
Reflections on the Little Rock: Assessing migrant inclusion in Maltese post-secondary education

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Abstract

This paper examines a field ridden with palpable and tangible silence: migrant inclusion within the Maltese post-secondary educational system. Focusing on the theme of difference and otherness, this paper studies whether inclusive practices inform migrant student experiences within Maltese post-secondary education. Employing a qualitative approach, I attempt to provide insights on the way migrant learner experiences are shaped and constructed within Maltese post-secondary education. Furthermore, this analysis engages with the political and educational theories of the philosopher Hannah Arendt to argue that what needs to be reimagined are forms of extra-territoriality, focusing on the needs of an intercultural educational ambience that places the vicissitudes not as a crisis but an opportunity for an emergent pedagogy.

Keywords

Migration, post-secondary education, Hannah Arendt, inclusion, qualitative research

Background

Since the turn of the century, Malta has transitioned from a country of emigration to a country of immigration, deeply impacting multifarious segments of society, specifically within the educational sector. With the escalation of migration come the vexing challenges of inclusion within a pre-established social order. However, research on the dynamic relationship between migration, inclusion, and education in the local context reveals that such an inquiry is fraught with uncertainty. With reference to migrants within Maltese post-secondary education, Calleja et al. (2017) highlight the dire situation migrant learners face in the transition from secondary to non-compulsory post-secondary school,

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including student alienation, financial restrictions, employment difficulties, and ambiguity in the law. Consequently, this current research takes these considerations with utmost seriousness, for it demonstrates a tangible absence within the literature and policies. Thus, by focusing on the lived experiences of migrant learners,¹ the purpose of this research is to explore how, if at all, inclusive practices inform migrant student experiences within the Maltese post-secondary education. This research is exploratory by nature, employing a qualitative approach of migrant learners' lived experiences. Furthermore, the study engages with the theoretical position put forth by the philosopher Hannah Arendt to demonstrate that, without individual care and implementation of inclusive policies, migrant learners are left vulnerable, destitute, individualised, and labelled as markers of difference and otherness. For the purposes of this study, Arendt's position on education holds fertile ground since it addresses the fundamental stage prior to any public engagement, legal status and entitlement of citizen rights. It thus equalizes the local and the migrant, arguing that the classroom environment is the pre-existent space of bare life, preceding any public relations. Arendt proposes a novel theoretical approach of education in which the migrant as a newcomer serves as a catalyst for new beginnings.

The analysis will unfold in the following manner: Firstly, the literature review focuses on arguments put forth in terms of migrant inclusion within the local educational context and the current policies regarding inclusive practices. Subsequently, light will be shed on the conceptual framework in the vein of Hannah Arendt's educational theory, in order to outline a groundwork that fosters all-inclusivity and transnational belonging. Thirdly, the methodology section provides a brief overview of the research design, recruitment and research sample. Fourthly, the findings and analysis section will provide invaluable insight in the learners' experiences in relation to the theme of difference and otherness, bringing to light the manner in which migrant learners' experiences draw disparities and similarities from their contemporaries. Finally, the conclusion and recommendations outline some reflections on the Maltese local context and sets forth suggestions towards an inclusive education within the post-secondary sector. In this respect, this research contributes to the field of educational research in two ways: an Arendtian theoretical approach within an educational framework; and a specific study of migrant education within the confines of post-secondary education.

Literature review

Malta's historical past has been uniquely formed by "waves of immigration" due to its 7,000 years of emigration, immigration, colonialization and geographical positioning (Darmanin, 2015, p. 30). Furthermore, in recent years, the proportion of migrants has more than quadrupled, rising from 4% of the population in 2008 to 17% in 2019 (Fenech & Seguna, 2020). Such an increase in population has had a significant impact on the educational sector, with Wright (2020, p. 320) noting that as of 2018, foreign children comprised 9.7% of the total student population in all Maltese schools. Similarly, a collection of statistics shows that the total international learner population in Maltese schools has increased from 1,280 in scholastic year 2008–2009, to 5,640 in scholastic year 2017–2018 (Fenech & Seguna, 2020, p. 34). Moreover, the latest report of the National Statistics Office, released in 2021, revealed that "foreign"² students in post-secondary education amounted to 872, of which 306 were EU Nationals and 566 non-EU nationals, together accounting for 8.9% of the total students enrolled at this level (NSO, 2021, p. 4).

Maltese national identity and the position of the migrant

In spite of Malta's extensive historical past, there is a visible reluctance to embrace the diverse cultural heritage and contemporary milieu embedded in Maltese identity. In a review regarding the Maltese National Curriculum, Pisani et al. (2010, p. 11) argue that migration has accelerated Malta's move towards multiculturalism due to the influx of different nationalities, ethnicities, colours and religions. However, Malta's accession into the EU in 2004 has exacerbated an array of mixed sentiments ranging from enthusiasm and anticipation to "fear and anxiety" (Calleja et al., 2010, p. v). The reception has "not always been positive", with migration being linked to issues of "security" and "invasion" (Pisani et al. 2010, p. 11). While there are various representations and narratives of 'the migrant', there are apparent elements of marginalization, racism and social construction among the undocumented sub-Saharan African migrants arriving by boat from North Africa since 2002 (Frendo, 2007; Galea, 2008; Calleja et al., 2010; Darmanin, 2015).

In effect, national identity comes to represent self-definition and identification in contrast to the nation's neighbours, visitors and strangers. Indeed, scholars in education studies have echoed these concerns in terms of the way the term 'migrant' is stigmatized as 'il-barrani' (the outsider) or 'boat people', who are

stereotypically defined by the intersectionality of undocumented, not white, not European, not Christian, and not Maltese—or English-speaking (Galea, 2008; Calleja et al., 2010; Pisani et al., 2010; Pisani, 2012).

Migrants and 'Otherness'

Thus, analysis of the dominant discourse on migration and education in Malta reveals a discriminatory and exclusionary scenario centred on marginalization and 'otherness' of particular migrant learners. Darmanin (2015, p. 31) points out that, in 2015, out of the 6% of non-Maltese residents, the absolute number of EU national immigrants was roughly equal to that of Third Country Nationals. In comparison to other EU countries, this is a small percentage but "subjectively perceived as large". According to Wright (2020, p. 334), migrant 'otherness' has led to a "level of contestation of identity markers, especially religion and language". Similarly, a study on education and ethnic minorities in Malta concluded that "the different is essentially the other [...] linked to a popular feeling that our archipelago is being invaded by inferior others" (Calleja et al., 2010, p. v-11). As stated by Darmanin (2015, p. 27), schools have become clear sites of reluctance towards multiculturalism, whereby the 'other' is met with "classes of tolerance", sometimes even with "intolerance".

Calleja et al. (2010, p. 12) further sustain that the Maltese selective and discriminatory educational system is mirrored in the literature and curricula, depicting a "generally monolithic, one-dimensional" school-life reality. In this regard, Borg and Mayo (2006) provide an accurate example of eurocentric curricula and migrant marginalization: a review of the Systems of Knowledge³ syllabus noted that "its orientations are exclusively Eurocentric" (p. 203). The review further stresses that "more could have been made of the fact that other cultural, artistic, intellectual and technological traditions were developed in non-European contexts" (p. 204). There is a clear absence in recognizing "that some of the most stimulating developments in art and thought often resulted from contact between different cultural traditions" (p. 204). This suggests that the curricula take a rather exclusive approach to addressing and promoting Maltese and European heritage. The texts are written and chosen with the assumption that national and cultural heritage is common to all students in Maltese schools. Falzon et al. (2012, p. 18-19) argue that in doing so, the systemic power of the educational structure acts as a form of subjugation of the migrant to the dominant norm, reproducing societal and educational inequalities.

Policies and inclusion in post-secondary education

The enigmatic persistence in the post-secondary sector is precisely due to the lack of an overarching policy within the system. However, as recently as 2017, a work-in-progress policy named *The Working Group on the Future of Post-Secondary Education: Report to the Minister for Education and Employment* (2017) was established in order to collect recommendations and alternative forms of teaching and learning. Albeit mentioned in brief, there is a significant effort in this report to introduce elements of inclusion within the educational sector. Considering the rise and need to cater for the increase of diversity, the report notes that “inclusion at this level is not well addressed” (MEDE, 2017, p. 55). There is a vociferous claim that highlights the “disquieting reluctance towards implementation” and the education system’s continuous resistance to change (p. 110). Policymakers remain “locked into a framework of fire-fighting and incremental investment that only serves to retain the status quo in the sector” (p. 110). Potential students within this sector experience a “raft of issues” simply due to the severe lack of institutional care and student induction (p. 112). It therefore suggests that policies related to “inclusive education and integrated communities” need to be encouraged by means of “special programs for immigrant, minority-language and rural students” (p. 164).

However, in an effort to draw a “single” and “coherent” policy regarding post-secondary education, the call to action has fallen short of reaching concrete implementation, and all discussions have currently been suspended. The report explicitly states that such recommendations were to be “addressed by policymakers within 24 to 36 months of submission of the Report” (MEDE, 2017, p. 9). With the report having been submitted in 2017, at the time of writing the 36-month stipulated time bracket has lapsed with no indication of any emerging policy.

Conceptual framework

Arendt and education

In the field of education, Arendt has been relatively unknown until very recent studies that have employed an Arendtian perspective towards an education of “inclusiveness” (Korsgaard, 2016; Korsgaard et al., 2018; Nixon, 2020). However, while previous studies have used Arendt’s work to focus on policy vocabulary at

primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education, one unique aspect of this study is to adopt an Arendtian framework as the pathway to 'new beginnings' for migrant education at post-secondary level.

Arendt outlines her thesis on education in *The Crises of Education* (1954), specifically reflecting upon her perception of the major problems confronting the American public in the 1950s. Her central argument is that education should not be conceived of in terms of the political sphere because "[it] can play no part in politics, ... [w]hoever wants to educate adults really wants to act as their guardian and prevent them from political activity" (Arendt, 1954, p. 173). Arendt's analysis focuses on how the classroom environment has been transformed into a pseudo-political space. In effect, Arendt argues for the non-instrumentalization of education, bracketing all aspects of the public realm and citizenship attributed to the political sphere. Consequently, she contends, there is a need for a separation between politicians and educators; civil rights and education rights; parliament and the classroom environment (Topolski, 2008, p. 260).

Furthermore, in her *Reflection on Little Rock*, Arendt (1959, p. 48) reiterates the paradoxical element of public and social life as based on equality but simultaneously exclusiveness. Noting that the United States, like Malta, "has always been independent of a homogenous population and a common past", Arendt reflects on the segregation, the colour question, and miscegenation laws: people of African or mixed race "resemble new immigrants who invariably constitute the most 'audible' of all minorities and therefore are always the most likely to arouse xenophobic sentiments" (my emphasis) (1959, p.47). Yet, whereas audibility is transient, visibility is "unalterable and permanent", resulting in a permanent state of alienation and marginalization (1959, p.47).

While appearance belongs to the public realm, Arendt believes that interaction with others is possible as equals of inner qualities, and that education is fundamental within this process. Therefore, failure to address the relationship of natality as new beginnings, action and education may lead to "totalitarian terror and the destruction of the newness and otherness" because it does not recognise the pre-ontological stage of newness and active learning (Topolski, 2008, p. 268). Arendt argues that, on the one hand, education should not be completely exposed to the light and dictates of the public sphere. On the other hand, in order to transition from the private safety of the classroom

to the activism of the public sphere, education must facilitate care for the human condition and the distinct needs of learners' "new beginnings". Yet, learners should not be considered political citizens since they belong to two irreconcilable realms: a space of pre-ontological care in the former and an appearance of rights, recognition and activity in the latter. Rather, education must be understood as a field of perpetual tension "between the old and the new", in which new beginnings are met in a world that is rooted in traditions (Arendt, 1954, p. 193). In effect, the classroom environment and education constitute a passing space as well as a place of preparation for the public sphere and political responsibility for the world (Duarte & Cesar, 2010; Nixon, 2020)

Crisis as opportunity: Otherness and transnational educational spaces

Arendt's appraisal is her critique towards an era of new pedagogical methods, which is related to her views on political crises and citizenship recognition. The African-Americans in her *Reflections on Little Rock*, and especially the immigrant's new beginnings in *Crisis of Education*, symbolise the failure of an ontological doctrine of equality which reduces political citizenship to mere bare life. However, it is precisely this reduction and vulnerability that creates a sense of common belonging and recognition for the human condition. To situate the classroom as the central space of conservation and protection is to separate it from the concept of exclusionary politics and thus, recast the aporia of the rightless and 'otherness.'

Arendt (1954) postulates how the immigrants as the newcomers "guarantee to the country that it represents the new order" (p. 177). The outsider, whether migrant learner or otherwise, should be considered for what it is, namely, nothing less than a limit-concept that, at once, brings a radical crisis to the principles of the old order, clearing the way for a renewal of categories. Consequently, the concepts through which one thinks politics, as well as all of its derivatives such as sovereignty, freedom, and revolution must be rethought and transgressed along with the practices that follow from them. This is precisely why an Arendtian framework for education has a transformative element – it brackets the exclusionary nature of neoliberal education while simultaneously building a system of new equal participation. With an increased number of non-citizens, what needs to be reimagined are forms of extra-territoriality that do not have

a specific location but instead involve joint reflective experiences in which all the residents are in a state of perpetual refuge and 'becoming'. In doing so, Arendt seeks to reorient politics away from the use of power, individual or collective will, institutional and territorial boundaries, and towards mutual recognition and equal cooperation.

Despite being over sixty years old, Arendt's position on education still remains particularly relevant because it addresses the fundamental stage prior to any public engagement, legal status and entitlement of citizen rights. It thus equalizes the local and the migrant, arguing that the classroom environment is the pre-existent space of bare life, preceding any public relations. Arendt proposes a novel theoretical approach of education in which the migrant as a newcomer serves as a catalyst for new beginnings. In this vein, an Arendtian framework finds fertile ground in the analysis of migrant education in Malta: once ascriptive differences have been precluded, new identities deconstructed, and exploitative power relations demystified, an enriching encounter occurs through a mutual space of strangerhood and new beginnings. According to Hanson (2004, p. 8), "we are strangers in the sense that we are constantly in a state of becoming", borne by the self and others in the same respect. Education and the classroom environment provide this bridgeable space whereby a coming community of mutual inclusive newness is born, rather than being built on fear and anxiety of otherness.

Study

The present study used in-depth individual semi-structured interviews with a small sample of migrant students, totalling up to six interviews. The interviews sought to shed light on the specific experiences of such students, as well as whether their needs are met within the Maltese educational system. Since students come from a variety of backgrounds and ethnicities, a research tool that was inherently loose and interpretative was adopted. The use of semi-structured interviews adds a level of flexibility to an interview by allowing re-identified issues to be explored and discussed (Denscombe, 1998). Therefore, this particular tool allowed the research a certain elasticity in the interview process, which evolved and developed on its own accord in unconsidered ways.

The participants were recruited through social media, specifically by an 'opt-in' procedure on Facebook. Jacobsen & Landau (2003, p. 13) argue that most refugee and migrant research relies on snowball sampling to access difficult-

to-reach populations. In order to expand the sample pool of participants, this study used snowball sampling, which echoed these thoughts. The sample was not very specific, and it considered all students who were broadly defined as “migrants” to be suitable for sampling purposes. As a result, there was a concerted effort to ignore any ascriptive differences in age (over 18), race, nationality, creed, sex, legal status, or social class.

One of the unique elements of this research study was the specific focus of the sample participants and their corresponding environment: a ‘formal’ education environment with students who are currently enrolled in a post-secondary institution or have been enrolled in a post-secondary institution in the last three years. The reason for limiting the criteria to a three-year timeframe was to keep the study focused on recent developments in educational policies, current inclusive practices, and their effects on students’ recent experiences. Rather than focusing on the institutional factors and implementations, this study addressed the personal experiences and perceptions of migrants within the educational sector. Hence, the sample, data collection and analysis only focused on students’ experiences. Insight of institutional perspectives and teachers was considered peripheral to the purposes of this study.

Interviews lasted approximately one hour and, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews were conducted online. With the consent of the participant, each interview was video- and audio-recorded so that a verbatim version of the interview could be presented for data analysis. Following the information sheet and consent form, participants were informed that they will remain anonymous, and they were briefed on GDPR rights and on their right to forfeit at any stage of the interview. Interviews took place with students over 18 years of age who followed courses in English. Therefore, interviews were conducted in English.

Findings and analysis

In this section, I will demonstrate how differences in migrant backgrounds have had an unequal impact on their educational experiences. While some migrants were able to integrate into the perceived normative educational structure, hegemonic practices labelled others as bearers of difference. Diverging elements were not only due to the migrants’ diverse backgrounds, but also resulted in an almost unrelated educational experience due to their diverging backgrounds. Some of the migrants’ characteristics, cultures, and situational

elements appear to have been the cause of their radically different experiences from other participants⁴:

At the beginning, it was lonely, I wanted to go home. The first year was horrible because in the class, the majority spoke in Maltese even though they were open to foreigners, but there was just me. However, the lecturers tried to make them speak in English but it was difficult. So I always had to ask and make sure I was there. In class I was perceived a bit – in the wrong way; I am foreign: I don't speak the same language, wear the same clothes, have the same hair, you know? (Fatima)

When I came here, I was introduced to someone. He was a student. He was the first student I met. He was kind of similar to me and my age. He was born and raised in the same country I was born in, so he took me to Watson High. He introduced me to some people and they became my friends. These are the only people I know from school. I am quite different from the people in my class. There are people who are not Maltese, but I am different ... (William)

When I came in 2013, I did not know where Somers was. I lived here 5 years before I started this course. I did not know I was allowed to study. I was at an NGO and I asked people. They gave me the opportunity to study. The Somers course is free but the challenge is to live and support myself. I waited 1 year then I applied to AFM to get some room to study because when you are sharing a room, you can't study. ... I have nothing so I have to start from zero, with no friends, no help and no education. When you come from a place I come from, we are unwanted. I stay quiet and I respect. This is the way forward. (Ahmed)

Cultural attributes were markers of difference in the perceived homogenous education structure. As Arendt (1998, p. 190) notes, "[b]ecause the actor always moves among and in relation to other acting beings, he is never merely a 'doer' but always and at the same time a sufferer". Consequently, the migrant's ascriptive elements (country of origin, language, hair, legal status) were externalized in a way that constructed their educational experience. In the process of externalization, however, the dominant discourse simultaneously influences the position of the migrant within such a reality as the submissive outsider. As Arendt puts it, the learners are "in a position, hopeless by definition, of a minority of one confronted by the absolute majority of all others" (1954, p. 178).

Migrant and the Other: Eurocentric epistemology and race

The unveiling of the participants' lived experiences delineated how such differences render into an aggregation of vulnerability due to the apparatuses of a selective system, causing particular migrants to be the bearers of difference and otherness. For instance, scholars have persistently expounded upon the lack of plurality and selective formation of the syllabi in the educational system (Borg & Mayo, 2006; Calleja et al., 2010) (See Section *Migrants and 'Otherness'* above). Despite the small sample size, such emotions were overtly present in the lived experiences of the participants, expressing the one-dimensional curricula and the failure to address migrant educational needs:

... this year, when I received the prospectus book, I was super annoyed because, for example, when I entered Huddersfield High, the prospectus was full of pictures of students who are all white, blue-eyes, with make-up, slim bodies; perfect you know? The perfect student, and they put it in the prospectus that it will go to everyone in Malta. Even the one, just one, student who seemed to have a different ethnicity in the prospectus, you will find that Photoshop played a big role in whitening the skin. For me, to change the skin colour in 2020/21 is something you cannot do. It is something very stupid and dishonest. You do not find diversity promoted in schools, there is no migrant inclusion. But it is not only migrants. We have a lot of people in wheelchairs; we have a lot of people with different conditions, this is what is 'normal'. We also have a lot of different ethnicities, a lot of people with different skin colours. So seeing the actual people in my institute as opposed to the prospectus book – white, clean, perfect – it is very strange. You know, there are black Maltese, there are fat Maltese, there are disabled Maltese. So why do you create the illusion of one kind of model in society? (Patrick)

One interesting factor emerged in the interviews with European migrants who spoke about the academic difficulties of their fellow classmates, who had a different ethnicity than theirs and the majority of the class. In these cases, there was the common element that, despite both being migrants, they were unfamiliar with certain elements in the syllabi or practices that were seen as a given in the European context. Consequently, students felt excluded:

Actually, we had an event, called 'World Night', which basically celebrated different cultures around the world. We were set up in themes and we had to present different set-ups with stylists, dress-up and a performance of different cultures. I suppose this was the most intercultural practice we did. ... Actually, (*laughs*) we were USA, there

was Spain, Italy, France, England, some Scandinavian countries, and I think, Morocco or Egypt? (*pauses*) No, actually, there was a student from Egypt who told me once that no country from North Africa was included. I never thought about it. ... She once said that she is ok with doing Sciences, like me, because if she had arts or social sciences, she might not understand the context or discussion. But I think she has been living in Malta for quite a long time, I don't know, she keeps a bit to herself. (Felicity)

Race to the bottom?

The overarching factor that permeated throughout the aforementioned themes was the discussion of race. In practically all cases where the participant was not white, race featured as a barrier to inclusion and they were outright stigmatized. It was clear that dark skin prompted the classification of the migrant as the 'other', the 'outsider', the 'intruder', and clearly, the bearer of difference. Participants lamented the lack of practices to address this issue, as well as how such racial perceptions influenced their Maltese educational experience:

... Like one of the first questions someone asked me – a lecturer – was if I came by boat. I was like – I wish I knew how to swim. I asked myself 'What just happened?!?!' I was in disbelief with this question. After I got to know the lecturer, I think he did it to see my reaction, as a kind of joke. It is difficult to explain but I really think it was to get a reaction out of me. Maybe it wasn't a racist thing. This was in the beginning, before I knew him, but it really hurt me. ... Every time something like this happens, I like to question myself a bit because, 'Is it me taking it in the wrong way, or is the lecturer being racist?' That is always the battle in my life here in Malta. (Fatima)

I am treated differently from another girl in class, who is Hungarian. Of course, I am the only one with this background. I personally never saw someone else. But, you know, it doesn't matter, we are all the same, we are all the same colour ... and I repeating it – COLOUR! – My experience here is ALL colour-specific. It is so shocking because I didn't come from this kind of environment. I remember I found a house in Marsascala. ... When the owner saw me, she said, "Sorry, the house is rented." 36 houses! This is just one of them! "What do you mean it is rented? I came all this way and you tell me now that it is rented?!" Her reply was, "The people before you were from Nigeria and they broke my house." You know, what do I have to do with Nigerian people? (*head shaking*). Because I come from a different country, different religion, different language, but we are both black, we are both the same colour. In my country, it is the law that is bad, but here, it is the mentality. (William)

Conclusion and recommendations

This research followed a similar motive to previous publications in addressing the inclusive practices of migrant education in the context of post-secondary education. Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore how, if at all, inclusive practices influence migrant student experiences within Maltese post-secondary education. To that end, based on the data collected through individual semi-structured interviews with migrant students, this article provides some critical insights into how migrant learner's experiences are shaped and informed within Maltese post-secondary education. In effect, the main thesis of this study claims that a lack of literature and policies in the field of post-secondary education is resulting in deep concerns for the well-being of migrant learners. The paradox persists: migrant learners represent the "newcomers" (Arendt, 1954, p.174) who require more assistance and care from students who are familiar with the system. In consequence, the status quo is reinforced further, and the migrant is accepted on the periphery as the marker/symbol of difference, the outsider and the other.

From Policy to Polis

A Policy aims to fortify, solidify and crystalize the experience of the learners in a guided, inclusive and cordial environment. Following Arendt (1954), I claim that legitimate authority and responsibility of protection must be vested in an all-encompassing policy that conserves and prepares the newcomer to enter the polis. In terms of the post-secondary sector, the absence of a policy is clearly the primary and categorical issue that must be addressed, not only in terms of migrant inclusion but also in relation to inclusive practices in general. The experiences of students clearly show a lack in supportive mechanisms which leads to migrant alienation and difference. Without such supportive measures, a discriminatory system of aggregation and migrant vulnerability is currently in place. Difference and vulnerability have come to represent the disenfranchised migrant as effects of discriminatory institutional power.

Transnational interculturalism

The school environment must undergo a metamorphosis into interculturalism, in which cultural ties are elastic and migrants can integrate into the community in the same way that the community integrates with the migrants. In doing so, the educational environment becomes a boundless arena of mutual recognition

and equal cooperation. Change and integration are thus dual-edged, exposing the flaws of essentialist understandings while also promoting transnational collective belonging. As a result, the educational environment transitions into an isonomic space of equals that are preserved for the impending active and political life. Isonomia signifies the belief that, through new beginnings, all individuals have the same claim to political activity (Arendt, 1998, p. 32).

In practical terms, solid institutional avenues and physical centres need to be created in order to guide and support migrants in their formal and informal academic journeys. This includes cultural instruction, language proficiency, peer support and extra-curricular inclusive activities. However, likewise, an inclusive system needs to be taught in order for natives to understand the cultural context of migrants and the fertile ground of cross-cultural learning. In other educational sectors, there are indeed a number of institutional avenues in this regard by means of pull-out hubs. However, post-secondary migrant hubs should not be limited to a pull-out option, but should be integrated into the educational curricula. Such measures remain overtly absent after compulsory education and within the post-secondary sector. Rather than relying on NGOs and ambiguous regulation, a policy should clearly demarcate and draw on the establishment of these avenues.

Further Research of the Little Rock

This study was limited in its approach, restricting the research to a small sample of migrant students within the post-secondary educational sector. In effect, this study leaves much to be desired in terms of comprehensive account of migrant educational and inclusive practices. In particular, the sample did not represent all migrant and post-secondary institutions in Malta. Moreover, no discussion was held about institutional responses to the growing number of migrants in local schools, nor did it shed light on teachers' experiences with diverse classrooms. Similarly, there was no discussion about personal relations such as family, friends and local communities and their impact on migrants' educational experiences. These are vital concerns that, despite not being discussed in this study, remain essential in addressing migrant inclusion within the educational sector.

Notes

1. The term refers to newly arrived/first generation, second generation migrant children and young people. Their reasons for having migrated (e.g. economic or political) may vary. Migrant children and young people from within and outside of the EU are taken into account.
2. One interesting fact is the use of the term “foreigners” as opposed to “migrants”. While in the former case, a student could be studying in Malta for a fixed and temporary period, migrant learners are “persons who come to our country and end up on a relatively long-term residence” (Calleja et al., 2017, p. 81).
3. Systems of Knowledge is a subject that was introduced in 1987 to provide students with basic notions of political and democratic concepts, values in science, environmental issues and aesthetic appreciation.
4. All institutes and names have been anonymized in order to protect the identity of the participant.

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