
*Educating the Migrant Girl. A Politics of
Difference*

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Abstract

This paper problematises discourses about integration, their claims for accommodating difference and their implications in conceptualising the education of young migrant women. In thinking about the ethics and politics of integration and particularly those that are promoted through discursive frameworks generated by EU institutional mechanisms I argue that they reflect a politics of assimilation that does not allow educational processes of becoming different. A politics of difference, in spite of the possibilities of generating conflict within schools and classes would better inform our thinking about an education that democratically attends to student differences. I shall draw on situations and examples related to the education of young migrant women to suggest that processes of migration, rather than those of integration, can be important sources in conceptualising education as processes of transformation where becoming different women is possible.

Fitting Migrants in Inclusion

In this paper I argue that discourses about the integration of non-European migrants into Europe through education do not attend to the particular diversities of migrants. One of the major problems of such discourses of integration is that they address difference in a general manner, and speak of diversity as if it were one. In giving a critical account of European discourses about the education of migrants, particularly those generated by EU documents about integration (European Commission 2009, COM 2005) I will suggest the notion of migration itself as a way of conceptualizing the educational processes of transformation that reflect the intersectional differences lived by young migrant women. Speaking of migrants within the Maltese context assumes that they are a homogeneous group; that they all belong to “another culture” or that they all simply have a “different religion”. Speaking of integration usually refers to a process of change that helps them adapt to new socio-cultural environments. Despite the well-meaning educational political aim that seeks to make migrants feel more at home or “find their place” within European contexts, more often than not such processes end up annihilating their cultural, religious, racial and sexual differences so that they fit into some fixed idea of what is considered to be European.

Within Maltese educational contexts the particular intersections of these differences are often ignored especially through a “mainstreamed” notion of diversity that groups all children having particular and different educational abilities and needs under one umbrella. This often leads to addressing particular educational needs pertaining to ability and those related to cultural difference and minority groups through one particular educational approach or strategy. 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. Meanwhile efforts are made at the discretion of the administrative staff and teachers in Maltese state schools to include migrant students into the educational system. Yet there are no formal educational provisions to help migrant students with their particular educational needs nor specific complimentary educational programmes for migrant students whose educational level is not equivalent to that of Maltese students’ age group. At times migrant students are offered special support given to pupils facing learning

difficulties (Bezzina and Grima, 2008) or provided with special examination arrangements (The Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice, 2004). Nevertheless these educational arrangements point to a predominant tendency to fit migrant students in existing schools cultures, reinforcing trends of their assimilation within the system. In Malta policies of inclusion that have historically developed out of policies that address students with learning difficulties and/or children with disabilities have had effects on migrants' access to learning. With the increasing number of migrant children in Maltese schools concepts of inclusion for children with different abilities were transferred in an attempt to address their needs. This has led to the association of children from minority cultures with those having 'special needs', frequently carrying with it the implication that children from minority cultures are somehow intellectually impaired. The transfer of the discourses between the inclusion of migrant children and those experiencing learning difficulties have created discourses that construct migrant children as being of a lesser ability or are unwilling to learn.

Although research indicates that migrant students do have learning difficulties (Stodolska, 2008; Olivos and Mendoza, 2010), the sources of their learning difficulties are clearly different from those that are experienced by Maltese students. They are mainly due to lack of attention to their particular experiences as migrants, as girls or boys of particular ethnic, racial, religious background and/or sexual orientation who have to adapt to new cultural and educational contexts. The mainstreaming of terms such as "diversity in education" or "inclusive education" have become largely understood through pedagogies of intervention that aim to address migrant children's educational needs as a common deficit irrespective of their different lived experiences. Thus, while one understands the National Curriculum Framework (2012) claims for the respect for all children whatever their difference, at the same time one needs to unpack the different educational approaches that are required to truly include different migrant children as full members of schools without neutralising their particular differences.

There are other numerous instances of how universalistic dimensions of integration largely conceived through educational transitions in becoming European violate the possibilities of becoming different. These often ignore intersections of

cultural, religious, racial and sexual differences that complexly conceive of difference as a process of becoming rather than a matter of possessing fixed qualities that mark people as migrants. Accounts from a research project with young migrant women in two Maltese schoolsⁱ provide an important context for a deeper and more complex understanding of the issues and challenges involved in thinking about education, integration and migration as processes that create differences. The main question is an ethical and political one that addresses the popular belief that educational provision should transcend group differences. This idea rises out of fear that speaking of difference will reinforce the exclusion of those who are identified as different.

Iris Marion Young considers this thinking as pertaining to a politics of assimilation that “assumes that equal social status for all persons requires treating everyone according to the same principles, rules and standards.” (Young 1990:158). I draw on her philosophical explanations of the difference between a politics of assimilation and a politics of difference to argue that general rules on treating people as if they were the same, in spite of being considered neutral, generally reflect viewpoints that advantage dominant groups in society. In the first part of the paper I shall problematise EU principles of integration explaining how a critical analysis of their general claims for the integration of migrants reveals a Eurocentric life-world to which migrants are expected to adhere. In the other part of the paper I shall draw on situations in schools and classrooms to give examples of how universal conceptualizations of education in becoming European violates the possibilities of young migrant girls becoming different because they ignore intersections of cultural and sexual difference. Here I again draw on Iris Marion Young’s arguments for a politics of difference that is based on an affirmation rather than a denial of difference. It envisions becoming different as an educational process that takes into account the particular relations and contexts through which it takes place.

European Principles of Integration

European discourses about integration generate and re-generate a whole way of thinking about educational transitions and in particular how cultural difference is managed in educational institutions. EU policies concerned with the education and

integration of migrants reflect the over-preoccupation with the practicalities of integration. The *Handbook on Integration for Policy-makers and Practitioners* issued by the European Commission (2009) for example, highlights how, what and who is to be managed for the effective integration and education of migrants. Another important document states that “in reality integration takes place at the local level as part of daily life and everyone has a part to play.” (COM 2005:15). The practicalities of integration processes however cannot be separated from other philosophical and political questions related to educational change and issues of difference. How is difference conceived in these texts and what are the implications for a philosophy and politics of difference in educational contexts that are marked with transitions of migrants?

Here I would like to unravel two European principles of integration (European Commission 2009, COM 2005) that have direct connotations to the education of the migrant girl and the politics of difference. These principles speak of migrants as if they were one homogeneous group and do not attend to intersections of cultural difference with other forms of difference and sexual difference in particular.

The first principle presents the idea that integration is a two way process, that demands changes in both communities, migrant and non-migrant. It states that *‘Integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States’* (European Commission 2009:160) This clearly conveys a political stance that is based on an idea of becoming different which is not only targeted at communities of migrants. Difference here is not conceived as a question of being or not being a migrant but a process of becoming different in relation to others. Change is expected of “the host society to adjust to diversity” (COM 2005:5) through the setting up of national programmes to enhance the understanding and acceptance of migration. Difference is presented as a dynamic concept, a relational one, where the host society as well as migrants are involved in processes of change. On reading the whole document however, it becomes clear that the commitment to change by the host society is one of adjustment that gives space to the coming of different others. It is not a process by which the host population becomes different to itself. The rest of the principles in fact are more focused on the processes for the successful integration of migrants. The first principle

does to a certain extent perceive integration as a process of becoming different. But the “becoming different” of the host population takes place through a superficial process of accommodation; of giving space to the presence of others rather than experiencing profound changes through the presence of others and relating to others in a manner that one becomes different to oneself. Metaphorically, the host population recognises the process of migration of others but it remains fixed within the same unchanging space.

In considering the second principle the political underpinnings of the notions of difference become more clearly marked as processes of ‘othering’ that continue to distinguish the migrant from the residents of the EU who hold European values. The second principle states that *‘Integration implies respect for the basic values of the European Union.’* (European Commission 2009:160) Here the change that is involved in welcoming and recognising the other has the interest to affirm a European identity even though processes of mutual change in accommodating the other are acknowledged in the first principle. It involves an authorisation of the presence of the different other who remains marginal to that which is considered central to the host member state.

Derrida’s concept of difference is useful to reflect on this further and to understand how migrants are always destined to be considered as others if they identify themselves as being migrants within the host institution. Derrida explains that “Every concept is necessarily inscribed in a chain or a system within which it refers to another and to other concepts, by the systemic play of differences.” (Derrida 1982 retrieved from <http://www.stanford.edu/class/history34q/readings/Derrida/Differance.html> 2013, September 25). Difference is generated by the creation of space between groups; European and non-European; migrant and non-migrant. My difference from a particular group (in this case the migrant group) reinforces my membership and allegiance to my group and my identity as European. My relation to the other reinforces my own particular identity as a European. The second principle universalises the values of the European group as dominant; they are experienced as the norm so that others, in this case migrants, are constructed as migrants by the very fact that they lack them and are therefore in need to be educated into these European values.

Processes of change and particularly educational ones are encouraged yet these processes are to be managed along European concepts of integration. The integration of the different other is controlled and systematised within a context that has the political interest of surveilling change along European norms. The migration of the migrant is completely fulfilled when migrants take up paths established by regulative Eurocentric discourses. These transitions are programmed through educational mechanisms that universalise fixed European values so that through her differences the migrant is destined to remain other and deficient in relation to the values of mainstream culture. The understanding of culture that is implied in the second principle is one which can be identified through fixed values of what it means to be a European. This greatly contrasts with the idea of culture that is characterised by its capacity of becoming different to itself and a European culture that can be identified through its very ability to change. As Derrida explains “what is proper to a culture is not to be identical to itself.” (Derrida 1992:9).

Assimilating Transitions

There are other principles of integration in the same document that perceive migrants as persons who lack particular knowledge, attitudes and skills that are in line with what is normally understood as being European. Migrants are continually perceived as being in transition in their becoming European. Principle 5 for example stresses the fact that this education is to take place for the benefit of migrants themselves building on Principle 4 which states that the need of “basic knowledge of the host society’s language, history and institutions is indispensable to integration”. (European Commission 2009:160) As I have argued in the previous section the claims to adhere to general principles of integration delineate a Eurocentric educational provision that assumes universal standards to which all are expected to move towards. Proponents of such educational provisions ignore differences between students including differences between migrants. For these, claims to difference might lead to the unequal treatment of those who identify themselves through their difference. For instance in distinguishing oneself to be a migrant in school one might risk becoming marginalised or as explained above, being automatically identified as having learning difficulties.

Most of the teacher participants in the research project with young migrant women in Maltese schools share this political outlook, stressing that their educational practices are grounded on the extremely important values of equality and non-discrimination. However equality and non-discrimination are thought of in neutral terms generally disregarding the particular backgrounds and situations of the young migrant women they teach. As Ms Villanova states, *“to us (the school) it does not matter if one is a migrant or not. What is important is that one has the same opportunities as all the others students.”*

This attitude is frequently adopted out of fear of highlighting the young women’s identities as migrants or of being perceived as giving preferential treatment to migrant students. However ignoring their particular positioning as young migrant women within the class and school does not address their particular educational needs that arise out of their particular circumstances of being newcomers in a school, in a foreign country, frequently immersed in languages that are completely alien to them. Furthermore the fact that one does not assert one’s identity as a migrant does not address the problematic workings of a hidden curriculum that frequently results in stereotypical and unequal treatment of migrant girls.

The problem, as Young (1990) explains is that the strategy of disregarding difference, achieved through setting up of universal standards of treatment applicable to all, results in a practice of assimilation. One acknowledges that the aims of the school mentioned above are well intentioned to include those groups that are excluded. Yet disregarding difference or treating it as if it were a secondary aspect in thinking about the educational provision of migrants does not do justice to the difference that they live and does not address their different circumstances of learning. Such basis for educational provision therefore, in spite of its claims to equality ends up replicating the unequal situations of migrants on entering schools. As I pointed out in the previous section however, this universal ideal upon which equality is orchestrated is far from being neutral. It is heavily ingrained in a Eurocentric and prevalent Maltese standard educational provision adequate to Maltese students made applicable and useful to all, including migrants. This notion that all are to be considered as equal usually comes to

mean that all are to be considered the same and as Iris Marion Young argues, this reinforces the notion that different others are to fit into the mainstream to be considered as equal. She continues to explain that forgetting the particular cultural, racial, religious and sexual orientations in thinking about social justice amounts to assimilative politics. Such politics have the “unintended” consequence of thinking of difference as a form of deviance from the norm; of a difference whose deficiency has to be remedied by a reference to “the unity of a common measure” (Young 1990:169) which in this case is a unity defined by dominant Eurocentric and Maltese cultures in schools.

There is yet another common and popular argument that refers to what Young terms as conformist politics of assimilation. Some people, such as one of the Heads of school referred to in this paper, argue that since migrants have migrated to Europe then at a certain point they have made the choice or expressed the desire to become European, then conformist integration processes that seek to make migrants European are justly called for. The two schools that have participated in the research project boast of an ethos which welcomes migrant students, where all teachers feel responsible for their well being and pastoral care. However, my conversations with one of the Heads of School show the prevalent conformist attitudes of “status quo institutions” that welcome different groups on condition that these groups conform to the norms established by the school.

Ms Terranova - *“There is one thing that bothers me. If I am in a guest country, I should, at least, this is what I think, that I should bend down to their customs, not they bend to mine. I think everybody should respect the culture they are living in. If I go to another country for example, and you are expected to take off your shoes at certain times, I do not object! It is my duty that I go in a particular mosque without shoes if that culture demands it. So why shouldn't they? Why shouldn't they bend down to our rules?”*

Simone: *But what happens if for example our rules make it difficult for the girl to come to school? What do you do?*

Ms Terranova: *But that is an issue that parents have to deal with. It is like having a girl who stamps her feet every time you do not give her the things she wants. I am sorry we have to very careful about this. What (happens) if you don't take care of your culture*

... in Europe and not in Europe only? A person, an outsider cannot come here and change it ... perhaps I sound racist?.. I don't want to be racist and I have no intention of being."

The universalisation of the values that are referred to as European and their assertion of being those of the dominant groups is evident here. Migrants are constructed as different because of their different cultures and also through the need for them to be educated into European values. Young (1990) points to the ways dominant cultural expressions often simply leave little space for the different experiences, voices and presence of groups. This, she maintains is a clear example of cultural imperialism where the experience of "the oppressed group finds little expression that touches the dominant culture, while that same culture imposes on the oppressed group its experience and interpretation of social life" (Young 1990:60). This creates a problem for those who are struggling to fit in because they are caught in a dilemma: "to participate means to accept and adopt an identity one is not and to try to participate means to be reminded by oneself and others of the identity one is" (Young 1990:165). As Young explains, this happens because difference is generally understood as "absolute otherness" and as in the account described above, assumes that migrants who are different have nothing in common with the rest of the school. She writes that one way of doing justice to different groups is to conceive difference as being "ambiguous, relational, shifting, without clear borders that keep people straight" (Young 1990:171).

More Migrants than Women

The concept of integration that has been discussed so far is that which holds that the principle of equity can be brought about by treating everybody to the same principles, rules and standards for justice to be done. Here difference is denied on claims that newcomers must conform to the norms of the institution. Migrants have a right to be educated within existing norms but they do not have a right to ask that these norms be changed. Migrant students are entitled to the same opportunities that have always been available to all.

Another account from the research project that problematises this conformist assimilationist approach is the objection of a young migrant woman to wearing a tie as

part of her uniform. Her argument was that for her ties symbolise a certain kind of masculinity. *“I will not wear a tie. No I will not because I am not a man,”* she told the headmistress. In this account the young migrant woman’s conformation to established practices in school conflict with her particular gendered expectations of being. Wearing a tie for this young woman implies negating her cultural expressions of being woman that might be intersectionally informed by her ethnic, religious background as well as her sexual orientation. Her comments make one reflect on how schools frequently “deny” women’s expressions of their femininity and that gender is regulated, performed and embodied through dominant discursive signs based in school cultures. (Yuval Davies et al., 2006). As Qin (2009) explains this gendered process of adaptation contributes to the quality of students’ educational engagement in schools. One may argue that the migrant girl’s expressions of femininity is based on an essentialist view that conceives woman as being different from man due to some natural biological qualities of woman. Nevertheless, the young woman’s objection to wearing a tie and her insistence on expressing her particular way of being feminine reflects the view of radical exponents of sexual difference (Irigaray 1993, Butler, 1990) that purport that social institutions have taken up universal practices that exclude and annihilate the possibility of expression of sexual difference. What the episode of the young migrant girl also highlights are the dominant patriarchal discourses that underlie schools cultures which in this case are symbolised by the rule of wearing a tie. This particular episode draws attention to the effects of disregarding gender difference which for this young woman complexly refers to social, ethnic and perhaps even religious construction of her gender difference.

In the two schools many teachers stress their vision that when it comes to learning, the fact that students are migrants or girls does not matter. What matters for teaching to be fair is that their needs are assessed and that measures are taken for successful educational outcomes.

Mr Cittavecchia: *“I only had few experiences in teaching boys but I don’t think that there are particular differences in teaching girls rather than boys. Gender does not really affect learning. It absolutely does not affect me.”*

Young migrant women are predominately seen, addressed and constructed as students on neutral terms. They are spoken about as if they are a homogeneous group and there is no consideration as to how race, socioeconomic status and/or sexual orientation are important in addressing the issue of a just educational provision of young migrant women. As Young explains “Ignoring these differences sometimes disadvantages women in public settings where masculine norms and styles predominate.” (Young 1990:176) This is not simply a matter of thinking of boys and girls as different, or whether they are naturally or socially different. It highlights the fact that women are to have more space in public spaces such as schools for their particular expressions of their femininities. It reflects a notion of equality that emphasises the entitlement of women to an education that speaks to and builds upon their various and multiple ways of becoming feminine without considering or allowing that femininity to become a hindrance to their particular educational growth.

Practising a Politics of Difference

In this section I will draw on another situation in one of the schools that problematises the stance for a politics of difference. I have argued that such politics makes claims for the recognition of difference in thinking about a fair and just treatment of persons. Within educational institutions, there are prevalent views that being different; being migrant and young women does not matter to educational provisions. I have also argued that views that claim to transcend group differences in education would frequently end up privileging the perspectives of the dominant groups concealed as universal views. This continues to allow the exclusion and unequal treatment of minority groups within a community. At this point however, I would like to refer to an account that might give proponents of conformist assimilation motive to maintain that their argument in favour of conformation to the established rules of the schools is justified.

Ms Casabella: *“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, perhaps it would have been better...”*

I have presented this controversial situation because it provides a good example of the complexities of engaging with practices of integration and also because it enhances our reflections on the question of difference and the political and ethical aspects in integration policies that take account of intersections of gender and culture. The challenge for mainstreaming the integration of migrants clearly intersects with gender mainstreaming and commitments to the rights of women particularly those related to the eradication of violence against women. Those who are in favour of conformist assimilation would argue that if certain cultural and ethical values are not imposed by the hosting institution then conflict would prevail.

More importantly, the punishment episode manifests the issue of patriarchal domination in a more forceful way than the episode of the tie. Nevertheless, both accounts highlight underlying issues of domination of patriarchal outlooks in educating the migrant girl. They also both give examples of situations of conflict with the school administration and the “normal” practice of the school. Proponents of assimilative practices of education for the integration of migrants would argue that that schools are obliged to have fixed rules related to acceptable school attire and more importantly on acceptable ways through which children are disciplined, otherwise conflict would predominate. Through these situations however one can note that although schools may hold policies in favour of sustaining harmony and unity within the school community, conflict still happens. Migrant girls and their families in spite of tentative schools’ measures to ignore differences, cultural or gendered, still maintain their particular specific identities and preserve particular views on how migrant girls should be educated.

Earlier on I have argued that disregard for difference puts students in a disadvantaged position because they remain unknown to teachers who should plan education on the good knowledge of their individual students. What makes this knowledge possible is the opportunity for dissenting views to be heard, the chance for the migrant girl to contest wearing the tie and for the father to speak about his parenting ways in spite of their controversial nature. The schools referred to here, in spite of their declaration of an assimilationist politics, have made an educational conversation possible by giving space for dissent rather than dismissing it. Young explains that conflict does

not arise by the presence of group difference as such but due to “relations of domination and oppression between groups that produce resentment, hostility and resistance.” She continues to argue that “placing normative value on homogeneity only exacerbates division and conflict, because it gives members of the dominant group reason to adopt a stance of self righteous intractability.” (Young 1990:179)

The question remains however on how a politics of difference could be practiced in these situations. Firstly, as I have pointed out the possibilities for dissenting views to be heard is essential, not only to avoid resistance or resentment between groups but because through such expressions teachers can understand claims that different others, and differently sexed others are making. This is essential to any educational endeavour. Secondly, one appreciates that the two episodes refer to different situations that suggest diverse practices of the politics of difference. In the first episode the Head used her authority to break the convention of the school and accept the girl’s difference through her objection to wearing a tie. Although one might argue that she might have acquiesced out of fear of creating more conflict, she might have also realised that the girl’s option to not wear a tie for school was essential to her wellbeing at school and also for her educational progress. In this instance a “conflictual consensus” (Todd, 2009) has been reached, which means that conflict has been resolved not by an imposition of some rule but out of respect for the other’s right to express her difference. In the other instance such consensus could never be reached because the Head of school would not accept that the father imposes his disciplinary measures on his daughter when she was under her care. However this situation would still enhance possibilities for the practice of politics of difference.

Both episodes allow us to think about migrant girls in terms of their sexual difference as well as their ethnic difference. They both point to what Todd refers to a “(masculine) projection of what constitutes a citizen” (Todd 2009:136) as well as to how conflicting issues related to sexual and ethnic difference can contribute to the possibilities of democratic spaces for the exercise of equality. The second episode draws our attention to the absence of the voice of the migrant girl. The fact that she is only talked about raises issues about how the school could use such situations of conflict as

educational opportunities for young women. As Todd argues, “the real challenge facing us here should not focus on the question of integration, but how to open up educational spaces of relationality in which these girls can exercise practices of human becoming as specifically female subjects in their own right.” (Todd 2009:136). The practice of a politics of difference does not have rules by which everybody should abide. It takes place through the articulation of dissenting views that give rise to possibilities for the unheard to use their voices, to speak as gendered subjects. The “educational spaces of relationality” would necessitate the existence of a “heterogeneous public” (Young 1990:190) rather than a homogeneous one. It entails a public that attends to various and intersectional differences and committed to social equality shaped through relations between subjects rather than through some fixed model of how one should behave or the dominant values that are to be followed. In the second episode the education of the migrant girl takes place through her relations with others and the possibility of an encounter with different points of view emerging from the different cultures she migrates to and from.

Education as Migration

It is within these contexts that educational practices can be metaphorically conceived as acts of migration. What identifies an educational process is that which brings about the possibilities of moving beyond the usual places; that which transforms human beings and their culture in relation to each other. This does not mean that all changes are acceptable or can be considered educational. Nevertheless education for integration cannot be conceived in terms of some clearly laid out plan of what is to be taught and how behaviours should be amended in terms of some cultural deficit that is deciphered in students. Becoming educated can be understood as migratory also by the very possibility of change through an encounter with different others and being allowed to respond even if this means creating conflict.

The values of equality and non-discrimination are clearly important in establishing practices of integration within our schools. However they cannot be understood as universal or reflect some neutral principles of equality where educational inclusion becomes equivalent to bringing excluded groups into the mainstream and

treating everybody on the same principle. This is particularly objectionable when principles and values that contribute to the meanings of becoming European are assumed to be fixed and unchanging. One would argue that not imposing such values and norms of reason would lead to the situation described above, where the father uses his patriarchal cultural norms to control the becoming woman of his daughter. One would rightly argue that the father's outlook is also limiting to her experiences of migration between cultures. Yet suppressing social group difference does not resolve the conflict. Conflict allows for a politics of difference where space is created for the expression of diverse views. As Todd explains we cannot "make equality happen for others" but we can "give students opportunities for developing political spaces through which their own assertions of equality might become noticed and realised" (Todd 2009:114).

A politics of difference is based on giving opportunities to young migrant women to insist on the positive value of their culture and articulate their gendered experiences of that culture which are understood in relation to European and national values. Schools can be important spaces where young migrant girls conceive themselves in relation to Maltese girls. Political affiliation and grouping of women for active participation is not only determined by the fact that they are migrants. Migrant women of course may find that they share common issues and need the space to be politically active to address problems of oppression that arise from their sexual difference. Young migrant women can also politically affiliate with Maltese girls on certain issues of common importance, such as oppressive patriarchal experiences. They may find, for example, that Maltese girls also envisage certain dress codes in schools as limiting and oppressive or that they have also experienced certain forms of discipline at home that are unacceptable to schools.

What makes these educational migrations possible is the students' active participation in school, their relationships with different groups that contribute to processes of becoming women. Living gendered lives within particular cultures is not something fixed or stable just as much as becoming European is not. The educational becomings of young migrant women occur through multiple educational transitions; they zigzag in between different cultures and educational opportunities according to the spaces

that are available to them; negotiating their positions in relation to important others such as parents, teachers, Maltese friends and other migrant friends. Also, their transitions are not always progressive in the sense that the school intends them to be. They have their own concepts of how they want to become which are not necessarily unrelated to expectations of those who are in authority. This means that teachers and Heads of School are to use their professional authority to ensure that political spaces are created within schools for students to express themselves; to open possibilities for all students to migrate and entertain the presence of others in relation to their positions and perspectives.

Schools' success in developing educational spaces for girls to migrate therefore should not be overshadowed by preoccupations of whether we should be integrating towards or away from a European identity. It is not a question of being for or against European identity. An education for integration within Europe would therefore entail that one becomes different to oneself and in relation to different others just as much as the young migrant girl becomes woman differently through the very act of migration and develops in relation to the different cultures that host her.

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