

# "Exploring School Climate Among Migrant Students and School Educators in six Countries: A Qualitative Study"

Dr Angela Mazzone

Dublin City University (DCU) Anti-Bullying Centre

**DCU** Ollscoil Chathair  
Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Dublin City University

# TRIBES

- Transnational Collaboration on Bullying, Migration and Integration at School Level (TRIBES - Action CA18115) COST Action.
- TRIBES aims at advancing collaboration between stakeholders to evolve and improve scientific measures and guides to tackle bullying and foster the wellbeing of refugee/migrant students.
- 33 countries are taking part to the project -> <https://www.tribesproject.com/>
- **Working Group 1:** To update and design a new set of measures for school climate accounting for changes in the demographic groupings and rate of immigration across European countries.
  - Qualitative research
  - Systematic review on school climate measures



Funded by  
the European Union

**DCU**  
Ollscoil Chathair  
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# Background

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- **Migration** in Europe increased substantially in the past two decades.
- Massive migration of families and children: **numerous challenges** to schools across Europe (e.g., integration and accommodation of students who do not speak the language of the host community or whose families are socioeconomically disadvantaged and experience residential instability).



# Immigration Context

## Germany



- History of immigration
- Migrants: 14.2% of the population
- Most attractive EU country in 2020 (5<sup>th</sup> place worldwide)
- Children aged 0 to 15: 39.5% of the migrant population

## Ireland



- History of emigration
- Immigration increased due to rapid economic growth in the 1990s
- Migrants: 2.3% of the population
- Children aged 0 -14: 15.5% of the migrant population

## Italy



- History of emigration
- Migrants: 8.5% of the population
- Children aged 0 to 17: 20.3% of the population

# Education

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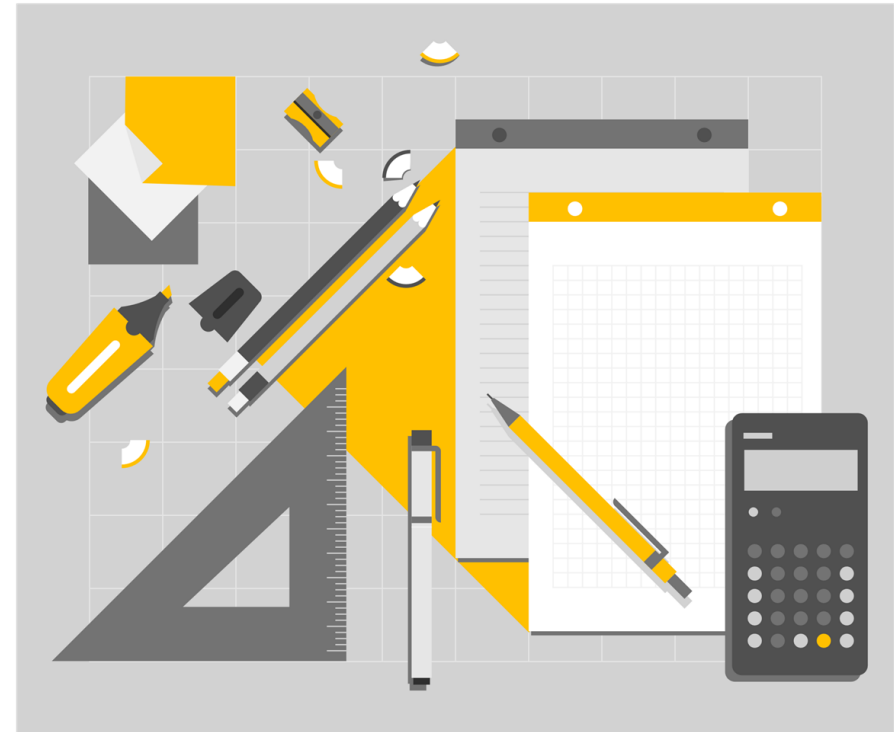
- Despite international policies, social, political, and economic rights (such as medical care or unemployment support) are not always available to refugee and migrant people.
- Education may be the only statutory service to offer migrant people formal support.



# School

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- **School as safe base** -> offering stability and sense of belonging.
- Alongside the benefits that may be garnered in inclusive school settings, migrant children are also more prone to **experience violence and bullying, prejudice, racism.**



[Caravita et al., 2020; Mazzone et al., 2018]

# School Climate

- **School climate** reflects the school's norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organisational structures.
- Positive school climate -> Student learning and healthy development in school



[Berkowitz et al., 2017]

# Qualitative Research on School Climate

## □ Aims:

- To investigate primary and secondary school **students**, parents and **teachers'** perceptions of the school climate (sense of belonging, inclusion, students' needs, bullying experiences).
- Focus on first and second-generation migrant students, their parents and teachers (and social workers/youth workers working with migrant students).



# Methods

**SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW** – Students, School personnel (+youth workers and social workers), Parents

☐ Six core areas (+1)

- **Every-day life and routine at school** (e.g., Tell me something about your everyday life and routine in the school, how do you feel towards your school?)
- **Belonging and connectedness** (e.g., Do you feel connected to your school?)
- **Tolerance and Inclusion** (e.g., Is your school tolerant towards all students?)
- **Relationships** (e.g., Please describe your relationship at school with your peers and teachers)
- **Violence, Bullying and Sense of Safety** (e.g., Have you ever experienced bullying or violence at school?)
- **Your needs** (e.g., Is there anything that the school could do to support you in this school and country?)
- **Health crisis** (e.g., Have you experienced any behaviours by your peers that made you feel uncomfortable during the online classes?)

# Data Collection

# Student Sample

N: 18 (56% girls; 45% boys)

Age range: 7-18

Student sample						
	Germany	Hungary	Ireland	Israel	Italy	Turkey
<b>N and gender</b>	<b>3</b> (2 girls, 1 boy)	3 (2 girls, 1 boy)	<b>4</b> (2 boys, 2 girls)	2 (boys)	<b>4</b> (2 girls, 2 boys)	2 (girls)
<b>Age/Grade</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup></b>	12-18	<b>17-18</b>	7-10	<b>9-10</b>	13
<b>Migrant status</b>	<b>First and second-generation</b>	First generation	<b>First and second-generation</b>	Second generation	<b>Second generation</b>	First and second-generation
<b>Country of Origin</b>	<b>Kurdistan, Turkey</b>	Germany, Pakistan, Syria	<b>Russia, Nigeria, Moldova</b>	Eritrea	<b>Nigeria, Moldova, Ukraine</b>	Russia, Syria

# School Personnel Sample

N= 30 (80% women; 20% men)

Age range: 24-67

School Personnel Sample						
	Germany	Hungary	Ireland	Israel	Italy	Turkey
<b>N</b>	<b>2</b>	16	<b>2</b>	6	<b>2</b>	2
<b>Age</b>	<b>30</b>	24-67	<b>34-54</b>	40-55	<b>49-59</b>	31-32
<b>Profession</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	Teachers	<b>Teacher; Youth Worker</b>	Teachers; School Principal; Social workers; Counsellor	<b>Teachers</b>	Teachers



## DATA CODING



The research team adopted a joint focus in the analytical process, related to the **core areas** explored in the interview



**Data coding scheme** to explore the data and its dimensions in a similar way across all teams



**Recurrent themes** across interviews -> interviews categorised across the most meaningful facts and processes (comparison and search for similarities)



**Student data**

## Results: Ireland, Italy and Germany

### □ Student data

#### □ Themes:

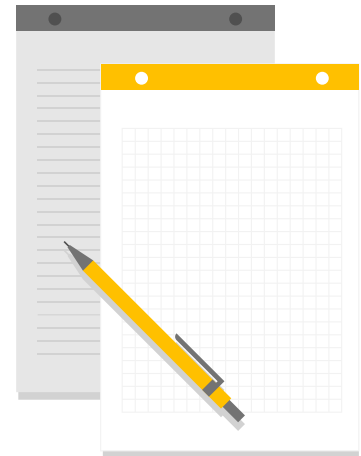
- 1) Bullying and Peer Segregation
- 2) Struggling with School Tasks



## Bullying and Peer Segregation

*“At the beginning it was bad, cause I didn’t have any friends, and my accent was different at the beginning, and I was really insecure about my accent; [...] and there were a few kids who were making fun of me. Well, because of my accent.”*

First-generation migrant girl, aged 18, Ireland.

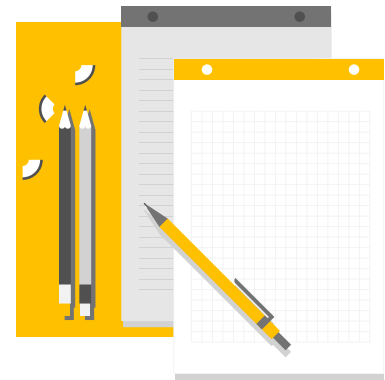




# Theme 1: Bullying and Peer Segregation

*“My classmates are not mean to me with words, but I’ve no friends. Usually, I’m alone. If we have to form teams during physical education classes, for example, the other classmates are not happy to be in the same team with me. I’m always the last one to be chosen. Also, the other Nigerian girl is usually alone...so often we stay together, but we’re not friends”*

Second-generation migrant girl, aged 10, Italy.



## Theme 1: Bullying and Peer Segregation

*“My father did not attend school in Germany and works as a construction worker. My mother is a housewife. I then always noticed what the parents of the others were doing and automatically didn't want to have anything to do with them. Hardly any of my classmates have more than three siblings. I have six siblings and no room of my own and always had to share my things. My classmates always had new things, cell phones and game consoles. Of course, I always noticed everything back then”.*

Second-generation migrant boy, 12<sup>th</sup> grade, Germany



# Theme 1: Bullying and Peer Segregation

- *“We have a teacher who always talks differently with a student who wears a headscarf. He talks louder and picks on her much more often. Of course, as a student, you think: Does the teacher have something against people wearing headscarves”.*

Second-generation migrant girl, 10th grade, Germany

- *“I feel like the teachers do not understand...I mean... they don't take care of me. Once a teacher told me: Start behaving like your classmates. I don't know...I don't know what I have to do”.*

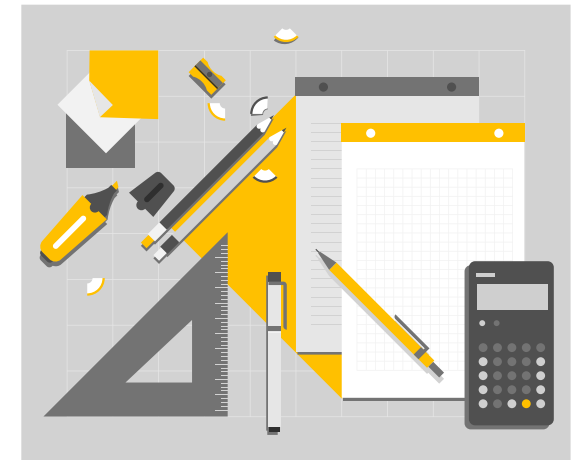
Second-generation migrant girl, aged 10, Italy.



## Theme 2: Struggling with School Tasks

*“I had a teacher who always wanted to persuade me to leave high school after the tenth grade and do an apprenticeship. She brought just for me such a catalogue of the Federal Employment Agency about apprenticeships. I found myself treated very unfairly”.*

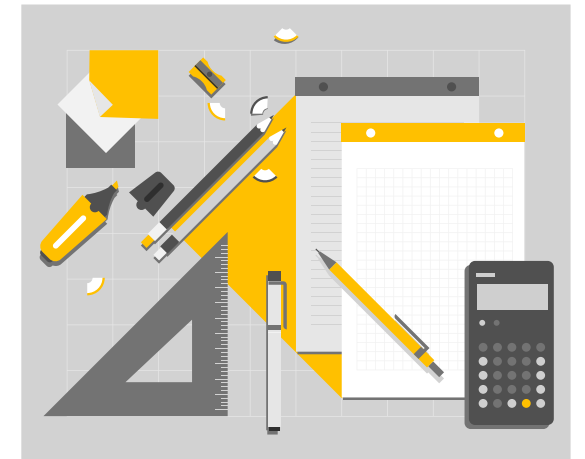
Second-generation migrant boy, 12<sup>th</sup> grade, Germany.



## Theme 2: Struggling with School Tasks

*“I think I would need some help with my homework because my mother cannot help me. She doesn’t understand what I’ve to do and she never has time. So, sometimes I’m unable to do what teachers ask or I forget homework.”*

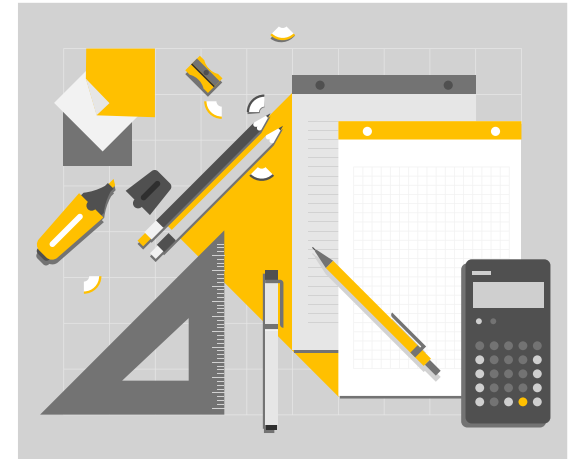
Second-generation migrant boy, aged 10, Italy



## Theme 2: Struggling with School Tasks

*“Sometimes I am in a class where students are not really bothered about the grades that they’re going to get [...] So, even if you’re a smart student it may bring your grades down, because the students in the class aren’t like top students, it doesn’t make you feel like you want to work hard enough”.*

First-generation migrant boy, aged 17, Ireland





## School Personnel Data

## Results: Ireland, Italy and Germany

### ☐ School Staff Members Data

### ☐ Themes:

1) Language Barrier

2) Cultural Diversity Challenges





## Theme 1: Language Barrier

*“I suppose one of the challenges in dealing with students from outside of Ireland, well, the most obvious one is when someone comes here with very little English, and there are students with very little English, and they’re not adequately catered for in the school system. They do receive some help to learn English, but I don’t think they’re getting enough. [...] It’s very difficult to communicate. Sometimes, we’ve communicated with them through an interpreter. Sometimes that interpreter would be a student”.*

Male Teacher, aged 54, Ireland



# Theme 1: Language Barrier

*“I have to say that in language acquisition there are often problems with students with a migrant background. The students often don’t know their native language well enough. [...] If they knew it better, they could use their knowledge here to learn German better”.*

Female teacher, aged 30, Germany



## Theme 1: Language Barrier

*“In some cases, it is impossible to talk with parents, both because they do not understand Italian [...] or because they do not come physically to school”.*

Female Teacher, aged 49, Italy



## Theme 2: Cultural Diversity Challenges

*“I often have the feeling that teachers are excluded from this (cultural diversity training), [...] but we should start with the teachers and then involve the students. There is no point in telling students about discrimination and racism if you as a teacher are not trained or have stereotypes towards some groups”.*

Female teacher, aged 30, Germany.



## Theme 2: Cultural Diversity Challenges



*“There are different opinions concerning how to manage multiculturalism. Some teachers think families and students should adjust to the Italian system. Others think that schools should adapt teaching to multicultural needs. The result is that nothing changes, and teachers are more and more frustrated”.*

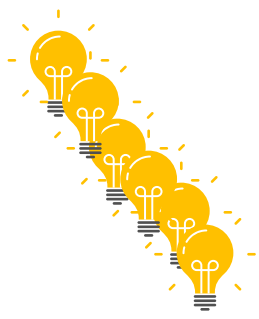
Female teacher, aged 49, Italy

## Theme 2: Cultural Diversity Challenges

*“I definitely think there is a need there for youth workers, overall, to get training on cultural awareness. For example, in terms of young people barriers to participation, for a long time we had a low participation from young females, and I was wondering, why is that? It was through discussion with parents that I became aware that parents would prefer if their daughters would just attend all female groups”.*

Female Youth Worker, aged 32, Ireland





# Practical Implications

## ☐ Students

- Formal system of support in terms of language courses, and interpretation
- Formal school support
- Tackle bullying and promote a positive school climate

## ☐ Teachers

- Cultural diversity training programmes for both pre-service and in-service teachers
- Tackle unconscious bias

# Thank you!

angela.mazzone@dcu.ie

This study received financial support from  
the European Cooperation in Science and  
Technology (COST) Funding Programme

Grant number: CA18115.

<https://www.tribesproject.com/>