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ERASMUS MUNDUS INTERNATIONAL MASTER
ADULT EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Learning to "belong": Processes of inclusion and exclusion in Malta's migrant integration programme

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In memory of Dad,

Who always had his own way of belonging.

Abstract

Following the example of many other European countries, Malta recently introduced an integration programme for migrants, called *I Belong*, which consists of Maltese language and cultural orientation classes. Although nominally aiming to facilitate migrants' inclusion in Maltese society, completion of the programme is also a requirement for Third-Country Nationals applying for Long-Term Resident status – as such, the programme serves to exclude migrants who do not meet its requirements. This study draws on semi-structured interviews with students and teachers, lesson observations, and curriculum analysis to investigate how the programme enacts this inclusive-exclusion (Turner, 2014). It argues that by 1) fostering their understanding of Maltese society, 2) instilling "shared values", and 3) assisting migrants in navigating government institutions and public services, the programme makes migrants' inclusion conditional on them demonstrating their commitment to certain "liberal", Western values, and their willingness to accept and adapt to Maltese society. Applying Foucault's notions of governmentality and technologies of self, the study proposes that rather than enforcing these attitudes and behaviours, the programme's pedagogy assigns migrants an agentic role in co-constructing these subjectivities. While the programme thus exemplifies how disciplinary power both constitutes and is constituted by its subjects, I conclude that its embeddedness in wider integration policy demonstrates how ultimately, sovereign power maintains its power to include/exclude.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

It has just passed midday as we drag our feet across the white expanse of Saint Publius' square, Floriana. It is a hazy day, without even the slightest breeze to ease the late June heat bearing down on us. Halfway across the square we stop. As the students that I am accompanying take a seat on one of the stone slabs that cover centuries-old grain silos, I perform my duties as the group's designated photographer. As part of their first "I Belong" excursion, the students are on a treasure hunt across Valletta and its surrounding area, and are required to take pictures of themselves at various points of historical, cultural or administrative significance. Three hours into the activity, the mood among the group is still cheerful, although as the temperature rises there has been a noticeable drop in students' enthusiasm when posing for photos. As we set out for our next stop (the housing authority, located on the other side of Floriana), one of them notices me struggling slightly to get back on my feet. He grins at me and says, "It's hard work, becoming a long-term resident, eh?".

This was my experience of joining one of the first excursions for students on the third cohort of the "I Belong" programme. Unlike previous cohorts, who had taken part in outings within weeks of the programme starting, the most recent group of students had to wait for over half a year before Covid-19 related restrictions were lifted and the planned field trips could go ahead - unfortunately coinciding with some particularly hot weather (even by Mediterranean standards). The excursions are normally an opportunity for students to contextualize and deepen their knowledge of the topics covered on the programme. In the case of the current cohort, it was above all an opportunity to finally meet in person, after seven months of weekly Zoom classes. Although some students already knew each other, whether because they attended one of the obligatory preliminary courses together, or shared a workplace (many students are employed at Mater Dei Hospital), there was nonetheless an initial sense of uncertainty and excitement as the group assembled physically for the first time on St George's Square in Valletta - in fact, when they first saw me, students speculated which of their classmates was concealed behind my surgical mask.

Research Area: the "I Belong" Programme

The pandemic's impact on the "I Belong" programme could be the topic of a dissertation in its own right. However, rather than attempting to treat it as a minor theme in a wider analysis, I have decided to "bracket out" the global health crisis and take a more holistic view of the programme. Established less than three years ago, "I Belong" has not yet been formally researched, and although education for migrant children in Malta has been explored in academic research (Camilleri and Camilleri, 2008; Calleja et al, 2010; Galea et al, 2011), programmes for adult migrants have not enjoyed the same treatment. Faced with this unchartered territory, one of the main challenges in this research journey was to identify a clear research problem. My initial engagement with the programme was through our 2nd semester placement at the University of Malta. "I Belong" was one of the local adult education programmes my coursemates and I profiled. For this, we interviewed the programme's academic coordinator, one of its educators and a recent graduate of the programme via Zoom. I summarized our interview and provided additional information on the programme in an article published on our placement blog (Sonne, 2020). Based on this, government publications, and additional information provided by the programme's academic coordinator, the following sections provide an overview of how the programme was conceived and has been implemented. I highlight Stage Two of the cultural orientation programme, as it will be the focus of the current study.

Introducing the "I Belong" programme

The I Belong programme came into being as part of Malta's first migrant integration strategy, "Integration = Belonging", which the Maltese government launched in December 2017. The strategy sets out to "ensure that migrants in Malta have a voice, are recognised for their true value and are able to build their sense of belonging within society" (Ministry for European Affairs and Equality, 2017, p. 2). This is to be achieved through the 17 integration measures outlined in the strategy's Action Plan. They include the provision of cultural mediators in public services, and awareness raising campaigns. Many of the measures fall within the remit of the Human Rights and Integration Directorate (HRID) and its newly established Integration Unit. The HRID is also responsible for the "I Belong" Programme, which the strategy describes as an "integration itinerary". Although open and free of charge to migrants from within and outside the EU, in practice, the "I Belong" programme is attended exclusively by Third-Country Nationals (henceforth TCNs), since successful completion of the

programme is one of the requirements for TCNs applying for long-term resident status, alongside evidence of having resided and worked in Malta for at least five years. The programme consists of two stages: Stage One, delivered by the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), comprises Maltese and English language classes, a "basic cultural and social orientation", and an assessment of qualifications and work experience.

"I Belong" Stage Two

Once students complete Stage One, they progress to Stage Two, which is similarly made up of language classes, leading up to an exam at MQF Level 2 (equivalent to A2 in the Common European Framework), and a cultural orientation course, which covers the "social, economic, cultural and democratic history and environment of Malta, with a specific focus on the Constitution, law, democratic values and practical sessions" (Ministry for European Affairs and Equality, 2017, p. 11). 120 hours in length, the "Kultura" course (henceforth referred to as "the programme") was designed by the University of Malta and is delivered in weekly three-hour sessions (held online since early 2020). It is divided into three parts: "Understanding" focuses on Maltese history and culture; "Sharing" is concerned with the values and attitudes undergirding Maltese society; "Living" addresses practical challenges students face as they integrate in Maltese society, including how to deal with Maltese government institutions and agencies. Although other courses on Maltese language and society were offered prior to the new Integration Strategy, the "I Belong" marks the first time that all components are brought together as one programme. It is also unprecedented in requiring educators to undergo a three-month pre-service training. At the time of submitting this dissertation, the third "I Belong" cohort, which began Stage Two in November, are about to complete the programme. Each cohort has consisted of around 100 students, divided into seven groups, which are, as far as possible, heterogeneous in terms of gender and nationality. Each group is led by two educators, who teach in alternate weeks or months. Students are evaluated throughout the course based on their attendance and active participation in class, as well as through a 10-minute interview with one of their educators and the programme coordinator.

Developing a Research Focus

Although the "I Belong" programme is, as mentioned above, unprecedented and (so far) unique in Malta, other countries, both within and outside of Europe (but almost always in

the Global North), have well-established programmes that can be considered equivalent to the "I Belong", in that they aim to improve migrants' knowledge of the country language and/or of its history, culture and social mores. Increasingly, these migrant integration programmes are also becoming requirements for gaining citizenship, residency (like the "I Belong") or even entry into a country (discussed further in Chapter 2). After deciding to conduct research on the "I Belong" programme, I began familiarizing myself with the literature on these equivalent programmes. While the concept of a mandatory integration programme for migrants has long been a hotly debated subject in academic circles, empirical research which investigates the implementation of such programmes is less widespread (some notable exceptions will be highlighted in Chapter 2). Studies which specifically consider migrants' perspectives are even rarer, representing a lacuna in the literature, as pointed out by Bucken-Knapp and colleagues (2019) and Phillimore (2012).

This methodological gap mirrors a disciplinary one, attesting to a dearth of studies which treat migrant integration programmes as adult education, rather than a tool in nations' immigration policy toolbox, and which consider migrants primarily as learners, rather than policy subjects. The current study aims to address this gap. Aligned with the interpretive, social constructivist traditions of education research which this Master's has familiarised me with, it draws on data collected through qualitative methods, and considers them through the lens of a post-structuralist critique of adult education. However, at the same time, the study is responding to previous empirical and theoretical research conducted on migrant integration programmes. It is a case study in that it treats the "I Belong" programme as an "instance in action" (MacDonald and Walker, 1977), belonging to a "class" (equivalent migrant integration programmes). Although, like every case, the "I Belong" programme is embedded in its particular historical and political context, "class-wide" issues and themes provide a useful starting point for its analysis.

Developing research questions and a research design

The issues and themes that emerged in my initial exploration of the literature reflected a predominantly critical attitude among researchers and authors towards migrant integration programmes. These, they argued, represent a form of "illiberal liberalism" (Joppke, 2007), reproduce Islamophobic discourses, or reinforce neo-colonial, racial boundaries (Onasch, 2017; Heinemann, 2017). Researchers generally agreed that programmes do little to bring about the actual integration of migrants, and that although they may be cloaked in the language

of inclusion, they represent "a form of migration control by valorising the self-representation of the national majority and defining certain migrants against it" (Larin, 2020, p. 128). One interpretation that deviated from this consensus was Turner's (2014) argument that despite their exclusory and coercive dimensions, there were also "certain techniques of 'inclusion' (self-improvement, education, understanding)" (p. 343) at play in migrant integration programmes. Turner raises the question of the "distribution of inclusion and exclusion" in programmes, an idea I kept returning to whilst trying to make sense of my diverse, and often highly contradictory, data. As Turner himself acknowledges, his theoretical study does not infer any understanding of migrants' experience of this double move of inclusion/exclusion, and the further I progressed in the data collection and analysis, the more I found myself in a position to address this gap. Therefore, I formulated my research questions as follows:

RQ1: How are discourses and practices of inclusion and exclusion distributed across the programme's content, pedagogy, and forms of assessment?

RQ2: How are these discourses and practices understood and experienced by students on the programme?

RQ3: How do they shape students' attitudes towards integration beyond the classroom?

It is worth noting that contrary to what these questions suggest, I did not begin the research project with the intention of testing Turner's hypothesis. In fact, my research questions continued to evolve throughout the project, each version reflecting a new stage in the process of my analysis. Here, I would agree with Diefenbach (2009) that "you only know the (right) questions when you already know what you are looking for" (p. 877): in my experience, identifying my questions and formulating answers to them was an iterative process involving a continuous back and forth between previous studies, my data, and related theory. The structure of the following chapters does not reflect this, and was imposed retrospectively to make the different research components more transparent and comprehensible to the reader.

Overview of the Dissertation

The dissertation is divided into seven chapters: Following this introduction, Chapter 2 provides some background on Malta's history and contemporary politics and society, and discusses how the "I Belong" programme fits into recent developments in policy, practice and

discourse surrounding immigration and migrant integration in Malta and the EU. The second part of the chapter outlines some of the key debates regarding migrant integration, and summarizes empirical studies that investigate and critique migrant integration programmes (mostly in the traditionally migrant-receiving, Northern European countries). Many of these studies draw on the work of Michel Foucault, therefore, in Chapter 3, I will elaborate further on his work, focusing especially on concepts such as governmentality, disciplinary power and technologies of self. I will discuss how these concepts have also been applied in the field of adult education, and set up a framework through which I can later interpret my own findings. In Chapter 4, I will describe how I collected, analysed and presented the data, and the ontological and epistemological dilemmas I grappled with along the way. Next, in Chapter 5, I will present the data, which is organised according to the programme's three components, "Understanding", "Sharing" and "Living". In Chapter 6, I will reconsider my findings more specifically through a Foucauldian, and in the final chapter I will summarize the current study, discuss some of its limitations, and contemplate possibilities for future research, as well as making some tentative recommendations for the programme's implementation.

Chapter 2: Background

The Maltese context

Although Malta's strategic position in the Mediterranean made it a point of contact for different civilizations throughout its history, the 19th and 20th centuries were marked by large swathes of the population leaving the country, mostly in search of work in North America and Australia (Price, 1954). Over the last two decades, however, Malta has undergone "the transition from having been a country of emigration to one of immigration" (Mayo 2012, p. 44). The issue of migration to this tiny island state has garnered international attention since the arrival of the first "boat people": refugees primarily from Sub-Saharan Africa who, on their perilous journeys across the Mediterranean in search for a better life in Europe, are stranded (quite literally) in Malta. The Maltese government's repeated failures to bring these migrants – referred to locally as "klandestini" – to shore and provide adequate facilities (AIDA, n.d.) resulted in Malta being ranked 33rd of 38 countries in terms of overall migrant integration (MIPEX, 2015). Due to the Dublin Agreement, non-European immigrants are obliged to remain in their country of arrival (Ammirati, 2015) and "burden sharing" has become "one of

the key terms of contemporary discourse on migration in Malta" (Falzon, 2012, p. 1670). Often used as a justification for the poor treatment of migrants, some Maltese politicians argue that Malta is "taking a bigger strain proportionally than all the other countries in the EU" (Soares & Joy, 2014) and that more "solidarity" across the EU is required.

Immigration to Malta: a complex picture

However, to focus exclusively on the (young, male) asylum seekers from Africa and the Middle East at the centre of these debates, would be to neglect the many other strands that make up the complex tapestry of migration flows that traverse (but do not always end in) Malta. Non-EU residents, also referred to as Third-Country Nationals (TCNs), whose estimated number in 2017 was 19,300 - the largest groups being Libyans, Serbs, Filipinos and Russians[1] (ECRI, 2018) – remain significantly outnumbered by EU migrants. Both groups are recognized as having contributed to the economic upswing Malta has experienced in the past decade (Grech, A.G., 2017). Another lucrative source of income has been the "Individual Investor Programme" (IIP): the sale of Maltese passports was estimated to bring in €50 million in revenue last year (Micallef, 2019), very much to the indignation of other EU member states (Guarascio, 2019). Thus, twenty-five years on, Sultana's (1994) analysis that Malta is caught between its "micro status and insularity on one hand [and] its falling within the shadow of European influences and value systems on the other" (p. 9) holds true, and pertains not only to issues of migration.

Towards a more "liberal" Malta

Malta's relationship with the EU has in fact been under constant strain since the murder of the journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia in October 2017, eventually leading to the European Parliament voting for then-Prime Minister Joseph Muscat to resign (Rankin, 2019). Muscat's Labour government had come into power in 2013 on promises to modernise Malta's economy and society, which only two years previously had become the last country in the EU to legalize divorce (Sharrock, 2011). The new government was particularly proactive on LGBTQ rights: In 2016, Malta became the first country in Europe to ban gay conversion therapy (Henley, 2016), and introduced same-sex marriage in the following year (Pace, 2017). As a result, Malta has been ranked 1st in Europe on ILGA's "Rainbow Map" for the last six years (ILGA, 2021).

[1] These figures pre-date Brexit, and therefore not include UK nationals, who are now considered TCNs.

Attitudes across Maltese society, however do not always reflect this progress, as exemplified recently in the outrage a Labour party politician caused by sporting a Maltese flag with rainbow colours (Sansone, 2019). Conservative views also hold sway over reproductive rights. A recent poll showed that the majority of the Maltese public do not support abolishing the current umbrella ban on abortion (Sansone, 2021). Both major parties continue to take a pro-life stance, despite mounting pressure from local pro-choice groups and from the EU, which recently declared safe access to abortion a human right (De la Baume, 2021).

The government has similarly defied the EU's criticisms of Malta's lenient tax system (Grech, H., 2017), which incentivized many multinational companies to relocate to Malta, contributing in no small part to the reccent rise in foreign workers, both from within and outside the EU (Jobsplus, n.d.). With their increased visibility, migrants' integration into Maltese society has also become a more pressing issue. In a parliamentary speech in 2019, former Prime Minister Joseph Muscat declared that "the ethos of us Maltese is that of a welcoming country", but added that, "rules are there for everyone so yes, you're very welcome to be here but you must follow the rules" (Diacono, 2019) - the assumption being of course that migrants are inclined to rule-breaking. Signalling even more plainly what he considers migrants' place, Muscat stated that he would like "the Maltese youths to get the skilled jobs. [...] I do not want the Maltese to be picking up rubbish from the streets" (Caruana, 2019). More recently, economy minister Silvio Schembri caused further controversy by claiming that "foreign workers" who lost their jobs due to the pandemic, "will have to go back to their country" (Hudson, 2020). Besides being blatantly xenophobic, his comment was exceptionally myopic in the context of a global pandemic, given the importance of foreign workers in staffing Malta's hospitals.

A stratified system: Third-Country Nationals in Malta

In a misguided attempt to mollify his initial statement, Schembri specified that he had been referring to TCNs, not EU nationals, thus highlighting the precarity TCNs face compared to their EU counterparts. While the latter enjoy the same employment rights as Maltese citizens, TCNs are required to renew their work visas annually, for which they depend on their employer's sponsorship (Identity Malta, n.d.). Employers often take advantage of this situation, cancelling contracts when employees file complaints, thus putting them at risk of deportation (Abela, 2021). TCNs' precarity was brought to national attention when 22 children of non-EU nationals were threatened with eviction on the grounds that their families did not earn enough

to support them (Abela, 2019). Although the call for eviction was revoked, and although deportation rates are generally low (Nimführ et al., 2020), the very possibility of being forcefully resettled entrenches TCNs' status as temporary, and makes them "convenient [...] to imagine and represent [...] as transients and sojourners rather than as settlers" (Falzon, 2012, p. 1661). TCNs can acquire a more permanent status by obtaining long-term resident status (henceforth LTR), which may later lead to naturalisation. LTR allows migrants to bypass re-applying for a work permit annually, and, according to EU law, grants them the same access to employment and social services as EU nationals. However, up until May of this year, when the relevant national law was amended (Government of Malta, 2021), TCNs were required to have an "employment license" issued by their employer, even after obtaining LTR. Combined, the public discourse, national policy, and its implementation make abundantly clear that the Maltese government subscribes to Bauder's (2006) "migrant-as-labour narrative", according to which migrants' place is not the community, but the workplace, where they often undertake precarious, undervalued labour.

This is also reflected in the educational provisions available to migrants. TCNs pay higher fees for courses offered by the Directorate for Lifelong Learning, including for Maltese and English language classes (Lifelong Learning, n.d.), and for programmes delivered by higher and further education institutions. Fee exemptions are available to refugees and those under subsidiary protection, and also apply to certain courses. One example is the "Skills Kit" programme offered at MCAST. These are "bite-sized" courses for personal and employability skills (CEDEFOP, 2018), and, by their very name, imply that migrants require generic, transferable competencies rather than specific, local qualifications. In addition to courses offered by educational and governmental institutions, civil society plays a significant role in providing migrants with learning opportunities. Organizations such as the Foundation for Shelter and Support to Migrants, Kopin, the Jesuit Refugee Service and the Blue Door English Centre offer language courses, as well as information sessions on education, employment, housing, and other services, often led by volunteers. Notwithstanding these provisions, a statement issued by the Malta Migrants Association highlighted the lack of adequate educational opportunities, especially language classes, for migrants as a pressing concern (Malta Migrants Association, 2015). The statement was responding to a public consultation, titled *Mind D Gap - Together we can make a difference*, which the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties initiated in preparation for Malta's first

integration strategy, which was adopted in 2018, and as part of which the "I Belong" was launched.

The wider European context

Any account of immigration or integration policies and practices in Malta requires consideration of the wider European context, not least because of the EU's significant contributions to their financing - the *Mind D Gap* project, for example, received 75% of its funds from the European Fund for the Integration of Third Country Nationals. Malta's accession to the EU in 2004 became one of the country's "pull" factors, making it more attractive both for EU and non-EU migrants (Grech, 2017a), and cemented Malta's position as one of the outposts of "Fortress Europe", both in legal and ideological terms. In the national imagination, this role is traced back to the victory over the Ottoman forces during the Great Siege, which remains one of the key events in Maltese history and places Malta within the Western, Christian camp, in opposition to the Muslim "Other" (Borg and Mayo, 2006). In the following paragraphs, I will discuss to what extent Malta is aligning itself with wider European trends by introducing an obligatory migrant integration programme.

Migrant integration programmes: a diverse landscape

While most traditionally migrant-receiving European countries have long required migrants to prove their "integratedness" before naturalizing, by passing a test or pledging their allegiance to the host nation, many observers (Goodman 2011; Etzioni, 2007; Joppke, 2007) agree that such requirements have not only become more widespread, but also more demanding and standardized since the turn of the millennium. They are, for one, no longer tied exclusively to citizenship: An increasing number of countries, such as Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands, and not least Malta, are making (semi-)permanent residence, and in some cases even the right to enter the country, conditional on passing a test or attending a course (Böcker and Strik, 2011; Goodman, 2011, Extra and Spotti, 2009). These programmes normally consist of two components: language proficiency and "country knowledge", but countries differ significantly in implementing them. In Norway and Germany, for example, TCNs must attend at least 600 hours of language classes to obtain long-term residence, while in Portugal, applicants are offered optional Portuguese courses lasting 75 hours (Pulinx et al., 2014). Similarly, the question of how, if at all, migrants' "country knowledge" should be tested is approached differently by EU member states. Some opt for written exams, others for interviews; some only

test migrants on historical and political facts, while others also include questions about what is considered "acceptable" behaviour (see Van Oers, 2013).

Lack of binding EU policy

These differences are often traced back to different countries' distinct traditions of citizenship, for example France's civic republicanism, the German ethno-cultural model, or the Netherlands' historically multicultural approach (see Weil, 2001; or Koopmans, 2003 for comparative analyses). A lack of binding EU policy has also made this proliferation of different approaches possible. While a 2003 European Council Directive stipulated that long-term residents should be granted "a set of uniform rights which are as near as possible to those enjoyed by citizens of the European Union", it does not specify the process of obtaining LTR (Geddes & Scholten, 2015). On the matter of integration, the EU is similarly non-prescriptive. The Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy (European Commission, 2004), which call for integration as a "dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents" were deemed to have no effect on national policies (Mulcahy, 2011), effectively granting member states the freedom to determine their own integration and naturalization procedures. The more recent EU Commission's Agenda on Migration (2015), and the Action Plan on the Integration of TCNs (2016) have similarly maintained that "the competence on integration lies primarily with the Member States" (European Commission, 2016, p. 3).

Migrant integration: key concepts and debates

The term integration…

It is normally in the name of "integration", that courses or tests for citizenship or residence are established - no less so in the case of the Maltese "I Belong" programme. Although the term integration has become a "buzzword in international fora" (Xanthaki, 2016, p. 815), as its prevalence in EU policy illustrates, Robinson (1998) argues that it is used by many but understood differently by most. Frequently contrasted with "assimilation", whereby migrants are expected to adapt to the culture and norms of the host society (LaFromboise et al., 1993), integration, as the EU policy's definition as a "process of mutual accommodation" suggests, entails reciprocity and shared responsibility among migrants and the host society. According to Berry (1997), integration occurs when two criteria are fulfilled: 1) It is considered of value for the minority to maintain relations with the larger society. And 2) it is considered

of value for the minority to maintain their own identity and culture. If the former, but not the latter criterion is fulfilled, this will result in "assimilation", while the reverse situation leads to "segregation" (often associated with multiculturalism). Integration's appeal is that it represents a "middle road" (McPherson, 2010, p. 547) between those two extremes. Its implementation, however, remains problematic. Favell (2005) argues that it offers "no clear criteria for operationalisation and measurement" (p. 25), primarily "because there is no clear measurement of how integrated (or 'organic') modern societies are to begin with" (ibid). Arguing along similar lines, Kostakopoulou (2010) notes that the idea of integration requires us to "turn a blind eye to class, sex, ethnicity and race differentials and the homeless people in our midst" (p. 951). In other words, it is predicated on the idea of a uniform and cohesive society.

... and its politicisation(s)

This idea(l) of a homogeneous nation state, which Anderson (2006) famously described as an "imagined community", gained political saliency in Europe in reaction to (and rejection of) the multicultural policies of the 1960s and 70s. This coincided with a rise in immigration to Europe throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, especially from Turkey, former Soviet nations, and African and Middle Eastern countries (Etzioni, 2007). Terror attacks committed by members of minority or immigrant groups, and linked to Islamic fundamentalism spawned anti-immigrant discourse, and in many countries triggered a change of course in policy: the "Life in the UK" test for applicants for settlement, for example, was introduced soon after the London bombings of July 2005 (Goodman, 2010). Fears that uncontrolled immigration and the "failure of multiculturalism" were leading to culturally pluralistic and fragmented societies resulted in a greater valorisation of unity over difference (Ossewaarde, 2014). Programmes for residence or citizenship were to ensure that migrants were sufficiently assimilated to indigenous "values" and "culture". Critics therefore point out that, although nominally fostering *integration*, these programmes are better understood as part of countries' *immigration* policies (Goodman, 2011), controlling who is let in and who is allowed to stay in the country, all in the name of national unity and security.

Perceived as a threat to this unity and security, Muslim migrants are often targeted specifically in courses and tests for residence and citizenship. In Germany, for example, tests that require migrants to "explain the right of Israel to exist" (Orgad, 2010, p. 68), or to describe how they would react if "their adult daughter dressed like a German woman" (Etzioni, 2007, p. 356), have been branded "Muslim tests", and illustrate how migrants of Islamic faith are

assumed to be "carriers of unacceptable ideologies" (Brown, 2016, p. 455), especially regarding women's rights. Numerous empirical studies highlight how Islam, across Europe, is perceived as being in "binary opposition" (Joppke, 2007, p.15) with the tenets of liberal democracies, particularly gender equality, secularism, individual liberty, freedom of speech and gay rights (Heinemann, 2017; de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2012). However, while European nations may be "working together to revitalize secular liberalism" (de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2012, p. 196) they vary in the strategies and narratives they employ. According to Onasch (2017), French programmes point to French laws or historical events to demonstrate how certain values are inherent to the French Republic. In Brown's (2016) study on courses for German citizenship, history is evoked somewhat differently: teachers see their task of initiating migrants into secular liberalism as comparable to the allied forces' "denazification" of Germany after World War II. Casting our gaze across the Atlantic, we find that programmes in the USA portray abstract principles and values such as individualism and constitutionalism as distinctly American, using "instructional narratives" to explain them to students and to define migrants' relationship to the state (Griswold, 2010). Thus, specific national narratives and discourses are operationalised to make migrant integration programmes more distinct across countries.

Critiques of migrant integration programmes

Although nations vary in the values they emphasize in integration programmes, many scholars argue that they converge in enacting "illiberal liberalism", a term coined by Joppke (2007) to capture the paradox of Western nation states imposing values, such as personal freedom, democracy and individualism, on migrants from more "backward" cultures through coercive measures: in some countries, migrants lose their rights to benefits if they do not attend the courses. Critics (Goodman, 2010; Hentges, 2013; and including Joppke himself), argue that this liberal end does not justify the illiberal means. They point out that it is not only assimilationist, but deeply undemocratic to make migrants' membership conditional on their adopting certain values. Moreover, empirical studies have highlighted that even when migrants meet the host nation's demands, and become residents or citizens, they are never - not even in the integration programmes - fully recognized as such (Onasch, 2017; Heinemann, 2017; Brown, 2016). Although integration programmes, Yuval Davis (2006) argues, were conceived of as "political projects of belonging", they have had the opposite effect, since they turn "emancipatory ethical and political values [...] into inherent personal attributes of members of

particular national and regional collectivities [...] and, thus, in practice, become exclusionary rather than permeable signifiers of boundaries" (p. 212-213). These boundaries are generally highly racialized, and applied differently to migrants of different ethnicities or countries of origin (Onasch, 2017). Factors like language proficiency, IT skills and literacy (Cooke, 2009; Fejes, 2019) often further exacerbate these differences.

Towards a relational understanding of integration

According to Norman (1995), civic integration programmes are not only exclusionary, but do not, and indeed cannot, foster integration because they are based on a false "ideology of shared values", which "gets the connection between shared identity [...] and shared values backward. It is not typically common values that lead to a common identity, but vice versa" (p. 147). "Shared values", Larin (2020) argues in a similar vein, are "a *product* of integration, not a *mechanism* for its achievement" (p. 128, my emphasis). The main "mechanisms", he continues, are the social interactions between individual members of society, including migrants and non-migrants. At the national level, these social interactions are mediated through "institutional relational mechanisms" (Tilly, 2002, as cited in Larin, 2020) such as mass education. If we accept Larin and Norman's relational understanding of integration, we should however also take into consideration that the networks which emerge from social (not to mention economic) interactions are no longer confined by the borders of nation states (or indeed those of the European Union). Rather, they are increasingly defined by transnational connections, which link individuals and groups across borders. "Transnational migration" marks a shift away from understanding migration as the single movement of people from A to B, and recognizes that migrants now cross borders frequently and continuously, and that new forms of transportation and communication allow them to remain connected to and invested in multiple places simultaneously (Glick Schiller et al., 1995). Leading to "new subjectivities that are cool on loyalties, ironic on cultural orders, and thin on commitments and solidarities" (Robins and Aksoy, 2016, p. 21), transnational migration seems to pose an existential challenge (Schmidtke, 2001; Grzymala-Kazlowska & Phillimore, 2018) to the more traditional conceptions of migrant integration and civic membership that undergird integration programmes.

An emergent "citizenship" model

The rise in integration programmes can easily be read as a knee-jerk reaction to this challenge, through which "nation-states in Europe are tightening their understanding of national membership" (de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2012, p. 205). However, programmes are not as incompatible with these new migration realities as such an analysis initially suggests. Increasingly, Goodman (2011) notes, the aim of integration programmes is not to achieve "cultural affinities or assimilationist uniformity", but to foster migrants' "functional, individual autonomy" (p. 754), mirroring more individualized and fragmented forms of migration. Two dominant discourses seem to be converging to create this new understanding of integration: 1) the institutionalization of human rights, especially at the transnational level, leading to "the inclusion of immigrants into a range of membership rights and institutions in postwar Europe" as "rights-bearing, autonomous, and active individual[s]" (Soysal, 2012, p.13); and 2) the expansion of a neoliberal discourse which emphasizes individual responsibility, including in issues of immigration and integration (Rose, 1999; Schinkel & Van Houdt, 2010). Combined, these ideologies have established a "globalizing, flexible" citizenship model (de Leeuw & van Wichelen, 2012) that "privileges individuality and its transformative capacity as a collective good" (Soysal, 2012, p. 1), whilst also "respond[ing] aptly to the needs of a national neoliberal labour market" (Heinemann, 2017, p. 178). It is a model that straddles economic competitiveness and social cohesion, commitment to the nation state and a transnational outlook.

Contemporary integration programmes are understood as agents of socialization into this complex, and, arguably, contradictory civic membership model. To some, this is an inherently repressive process. Writing from the Dutch context, Suvarierol and Kirk (2015) comment that integration courses primarily teach "submissiveness to state and market authority" (p. 263). Moreover, migrants can no longer prove their submissiveness by memorizing facts about the nation's culture and history: Instead, it has become contingent on "morality questions, above all about gender relations or sexual preferences, which check the right attitude not knowledge" (Joppke, 2017, p. 1167). Migrants' personal beliefs are now scrutinized, so that they may "clear themselves from a priori suspicions of unwillingness to integrate" (Löwenheim & Gazit, 2009, p. 161). This new, "deeper" form of integration requires a degree of complicity from migrants themselves: As Heinemann (2017) notes, integration has become "a way to produce normalised subjects who *consent to their own subjugation*" (p. 186, my emphasis). In a similar vein, Schinkel and Van Houdt (2010) refer to integration programmes as enacting the "repressive responsibilization" of migrants. A slightly different

interpretation is put forward by Turner (2014), who, whilst not denying the exclusory dimension of integration programmes, suggests that, "by promoting notions of autonomy, self-sufficiency and empowerment" (p. 335), they simultaneously enact inclusion. What these approaches have in common is that they are indebted to the work of the French social theorist Michel Foucault, whose concepts and theories have not only been utilised in the study of migrant integration programmes, but have also significantly shaped the field of adult education. In the following chapter I will explore the different applications of his ideas, based on which I will develop a theoretical framework for the current study.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

Foucault: some relevant ideas and concepts

Foucault's work, especially that relating to disciplinary power and governmentality, is frequently invoked in the investigation of migrant integration programmes. Scholars from various disciplines, including legal studies (Joppke, 2017; Orgad, 2010), political sciences (Löwenheim & Gazit, 2009) and sociology (Heinemann, 2017) apply a "Foucauldian" lens. As Joppke (2007) argues, one of the reasons Foucault's ideas have proven so popular in this area is that they explain how integration programmes can embody two seemingly "opposite, perhaps contradictory types of liberalism": on one hand, the liberalism which grants migrants greater rights and seeks to accommodate, rather than assimilate them to the host society; on the other, a "liberalism of power and disciplining" whereby migrants are expected to "release their self-producing and -regulating capacities". Thus, they become "both self-sufficient and autonomous by illiberal means" (Joppke, 2007, p.16). Here, Joppke is referring to several of Foucault's key ideas. The notion of "power" was turned on its head by Foucault, who contests our traditional understanding that locates it in one person or institution, from which it exudes its influence unilaterally. Instead, Foucault argued that "[p]ower must be analysed as something which circulates [...] Power is employed and exercised through a netlike organisation" (1980, p. 98). The "net", which captures everything, is discourse, referring not only to language, but to "the conditions under which certain statements are considered to be the truth" (Ball, 2012, p. 19). Discourse both generates, and is generated by "regimes of truth", wherein certain assumptions, beliefs and practices become "unquestioned and unquestionable", and their "arbitrariness becomes invisible" (Carroll et al., 2008, p. 167).

Although power is ubiquitous, penetrating our most basic understanding of the world, this does not mean it is equally distributed, nor does Foucault deny that power imbalances and hierarchies exist. However, these hierarchies are no longer maintained through the top-down imposition of power, for example by a monarch, but rather permeate society, and depend, as Joppke (2007) notes, on individuals' "self-producing and -regulating capacities" (p. 16). This marks a shift away from "sovereign" toward "disciplinary" power, which, to Foucault (1977), is best illustrated by Bentham's panopticon, a prison designed in such a way that prisoners do not know whether they are being watched, resulting in prisoners' "disciplining" themselves. For Foucault, the panopticon exemplifies how in modern disciplinary societies, external authority is internalized through dominant societal norms, according to which we evaluate ourselves, which produces what Foucault (1979) identifies as a normalizing judgement or gaze. Institutions, and especially schools, play an important role in this - so much so that teachers are seen by Foucault (1979) as "technicians of behaviour", and "engineers of conduct" (p. 294). To him, the normalizing processes are so fundamental to who we are that one cannot speak of a pre-existing individual subject. Rather, subjectivity is a "reality fabricated by […] 'discipline'" (ibid, p.194). Crucial to the process of fabricating subjects (also referred to by Foucault as "subjectification") is that individuals are made "known through the methods of observation, testing, appraisal, etc" (Ball, 2012, p. 13). In this increasing concern with knowledge and security, modern society in general has come to mirror prisons (Leask, 2012).

It is not surprising that Foucault, given his frequent invocations of prisons and the inescapability of disciplinary power, is often labelled as overly pessimistic and accused of treating individuals as objects without agency. However, the fact that power is all-pervasive does not necessarily imply that it is repressive. In fact, Foucault (1979) famously emphasised that power should not be considered negatively and, later in his career, shifted his focus from the "totalizing" towards the more "individualizing" effects of disciplinary power. These are predicated on the subject's agency and freedom, in fact: "Power is exercised only over free subjects and only insofar as they are free" (Foucault, 1982, p. 790). The purpose of governing therefore is not to dictate certain behaviours or attitudes, but "to structure the possible field of action of others" (Foucault 1982, p. 221). Foucault proposed the term "governmentality", to encompass all the ways in which "individuals, groups and organisations manage their own behaviour" (Dean and Hindness, 1998, p. 2). However, while "technologies of self", which refer specifically to the "operations on our own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being" can be considered repressive in that they bind us to the norms of society, Foucault

also sees them as having empowering, even liberatory effects through which we can reach a state of self-fulfilment or self-realization (Foucault, 1988).

Towards the end of his career Foucault becomes interested in how these forces of governmentality can be resisted, especially through what he refers to as “ethics”. By this, he understands the “conscious practice of freedom” (1997, p. 284): while certain external conditions need to be met to make freedom possible, to Foucault, there is much more to “being free”. It involves the subversion of “anything which prohibits or denies self-construction” and which “seeks to define subjectivity for individuals” (Infinito, 2003, p. 158). As Thompson (2003) argues, it is in these practices of self-formation that Foucault identified the real potential to resist the effects of disciplinary power. Although he initially understood resistance as the “tactical reversal” of the mechanisms of power, whereby “the conflicts that are necessarily intrinsic to all power relations could nonetheless thwart particular arrangements of such relations” (Thomspon, 2003, p. 114), he later recognised that this form of resistance would only lead to other, new forms of domination of certain groups over others (Foucault, 1982).

Resolving this dilemma, Foucault suggests, requires a reinvention of the self as autonomous of the subjectivity defined by power relations. The “self” that Foucault has in mind, however, is "not the decontextualized self of inwardness, but a self that becomes autonomous only through a struggle with and a stylizing or adaptation of those concrete possibilities which present themselves as invitations for the practice of liberty” (Foucault, 1988, as quoted in Infinito, 2003). In other words, what Foucault calls “ethical self-formation” is not the striving towards a dehistoricised “true essence” of the self, but a response to “the particular and historically evolved power configuration” (Lilja and Vinthagen, 2014, p. 122) that it is embedded in. Freedom, for Foucault, is thus relational and social: it is “relative rather than absolute, involving interdependence and connectedness to others rather than detached autonomy” (Clarke and Henning, 2013, p. 80).

Mobilizing Foucault in adult education

Foucault’s ideas are often referred to as post-structuralist or postmodernist (although he himself rejected this classification), and contrasted with modernist social theories. They present a particular challenge to humanism, which is grounded in the “idea of an intrinsic self” (Pearson and Podeschi, 1999, p.42), as well as to critical theory, which, drawing on Marx,

understands power negatively, as a tool for repression and ideological manipulation. Theories of adult education, especially those that can be subsumed under the labels of transformative learning or critical pedagogy, draw heavily on one (or both) of these schools of thought, and emphasize the potential of adult education to empower learners and bring about individual or social change. Foucault's understanding of power and subjectification does not sit easily with the binary opposition of liberation and repression undergirding these theories (Brookfield, 2001b). It has prompted scholars to question this duality, and to examine how adult educators, and even learners themselves, engage in practices and relations of power, even if their stated goal is to become liberated from them.

Such critiques often closely scrutinize classroom practices and pedagogies in adult education – especially those that are considered "learner-centred", "democratic" or "empowering" – to reveal how they can in fact be seen as "belonging to and extending [the] lineage of technologies of the self" (Tennant, 1998, p. 365). For example, the chair circle, arguably the paragon of the democratic classroom, when viewed through a Foucauldian lens, merely "reconfigures the regulation of students" (Usher and Edwards, 1995, p.91) and places them under each other's, in addition to the educator's surveillance. The practice of incorporating learners' experiences in classroom discussion is also touted as democratizing and inclusive. In practice, however, adult learners' experiences are often selected, instrumentalised and even "manipulated so as to enable access to already existing forms of knowledge" (Avis, 1995, p. 174). Moreover, Avis argues, they can serve to reinforce essentialising categories, such as the "migrant experience", in disregard of the diversity contained within such groups.

Similarly, reflective practices, a hallmark of adult learning, are exemplary of the ways in which we "work on ourselves" as subjects. In encouraging, even requiring, students to reveal what are often very personal experiences and thoughts, for example in a learning journal or in dialogue with their peers or teachers, reflection fulfils a "confessional" purpose (Fejes & Dahlstedt, 2013). Originally discussed by Foucault (1980) in his work on sexuality, the confessional mode has colonized other areas of modern society (especially education), as it has become necessary for "[our] own salvation to know as exactly as possible who [we are] and also [...] to tell it as explicitly as possible to some other people" (Foucault, 1993, p. 201). Confessional practices serve another more sinister purpose: by making themselves known, subjects also become governable (Usher & Edwards, 1995) and can be subjected more easily to disciplinary power's normalizing gaze. Within adult education, this complicity of so-called

transformative and liberatory practices in neoliberal governmentality frequently remains undetected, even by educators themselves, who unwittingly contribute to the workings of disciplinary power behind "the false face of apparently beneficent power exercised to help adult learners realize their full potential" (Brookfield, 2001b, p.3). Especially in the context of migrant education, educators are often highly motivated to help their students integrate, even if this means encouraging them to assimilate to a system in which the odds are always stacked against them (Slade, 2011).

It is this micro-analysis of everyday practices, including classroom interactions, that Foucault is most interested in, and in which he believes the workings of power can best be detected. However, his theories and concepts have also proven relevant to questions of adult education policy. They are often applied to explain the ascent of "lifelong learning" as a policy tool (Fejes & Nicoll, 2008; Olssen, 2006): by making individuals constantly up-skill and retrain, lifelong learning (as opposed to lifelong *education*) has replaced the decimated welfare state and placed the onus of adapting to the economy on individuals (Crowther, 2004). As Kopecký (2011) argues, "[l]earning has thus been altered so that it is a rule; it becomes an obligation. We can therefore talk of *responsibilisation*" (p. 255, original emphasis). Strategies which absolve the state and instead transfer them responsibilities the individual have long been acknowledged as crucial to the hegemonic neoliberal order (Rose, 1999), and are not confined to the field of education. In the context of migration too, migrants are increasingly made responsible for their own integration: programmes (such as the "I Belong"), which require migrants to "earn" their citizenship or residence rights, exemplify this particularly (Joppke, 2017). Often, this is framed in the positive terms of transformative learning: As Turner astutely notes, "the would-be citizen is a site of problems but ones that can be overcome through their own self-development and 'empowerment'" (2014, p. 343)

This trend, however, does not imply that the state has lost interest in its subjects. Quite the contrary: through lifelong learning, it seeks to include individuals, but "only under very specific conditions: their subjectivity must be shaped in a specific form through forms of individualizing knowledge and continuous techniques of normalizing power" (Oksala, 2013, p. 328). According to Watson (2010), the discourse surrounding lifelong learning, increasingly juxtaposed with the term "inclusion", illustrates how we are moving towards a "control society", which seeks to include all its members – migrants being no exception – so that we may "be managed by it and made productive for it" (Watson, 2010, p. 97). This is often

shrouded in the language of "empowering" education, which, despite its positive overtones, in practice merely "involves people developing capacities to act successfully within the existing system and structures of power" (Inglis, 1997, p. 4). This contrasts with "emancipatory education", which "concerns critically analyzing, resisting and challenging structures of power" (ibid). The difference is illustrated by Worthman (2008), who investigates how two ESOL teachers utilise learners' experiences in the migrant classroom. For one teacher, discussing students' (often negative) experiences in class created possibilities for them to develop the "right attitudes" to move beyond these experiences, and transition from an "outsider" to an "insider" position: an act of empowerment. By contrast, the other teacher used learners' experiences to help them critically position themselves in the world, and to "turn the gaze back upon existing power structures" (p. 461), thus engaging students in emancipatory learning.

Similarly, Carroll and colleagues (2008) argue that the processes through which migrant learners create and engage with their "imagined communities" (either in relation the host society or their country of origin) can enable them to either resist or reinscribe regimes of truth. Like Worthman, they suggest that learners' lived experiences combine with classroom learning to form a contested terrain in which new meanings are produced. These meanings can resist dominant narratives, even within the highly normalizing settings of language education for migrants. These studies invite us to consider how the learning on migrant integration programmes may amount to more than "a powerful totem of the 'active' and 'committed' subject who will become a citizen" (Taylor, 2014, p. 342), and may also offer avenues for resistance. This becomes an even more pressing endeavour if we accept that adult education "has been given an increasing role in […] immigration regimes" (Morrice et al., 2017, p. 131). Foucault's work on power provides a useful theoretical link between research on adult education and migrant integration, which I will further explore in the Findings and Discussion chapters. However, I will first describe the process of collecting and analysing my data.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Ontological and epistemological standpoints

As outlined in Chapter 2, the existing literature on migrant integration programmes largely consists of theoretical discussions, policy analyses, or studies of the implementation of programmes. Absent within this literature, as Bucken-Knapp and colleagues (2019) observe, "is a focus on the voices of migrants themselves" (p. 224). The inclusion of migrants' voices, they argue, is important because it helps policy makers better understand the differentiated needs of migrants, and subsequently develop better policies and programmes. Sprung (2013) similarly contends that "it is only through the inclusion of migrant voices that we begin to see areas that require further inquiry from scholars and policymakers, resulting in a more efficient governance of […] integration" (p. 233). What these researchers are advocating for, and what I hope to offer here, is an interpretive study, which "has as its central endeavour to understand the subjective world of human experience" (Cohen et al, 2017, p.19). Interpretive studies primarily deploy qualitative methods, in order to "explore new phenomena and to capture individuals' thoughts, feelings, or interpretations of meaning and process" (Given, 2008, p.xxix). Subsumed under the label of interpretivism are a number of different ontological positions: the current research aligns itself with social constructivism, which assumes that our interpretations of meaning and process are fashioned through our relations to and communication with others. Research under this paradigm aims for "the careful documentation of how particular social phenomena are culturally or interactionally constructed in particular places at particular times" (Hammersley, 2012, p. 45).

Research Design

The social phenomenon under investigation here is the "I Belong" programme - more particularly, the processes of inclusion and exclusion which the programme enacts. The research can be considered a "case study", since it investigates a "specific, unique, bounded system" (Stake, 1994, p. 237). While this framing invites comparison with other "cases" (i.e. equivalent migrant integration programmes elsewhere), the case must be understood as embedded within its historical and socio-political context (Adelman et al., 1980, p. 59), and research findings can therefore only ever be transferable, not generalizable (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Case studies vary significantly in their purpose and methods. Since the research area has not been investigated previously, I am conducting an "exploratory" case study, in which according to Yin (2003), "fieldwork and data collection are undertaken prior to the final definition of study questions and hypotheses" (p.6). Often, the goal is to discover theory by directly observing a social phenomenon in its raw form". My own approach is less inductive,

and responds to previous studies on equivalent integration programmes. It can therefore equally be considered an "instrumental" (Stake, 1995) case study: it "start[s] and end[s] with issues dominant" (p.16), using the case to investigate them, rather than studying the case for its own sake. This does not detract from my goal to provide a "thick description" (Geertz, 1973), leading to an in-depth understanding of a single case, the "I Belong" programme.

Here, I agree with Berndtsson (2017) that the research design of any case study "has much to gain in terms of quality, empirical depth and credibility by mixing different methods for data collection" (p.85). I therefore decided to combine interviews with students and educators, field observations of lessons and excursions, and document analysis of the curriculum and programme's evaluation criteria, aiming to understand how meaning is constructed at the individual level, in the classroom, and in the programme's official discourse. As discussed earlier, migrants' experiences of integration programmes have rarely featured in previous studies. For this reason, and because it is in line with my own social constructionist standpoint, interviews with students were treated as my primary data source, and "outweigh" the other data sources, both quantitatively, in terms of the amount of data they provided, as well as in their significance in generating the themes in which my analysis is grounded. Before describing this in more detail, I will, however, outline the process of collecting empirical data through interviews and field observations.

Data collection

Interviews: Recruiting participants

Given the limited scope of the dissertation, I initially intended to recruit eight to ten interviewees in total: three or four students each from the current cohort and from previous cohorts, and two or three educators. Since students from the programme's most recent cohort had, at the time of data collection, only completed the first half of the cultural orientation course, I decided to aim for an equal share of former and current students, in order to provide a more longitudinal perspective on the programme, and to include insights from before and after the health crisis necessitated a shift to an online format. Although I did not look for any characteristics in students, it was important to me that, taken together, they captured the diversity of the "I Belong" student population. Accordingly, I planned to select students

through purposeful sampling, specifically the "maximum variation" principle, aiming for "*demographic* variation, where variation is sought on generally people-related characteristics" (Sandelowski, 1995, p. 181): in this case, specifically, nationality and gender.

First, the programme's academic coordinator sent out a call for participants to all current and former students via email. Most of the 13 respondents were current students. Concerned about not securing enough participants (and fuelled by the zeal of a beginning researcher), I followed up with every potential interviewee and had soon scheduled eight interviews with current students and three with former students. Although no nationality was represented more than twice in this initial "sample", participants from certain regions, especially East Asia and the Middle East and North Africa, were conspicuously absent, without any Libyan or Filipino participants, despite these being two of the largest migrant nationalities in Malta. Women were also under-represented, even when considering the overall gender imbalance on the programme. To offset these disproportionalities and come closer to "maximum variation", I sought help from the programme's academic coordinator and several educators, through whom I recruited four more former students who fit these specific criteria. An overview of the final list of student participants can be found in the appendices. I recruited "I Belong" educators through a similar process of issuing an electronic call for participants through the programme's academic coordinator. Three of the four educators who responded were female, and two of them were teaching on the programme for the first time.

Ethical considerations: anonymity of place and participants

The information I just provided, regarding interviewees' personal characteristics, is not unproblematic, as it ties into issues relating to the anonymity of place and participants, which is a central concern in conducting ethical research (Wiles et al., 2008) Given the impossibility of anonymizing the setting of the research (due to the singularity of the "I Belong" programme in Malta), it became even more important to protect participants' anonymity, which is conventionally done by "assigning numbers or aliases to individuals" (Creswell, 2013, p. 174). In my presentation of the data, I have opted for the former – referring to participants through a letter combination ("TP" for teacher participant, or "SP", for student participant), and a random number. I am aware that this decision has serious implications: "to strip a name to a number" Lahman and colleagues (2015) caution, "reflects at best thoughtlessness on the part of the researcher and at worse an abuse of power" (p. 449). I am guilty on both counts:

thoughtlessness because I did not have the foresight to discuss participants' preferences for pseudonyms during interviews, and did not have time to follow up on this afterwards, and an abuse of power because – as I will discuss further on – the entire research project is contingent upon a power imbalance between myself and participants (especially student participants).

The alternative – assigning pseudonyms to participants myself (as Creswell suggests) – raises different, challenging questions: most importantly, how to select names which would not prompt the reader to make assumptions about participants, specifically their nationality, religion or socioeconomic status, potentially resulting in their (falsely assumed) identification? However, in any research aligned with a social constructivist ontology, a participant's background cannot simply be side-lined, central as they are to how we make sense of the world. Conducting ethical research therefore involves what Allen and Wiles (2016) describe as "a balancing act […] between ethical prohibitions on the disclosure of 'confidential, personally identifiable information' […] and disguising characteristics to such an extent that potentially important variables like gender or occupation are obscured" (p. 150). With regards to the current study, variables of particular importance were race, nationality, and language proficiency, and I have sometimes included this information when I considered it relevant to the reader's understanding of the quotation or observation I am referring to. It is for the reader to decide whether the information I provide is sufficient to judge the validity of my analysis.

Conducting interviews

Interviews were conducted and recorded online via Zoom, except for two student interviews, which were held on the phone. In one, we mostly spoke Maltese, all other interviews were conducted in English. Prior to the interviews, participants were made aware of the purpose and conditions of the research (including how data would be anonymized and securely stored), as well as their right to withdraw from the research at any point during or after the interview. They gave their informed consent in writing or orally, in accordance with procedures stipulated by the University of Malta's Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee, which approved the study. Interviews lasted between 45 minutes and two hours, and were transcribed and anonymised. Transcripts were shared with participants to give them the opportunity to rectify any errors or provide any necessary clarifications.

Given the exploratory nature of the study, and following Leech's (2002) maxim that, the less one knows about a topic, the more open-ended and unstructured interviews should be, my interview format was semi-structured. Drawing on my provisional research questions, and on themes I had identified in my literature review, I prepared an interview guide including main questions, follow-up questions and prompts. However, I approached interviews with the intention of "allow[ing] the interviewees a degree of freedom to explain their thoughts and to highlight areas of particular interest […] as well as to enable certain responses to be questioned in greater depth, and in particular to bring out and resolve apparent contradictions" (Horton et al., 2004, p. 340). In practice, this meant that I would refer to my interview guide when I felt that the conversation was digressing too far from the issues under investigation, but that I also remained open to the possibility of including new issues in my exploration of the research area. For example, it was only during interviews that I became aware of how students' interactions with Identity Malta (the government agency responsible for identity management and migration processes), although technically separate from the "I Belong" programme, affect how they perceive and understand the programme, and shape their overall experience of integration.

Thus, even as I was collecting data, I began to identify what would later become the codes and themes of my analysis (more on this below. I drew heavily on Rubin and Rubin's model of "responsive interviewing", which considers the different stages of research to be closely intertwined: "Researchers perform analysis throughout their projects, not just at the end, so that as they learn more, they can modify both the research problem they are exploring and the questions they ask" (Rubin and Rubin, 2012, p.xvi). Although I conducted all 19 interviews within five weeks, I tried, through notetaking and journaling, to reflect on the process. Informed by the patterns I began identifying, my interview guide shifted from being primarily "question-based" to "theme-based" (Morgan and Guevara, 2008, p. 469), and I started weaving the issues that had emerged in previous interviews into every new interview I conducted. Thus, although the number of interviews was determined by external factors (the responses I received within the period of time I had allocated to data collection) rather than by a sense of having reached data "saturation" (Saunders et al., 2018), I felt, by the time I completed the final interview, that I had achieved a degree of "conceptual depth" (Nelson, 2016), which allowed me, if not to answer, then at least to come closer to identifying them.

Field observations: lessons and excursions

Whilst semi-structured interviews' potential to grant us insight into the subjective realities of participants make them particularly suitable to interpretive research, they "might not allow a full investigation" of the research topic, as they are "limited by the recall of the participant. […] As such, in-depth interviews are often combined with other forms of data, such as observations" (Cook, 2008, p. 423). For the current study, I observed three classes via Zoom, each of which lasted three hours. The lessons' online modality allowed me to switch easily between groups, so that in total I observed five different groups and six educators. The sessions were not recorded, meaning that the data I collected from lesson observations was much less detailed and precise - as is common with fieldnotes (Flick, 2014) – than my interview data. Since only very few students in each group had consented to being observed, my observations were limited to more general descriptions of classroom proceedings, and focused more on the educator than students. Nonetheless, loosely following a semi-structured template, I took notes in as much detail as possible, based on which I later produced thick narrative accounts. I identified and focused specifically on several "critical incidents" (Moyles, 2002), which featured prominently in my data analysis.

My plan to observe "I Belong" excursions was initially jeopardized by their postponement due to ongoing Covid 19-related regulations. However, after restrictions were partly lifted in July, the excursions were held, although students had to separate into smaller groups. The nature of the excursion (consisting of a museum visit and a treasure hunt) made it impossible to take fieldnotes *in situ*. Through notes I compiled immediately afterwards, however, I attempted to create as detailed a report as possible. I obtained consent from the four students forming the group I joined, and focused on the critical incidents and interactions that occurred within the group. As can be inferred from Chapter 1's opening narrative vignette, my role during the excursion was that of a participant-observer. During lesson observations I was less active: after introducing myself and my research, I mostly remained silent (or rather, "muted"), except when joining Zoom "breakout-rooms" for groupwork, where I would make minor contributions, and during the "Rokna tal-Malti", the part of the lesson dedicated to Maltese language practice. Here, one educator asked me to introduce myself in Maltese, and in another lesson, I briefly took part in a discussion on pets.

My Positionality as Researcher

Although seemingly inconsequential, these instances of participation bear the imprint of my positionality as a researcher: having lived in Malta until the age of eight, I have a good enough grasp of the Maltese language to participate in conversations on everyday topics, but rely heavily on codeswitching with English. This, along with my physical appearance, means I am often cast as a foreigner, and even after having spent most of the past two years in Malta, my own sense of "belonging" remains ambivalent at best. Rather than identifying fully as a member of the majority population – referred to as an "outsider" position in migration studies (Bonner & Tolhurst, 2002) – or with the migrant community, as an "insider" (a problematic distinction in the current project, as there was no single migrant community under investigation), I therefore occupied a "hybrid position" (literally, being half-Maltese) in relation to my student participants. While certain difficulties related to living in Malta, such as the Maltese language, provided some grounds for proximity between us, our relationships were defined mostly by the distance – and privilege – that separated me, a Maltese citizen, from them, whose status as TCNs was the reason I was interviewing them in the first place. Our positionalities are always multiple (Ryan, 2015): besides being half-Maltese I am also a language teacher, and thus occupied a similar hybrid position in relation to the educators I interviewed – "close" in our shared identity as teachers, but "distant" due to our very different professional contexts.

While issues of researcher positionality are brought into sharp relief during field research, they shape every stage of an interpretive research project (Bourke, 2014). Fully excavating the extent to which my positionality shaped how I identified my research problem, and collected and analysed data would require a distance from the project that I currently lack. However, one aspect of my positionality that is worth highlighting is my own personal and professional interest in immigration and migrant inclusion. My involvement, primarily as a language teacher, with several NGOs supporting migrants and asylum seekers in Malta, first sparked my curiosity about the "I Belong" programme. Combined with an interest in critical theory and pedagogy, cultivated throughout this Master's, my approach was anything but impartial. Rather, it was guided by a deeply held belief that the inclusion of migrants is one of the most pressing social justice issues in Malta, and that emancipatory adult education (including, potentially, the "I Belong" programme) can contribute to "uncovering the workings of ideology" (Brookfield, 2001a) which ensnare certain groups, especially migrants, in a

position of constant precarity. Much of the previous literature on the topic adopts a more pessimistic outlook, often highlighting how integration programmes are "reproductive" rather than "revolutionary" (Allman, 1999). My own approach oscillated between this critical stance and the hope that the "I Belong" programme would embody an "inclusive education that acknowledges and affirms cultural difference and diversity as positive and desirable assets" (Guo, 2015, p.15), and that, as a result, not only engenders individual transformation, but also wider social change.

Data analysis

My stance as a student of critical pedagogy was brought to bear especially on my analysis of the curriculum. Conducted prior to collecting empirical data, it was guided by interest in the emancipatory and transformative potential of the "I Belong" programme. Whilst not deductive to the extent that I had an a priori template of codes (Crabtree and Miller, 1999), this initial analysis was nonetheless theory-driven, in that my "starting categories" (Meijer et al., 2002) were shaped by the transformative learning theories which have dominated adult education for the past 30 years (Taylor, 2007), relating to issues such as learner agency and reflective practices, but also more specific concepts, such as "false" and "critical consciousness" (Freire, 1970, 1973) and "disorienting dilemma" (Mezirow, 1978). However, by the time I collected my empirical data and had conducted a more thorough literature review, I found that the themes that began to emerge did not fit comfortably in the theoretical categories that are generally associated with these humanist, critical traditions within adult education. I therefore pivoted toward a more inductive thematic analysis, which differs from deductive or theory-driven analysis in that it is "a form of pattern recognition *within* the data, with emerging themes becoming the categories for analysis" (Bowen, 2009, p.32, my emphasis). Following Braun and Clarke's (2012) clear six-phase guide to thematic analysis, and using NVivo coding software, I read and reread my interview data and fieldnotes to identify patterns, which I first labelled using a combination of in vivo and descriptive codes (see Saldaña, 2014), and then, in an iterative process, moving back and forth between the codes and the data, grouped into sub-themes and themes. Braun and Clarke's model affords researchers considerable flexibility on where to locate their analysis on the inductive-deductive continuum, so that, following an initial inductive analysis, I began making connections with the themes and issues I had identified in my literature review.

Triangulating the data

The process of combining data from different sources is commonly referred to as "triangulation", and is considered useful in establishing the credibility of the research and minimising researcher bias (Bowen, 2009, p.38). Given that these goals do not sit easily with interpretive, social constructionist research, data triangulation in the current study served to provide a deeper insight into the phenomenon under investigation, by allowing the different sources not to simply corroborate, but rather complement (Meijer et al., 2002), even contradict each other. Discussions on data triangulation rarely consider how data sources may contribute differently to the findings and analysis. In the current study, the empirical data I collected through interviews and lesson observations occupied a central position, as it was from these sources that I drew most of the codes and themes. For this reason (and because they were only shared with me after I analysed the empirical data) the programme's evaluation and assessment criteria played an ancillary, but not negligible role, as they provided new perspectives on the themes I had already started developing. This was also the case for the excursion I participated in, which took place after I had written a first draft of Chapter 5.

Developing themes and presenting the data

As the foregoing paragraph illustrates, the process of collecting, analysing and presenting data was iterative and messy, and occurred simultaneously with a review of my research questions and theoretical framework. After much journaling, notetaking, drafting and redrafting, however, the jumble of data, theory, and literature that I had accumulated came into clearer focus, and I began to home in on questions relating to the inclusive/exclusive processes within the programme. Among the initial codes (over 50 in total), I identified those most relevant to the emerging research questions, and grouped them into sub-themes, which in turn came together to form wider themes. As I began drafting my Findings chapter, I also continuously re-read my different data sources, including the curriculum, and found that my analysis reflected the programme's tripartite structure. Therefore, I have divided the chapter into an "Understanding", "Sharing", and "Living" section. This division loosely mirrors the content covered in each of the programme's components, but mostly serves as a conceptual device to organise and present my findings and analysis. In Appendix 2, I break down how each theme and its composite sub-themes correspond to one of the three components.

Chapter 5: Findings

In this chapter, I will draw on the (empirical and non-empirical) data I collected to answer the research questions identified in Chapter 1. These are:

RQ1: How are discourses and practices of inclusion and exclusion distributed across the programme's content, pedagogy, and forms of assessment?

RQ2: How are these discourses and practices understood and experienced by students on the programme?

RQ3: How do they shape students' attitudes towards integration beyond the classroom?

Embedded within the presentation of my findings is also an initial discussion, relating my observations to previous studies on equivalent migrant integration programmes elsewhere. This is followed, in Chapter 6, by a more in-depth analysis, linking my findings specifically to Foucault's "governmentality" and related concepts, and to wider debates in adult education.

Part 1: *Understanding*

> "[The programme] helps me to understand [how] Maltese people live their life, their mood, their everything, like, like I go inside Maltese people and I come back out. Yes, I understand Maltese people, I know how to deal with them, I know how to speak with them. I know when I visit any place, hospital, shop, institution of education"

This quote by a former student (SP1), highlights what many participants I spoke to considered to be the main purpose of the "I Belong" programme: increasing migrants' knowledge and awareness of Maltese society. One of the underlying assumptions of the programme, as stated in its curriculum, is that an "understanding of cultural categories, norms and rituals" will facilitate migrants' integration into Maltese society. While most students reported that knowing the language was an equally, if not more important factor in contributing to their sense of being integrated in Maltese society, knowledge of Maltese culture and history would, as one former student (SP14) explained, "help you understand how the people think".

On the “I Belong” programme, this understanding was not imposed on students through its curriculum or by its educators. In interviews, students pointed out how educators would invite them to contribute their (often extensive) own knowledge of Maltese history and society to classroom discussions. They were also encouraged to share their lived experiences of Maltese culture and society. These did not have to be positive. In fact, as outlined in its curriculum, the programme aims to offer an opportunity for students to “identify lived experiences which confounded them”. In practice, the “confounding” experiences that were shared in class often referred to encounters with Maltese which students had experienced as exclusory or discriminatory. For many participants, the programme offered different ways of “making sense” of such encounters. As one former student recounted,

> “There's some [students], they explain that, because it's obvious that they are not Maltese, they felt, kind of, excluded in some scenarios, so they shared this, and I think there was a good discussion as well about why some locals are more open to foreigners than the others. And how that’s different based on the generation” (SP14).

This generational gap in attitudes was pointed out repeatedly, and sometimes linked to the older generation’s lower proficiency in English. In interacting with elderly Maltese, one student had noticed that “they clearly didn't feel comfortable to speak [English]. And then you might perceive this as being rude but it's not the case, they're just being taken outside their comfort zone” (SP2). The older generations, others explained, still held negative attitudes towards migrants because certain events in Maltese history were within their living memory: “It’s older people that are like this, because they were through everything, through wars, through being here”, one student (SP9) commented. A similar interpretation was offered by one of the educators (TP1), who highlighted how disorienting the unprecedented influx of migrants would be to those Maltese who had experienced the country’s transition to independence first-hand:

> “Yesterday we celebrated the Jum il-Ħelsien, the Freedom Day, and suddenly you have people who are migrants coming to Malta. Like, those people who lived back then are still alive right now. [...] And the generations fought for independence, for freedom, and now migrants are coming to Malta. Those people are still alive, that's what I mean”.

Some students traced the association between the attitudes of the Maltese and anti-immigrant sentiments back even further, evoking the Roman and Arab invasions to explain

their protective mentality, and in particular their animosity towards Muslims. For many, learning about Maltese history on the "I Belong" programme had made these links more apparent:

> "They explain to us a lot about the history and how the historical events affect the Maltese mentality. And the reason why you guys [are] reserved sometime, like getting closer. Or, let's say, always thinking that we're trying to invade, you know? It's like, it's not because you are like that, it's because of your history" (SP13).

While learning about Maltese history on the one hand helped migrants feel like they understood the Maltese and could therefore integrate better, the particular history conveyed on the programme also offered an explanation - if not a justification - for the exclusion they experienced. Certain aspects of Maltese history, such as the Great Siege – discussed to a degree of detail which one student (SP5) described as an "overkill" – or independence after British rule, were emphasized over others, such as the period in which the island's Arab settlers defended it against Byzantine forces (Fiorini and Zammit, 2016), or the pre-independence referendum in which most Maltese voted to remain part of Britain (Smith, 2007). Although educators were given free reign in how they presented Maltese history, there seemed to be a limited awareness of the co-existence of multiple historical narratives: one educator (TP4) explained that she was mostly concerned with "getting the facts straight". However, as students' comments suggest, historical narratives, even when factually accurate, are never neutral, and have implications for how we make sense of the world. In this case, the dominant narrative treated anti-immigrant sentiments among Maltese as historically determined and therefore inevitable: an insurmountable barrier for migrants toward full inclusion in Maltese society. As one former student (SP13) put it, closing our conversation on the topic of racism in Malta: "This is how it is, you know? Malta is like this".

Critics of migrant integration programmes elsewhere highlight the potentially exclusory effects of national historical narratives. For example, as Onasch (2017) demonstrates, by linking national values to France's revolutionary history, French citizenship classes make the boundaries between migrants and non-migrants "brighter", while in the USA, the historical importance of the individual is intended to portray the USA as more egalitarian, but in fact reinforces the idea that migrants bear the responsibility for their own economic and social integration (Griswold, 2010). In both cases, "these constructions of national identity may appear static and actually serve to exclude immigrants rather than facilitate their integration"

(Onasch, 2017, p. 590). Compared to other programmes, the "I Belong" pursues an ostensibly more inclusive approach, by dedicating ample class time to discussions of students' own perceptions of the Maltese identity. Moreover, although the curriculum states that the purpose of the "Understanding" component is to "induce a cognitive appreciation and/or consideration of cultural categories", it also makes clear that an "awareness does not imply or *necessitate adherence to and participation in* mentioned cultural categories" (my emphasis), thus distancing itself from assimilationist demands. Nevertheless, as one former student (SP8) pointed out, awareness and understanding can in themselves instigate assimilation. The programme, he believed, would be particularly helpful for migrants "who cannot integrate, or they don't want to integrate because they just don't understand [Maltese society]. And probably after this course, they can say, 'Yes, I change my behaviour because of that.'" Implicit in this student's comment is the notion that Maltese society, through the programme, is presented in a way that makes it easier for migrants to understand, and therefore accept, even if this includes aspects of Maltese society that reinforce their outsider position.

Part 2: *Sharing*

As discussed above, some students reported that Maltese history, or rather, a particular version of its history, helped them make sense of contemporary Malta. For example, learning about the many instances throughout its history when the Maltese population had been pushed to the brink of survival, helped one student (SP10) better understand the resilience of the Maltese, which often manifested itself as resistance to change. However, this narrative of a conservative, unchanging Malta co-existed with an understanding of Malta becoming "quite progressive". Through the "I Belong" programme, one student (SP7) had learnt how "little by little, [the Maltese] were getting away from Africa, until they get like, the independence, and they become the European part". Integral to this narrative of modernization was Malta's gradual adoption of "liberal" values and rights associated with EU membership. As one student (SP9) commented, Malta was "going towards a country of 21st century. Where every person has their right, doesn't matter the colour, the nationality, sexual orientation". These rights, and the values grounding them, are the focus of the programme's second component, "Sharing," which is introduced in the curriculum as follows:

> "Living in a democratic society entails life that is based on inclusive values and attitudes which instil mutual responsibility for the well-being of all".

The curriculum does not explicitly define these "inclusive values", but lists human rights and their "implications in daily life" as one of the component's main topics. Human rights were discussed at length in two of the lessons I observed, and although their universality was invoked as the basis for migrants' inclusion, the manner in which they were presented did not always sit easily with this discourse of inclusion. In one of the sessions, which focused on children's rights, the educator touched on child marriages as an example of a breach of children's rights, pointing out several countries where the age of consent for marriage is very low. She then specifically addressed a student from one of these countries, asking them to comment on what, to her, was evidently an unacceptable practice. A current student described a similar classroom interaction in which the educator, as part of a discussion on different types of families and relationships, "really had a go at [an Indian student] for having an arranged marriage" (SP4). Thus, although the "Sharing" component is by its very name inclusive, in its implementation, it corroborates the observation made by critics of migrant integration programmes that supposedly "universal values" are often depicted as characteristic of the host society, thus serving to exclude rather than include migrants (Larin, 2020; Yuval-Davis, 2006).

If integration is contingent upon migrants' rejecting the "less progressive" values of their own cultures, migrant integration programmes serve as a space for them to do so publicly (Besley, 2005). As part of the programme's participatory pedagogy, the curriculum requires students to take on an "agentic role". Even more than in the "Understanding" component, the "Sharing" component encourages students (as its name implies) to share, by relating the values and beliefs under discussion to those of their home countries. Many students enjoyed this activity, and were comfortable to speak openly about their cultures and experiences: to one student, it felt like the process of integration was being re-created in the classroom (SP15). However, students' contributions were sometimes also taken up by educators to demonstrate how certain cultures failed to meet the liberal standards of European societies, and to ensure that students from these cultures reject their "illiberal" aspects. One former student (SP12) recalled discussing LGBTQ rights in class:

> "I told them, listen, in my country, if I am gay, I will be stoned to death, you know? It's barbaric. And they make me understand, this is barbaric... so they make me believe those things".

LGBTQ rights featured prominently in the "Sharing" component, and in my conversations with educators and students, Malta's (relatively liberal) stance on this issue was often used as shorthand for the country's overall level of progressiveness. Homophobia was considered by educators as the prime integration deal-breaker, with one educator stating that homophobic students would inevitably fail his class (TP1). When I asked students how the topic was treated and received in class, few reported that it caused any altercations or tensions. However, a (non-Muslim) student from the current cohort sensed that during discussions on LGBTQ rights, educators held "an assumption that the Islamic members would find [the topic] difficult" (SP4). A similar observation was made by a Muslim student (SP15), who recalled instances in class when Islam was equated with practices considered "backward", such as polygamy and circumcision. He noted that educators' attempts to be inclusive by discussing other cultures had the opposite effect for Muslim students, as Islam was often reduced to essentialist stereotypes. The student worried that Muslim students were being alienated, rather than integrated, through these classroom discussions. As has been noted in other studies on integration programmes elsewhere, these serve to reinfornce a distinction between the liberal West and the immigrant "Other", in particular Muslim immigrants, who are considered "deficient in the liberal values deemed necessary for European membership" (Brown, 2016, p.456). Progressive sexual politics are presented as central to these liberal values, and are often invoked to "legitimise Western self-representation as liberal and modern" (Heinemann, 2017, p. 190).

While the "I Belong" programme is to some extent participating in this agenda, closer inspection reveals much less ideological consistency than in its European counterparts. For example, while there was a consensus among educators that LGBTQ rights were a non-negotiable part of the Maltese value system, abortion was treated very differently. In one lesson I observed, the educator made her own pro-life stance very clear, explaining that this was not a matter of religious beliefs, but of "valuing human life". By contrast, another educator referred to the ban on abortion as an example of the rights of a minority being violated - in stark opposition to the pro-life educator, who quoted a study claiming there was no legal ground to consider abortion a woman's right. This example illustrates the point made by de Leeuw and van Wichelen that the values promoted on migrant integration programmes are often "more arbitrary than absolute" (2012, p. 198), not least because they are in constant flux. As one student (SP4) observed, "if this 'I Belong' programme was being run 10 years ago, then we would have to believe that divorce is wrong and we would have to believe that equal rights for

homosexuals are wrong." Other students, whilst acknowledging that Malta was changing rapidly, considered its conservative stance on issues like abortion (and the tendency of some educators to promote these conservative views) problematic, especially in comparison to the more progressive laws in their own countries.

Unlike in the traditionally migrant-receiving European countries, the contrast between the "liberal, progressive, democratic" host nation, and the "backward, repressive, undemocratic" sending country, which integration programmes often capitalize on to create clear boundaries between migrants and non-migrants, is much more difficult to uphold in light of Malta's conservatism and its reluctance to espouse the secularism at the heart of its European neighbours' value systems. Moreover, the relatively non-prescriptive "I Belong" curriculum grants educators a high degree of autonomy in how they present Maltese "values". In practice, this allows educators to voice their own critical stance towards Maltese society (something that all educators highlighted as important in their teaching). It also creates significant discrepancies among teachers (as the abortion example demonstrates), and in some instances results in students being exposed to contradictory value systems through their two educators. Liberal, European values are thus presented as less definitive, and do not embody the same exclusory boundary for migrants living in Malta.

Assessing values

In most migrant integration programmes, this boundary is at its most tangible in the examination migrants are required to pass in order to gain residence or citizenship. While in other countries migrants take a written test, which is often exclusory towards specific groups – recall the "Muslim test" in Germany; or how the digitalized UK test puts certain migrants at a disadvantage (Cooke, 2009) – the "I Belong" assessment appears to be more inclusive and accessible: Besides participating in a 10-minute interview, students are evaluated based on their in-class participation throughout the course. Here, according to the programme's evaluation criteria, students are required to "engage positively with controversial issues and show evidence of critical reflection and thinking", "ask questions when not understanding or agreeing", and "demonstrate wonder, curiosity and interest in all members of the group". Evidently, their contributions in class are expected to reflect very specific attitudes. As one educator (TP2) explained:

> "It is not how much they open their mouths. I mean, after nine months you get to know them. You get to know them well, and you know who has actually integrated,

> who is making a show of himself. Who will never manage to adhere to our laws. You know, 'I am against gay people'. In Malta you cannot be against gay people, for example".

In her lessons, this culminates in an exercise that she described as students' telling their "integration story", which involves the educator sitting in a circle with the students, as each of them shares with the group the challenges and difficulties they faced throughout the process of settling in Malta. The chair circle illustrates particularly well to what extent students are not only observed by educators, but also by each other. That students were watching and appraising each other could also be inferred from comments several students made in interviews. They noted that some of their peers and only joined to "tick the box", or to "finish with it and […] get their documents. […] So, some of them will really, really learn because they like it, some of them will be there just to finish with this, you know?" (SP9).

Another student from the current cohort (SP3) expressed her frustration that, after having waited months to get on the programme, some students nevertheless dropped out. She considered the programme "an opportunity" for migrants who had clear intentions of staying in Malta, and were ready to invest time and effort:

> "You know, [students] have to be serious about this course. And also, when they join, and they got the opportunity, and they know the rules, like how many marks we are getting for the punctuality, and participation - they just have to follow this! Coming on time and turn on their device, it's necessary".

That many students did in fact take the programme's requirements very seriously became evident during the excursion that I observed. Although the educator stressed that the activity (a treasure hunt) was "just for fun" and that students' performance would have no impact on their passing the course, students were highly engaged: one of the participants in the group I joined had looked up all the places they were expected to visit in advance; another had even come to Valletta the previous day to chart her group's route. Needless to say, not all students I observed or interviewed approached the programme with the same zeal, or considered its demands on participants appropriate. Indeed, the majority agreed that the course was too long, and that it would be much more beneficial to newly arrived migrants. However, most did not disagree with the idea of the "I Belong" programme, or with LTR being contingent on completing a course or passing a test, and understood the rationale behind it. As one student (SP10) explained:

> "If I'm going to accept someone on this island, to change his job as he wishes, to live where he wants, to end up homeless, jobless, at the end of the day. [...] I'll say, please do something that he can understand and accept our ways, and try to play by them. Maybe like this we're going to avoid getting ourselves the social security cases".

Implicit in his comment is the view that migrants have a responsibility to be economically self-sufficient, and should be able to demonstrate that once they are granted LTR, they will not put Maltese society under any financial strain. It also underpins the other requirements TCNs are required to fulfil before they can apply for LTR, such as proof of five years of employment, and is made even more explicit in the EU directive on TCNs. According to Article 7 (Directive 2003/109/EC):

> "Third-country nationals [applying for LTR] should prove that they have adequate resources and sickness insurance, to avoid becoming a burden for the Member State."

Thus, the greater socioeconomic rights, including increased freedom of movement and employment, associated with LTR, are only extended to those who are financially solvent and self-responsible, and therefore do not pose a "risk" to the host society. This corroborates Erel's observation that "the ability to be economically self-reliant in a world that is presented as globally competitive [...] is increasingly becoming a measure of moral worth articulating citizenship" (2011, p.705) - or in this case, LTR. Accordingly, the "primary task" of migrant integration programmes, Joppke (2007) notes, is to assess whether migrants present an economic risk to the host society, and as much as possible, "to make migrants independent of the state" before they are granted more permanent rights. The following section will explore in more detail how the "I Belong" programme takes on this task.

Part 3: *Living*

Although embedded in this EU-wide policy of exclusion (or rather, conditional inclusion), the programme does not unequivocally embrace its goal of minimizing the risk of migrants burdening the host society (and by extension, the EU). In fact, one of the programme's main objectives, and the focus of the third component, "Living", is to ensure that students access the rights and services they are entitled to, and know which institutions, government

agencies or NGOs to approach for help – an aspect of the programme often highlighted by students as particularly helpful. However, it is worth noting that there was little to no mention, either in the lessons I observed or in interviews with students or educators, of ways in which students could themselves become active in such organisations, or in civil society more broadly. As one student (SP5) pointed out, this constituted a missed opportunity to enable a type of civic participation that is accessible to LTR permit holders (whose political rights are otherwise very limited). Although by facilitating their access to services, the programme makes a tangible contribution to migrants' inclusion in Maltese society, its treatment of students nonetheless reflects a "deficit mentality" (Goldberg, 2007) towards migrants; considering them primarily in terms of the assistance and support they need, rather than – in the spirit of true inclusion – an asset to society and an agent for change (Guo, 2015).

Instead, the "Living" component places an emphasis on self-care, including mental and sexual health: In one of the lessons I observed, for example, the educator shared a self-assessment form and a self-help manual on dealing with stress. One student found that the ethos of self-development, that the "I Belong" programme promoted had given him new confidence. It had helped him realize that "you can tackle your own problem yourself, by taking care of yourself, and by believing that you can do it" (SP12). To illustrate how his mindset had changed since the "I Belong" programme, he told me about a recent encounter at a supermarket, where he had asked a fellow shopper if she was standing in line to pay. He was told that, yes, she was, and that "you should allow me to be in the queue because I am from Malta". He explained how prior to attending the programme, he would have spoken back in such a situation, but that now, he simply moved to a different queue and avoided any confrontation. The programme had made him "calmer" and more accepting of people with "different views".

This student's experience, and his response to it, are perhaps better understood by considering the wider discourse surrounding racism on the "I Belong" programme. As mentioned earlier, students were encouraged to share incidents of racism or xenophobia in class. However, an educator (TP2) observed that the topic often prompted students to come to Malta's defence: "Immediately, there are interventions from other participants, who share positive experiences with Maltese". For her, the programme fulfilled a dual role: On the one hand, offering students the space to "vent" their frustrations, but also providing "a golden opportunity for those who have had negative experiences in the Maltese community as a host community, to hear [something] positive". The student who had been verbally abused in the

supermarket found that listening to his peers recount their positive encounters had helped him recall his own positive experiences, rather than dwelling on the negative ones:

> "The bad eggs overshadow the good people around. So, with the courses I get to understand and remember the good things I receive from people."

Here, as well as in the previous comment by the educator, the underlying assumption is that instances of racism and xenophobia in Malta are individual aberrations from an overall tolerant and accepting society. When I raised the topic in interviews, participants were quick to note that their encounters with "most Maltese" were unproblematic, and stressed the exceptionality of hostile attitudes. In an interesting reversal, one educator I interviewed (TP3) argued that anti-immigrant sentiments were a wider societal problem, but that this was to some extent offset by the actions of more tolerant individuals:

> "So maybe as a larger community, the Maltese don't seem to be accepting foreigners in certain aspects. However, on an individual level, many of us do."

Although acknowledging its pervasiveness, her interpretation of racism in Malta similarly reduces it to a matter of "individual psychological dispositions" (Bonilla-Silva, 2013), rather than recognizing it as institutionally sanctioned and reinforced (Wight, 2003; Flynn, 2015) and therefore necessitating broader systemic change.

Just as racist behaviour is considered the responsibility of the individual, the individual migrant's response to it can also make a difference. This was illustrated in a current student's recounting of his experiences at Identity Malta, the government agency often invoked by participants for their inefficiency in dealing with requests or processing applications, as well as for their staff's overt hostility towards migrants. The student (SP7) stressed how important one's individual attitude was in such a situation:

> "I always went there and I never got something bad. But I always say, is the way that you're going to communicate to the people. If you go with a good behave, for example, I go to you and I say, 'Listen, I have this', but I'm very polite, and the other person answer to me in a rude way, I am still going to keep polite. If the person wants to be rude, can be more rude, but I'm gonna still keep polite and then the other ones [are] going to say, 'Okay, look at the difference!'"

His narrative echoes that of the previous student (SP12) in highlighting the importance of migrants' own behaviour when dealing with racism or xenophobia. While I would not go so

far as Heinemann (2017) to conclude that students have "internalised the idea that verbal abuses and racism are *a result* of their individual behaviour" (p. 191, my emphasis), there was a tendency among participants to consider it their individual responsibility to mitigate hostility by adopting a non-confrontational, even appeasing manner. As discussed in the previous section, the economic responsibilisation of migrants is an important aspect of the wider EU integration policy and a prerequisite for their being granted more permanent status in EU member states. As the foregoing discussion suggest, the significance of individual responsibility also permeates the programme's discourse on racism and xenophobia, not only in how these topics are discussed in class, but also how they are made sense of by students beyond the classroom.

The importance of individual attitudes

Migrants' individual responsibility was often invoked when I asked students (mostly toward the end of the interview) about their sense of "belonging" to Malta, and how their participation in the programme affected it. For most participants, the extent to which the programme helped them feel part of Maltese society was limited. Learning about Maltese history, culture or values was helpful, but far more important, several argued, were one's individual attitude and mindset. As a former student (SP14) explained to me:

> "I think it's not only the knowledge but it's the intention as well. Because you can have all the knowledge in the world, but then you decide not to be part of the society. [...] For me, what is more important than the knowledge is the way you live your life".

She went on to contrast the different "intentions" migrants have in Malta, distinguishing between those who are seriously committed to integrating, and more temporary migrants.

> "So you either think of yourself as, 'I'm living here, I'm living as part of the society'. [..] And other people can have the mindset of, 'Yeah, I'm an expat here, I'm living here for a couple of years. I don't care about how the local would live. I live in my own way'. So it's more of an intention, a mindset. An attitude if you want"

A similar distinction was made by a current student (SP2). She contrasted the long-term nature of her plans with those of others:

> "Somebody who comes here for two years, maybe he cannot... doesn't matter if he does the programme or not, he will not belong if he's looking towards his future".

According to these students, the well-integrated immigrant contrasts with the more itinerant immigrant – or, to use a more field-specific term, the "transnational migrant" – who is not rooted in one particular place, but connected to people and places across national borders (Glick Schiller et al., 1995). Even if external factors had led them to settling in Malta (some students I spoke to came from countries ravaged by civil wars, dictatorships, or decades of economic instability), participants highlighted that they had come to Malta of their own volition, and that the degree to which they felt integrated was largely based on their personal attitudes and lifestyle. As the student quoted above (SP2) went on to explain:

> "Personally, when I decided to move here, I already kind of decided that I belong. I have to make myself belong and work towards that".

Just like migrants have a responsibility to be economically independent, participate in class, and deal with racism in a certain way, so too, "making oneself belong" lies within the power, and is therefore the responsibility, of the individual. That integrating was to some extent a "self-fulfilling prophecy", contingent upon a pre-existing willingness to doing so, was also evident in the comments made by another current student (SP10). He contrasted his own experience (having decided to settle in Malta over six years ago), with that of other migrants he knew who, based on an initial bad experience, wrote Malta off entirely.

> "With that attitude, you change a couple of jobs, and then you go back. Actually you're fulfilling what is the real need of the Maltese economy: Come, do the job, go back to your country".

However, not all student participants seemed to share the belief that integrating required a deep, unwavering commitment to Malta. Indeed, some participants spoke openly about their intentions to leave the island within the foreseeable future. While, at first glance, they may seem to be demonstrating the kind of "cool connections" that Robins and Aksoy (2015) attribute to transnational migrants, they, too, felt that they had, to quote a current student (SP5) "integrated in their own way". Although the individual nature of this process was highlighted, for him, as for many others, "belonging" meant being part of a social network, e.g. a friendship group or a migrant community. Familial ties were given particular importance when students discussed their "belongingness". By deciding to raise their children in Malta, they were not only committing to staying for the foreseeable future and therefore had a real stake in the future of the nation, but were also integrating vicariously through their children's experiences. This seems to corroborate the argument made by relational sociologists, that social interactions and

the networks they establish are most conducive to individuals' integration. These form the "imagined communities" which are, as Carroll and colleagues (2008) point out, central to migrants' identity construction.

Although they may be extraneous to the research questions, these observations illustrate that the programme's role in including or excluding migrants is overshadowed by their individual attitudes towards living in Malta, and the imagined communities they constructed in relation to the island. This is not to downplay the importance of the programme as part of migrants' often arduous journey towards LTR. Many of the students I interviewed shared their experiences of long delays in the application process, of submitting and resubmitting forms and documents, and in one case even participating in cultural orientation courses more than once because their certificate had expired. All of this prevented them from accessing the benefits of LTR, such as changing jobs or reuniting with their families, all of which leaves little doubt about the underlying exclusory purposes of the wider bureaucratic structures in which the "I Belong" programme is embedded.

The findings presented in this chapter suggest, however, that labelling the programme as unequivocally exclusory would over-simplify matters: in some instances, the programme actively resists the wider exclusory policy it is embedded in, while in others, seemingly inclusive discourses and practices prove, upon closer scrutiny, to be reinforcing boundaries, or making inclusion conditional on specific attitudes and behaviour. Moreover, students play an active role in shaping and reproducing these discourses and practices, and often frame them as conducive to their integration, even empowerment. Turner (2014), referring to integration programmes in the UK, applies the term "inclusive-exclusion" to describe how programmes "'exclude' and restrict", but adds that they do so "through the power to 'include'" (p.340). Turner links this to Foucault's notion of governmentality, whereby subjects are governed by being empowered to govern themselves. Following Turner's example, I will, in the next chapter, apply a Foucauldian lens to my findings, which I believe will help us grapple with the discourses and practices of inclusion and exclusion that the programme, its educators and students engage in. For this purpose, I will, in turn, revisit the three sections, "Understanding", "Sharing", and "Living".

Chapter 6: Discussion

Understanding: Reproducing regimes of truth

The programme's "Understanding" component provides students with an overview of Maltese history and covers key aspects of Maltese culture and society. The underlying assumption is that the knowledge conveyed to migrants will help them better navigate Maltese society and facilitate their everyday interactions with Maltese. From interviews with students, it could be inferred that the programme achieved this goal: many students reported that understanding Maltese history had in fact made it easier for them to adapt to Maltese society. When I prompted them to elaborate on this, one particular historical narrative emerged as dominant: that of Malta as an "island under siege". As can be inferred from my findings, this narrative significantly shaped students' personal interpretation of Malta's history, and provided a lens through which they could make sense of certain experiences and encounters with the local population – especially those more hostile in nature. That there exists a causal link between this particular aspect of Malta's history and a certain "typical" Maltese behaviour was not only institutionally sanctioned through the programme's educators, but also reinforced by students' lived experiences.

This link, by being "socially inscribed and reinscribed upon individual consciousness" (Carroll et al., 2008, p. 167) both inside and outside the classroom came to be taken for granted and formed part of the "regimes of truth" that held sway over the "I Belong" programme. In this case, the truth that is perpetuated through this particular historical narrative has exclusory implications for migrants, who are linked, at least symbolically, to the invaders of the past. However, if regimes of truth are repressive, they equally have the potential to be productive: having this understanding of Maltese history, however much it limited their possibilities for integration, was described as empowering by some students. By interpreting acts of hostility from the part of Maltese not as personal affronts, but rather as a Maltese idiosyncrasy, some students, it seems, could navigate Maltese society with more ease and confidence, and felt that, even if it was beyond their power to change it, they could in this way at least make more sense of it. As Popkewitz and Brennan (1998) note, knowledge, as understood by Foucault, is primarily a "social practice that generates action and participation" (1998, p. 5). The knowledge conveyed through historical narratives is no exception, and the attitudes and behaviours it

engendered among students shaped how they navigated Maltese society beyond the "I Belong" classroom.

Sharing: Creating self-governing subjectivities

That such narratives, and the "regimes of truth" they are embedded in, are reproduced through social practice, and are therefore constantly being reshaped and contested, often co-existing with other narratives, explains, in part, another dominant narrative within the programme: that of Malta as a "21st century nation" within the European Union. A prominent theme across the literature on migrant integration programmes (see Chapter 2), the image of the democratic, progressive, migrant-receiving nation state is part of the *raison d'être* of such programmes: it serves as a foil for migrants' less progressive countries of origin against which learners are measured and either included or excluded. Drawing on Foucault, Heinemann (2017), frames this as a process of normalization, a term which not only highlights the coercive means through which the host society imposes its norms, but also the degree to which migrants internalize them. This is a crucial aspect of governmentality, through which disciplinary power is "aligned with the self-organizing capacities of individual subjects" (Olssen, 2006, p.35), which, in the case of the "I Belong" programme, is achieved through its participatory and student-centred pedagogy. Instead of simply quizzing students on historical facts or making them memorize the constitution, the programme places the learning experience in students' own hands, encouraging them to contribute to classroom discussions, to share their experiences of living in Malta, and to draw comparisons with their own countries.

However, these comparisons often serve to highlight the discrepancy between the norms and practices of students' home countries or cultures, and those they should accept and adhere to as residents in Malta. As the example of the student, whose country's homophobic practices were deemed "barbaric", shows, students are expected to admit to the wrongful practices and attitudes of their own countries, or, to use a term favoured by Foucault, to "confess" them. Anti-LGBTQ attitudes and legislation were targeted as particularly problematic, as were under-age or arranged marriages. However, the programme also offered students the opportunity for "redemption", by distancing themselves from these practices, and stressing their contrasting personal beliefs. The "I Belong" programme thus seems to disprove Goodman's claim that "the state can mandate knowledge and the profession of loyalty, but *not* morality or belief" (2014, p. 33, my emphasis), and instead corroborates Löwenheim and

Gazit's argument that through migrant integration programmes, "the immigrant is directly pressured by the state to confess deep values and ideologies" (2009, p. 156).

In the context of the "I Belong" programme, this serves several purposes: for one, by bringing to light the "backwardness" of certain cultures, the programme is legitimized in its attempts to educate migrants from these cultures. Moreover, by "probing the inner world" of migrants (Löwenheim & Gazit, 2009) – or as one educator put it, "really getting to know them" – integration programmes contribute to the surveillance of a potentially threatening population, thus fulfilling their role as an extension of the EU border regime. However, the act of confessing is in itself significant: it is through confession "that people are constituted as 'active' subjects yet at the same time are enfolded in power as they become subject to confessional discourses and therefore sites for intervention" (Usher et al., 1997; p. 84). This apparent paradox, of being active subjects constituted by power, lies at the heart of Foucault's notion of governmentality. It is also central to Turner's understanding of migrant integration programmes as enacting a "self-regulating" inclusive-exclusion. Participatory, learner-centred pedagogy, as employed by the "I Belong", plays a crucial part in ensuring that "rather than feeling regulated", migrants feel they have "found an empowering 'truth' because [they] have the power to talk about [their] subjectivity" (Usher et al., 1997; p. 85). As a result, they "conceive of [themselves] as active and adaptable", and, I would add, accept their responsibility to adapt.

Living: Possibilities for resistance?

As outlined in the previous chapter, the notion of individual responsibilisation shapes discourses and practices within the "I Belong" programme, but also impacts how students navigate wider Maltese society, and how they construct their sense of "belonging" in Malta. In this, the programme reflects a broader shift in adult education "from state responsibility under the old, Keynesian, welfare state to a responsibilisation of teachers, students and associated forms of discourse, accountability, and assessment regimes" (Peters, 2017, p. 169). In migrant integration policy, too, migrants' responsibilities are increasingly emphasised over their rights (Joppke, 2007) and the successful migrant is envisioned as adaptable and economically autonomous. Given how pervasive discourses of responsibilisation and self-government have become, one would not expect migrant integration programmes to offer themselves as potential

sites of resistance. The "I Belong" programme, to some degree, counters this expectation, by prioritising migrants' rights, and by addressing the practical challenges that stymie their implementation. However, its tendency to encourage migrants to accept, rather than question those aspects of Maltese society which, viewed through the lens of the dominant historical narrative, seem immutable, mean that the programme can only ever be considered empowering, not emancipating, and precludes genuine acts of resistance. For Löwenheim and Gazit (2009), resistance can only emerge from outside, and in reaction to migrant integration programmes. They imagine the "construction of a new brand of citizens with no deep commitment to the state, a state that appears to them – through the experience of taking the [integration] test – as a coercive, not very rational, actor, generally detached from the cultural and material realities migrants face" (p. 161). Their proposal, although it captures how integration programmes can alienate migrants, is not without its limitations: first, in the Maltese context, the "new brand of citizens" they envision are not citizens at all, but long-term residents with limited rights, whose relation to the state is precarious, and for whom "not committing" to it therefore comes at a certain cost. Pisani (2012), writing on the Maltese context, points out that many scholars, especially within the critical tradition, falsely "assume citizenship" when discussing migrants and their possibilities for political agency.

Moreover, it is worth questioning whether this "new brand of citizenship", suggested by Löwenheim and Gazit (2009), would appeal to migrants. As the foregoing chapters indicate, the "coercive" demands of integration programmes may not be in such misalignment with some migrants' own understanding of integration as a personal, long-term commitment to the place which they have decided to consider home. In fact, several students saw the programme as necessary, if not for their own, then for the integration of other migrants. In highlighting the importance of their individual experiences of settling, integrating and "belonging", students were, on the one hand, countering the dominant regime of truth whereby migrants in Malta are only tolerated as "transients and sojourners" (Falzon, 2012, p. 1661) and constructed alternative imagined communities to that of the nation state, for example through their families, friends or migrant community. This could be understood as what Foucault termed "ethical self-formation", and an example of migrants resisting the existing power relations. However, although they may, to some extent, be engaging in the "constitution of novel sorts of subjectivity, forms of agency" (Thompson, 2003, p. 123), students are also reinscribing the discourse of responsibilisation – having the "right attitude". The subjectivity and imagined communities they are producing are thus also *re*producing the regimes of truth which

distinguish between different "types" of migrants: the permanent vs the temporary, the responsible vs the irresponsible, the committed vs the uncommitted – and leave little doubt as to which of these subjectivities is the more desirable. As Lilja and Vinthagen note, "[t]he question then becomes how it becomes possible to see what is what, if a certain 'technology of self' is creating power and/or resistance" (2014, p. 117).

This question, although it astutely pinpoints what makes disciplinary power so pervasive, risks taking us away from what Pisani (2012) would surely consider the more pressing concern: Even if migrants do deploy technologies of self for the purposes of resistant self-constitution, rather than normalizing self-regulation, the constraints that their legal status imposes on them remain. For as much as students see themselves in control of their own integration (and as much as this idea may be encouraged in the "I Belong" classroom), legal recognition for it (in the form of LTR) is only granted on the whim of Identity Malta, and even then, migrants do not obtain full rights. This serves as a reminder that disciplinary power does not operate in isolation, but alongside sovereign power. As Foucault makes clear: "the powers of modern society are exercised through, on the basis of, and by virtue of, this very heterogeneity between a public right of sovereignty and a polymorphous disciplinary mechanism" (1986, p. 240). It is sovereign power, acting in the legal and political sphere, which decides over the status of migrants. Indeed, as Agamben (1993) argues, it is in this act of excluding certain migrants, or rather, including them through their exclusion, that sovereign power constitutes and sustains the political order. However, for sovereign power to be resisted, it must be "publicly challenged in a sustained way by key sectors/groups in society of which the de facto sovereignty depend" (Lilja and Vinthagen, 2014, p. 114); in other words, any form of resistance that is not initiated by those who are uncontestably inside the political order (read, citizens) is unlikely to succeed.

By outlining the processes of inclusion/exclusion that are at play in the "I Belong" programme, the current study suggests that the distinction between inclusion and exclusion is less clear-cut than the binary opposition would make us believe. In fact, the emergence of the Long-Term Resident, as situated somewhere between the citizen, rightful member of the political order, and the refugee, the "bare life" that is included purely through its exclusion, implies that - to recast Sara Ahmed's (2001) phrase - there are substantive differences between ways of belonging, and that the mechanisms of sovereign and disciplinary power complement and contradict each other in producing these differences.

Chapter 7: Towards Conclusions

Summary

In the previous chapters, I explored how the double move of inclusion/exclusion can be observed in each of the programme's three components, "Understanding", "Sharing" and "Living". Each component has as its explicit goal the inclusion of the migrant students in wider society, which is to be achieved, respectively, through a greater understanding of Maltese history and culture, the sharing of universal, inclusive values, and the ability to autonomously navigate Maltese institutions and services. However, each component simultaneously excludes migrants, by presenting national history and values in a way that reifies the ideological and cultural boundaries between migrants and non-migrants and leaves hostility towards migrants uncontested, and by making migrants' inclusion contingent on demonstrating their commitment to integration. By accepting, and adapting to these narratives, values and attitudes, migrants are expected to develop a certain subjectivity, that of the responsible and dedicated individual, who makes himself/herself known through active participation in the programme and in Maltese society more generally, but also takes responsibility for their own integration.

Foucault's notion of governmentality helps us better understand how this subjectivity is fostered. Importantly, we do not observe a unilateral process of top-down subjectification through the programme. In fact, in some instances, the "I Belong" cultivates an alternative subjectivity, by making migrants aware of their rights, and encouraging them to take advantage of governmental and non-governmental services. However, the programme remains embedded in the wider discourses and practices surrounding adult education and migrant integration, which stress the responsibilisation of the individual and aim to minimise the risk TCNs are imagined to pose to the EU and its member states. This is further reflected in the programme's pedagogical practices, which deploy the confessional mode and ascribe an "agentic role" to students. Interestingly, these discourses and practices are also reproduced by migrants, and applied beyond the classroom to their broader experiences of integration, corroborating Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power as both constituting and confining the subject. However, as I argue in the foregoing chapters, a singular focus on the mechanisms of disciplinary power (including their potential for resistance) offers an incomplete picture of migrants' experiences of the "I Belong" programme, and integration more generally. They are just as much, if not more significantly, shaped by the workings of sovereign power, which

determine migrants' status and therefore are more repressive and exclusory than the technologies of self in which migrants engage through and beyond the programme.

Limitations and shortcomings

The relevance of Foucault's work to our understanding of migrant integration programmes becomes even more apparent when we come to understand the interdependence of sovereign power and racism. According to Foucault, racism is not only deployed, but was indeed "invented" by early modern societies to "preserve the sovereignty of the state, a sovereignty whose luster and vigor were no longer guaranteed by magico-juridical rituals, but by medico-normalizing techniques" (2003, p. 81). One of the major shortcomings of the current study is that it does not address the centrality of racism in the mechanisms of sovereign power as embodied in Maltese and European integration and immigration policy. Nor does it consider (beyond some obvious links I pointed out between racism, national narratives and the wider discourse of responsibilisation) how this has been translated into disciplinary power through migrant integration programmes. Foucault's later concept of "bio-power" (see Zembylas, 2010 for links to migration), which is particularly relevant to Agamben's reworking of sovereign power and how it "includes through exclusion", was also omitted.

Accommodating this level of theoretical rigour proved challenging in an empirical study that, due to a rather loosely conceived research design, was only just contained within the spatial limitations of this dissertation. Several methodological misjudgements on my part are worth noting: In hindsight, I would caution any Master's student to think twice before conducting a multi-method study: each additional data source introduces more complications, and the process of triangulation is not for the faint-hearted! Similarly, the number of interviews (especially if in-depth) should be kept to a minimum. Ironically, my aim to "capture the diversity" of the "I Belong" student population, and the sheer amount of data I subsequently collected, required me to be extremely reductive in my analysis, leading to the presentation of a homogenized student experience that, for the sake of coherence, glosses over the depth and nuance which a closer engagement with individuals' processes of meaning making would undoubtedly have revealed. My goal to address the lack of student/migrant voices in previous studies thus largely failed, and instead of doing them justice as "real biographical entities", I fear that the study has reduced them to "descriptive fragments illustrating constructs of sociological discourse" (Nespor, 2000, p. 552). Whilst I have tried to avoid making

generalizing claims, even portraying student interviewees as *illustrative* of the "I Belong" cohort is problematic, given how my methods of data collection privileged those students who are digitally literate, confident in expressing themselves in English, and available to engage with the "I Belong" programme beyond the hundreds of hours they already devoted to it.

Suggestions for future studies

One way for future studies to overcome these limitations could be to shift their methodological focus away from interviews, and towards more direct engagement with the programme. What I am suggesting is not so much a traditional ethnography with the researcher as a detached observer, but rather, something closer to participatory action research (McTaggart, 1997; Brydon-Miller and Maguire, 2008), wherein students may reflect in class on themes that have emerged in the current study, including responsibilisation, historical narratives and values, racism, and the meanings of belonging. Beyond including those students who would have otherwise not participated in such a study, this would have the added benefit of granting insight into how discourses around these themes are constructed collectively in the classroom. Followed-up with in-depth interviews with individual students, this may provide opportunities for research of a more narrative or biographical bent, leading to an exploration of students' material conditions and struggles, in which their experiences of the "I Belong" programme and integration could be more concretely situated. This may shed light on how the programme fits in with the wider processes of integration that migrants in Malta undergo, and to what extent these are affected by factors relating to class, race, gender, education and language.

In bringing together an exceptional variety of people (among the students I interviewed was a tech executive from Northern Europe as well as a former construction worker from Sub-Saharan Africa), the programme offers a unique but challenging research environment and raises questions about the validity of the conventional methodologies and theoretical concepts used in "migration studies". Resisted by many of my participants, the term "migrant" itself is "reflective of and operative in racialised power relations" (Kunz, 2020, p. 2145), and cannot be taken at face value, but should instead be discussed in relation to other terms we use to categorize allochthonous populations, such as "expats", "immigrants", "refugees" or (a surprisingly popular term participants used to refer to themselves) "foreigners" – to which, in the European context, we now must add "Third-Country National" and "Long-term Resident".

These new terms, I believe, produce meaning and difference beyond their legal status and bureaucratic implications, and seriously challenge the dichotomy Agamben (1993) draws between citizens/political life and refugees/bare life, and the processes of inclusion/exclusion that tie them to the construction of the political order.

This is not the only dichotomy that should be questioned. Critics argue that integration programmes revive imperialist or neo-colonial projects (Heinemann, 2017; Onasch, 2017), enacting what Lentin (2008) calls a "transposition of colonial arrangements into post-colonial immigration regimes in Europe" (p. 501). The case of Malta, until recently a migrant-sending colonial outpost, which has through its accession to the EU joined the ranks of former colonizers, makes us reconsider this hypothesis. Evidently, theories and interpretations which have emerged from the study of integration programmes in traditionally migrant-sending countries need to be carefully reconsidered to accommodate the new realities of smaller, peripheral countries (especially in Southern Europe) implementing citizenship tests and integration programmes.

Tentative recommendations for implementing the programme

Without wishing to evade my responsibility as a researcher to offer advice on the implementation of the programme, I believe at least some of the studies suggested above should be conducted before meaningful recommendations can be made. Even then, any researcher – especially if advocating for humanist or critical adult education – would face the challenge of reconciling their advice with the programme's embeddedness in Maltese and European integration policy: the very involuntary nature of the programme makes it incompatible with the tenets of transformative adult education (Hentges, 2013). Navigating this contradiction is, however, part of the work of any researcher or practitioner in education (Giroux, 1981), and recognising the nuances and possibilities for change that exist even within seemingly repressive systems is one of Foucault's most important contributions to our field. In the current study, his theoretical framework brought to light the existing forms of resistance present within the programme, for example, its defiance of the dominant responsibilisation discourse, or students' reappropriation of said discourse as part of their "ethical self-formation". However, he also draws our attention to the limitations of resistance to disciplinary power, and the degree to which it is always also complicit in the reproduction of regimes of truth.

This is an important consideration for educators, too: as discussed in Chapter 3, attempts to resist dominant, oppressive discourses, and empower students, risk producing the opposite effect. To counteract this, I believe the introduction of a more structured, methodical curriculum is necessary. This need not be prescriptive in content: as discussed earlier, "I Belong" educators' freedom to incorporate their own views and interpretations rendered notions of Maltese values and history more polysemous and therefore less exclusory. However, without more direct guidance, these interpretations are likely to coalesce around dominant regimes of truth. The effect is what Mojab and Carter (2011) call "learning by dispossession", a process which serves to "abstract learners from material conditions in order to promote a particular vision of liberal democracy that legitimates the very material conditions learners struggle to overcome" (p. 549). To avoid this, educators could draw on Foucault's (1981) "genealogical" approach when discussing dominant historical narratives and cultural categories in the programme's "Understanding" and "Sharing" components, by emphasising discontinuities over continuities, contingencies over simple cause-effect relationships (Mills, 2003) and heterogeneity over an essentialised national identity.

Just as there is no "true essence" or identity to a nation state, there is no "true self" to any individual. In a reimagined "Living" component, students and educators would therefore "engage in more active problematization of their own situatedness in power and their own responsibility for their power effects" (Mayo, 2000, p. 116). Given the diversity of the "I Belong" student population, this would be a challenging task, replete with ambiguities and inevitably political in nature. Educators would need to be sensitive to what Morrice (2013) calls the "darker side of transformative learning", viz., how varying degrees of hostility and racism in migrants' daily lives affect their subjectivities, and result in migrants unlearning their identity. The processes of "relearning", or "ethical self-formation" (to use a Foucauldian term) could be potentially emancipatory, but also risk reinscribing the existing regimes of truth, if they are not grounded in a critical analysis of the contingent nature of migrants', as well as their Maltese neighbours', material conditions. However, educators should also be mindful of the potentially alienating impact these critical practices may have on students, for example, due to their fear of jeopardizing their LTR application. One theme that I did not have the opportunity to discuss in this paper, but that would merit further exploration, was a reluctance among many students to engage in classroom discussions on politics, sexuality or religion.

All of this underscores the responsibility of those who are, in Agamben's terms, fully included in political life, to resist the *sovereign* power which makes the programme obligatory

in the first place, adding it to an already long list of requirements for TCNs applying for LTR, which serve no other purpose than to limit migrants' access to employment rights and services. While it is difficult to imagine citizens mobilising to radically change these regulations, raising awareness about the stringency of the requirements and the application procedure may result in an amendment of the current rules, such as reducing the length of the programme, delivering it in a more flexible manner to accommodate students' varied schedules, and requiring applicants' employers to give them paid time off to attend the programme. While this could hardly be considered a revolutionary practice, it would be a small step towards making borders more porous, and render the processes of exclusion, which the "I Belong" programme forms part of, slightly more inclusive.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Demographic information of student participants

Nationality	Gender	Former/Current	Years lived in Malta
South Sudan	Male	Former	15
Russia	Female	Current	10
India	Female	Current	8
United Kingdom	Male	Current	19
Venezuela	Male	Current	6.5
Algeria	Male	Current	n/a
Costa Rica	Male	Current	4.5
Russia	Male	Former	10
Serbia	Female	Current	6

Serbia	Male	Current	6
Libya	Female	Former	12
Nigeria	Male	Former	12
Philippines	Female	Former	n/a
Syria	Female	Former	7
Tunisia	Male	Former	6

Appendix 2: Themes and Examples of codes

Grouped into the three "sections" that reflect the "I Belong" programme structure. The list of codes is not exhaustive.

Section	*Themes*	*Examples of codes*
"Understanding"	Understanding the present through the past	Learning about and discussing Maltese history in class
		The changing nature of Maltese society
	Making sense of racism and xenophobia in Malta	Explaining racism and xenophobia through Malta's history
		Generational differences among Maltese
		Migrants' responsibility to understand/accept racism and xenophobia
"Sharing"	Learning about Maltese (European) values	Importance of human rights
		Comparing values to those of other countries
		Sexual politics (LGBTQ rights and abortion)
	Assessing values	Evaluating students' behaviours and attitudes
		Students evaluating themselves and each other
"Living"	Responsibilities and rights	Helping students access their rights (including government services)
		Students taking responsibility for their own well-being

		Students' responsibility when dealing with racism and xenophobia
	The importance of individual attitudes	Understanding "belonging" as an individual responsibility/act
		Students comparing themselves to other migrants
		Other factors contributing to students' sense of inclusion

Appendix 3: Information letters and consent form

Information letter for current students

Dear "I Belong" student,

This letter is an invitation to participate in my study, titled "Learning to Belong: How inclusion, transformation and empowerment are envisioned and enacted in a Maltese migrant integration programme". I am conducting it as part of the dissertation for my Master's in Adult Education for Social Change, offered jointly by the University of Glasgow (UK), the University of Malta and Tallinn University (Estonia). The study will be conducted under the supervision of Dr Colin Calleja (University of Malta) and Dr Meril Ümarik (Tallinn University) I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement will entail if you decide to take part.

The focus of the study is the "I Belong" programme, specifically how it envisions and enacts students' transformation, inclusion and empowerment in Malta, and how it contributes to students' sense of belonging both inside and outside of the classroom. Since the "I Belong" programme only began recently and is constantly evolving (not least due to the impact of Covid-19), learning more about students' experience of the programme is essential for the programme's educators and coordinators. This study will help the "I Belong" team understand their students better, and based on this knowledge they can continue to develop and improve the programme. More generally the study will contribute to our broader understanding of migrants and migrant learners in Malta, a part of Maltese society which has not been studied extensively yet. Any data collected from this research will be used solely for purposes of this study.

Participation in this study is voluntary and the only conditions for participation are that you currently are a student on the "I Belong" programme or have been in the past and that you are proficient in English or Maltese. The study will consist of two parts:

1) An individual (one-to-one) interview of approximately one hour in length which will be held online via Zoom or Skype. In addition, a second follow-up interview of approximately 30 to 45 minutes may be requested. You will be asked about your experiences of the programme, how it has changed your perceptions of Maltese society, culture and people, and how it relates to your everyday life in Malta outside of the classroom. I will also ask you about your expectations towards the programme before

joining, how these expectations have been met, and what you anticipate from the programme looking forward.
You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time (including during the interview) without any negative consequences. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the interview has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish.

2) Observations of "I Belong" online classes and/or excursions: I will be observing up to two of your online "I Belong" classes (and, Covid-19 restrictions permitting, up to two excursions) in oder to observe how the "I Belong" curriculum is put into practice, how Maltese society, migration and migrant integration are represented and discussed in class, and how students and educators interact with each other. Field notes in an anonymous format will be taken during the session observations.

All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study, however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be securely stored until the official grade of the dissertation is published, at which point all data (including recordings and transcripts) will be destroyed. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study. As a participant, you have the right under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Malta Data Protection Act 2018 to access, rectify, and where applicable erase the data concerning you. If you choose to participate, please note that there are no direct benefits to you.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the University of Malta Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee. Questions regarding this process can be addressed to research-ethics.educ@um.edu.mt. For all other questions, or if you would like to have any of the above information translated into another language, please contact me on 79206139 or at kirstin.sonne.19@um.edu.mt. You can also contact my supervisors Dr Colin Calleja (colin.calleja@um.edu.mt; tel: (+356) 2340 3363) or Dr Meril Ümarik (meril.umarik@tlu.ee). If you have no further questions and wish to participate, please read the attached Consent Form carefully and return a signed copy to me via email (kirstin.sonne.19@um.edu.mt) or post: Kirstin Sonne, 8/135 Marina Street, Pieta PTA 9043).

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Kind regards,

Kirstin Sonne

Information letter for former students

Dear "I Belong" graduate,

This letter is an invitation to participate in my study, titled "Learning to Belong: How inclusion, transformation and empowerment are envisioned and enacted in a Maltese migrant integration programme". I am conducting it as part of the dissertation for my Master's in Adult Education for Social Change, offered jointly by the University of Glasgow (UK), the University of Malta and Tallinn University (Estonia). The study will be conducted under the supervision of Dr Colin Calleja (University of Malta) and Dr Meril Ümarik (Tallinn University) I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement will entail if you decide to take part.

The focus of the study is the "I Belong" programme, specifically how it envisions and enacts students' transformation, inclusion and empowerment in Malta, and how it contributes to students' sense of belonging both inside and outside of the classroom. Since the "I Belong" programme only began recently and is constantly evolving (not least due to the impact of Covid-19), learning more about students' experience of the programme is essential for the programme's educators and coordinators. This study will help the "I Belong" team understand their students better, and based on this knowledge they can continue to develop and improve the programme. More generally, the study will contribute to our broader understanding of migrants and migrant learners in Malta, a part of Maltese society which has not been studied extensively yet. Any data collected from this research will be used solely for purposes of this study.

Participation in this study is voluntary and the only conditions for participation are that you currently are a student on the "I Belong" programme or have been in the past and that you are proficient in English or Maltese. The study will consist of two parts, one-to-one interviews and observations of online classes and excursions. As a former student only your participation in one-to-one interviews is requested.Interviews will last approximately one hour and held online via Zoom or Skype. In addition, a second follow-up interview of approximately 30 to 45 minutes may be requested. You will be asked about your experiences of the programme, how it has changed your perceptions of Maltese society, culture and people, and how it relates to your everyday life in Malta outside of the classroom. I will also ask you about your expectations towards the programme before joining, how these expectations were met and how the programme has impacted your life since completing it.

You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time (including during the interview) without any negative consequences. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the interview has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish.

All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study, however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be securely stored until the official grade of the dissertation is published, at which point all data (including recordings and transcripts) will be destroyed. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study. As a participant, you have the right under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Malta Data Protection Act 2018 to access, rectify, and where applicable erase the data concerning you. If you choose to participate, please note that there are no direct benefits to you.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the University of Malta Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee. Questions regarding this process can be addressed to research-ethics.educ@um.edu.mt. For all other questions, or if you would like to have any of the above information translated into another language, please contact me on 79206139 or at kirstin.sonne.19@um.edu.mt. You can also contact my supervisors Dr Colin Calleja (colin.calleja@um.edu.mt; tel: (+356) 2340 3363) or Dr Meril Ümarik (meril.umarik@tlu.ee). If you have no further questions and wish to participate, please read the attached Consent Form carefully and return a (digitally or manually) signed copy to via email (kirstin.sonne.19@um.edu.mt) or by post (Kirstin Sonne, 8/135 Marina Street, Pieta PTA 9043).

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Kind regards,

Kirstin Sonne

Information letter for educators

Dear "I Belong" educator,

This letter is an invitation to participate in my study, titled "Learning to Belong: How inclusion, transformation and empowerment are envisioned and enacted in a Maltese migrant integration programme". I am conducting it as part of the dissertation for my Master's in Adult Education for Social Change, offered jointly by the University of Glasgow (UK), the University of Malta and Tallinn University (Estonia). The study will be conducted under the supervision of Dr Colin Calleja (University of Malta) and Dr Meril Ümarik (Tallinn University). I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement will entail if you decide to take part.

The focus of the study is the "I Belong" programme, specifically how it envisions and enacts students' transformation, inclusion and empowerment in Malta and how it contributes to students' sense of belonging both inside and outside of the classroom. Since the "I Belong" programme only began recently, I hope that this research will help the "I Belong" team understand their students better and that, based on this knowledge, they can continue to develop and improve the programme. More generally, the study will contribute to our broader understanding of migrants and migrant learners in Malta, a part of Maltese society which has not been studied extensively yet.

Participation in this study is voluntary and consists of two parts:

1) An individual (one-to-one) interview of approximately one hour in length which will be held online via Zoom or Skype. In addition, a second follow-up interview of approximately 30 to 45 minutes may be requested. In the interview(s) you will be asked how you perceive and understand students' transformation, inclusion and

empowerment in Malta, how you see these concepts outlined in the curriculum, and how they inform your classroom practices and interactions with students. I will also ask how you believe the programme impacts students' lives outside of the classroom and their interactions in wider Maltese society.
You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time (including during the interview) without any negative consequences. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the interview has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish.

2) Observations of online classes and/orexcursions: I will be observing one of your online "I Belong" classes (and, Covid-19 restrictions permitting, up to two excursions) in oder to observe how the "I Belong" curriculum is put into practice, how Maltese society, migration and migrant integration are represented and discussed in class, and how students and educators interact with each other. Field notes in an anonymous format will be taken during the session observations.

All information you provide in the interview(s) and observed lessons/excursions is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study, however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be securely retained until the official grade of the work is published, at which point all data (including recordings and transcripts) will be destroyed. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study. As a participant, you have the right under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Malta Data Protection Act 2018 to access, rectify, and where applicable erase the data concerning you. If you choose to participate, please note that there are no direct benefits to you.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the University of Malta Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee. Questions regarding this process can be addressed to research-ethics.educ@um.edu.mt. For all other questions, please contact me on 79206139 or at kirstin.sonne.19@um.edu.mt. You can also contact my supervisors Dr Colin Calleja (colin.calleja@um.edu.mt; tel: (+356) 2340 3363) or Dr Meril Ümarik (meril.umarik@tlu.ee). If you have no further questions and wish to participate, please read the attached Consent Form carefully and return a signed copy to me, either by email (kirstin.sonne.19@um.edu.mt) or by post: Kirstin Sonne, 8/135 Marina Street, Pieta PTA 9043.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Kind regards,

Kirstin Sonne

Participant's Consent Form

"Learning to Belong: How inclusion, transformation and empowerment are envisioned and enacted in a Maltese migrant integration programme"

I, the undersigned, give my consent to take part in the study conducted by Kirstin Sonne. This consent form specifies the terms of my participation in this research study, and indicates which parts of the study I agree to participate in.

1. I have been given written information about the purpose of the study; I have had the opportunity to ask questions and any questions that I had were answered fully and to my satisfaction.
2. I also understand that I am free to accept to participate, or to refuse or stop participation at any time without giving any reason and without any penalty. Should I choose to participate, I may choose to decline to answer any questions asked. In the event that I choose to withdraw from the study, any data collected from me will *be erased.*
3. I understand that I have been invited to participate in one-to-one interviews and/or observed lessons/excursions. In interviews, the researcher will ask participants questions about the "I Belong" programme, and their understandings and experiences of migrants' sense of belonging in Malta. In addition, the researcher will observe some of the "I Belong" online lessons and/or excursions; these do not entail any additional involvement or participation on my part. The overall aim of the research is to better understand how the "I Belong" programme envisions belonging, understood as students' transformation, inclusion and empowerment within Maltese society, and how these are enacted both inside and outside the classroom. I am aware that interviews will take approximately an hour and that a follow-up interview may be requested. I understand that interviews and lesson observations will take place online, and that observed excursions will take place in the location specified by the programme staff. Field notes in an anonymous format will be taken during the observed lessons and excursions.
4. I understand that my participation *does not entail any known or anticipated risks.*
5. I understand that *there are no direct benefits to me from participating in this*. I also understand that this research may help the "I Belong" coordinators and educators understand their students better, and that based on this knowledge they can continue to develop and improve the programme.
6. I understand that, under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and national legislation, I have the right to access, rectify, and where applicable, ask for the data concerning me to be erased.
7. I understand that all data collected will be *stored in an anonymised form on completion of the study and will be destroyed once the study's final grade has been published.*

8. I have been provided with a copy of the information letter and understand that I will also be given a copy of this consent form.
9. I am aware that, if I give my consent, interviews will be audio recorded and converted to text as it has been recorded (transcribed).
10. I am aware that, if I give my consent, extracts from my interview may be reproduced in these outputs, either in anonymous form, or using a pseudonym [a made-up name or code – e.g. respondent A].
11. I am aware that I may ask to be given the opportunity to review relevant extracts of the transcript of my interview, before the results of the study are published. I am also aware that I may ask for changes to be made if I consider this to be necessary.

I have read and understood the above statements and agree to participate in the following parts of this study.

☐ One hour-long interview with the researcher, as well as a potential follow-up interview

☐ An "I Belong" online class observed by the researcher

☐ An "I Belong" excursion observed by the researcher

Name of participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

_____ _____

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