact that Maltese students increasingly regard the presence of migrant students as a normal occurrence, and to the school that provides spaces for the celebration of cultural differences.

## Conflicting Women

The presence of migrant women within the school is not only troubled by episodes when they become ‘absent’ but also by the absent talk of conflict between the Maltese and migrant women. Migrant women are frequently the victims of racist comments and this was particularly evident during one of the mini-action groups held in one school. Derogatory comments by a Maltese student about an Asian migrant student’s slanted eyes were considered very offensive by the migrant girl. The migrant girl’s closest friends (two migrants and three Maltese) immediately tried to offer support to their distressed friend by insisting that she should not take any notice of such comments. Their attitude was extremely caring and they empathised with her. However they did not confront the girl who allegedly made the hurtful comments. Neither did the Asian girl. The presence of conflict resurfaced during the one-to-one interviews, during which migrant women complained of racist comments by Maltese peers.

These undercurrents show the contradictions between the young women’s perceptions of their relations with foreign friends and how these relations are lived. Students’ descriptions of their relation with others may be a projection of their wish for harmonious relations. The fact that the migrant girl and her friends did not affirm her cultural positioning through an appreciation of what is generally considered to be non-Maltese (having slanting eyes and that they are beautiful) demonstrates that lack of conflict results from migrant women not

affirming their own selves and putting up with unkind comments. Nevertheless, a caring environment amongst close friends helps the migrant women to cope with racist incidents.

Despite their classmates' willingness to include them, some of the migrant women withdraw into themselves and are apprehensive about the potential risks involved in integrating more fully in class and amongst peers. Such risks might entail the fear of rejection and misunderstanding. The fact that this was revealed during interviews with individual migrant students makes one reflect on the challenges of migrant students in actively presenting themselves as young migrant women. It particularly points to the migrant women's shifting conceptions of their own selves. The 'moving between worlds' is not devoid of contradictory and playful positions that migrant women hold with respect to school rules and school cultures and their femininities.

### **Contradictory selves**

During the research process the migrant women took up multiple and often contradictory positions. A number of school experiences were described by them as positive in particular contexts, and negative in others. Different information was revealed depending on the nature of the situation the students were participating in. We have noted that when they were in the company of other migrant students and Maltese women, they revealed less about the negative episodes that at times characterised their school experience. The reason for this may be that the students did not feel comfortable enough to reveal intimate and sensitive parts of their experiences within a group of participants. Moreover, the nature of the context they participated in may have stimulated the migrant women to confide in different ways. The more intimate context of the one-to-one interview invited the women to reflect upon specific aspects of their school experience by helping the students to reflect and discuss their personal experience of adapting to and integrating in the Maltese school in more detail. In the class setting of the discussion group and mini-action group, the questions posed gave the women an opportunity to discuss their integration experiences in a more generic way. Students may have chosen to leave out any negative episodes due to the feel-good factor characterising these discussions.

The different fieldwork encounters brought out different and opposing representations of the migrant students. We interpret contradictions in the women's presentation of themselves – self-confident, scared, ambitious, lazy, quiet, assertive, aggressive and eager to please, rebellious friendly and reserved, woman-like and child-like as strategic. These we interpret as being in line with the possibilities of playing with the fixed notions of their migrant and feminine selves that are particularly made available through centralised gendered discourses within the school.

It has been important for us to make sense of these contradictions and acknowledge them as inevitable ways of constructing themselves as migrant subjects (Currie, 1999). Contradictions revolving around migrants' issues demarcate their subjectivities as complex and convey agency and passivity, self-determination and dependence, courage and fear. These resonate with differing experiences of living within different cultures, juggling with the multiple discourses that seek to define them as migrant and young women. Their femininities are played out as migrating in the sense that they are formed in relation to foreign cultures and more familiar cultures, giving rise to possibilities for questioning a feminized stable self, untouched by contradictions:

The split and contradictory self is the one who can interrogate positionings and be

accountable, the one who can construct and join rational conversations and fantastic imaginings that change history. Splitting, not being is the privileged image for feminist epistemologies of scientific knowledge. ‘Splitting’ in this context should be about heterogeneous multiplicities that are simultaneously necessary and incapable of being squashed into isomorphic slots or cumulative lists. (Haraway, 1991c, p.193)

The migrant women’s multiple contradictory positionings can be illustrated in the way the women react to racialisation episodes that they encounter at school. Some choose to victimise themselves and are vulnerable to the derogatory comments they receive; at other times they chose to be indifferent (or choose to pretend to be) to negative remarks they receive from their peers relating to them being foreign. Others contest norms of the host society by misbehaving and by reacting defiantly to be in control and create trouble in a bid to make their presence felt. This can be interpreted as a strategy for them to cope with practices that seek to categorise them as migrant women. However as we will explain in detail, their attempts to be agents of change and inventions of their own particular feminine selves are limited by other forms and discourses of femininity made available to them either by the school itself or at home. Such anecdotes lead to the realisation, as outlined by Hilsdon and Giridharan (2008) that racialised, migrant sexualities are discursively produced through the exercise of disciplinary techniques of power. These techniques of power operate both at the state level and within society, working through the dominating discourses of ethnicity and gender (Hilsdon and Giridharan, 2008).

## Playing Feminine Selves

The migrant women also strive to “be themselves” through processes of rejecting, accepting and playing with conceptualizations of femininity that are available to them. As Ang (1996) explains: “Women are constantly confronted with the cultural task of finding out what it means to be a woman, of marking out the boundaries between the feminine and the unfeminine” (Ang, 1996, p. 94).

These processes take place in relation to various discourses that perceive the migrant women different, according to culture, place, time and especially the contexts of power that they live in. Migrant women play with these discourses so that their construction of their feminine selves emerges out of their own plays with prevalent discourses and perceptions that seek to establish who they are.

One important example is that of the Eastern European women and their choice to highlight or downplay aspects of their femininity in ways that support their belonging to school or groups of friends. Two migrant women who have straight blonde hair have argued that they are perceived as being privileged by Maltese students and that they attract more popularity and power with potential lovers. These migrant women have implied how credibility is assigned to claims such as ‘being blonde wins lovers easily and makes one more desirable’. Such claims of beauty standards are predominant in the media (Currie, 1999) and emphasise that women are often and only valued for their appearance (Bordo, 1993).

For many of the migrant women interviewed, particularly those from Asia and Eastern European countries, the gendered stereotype of the exotic, sexy, blonde female is very dominant. Maltese women, who in their absolute majority are not blonde, were described as being “jealous” of the blonde women:

Michelle: ... *Why do you think they judge you?*

Senka: *I don't know ... cause maybe ... .. (laughs) ... some of them I don't know, sometimes they are like,*

*or maybe jealous, I don't know ...*

Michelle: ... *Can, can it be possible that people judge you because you come from a different country? Do you feel like that?*

Senka: *No ... sometimes ... some girls really ... they tell me like – Go in your country and I fight with them ... but ... that's it ...*

This suggests that a sense of rivalry exists and that this fuels the Maltese students' sense of inferiority towards the 'other', considered to be better. This can also be attributed to a postcolonial trait in conceiving foreign as 'better' but it also intersects with masculinist male trends in Malta that consider foreign and especially 'Nordic' woman as more beautiful and at the same time more sexually open.

Skin and hair colour are cited by migrant students as symbolic markers of recognition. At times the striking differences in their looks also inhibit them from making friends because Maltese women would want to avoid the competition. However at other times, or for others, their strikingly different appearance becomes useful in making themselves desirable and hopefully acceptable with school mates. Maltese women do find the migrant girl interestingly different enough to at least start to get to know her and befriend her.

Migrant women sometimes use differing reactions to their racial characteristics to present themselves differently to different groups and sometime even to make or unmake friends. In this sense their selves become strategically fluid and dynamic (Joseph, 2009). Migrant students experiment with their belonging to different peer groups at school and the shifting in and out of groups makes use of the way they present themselves, playing with particular racial feminine characteristics. They are aware of cultural and social expectations and structural constraints in ways of being young women but at times, they also use particular racial characteristics strategically to 'choose' to belong to one group rather than another; or to shift from one groups to another.

There is not one dominant gender script operating in a place, but competing gender scripts that adolescents may internalise or resist fully or partially in a specific place. Adolescents negotiate existing gender identities by conforming to, challenging or hybridizing normative femininities marked by the place in which they originate. The data collected reveals that while some of the migrant students tend to be negatively influenced by the stereotypical comments they receive about their appearance, others resist the kind of femininity their peers try to subject them to and in turn construct their own identities. A case in point is when migrant students talk of ambitious aspirations regarding their future careers which challenge the 'deficit' image of the migrant student projected upon them by some teachers and peers.

Friends are very important sources of the gendered formations of young migrant women within schools. Social groups are sites where young migrant women can experiment with the conventional limits of what it is to be a young woman as well as finding ways of defying them. We can note that the women's femininities have in some ways been influenced by the various female groupings taking place. Some Maltese students take the initiative to invite migrant students, especially those who are 'alone', to join their group. Through such initiatives, both migrant and Maltese students actively seek ways to construct friendships and validate each other by giving and receiving support. Even in other school settings, the "female friendship group" (Kehily 2004, p. 368) is believed to empower women by holding them together and "providing security and warmth in the less than cosy environment of the school classroom" (ibid, p. 368).

The way feminine students are depicted by their peers may be considered as a threat to their identity and may not necessarily challenge their femininity. Migrant students may

start perceiving themselves differently in light of their peers' opinion of them. It is therefore important, as Hatoss and Huijser (2010) argue, that migrant students continue to be made aware of any gender stereotypes which can hinder them from taking full advantage of educational opportunities. Such gender stereotypes can be constructed both within their own family structure or community, or even established by the host society at large and assigned to particular migrant groups. However, the school is a particularly important site where the complexities of power play with prevalent ideas about the migrant young women are accepted, resisted and complexly constructed through power relations.

### School gendered reproductions

The school, as a context, has been given significant importance in our analysis of the identification of migrant women's gendered and ethnic representations. Gender "offers an important conceptual lens for examining the continuities and discontinuities of cultural norms and values in different developmental contexts for immigrant adolescents" (Qin 2009, p. 38). It is an important segmenting factor in students' adaptation process and the school is an important site of gender reproduction. As Qin (2009) argues, a gendered process of adaptation may contribute to different levels of educational engagement at school. In this discussion, gender is seen as a cultural product that is constantly reconstructed by relationships between individuals and shifting power dynamics within a specific place. This is because, as Giddings and Hovorka (2010) maintain, understandings of identities are grounded within the specific contexts in which they occur. Place and gender are mutually constituted to facilitate place-based gendered identities. Schools are sites that contribute to the fluctuating perceptions of the foreign feminised selves, as will be explained.

Gender is regulated, performed and embodied in school-based cultures. Moreover, the body is a medium through which the discursive signs of gender are given corporeal significance (Yuval-Davis et al., 2006). Identities are inscribed and re-inscribed in the day-to-day practice of students inside schools. Students tacitly and knowingly refuse the denigrated identities ascribed to them. Migrant students can be seen to read, remake and exceed the limits of normative discourse but at the same time they have no option but to revert to the same normative discourses to give meaning to themselves within the place that they are living. As Youdell (2004) argues, re-inscribing identities that are constituted through the citation of enduring discourses, themselves steeped in historicity, is not straightforward. There are multiple discourses at play within single moments of practice, so the possibility for performative re-inscriptions exists along with the threat of normative meanings being restored (ibid., 2004).

The schools are systems that establish and promote dominant cultural ideas of being feminine. Similar to the instances explained above, migrant women play with the fixed notions of 'being female'. They question the femininities as projected by the school and confront them with their own concept of femininity:

*Michelle: Does it feel like you are less feminine in this school because you cannot wear short skirts, you cannot wear make-up?*

*Nada: Not just only me, most of the girls can't do this stuff.*

*Michelle: Yes, but, how do you feel about it, the fact that you have to change in, in ... when you are outside school you are very different, your hair will be different. So the fact that you have to change the way you look, and you are a girl, and you have to change ...*

Nada: *I'm pretty angry about that, the way I have to change, just for school ...*

Michelle: *You are angry about it.*

Nada: *Yeah, I just don't really, don't like it, makes me feel like, somebody who doesn't exist without my stuff, that I can't live without.*

Here the resistance to the schools' official form of being feminine are contested. Yet, Nada's other performance of her feminine self outside the school does not contest the stereotypical conception of the young woman through the media and in youth cultures, as one who needs to wear make-up and short skirts in order to be young and feminine. In fact, when asked about what they like about their femininity, the popular concept of 'wearing smart clothes and putting on make-up' was highlighted by a considerable number of Maltese and migrant students. They considered it one of the benefits of being female and an important part of their growing up process: "Because I can wear nice clothes and grown up clothes, put on make-up." Although the act of applying make-up appears to be mundane, it engages women in the everyday reconstitution of their gendered identity (Currie, 1999).

The young migrant women's play with different ways of being women does not always challenge the role of the media in constructing stereotypical conceptions of ethnic minorities (Christensen, 2009), nor with the ideal images of the feminine self at home. A case in point is the way migrant sex workers in Malta, who are usually women from Eastern Europe, are portrayed as 'hot, desirable blonde bombshells' and how this knowledge eventually impacts on the relationships formed between migrant students from Eastern European countries and their Maltese peers, as noted earlier. Again, other migrant women do act out strategies that resist the stereotypical conception of the easy woman. Yet these tactics do not always help them move out of stereotypical feminine ways established in the different cultures they live in.

The migrant women's construction of their feminine selves shows their complex positionings and how they resist rules of the school that do not coincide with particular, ethnicised conceptions of the feminine (Hilsdon and Giridharan, 2008) as this discussion shows:

Ms Cassar: *For example, the issues with the uniform. We had a migrant student and she told me, "No I will not wear a tie, no I will not, because I am not a man." It was just one case of one girl refusing...*

Simone: *So for her the tie represented the masculine...*

Ms Cassar: *Yes, yes she did not want it and she didn't wear it*

Simone: *And then?*

Ms Cassar: *I spoke with her social worker, also because she used to fight with other girls. She (the social worker) explained that the girl had witnessed lots of fighting in her country and the problems she had she brought them with her.*

This raises questions about how school contexts, and especially the way teachers work (or do not work), provide such spaces and possibilities for young migrant women in forming their selves as women and as migrants. The migrant women's gendered identities, for instance, are perceived by head teachers and teachers of the school as in need of being guided, corrected and disciplined:

Ms Cassar: *I mean I am always telling them ... take off that make up, put down your skirts.*

Ms Abela: *Looking good to them means that they put on loads of makeup and short skirts ... but you need to educate them ... To be feminine you have to do it with class.*

Ms Vella: *Girls show off more than boys do... they show off, they show off. A boy does not. A boy tells*

*you exactly what he wants to tell you and stays in his place but a girl ... she keeps on and on and on ... provoking.*

Interestingly however, some teachers think that this is particularly so for young Maltese women rather than for young migrant women. Maltese women are considered to be more sexualised, in terms of conspicuous performance of femininities that do not subscribe to the dress or behaviour codes expected of young women at school. Teachers' perceptions in these cases challenge prevalent notions of the Eastern European girl as the 'easy young woman'. Rather, young migrant women are considered in need of protection from the influence of the more sexualised feminine performance of their Maltese classmates. Teachers complain of the transformations of young migrant women's ways of performing their femininities and how they are pressured by their Maltese peers to manifest themselves as young women according to popular cultures, and especially the feminised subcultures of girl groups within the school:

*Ms Saliba: I observe that when they arrive they are different from Maltese students. Maltese students do not have a childhood anymore. They wear make-up very early, they pluck their eyebrows, very young. But they don't. Then, when they become friends with Maltese students, they become like them. I think that back home they were restricted. Here, they are freer. They have more space.*

*Simone: Or perhaps it is because they are given the space to choose?*

*Ms Saliba: Yes but then they do not know their responsibilities.*

In this particular case the more child-like the girl dresses, the more she wears her uniform as expected and the less womanly she seeks to appear, the more she is approved of and accepted by her teachers. In one of the schools for example, the teachers' perspectives of migrant students are similar to those reported by Suárez-Orozco et al. (2008) where teachers prefer migrant students because of their respectful, disciplined, hard-working attitudes and particularly because of their readiness to comply with school rules. Teachers even brag about the effort that migrant young women put into their work, comparing it to the poor performance of Maltese students, with the obvious implications this may have on migrant students' relations with their native peers. As Ms Saliba says: "*I tell our children, why is it that you don't take your work as seriously as they do?*"

Some of the young migrant women take up the more popular image of being woman that is in opposition to that expected by the school. Other migrant women on the other hand reject the popular ways many of the schoolgirls conceive themselves and strictly adhere to school rules. The migrant women use both strategies to become accepted by their teachers or their schoolmates. Yet, their ways of being feminine both pertain to fixed conventional notions of being woman. In this manner, migrant women do not take up forms of resistance that are geared towards a re-invention of a different feminine self or as one migrant girl put it "as being themselves."

## **Young Migrant Women and High Academic Expectations**

The teachers and administrative staff interviewed tend to have set opinions of the migrant students under their care. One teacher described the migrant students from the Eastern European countries and Asia as very hard-working, disciplined and studious, whereas the migrant students coming from Northern Europe were described as "intelligent but lazy." The teacher held that migrants from Northern Europe are not accustomed to the rigid educational system in Malta. Other teachers confirmed that Asian students seem to be more committed

to their studies.

Schools also provide protective spaces that tend to guard the young migrant women from the more deviant behaviour of their peers. Teachers in particular act to support, maintain and validate the young migrant women's commitment to academic achievement, and their motivation to learn in spite of their transitional cultural experiences. As Gibson and Hidalgo (2009) maintain, teachers are important sources in supporting young migrant women's relations within the school. Their acceptance, welcoming and understanding of the migrant women, also especially because of the women's positive attitude towards academic content and/or their respectful behaviour towards teachers and heads, can increase the students' chances to respond to, and resist, gender-oppressive practices. As Ohrn (2009) found out, teacher acceptance served as a key resource, especially in offering migrant women the required support to come out of their subordinate position.

An insightful study by Steele (1997) and cited by many others (Dweck, 2000; Halpern, 2000; Hyde, 2005) reveals how societal stereotypes about groups can influence the intellectual functioning and identity development of individual group members. Apart from structural obstacles that migrant students face, there is also a social-psychological threat that arises when one is in a situation or doing something for which a negative stereotype about one's group applies:

"This predicament threatens one with being negatively stereotyped, with being judged or treated stereotypically, or with the prospect of conforming to the stereotype. Called *stereotype threat*, it is a situational threat - a threat in the air - that, in general form, can affect the members of any group about whom a negative stereotype exists ..." (Steele, 1997 p. 614)

The teachers participating in the study are clearly aware of the influence they can have in helping the migrant women, not only in forming social relations with others but in forming relations that are educationally relevant to making themselves women. The data reveals that they empathise with the difficulties migrant women have with adapting to a different way of life, adopting new languages and finding ways of providing emotional and academic support without highlighting their particular migrant identities. At the same time many of the teachers consider academic achievement and success of the women as an important aspect of their educational development. School expectations in this regard at times match the expectations of young women from their particular ethnic communities. One of the teachers, Ms Calleya, explained that the "*high educational aspirations from Chinese parents often match those of the school.*" The high educational expectations from parents however do not always liberate the young migrant girl from the more conventional views of being a woman in specific cultures.

## Caught in between home and school world worlds

This study also found that migrant women spend more time at home, receive more parental monitoring and are more involved in home responsibilities than their male siblings. This naturally has an impact on their academic performance and on their feminine selves as they dedicate less time to academic and social matters:

Michelle: *Ok. Do you have any responsibilities at home? Any other things that you need to do after you come back from school?*

Nada: *Em, yes, like when I come I have to help my mum, or wash the dishes, do the clothes, make the beds, remind my brother to go shopping because he is too lazy to get up from computer, I have to clean ... I do have.*

As a result, migrant women may have less opportunities than migrant boys to be exposed to and assimilate Maltese culture. There are also frequent references to their mother (rather than the father or to both parents) indicating close ties with her and the possible dominant fixed maternal representation that shapes the women's formation of self and their hopes and aspirations:

Michelle: *Do you have a role model in your family or in your community? A role model; somebody you admire, somebody that you like to be like him or like her when you grow up.*

Odval: *My mum.*

Michelle: *Ok. What does she do... why is she your role model?*

Odval: *Because she is so nice and kind, don't angry.*

Certain migrant women's experiences of wavering between accepted forms of feminine behavior are clearly the result of their relations with powerful others - teachers, headteachers and parents. These genderized geographies of power (Mahler and Pessar, 2006) become more complex when fathers, and/or prominent male leaders of the migrant community enter the scene. As one head of school recounts:

*"One day her father came complaining about the liberal way we educate girls. He told me - punish her if she doesn't obey. I told him - Here we don't do that. He said it would have been better if he left her back at home with her aunt. And I said yes, it would have been better..."*

Another teacher in the study provided a detailed description of the hierarchical patriarchal relations within a particular ethnic community that bypassed the powerful school disciplining mechanisms. Hondagneu-Sotelo (2003) explains that these relations of gender are indicative of the way they can hinder or facilitate settlement. In this case however they show how the young migrant women's performance of their femininities varies according to the social relations they are in and that their gender formations are multi-sited (Mahler and Pessar, 2006). Masculine control of the way migrant women behave (Mahler & Pessar, 2006) and the engagements of power become more complex when male teachers in school, who belong to particular ethnic communities, network with male leaders from the same communities outside the school. The following example illustrates this point:

Mr Aber: *Yes this was the case of a particular Congolese student. She was misbehaving. The truth is that, you know we should not forget about our roots sometimes. If you knew someone within your community and she is not doing well you would like to change her behaviour*

Simone: *But because she is a girl?*

Mr Aber: *No for every typical African child. But I said to her 'I want to speak to your pastor. In Africa if someone reports you to the priest or to the pastor, it's like you committed the worst crime*

Simone: *So what did she do?*

Mr Aber: *She didn't do anything really bad, but you know sometimes students like to talk to each other and I said to her 'Look you are here to study. So you shouldn't join in any group and start bla bla' and the only way I can get her attention is tell her 'Look I am going to tell your pastor.'*

This account, defines the young migrant woman as the 'keeper of her culture' (Billson 1995). It also depicts relations within a migrant community as protective of the young woman but at the same time places the responsibility of 'bearing' the tradition onto her (Espiritu, 2001).

Espiritu's research points to the complex networks of power that make the migrant women the bearers of tradition. It explains how, for example, Filipina daughters are constructed as morally superior to white women and how this works to overcome discourses that represent the Filipina woman as over-sexed. At the same time, however, it highlights patriarchal dominance over women's self-representations and the limited possibilities for young migrant women to go beyond strict arbitrary definitions of being a bad or a good woman.

As the case of the father's complaints about the school's liberal teachings suggests, the school, in spite of their more conventional views of womanhood, are sites that provide women with spaces where they can be presented with different ideas of being a woman. The account of the 'upset' father also indicates that the schools are successful in valuing the girl's culture in a manner that lures her into considering different ways of becoming a woman that are different from those expected by the father, while at the same time obliging her to adhere to other codes of behaviour established by the school. These codes simultaneously construct her as different. Although the school at times does not subscribe to parental expectations of the young migrant women, school structures and knowledge systems also reinforce, albeit in different ways, particular ways of being a woman and especially of being a young, migrant woman.

## **Informing Educational Policy**

The lack of specific policies regarding access to education for migrant students is striking in the local context. There are no particular policies that give direction to the processes of integration of such students within Maltese schools, nor are there any that address the involvement of parents in their children's education. As explained in the beginning of this chapter, a general policy of inclusion which is grounded in respect for diversity and aims to make all children succeed is assumed to be broad enough to address the educational entitlements of migrant students. Policies are expected to be defined in the near future as a result of an increase in the number of migrant students and an increased awareness of their particular experiences in schools. In the absence of specific policies, the schools participating in this research have adopted their own ways of integrating migrant students; ways that are very much in progress and subject to the school's own evaluation of the effectiveness of the adopted practices.

It is generally understood that equal access to the educational system must be ensured by the educational community without discrimination on the grounds of ability, gender, religion, race or socio-cultural and economic background. A sense of social justice and solidarity should be cultivated with students throughout the educational process. Migrant students are to be treated on par with Maltese students and helped to fit into existing school cultures (Camilleri, 2007). If any of these students need extra help, they are withdrawn from their classroom and given lessons by a support teacher, a strategy that is applied to all students irrespective of race (The Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice, 2004b). A number of other measures have also been adopted by the Education Directorates to aid in the integration of migrants. It is often argued that mother tongue support, in addition to cementing identity, will improve the development and learning ability of children with a mother tongue different from the language of instruction (Duff, 2002; Neto, 2002; Liebkind et al., 2004; Karsten et al. 2006; Becker, 2009). To this end, and in fulfillment of Legal Notice 259 of 2002, which concerns the teaching of the language and culture of migrant children, the Education Directorates have liaised with the respective embassies to provide mother-tongue classes on Saturdays. The Department of Further Studies and Adult Education also organises courses in basic skills for

anyone who applies and there are specialised courses targeting migrants or foreigners married to Maltese nationals (European Commission, 2004).

In relation to gender policies, the Maltese Government is committed to promoting gender equality in all areas and levels of the Maltese society. One of its main objectives concerns equal access to education and training, at every level, for both women and men. Increased importance has been given to life skills education, which focuses on responsible behaviour, family relationships, human relationships, preparation for marriage and employment, and on civic and social duties. Gender training for teachers and kindergarten assistants is provided both at entry level and in in-service courses. Programmes for parents on parenting skills also include education on gender equality. Educational programmes that address the career choices of their children claim to be free of gender bias.

However the major trend in local policy documents is to look at one aspect of child diversity at a time. The point that diversities of students may be sources of inequalities and discrimination is clearly acknowledged in existing educational policy documents. Yet discussions on how gender differences, for example, can lead to unjust educational practices are always discussed separately and they never address how students' gendered experience intersects with race, disability, ethnic difference and sexual orientation. Although it is acknowledged that inequalities due to gender and ethnic differences are to be dealt with, they are always tackled one at a time and rarely in relation to each other.

This trend is reflected in the way the schools participating in this research conceive of migrant students. It is as if the school, or the class teachers, can only afford to look at one particular aspect of learning at a time. From the data collected we can observe that the aspect of being a migrant overshadows teachers' perceptions of the young women. Young women are predominately seen, addressed and constructed as migrants rather than women by teachers in the study. When interviewed, teachers confirmed that gender does not really affect learning, or their way of teaching, and there are no particular challenges in teaching females or males. This does not mean that the racialisation of the young women is not gendered. Other parts of this chapter highlighted the intersections of gender and race and how they are played out within the schools. The gendered racialisation of young migrant women is non-formal and not intended by teachers' to address the education of the students as young women and migrant.

The presence-absence of gender in conversations about students by teachers applies to all students' not just young migrant women. Teachers' discussions about teaching and the education of young women in their schools are generally gender neutral and focus mainly on academic progress and social and personal development. Hence, in order to collect heads' and teachers' perspectives on the school's vision in educating women, we included specific questions that focused on the school's ethos and its role in developing their femininities. Teachers have emphasised their commitment to teach women irrespective of their gender, yet they do so in a manner that disregards it, so that their gender becomes less relevant to their teaching. Young women are spoken about as if they are a homogeneous group and there is no acknowledgement that race, socioeconomic status and/or sexual orientation are important factors to consider when addressing the provision of education to young women or young migrant women.

Policies based on notions of equality for all frequently encourage educational practices that disregard the particular positions of students as migrants, or women or as migrant women. This attitude is frequently adopted out of fear of highlighting the women's identities as women and as migrants or of being perceived as giving them preferential treatment. Although we acknowledge that referring to students as migrants risks labelling them as such we believe that ignoring their positionings as migrant women does not help in recognising inadequate provision of

resources that should consider their educational formation as young migrant women. A hidden curriculum establishes fixed ways through which young migrant women and their needs are perceived, rather than looking at how their different positionings can inform their experiences of learning. This practice tends to assimilate young migrant women into the dominant cultures of the schools. It is evident from this research that the two schools seek to change the migrant students' identities to be more in line with the local culturally acceptable way to be a student in a secondary school in Malta. One can also observe that while the disciplining of the migrant students is not always overtly authoritarian, other school practices such as wearing uniforms and following more traditional pedagogical and classroom practices do make foreign students conform to the normal practices of learning within the school.

Extracurricular activities directed at and held by foreign students in the school, including drama presentations, exhibitions and food festivities are considered to be educational enough to address issues of diversity and belonging. It is assumed that 'celebratory multiculturalism' which aims to inform Maltese students about the cultures of others as well as to give space within the school for the migrants to present themselves will automatically satisfy the principle of respect for diversity:

"Each school is endowed with a vast repertoire of skills, experiences and needs. This diversity, allied with the individual and social differences evident in the student population, enables and requires a pedagogy based on respect for and the celebration of difference." (Ministry of Education, 1999 p. 30)

One can envisage risks in adopting this broad policy for the educational inclusion of migrant women. First, as argued earlier, since policies of inclusion historically developed out of policies that were intended to address problems of access to learning by students with learning difficulties and/or children with disabilities, the idea of migrant students as persons with learning difficulties may be reinforced. The transfer of the discourses of learning difficulties generated by this policy of inclusion may create discourses that construct migrant students as such. Although research indicates that migrant students do have learning difficulties (Stodolska, 2008; Yeh et al., 2008; Olivos and Mendoza, 2010), the sources of their learning difficulties are clearly different from those experienced by Maltese students. They are mainly due to lack of attention to their particular needs as migrant women and are therefore enhanced by systems that tend to label them as students of a lesser ability and unwillingness to learn. One of the main sources of learning difficulties of migrant students in our study is their struggle to master Maltese and English, yet migrant women are not given the educational opportunities to overcome this barrier to learning.

As a second point, one questions the way the policy of inclusion conceives of diversity and how this has implications for addressing the needs of different students. Within this policy, diversity is understood as something that someone experiences as a woman or a disabled person or a migrant, but it is rarely considered as a combination of all the three conditions. It is assumed that responses to diversity, for instance, will address educational needs that rise out of intersections between race, ethnicity and gender (Öhrn, 2009; Qin, 2009; Hatoss and Huijser, 2010). The particular educational challenges of disabled women, for example, are rarely taken into consideration with respect to the fact that they are women or that they come from a particular social class. Successful inclusive education practices within the classroom must consider other circumstances such as the students' socio-cultural economic background and the neighbourhood in which they live, their sexual orientation as well as their race and religious beliefs (Gibson and Hidalgo 2009).

To sum up, the participant schools in this study are aware of the limitations of their procedures for receiving migrant women, placing them in classes, encouraging participation in

class and nurturing their holistic educational development. These limitations are exacerbated by the migrant students' struggle to become proficient in Maltese and English. The schools are also conscious of the need to develop good relations with migrant parents, but language again becomes an issue when trying to help them engage in their daughters' education.

The assessment of the policies and other official documents outlined here draws on the schools' own critical appraisal of their shortcomings in this regard. The main challenge relates to the fact that there is no formal political direction for schools in integrating migrant students. As Calleja, Cauchi and Grech (2010) comment, there is no real policy effort by the educational authorities that promotes initiatives to encourage cultural exchange and enrichment. Initiatives are sporadic and often initiated by individuals. Moreover, the heads' and teachers' accounts particularly highlight the urgent need for schools to liaise with each other to find the human and material resources needed to tackle the challenges of educating young migrant women. Although the goals of the NMC include the recognition of different ethnicities and cultures, one asks whether logistics are actually in place to achieve these goals.

Although a specific official policy for the education of migrant students in Malta is urgently called for, the schools' *ad hoc* policies, as well as the teachers' 'implicit policies' within the classroom are highly influential factors in the successful education of migrant students. Because of their direct experience and contact with the migrant students, schools and teachers are aware of both the educational challenges in school and the social challenges faced in the community. As Holdaway and Alba (2009) argue, local stakeholders and teachers lack formal authority yet their mobilisation is as important as the formal content of the policy.

## Policy recommendations

Literature is replete with studies on how to integrate migrant students. In its report entitled '*Integrating immigrant children into schools in Europe*' (2004) the European Commission states that the school system is failing migrant minors and minors of immigrant origin. These groups have higher dropout and expulsion rates than native students. They also gain lower results and significantly smaller numbers of them continue on to higher education. The fact that they struggle with belonging to the school community suggests that schools are not effectively addressing important educational issues that support the migrant students' development. Our study highlights the additional need to take account of their gendered experience of being young women migrants in schools. Our study confirms that young migrant women in the schools we studied experience serious challenges in this regard and particularly because of practices that tend to disregard the gendered aspects of processes that "educate" young migrant women into the dominant cultures of the school.

There are efforts to promote a multicultural environment within the schools, yet the predominant trend is to perceive migrant students as a homogeneous group and disregarding their processes of feminisation falls short of the 'multicultural' principle that seeks to include multiple cultures within the school. Critiques of multicultural approaches rise out of dilemmas of pluralism (Moodod, 2007) and the difficulties in reconciling national integration with the rights and educational advantages in affirming minority cultures. This is not an argument for abandoning multicultural policies (Parekh, 2002) but rather for rethinking them by imagining notions of national identities differently. Multicultural education and culturally responsible pedagogy can help learners recognise their heritage and give them a sense of belonging as well as a sense of their uniqueness (Carjuzaa et al., 2010). It should also address historical and

contemporary oppressions of migrant students that take note of intersecting power plays of sexism, racism and colonialism (Mirza, 2009).

Socio-culturally responsive education develops out of such an analysis. It needs to attend to macro structures and critically reflect on existing policies to understand how their pedagogies are informed by assumptions about the diversity of migrant students. A culturally responsive pedagogy incorporates students' lived experiences, home-based knowledge and local environment to inform curriculum design and content as well as opportunities to develop positive relationships between students. Migrant women's lives and identities are not solely defined by their native culture but also include social influences such as the mainstream media, family income and occupation, and peer influences. This implies that teaching practices require more than just being sensitive and aware of the students' cultural background. It recognises how cultures are contextually based and need to be understood as relational and in process. This also necessitates that educators become culturally competent not only in terms of being familiar with migrant students' cultures.

It is obviously important that teachers have an understanding and knowledge of differing cultures (Collins and Harvey, 2001) and change racist attitudes towards students of different cultures (Neto, 2002). Teachers however must be aware of the power relations that they themselves are involved in when seeking to draw on their students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds in their teaching.

Teachers must not only respect students' cultural differences, they also need to have the strategies and skills for using students' socio-cultural knowledge and resources in the classroom (Lee and Quijada Cerecer, 2010). In order to achieve this, one needs to revise school textbooks, material and curricula to introduce elements that are intercultural and reflect multicultural society. If representations of migrants are relatively absent, or distorted, the self-image and self-esteem of migrant students is going to be harmed and their chances of school success will be negatively affected. Our analysis of the findings of this research project highlights the tensions the migrant women experience in identity and belonging as they seek to overcome the tendency to construct them in 'deficit' terms, or with derogatory comments related to their femininity and sexual identities; it also emphasises the resilience of the migrant women in making the transition to the host society.

Moreover, teachers cannot ignore gender and ethnic differences that sometimes reinforce stereotypes towards migrant and minority young women. As Harry (2005) stresses, one must pay attention to differences, rather than ignore them: "Silence about difference, especially with regard to students from historically stigmatised groups, serves only to reinforce the belief that the differences represent deficiencies" (Harry, 2005, p. 104).

Discourses that promote notions of social cohesion and cohesive learning communities in which differences are accommodated and bridged (Duff, 2002) tend to blur the focus of differences. The traditional meaning of social cohesion highlights the search for consensus, and the respect for autonomy. Contemporary meanings acknowledge the fundamental importance of recognising the opaqueness and incomprehensibility of the other. This latter conception where proximity merges in distance and togetherness in otherness points to the need to revise social integration policies and to ensure that they are considered to be in process. Constant revision of policy is required because of the realisation that the other is never completely understood, and because subjectivities shift and change through power relations .

## Including languages

Although various policy documents like the 'NMC', 'Creating Inclusive Schools', and 'For All Children to Succeed' stress that all students are to have equal opportunities to learn, one of the most persistent challenges reported by both students and teachers is related to the 'languages of inclusion' that are adopted within the schools. The school environment is responsible for activating the use of this language, yet schools are also responsible for providing young migrant women with tools that practically engage them in a more active manner within the school and in their own educational journeys. Supporting migrant women as they acquire the main languages of instruction and communication at school is imperative.

A number of approaches can help to address this situation. The teachers can help these students in their own way through code-switching and supplementary resources during lessons. An EFL teacher would provide specialised help to the migrant students to develop the required skills, integrate in the school community and to adjust in the shortest time possible. Language classes after school hours are already being provided by the Department for Lifelong Learning within the Directorates. Access to such classes would be facilitated if they were held in the communities where the migrant students live, and this would also enable the parents to attend.

Contexts are useful resources in the learning of a language. Language learning provisions that move students out of their normal class placements with Maltese students fall short of the inclusive philosophies that are informed by principles of social justice and migrant students' entitlement for participation within the school community. It is important to note that all mainstream subject teachers are, first and foremost, language teachers since all curricular knowledge is mediated through language. Sometimes the suggestion for all teachers to take on responsibility for language teaching is made in contexts where budget cuts do not allow specific language support for migrant students (Lyons, 2010). This however does not underestimate the importance of mainstream language teaching which is also the ideal locus for intercultural contact (Council of Europe, 2007). Additional separate provisions are to be provided; these aim to enhance learning in class during normal school hours rather than replace it.

Researchers (European Commission, 2004; NESSE, 2008) stress the importance of legitimizing the linguistic identity of minority language children and their families and communities. Advocates of bilingual education suggest that it carries social and cognitive advantages for students and obvious nationalistic advantages for the society, especially in relation to international economic markets where multilingual competence is important.

There are no classes in the migrant students' language of origin in Maltese schools. It is noteworthy that one of the schools has organised a 'Language Day'. In this activity, migrant students presented poetry, songs and stories in their native languages. Such activities are aimed at fostering an appreciation for diversity and support the learning of foreign languages. The school involved is planning to extend this activity in the future by including other aspects of the migrants' lives apart from their language, such as their native costumes, food, music and traditions. The celebratory aspects of these extra-curricular activities however should not distract teachers, head-teachers and policy makers from the more challenging task of implementing language inclusive policies within their classrooms.

Teachers need to be allocated sufficient time to team up with their colleagues to discuss and pool the required resources to support these students. Regular training should be provided on how to cater to these migrant students' needs – needs which are undoubtedly challenging but which can be addressed with the right resources and commitment. Since it

is very time consuming to prepare resources for every lesson, learning packs of text books can be devised in advance to enable the migrant students to familiarise themselves with the subject even without the help of the teacher. Migrant students should also be offered the same additional support as Maltese students if they are encountering difficulties in attaining sufficient academic progress. These students have the right to be exposed to the same learning experiences as their peers and it is not acceptable that they should miss out on particular educational experiences simply because lessons are conducted in Maltese.

Finally, schools need to sensitize Maltese students and make them aware of the migrant students' right to participate in class. A bilingual Maltese class offers a particular advantage to the implementation of the inclusive language policies that benefit both Maltese and migrant students. It is expected that all students develop competency in both Maltese and English. In cases where migrant students' are struggling with lessons in English, Maltese students who speak English could help the migrant women integrate and adjust better. Simultaneously, the Maltese students would improve on their English language skills if they are exposed to it more frequently.

### **The inclusion of migrant families**

Although parental involvement is positively associated with the achievement of children in schools, migrant parents generally do not seek contact with schools (NESSE, 2008). One of the first strategies that need to be employed is to include migrant families through written information on the school system (NESSE, 2008). Schools need to be proactive with migrant parents by liaising with community coordinators of the same ethnicity as the parents and build coalitions and community with parents (Lee and Quijada Cerecer, 2010). Findings point to the need to implement and articulate effective educational programmes involving the whole family. Parents' ongoing education process contributes to their increased and effective involvement in their children's schooling (Jasis and Marriott, 2010).

Cultural mediators should also be employed in schools (NESSE, 2008) and representatives of the new communities should be consulted in order to adequately integrate symbols of the cultures of origin into school life. Rather than merely acknowledging the diversity of cultures, schools need to be proactive in order to ensure the migrant women's cultures are integrated into the curriculum (Lee and Quijada Cerecer, 2010).

### **A policy for teacher training**

Research shows that denied support is the most significant form of discrimination in the education of migrant children (NESSE, 2008). It is thus recommended that initial teacher education and in-service training prepares teachers adequately for teaching migrant students. Teacher training in intercultural education is given in the initial stage, and in-service provision, when available, is on a voluntary basis and available to teachers after they have satisfied the number of hours they are obliged to attend in their subject area. Material for teachers to use in class to raise awareness of cultural diversity is made available by various NGOs who work with migrant students and their families, yet the Directorates do not distribute it to all schools and therefore it is up to the individual teacher to get it themselves. Because a number of teachers have expressed interest in addressing the learning needs of migrant students in their classrooms, training packs related to differentiated instruction and support on how to teach students of different interests, levels and backgrounds have been made available in some

schools, A number of support teachers also go around schools to offer literacy support in class; yet it should be noted that such measures are directed to all students and no specific measures are in place for migrant students, or migrant women.

Systematic teacher training will help teachers better understand the school cultures, norms, disciplinary practices, teaching and learning styles and curriculum design in their students' countries of origin (Warikoo, 2004; Haas, 2008; Hortas, 2008; Opertti and Belalcazar, 2008). It would provide educators with a broader conception of the source and nature of the difficulties migrant students encounter. They would be able to help these students overcome some of their problems more effectively and adapt their teaching methods and develop culturally appropriate curricula. As Opertti and Belalcazar (2008) contend, teachers have a professional role and they should take into account their ethical and societal mission and responsibility. Teaching styles should be aligned with cultural and social contexts and "... teachers should be considered co-designers and co-developers of inclusive education policies at the school and classroom levels, not as mere implementers of curriculum change" (Opertti and Belalcazar, 2008, p. 119).

### **A strong support structure**

It is finally important to note that when schools are of good general quality, all children will benefit from educational opportunities. Improvement of the general quality of the school includes good management, good cooperation among teaching staff, high expectations of teachers with readiness to give support, good quality of teaching, good discipline, good school equipment and strong parental involvement (NESSE, 2008).

One should not be under the illusion that the above is sufficient to bring about change. Specific and additional financial resources should be devoted to schools where migrant students are present, and such funds should be considered as an investment rather than a cost. An organized structure should be set up to identify the needs of the migrant students, and to see how these can be met, by whom and with what resources. Our data suggests that, inclusive language practices, the reception of migrant students into schools and special attention to their specific needs has to be made a priority.

We also need to point out that some policies described in both 'NMC', '*Creating Inclusive Schools*', '*For All Children to Succeed*' and the '*Gender Equality Plan*' are already in place, but they need to be reinforced. It is rather contradictory that schools boast of embracing principle 1 of the NMC – Quality education for all, yet allow for migrant students to miss out on several lessons a week because of lack of language skills. Principle 11 of the NMC, for instance, calls for gender equality. This can be achieved if schools and educators offer alternatives and opportunities, rather than affirm a popular culture which may reinforce gender stereotypes. A respect for diversity requires concrete changes in the schools' attitudes and their perceptions of the young migrant women's needs and rights for quality education. Re-conceptions of existing forms of learning and teaching that address cultural disparities are also needed to complement policies of entitlement and inclusion.

### **Conclusions**

The study's findings have led us to develop a number of guidelines which are aimed at building up theory and informing policy debate about the provision of integration approaches in schools related to migrant students. One needs to address the issue of fluctuating identities

through educational curricula and acknowledge them as fluid, unstable, temporary and in process.

This exercise can develop schools into communities that are committed to socially just educational practices geared towards the educational success of young migrant women in schools, as well as the cultural enrichment of all young women in schools. Existing inclusive policies provide good political and ethical grounds for their integration. Our study however has clearly indicated that in their effort to be accepted migrant students often give up or hide aspects of their selves. We believe that the experience that these migrant students have at school is very much determined by the way they are thought about and represented in the public culture and, therefore by extension, in schools. On analysing the experiences of migrant women, we identified a series of political, educational, popular and cultural discourses that circulate in the school setting and beyond, which provide the discursive terrain on and through which these students are made subjects (Youdell, 2006).

Our analysis of the power relations that the young migrant women are involved in within the school points to the importance of understanding how they play with different gendered and ethnicized aspects of their selves in making themselves young migrant women. We conclude that the women's access to a language of empowerment is crucial. We argue that this should take place within educational environments that do not speak the language of inclusion in generic terms, but in terms that are particularly understood by young migrant women and their families.

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# Migrant Girls in Secondary Education in Spain: Fighting to Transform Difficulties into Possibilities

## **Introduction**

In this chapter, we will be discussing the educational policies and practices related to migrant girls in Secondary Education in Spain, as well as the main findings of the qualitative field work we conducted in two high schools in the city of Barcelona. We will focus on the main barriers and difficulties that migrant girls face in their daily experiences in schools, as well as on the actions and interventions that promote the overcoming of these barriers. We will conclude by highlighting those actions that are most likely to foster the successful paths of these girls.

Firstly, the context of Spain has to be taken into account in contrast to other countries where immigration has a longer history. In Spain, the phenomenon of global migration did not become significant until the end of 1990s. However, the accelerated pace of migratory flows into the country has placed Spain near the top of the list of European Union member states that have the largest migrant populations. The most significant migration growth took place between 2000 and 2006, when the foreign population registered in the Census quadrupled. In fact, this increase has been the main cause of the overall increase of residents in Spain, which in the period between 2002 and 2008 grew to an average annual rate of 720,000 inhabitants (Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE), 2009). It should be noted that this trend has slowed due to the global financial crisis (Pajares, 2009). While the number of visas granted in Spain grew steadily between 2003 and 2007, it has decreased since 2008.

The influx of immigrants has increased the number of foreign pupils enrolled in primary, elementary and secondary education. The foreign student population grew from 0.5% of the total of enrolled students in the 1992/1993 school year to almost 8.5% in 2006/2007 (Parella, 2008). In recent years the increase of foreign students has slowed down. In the 2009/2010 school year, data from the Ministry of Education (Ministerio de Educación, 2010) shows that rate of increase in the amount of foreign students has slowed and foreign students now comprise 9.6% of students attending primary, elementary and secondary school.

The distribution of foreign students varies depending on the region, the educational level and the type of centre. The educational level data collected in the 2006/2007 school year

(IFIIE, 2010), shows that the majority of foreign students are enrolled in primary education<sup>1</sup> (42,97%), followed by those enrolled in secondary education (27,75%) and elementary education (17,06%). However, the amount, which this represents at various educational levels, is different: the highest concentration of foreign students is in the Social Guarantee Programs<sup>2</sup> (15,55%), followed by Elementary Education (10,34%) and Secondary Education (9,24%). With regards to the type of centre, the vast majority of the immigrant students (more than 80%) are enrolled in public schools.

Existing data indicate that there is a larger concentration of student places in the Social Guarantee Programs, in contrast to 3,99% in High Schools (IFIIE, 2010) or only 2% at the university, (Parella, 2008). This is in line with PISA results, which demonstrate the general trend of the OECD countries where the academic performance of immigrants is significantly lower in comparison to students without immigrant background (OCDE, 2010). In the case of Spain, there is evidence that the performance gap between the two groups is greater than in the average of the OECD countries. (Instituto de Evaluación, 2010).

Unfortunately, we have no specific data on the presence, distribution or performance of immigrant girls in secondary education in Spain. To investigate the experience of migrant girls in secondary education, we conducted fieldwork in two Catalan schools with high migration rates. Catalonia is a region with a high proportion of immigrant students. In this region 13.54% of secondary school students are foreign (IFIIE, 2010).

The first school is located in a town on the outskirts of Barcelona with a highly diverse population. Currently, the migrant population in this town is around 25%, with China as the main country of origin, followed by Morocco, and then several Latin American countries. The second school selected is located in the centre of Barcelona, in one of the most historical areas of the city. This is also a highly diverse neighbourhood with a large number of people from different nationalities and cultures. The population of this neighbourhood is at risk of social exclusion, and suffers from problems related to drug abuse, prostitution and criminality.

This particular school has a long history of absorbing migrants into its student body. Currently 80% of the school's population made up of migrant students in both levels of secondary school. For years, it has been considered as a school that provides "preferential treatment" for migrants, and it has promoted several projects to improve their education. The school also offers post-compulsory vocational training, although this programme has very few migrant students.

To develop the fieldwork, the research team met the board of directors of each school. The team presented the project goals and requested the boards' co-operation with the research. Permissions and consents for the data collection were arranged and guarantees for the anonymity of the participants were secured. In total, 26 data sets were gathered: 18 interviews with high school migrant women (from different countries such as Morocco, Ecuador, Bangladesh, Peru, Pakistan, Uruguay, Brazil, China, Colombia, and many others); 5

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1 Primary Education in Spain includes 6 years of compulsory education, from 6 to 12 years of age. Secondary Education refers to compulsory education, lasting four more years, for students between 12 and 16 years of age. After this period School graduation is obtained. Elementary Education includes the three years prior to Primary Education, i.e., from 3 to 6 years of age.

2 Social Guarantee Programmes are educational programs aimed at youth between 16 and 18 that have not completed the compulsory secondary education. These programmes are basically aimed at the initial vocational education.

interviews with teachers and management members; 2 focus groups with high school migrant women and a joint focus group formed by students, one family member and teachers. In the following pages, several interviews and focus groups show the findings obtained.

## 2. Conditions of migration and family dynamics

Migration flows to Spain have predominantly been work-related. This has meant that in many cases students with an immigrant background are also socio-economically disadvantaged. The study of Parella (2008) shows that the need to economically provide for one's family is the most common reason for cutting short one's education. This applies mainly to youth with foreign nationalities (36.8%) or recently acquired nationality (30%), as opposed to 11.3% of Spanish-born youth. Women are overly represented in these statistics. Parella also describes other factors that interfere with the migrant education process, such as the stigma against the immigrant population in the society or the low expectations regarding the education of these children. In addition, the influence of family problems that arise from periods of separation and regrouping in the family, an inevitable part of the migrant experience, may also have a deep impact on the academic lives of the students.

The personal histories collected during this fieldwork confirm these conclusions and show that the academic paths of young migrant girls in secondary education are affected by different factors, such as different transnational or mobility conditions.

In most of the cases of our fieldwork, the parents (father, mother or both) are the ones who emigrate first, leading to separations of parents and daughters for long periods of time. Some of the girls interviewed stated that they spent between months and years without seeing their fathers and in some cases their mothers. Consequently, their migration to Spain not only means that they must adapt to a new educational system and another language in some cases, it also means that they must re-establish their relationships with their families.

In many cases the immigrant students also arrive in the middle of the school year, which causes them to feel disoriented. According to one of the girls interviewed:

*A bit strange when I came, because of course, you sit down in one place, and others come, it is the place of somebody and you don't know that and of course it is a bit difficult... (EA6)*

The fieldwork also reflects that the economic situation of families (parents who have to take jobs with precarious working conditions and impossible schedules, to be available at any time, etc.) frequently obliges the girls to take on family responsibilities, such as looking after younger siblings. This responsibility falls on the elder daughter if she is old enough to take care of her siblings, and it is much more frequent among girls than boys. However, as one teacher pointed out such duties do sometimes affect boys as well:

*Or boys, some of them also have to take care of the younger brothers. Especially the Latinos because the mothers work and from here the child goes straight to pick up the brother, takes him home, feeds him and bathes him. In the morning they don't have their homework because they have not managed to do it. Yes, for the Latinos the family commitments are the same for the boys and girls. (ED3)*

In addition to these burdens, other economic hardships in the family often lead to situations in which the families themselves have to prioritize the pursuit of money rather than thinking that their daughters should continue their studies. This has been stated by some of

the girls interviewed:

*There is a girl in the newcomers' class, she is from India, and she would like to go to high school and... her mother does not allow her. I don't know, she says that... her mother only thinks about the money, that it is more important to earn money, than to study... (EA9)*

It becomes clear from the interviews with the students that language difficulties hinder their academic success and also make it difficult for them to establish relationships with their peers. Those coming from South American countries do not have as many difficulties because they are native Spanish speakers. However, Catalonia is an officially bilingual territory with a complex linguistic situation (Pujolar, 2010) where Spanish speakers are also required to use a new language (Catalan) in their studies. A Russian and a Colombian girl, reflect their perception of language as a main barrier in their schooling:

***Do you think immigrant girls have more difficulties to obtain good grades? Yes.***

***Why? Because it is more difficult to understand it, there are many words you don't understand and it is hard. But it is only because of the language, Catalan or Spanish. Yes, for example, those who come from Ecuador, Colombia, who already speak Spanish, when they come here it, is easy for them. But I come from Russia and it is hard. (EA17)***

***Because of Catalan sometimes. Because you understand in Spanish, but in Catalan it's already different and the exercises, so written, in maths or so, it's different. So sometimes it's difficult. (EA14)***

Aside from language, the intersection of gender and ethnic stereotypes produces different images and situations of educational exclusion depending on the cultural group of the girls. For instance, there are very different stereotyped discourses about Latin American women and Muslim women (Pérez Grande, 2008), which influence educational practices and also interactions in the classroom, dialogue with families, etc. In recent years, controversies related to the use of hijab in secondary schools have been on the front page of national newspapers (Álvarez and Cembrero, 2010) as some schools have forbidden students to wear the hijab. The question has arisen as to whether it becomes necessary to regulate over the use of the hijab in schools and other contexts. Meanwhile, the sexist and racist prejudices underpinning these proposals (De Botton, Puigvert, and Taleb, 2004) are further perpetuated.

Given these difficulties, many of the girls perceive that family support is very important. In some cases, the support of the family provides a variety of resources for learning that go beyond what can be offered in the classroom, as we see in the case of this girl from Bulgaria:

***The language, how did you learn it? Well I don't know. I talked a lot in Spanish with my cousin. So we learned more and now I also speak it at home. I learned it also by listening, the teachers... And when you came, did teachers help you a lot? No, I think it was more my family. My grandmother talked a lot in Spanish, they worked, so they talked and I learned. (EA16)***

Among the interviewed girls we have found that where there was family support there was also a positive attitude towards studying. The inverse was true for girls who had little or no family support; these girls were often prevented from studying. Family support is experienced as crucial for these girls, whereas lack of support generates a great disappointment, lowers the expectations and lessens the desire to go to school and obtain good grades.

### 3. Educational policies

The Educational Law in Spain (Ley Orgánica 2/2006) does not deal specifically with immigrant girls, or with immigrant students in general. On the other hand, the Organic Law on the Rights and Liberties of Foreign People (LEY ORGÁNICA 4/2000, 2000) states that foreign students have the same rights and duties as Spanish students. This law includes the right of equal access to academic qualifications and to the public system of grants and financial aid for all citizens of Spain. Therefore, educational administrations are obliged to inform parents of their children's rights and obligations within the Spanish educational system. Moreover, it is also established (Real Decreto 1162/2009) that in their applications for the renewal of their authorization to stay in Spain or in their application for long-term residency, foreign residents with school age children in Spain must provide proof that their children are attending school. They are required to provide a report issued by the competent autonomic authorities (Real Decreto 1162/2009).

The division of the public administration in Spain into different regional governments means that very different regulations exist in each region with regard to immigrant integration, education, youth, or gender. In some cases, plans and measures for the integration of immigrants take the perspective of gender and youth into consideration but there are no policies that specifically address immigrant females in the educational system. As Archer *et al.* (2007) argue, the policy silence around working class and minority ethnic femininities means that no resources are made available to address their specific problems at school.

In relation to migrant students in the Spanish educational system, according to a study from 2005 (CIDE, 2005), the measures adopted by the majority of the Autonomous Communities include the following: reception programmes; curricular adaptation programmes; extracurricular activities; intercultural mediators and interpreters for families and students; teacher training. We highlight here only those areas in which we were able to record the experiences and perceptions of the girls and teachers.

#### Reception programmes

An important set of measures for immigrant students are those dedicated to the initial, pressing needs of their first months in the reception country and educational centre. As language is a very clear barrier, most of the Autonomous Communities have promoted specific classrooms for immigrant students in which they are expected to learn Spanish (and Catalan in our case) before joining the regular classroom. These classrooms are organised according to age and academic background and are called “welcoming classrooms” (aulas de acogida), “link classrooms” (aula de enlace), or “Spanish classrooms for immigrant students”. In most cases, they operate inside the school and students progressively share some classes with their peers. In other cases, segregated temporary centres have been created for immigrant students up to the age of thirteen. These centres have been condemned by anti racism and migrant integration organisations (Padrós and Tellado, 2009).

Despite the fact that other interventions and actions to facilitate the arrival of migrant families do exist, the most common measure we found being used is ‘welcoming classrooms’. Many of the girls interviewed have been placed in these settings within their schools. Their assessments of these classrooms are ambivalent. On the one hand, they value the small size of the group, the classroom environment, the treatment by the teachers, and the language learning. However, the most common critique is that the type of language and activities developed in these classrooms take place at a much lower standard and pace than the regular

secondary school curriculum, i.e., they are not age appropriate to the students. When learning vocabulary by means of pictures, for instance, students report feeling that their time is being wasted, or that they are being treated like little children. Fatiha, a Moroccan girl, explains with certain irony such a situation:

*If we attend these classes, which are ok, but in which we only draw, we do nothing of class, we go there and draw. This can be helpful to someone who wants to explore painting, but that's it, Oh... I don't know!*

### **Curricular adaptation programmes**

Since the passing of the educational law in 1990<sup>3</sup> the dominant discourse in Spain has placed high value on the idea of “attending diversity” which has been understood in many cases to mean “adapting” the curriculum pace and level of difficulty to the “capacities” or levels of the students instead of pursuing equal outcomes for all students.

As a result, it is very common to find different practices of *streaming*. Streaming is defined by the European Commission as *tailoring the curriculum to different groups of children based on ability, but within the same school* (European Commission, 2006). There are other forms of segregation of migrant students apart from the “welcoming classrooms” in which migrant students are separated because they are migrants and also because they have language difficulties. In many schools, students are divided more or less explicitly according to their ability. Frequently, this separation is made in the instrumental subjects, particularly mathematics and language. Little or no explanation is given to the students or their families as to the criteria or consequences of such divisions. Mariam, a Moroccan girl aged 17, explains that her secondary school class is divided into three groups but she ignores the reasons behind this division:

*How are you divided, in groups? Yes, in groups. The first is for the one who knows nothing, the second one is average and the third, the highest level...for Catalan, Spanish and English. And in these groups by ability, who decides who goes where? (...) I don't know why they have done this... (EA10)*

There is a large body of academic literature that describes the negative effects of streaming. The lower ability classes tend to be disproportionately filled with students from cultural and ethnic minorities or with those from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Youdell, 2003; De Haan and Elbers, 2005). In these groups, the positive effects of peer interaction are diminished, and students receive fewer resources and are given less challenging activities. Moreover, teachers have lower expectations of the children in low stream classes, which in turn leads to an increase in the distance between top and lower streams and diminishes self-confidence and engagement with education (Hallam and Ireson, 2007; Ireson, Clark, and Hallam, 2002; Ireson, Hallam, and Hurley, 2005). Furthermore, the low achievement groups (where migrant girls are more likely to be placed) are also those in which students with behavioural problems (mostly boys) may be included. Despite the aim to homogenize students in these groups, very different types of behaviour can be found, e.g., the very quiet foreign students and the highly disruptive native or foreign ones. This situation obviously influences the experience of the female students and the construction of their identity.

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<sup>3</sup> Ley Orgánica 1/1990, de 3 de octubre, de Ordenación General del Sistema Educativo (LOGSE) [Organic Law of 1/1990, 3rd October, of the General Regulation of the Educational System]

Neither the students, nor the teachers interviewed described any existing measures aimed at tackling potential difficulties and situations of migrant girls. The only reference was made by a teacher of one of the reception programmes, who explains some meetings with migrant girls:

*We bring the interpreter, because they are normally from the country and are here for many years and are experienced in this. So, with the issue of hygiene, with the Pakistani or the Indian girls; with the issue of boyfriends, the relationship with their parents...with all these things we have brought them outside the classroom, we have conducted like a tutorial with these girls so that they get together and talk,...to see if the problems they might have come out... (ED5)*

While this intervention took some account of the need to share gender related problems with their peers, there is no reference made to academic matters.

Finally, it should be stressed that tailoring the curriculum to meet the needs of migrant students does not include teaching the mother tongues and/or cultural empowerment. Spain has not introduced measures to include mother tongues in their schools' foreign language provision (Red Eurydice, 2009). Although some bilateral agreements have been made with Morocco and Portugal to employ teachers to teach Arabic and Portuguese during school hours, in the majority of cases this teaching is not actually provided. In some other cases it is carried out by social entities, or it depends on the willingness and the opportunities available in each school. In spite of the high percentage of migrant students, neither of the two schools in the study has a language-learning programme. Different topics about the existing cultural diversity are discussed as part of the Catalan language learning in the reception classes. Occasionally, there are particular activities of interculturality without reaching a deep knowledge of the backgrounds that each one contributes. For instance, a Chinese girl who has been in Barcelona for two and a half years explains:

*...yes, I want that they know more things about China, not only seeing the negative things, but also the positive ones...many good things... (EA9)*

Subsequently, in classes with a larger number of immigrant students, schools tend not to provide the same level of knowledge as they do in classes with a majority of Spanish students. Neither do they provide a strong knowledge of their own cultural characteristics.

### **Inclusionary support and extending the learning time**

More recently, academic research in education has focused on practices aimed at inclusion in order to achieve excellence and improve standards for all students in schools (Braddock and Slavin, 1992). In the integrated project INCLUD-ED, the research on schooling with the greatest resources and highest scientific rank developed in the European Union has identified five different types of inclusion that will provide support to all learners and especially to those with social or learning difficulties. The recommended practices are heterogeneous ability classrooms with reallocation of human resources, inclusive split classes, extended learning time, inclusive individualised curriculum and inclusive choice (Consortium INCLUD-ED, October, 2009).

Although neither of schools where we did the fieldwork is clearly promoting inclusion, teachers described certain actions that are contributing to the academic improvement of migrant girls. One of the teachers explained that making an extra teacher available in the classroom instead of segregating the girls was more useful:

*The support that we can find also in the classrooms, isn't it? That we can have during some hours, with some teacher in the classroom, with a psychopedagogue, with a person within the reception class,... an assistance who can...would be able to help more children, particularly these girls, so that they can ask and they can move forward...to have a support more within the classroom. This is also...well, it's working. We are making few hours right? Very few, but well...it Works. (ED1)*

Another type of inclusion is the extension of the learning time. This is particularly useful for those students who need extra support after school hours, or during the summer. In Spain, the extension of learning time has not been promoted by public secondary schools, but private institutions, other social organisations or, in some cases, parents' organisations are doing this. Over the last few years, language learning and other school-related activities have been arranged in cooperation with these other organisations. Some of the migrant students interviewed in the study had participated in some of these programmes. However, they stated that they are offered fewer extra activities than their male peers. Marcela is a 17 year old from Uruguay whose school does not offer activities specifically intended for girls. According to her, the main space for girls' relationships is the welcoming classroom, which reflects an environment with poor opportunities beyond the school:

*Do you know if the centre, the High School has any after school activity plan, addressed to migrant girls? I don't think so, after school activities offered are football for guys and for girls...a little difficult. Nothing specific for migrant girls? No, but I think they get together in the welcoming classroom.*

### **Comprehensive school approaches**

In recent years, education policies in Spain, and particularly in Catalonia, have reflected the awareness that complex situations such as diversity and multiculturalism require "comprehensive school approaches". According to two EU studies, one on teaching migrant children (European Parliament., 2009), and the other on reducing early school leaving (European Commission, 2011), comprehensive school policies with an emphasis on participation, shared commitment with student achievement and family training will greatly benefit minority and vulnerable groups in schools. One of the initiatives for tackling early school leaving is *Learning Communities*. Although the two centres where we have undertaken fieldwork have not implemented this initiative, they do follow some of its strategies. For example, one teacher explained that they were participating in an educational, territory-based plan, which includes language classes for family members. Another teacher explained their efforts to promote family participation in the government bodies of the centre. Research has shown that initiatives designed to include women from minority groups or those having no educational degrees in decision-making processes in schools are contributing to overcoming gender inequalities in schools (Oliver, Soler and Flecha, 2009).

## **4. School environment and interactions**

In this section, we focus on the impact that school interactions and atmosphere have on peers, teachers, and families and, particularly on the migrant girls. These interactions may have exclusionary effects that create barriers to developing a positive identity or they may be transformative and contribute to the overcoming of these barriers.

Young migrant students face problems such as adapting to the curriculum, negative

stereotypes, low expectations, and educational provisions that make it difficult to remain in the educational system (Labrador and Blanco, 2007). The teachers interviewed are aware that female immigrant students face greater difficulty than their male immigrant classmates, as one of them explained:

*I think that it is very hard for a migrant boy or girl; it is very, very hard for a migrant girl, from Pakistan or India (ED5).*

One theme that came up frequently was that migrant girls feel that neither the other students in their class nor their parents believe that it is possible for them to achieve anything academically. From this idea comes the sense that the agents involved in the educational process of the girls do not feel or see the need for these girls to continue their studies. Oftentimes, these low expectations correspond with prejudices associated with particular groups. We can see the presence of these prejudices and their transmission and influence from the comments of a teacher:

*I think so, that sometimes there are stereotypes, aren't there? Still part of the community, from different agents in the educational community, not only the teachers ... (...) there are still stereotypes, sometimes from certain social groups, isn't it? The group...is more...well...stereotypes; that would need to disappear because they are also transmitted to the children particularly, and this might lead to some girls thinking that what's the use?...why should they study more, make a greater effort if they will not achieve anything with this. I think that this also has a negative influence and it is very necessary to talk about it to change this thinking, these ideas...that the society...we have, right? Sometimes...and do not allow for change... (ED1)*

This aspect is also reflected in some of the stories gathered from the students. Situations are described in which stereotypes, perceptions and prejudices of the teachers are made explicit in the classroom. For example, one student explained the lack of sensitivity and respect from the teachers towards the religious beliefs of the students:

*...well, religion, yes, sometimes I have felt a little segregated, because the teachers normally..., I think that the teachers here are atheists and they criticise my religion (EA15)*

In other cases discriminatory behaviour comes from the students. One of the interviewed students explains that the teachers might feel obliged to protect the foreign pupils in these situations. As one student explains, when this happens the non-foreign students perceive the protective behaviour on the part of the teachers as preferential treatment:

*...then sometimes, you see some laughing or some verbal attacks, but you also see sometimes that they say that the teachers have favouritism with us because we are foreign and we do have much difficulties... but I don't think that's the case... (EA7)*

Participants in the fieldwork also reported gender-based insults and discrimination in the schools. This kind of discrimination has a variety of causes. Several of the interviewed girls explained that language difficulties were often the reason for discrimination. For instance, when they did an oral presentation in front of the class they would feel uneasy and insecure because the rest of the students would verbally attack and mock them:

*...we were giving an oral presentation in class and ... because it is very hard for them to talk...and I can not express myself, you understand? (...), and therefore...Were you ashamed, did they laugh at you? Yes, yes...(...) and therefore I felt very badly and I was crying (EA8)*

In other cases, this discrimination comes in the form of exclusion from activities by some of their classmates. This type of situation causes the girls to feel outside the standard rhythm of the classroom and generates a feeling of loneliness. They are discriminated against because of their looks and the way they dress. Wearing the veil is a particular problem. One of the students interviewed reported the reactions that she received from the rest of the classmates because she wore the veil. The reactions took the form of scorn, mockery, insults, and explicit forms of rejection such as ostracism:

*Well, ...see, at the beginning I had not girl friends, but here when I arrived; my class mates, all of them, they hated me because I wore the veil and they told me, Who does she think she is, with the veil?...And I felt a bit alone in class... (EA1).*

In some cases, to overcome these situations of explicit discrimination, many young girls feign indifference, ignoring the comments to reduce the possible anxiety that this sort of situation generates. But unfortunately, this reaction is not the most common. It became clear in some of the interviews that in some cases the impact of this type of discrimination affects the girls by demotivating them in school. In extreme cases some students expressed the desire to return to their country of origin:

*...Do you know a class-mate, don't you? An immigrant that has felt...discouraged and thinking...I don't want to continue studying because, of course, they mock me and laugh at me because I am an immigrant or...My cousin!...Your cousin?...And what happens with your cousin? That, as she is too covered and therefore people in her class do not...And now she wants to leave, go back to my country to study there, and her mother want the same as well... (EA1)*

On the other hand, positive reactions to migrant students also emerged in the in two secondary education schools analysed. In these cases student indicated that coexistence with students generates a greater knowledge of diversity. One of the girls interviewed stresses the fact that, in her opinion, the contact with people from different cultures enriches the students because they learn other forms of thinking, other habits, and so forth:

*And did you have any problem with relationships? Being with such different classmates, from different countries or you have not noticed any different? No, no, on the contrary, I come closer to them...I don't know. Why? I don't know, because for instance, here people... I don't know how to explain, are more stupid...and with them that come from different places, you learn new things, culture, I don't know,...I like it more. For instance, if there is a word in Chinese, you learn it...I don't know, they provide more... (EA6).*

In addition to learning about diversity, students also manage to find common elements among them, as one of the girls explained:

*Did you feel in class sometimes discriminated against by the rest of the class? Because you come from another country, or because you have another religion?...(...) I don't think so, because the*

*majority here are Moroccan, that is, we do not have the same religion but, we have...We believe, you know? We have a belief that...And this makes us be united, isn't it? Even if it is not the same religion, believing in the same God, but you do believe in God?...And they understand (EA15)*

Dialogue between teachers and immigrant students can help to transform the low expectations that the girls have towards their own future, and encourage them to continue their studies at the university level. One of the interviewed teachers stressed the importance of such dialogue in which the girls express their professional desires, such as being a doctor or a nurse, which they might not state at home:

***And in the cases that you talked with girls, what do they mention...what do they think?...which higher studies they would like to make or such...do you see any relationship with participation, that is, with the support that they receive at home...? Or you do not have information in this regard? Or...****No, I don't have much information but I do see that the relationship with the teachers is a great influence also, when you ask them what would you like to become when you grow up, in what would you like to work, what would you like to study...then in the tutoring is where you talk about this issues...or when you talk individually with a boy, a girl, they start to get encouraged, right ? and start thinking about what they would like to do, they can also be someone, whoever they want...Then, in this dialogues...I have seen, right? I have checked that there are girls and boys that although at home the issue might not be risen, when they are here in the school, in the high school in this case, we talk about this issue, I have seen girls who are thinking about...I want to become a doctor, or I want to be a nurse, or whatever...(ED1)*

On the other hand, we see a trend in which teachers recommend that migrant students continue vocational training after finishing secondary school; this has less academic recognition, and hinders or even prevents them from having access to university. Educational research has shown how migrant students, cultural minorities and students with disabilities are doomed to these lower level educational paths (Myklebust, 2006). Those girls who recognize this kind of discrimination reject these recommendations:

*...The truth is that they do not help you, they do not encourage you to follow high school. They choose for you. You can do Hairdresser, very well. They wanted me to follow a cycle [vocational education], yes they told me: as you have a low level, you are not good in High School, it is very difficult for you, whatever..., well, you see, I am going to in High School, whatever it takes. If it is hard for me, and I have to repeat a year, I will. Repeating a year is not the end of the world, it's nothing...I see that all Moroccans have never done High School...some...that's why I said...in this school no Moroccan went to in High School, few, few. That's why all of them go the cycles because the teachers encourage them; they say: you do not have the level for in High School, you better go to cycles...they discourage them and they go to the cycles. And I think this is unfair, unfair... (EA10)*

The girls understand that access to the labour market is difficult, and that the option to study will allow them to have more opportunities and improve their quality of life on all levels. Studying allows them to avoid jobs that they see many migrant women doing, such as cleaning or domestic work, as one of the girls explains:

*Because a migrant girl in order to fend for herself has to study, needs studies and then she can work well and doesn't need to clean (EA6)*

From the fieldwork, we collected many transformative contributions that open up spaces to overcome these difficulties by means of different kinds of support. On the one hand, these supportive actions come from teachers and on the other hand, from peers.

In regard to the support given by teachers, the focus is on a treatment based on dialogue that cultivates a relationship with the students. The teachers highlighted that having high expectations of their students makes the students feel that they can go ahead:

*Here we try to promote the girls so they won't fall behind, because we know that we have to push them (...), we don't have many girls with lacks. I'd say that at the moment with a deficit ..., with educational needs, we have two (ED3)*

The same girls agree that the support they receive from their teachers makes them feel encouraged and helps them believe in their abilities:

*...my tutor has supported me a lot. We sit down together, we think about things, my assets, the abilities I have, things I'd like to do ... and among this try to chose whatever... (EA11)*

The girls point out that it is not only the encouragement of their teachers but the efforts they made and their explanations in class that helped the girls follow the lesson and understand the content:

*... **Your tutor, why do you like him that much?** Because he cares about the students, because there are teachers that don't (...), don't care about the students understanding him or getting what was explained ... **Do you think motivation, concern... of a teacher about his students is important?** Yes, yes. **Do you think this can help your performance to improve, to be better... that you learn more than when your teacher only explains it and that's it?** Yes (EA15)*

Through dialogue, teachers verbally reinforce all progress they make; but as one of the teachers tells us, dialogue is possible in specific spaces such as the welcoming classes where there is somebody in charge to whom the students can go when they have academic problems or difficulties of coexistence.

*... To conclude, we are proving, for example, with the teachers of the welcoming class, of the orientation department and other teachers that there are, talking to these girls, right, boys as well, but with these girls, ... well the talking to them, giving them support, meeting them, asking how was the exam, and they: "Damn, I failed" "Why, what happened?" all this makes that these girls make it, passing the courses. These direct consequences in their lives, well... "How can we help so that you get it", it works: the direct consequences. And we can talk in tutorial sessions and so on, but that they have people that support them and serve as a reference, that's essential (ED1)*

Teachers are becoming aware that the girls have difficulty feeling included. They recognize that these girls must be actively encouraged to become involved in common activities or classes in the school. As one teacher says, a little support helps the girls take the initiative. This support is given in the class and, as the teacher points out, it is given to all the students; this way everyone learns that diversity in class means enrichment:

*Depends on what, there is always this hand that pushes you, but you don't notice it. The searching: "You should register for such course...", don't you think? But no special dedication. One sheet for the Moroccans: "you should register for..." or inform them more... No, in the context of their class you say it to everyone and there in an indirect way you say: "it wouldn't be bad if you'd register for this, do I sign you up?" I just came back from Germany and I've been with foreigners. The best way is that the rest treats them, the rest of the students, as a student, is that you treat them yourself as just another student. And if you are joking, and you're joking with them the same way you do with the one next to her that has a different colour, but is more intelligent or richer, right?, that's the best integration we can do (ED2)*

The interviewed teachers emphasize that they explicitly reject any kind of discrimination based on gender, culture or religion in their classrooms. One of the interviewed teachers puts it this way:

*In class this can't happen, and if it becomes clear, I assure you that from the class itself (...) we react, and vehemently. Eh... a phrase or a word, a racist attitude is something we fight with all our strengths. Because if there is anything we can transmit to our students this is tolerance. Also history and maths, but tolerance, coexistence, respect. And respect for the different and the one that has come from Punjab, who didn't come on vacation, but because his social or economical situation forced him to do so. Or hard and difficult reality as they are in, that's why we fight it severely. (ED2)*

As the teacher indicates, racist attitudes are stopped and condemned in the classroom. One student points out that the actions taken by the teachers to solve conflicts by means of dialogue and respect make students feel heard and respected:

*Well, the respect and the teachers help a lot..." "...in the same way, as we get out of school teachers get out as well and they meet and talk to them: why do you fight, you're friends, whatever, that's what I like most (EA3)*

In this girl's account the importance of peer support arises. She clearly indicates that inclusion in the group is important and would improve her academic performance, and motivate her to attend school:

***Do you think that if you had more friends in school, you'd have better grades? Yes, I'd do better. Would you like going to school more? Yes, but as I have no friends and no help... And the girls that you said sometimes explain the topics? Sometimes... (EA17)***

One teacher mentions the need to increase dialogue with the family in situations where a student is in difficulty. Tutorial sessions with the girls' families are oftentimes a context to monitor the progress and the possible difficulties that the students face. This dialogue with the family also helps improve the girls' results and their motivation to study.

During the fieldwork, we found various measures used to promote coexistence in high schools, such as coexistence commissions or mediation groups. These kinds of measures help reduce the conflicts and may directly affect improvements in the learning process of the students:

*Afterwards, here in this school we started last year and this one... we are progressing in ... we have a coexistence commission and mediation service. So, well, we have started talking about this topic and the*

*importance of coexistence for school success to be higher, right? (ED1)*

## 5. Conclusions and recommendations

This study shows that there are neither policies nor particular resources available to address the problems of immigrant girls in secondary education in Spain. In addition, there is no specific quantitative data about the conditions they face or their performance in school.

Although education professionals acknowledge the fact that these girls face difficulties during their studies, there are no particular action plans to tackle this phenomenon.

These girls face discrimination for two reasons; they are women and they are migrants. The fieldwork shows that for young migrant women the more visible their difference is, the more noticeable the prejudices and stereotypes of peers and teachers are. This is demonstrated, for example, in relation to migrant girls who wear the veil.

The girls that have taken part in this research attach – in general terms- great value to their studies. In fact, many of them have had difficult experiences and have made a considerable effort to overcome the barriers that they have encountered. They have faced barriers related to the curriculum they are offered and the expectations they perceive among their teachers and their families, not to mention the challenge of changing their own behaviour to cope with discrimination from their peers.

It is important to highlight that those educational measures that are intended to help migrant girls integrate and develop the necessary language skills do not necessarily ensure a strong academic performance, nor do they foster the desire to continue their studies in the post-compulsory level. In some of the stories collected these girls report feeling that they have wasted their time in the classes and groups in which they have participated. This lack of perceived progress causes low expectations for their future in the education system. Lack of hope for the future is not only internally produced but it is also absorbed from outside through the criticism and attacks received from peers and from teachers who do not react to such behaviour from other students.

The recommendations that stem from this analysis point to the need to reinforce the relationship between the schools, the girls and their families. This kind of integrated approach is practically non-existent or, where it does exist, it has been reduced to a few tutoring sessions with the families. We believe that the girls would greatly benefit from increased interaction between the school and their families. Such a relationship would promote their full participation in the school, in their daughters' training and in decision-making. According to the literature, this approach results in educational success and improved inclusion of vulnerable groups.

The literature also points out that the participation of women belonging to cultural minorities with different religious or educational backgrounds can play a key role in the schools. Their presence contributes to breaking stereotypes among children, teachers and other members of the community. Furthermore, it has an important impact in the prevention of educational failure and drop out as well as to prevent problems of gender violence.

Providing positive role models is important. An effective way to do this is to organise meetings with migrant girls where they can share their experiences, support and motivate each other. In Spain, these meetings are being conducted with Roma girls with very positive results. The focus groups conducted during this fieldwork have already had a positive effect.

These spaces of dialogue and solidarity and the mechanisms that provide support to these girls must be promoted and implemented. By doing so, female migrant students will be able to stay on the path to educational success and inclusion.

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# Young Migrant Women in Young, Female and Migrant: Gender, Class and Racial Identity in Multicultural Britain

## Introduction

### 1. Race, Gender and Young Migrant Women: An Educational Policy Review

#### **1.1 Migration to the UK: Background to the study**

This study focuses on education and policy issues as these relate to young migrant women at secondary schools in England. England has been chosen as the main focus of this review because the vast majority of third country nationals to come to the United Kingdom in the years following the Second World War have settled in England. Figures from the 2001 census show that 13% of the English population belong to minority ethnic groups, compared to 4% in Wales, 2% in Scotland, and 7.9% across the UK as a whole. Since 1945, seven postcolonial waves of migration to the UK are identifiable (Hall 2004). They mirror economic demand for labour in the UK, global political change, and population upheavals caused by conflict and war. They are: first- African Caribbean; second-Asian sub-continent, including Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi as well as Kenyan and Ugandan Asians; third -West African, including Nigerian and Sierra Leone, Turkish, and Greek Cypriot; fourth - North African including Somali, Sudanese Moroccan and Algerian; fifth- (Bosnian, Albanian and Kosovan); sixth (Afghan, Iraqi and Middle Eastern); and seventh post-Soviet Eastern European, including Polish and Lithuanian.

However there are distinct gender differences that underpin the migrant experience which are rarely acknowledged in policy (Griffin, 2007). The general trend in immigration legislation toward placing restrictions on family related modes of migration disproportionately disadvantages women. While female dominated family reunion is the largest single category of migration to developed countries including the UK, family migration is framed with reference to primary applicants who are assumed to be male heads of household (Kofman *et al.*, 2008). Despite the fact that labour migration to sectors such as health, education and domestic service is female-dominated (generally migration reinforces existing gender divisions in the workplace), gender is neglected in policy terms and the different patterns of female migration go unrecognised. According to the Women's National Commission,

'women who have migrated to the UK, forced or of free will, are more likely than migrant men to suffer from discrimination. They are also more likely to be exposed to forced labour, sexual exploitation and other kinds of gender-based violence. They are more likely to accept hazardous work conditions and low salaries that are below the minimum wage' (WNC, 2010).

There have been different State responses to postcolonial migration to the UK: from assimilation and integration in 1960s; to multicultural pluralism in 1980s; to the celebration of difference and diversity in 1990s (Mirza, 2009). In the context of the racial unrest and ethnic segregation among Muslim youth in 2001 and the 7/7 bombings by British born Muslim youth in 2005, Community Cohesion through civic integration has become the new official discourse on multiculturalism. Community Cohesion emphasises building bridges between faith-based communities, in particular targeting what are seen as segregated Muslim communities who are deemed to live 'parallel lives' (Wetherall *et al.*, 2007). This project's working definition of 'young migrant women' includes not only third country nationals (i.e. those who are not nationals of one of the 27 EU member states) but also young migrant women whose families have been settled in the UK for two generations or less. The breadth of this definition means that the policies and sources described in this study are not all specifically focused on migrants but rather on 'minority ethnic groups', which is the usual term in the UK for minority groups that have a shared race, nationality or language and culture (Bhavnani *et al.*, 2005).

### **1.2 National Policy Drivers for migrant/minority ethnic pupils in schools**

Across compulsory education, one in eight pupils in the UK are now from a minority ethnic background. England has a higher proportion of minority ethnic pupils than the other three countries in the UK: figures from the English School Census of January 2008 show that in state-funded secondary education 19.5% of pupils were classified as of minority ethnic origin, an increase from 18% in 2007 (DCSF, 2008). In line with recent immigration trends, the fastest growing ethnic group in London schools is 'white other' (that is, pupils not from Britain but from European countries like Poland and Lithuania). Figures from 2009 show that 11.1% of secondary school pupils (364,280 pupils) in England have a language other than English as their mother tongue. In Inner London, over half of school pupils (54.1%) are recorded as learning English as an additional language (DCSF, 2009).

Since 2000 a number of national initiatives have been implemented that impact upon migrants and education. Some of these initiatives are relevant to children and young people in education in general; others specifically tackle the imbalance of educational opportunities and educational outcomes for school pupils of different ethnic backgrounds. Two drivers have shaped policy on education and migrants: (1) a commitment to social justice, and in particular, to policies of equality and inclusion; and (2) the creation and promotion of the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda. With reference to equality, the Race Relations Amendment Act (RRRA) 2000 has a key impact in stimulating a range of equality and inclusion duties of public bodies, which the Equality Act 2010 has integrated into a general equality duty, bringing together the duties on gender, ethnicity and disability with duties on age, gender identity, religion and belief, and sexual identity. Significantly, both the RRRA and Every Child Matters emerged from inquiries into the murders of black children in Britain, and the questions these deaths raised about UK society's record in racial equality and child protection (Patel, 2007).

Schools also have a Gender Equality Duty (to demonstrate that they are promoting equality for women and men and eliminating sexual discrimination and harassment, and they are required to have a gender-equality scheme) and a community cohesion duty (a duty that all pupils understand and appreciate others from different backgrounds with a sense of

shared values, fulfilling their potential and feeling part of a community, at a local, national and international level). Again, there are questions about the extent to which these duties have translated into actual educational policies designed to ensure justice and equity and to combat racism and exclusion. Shain (2003) found that although all the schools she visited in the course of her fieldwork had policies on race equality or equal opportunity, racism and racial harassment was an 'accepted part' (p. 130) of the school experience of female Asian pupils.

The Government is committed to parental choice in education, particularly the selection of the school their child attends (schools in England act as their own admissions authorities). Research suggests that many minority ethnic parents are in favour of selection although the system often works against them (Tomlinson, 2005). Tomlinson also argues that the evidence shows parental choice has increased social and racial segregation in schools, as it has enforced the idea of a hierarchy of desirability, with many schools attended by ethnic minorities (often inner city schools without an established academic culture) viewed as the least desirable. This tension between choice and inclusive education is also present in the emergence of faith schools in England. The range of schools with a particular religious character or formal links with a religious organisation has increased since 1997 and concerns have been raised about whether these schools are divisive in a multicultural society.

### **1.3 Educational issues for young migrant and minority ethnic women**

In the UK there has been ongoing concern about the lower achievement levels of some minority ethnic pupils. In practice, the majority of discourse has focused on the lower achievement levels of boys, particularly African Caribbean boys and, more recently, white working-class boys (the lowest attaining group) and Muslim boys. Girls remain absent from current discussions around gender and schooling, eclipsed by an ongoing international media and policy obsession with the 'boys underachievement debate' (Archer *et al.*, 2007, p. 549). Although, for white British pupils social class has a far greater bearing on educational achievement than gender, the same is not true for all minority ethnic groups (*ibid.*). Noting the overall improvement in the performance of girls in schools masks the educational difficulties of girls from working-class and/or minority ethnic heritage as well as the impact of other social identities.

Data from the Youth Cohort Study suggest that while the gender gap is established within each of the principal minority ethnic groups, there are nevertheless consistent and significant inequalities of attainment between ethnic groups regardless of pupils' gender (Gillborn and Mirza, 2000). The data highlights a particular disadvantage experienced by Pakistani/Bangladeshi and African-Caribbean pupils. Here girls attain rather higher than their male peers – which, in the case of black girls, educational research has attributed to the (mythologised) 'strong black mother' (Mirza, 2009, p. 11) – but the gender gap within groups is insufficient to close the pronounced inequality of attainment associated with their ethnic group as a whole. Achievement data shows that, in actual fact, white British boys do better than black Caribbean girls at GCSE level (Archer and Francis, 2007, p. 10).

In a similar vein, Osler and Vincent (2003) examined school exclusion data and found that girls comprised a very significant minority (1 in 4) of school exclusions of pupils aged 13-15 (a key educational period in terms of working towards public examinations), but noted that there was a lack of interest in this from policy makers and a belief that this was not a priority issue. Although there is evidence to support the argument that African Caribbean girls are disproportionately likely to be excluded from school compared to other ethnic groups (eight times more likely than their white female peers [*ibid.*]), the impact of institutional or teacher racism (explicit or implicit) on girl pupils is under-researched.

The issue of pupil mobility – that is, the movement of pupils in and out of schools at non-standard times of entry – is one with direct relevance to young migrant women, although in the UK it is most often discussed with references to refugee and asylum-seeking children. Pupil mobility is perceived by many head teachers to have a negative effect on school performance, largely because mobile pupils tend to be those with English as an additional language (EAL). Young people's wellbeing, progress and attainment may be negatively affected by domestic and school mobility (see LERU, 2008). The New Arrivals Excellence Programme (NAEP) offers guidance on the induction and integration of newly-arrived pupils learning EAL and the DCSF provides advice for schools on meeting the needs of newly arrived learners of EAL, especially where these schools have no access to specialist ethnic minority advisers.

Where a school's policy concerns young minority ethnic women specifically, it is in cultural/social measures. As part of the Every Child Matters agenda, the DCSF published (in 2008) booklets and leaflets on forced marriage specifically aimed at children and young people, with separate leaflets aimed at teachers. Practice guidelines for professionals, including school staff, were developed following the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007. Mirza (2007) argues, however, that in general multiculturalism in Britain has failed to recognise gender difference, with consequences for 'ethnicised' young women who are invisible, not fully-protected, and thus vulnerable to oppressive cultural and religious practices, such as forced marriage, 'honour' ('izzat') crimes and Female Genital Mutilation (in the UK an estimated 6,500 girls are at risk of FGM every year). In 2009, the DCSF set up the Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Advisory Group which recommended that guidance for schools is developed to support effective teaching and learning to prevent VAWG across the curriculum as part of the gender equality duty.

#### **1.4 Young Migrant Women and education: issues of race and gender identity**

Educational research and policy can categorise minority ethnic pupils in ways that are insufficiently intricate to identify and address equality of opportunity and outcomes. Added to this, stereotypes of female pupils persist, with the ideal female pupil being quiet, obliging, industrious and so forth (Archer *et al.*, (2007). However teachers and professionals described this disengagement in 'explicitly racialized terms' (*ibid.*, p. 557), with black girls viewed as louder than Asian girls who were homogenised into a passive (and thus marginalised) group. (Asian girls were also perceived by pupils to be treated more harshly for transgressing the expected behavioural codes.) Diane Reay in her case study of gendered power relations among 7-year-olds in London concludes that for Asian girls 'ethnicity, as well as class, appears to be an important consideration in the possibilities and performances of different femininities' (Reay, 2001). Ethnicity, as well as class and sexuality, can 'constrain as well as create' the options available to girls in constructing their gender identity.

For Asian – or Muslim – girls the focus of their femininity has been on constraint not rebellion, and the symbols of stereotypes of oppression by the home culture (as opposed to the freedom of school), clothing and choice in marriage (Haw, 2009). The current representation of these girls is as 'the over-controlled victims of oppressive cultures' (Shain, 2003, p. ix) and research has shown that 'it is a common experience for Asian girls to be ignored or marginalised in classroom interaction because it is assumed that they are industrious, hardworking and get on quietly with their work' (*ibid.* p. 62). Research with working-class Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian girls aged 13-16 conducted by Shain (2003) shows instead that the girls are actively engaged in producing identities that draw on both residual cultures of the home and the local and regional cultures they now inhabit. Shain described four strategies for survival employed

by her interviewees: first, resistance through asserting their Asian cultural identity, a response in the main to experiences of racism; second, survival by passivity, working within stereotypes and focusing on academic achievement; third, rebelling against their parental and community values, and fourth, asserting religious identity. Mirza's study of black girls at schools in London in the late 1980s observed that 'much of the girls' time was spent using strategies to avoid the effects of racist and negative teacher expectations (Mirza, 1992, p. 192).

As Basit describes, female Muslim pupils can be stereotyped by their teachers as having poor attendance, low self-esteem and on the receiving end of low expectations (academically) from their parents. Basit conducted interviews with 15 and 16 year old Muslim girls in the east of England who had all been born or raised in Britain to explore how the dynamics of Muslim family life impact on their identities. This study reveals interesting insights into the mismatched perceptions of teachers – that British Muslim girls were lacking a freedom at home that they had at school, and that this was a cause of tension between them and less restricted (white) English girls – and the perceptions of the Muslim girls themselves. They wanted more freedom, but not as much as English girls had because this freedom was perceived as a symptom of parental neglect. Basit identifies 'a process of negotiation in constant operation, whereby Muslim girls are able to win more freedom in certain areas, such as education, by behaving in accordance with parental wishes in other ways, for instance by not going out with boys' (Basit, 1997, p. 436).

Claire Dwyer's (1999) interviews with young Muslim women engage with the premise that the veil is a marker of difference and show how dress is used to construct identity in a school context. Dwyer found that choices over dress were related to the school context (particularly the visibility of the Muslim subpopulation) and class (with working class girls experiencing fewer freedoms than middle class girls). Young women described clothing in oppositional terms as either Asian or English, and with anxiety expressed about being defined by the clothes worn: styles were mixed to create new ethnicities, as young women explored their identity through clothes style. For Shain, the Asian girls she interviewed who defended their wearing of non-Western clothes to school, traditional dress was 'an important site for the contestation of school identities' (Shain, 2003, p. 65).

These studies emphasise the multiplicity of identities that young migrant women in secondary schools engage in, and that the formation of identity should be seen as a fluid process, a process of becoming rather than arrival (Asare, 2009, p. 17) Within this, however, it is important to recognise that this story is by no means wholly negative and the very fact of being a migrant, especially where this move has been motivated by pursuing a goal of upward social, educational, or occupational mobility, can be a positive factor in educational attainment. In the UK educational success is associated with some migrant groups (Chinese pupils for example), but is also evident in groups not normally recognised as successful. As Mirza argues from her study of second-generation African Caribbean women (whose parents came to Britain in the 1950s) 'young black women engage in a dynamic rationalisation of the education system' and 'strategically employ every means at their disposal in the educational system and in the classroom to achieve a modicum of mobility in a world of limited opportunities' (Mirza, 2009, p. 11). Through a combination of faith in meritocratic ideals (from migrants who came to the UK in search of 'a better life'), 'strategic rationalisation' (that is, strategies for getting by and getting on in the school environment, making use if the opportunities that are available and accessible) and the expectation of economic independence and the prevalence of relative autonomy between the sexes, young women construct 'positive strategies for a negative climate' (ibid., p. 25) in the educational system.

## 2. Young Female and Migrant in England: The Study

### 2.1 The School Context

The research on young migrant women in the UK was conducted in a large conurbation in England. In line with the other four European partners, we adopted a qualitative approach to gathering the data, using a case study approach in two inner city state secondary schools, both with high numbers of minority ethnic and migrant students. We have changed the names of the schools for confidentiality purposes, to protect the identities of the students and educational professionals who shared personal experiences, incidences and opinions which have enabled an exploration of the experiences of migrant young women in a schooling context.

School 1 will be referred to as 'Hazelville'. A mixed sex state comprehensive school, Hazelville is located in an inner city area with a highly diverse population in terms of class, ethnicity and the migration routes of students and their families. Such diversity in the area provides an interesting mix of pupils in the local schools along class and ethnic lines, where those from middle class and Muslim families are more likely to attend the other neighboring high achieving all girls school. However raised standards in Hazelville have meant more middle class families are seeking places in the school. The majority of students are of African Caribbean heritage (two thirds), followed by white British (one third) and lastly 'other' ethnic groups. The school offers secondary and further education for students aged eleven to nineteen.

School 2 will be referred to as 'Bushill'. Bushill is an all girls state secondary school located in close proximity to the city centre. The borough under which the locality falls is classified as one of the most economically disadvantaged in the country. The families of the girls in the school reflected such socio economic status. This school is particular in its ethnic mix where 94% of its pupils are of Bangladeshi origin. It achieves highly in national inspection reports and also in academic performance with significant numbers of students going on to higher education.

## 2.2 Methodology

### 2.2.1 The young women

The Institute of Education (IOE) is a leading university in educational research and teaching. Research staff has access to a range of educational institutions across the country for potential research sites. For this project, the research team had an established positive relationship with teaching staff at Hazelville that enabled access to the school. Furthermore, through a snowballing technique, the team was put in touch with a senior teacher at Bushill who facilitated access to the second school site. Data was collected through focus group discussions with students, in-depth interviews with students, teachers and other education staff in the schools, and comprised the following:

- a) 8 in-depth one to one interviews with young migrant women (aged 16-18, Hazelville). They came from a range of countries including India, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Jamaica, Sierra Leone, Burundi, and Moldova. The length of stay in UK ranged from 3 years to 13 years.
- b) 2 focus group discussions with young migrant women from a mixture of ethnic backgrounds and migration paths comprising 22 students aged 16-18 at Hazelville, and 12 students aged 16-18, at Bushill.
- c) 7 in-depth interviews with educational professionals, including teachers such as Head of sixth form, Deputy head of school, Health and social care teacher, head of inclusion, parent support worker, admissions mentor, academic learning mentor and home-school liaison officers.

d) A parent discussion group with 13 participants (12 mothers and 1 father) whose children attend primary and secondary schools in the local area.

### **2.2.2 Policy makers and other actors**

In-depth interviews were conducted with policy actors at both national government and local level. At governmental level the research team identified two relevant departments and directly approached key stakeholders for interviews. These departments have not been named to protect the identities of the participants. At the local level, the policy officer was approached through recommendations from colleagues at the Institute of Education, and subsequent contact was made with other local level policy actors through snowballing. In-depth interviews were conducted with the following policy participants:

- 1 senior policy maker team in one government department (3 participants)
- 1 senior policy maker in another government department
- 1 policy officer concerned with ethnic minority achievement delivery at local (borough) level
- 1 parent liaison officer at local (borough) level
- 1 Teaching and Learning Manager, Secondary Education at local (borough) level

The interviews and focus group discussions were transcribed and analysed by the research team using a grounded theory approach, whereby emerging themes were recorded and agreed independently from the initial questions as set out in the interview and focus group schedules. Emerging themes were subsequently discussed with the other project partners and an agreed coding frame was developed for analysing the data in the second phase of analysis.

### **2.3 Theoretical framework: Intersectionality of race class gender and religion**

In this study we have adopted an intersectional approach to deconstruct and frame the narratives of the young migrant women, parents, teachers and policymakers. Intersectionality is an evolving approach that is increasingly being applied in understanding inequalities and identities referring to:

*The interaction between gender, race and other categories of difference in individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power.* (Davis 2008, p. 68)

The focus on interaction between social categories allows for an understanding of how such divisions are produced and reproduced in relation to one another, rather than as separate categories of difference (Yuval-Davis, 2006), and for an examination of individualised and highly contextualised identities and social locations in terms of time, place and other intersecting social locations (Phoenix and Pattynama, 2006). In the case of young migrant women an intersectional analysis provides the scope to examine processes of racialisation and gender in relation to class, religion and migrant status, amongst other social categories such as disability and age. Such analyses of the interaction of multiple social categories provides the opportunity to focus on diversity within groups, and also the process by which categories are produced, experienced, reproduced and resisted in everyday life (McCall, 2005). For instance, some categories of difference may be troubled in some contexts and not others, e.g. religious identity of Muslim girls in schools in contrast to the home which can be negative in the former and positive in the latter environment (Ramji, 2007). Furthermore, unlike feminist theory or CRT (Critical Race Theory) which are both ideologically predetermined, an intersectional

approach can allow for an understanding of ruptures and signs of resilience or resistance that the girls may demonstrate (Staunaes, 2003).

### **3. Gendered Routes to Migration: Young Migrant Women in the UK**

The young women who participated in the fieldwork in Hazelville and Bushill schools were from a variety of migrant backgrounds, either of first generation (born abroad) or second generation (born in the UK and parents born abroad). However it should be noted that the term 'migrant' in the UK context is specifically used to describe those who were born abroad. Second generation migrants have 'naturalised', hold British or dual passports, and are subsequently referred to as 'minority ethnic' as opposed to migrant. From the individual interviews, only one participant, Shantelle, was second generation with parents born in Jamaica and Dominica, and the other 7 girls were all born abroad and migrated to the UK at different times between the ages of 5 and 15. All 7 girls were in various ways classified as family migrants, constituting the largest category of migrants entering the UK (Kofman and Meetoo, 2009). Within this category of family migrants the girls came through a variety routes, reflecting the diverse backgrounds, countries and histories of migrants in the UK. Some of the girls came as 'family dependents' after their parents had settled, some as lone migrants to join other extended family members, and others migrated at the same time as their parents and siblings. The young women's families were from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, and reflected the increasingly classed migration system that is based on accepting a higher number of skilled migrant workers through the points-based system.

#### **3.1 Migrant status and journeys of arrival**

The girls in our study arrived in the UK via diverse migratory paths, and as a result have a range of migrant statuses. Munizeh, originally from Afghanistan, had first migrated to Holland at the age of 4 and then to the UK aged 14 with her parents and sister. Four out of the 7 girls came as migrants for 'family reunification' purposes, i.e., one or both parents arrived in the UK first and subsequently invited their children as dependents. Janini came to the UK from Sri Lanka, aged 13 with her mother and brother to join her father after he was granted refugee status. Geeta came from India when she was 15 with her father to join her mother, who came as a skilled migrant nurse. When her mother felt that she was financially stable, she called her daughter and husband to join her as family dependents. Aleksandra migrated from Moldova aged 5 to join her parents who came as economic migrants. Similar to Geeta, she was called to join them as a family dependent after they had stabilised themselves financially. Jamelia from Sierra Leone also migrated for family reunification purposes aged 9, although her case differs from the three girls above. She migrated alone and was sent by her father to meet her grandmother in the UK. Both Gillian from Jamaica and Shani from Burundi migrated aged 5 and with their immediate families.

The participants in the two focus groups consisted of girls from very different migrant backgrounds. The young women in the Hazelville focus group were migrants from the Caribbean, parts of South and South East Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe. The girls from the Caribbean and South Asia were mostly second generation, whereas those from Eastern Europe, Africa and some from South Asia were first generation. The participants in Bushill, on the other hand, were very different. They were all practicing Muslims, and mainly second generation Bangladeshi girls, with the exception of one who was born in

Kenya but whose parents were Somali, and another who was born in France but migrated to the UK at the age of seven.

### **3.2 Limits of the British Immigration System**

All of the young migrant women in the interviews and the two focus groups were legalised and had status as family dependents. The experience of marginalization for young migrant women in the UK context is therefore less about status and legality and more about the actual processes and day-to-day experiences in the school system. Shantelle lives with her mother who is now separated from her father, two sisters and two brothers. She is the middle child. Of those who came to the UK through the family reunification route, Janini lives with both her parents and two brothers, and Geeta who was invited by her mother continues to live with her. Geeta's situation highlights the disadvantages faced by spouses who enter as dependents in the British immigration system: her mother has divorced her husband, and as a result he is to be deported back to India. This is based on the dependent spouse rule that states that if a spouse is brought into the UK from a non-EU state, they are subject to the two-year rule, which is used to detect whether the marriage is 'bogus'. If the marriage breaks down within this period, the dependent spouse is deported (Kofman and Meetoo, 2008). Research shows that females are disproportionately affected by this legislation because the dependent spouse brought into the country is usually the wife (Wray, 2006). Such gendered experiences of the immigration system create further dependency on the male spouse and in cases of domestic violence can lead to the entrapment of the woman in the relationship (Wray, 2006; Gupta, 2003). Furthermore, under the two year rule such spouses are unable to access state help to leave potentially dangerous situations and are forced to stay with their partner and wider family or face deportation (see Gupta, 2003 for further discussion of the issues).

Geeta's case is the reverse. Her mother, as a highly skilled migrant, is the economic driver of the family and is the lead migrant. However, Geeta faces not seeing her father as often as she would like as a result of the British immigration system rules. She was given the option by her mother to return to India with her father, but is choosing to stay in the UK. Geeta's father's agency is limited by and tied to his economic and professional status. Her mother entered the UK on the skilled migrant programme and holds qualifications that are recognised by the UK government. Her father, on the other hand, is a mechanical engineer but because he qualified in India and does not have a UK recognised degree, he could not practice in his skilled profession. As result he found himself working as a waiter in a hotel, and then in a supermarket. Such cases demonstrate how the British immigration system continues to disadvantage those who are not from the recognised skilled migrant categories, alongside further restrictions in types of migrants that can enter the country, and for Geeta's father this is doubly compounded by his dependent status as 'spouse'.

### **3.3 Family Formation and Change**

The interviews allowed the research team to explore the various family formations in detail. They revealed that young migrant women come from a wide array of arrangements, some of which are directly linked to migratory experience, as with Geeta, but they also showed that migrant families experience the same issues of separation and continuation as other families across ethnic and migrant groups in the UK. Of the young women who migrated with their families, Shani continues to live with her mother and siblings. Her father remains in Uganda and continues to work there. Munizeh also lives with her parents and sister with whom she migrated. Jamelia, who migrated alone to join her grandmother, continues to live with her

even though her father is now residing in the UK. Jamelia was brought up by her father and aunts in Sierra Leone, but the civil war meant that she was separated from her father. Despite not living with him in the UK she continues to visit her father on a regular basis.

Gillian, who migrated with her mother, has never met her father and describes him as “*a bit of a...he was a runaway once I was born.... yeah, people say it’s because he was Jamaican, it’s a bit of a brand and a label they’ve got*”. Furthermore, stories such as Gillian’s demonstrate that the post colonial stereotypes linked to black masculinities and fatherhood still persist in contemporary British society, and that such negative representations and assumptions continue to influence the ways in which second generation migrant women perceive themselves.

Most of the young women did not return to their country of origin on a regular basis. On the contrary they often expressed displeasure at the idea of visiting their country of origin, despite their parents missing home. Aleksandra said, “*...we go back every year. I don’t want to go back.... (even though) it’s right bang in the city*”. Some of the young women such as Munizeh and Janini had not returned to their country of origin as their parents were refugees and expressed no desire to revisit their roots. However, Geeta, a more recent migrant with strong links with her grandmother and friends in India was looking forward to celebrating her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday there. Return visits to countries of origin depend on a number of factors. Migrants such as Geeta whose mother is able to afford holidays are able to maintain such links and desires to revisit their homelands. Other migrant families such as Munizeh’s who live in overcrowded social housing, and whose parents do not work because of ill health, are constrained by financial struggles making such contact with their country of origin impossible.

#### **4. Bullying and victimisation: towards an intersectional understanding**

Recent research conducted by Tippett *et al.* (2010) shows that identity based bullying in schools across England, Wales and Scotland is widespread and impacts on educational attainment and life chances. In our research bullying and victimisation was a main area of concern that arose from the interviews and focus groups with the young migrant women and the parent discussion group. Mapped out below are the reasons for bullying, a discussion of the nature of the bullying in its various forms, and policy recommendations on how bullying of migrant students in schools can be dealt with. The varied stories and experiences below present a snapshot of the different manifestations of bullying, and the diverse reasons young women and their parents are often bullied or victimised in different spaces. To fully understand how bullying is located and the appropriate mechanisms to tackle it, we advocate an intersectional approach to provide a more nuanced understanding of the problem.

##### **4.1 Manifestations of bullying: poverty, gender, race and newer migrants**

Shani who migrated from Burundi with her mother and siblings aged 5, spoke of how she was picked on and bullied in her years at secondary school prior to sixth form. In response to being asked if she thought the bullying was about race or skin colour she replied:

*Everyone used to look down on me and...I don’t know...I think because, like, I don’t fit in, because I don’t fit in with the trends. I don’t have the nice new trainers, I don’t fit in with what they do and stuff like that.* (Shani, Burundi, Hazelville)

Shani’s experience highlights how class entwined with ethnicity features prominently in the everyday schooling experiences, and is exacerbated by the racialised position of such

young migrant women. The majority of the young women interviewed, including Shani, were from lower socio economic groups whose parents were either unemployed, on incapacity/sickness benefits or worked as manual labourers.

It was evident from the young women's narratives that skin colour acts an important trigger for bullying. Jamelia from Sierra Leone spoke of how in her earlier years in secondary school she was "cussed ...about (her) skin colour" by students from different ethnic backgrounds and not only white students. Such 'cussing' was clearly highly racialised and often perpetrated by other black students:

*They were mixed, black, black African, black Caribbean, black British, all mixed...they mainly cussed me because they said my skin colour's really, really dark. They would use this word called Blick...or say I was really, really, dark, they used to compare me to like charcoal and all those things. And sometimes the boys, mainly the boys,... I think that's the main one, black on black, because most blacks think - oh we are better than other blacks - if you know what I mean? (Jamelia, Sierra Leone, Hazelville)*

Common interventions in racism inside schools are modelled on whites as perpetrators and minority ethnic groups of colour as the victims (Bhavnani *et al.*, 2005). However, in a multicultural context, forms of racism vary in nature and are seldom accounted for when addressing racist behaviour. Being unpopular was also identified as a measure to recognise which students were likely to be bullied. As Jamelia explained, the students are divided into those who are popular and unpopular, which was confirmed in the focus group discussion where links were made between popular students and their race:

*It's all about status. Every year group has like a hierarchy, you are either at the top or the bottom. If you are at the bottom you are going to get picked on, if you are at the top you just stay out of their way.*

*I think it's sort of racial as well, but not the typical racism you expect...the person that is getting bullied is most likely to be white, in this school ... (Focus Group, Hazelville)*

Such categorisation by popularity is deeply racialised, where the colour hierarchy continues to define how popular students are. The newer migrant girls who were of black and Asian descent did not feel that they were seen as popular. However, migrant girls from Eastern Europe such as Aleksandra from Moldova, were in the popular group, despite being a first generation migrants. Aleksandra's perception of her own popularity status defined this. When asked if she and her group were popular, she replied, "Yes, I don't want to be big-headed, but we are". Vulnerability to being bullied or being popular is tied up with gendered and racialised perceptions of beauty, as Aleksandra's case in relation to other girls not viewed by other students as popular, such as Shani, demonstrates. Geeta from India spoke of her experience when she first arrived in the UK three years ago. She was teased about her hairstyle and was sexually bullied by boys:

*They used to talk rubbish about me...talking about Geeta has the same hairstyle every day. You cannot change your hairstyle, like if you don't have that proper hair...her hair is always curly, maybe she curls her hair, and all those stuff. And I was unable to sit in that lesson... there were like three boys who used to tease me a lot, they used to even touch me wherever they want... and I didn't used to like that, because I came from a girls' school... when I came to the school people used to be very rude to me because of my colour. (Geeta, India, Hazelville)*

Geeta's experience of being bullied as a new arrival was not uncommon, highlighting that specific attention needs to be paid to such students at this transitory stage in their schooling. In addition to the racialised nature of the bullying, language or accent was also used as grounds for bullying for other newly arrived students. Geeta has higher levels of cultural capital given her family's skilled migrant status and family educational background.

Parents of migrant students provided valuable insights into their experiences of bullying when their children started school. As one parent explained, being a new arrival often means automatic exclusion from established friendship groups, leading to isolation and then poor performance:

*So when children fight...they feel isolated because the other group has their own group to back them up, and say no, no, no, it was him actually, or it was her. Because they don't have the friendship, or they are not developed, where they feel they are isolated because they will be, they feel like they are outsiders.*  
(Parent discussion group)

Furthermore some parents in the discussion group felt that while newly arrived migrant students are supported academically, there is a lack of emotional support which would address some of the issues around bullying. They mentioned, for example, that there was no "*support for children to make them settle and feel welcome*", and that no work was done with the other students to explain that "*they shouldn't be bullying because this person has a language barrier or has just arrived in the country.*"

#### **4.2 Bullying and Religious dress**

The young migrant women identified both advantages and disadvantages in wearing religious dress. On one hand, the Muslim girls in Bushill school explained how religious dress can act as a form of gendered protection from exposure to criticism for not wearing the 'right clothes', providing less scope to be bullied for having less money. However, in Hazelville, a more diverse school setting, Shani felt that she was being bullied by students she did not know because she wore the hijab and because she '*was the only girl wearing it*'. There were strong parallels between the stories from the migrant girls, and the mothers in the discussion group. Both parents and the young women spoke of religious dress as reasons for being bullied or victimised in school for the girls, and on the street for the mothers. Muslim women in religious dress currently receive much public attention from media, politicians and are the subject of academic investigation in the UK and across Europe (Afshar, 2008; Meetoo and Mirza, 2007; Ahmad, 2003). Some of the female participants recounted how they had experienced harassment and racist behaviour in the public spaces they frequent on a daily basis because they wear the veil. One female participant offered her seat on the bus to a fellow passenger with a buggy who declined the seat and commented, "*anyway, they are bombers*". Another woman cited an incident in which she asked a pedestrian in the street to move his dog over to the other side as her child was frightened, to which the pedestrian responded, '*what do you know, you wear a scarf, stupid woman*'.

#### **4.3 School response to bullying: teacher (in)action, student agency, culture and language**

The above mapping of experiences of bullying, its locations and explanations demonstrates the complexities of why some students are targeted over others. Reasons as to why some students are bullied are not solely about race or ethnicity. Instead, our research shows that the nature of bullying is gendered (beauty) and racialised (colour), and simultaneously tied

to wealth, and religion. Hierarchies of power between students are also context specific as the case of Hazelville demonstrates, where the African Caribbean students were cited as the bullies of white students and other black students. However, despite such articulated stories and experiences, there was a general consensus amongst the students at Hazelville that bullying was not adequately dealt with by the teachers, if at all:

*If there is one person in the year or class that starts on the new person, or the person who is a different culture, or ethnic background, and the teacher doesn't do anything about it, even though you go tell him, or her, and their parents is brought into it as well, and the teacher doesn't do anything. I'm not sure if it's the training, or they just don't care. (Focus group, Hazelville)*

The young women explained that this inaction is due to fear of the bully on the part of the teachers, especially if the bully is *quite an aggressive person*. The individual interviews with the young migrant women in Hazelville provided a varied picture of teacher response to bullying, particularly in terms of which students perceived it worthwhile to report such incidents. Shani 'chose' not to tell any teachers about her experiences. Geeta did report the incidents to two teachers who subsequently called a meeting with the bullies. These contrasting situations raise important issues about which students feel that their concerns will be responded to in relation to their subjectivities, capital, and identification with the school system. Geeta, who displayed higher levels of cultural and social capital compared to Shane, appeared to identify with the school system and subsequently felt more at ease in communicating with teachers over personal matters.

In contrast to the everyday nature of bullying at Hazelville, Bushill instilled a different ethos of inclusion and 'family', resulting in minimal problems with bullying, perceived by both the teachers and the students. One student who had joined the sixth form recently commented:

*It's like when you join the girls are really friendly...Everyone's just so friendly...I think, before I came here people were saying it's the friendliest school ever...I used to think, no, there's always going to be something where someone's hating someone, or some people aren't friends with some people, but when I actually got here it's like everyone's friends with everyone. (Focus group, Bushill)*

Bushill is a unique all girls school in that its ethnic mix is predominately Bangladeshi and Muslim. The young women linked the school's welcoming environment partly to the fact that it was an all girls' school and to values of sisterhood, but they also thought its success was mainly due to the student mentoring system which encourages sixth formers to mentor students in the lower years.

School response to bullying of migrant students was a theme that was discussed at some length during the parent focus group discussion. Parents raised issues about cultural (mis) understanding and language issues for newly arrived migrant students in relation to bullying and responses to being bullied. One parent commented:

*In terms of, in Somalia, where a child bullies another child, its eye for eye, tooth for tooth, end of story. They hit you, you hit them back, that's the way the system is...So here...the system doesn't teach this. And often their children, because other children know how to manipulate the system, so that they will do it in a way discretely, they will hit the child where teacher or the adult around them can't see them.... So the Somali child, even though he is the victim, he will become also the person who is being excluded ...the teachers only act on what he sees and what he knows. (Parent discussion group)*

#### **4.4 School ethos and the whole school approach: Solutions to the problem**

The forms of bullying and victimisation presented are highly racialised and gendered and are also compounded by other intersecting forms of social divisions and categorisations. Some categorisations are more pronounced in some environments than others. For instance, managing diversity in Hazelville demanded greater attention due to the socio-demographic characteristics of its students. Forms of bullying were based on hierarchies of beauty (colour) and dress (wealth, religious), and migrant status. These issues were less pronounced in Bushill where the young women were from similar ethnic and religious backgrounds, and were further protected by religious dress that acted to standardise appearance of the young women, more so than general school uniform.

For those students who feel they do not have the scope to speak out about their situations, teachers' recognition and sensitivity towards such students needs to be heightened. As Shani explained, some of the quiet students and those who are truanting from school may be signalling that they are being bullied and added that:

*Teachers should recognise that. If a person's not speaking and someone is always picking on them and making sly comments ... They shouldn't just leave it... when a student is bunking, or missing lessons and stuff, there's a reason behind it. (Shani, Burundi, Hazelville)*

Most pupils and parents at Hazelville felt that the school did not deal with bullying effectively. This echoes research by the Tippett *et al.* (2010) which also found that a common cause of ineffective intervention in bullying is sometimes teacher's poor understanding of diversity, and that identity based bullying cannot be effectively addressed until recording of such incidences are put in place. While some categories of identity-based bullying in the UK are recognised and recorded in schools e.g., racist and homophobic bullying, others such as refugees, transgender and gypsy travellers are not. Gender-based bullying is also minimally recorded. Through our research we found that ineffective responses to bullying were also due to lack of student knowledge of existing support mechanisms, i.e., many students at Hazelville did not know about the counselling service. As Gillian explained:

*I think they should have like a little centre place, or an open door where people that are bullied or think, you know, they are a bully, to just go in there and freely talk about it. (Gillian, Jamaica, Hazelville)*

The students in Bushill instead talked about a 'family feel' to their school, which is in part about the school's ethos: a zero tolerance attitude towards bullying, and an inclusive environment in which their students thrive and excel, despite their lower socio-economic status. These issues are expanded on in the section on mental health and policy. A preventative 'whole school approach' to tackling bullying is most effective and should be integrated into school policies, assemblies, personal, social and health education lessons, and also equality action plans (Tippett *et al.*, 2010).

#### **5. Gendered Surveillance: controlling the female body in disempowering environments**

The young women in the interviews and focus groups recounted varied experiences of being heavily regulated or monitored by teachers, fellow students, family and the wider community. Such surveillance was highly gendered, racialised and based on expectations of appropriate behaviour. Previous UK based studies which highlight regulation of young women's behaviour have tended to focus on girls of South Asian origin, i.e., those whose ancestors are from

India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, examining how girls from these groups are more heavily controlled and restricted culturally and religiously by their own families (Ghuman, 2003). However studies which have critiqued both family and community regulation, and also the intricacies of wider surveillance and regulation of Muslim and South Asian girls have made valuable contributions toward understanding the complexities of surveillance beyond culture and the home (Shain, 2003; Puwar, 2003; Ahmad, 2003). The findings presented below also demonstrate that gender surveillance for migrant and minority ethnic girls is not merely confined to family, home and culture, but extends to other spaces that girls frequent both in school and in public and social spaces. In addition, our research shows that the nature of surveillance is marked by current discourses, which are deeply racialised and gendered.

### **5.1 Regulation in school: teacher expectations and Muslim girls**

The Muslim headscarf and various forms of veiling is a highly contentious issue around Europe, where political debate and legislation has focused on safety, terrorism, and agency of Muslim women. Since the 9/11 and 7/7 bombings in New York and London, media narratives of young Muslim women continue to be on the agenda. The young women in the focus groups and interviews who wore the headscarf spoke of negative experiences at school that they linked to wearing religious dress. Within schools the headscarf was a main concern of teachers, where serious incidents have emerged in pressurised situations between teachers and students:

*We had a teacher who was annoyed with a student because she'd been doodling on the table, and the response to that, because he was totally annoyed and vexed, his response to that was – why don't you clean it with your headscarf.* (Focus Group, Bushill)

Muslim women who do wear the veil have largely been constructed as a homogenous group, where meanings ascribed to veiling are understood as symbols of oppression (Ahmad, 2003) and where such women lack agency (Afshar, 2008). This is largely evident through media representation, but is also relational to other representations of female sexuality, which in the UK context has been understood by Gill (2007) as the hypersexuality of 'other' women in relation to Muslim women and the veil. Agency for such Muslim women, and in particular South Asian women in the British context, is heavily problematised in relation to marriage, educational paths and patriarchal cultures (Puwar, 2003). Muslim girls who wore religious dress in the schools were also problematised, resulting in questioning, regulation and increased surveillance of behaviour by teachers. Teachers' perceptions of girls wearing the veil were bounded by popular concerns about their agency or scope for choice, which was articulated a young woman in the discussion group:

*There are a few teachers who, like, I wouldn't say they have a problem with our faith, but they do make a few comments which sometimes I just think are unnecessary.... you know like it's been quite hot the past week and stuff, the teacher would say something like – are you not so hot with your scarf? Why don't you take it off? I won't tell your mum. It's like we wear it for our parents, but we don't. Just comments like that.* (Focus Group, Bushill)

Brah (1996) argues that agency has to be seen and located in the context of intersections as experiences are relational, and located in intersections of structure, culture and agency. Understanding agency and the significance of wearing the veil benefits from an intersectional under-

standing which places such significance in context, and in this case within schools. Young Muslim women's identities are contested from different actors, from home to school and in public and social spaces (Basit, 1997; Dwyer, 1999; Begum, 2008). They are subject to teacher's expectations about what it means to be a 'true' Muslim, and this is particularly manifested through body and dress. At the heart of such assumptions lies the continued preoccupation with the silencing of Muslim women's voices through the symbol of the dress, and the scope for agency they have. In the following extract, Jane, the Head of Inclusion from Hazelville uses religious dress to control young Muslim women's behaviour in school, drawing upon the overt absence of 'race' in the British multicultural discourse to explain her concern:

*So don't tell me that you are kind of being forced to wear the headscarf and you couldn't take it off, because you could do, couldn't you? Because you are doing what you shouldn't do with the earrings. I know it's more complex than that, but as a middleclass white woman those are the thoughts that partly go through my head...And in a way it's nothing about race, it's about difference isn't it? It's about difference. (Jane, Head of Inclusion, Hazelville)*

### **5.2 Regulation by the wider community**

Some of the young migrant women disclosed information about being controlled in different spaces, by community members both in and outside of school. Such surveillance was tied to regulation of sexuality, and can be partially understood through notions of honour and shame, which feature highly in public discourses about women of Asian and Muslim background. Munizeh from Afghanistan spoke of being policed and reported on by males in different spaces. In the following extract she recounts how a younger Afghan boy in the school was following her around and reporting her 'bad' behaviour to her father:

*[He was] saying bad words...saying things that are not true, to people, like from in my family...they said your daughter is with boys, hanging around with black boys, and sitting in the car...thank God my father didn't trust them. Because, I mean, the teacher...was involved in this, even went up to my dad and said this was mis-accusations...and I never had a relationship with him, he's just a guy from there, and he just keeps on observing every move I make...in the beginning, when he used to do it I didn't feel comfortable to come to the school...Why would this guy observe you and look at you twenty four hours and tell bad things about you? (Munizeh, Afghanistan, Hazelville)*

Geeta, from India recounted being monitored by a family friend, where such surveillance was based on expectations of 'decent' behaviour. Geeta felt that her parent's divorce was the main cause of added surveillance from her father's friends. She explained:

*We went on a trip with the sixth form, ...taking the tube from Balham, ... and we were just having fun, and I was wearing a short skirt, because it was really sunny, so I was wearing tights, but I took it out, because it was really hot...I was talking to them (the boys), and I was hitting one of them, and one was holding my hand. So my dad's friend saw me and he was telling to my mum's friend, like...you can see by her facial expression and the way her posture is, she's always hanging around with boys...and my dad knows about it but he doesn't say anything. That hurt me a lot" (Geeta, India, Hazelville)*

### **5.3 Familial control and school response**

Wider concerns about familial and community surveillance of South Asian and Muslim young women are currently high on the public agenda in the form of gender based violence, evident

in government policies and interventions on forced marriage and honour crimes (Brandon and Hafez, 2008; Gill and Mitra-Khan, 2010). A handful of studies in the UK have explored such racialised understandings of violence against women amongst some ethnic groups and have challenged everyday explanations for specific forms of violence, which are largely attributed to culture. For instance Gangoli *et al.* (2006) report that forced marriage is found amongst a range of ethnic communities beyond South Asian and Muslim groups, including gypsy traveller and Jewish communities. When dealt with in the school, such culturally defined phenomena touch on thorny issues of teachers dealing with perceived difference in a multicultural context. While UK multiculturalism instils values of respecting difference, how such issues are framed and responded to by professionals is currently a much-debated area (Meetoo and Mirza, 2007; Dustin and Phillips, 2008).

We came across a potential forced marriage case in Hazelville involving Munizeh, whose parents wanted her to marry an older man in Afghanistan when they discovered that she had a boyfriend. She explained that the teachers who were mainly white and middle class in Hazelville, did not understand her culture:

*Obviously they don't have the same culture as me. The things I am telling them they kind of get shocked, like the abuse what happened in my parents' family, you know, they took it a bit strict, and they said they had to call the police. I told them because I was in pain, and they told the police, and the police came and said we won't do anything more. I had to beg, I had to beg to them that please don't arrest any of my family. I don't want them to know that I am here with you guys.... I had to give the DNA and they took pictures of him and I had to talk to the police in a small room, only me, ... they said if they do forced marriage they take you in a car, or force you, just call the police, or do something, or shout, they told me these things. And, you know, I was actually being prepared for it. (Munizeh, Afghanistan, Hazelville)*

Munizeh's family are unaware that she met with the police, as the process was conducted in confidence. The marriage is no longer taking place as he is now marrying another woman. However, Munizeh did mention that there are other men in the family who her parents may want her to marry. The staff at Hazelville in conjunction with the police acted as appropriately as possible, respecting Munizeh's wishes and not compromising her safety. There have however been other cases of professionals acting against the interests of the young women at risk that should be considered (Puri, 2005; Gupta, 2003). The deputy head at Bushill explained how support structures in the school also assist girls who are facing forced marriage (see mental health section for further details) and that the school also displays posters and information on notice boards about gender violence. She explains:

*So, for example, when we did have a girl forced into marriage earlier in the year it was a case of speaking to the father, and we worked with social services, who gave us advice about it and then we got her counselling when she came back. And her peer group as well, to give them support, so it's a mesh really of support for students. (Katie, Deputy Head, Bushill)*

Neela, the sixth form mentor mentioned that there are one or two cases of forced marriage every year in Bushill. The girls in the focus group talked about the lessons received on forced marriage, consisting of video clips and stories. As a result, they were highly articulate about the difference between arranged and forced marriage, and drew on Islamic teachings, which do not condone forced marriage, to highlight how such forms of control are unjustified:

- Because a lot of these forced marriages are culture, it's not really the teaching of Islam, and they mix it up.
- Yeah, our tutor explained a lot about it, and she did know the difference between the two, and she was explaining them, and she was really into, like, the whole forced marriages and explaining to us how people were forced, and...she basically gave us all these different articles about how these women and then were forced, or honour killings, and it was a big issue for her, and us as honour killings, they weren't exactly honour killings were they?
- I don't think they are, because they say they do it for Islam, but nowhere in Islam have I ever seen it say that you should kill your son or daughter because they don't marry the person you tell them to. I've never seen that in Islam, and I don't think any of you have.

#### **5.4 Risk and control in an ethnicised context: Ways forward**

The gendered surveillance and control exercised by teachers, peers, the wider community and the family described in many of the young women's narratives, was primarily based on behavioural expectations. Extreme forms of ethnicised control were apparent in current discourses around forced marriage, although it remains unclear how frequent such forms of violence are. It appears that some schools may be more effective than others in addressing so-called culturally specific forms of violence and some teachers feel more comfortable speaking about such issues, tied to support systems in place and also appropriate training. However, in Hazelville the young migrant women from a variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds, i.e., not only South Asian and Muslim girls, spoke about having strict parents who exercised higher levels of control compared to their white British counterparts. The young women spoke of how parents were reluctant to let them 'go to places alone', and were particularly concerned about teenage pregnancy, and as a result placed heavier restrictions on their movements than the parents of white girls. Such conversations indicate that whilst wider understandings of gendered control are racialised where some young women are seen as more likely victims of overly patriarchal cultures and beliefs (Puwar, 2003), the young women from a diverse range of backgrounds were also subject to enhanced restrictions. As current understandings of gendered surveillance and control are limited, based on an oversimplified understanding of parental and wider community control, analyses would benefit from an exploration of why some parents feel the need to control their children's movements more than others. Exploration of perceptions of risks tied to their everyday experiences would enable an understanding of migrant families' lives beyond religion and culture.

## **6. Mental health and resilience: Migrant girls surviving trauma**

### **6.1 Understanding the prevalence of mental distress**

Since the death of Victoria Climbié in 2000, and more recently Peter Connolly in 2007, risk and safety of young people is now high on the agenda. The Every Child Matters policy has prioritised the mental and physical safeguarding of children as a core duty of schools in the UK. The young migrant women's ability to survive and flourish in school depended on their resilience and ability to negotiate the harsh educational terrain of urban inner city schools, their home life in England and their past lives and memories from back home in their country of origin. With migration the young women had to navigate new and unfamiliar conditions of familial stress and poverty in a new land.

The research revealed some disturbingly high rates of mental health problems such as depression, self harm - including attempted suicide, and eating disorders. In Hazelville as many as 12 young women out of 100 in the 6<sup>th</sup> form were deemed to be at risk. Jeanette the

deputy head of the sixth form explains:

*...kids present with really serious issues that have often not been picked up until, really, the suicide plan has been formulated. And we are dealing with a lot of students, referring them to CAMS (child mental health services) much more now than I would have done five or ten years ago.*

In Bushill the deputy head Katie alarmingly stressed that mental health problems were ‘*Very, very common...*’ among the young women.

To understand why young migrant girls are prone to this sort of risk we need to locate their psychological state in what Spivak (1988) calls the epistemic violence of loss and the trauma of erasure. Racialised and sexualised ‘migrant bodies’ have become objects of hate in mainstream multicultural societies (Ahmed, 2004). The ‘crushing objecthood of the skin’ frames the migrant journey (Fanon, 1986). Skeggs (1999) argues that bodies carry unequal values depending on their position in social space. Young migrant women, like refugees, occupy a subaltern (Spivak, 1988) or abject social space that has psychological consequences for the young women. Furthermore the sexualisation and subsequent control of the young women within their own repressive patriarchal and conservative cultures impacts on their mental health and well being (Meetoo and Mirza, 2007).

## **6.2 Cases of trauma and distress among Young Migrant women**

The incidents of trauma and distress among the young women were narrated by the teachers who encountered disturbing and complex cases on a daily basis. An overriding aspect of the trauma was the young women’s emerging sexuality, familial tension and regulation compounded by isolation and lack of control over their lives in the new migrant context (van Bergen *et al.*, 2009). The head of sixth form at Hazelville cited numerous examples of young migrant women with mental health problems. Two of the young women she spoke about had attempted suicide. The reasons for such high levels of mental distress can be explained by numerous factors that characterise young migrant women’s lives. The first young woman was supporting herself and her mother, still in Kenya, with her Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA - due to be scrapped under the new coalition government), and had also increased caring responsibilities for her siblings. Such responsibilities at home take an added toll on the educational performance and experience of young migrant women, and are important in understanding how complex young migrant women’s lives can be. However, describing these pressures as “cultural” can obscure the fact the family is experiencing economic, social or structural problems that are not caused by their culture. For example, displaced migrant families have weaker social networks, which can result in increased caring responsibilities for young women (Wall and Sao Jose, 2004). This is visible through another young migrant woman from Tanzania, who lost her dad and currently lives with her mum. Denise, head of sixth form explained how this student and her mother are extremely isolated in the UK ... *‘her mum is struggling with having no partner, is struggling with supporting two very amazing eighteen year old daughters, and a son who is in my year ten, and I therefore think that her mum’s status as a migrant is making it very difficult for her, because her mum is just all alone and desperate for help and support. And we provide her a lot of informal support, but I feel very much for them. So we have lots of girls who cause us quite a lot of concern.’* Another second-generation migrant woman, whose parents are from Bangladesh, also attempted suicide and had a public breakdown. As with the young woman from Kenya, she presented as having increased caring responsibilities for her seven siblings. However, her distress appeared to be in connection to a relationship she was having with a man, which her parents did not endorse.

### **6.3 Polices and practice concerning risk, safety and well being in schools**

The casual admissions tutor/mentor at Hazelville whose role is to settle migrant students into the school both emotionally and logistically, referred to a multitude of episodes with migrant students that could be referred to as cases of trauma or distress with serious implications for mental health. However it should be noted that teachers who fulfil specific pastoral roles and are trusted to pick up on problematic issues for the young women are currently faced with having these posts cut and not replaced. The casual admissions tutor told of one young migrant woman who experienced flashbacks of abuse from her childhood, which were brought out in the playground. She highlighted that even though this could be viewed as an extreme case, it was important to clarify how such buried incidents from students' pasts must be dealt with effectively in schools to ensure their mental well-being. The policies, Every Child Matters and Safeguarding Children insist schools should work with other agencies to effectively address children's well-being, including mental distress. As the casual admissions tutor explained "...one of the important things about my role is to know what to do with information and who to refer them on to if necessary. That's the same for anyone who is staff in this school".

The schools' responses to the cases cited above by Denise, head of sixth form at Hazelville, demonstrate that dealing with mental distress and trauma for young migrant women can be complex when located in economic, cultural and migratory experience. Students who have recently migrated may not be familiar with the help available and may not fully understand what can be provided in terms of support. They may also feel that they are not entitled to access such help. When navigating cultural difference, as the case of the Bangladeshi young woman's attempt at suicide, teachers have tried to work closely with the parents to agree on procedures. In these sorts of situations where parental restriction can be one of the causes of mental distress, teachers are presented with what can be a difficult and contradictory scenario:

*So we linked carefully with the parents, and tried to encourage her parents to support her to go and get support from the adolescent mental health services, and we spoke to her parents a lot, they came in and spoke to us and they ignored everything we said. She was then seen by adolescent mental health services, but then refused to go back, was seen by the police, but refused to take it any further. (Denise, Head of Sixth Form, Hazelville)*

Denise felt that the parents were resistant to help from mental health services because they were '*ashamed of what happened*' and that they '*didn't want any association with mental health problems*'. Furthermore, when the police were involved the parents did not allow them to speak to their daughter alone and insisted on being present in conversations with the police. Close engagement with parents over a child's mental health may sometimes not be the best solution, and a more sensitive approach to dealing with attitudes and risks from families themselves needs further attention in teacher response. Teachers navigating mental health issues for young migrant women are presented with a multitude of intersecting factors to manage as these cases demonstrate, from understanding economic disadvantage and the effects on schooling, to awareness of cultural attitudes that contravene school's approaches to pastoral assistance and understanding the isolation some migrant families face.

The Head of Sixth Form at Bushill spoke about the support systems in place that mirror much of what Hazelville offered to its students. Like Hazelville, Bushill also had a counsellor, social worker, health advisor, and a police officer all based at the school. When a girl was forced into marriage earlier in the year, the school spoke to her father, and sought advice

and worked closely with social services. Uniquely, Bushill gave this girl counselling when she returned to school and her peer group also received support from the school. However, school-based counselling services only work if students are aware that they are available. At Hazelville most students did not know there was a counsellor, and the ones that did pointed out that she was only available for a limited number of days a week. In addition, a health and social care teacher highlighted that the school counsellor was only available to students up to year 11, i.e., GCSE compulsory school age, and students in the sixth form were unable to access such support systems despite continued need.

#### **6.4 Recommendations: improving response to mental health issues for young migrant women**

Raising student's awareness of support services available to them in the school was a crucial finding in our research. The young women in the Hazelville focus group were not aware of the support services in place, e.g., they could not name the educational welfare officer (EWO) or the counsellor, and some did not know there were such people in the school. When asked what would make things better for girls if they did face problems such as bullying, or if they needed help, one young woman replied '*Make it (the support) more known, really. I didn't know who the counsellor was*'.

Instead the girls at Hazelville saw individual teachers playing important roles in supporting them through difficult times. They referred to the importance of the ethnic background and cultural compatibility of the teachers who offered them support. As one young woman from the focus group told us:

*I think also when ...you know someone is part of your culture they might have gone through the same thing, or had experience of dealing with that situation, whereas if, like, a white teacher who hasn't been through that same experience, they'll have, like, different cultures have different reasoning, if that makes sense? And I think that a person who doesn't understand where you are coming from, they'll kind of judge the situation too quickly, even if they try not to. (Hazelville, focus group)*

Another young woman from Afghanistan told us that when she was faced with a potential forced marriage situation, the teachers lacked an understanding of the repercussions their usual course of action would have on her family relations:

*When I had family problems Miss Gerard just called the police and suggested that I want to arrest this person, and I went no, you can't, because then the problem will get bigger. But I had to make them understand. (Hazelville, focus group)*

### **7. Substituting Capital: parents, mentors and schools building capacity**

Education is an important means of class and social mobility for migrant groups. It is a site of both reproduction of cultural capital and translation of social and economic capitals into crucial resources for their children. Schools represent important sites of social inclusion, citizenship and belonging for migrants who are vulnerable in terms of status and employment opportunities. In this sense schools become important points of integration and take on meaning beyond mere learning. For migrants schools become a valued trajectory for inter-generational social transformation and social distinction. As Weekes-Bernard (2007) shows minority ethnic parents, in this case Caribbean parents, choose schools so as not to be with

'people like us' but to differentiate themselves from 'people like that', i.e., to distance themselves from the stigmatised status of their own communities, often paying for independent private education when they can.

### **7.1 Mapping migrant girls aspirations: self-actualisation and the limits of educational transformation**

While working class and racialised migrant habitus - or ways of being - may be embodied and thus not transcended through learning, the young women negotiate the opportunities available to them to create educational and social capital (Ali, 2003). For the young migrant women education was a means of personal transformation and belonging in socially and economically restrictive circumstances. Bradford and Hey (2007) discuss the way in which young people from minority ethnic backgrounds are inculcated into the neo-liberal educational discourse of performativity and individuated success. Acceptable and compliant identity is 'performed' through embodied practices and behaviours. Commonly held views that most minority ethnic and migrant groups in the UK are highly motivated and 'buy' into the meritocratic educational system are echoed here by Abigail:

*My view is that a lot of these children are such an asset to school, especially in terms of motivational behaviour, they keep on going, that they actually do make a lot of positive difference to a school. But that depends on how well you can keep them going, and I guess that's a lot of my role. (Abigail, Casual admissions tutor, Hazelville)*

Whilst many of the young women talked about experiences of racism and bullying they also talked about England as being a fairer and better place to live than their home countries, providing them with opportunities and choice. As one young woman explains she liked, '*... the way the education system is, very fair and available to everyone*' (Focus group, Hazelville). Comments such as this were based on factors such as not having to pay school fees in the UK. However, migrant girls did not experience access to education and thriving in school as a level playing field. Their experience was often characterised by systemic and structural constraints to their educational progress. For instance, access to school and their future beyond school was dependant on two factors. Firstly, many migrant pupils were not admitted to schools near to exam time because it was believed that they could not pass their exams and this would affect the schools performance in the national league tables. Abigail, the Casual Admissions mentor explained that this was a strategic decision:

*Year eleven is GCSE year, we don't take casual admissions into year eleven, because it's a two year course, and they reckon it would be too difficult for them to catch up, because it would be too demanding, and they wouldn't have a hope of doing themselves any kind of justice. Although children who come to school within two years of sitting the exam don't count in league tables. Schools are quite conscious of the fact that these kids can skew their league table results. (Abigail, Casual admissions tutor, Hazelville)*

A second constraint on the educational progression of migrant girls is both the quality and the value of the qualifications they are allowed to pursue. Jeanette, deputy head of Sixth Form, explained that the exams they sit limit their future entry into higher education and post 16 opportunities. She expressed her anger at the way the pupils are beguiled into believing that what they are studying will provide 'proper qualifications' with competitive value in the educational market:

*Our head decided that she wanted to get outstanding and the things that get you outstanding in Ofsted terms are not necessarily the things that you and I would talk about in terms of the importance of the children..... there's been a big debate about the management's move towards this Asdan Award...A worksheet on this, a worksheet on that, put it all in a portfolio and the kid gets half a GCSE, so it helps bump up your...(results)...So ...we are going to get, this year, ninety percent of kids getting A-Cs. Because we do employability skills, because we do art award, because we do Asdan ...And I have to be careful how I say this, they've got a big portfolio of every GCSE known to man, other than maths, English, and science. (Jeanette, Deputy Head of Sixth Form, Hazelville)*

In Bushill the young women enjoyed a challenging and diverse curriculum. The girls had recently taken part in a very impressive model UN conference where they debated issues such as organ trafficking, and heard speakers such as ex-British National Party members, and an investigative journalist who had been to Afghanistan. In addition they received substantial support from their sixth form mentor who provided information on universities and campus life. She spoke to the universities on behalf of the students and brought ex-students and external speakers to the school from universities as well. Bushill appeared to provide a wealth of facilities and enrolled their young women in additional schemes to facilitate educational progression. As one young woman told us, some of them participate in the Social Mobility Foundation:

*If you get accepted onto their scheme they provide you with a mentor in your chosen area, and they take you to loads of different events, and they organise things in different places. It's really good. (Focus group, Bushill)*

This scheme also allowed the young women to hold internships in their chosen area of study in organisations such as the NHS. The young women at Bushill displayed a distinctively wide range of career aspirations such as pharmacy, medicine, psychology, finance, and engineering that they aimed to achieve through attending high-ranking UK universities. These ambitions were facilitated by an effective careers advice service. However, some of the young women voiced the lower expectations of some of their tutors who discouraged them from applying to top universities *'because there was no chance I would go'*.

## **7.2 Leadership: Social inspirational support from the Head**

The strong presence and influence of the head teacher at Bushill was evident from the staff and student interviews and discussion group. Her commitment to developing the young women's sense of empowerment was recognised and valued by the girls who described her as *'just incredibly driven, and very well connected'* and a *'very sincere kind of person wanting the best for, especially, the sixth form'*. Another young woman went on:

*And then we had this arts module about powerful women, and in that sense she did build our confidence, and she did open our eyes to all the jobs that would usually have gone to men. She was telling us it's OK to apply for such jobs. That we will get there if we try. So I think in that sense she did help us, more so than in the lower years. (Focus group, Bushill)*

## **7.3 Mentors making the difference: migrant girls transcending class and race**

Diane Reay has written about middle class advantage in education, in particular the way in which mothers employ class privilege, employing finely honed practices of networking, extra

resources and sense of entitlement to negotiate the best for their children (Reay, 1998). The knowledge, class habitus and unenunciated whiteness required to do so is embodied as cultural and social capital by the white middle classes (Reay *et al.*, 2008; Crozier *et al.*, 2008). Migrant parents who do not have access to such privilege and understanding of the educational system and are furthermore racialised as low status migrant 'abject others' are at a clear disadvantage when it comes to navigating educational advantage for their children. However Bushill instilled a remarkable system of substituting cultural capital of the Muslim migrant parents by employing a complex network of learning mentors and parent liaison workers to support the young migrant women in their educational studies and choices. Katie, The deputy head explained:

*We could spend a lot of time and money patching things up, and doing intervention later on, and having catch up classes, and behaviour problems, lots of schools have behaviour support mentors, and that kind of thing. What we do is put all the work into links with the community and ethos and values and culture and identity, so there's a cohesive group there, so that we don't lose loads of teaching time with students being out of lessons. We don't need to spend loads and loads of time excluding students. It happens, but much, much, less than other places, because we've got that groundwork in place. So I suppose it's a case of over a long period of time doing all of this work which means that other things don't need so many resources, if that makes sense...because schools often spend a lot of their time and energy on a very small number of students, don't they? ... So we spend a lot of time on these hard to reach families as well, but I guess we've got a certain amount of capital, not cultural capital, but as a school we've got a certain value which parents are already there with us, they already know that we are on their side.*

With 'choice' being a fundamental driver of educational policy, knowledge of what is available in the educational system, i.e., how it is ranked and what it means, becomes crucial to maintaining fair and equal access to education. If such knowledge is lacking in your family background then how are you to attain it? The employment of Neela, the academic mentor at Bushill, who works closely with the students through one to one mentoring was one such solution. Her role is to provide support for gifted and talented students by encouraging them to attend the top ranking universities, taking them to university open days and inviting speakers to talk about admissions and application procedures. Neela also deals with personal issues the girls may be facing. However, she highlighted that the young women were often reluctant to move away from the local area to study at top ranking universities, which she explained as due to lack of confidence and also parental pressure. These factors prevented them from meeting people outside their community, and also from socialising and communicating with men and those from other ethnic and religious groups:

*It's not really in my job description to say that, you know, you must get these girls outside of school, get them to meet who are non-Bengali, who are white, who are black, who are non-Asian, and even females as well, it's not really in my job, but I felt that when I first started this role, this is something that has to change. So if I give you another job description of mine, this will lead on to what I do in terms of getting the girls to socialise with other people, non-Muslim females. (Neela, Academic Mentor, Bushill)*

Neela viewed such mixing as essential if the young women were to progress in university interviews and find employment in diverse environments after university. To facilitate this, she specifically requested that male members of staff at companies that were providing work placements mentor the young women. Many of the young women could not face the idea of this, having had no contact with white men in their lives.

Bushill employed Sara as a parent liaison officer to deliver enrichment programmes to students and their parents. She developed extra curricular activities as a means of improving cultural and social capital for the families, including the parents. She learned that many families had never travelled out of the local area, and arranged to take families on trips to neighbouring counties and attractions, to raise parents' awareness about what is on offer for their children's learning. Other activities included yoga, Arabic, hockey, football and fruit carving, cookery and beauty classes, which the girls could participate in with their mothers. In addition, Bushill organised adult learning classes for the parents (language classes), and workshops on how to support your child's education and safeguarding children (sexual issues and safety). She explained that the school had made a commitment to providing these activities to '*draw the parents in (so that) they feel comfortable coming to the classes*', where '*the whole aim is for them to spend more time with their children, and support their children's education*'.

Involving fathers in their daughters' educational success was crucial at Bushill. To this end, they were invited to play badminton and attend trips. Although recognising that it is difficult for many fathers to spend time with their daughters due to constraints of work, Bushill nevertheless talked to fathers about the importance of supporting their daughters, how they '*should try and spend some time with their girls as well*'. Alim, a community liaison officer who is deeply rooted in the local community, also invites older brothers to the school as well as the parents, and openly challenges misconceived views about Islam and women:

*I say if you don't allow your sister, or ask the father, your daughter, to go out, where in the whole Quran says they cannot go out? Show me. Simple thing. Show me where, in the Quran it says woman is a second class citizen. You can go anywhere, why can't she go? Show me. And they cannot. Because it is not written there. Because God created everybody equal.* (Alim, Community Liaison Officer, Bushill)

#### **7.4 Managing parental expectations:**

It is widely assumed social capital is a positive asset. However as Zontini (2010) shows, while ethnic solidarity is positive in creating social capital, it can be limiting in relation to gender. This is apparent for young migrant Muslim women who were restricted by their parents' expectations. As Katie, deputy head explains:

*Parents will prevent them from applying, because they are very protected in their community ... they are very comfortable, and parents can be very traditional, and it is a cultural thing, for some Muslim girls they are not meant to be living away from parents, if they do then they can go to Oxford and Cambridge, but if it's not Oxford or Cambridge they can't go anywhere beyond the M25, otherwise they just become corrupted.* (Katie, Deputy Head, Bushill)

Neela explained that parental reluctance to allow their daughters to apply for alternative courses in universities across the country was due to lack of knowledge and information about the system, and alternative courses at university. She says, '*I don't think they've even heard of international relations or international politics*'. This highlights the need for schools to educate the parents as well as the students and the importance of having parental liaison officers in schools and at local level. Such figures also play a crucial role in negotiating access to educational enhancement activities (school trips) for girls that are often part of the curriculum. Sara explains to parents that it is important for their daughters to attend trips and that '*it's part of their GCSE*'. In addition, parents who may have experienced hostility and racism themselves in their locality are often worried about safety issues. Exposure to drugs and violence was also a major concern

for parents, and one of Sara's roles was to address these concerns as well.

Parental expectations and behaviour were sometimes contradictory. The deputy head, Katie, cited various examples in which parents expected their daughters to do well educationally but still expected them to contribute significantly to housework and childcare. Some daughters were not allowed to attend university outside of the city, but were expected to study medicine. The dialogue between teachers and parents often proved to be a defining point for the young women's educational pathways:

*It's long conversations and negotiations... we do have a certain amount of influence with the parents, because we've got so many avenues we can go down to try and persuade them. Generally we get them to agree, and this Oxbridge parents meeting, I know that some of the parents turned up, fathers and mothers ...some of the other parents, came very reluctant, and some of them didn't even realise that going to Oxford and Cambridge you had to live away from home, and the girls were saying it's fine, it's only an hour, I'll commute. By the end of the meeting they all said it's fine, they can apply. (Katie, Deputy Head, Bushill)*

## **8. Educational policy and young migrant women in schools**

### **8.1 Policy Patterns: The visibility and invisibility young migrant women**

Two aspects of policy stand out in relation to young migrant women in school in England. Firstly, migrant girls/young women are largely invisible in the multicultural and community cohesion discourses that frame approaches to minority ethnic pupils. Given the neo-liberal educational emphasis on performativity and success (Ball, 2010) the official public discourse is one of concern with boys' underachievement (DFES, 2007). At a governmental level this manifests itself through policies aimed at the crisis of masculinity and disaffection for black boys, alienation and separatism for Muslim boys, and whiteness and low self esteem for white working class boys. This preoccupation with boys rather than girls was clearly articulated in frank and open discussions with policy makers who did not see the absence of a gender perspective as problematic. Interestingly the normative emphasis on boys in policy meant that a 'gender perspective' was perceived as related to 'girls', simultaneously implying that such targeted measures for boys are not gendered:

*A lot of the work on community cohesion there hasn't been a gender... we haven't done anything specifically around gender. Although there's nothing stopping a school...this is where the local element comes in, we've said to schools there's nothing stopping you if there's a particular issue around gender, in your school, in your local community... but we haven't pushed that. (Gamal, Government Senior Policy Advisor)*

Secondly, when gender does arise in policy discourse in relation to migrant and minority ethnic girls, they are constructed as pathological victims of their culture where concern is largely focused on their familial and religious practices. While gender equality is integral to school policy where schools must comply with legislative monitoring of pupils attainment, where Muslim communities are concerned the issues aimed at girls are almost always organically cultural. When asked what gender policies are in place, the same senior policy advisor above explains:

*We did some work with the Home Office a couple of years ago, a big campaign, posters being sent out to all schools, ...the Foreign Office have a Forced Marriage Unit, specifically dedicated to this, educating*

*pupils about their rights, trying to educate the community. So there's quite a bit of work going around, just making young girls aware of their rights, and that they have support...you may recall some issues around children missing from education, about three thousand-odd are missing from education, and do local authorities know, we are trying to get local authorities to improve their information...I know it's done some bit of work around female genital mutilation, because that's quite prominent in.....Somali communities, and is a growing problem. A little bit of work has been done...against the taboo in some of our Muslim community...first cousin marriages. ...And I think, going forward, if we are going to address issues around women these are the issues I think we need to be doing. (Gamal, Government Senior Policy Advisor)*

While educational policy must address the human rights violations of young women's bodily rights, it is also crucial that policy perspectives move beyond stereotypical views of the issues and look at violence against all pupils more generically (Womankind, 2011). White pupils also suffer cultural domestic violence abuses, and these must be seen not as a cultural matter, but as a gendered issue to be treated in the same way for all groups (Dustin and Phillips, 2007; Mirza, 2010). However what we are witnessing here is the way in which migrant girls, and Muslim girls in particular, are produced as voiceless subjects in the policy discourse (Ali, 2003). Furthermore issues for migrant girls are submerged under the 'race' lenses of community cohesion policies and the preoccupation the government has with Muslim young men since 9/11 and the 7/7 bombings in 2005. PVE (Prevention of Violence and Extremism) as a policy strategy is the main thrust of central government policy and is now mainly targeted at faith-based migrant groups and at Muslims in particular. When asked if PVE had a gender element to its focus, the senior government policy maker replied:

*I think PVE was there to address threats to national security, posed...it's part of a kind of terrorism strategy...I wouldn't say there was, from the outset, it's got to be boys we've got to target, but I think it was who are the people most vulnerable, at most risk, and it just so happens to be young male Muslims, of a particular age, who are more likely to be radicalised, more likely to, you've only got to look at 7/7, at the bombers there. (Gamal, Government Senior Policy Advisor)*

The dichotomy of masculine and feminine identity and behaviour amongst Muslim youth continued to be crudely separated in the PVE discourse and acted as a justification for its male focus:

*...And the programme that was designed to address some of the issues wasn't really because there are gender issues, there were just more issues around that sort of clash of cultures, you know, lack of identity, their sort of feeling of, you know, alienation, risk posed by their sort of lack of their knowledge, lack of faith, lack of knowledge of their own faith. Those were more the issues, and I think those issues also apply to girls as well, but I think girls were just less likely to then get worked up, probably were radicalised, but were less likely to go on and probably commit, I don't think we've come across any, in our work, any young girls going on and committing a violent extremist act. But I'm sure there are young Muslim girls who are radicalised, with extreme views, but they don't go on and commit violent acts. (Gamal, Government Senior Policy Advisor)*

## **8.2 A Diverse work force? Teacher preparedness for a multicultural classroom**

As with race equality and gender equality policies more generally, increasing the number of black or female teachers was seen as a way of changing the makeup of schools to bring about

change (Mirza, 2009). Targets however are known to be problematic not only for those chosen few who carry the burden of being the change makers and role models, but also because they do not tackle the deeper issues of endemic inequality and in particular entrenched racism and sexism and western ethnocentric world views (Ahmed, 2009; Bhavnani *et al.*, 2005; Keddie, 2011). However targeting the recruitment of more female teachers in areas with high migrant populations was one way in which government articulated positive hands on approach to the issue, especially in mosques. The senior government policy advisor referred specifically to mosques, the ICE programme which introduced citizenship into the curriculum and encouraged the placement of female teachers into independent Muslim schools where this could include teaching segregated groups of boys and girls.

If such a policy perspective aims at the representation of migrant groups as a solution then the training of all teachers needs to be underpinned by an antiracist and anti sexist understanding – something which government has failed to implement on a national level. As Archer and Francis (2007) note, Teacher Training Agency surveys regularly reveal that the majority of new teachers report feeling ill-prepared and ill-equipped to engage with multicultural classrooms and pupils from diverse backgrounds or with English as an additional language. Such (mis)understandings of religious background and difference are reflected in day to day experiences of the young women in schools. The focus group at Bushill discussed teacher attitude and understanding of their religious background:

*I had a very mixed experience, because I found it depended entirely on the teacher. Some teachers were more informed about the religion than others, and the ones who were more well informed were generally more open minded in some respects, and the ones who were less informed sometimes had a very condescending attitude towards religious practices. (Focus group, Bushill)*

Effective training may encourage teachers to reflect before expressing such racialised attitudes evident in the extract below:

*I think the headscarf, especially for new teachers, sometimes not so new teachers as well, you do get some unnecessary comments, like she said. I remember when I was at school we had a teacher who was annoyed with a student because she'd been doodling on the table, and the response to that, because he was totally annoyed and vexed, his response to that was – why don't you clean it with your headscarf? (Focus group, Bushill)*

Minority ethnic teachers are more likely to fail their training, leave their posts or not be promoted in the UK (McNamara *et al.*, 2010). Black and minority ethnic, and in particular Muslim teachers were very rare in all the schools despite large numbers of girls from migrant backgrounds. However, one school did have an inclusive approach in terms of their ethos so the few teachers from other cultures were included and encouraged to feel part of the culture, as Katie the deputy head of Bushill explains:

*We have increasing numbers of Bangladeshi and Muslim staff...when we come back in September for the start of term it will be Ramadan, so we are organising first day back and lunch and things, and we think we will have forty to fifty staff who will be fasting, out of about a hundred and fifty. So increasing numbers are from the community, and that's really important, and we have, now, quite a few members of staff who were students here. (Katie, Deputy Head, Bushill)*

### **8.3 Schools make a difference: unravelling the complex tapestry of gender class and ethnicity**

Despite the central government's concerns with Muslim extremism and cultural practice at the top, the reality at the local level presents a very different and complex picture and demonstrates the importance of educational leadership and school priorities in defining a schools success or failure in the context of dealing with minority ethnic migrant girls. Gamal explained the policy of 'school linking' is a major plank of the multicultural community cohesion strategy. Here no two schools would be doing the same thing, but they could link up and support each other across class and religious divides. He explains:

*For example we've got some schools where Muslim schools link with Jewish schools, Jewish schools with Catholic schools, so we have the religion dimension. You also have rural schools linking up with some inner-city schools, so we've got schools in Cumbria, in Cornwall, linking up with schools in London, to give that different perspective. (Gamal, Government Senior Policy Advisor)*

However schools are extremely diverse and complex, which begs the question – how can they transfer good practice to each other (Macbeath, 1999)? What works in one location may not work in another. This is a fundamental problem with evidence-based good practice as a foundational policy driver (Bhavnani *et al.*, 2005). George, a senior policy maker at the local borough level explains how different schools affect the attainment and experiences of the pupils within their walls, even to the point of bucking national trends:

*The big issue is that we've got a reverse gender gap. At GCSE boys do better than girls.... we've got a couple of boys schools that absolutely buck the trend for inner city boys school... We've also got one girls school that I think seriously under-performs, ...And in our mixed schools girls actually do better than girls in our girls schools, which is another thing nobody expects. (George, Local Level Policy maker)*

George went on to explain that beyond the stark gender division, educational performance is read through ethnic categories where, for example, Turkish girls are out-performed by Turkish boys, African girls tend to perform better than African boys and Bangladeshi performance rates fluctuate.

In our study the two schools were very different and unique in their approach to migrant girls, which George referred to as the 'micro effect' of particular programmes. There was striking difference between the two schools – demonstrating the micro effect of school policy, leadership and intake. Bushill was largely mono-cultural and mono-gender, and Katie the deputy head explains that the success of the school is largely due to the existence of a 'community of likeness'. Bushill had a sustained and well funded programme of learning mentors to support the academic progress of the young women and advise them on their educational choices such as what GCSE subjects to take and what university to go to. They also had parental liaison officers from the Bengali community in place to bring the parents in to the school for extra classes, such as literacy and computing. These liaison workers and mentors were crucial to building bonds of trust to negotiate any familial issues such as permission to go on trips or any other religious restrictions. The mentors were integral to the school and at least three were ex-pupils (Muslim women) who had returned to work in the school. They held valued and respected roles. When asked how they managed to sustain this regime – the deputy explained they prioritised the funding for mentors, as they did not have to spend their limited budget on other pressing problems such as behavioural issues like other city schools.

On the other hand Hazelville's support systems were more chaotic. They had counsellors and admissions mentors and tutorial leaders. However, they were poorly funded, unsupported and these posts were part time, i.e., 2 days a week, and constantly under threat of redundancy. The turnover of staff was high and most of the pupils and other staff did not know who they were or where their office was. Many EAL and support staff admitted they did not have specific training for the task, and offered only informal and empathetic support to the girls rather than professional training. Good and more established (mainly female) teachers ended up as the point of reference for the migrant girls, who would turn to them in times of distress. The staff often referred to the lack of direction from the Head.

Leadership was a key issue in bringing about change in multicultural schools. The staff interviews at Bushill showed the head teacher was well respected for her leadership skills and the changes she had made. As Alim, the school's community liaison officer told us:

*She's a superhuman being...she's looking after close on fifteen hundred girls, ninety nine percent of them are Muslim, different culture, tradition, way of living, with contentious issues like the hijab ..and burka and all those things, and she sorts out everything, she has got a fair knowledge of Islam, and ready to talk about it. (Alim, Community Liaison Officer, Bushill)*

The positive effects of good leadership and a friendly school environment were evident in the girls' comments about their schooling experience. *'Everyone's friends with everyone'*. The girls mentioned that measures such as sixth form students acting as mentors for younger girls and the good interaction between the teachers as students enhanced their schooling experience.

#### **8.4 Integration Policies for new arrivals: Reception, Language and support systems**

Schools may vary in their provision for migrant girls when they newly arrive. A key element is the ethos of the school. A Somali parent explained the difference between the English and Danish school systems. Unlike in Denmark, her children were not separated or treated as 'alien' in the UK. In Denmark, being separated from other native students made her children feel excluded, less able to advance and less confident. The lack of interaction with Danish speaking children also meant that their language skills were underdeveloped. She describes her experience in this translation:

*I'm from Denmark, so in Denmark, when a new child joins the school, what they will do is they will segregate that child, they will teach them separately, the children will feel that they must be isolated, there must be something wrong with them, ...she feels positive in the UK, where children will be educated with their age group, with the peer group, and she feels it's very positive that they are not isolated. They will obviously have the support, and there would be language barriers and other issues, and various other things, but she feels the child doesn't feel that, like you stand from the crowd... in Denmark ...they couldn't learn because they were segregated, they were only amongst other ethnic kids, not the native. (Parent discussion group)*

Another Somali mother in the parent discussion group commented that she feels more equal in the in UK as she has the right to practice her religion. She is pleased that this also the case for her children in British schools where prayer rooms are provided and provisions are made for fasting periods, etc.

Bushill had a well-funded and mature approach to integration that draws on the skills

and experience and language competencies of established migrant populations in the school. Katie, the deputy head explains how this is complimented by their systems of support:

*We have an EAL department, and they pick up students, so as soon as a new arrival comes...we'll know before they arrive if there are language issues, and they have an intensive programme for some students, where they will be doing intensive work outside of classes, before they come to classes, or sometimes, especially if they are older, they might go straight in. But it completely depends, it's very individualised so it depends on the girls at the time.*

Katie went on to explain that migrant students have differing needs, which are not always about language. It is important to distinguish between students who have special needs and language issues:

*We always try and make the difference between special education needs and language issues, because students can be very high cognitive, but not necessarily have the language skills, so try and identify exactly what their issues are straight away to give them the support they need.*

In Hazelville they also had a systematic approach and a 'casual admissions tutor and learning mentor' to oversee new migrant girls. Her role is to coordinate their settlement, which includes things like coming into lessons, and matching new arrivals with buddies. She writes an induction report where they are monitored to see how they are getting on and to ensure that EAL support is in place. Abigail explained her complex role of managing parents, teacher and pupils:

*There's a lot of very technical stuff to start with, when they come in, explaining to them what the British education system is about, and that's often from start to finish, and it's about the different ways, the structure of courses, but it's also about the different ways we discipline children, and it's about our expectations, and that's quite tricky when families, parents, don't speak, actually English either.. So it's a sort of measure dosage that you give out, bit by bit, and that's why it's so important to have someone in school who is accessible in school to them, and is not fully timetabled all the time, so you are available to them. (Abigail, Casual admissions mentor, Hazelville)*

Negotiating language competency is a core issue and can make or break the girls' ability to integrate successfully. Abigail explains the way she has to tackle the issue:

*You often hear teachers say things like well, they've good English, they understand everything I say, but they might have a vocabulary of three hundred and fifty, four hundred and fifty words, but it isn't language for learning, and the sort of language that you use academically is often very different... explaining to teachers, (that) it's something that will benefit all the children, about speaking slowly, clearly, different strategies for re-explaining if necessary...because all of this is about the kids' level of comfort in class, and in the community that's very strange to them. (Abigail, Casual admissions mentor, Hazelville)*

The teachers in both schools were sensitive to the specific issues faced by young migrant girls when they arrive, and in particular they pointed to managing parental expectations and gendered expectations of caring responsibilities:

*I mean I think for some girls it is difficult for them straddling expectations at home, and expectations here, in that that can be hard for them to communicate and explain, and I think lots of girls have pressures at home, often caring responsibilities that are more significant, I think, in migrant girls than they are in other students...And I think that can place a pressure on them that we are not aware of, so if we are asking for loads of homework ...but they've got responsibilities at home, it's different for them. ...I'd imagine that it's a cultural expectation of the families, and that's very much been the expectation back in their home country, and that's brought over as part of that expectation and the girls will very much look after some of the boys as well. (Denise, Head of Sixth Form, Hazelville)*

The girls outlined these home pressures as well and how their lives differ from white English students:

*Our background and our home lives rather than the education that we get. Most of us probably might have more chores or more responsibilities at home, than, say, my white English friends, I mean I help out with my little brother, I help cook, I help clean. (Hazelville Focus group)*

The teachers also talked about inducting the girls culturally and the shock and trauma of settling into a new and highly sexualised culture:

*Things like sexuality for girls, and how they, what they see going on around them...it's often quite shocking. And it's confusing for them, because the adult world in the UK doesn't seem to have the same attitude as their adults or themselves...there's enough stuff in shops in the High Street, magazines, conversation that they hear, words that they hear....they can be inadvertently quite vulnerable at school, but also out of school.....what they look like, and what response that might bring from other people, boys, because they don't really know how to protect themselves, because it's not an open, free, situation that they have probably met before.....we are not talking about boys, but boys also don't understand that, they often think everything is fair game, and obviously it's not. (Abigail, Casual Admissions Mentor, Hazelville)*

However, despite the clear implications such examples have for migrant girls, teachers have only been able to offer forms of intervention on an informal and piecemeal basis.

## **9. Conclusion and recommendations**

### **9.1 Main findings**

Drawing on 8 interviews and focus groups with over 30 young migrant women in 2 inner-city schools, this study used an intersectional framework to trace the narrative constructions of young migrant women as they negotiated the gendered, raced and classed structures of dominance and power in the classroom and in their everyday lives. The young women's gendered subjectivity and experiences of education were also contextualised by interviews with parents, teachers and senior and local policymakers. Our study concludes that for educational policy and practice to effectively address the young migrant women's lived reality in multicultural Britain we need to locate their embodied raced and gendered subjectivity firmly within the materiality of their struggles. Only by understanding the multiple and complex ways in which gender, race, class, culture and religion shape their lives can young migrant women's absence from the policy agenda be acknowledged.

Our findings are as follows:

- The young women expressed strong outwardly individualistic neo-liberal career

orientated identities characteristic of diasporic 'migrant' self-actualisation, aspiration and survival. For migrant young women **education was a means of personal transformation and belonging** in socially and economically restrictive circumstances. However, access to education and thriving in **school was not experienced on a level playing field**. In one school many young women were not entered for high-level exams in order to manipulate ranking in school league tables. In another school, where they did get good qualifications, access to further and higher educational opportunities were restricted either by familial cultural constraints, such as not moving away from home, racist university admissions experiences or low expectations of work opportunities.

- The young women's narratives demonstrated the fluidity of strong gendered migrant female identities rooted in the materiality of their struggles and journeys of arrival. **The girls' route to migration was important**: her social class and parental background, how long she had been in the UK, fluency in English, and the circumstances which led to their family's migration (i.e., as a dependant or fleeing harm) were all tipping factors in terms of their confidence and well-being. Young women with unqualified parents or parents who had differing degrees of mental health problems, e.g., depression, or who had familial responsibilities, such as caring for siblings suffered the most. **Access to EAL (English as an Additional Language) was important**, as was inclusion in integrated mainstream classes (i.e., no separate reception classes).

- The young women's gendered subjectivity and experiences of education were also contextualised by interviews with policymakers. On one hand, their concerns were characterised by the dual multicultural discourse of invisibility, i.e., **that no agenda existed that specifically acknowledged them as a group** with particular needs. On the other hand, if they did receive attention they were subject to discourses of gendered surveillance, risk, safety and well-being on the other. Here what prevailed was the preoccupation with cultural restrictions and ethno-religious transgressions such as forced marriage.

- The girls' ability to survive and flourish depended on their resilience and ability to negotiate the harsh educational terrain of urban inner city schools. Their ability to overcome everyday issues such as sexual and racial bullying, forced marriage, depression, poverty and parental restrictions and surveillance depended on the schools' ability to mediate and support them. **Access to good school support** such as counsellors, parental liaison officers, educational welfare officers could be chaotic and often came down to the individual teacher or tutor that was approached. The young women suffered surprisingly high rates of psychological stress including domestic abuse and attempted suicide. They also **voiced great disappointment in the ability of schools to contain the racial and sexually bullying that was rife** between and among different competing ethnic migrant groups, including but not only white groups. A great deal of the bullying was gendered, perpetrated by boys with similar ethnic backgrounds to the girls.

- A good school often acted as a **substitute for lack of (white middle-class) parental social and cultural capital** providing learning mentors and integrated professional advice about educational choice, including further and higher education opportunities. Expanding the students' horizons with trips, work experience and extra curricula and enrichment activities usually not available to working class migrant girls, boosted their self-esteem and confidence and positively impacted on their exam results. Thus we found **'schools do make a difference'** as leadership was a crucial factor in establishing a sound inclusive and antiracist vision. In the case of one school the Head's decision to have a multicultural and a religiously respectful approach enabled a whole school ethos of 'everything is possible' among the girls.

## **9.2 Recommendations: Gendered strategies for integration**

'Integration' is a much-disputed term. It can imply loosening cultural and religious ties in order to fit in and 'assimilate' as it did in 1960s Britain, or it could imply that the focus is on the migrant "other" to change rather than any responsibility toward the receiving or the host society to adapt and develop and include new comers (Bhavnani *et al.*, 2005). However in this study gendered strategies for integration refers to the policies and practices that enable young migrant women to be recognised as a group with specific needs. As this study has shown, central Government policy has not addressed the needs of ethnic minority or young women, or if it does it pathologises them in terms of cultural practices thus locking them into gendered stereotypes of victims of religious and cultural practices. Four recommendations emerged from our findings:

- **Develop challenging intercultural Dialogue**

Professionals such as teachers and social workers were very conscious of 'not interfering' in other cultures. There is a need to address professional paralysis, or the 'walking on egg shells' syndrome that some professional experience. Young women complained of teachers not challenging bullying in the classroom, which was continuously highlighted by the young women as a major issue of concern. There is currently very little about cultural difference and diversity in the ITE (Initial Teacher Training) curriculum (Lander, 2010). Having compulsory specialist training, i.e., more than the current 2 hours allowed, would help teachers feel more confident about teaching multicultural and diverse classes. CPD (Continuing Professional Development) aimed at developing confident intercultural dialogue among educational professionals should be proactively rolled out to schools. This would entail clear government guidance underpinned by objective interfaith and intercultural knowledge. We would also recommend the use of Human Rights as a framework for educational providers to adopt when shaping classroom practice and the wider policy agenda. This would challenge the 'cultural relativism' (i.e., the view that other cultural practices must not be challenged), which is too often implicit in dominant mainstream multicultural approaches in schools.

- **Ensure Clear procedures for dealing with incidents for the Safeguarding and well being of young women.**

The high rates of forced marriage, attempted suicide, domestic violence, depression and other self harming actions by young women suggest the need for a clear proactive safety net for these young women. While progressive policies such as Every Child Matters and Safeguarding duties are in place in the schools, it is clear that the systems do not always work. Under the Children's Agenda there should be a safe 'mesh of support', i.e., social workers, police, family liaison officers, and mental health counselors who are trained in intercultural dialogue.

- **Have strong leadership that combines race equality with gender equality and wellbeing.**

Good leadership clearly made a difference in the schools we studied. Having high expectations for all groups in the school, instilling an open ethos of valuing one another through respect and trust was instrumental in transcending the barriers of poverty and inequality and the religious and racist prejudice that was endemic in the inner city schools we visited. A specialist programme of leadership training, which all heads must attend and pass with practical exchange visits, would help toward instilling such leadership and ethos. Building on the twinning programme with a diversity theme would normalize this aspect of leadership, rather than treating diversity as an 'add on'.

- **Secure Funded Support for Learning Mentors in schools.**

It was striking how much difference these extra staff, i.e., the learning mentors made to the

young women's lives. Rather than focus on role models in schools to instill and encourage young people, learning mentors and parental liaison officers enabled the young women to gain knowledge and understanding of how to navigate a complex education system. Learning mentors and parental liaison officers were funded by the schools budgets if other overriding matters, such as behavior did not lay claim to funds. However, a nationally funded integrated career path for such learning mentors would give them the status and professionalism they deserve.

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## GLOSSARY

|      |   |
|------|---|
| CAMS | Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service    |
| CPD  | Continuing Professional Development           |
| CRT  | Critical Race Theory                          |
| DCSF | Department for Children, Schools and Families |
| EAL  | English as an Additional Language             |
| ECM  | Every Child Matters                           |
| EMA  | Education Maintenance Allowance               |
| EU   | European Union                                |
| EWO  | Education Welfare Officer                     |
| GCSE | General Certificate of Secondary Education    |
| ICE  | Islam and Citizenship Education Project       |
| IOE  | Institute of Education                        |
| LERU | London Education Research Unit                |
| NHS  | National Health Service                       |
| PVE  | Prevention of Violence and Extremism          |
| RRAA | Race Relations Amendment Act                  |
| UK   | United Kingdom                                |
| UN   | United Nations                                |
| VAWG | Violence Against Women and Girls              |
| WNC  | Women's National Commission                   |

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