INTERGROUP ENCOUNTERS: THE IMPACT OF CONTACT ON THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE MALTESE AND THE SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN MIGRANTS

by

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A Thesis
Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty
of
George Mason University
in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree
of
Master of Science
Conflict Analysis and Resolution
Master of Arts
Conflict Resolution and Mediterranean Security

Committee:

Chair of Committee

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Date: 12/3/2014

Fall Semester 2014
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA
University of Malta
Valletta, Malta
Intergroup Encounters: The Impact of Contact on the Relations between the Maltese and the Sub-Saharan African Migrants

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science at George Mason University, and the degree of Master of Arts at the University of Malta

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Fall Semester 2014
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DEDICATION

To Mum, Dad, and my brother Jonathan

And,

To all forms of relations between people, so that they would be based on understanding, empathy, trust and acceptance, so that the ‘Self’ and the ‘Other’ can coexist peacefully in the world of today and tomorrow.
The research work disclosed in this publication is partially funded by the Master it! Scholarship Scheme (Malta). This Scholarship is part-financed by the European Union – European Social Fund (ESF) under Operational Programme II – Cohesion Policy 2007-2013, “Empowering People for More Jobs and a Better Quality Of Life.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A very big thanks to all those who accepted my invitation to be interviewed; I am most grateful and would not have conducted this research without your valuable time and feedback. It was both a privilege and a pleasure to have met you and got to know you.

Thanks also to Mr. Guido Borg, Mr. Stephen Gatt, Mr. Joseph Azzopardi and the Staff at the Foundation for the Shelter of Migrants (FSM), for their help and support in recruiting interviewees.

Thanks also goes to the lecturers of both MEDAC and S-CAR who shared their knowledge with me and immersed me into the field of Conflict Analysis, Resolution and Mediterranean Security. A word of thanks also goes to Mr. Michael English who was a constant feature throughout the course providing advice, support and that push to reach new heights.

A word of appreciation goes to my thesis supervisor, Prof. Karina Korostelina, who shared her knowledge with me, helped shape my ideas and was supportive of that burning flame inside me that came to be known as my thesis.

Last but not least, I am indebted to my family for their help and support throughout the course and especially the research process, in particular mum for making life special with little things, dad for his continuous encouragement to “keep going” and my brother Jonathan for keeping my spirits high. A word of thanks also goes to my friends (they know who they are), who lent me an ear, gave me courage and a shoulder to lean on throughout the course and the research.
“if you can learn a simple trick, Scout, you’ll get along better with all kinds of folks. You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view ... until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.”¹

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers ........................................... AWAS
Foundation for Shelter and Support to Migrants....................................... FSM
International Organisation for Migration................................................ IOM
Jesuit Refugee Service ............................................................................. JRS
Preliminary Questionnaire ....................................................................... PQ
United States ........................................................................................... U.S.
Marsa Open Centre ................................................................................. MOC
Balzan Open Centre ............................................................................... BOC
Hal Far Open Centre................................................................................ HFOC
ABSTRACT

INTERGROUP ENCOUNTERS: THE IMPACT OF CONTACT ON THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE MALTESE AND THE SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN MIGRANTS

Lynette Camilleri, M.S./ M.A.
George Mason University and University of Malta, 2014
Thesis Project Director: Prof. Karina Korostelina

This thesis studies whether contact between the Maltese and the Sub-Saharan African migrants in Malta leads to positive or negative relations between the two groups. It analyses the main features of the contact and problems encountered, and how this is impacted by the categorization of the ‘Other,’ perception of threat and policies and institutions. Moreover, the intergroup contact in the localities of Balzan and Marsa that are both home to an Open centre for migrants, were compared and contrasted. Literature concerning theories on social identity, threat perception and intergroup contact where reviewed. The study was conducted by means of 38 in-depth interviews with Maltese from the Balzan and Marsa residential areas, 18 with resident migrants in the Open centres and two former residents of the Open Centres who are now living in the community. Recommendations were made for the betterment of the intergroup contact experience between the Maltese and the Sub-Saharan African migrants in Malta.
INTRODUCTION

“Anyone who works in the field of intercultural relations knows how often in his community he hears the remark, “There is no problem.” Parents, teachers, public officials, police, community leaders seem unaware of the undercurrents of friction and hostility. Until or unless violence breaks out “there is no problem.””

This study aims to explore the problems in relations between Maltese and the Sub-Saharan African immigrants based on perception of contact, perception of threat, and assessment of policies and institutions.

Context and significance

The origin of the concern to mitigate tensions in intergroup relations can be said to date back to the post-Second World War period in the United States (U.S.), when there came to be a mood of opposition to the periods of Nazism and anti-Semitism that had been so prevalent during wartime. Against the backdrop of severed race relations in the homeland, the Human relations movement was created in the U.S, with the aim of fighting prejudice and discrimination between people with different ethnic and racial backgrounds.

It was at this time that the theory that would come to be known as the ‘contact hypothesis,’

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namely the idea that when people come into contact, relations between them should improve, saw the light of day; a theory that has been tested, challenged and re-formulated.

In the 21st Century, on the other side of the Atlantic, in the island of Malta, a related yet different phenomenon is occurring, namely that of an influx of irregular migrants; a phenomenon that has been a constant feature in Malta as well as in other Mediterranean countries amongst others, for more than a decade, particularly since 2002. As yet, the largest number of migrants stem from Sub-Saharan African countries, although this may be subject to change, amongst others in view of the fragile situation in the Middle East. This meant that overnight people from different backgrounds, cultures, languages, religions, mentalities and characters were pushed into co-existence.

No major violence broke out between the two groups, the Maltese and the Sub-Saharan Africans, the latter taken to be united not only by the region they come from, but their common fate in Malta. No war took place. Yet does that mean that there are no “undercurrents of friction and hostilities”? What about riots in detention centres or clashes individuals from the two groups had in places of entertainment? Could there be a problem, or have the two major identity groups managed to lead their own lives uninhibited by their ‘Other’?

They are issues that need to be seen to since migration does not only mean that there are problems in the countries of origin that push migrants-to-be to leave their
homeland, or problems for recipient countries in their dealing with the influx of immigrants. What is also an issue is what happens when migrants and locals in the country of destination come into contact. This is where the present study endeavours to make a contribution.

**General research question**

This study consequently aims to answer the following research questions:

*What are the nature and dynamics of the interaction between the Maltese and the Sub-Saharan African migrants? What are the main problems in the interaction between these two groups? What are the features and impact of the contact between Maltese and immigrants?*

Keeping in mind that the nature of interactions between the two groups might not necessarily be the same across the island, the localities of Balzan and Marsa will be focused on; localities that are both home to an Open centre for migrants, and which have been compared and contrasted in the past months. The study will be based on in-depth interviews with both Maltese and migrants in the two localities; 8 Maltese from Balzan, 10 Maltese from Marsa, 9 migrants from the Balzan Open Centre and the Marsa Open Centre each, and 2 migrants living in the Balzan and Marsa communities.
**Structure**

The structure of the study will proceed as follows. The next chapter will give an overview of literature on theories of intergroup relations, before moving on to elaborate on the situation of migration in Malta, in order to lay the foundations of this study. The methodology used for this study will then be detailed before data presentation and analysis of the relations between the Maltese and sub-Saharan African migrants in Balzan and Marsa will in turn be dealt with in different chapters. The next chapter will synthesise the results of the two case studies and propose recommendations to better intergroup relations in Malta, before bringing the study to a close and suggesting areas for further research.

By the end of this study a clearer picture would be acquired on the impact of contact on the relations between the Maltese and the Sub-Saharan African migrants and what problems have been encountered, so that attempts could be made to mitigate negative relations, while allowing more opportunities for positive contact to take place.
CHAPTER ONE – LITERATURE REVIEW I:
THEORIES ON INTERGROUP RELATIONS

1.1 Introduction

Historically, tensions or even conflicts have always arisen between people. Why is this so? Firstly, differences between people have been seen to deepen the divisions between them, merely because of the said dissimilarity, as social identity theory would attempt to explain. Secondly, people have also sought to acquire resources, broadly defined, in competition to others, in order to better their own position, as has been revealed by realistic group conflict theory. However, mankind has also sought ways to improve their relations, for instance in the U.S. following World War II, as discussed in the Introduction. ‘Contact’ between people was thought to be a means to remedy the situation, to diffuse tensions, to mediate conflict. Yet, is this always so? How do relations between groups coming into contact progress or regress? What are the different stages? After delving deeper into the meaning of social identity, the chapter will proceed with a discussion on how perceptions and later behaviours towards others have been shaped, by drawing on different theories of intergroup relations. The aim is to lay the preliminary foundations for the formation of the research questions of this study.
1.2 What is Social identity?

In his theory of pseudospeciation, Erikson argues that since the beginning of mankind, man has sought to split himself into different groups based on territory, culture or politics and has considered his group to have a “distinct identity” and to be supreme compared to other “human species.” Tajfel et al. sought to explain such a phenomenon and came up with the concept of “social identity,” as “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group… together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership.” It contrasts with one’s individual identity, which includes the unique characteristics that make each individual the way he or she is. Social psychologists have sought to better understand one’s social identity and the implications it has on one’s relations with people who harbor a different social identity. This section will focus on the definition of groups and how one comes to associate with them, as well as social categorisation and why this is done.

1.2.1 Defining Groups

Crucial to the study of social identity is the concept of “groups.” How can a group be defined? Tajfel (1978) suggests that a definition of a “group,” has three components:

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i) **a cognitive component**: “in the sense of the knowledge that one belongs to a group;”

ii) **an evaluative one**: “in the sense that the notion of the group and/or of one’s membership of it may have a positive or a negative value connotation;”

iii) **an emotional component**:

“in the sense that the cognitive and evaluative aspects of the group and one’s membership of its may be accompanied by emotions (such as love or hatred, like or dislike) directed towards one’s own group and towards others which stand in certain relations to it.”

Besides, Sumner distinguished between ‘in-group’ or ‘we-group,’ composed of ourselves, wherein relations are peaceful, orderly and lawful, in contrast to the ‘out-group’ or ‘others-group,’ which consists of everyone else who is not in the we-group and with whom relations are generally hostile, unless “agreements have modified it.”

In his theory on ethnocentrism, Sumner goes on to describe such a phenomenon, whereby more importance given to one’s own group leads to more “hostility towards the out-group.”

He argues that ‘ethnocentrism’ is:

“the technical name for this view of things in which one’s own group is the center of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it… Each group nourishes its own pride and vanity, boats itself superior, exalts its own divinities, and looks with contempt on outsiders.”

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What is referred to as “Social identity,” “is developed through the affiliation of individuals to different groups, along with a determination of their position in society.” Furthermore, as Turner argues via his Self-Categorization theory, group identity salience, leads the individual to become more like the group and take up the groups’ mind-set including vis-à-vis out-groups, leading to his/her “depersonalization.”

1.2.2 Associating with Groups

What makes individuals become associated with groups? Firstly to show their distinctiveness; Tajfel and Turner argue that “[i]ndividuals perceive themselves as members of a group and identify themselves with it” so that they could “distinguish between their groups (ingroups) and outgroups.” Secondly, it is argued that people associate with a group and take up a social identity, as a means to augment their self-esteem. As Tajfel and Turner note, since as humans we have the need for a positive self-esteem, if we form part of groups that are highly esteemed, then we see ourselves from a positive lens due to our membership in that group. Thirdly, individuals also seek to join groups to benefit from ingroup support and solidarity.

1.2.3  Social categorization

Building off the notion of ‘groups,’ is the concept of social categorization. Crisp and Turner argue that social categorization, “is central to explaining intergroup relations, because without it, there would be no conflicts or difficulties between different groups.”11 It is the process by which humans cognitively classify each other (or put each other into imaginary boxes). It is a three stage process: first “individuals define themselves as members of a social group,” next “they learn the stereotypes and norms of the group” and finally “group categories influence the perception and understanding of all situations in a particular contact,”12 thereby “enabling the individual to act in a way which has been sanctioned as ‘appropriate’ in many other situations.”13 Similarly, the “process of pseudospeciation,” defined by Erikson and mentioned earlier, can be referred to as “a systemic and often unconscious combination of prejudices, illusions, and suspicions in regard to one’s own human kind and to other kinds.”14

1.2.4  Why categorise?

According to Tajfel et al. “the articulation of an individual’s social world in terms of its categorization into groups … will give order and coherence to the social situation…”15 This is because as Fiske and Taylor highlight, humans are “cognitive misers,” meaning that

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“our mental processing resources are highly valued (and inherently limited), so we find ways of saving time and effort when trying to understand the social world.”\textsuperscript{16} As a consequence, we make use of so-called “heuristics,” which are “timesaving mental shortcuts that reduce complex judgments to simple rules of thumb.”\textsuperscript{17} Social categorization is one such ‘heuristic.’\textsuperscript{18} In fact, McGarty refers to categorization as “the process of understanding what something is by knowing what other things it is equivalent to, and what other things it is different from.”\textsuperscript{19} Additionally, as has been argued by Hogg via the “Subjective uncertainty reduction hypothesis,” it seems that by relying on categorization, one follows prescriptions in terms of how one is to deal with others in intergroup relations, which reduces “subjective uncertainty.”\textsuperscript{20}

1.3. Prejudice and Perceptions of the ‘Other’

How does one’s social identity, discussed in the previous section, come to impact one’s perceptions or others? This section will discuss prototypes, differences and similarities between groups, attribution, prejudice and prejudice-reduction through contact, and perceptions of threat and intergroup anxiety.

\textsuperscript{16} Crisp and Turner, 	extit{Essential Social Psychology}, 65.
\textsuperscript{17} ibid.
\textsuperscript{18} ibid., 72.
\textsuperscript{20} Hogg, 2001, in Crisp and Turner, 	extit{Essential Social Psychology}, 222.
1.3.1. Prototypes

“Prototypes” (what are seen as typical examples of a group), are particularly useful for categorization, since they incorporate characteristics that most readily come to mind when thinking about something.\(^{21}\) While “prototypes” are used to categorise individuals, similarity to a ‘prototype’ also attracts more people to a group.\(^{22}\) Yet at this point the researcher questions, who can be considered a prototype and who gets to define who the prototype is, and of what the characteristics of the prototype are supposed to be. It might be something psychological or intuitive within a group context.

Moreover, there exists a phenomenon whereby one tends to classify the out-group as a single group without differences between its members, drawing on one’s perception of the ‘prototype’ of such a group, while recognizing individual differences within the in-group (despite the overall similarities that unite the members), what can be called the “outgroup homogeneity” effect.”\(^{23}\) In fact, stereotypes would be generalized to the whole group rather than used vis-à-vis a particular individual. As a result, as Weber and Crocker (1983) point out, when individuals do not fit into the standard way one would categorise them, for instance in a particular group, “sub-typing” takes place.\(^{24}\) Allport calls this the “the re-fencing device,” since “When a fact cannot fit into a mental field, the exception is acknowledged, but the field is hastily fenced in again and not allowed to remain

\(^{23}\) ibid., 26.
dangerously open.” This means they would be treated as exceptions to the group, and thereby one’s relations with them, would not generalize to the outgroup. This is particularly troubling since positive contact with such individuals would not impact intergroup relations.

1.3.2 Attribution

Heider argues that humans can be “naïve scientists” since they try to attribute causality to what they encounter in order to make sense of it. There are two main types of attributions, “internal” attributions (or dispositional/personal), where one attributes the cause of something to be linked to one’s ingrained characteristics (for instance “personality, mood, abilities, attitudes, and effort”) or “external” attributions (or situational), the action being caused by the situation the person finds him/herself in (for example “the nature of the situation, social pressures, or luck”).

Individuals tend to use attributions, both when it comes to their own behavior, and those of other. Yet, these “social inferences,” as attributions are called, may not always lead to an accurate result; two errors are worth mentioning. The first is the “fundamental attribution error,” whereby one tends to make internal attributes instead of external ones,

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28 ibid.
even when something is very likely to be caused by a particular situation. The second, called the ‘Ultimate Attribution Error,’ is when individuals tend to attribute failures by outgroup members to their internal characteristics, unlike in the case of in-group members, whereas successes by the outgroup member would more likely be attributed to “(a) ‘the exceptional case’, (b) luck or special advantage, (c) high motivation and effort, and (d) manipulable situational context.” This may have an impact on how members of an outgroup are perceived in intergroup relations.

1.3.3 Perception of difference and similarity between groups

One’s interactions with others also depend on the way one perceives other individuals with whom one comes into contact as similar or different to oneself. According to Doise’s ‘category differentiation model,’ merely forming part of another category makes you different from the group. Nonetheless, the more salient one’s social identity is, the more one moves away from one’s individual identity (resulting in ‘depersonalization’ highlighted in section 1.2.1), the more similarities one perceives to have with members of one’s group and the more differences from other groups come to play a role in one’s perception of them. Yet according to the theory on ‘positive distinctiveness,’ not only do

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individuals want to differentiate themselves from the outgroup but in a way that puts them in a positive light.³³

Alternatively, Oakes and Turner, put forward the ‘meta-contrast principle,’ whereby while people have a tendency to see more differences between the in-group and the outgroup, they perceive more similarity within the in-group.³⁴ By recognizing or even highlighting the differences one perceives from others, one may however create a deeper divide between “us” and “them,” that may lead to conflict. In fact Oakes and Turner argue that “[t]he greater the perceived difference in the typical characteristics of the ingroup and the outgroup, the greater the predisposition to hostility.”³⁵ This divide may result in a so-called ‘social boundary’ between groups,³⁶ which may be psychological, yet which may be set in stone via institutions or policies in place, such as residential segregation between groups.

Additionally, according to the similarity-attraction theory, individuals have a tendency to become more attracted towards others who are similar to them.³⁷ This would in part also explain, why one may get on less well with members of the ‘outgroup’ that

³³ Crisp and Turner, Essential Social Psychology, 220.
³⁶ Kriesberg (2003), in Korostelina, Karina V., Social Identity and Conflict: Structures, Dynamics and Implications, 137.
would be so dissimilar to oneself. By extension, Bryne has argued in his theory of interpersonal attraction, that when individuals who from part of different groups come into contact, they realize that they have similarities between them. Consequently, linking this to the idea of similarity-attraction, by discovering how similar they are, groups may grow fonder of each other, thereby reducing potential tensions between groups.

Even so, since one’s social identity might also be linked to the “roles” one is expected to play in society, if people are too similar, they may have the same or similar roles that would lead to conflict, owing to the element of competition between them. Consequently, in such situations it would make sense to emphasise the differences between the two groups, in order to show that each group is “unique” and that they would not be competing over common resources.

1.3.4 Perception of threat and intergroup anxiety

If (a) member(s) of another group are seen to be encroaching on one’s identity, territory, jobs to name but a few, one may perceive them as a “threat” to one’s well-being. According to LeVine and Campbell, perception of threat is cause by “[r]eal conflict of interests, overt, active or past intergroup conflict, and/ or presence of hostile, threatening, and competitive outgroup neighbours, which collectively may be called a real threat...”

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Moreover, this “fear of the ‘Other’”, that may eventually lead to racism “is many times based on lack of knowledge or at least accompanied by it.”

At the outset, the ‘contact hypothesis’ has seen interactions between individuals with an equal status as leading to positive outcomes. Yet Amir highlights the fact that equal status between groups, can also increase a sense of threat for the high-status, if for instance the lower-group would be gaining in power compared to the high-status group. In fact, Erikson argues that perceptions of threat may lead one to drastic reactions, since in line with his theory on pseudospeciation, he claims that when in times of “threat or upheaval” man may fear that other pseudospecies would take his place as the “supreme” one, he therefore tries to eradicate them or use “warfare and conquest,” or oppression to keep them in check.

Additionally, perceptions of threat could increase for both minority and majority groups. Williams argues that perceptions of threat may increase with the visibility of an outgroup, namely (a) the larger the group of ‘outgroup’ members that migrate to where the original ‘ingroup’ was living, and (b) the faster the influx. Yet, Allport further argues that a growing population of outgroup members may only heighten prejudice already in place.

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since he shows how Nova Scotians would be seen as less threatening than dark-skinned migrants in the 1950s United States, “either because they have more points of difference or a higher visibility.”44 Yet besides the issue of visibility, minority groups may be considered more of a threat if certain problems are caused by a substantial number of the group, such as

“a reluctance to join trade unions, a willingness to work long hours for low pay under poor conditions of safety and health, an ability to undersell natives in any respect, a tendency to spread disease or to commit crimes, an increasing birthrate, low standards of living, unusual resistance to assimilation.”45

The latter is also related to the threats perceived by the minority. From the latter’s point of view, they may be threatened by exploitation, be it “economic, sexual, political,” in which case prejudices are made use of by the exploiters, to justify their differential treatment of minority groups.46

Linked to the perception of threat is anxiety experienced in one’s interactions with members of other groups – intergroup anxiety. Stephan and Stephan studied what leads to such intergroup anxiety. They focused on the type and extent of contact that takes place between groups, prior cognitions regarding the outgroup, and the setting in which the contact takes place and external factors that have an impact on it, which help to determine one’s behavior vis-à-vis outgroup members, and how one thinks and feels about them and

45 *ibid.*, 230.
46 *ibid.*, 234.
one’s interactions with them. As a result of their study among Hispanic college students, they found out that more voluntary contact with the Anglos led to less anxiety but the greater the differences they perceived with members of the other group and the more stereotypes they had about them, the more intergroup anxiety they perceived.\textsuperscript{47}

Finally, perceptions of threat and intergroup anxiety could be taken to another level. A phenomenon that derives from social constructivism theories is that of “securitization,” whereby an issue comes to be considered a “security issue” because it is perceived as such, and not because it necessarily is so. The media may also have a role to play in this regard, since they are capable of securitizing issues for instance migration, raising them to the top of a state’s agenda.

1.3.5 Prejudice and prejudice-reduction

Allport defines ethnic prejudice as

“an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be felt or expressed. It may be directed toward a group as a whole, or toward an individual because he is a member of that group.”\textsuperscript{48}

In line with the contact hypothesis that started to be developed after the Second World War (see Introduction), namely the idea that contact would reduce tensions between people, Allport sought to develop this further. In his 1954 classic, \textit{The Nature of Prejudice},

he suggested that attitudes towards others would change, depending on the type of contact that takes place, so he reviewed studies about different contact scenarios, namely casual contact, acquaintances, residential contact and occupational contact and drew up a list of variables that help to determine the type of contact that takes place (see Appendix).

Allport concluded that:

“All prejudice (unless deeply rooted in the character structure of the individual) may be reduced by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in the pursuit of common goals. The effect is greatly enhanced if this contact is sanctioned by institutional supports (i.e., by law, custom or local atmosphere), and provided it is of a sort that leads to the perception of common interests and common humanity between members of the two groups [emphasis added].”

His version of the ‘contact hypothesis’ thus puts forward four conditions that he argues must be present in order to make way for prejudice-reduction in intergroup relations:

(1) ingroup and outgroup members should have an “equal status” in their inter-relations,
(2) people in contact must have common/ “superordinate” goals, (3) individuals must cooperate in order to achieve the goals, and (4) institutions and laws must be in place that augur for (positive) contact to take place.

With reference to Allport’s fourth condition, although legislation cannot directly reduce personal prejudice, by controlling the “outward expression of intolerance,” it may have a ripple effect onto “inner habits of thought and feeling.”

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49 ibid., 262–263.
50 ibid., 281.
51 ibid., 476-477.
Galtung’s model of conflict, as discussed by Mitchell, a change in the social structure, may lead to a change in the situation, which may in turn lead to a change in behavior, resulting in a change in attitudes.\textsuperscript{52} Thus the importance of policy must be underlined. In fact several studies on intergroup relations in social psychology such as Allport and Pettigrew have sought to point out the wider implications of the results on the policies that could be enacted at the site of intergroup clashes for instance social policy,\textsuperscript{53} so that relations with the ‘out-group,’ do not remain hostile. Consequently the researcher notes that a consideration of policy is key in the study of some form of intergroup relations. Moreover, although states’ institutions are usually set on three pillars that all play a role in making sure relations between groups are fair and good, namely the legislature, the executive and the judiciary, the researcher agrees with the idea of a fourth estate in society that also plays a crucial role in the field, namely the media, which should also be looked into.

Following Williams and Allport, other academics have sought to develop contact theory in order conditions must be in place in order for contact to help to improve relations between different groups. Brown and Hewstone, would later argue that the conditions proposed by Allport are not essential but play a facilitating role.\textsuperscript{54} Others like Brown and Turner questioned the generalizability of positive contact between individuals, to the


groups there are members of. The latter argued that interpersonal and intergroup relations are subject to “different psychological processes,” so relations between individuals could only be generalized to the group level, if “the contact can be characterized in ‘group’ terms, that is an interaction between individuals qua group members, or in ways that alter the structure of group relations,” since it is then that “genuine changes at the intergroup level may be expected.”\(^{55}\) Moreover Brown and Hewstone went a step further by combining Brown and Turner’s analysis of interpersonal–intergroup behavior to Tajfel et al.’s social identity theory, stating that “contact between two individuals can be, and often is, intergroup contact, in that social categories are salient, there is self- and other-stereotyping and the target is seen as a typical outgroup member.”\(^ {56}\) They proposed a nine stage ‘Model of intergroup contact’ to analyse intergroup conflict (see Appendix), which added amongst others the intergroup contact participants’ evaluation of their contact, a feature taken up in this study (see Methodology).

Finally, some social psychologists have focused on the impact of friendships on prejudice-reduction. Pettigrew and Tropp found that “friendship is a particularly effective form of contact,” in “studies where intergroup friendship was the measure of contact had a markedly stronger effect on prejudice than those that did not.”\(^ {57}\) Furthermore, Pettigrew argued that friendships between individuals from minority and majority groups, played


\(^{56}\) Brown and Hewstone, “Contact Is Not Enough: An Intergroup Perspective on the Contact Hypothesis,” 38.

\(^{57}\) Crisp and Turner, Essential Social Psychology, 201.
more of a role in prejudice-reduction, than residential contact, or contact at the workplace.\textsuperscript{58} Besides, Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, Ropp, refer to a phenomenon known as “extended contact,” “just the knowledge that other people in your group have friends in the outgroup can reduce intergroup bias, a phenomenon referred to as extended contact.”\textsuperscript{59} Yet Moreover, Cameron and Rutland add that “the group membership of those involved in extended contact should remain salient if the interventions are to lead to more positive attitudes towards the outgroup in general.”\textsuperscript{60}

1.4. Intergroup bias and discrimination

One’s social identity and the need to maintain one’s uniqueness, have had an impact on how one comes to perceive others. Contact has been seen as one of the means sought to change attitudes in order to bring about more positive perceptions of others. In fact, some sociologists have argued that upon coming into contact, relations between people pass through a “peaceful progression,” meaning that “first there is sheer contact, leading soon to competition, which in turn gives way to accommodation, and finally to assimilation.”\textsuperscript{61} However, negative perceptions as well as competition, may also have an impact on one’s behavior with others, leading relations to regress. This section will focus on competitive versus cooperative behavior, in-group favoritism, racism and models on discriminative and genocidal behavior.

\textsuperscript{58} ibid.
\textsuperscript{59} Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, Ropp, 1997, in Ibid., 203.
\textsuperscript{60} Cameron and Rutland, 2006, in Ibid., 205.
\textsuperscript{61} Allport, Gordon. W., \textit{The Nature of Prejudice}, 261.
1.4.1. Competitive vs. Cooperative behavior

Unlike sociopsychological theories, Realistic Group conflict theory, suggests according to LeVine and Campbell that “group conflicts are rational in the sense that groups do have incompatible goals and are in competition for scarce resources.”\(^{62}\) Nonetheless, “actual competition over resources” is not necessary according to this theory, but the perception of it.\(^{63}\) Moreover, this theory also suggests that ethnocentrism (see section 1.2.1) in the result of such, “competitive interactions by groups to obtain their goals,” in which the “perception of threat” is seen as pivotal “by heightening in-group solidarity and engendering hostility toward the threatening out-group, especially if there is a history of antagonism between the groups.”\(^{64}\)

Realistic Group Conflict theory This theory is clearly shown via Sheriff et al.’s observational study among twenty 11 to 12-year-old boys at a summer camp at ‘Robbers Cave State Park’ in order “to obtain a model of intergroup behavior at all stages from group formation to interaction and eventual dissolution.”\(^{65}\) Upon arrival at the camp, the boys were randomly divided into two groups, which already sparked groups to compare themselves favorably with the other group, to call for the two groups to compete against


\(^{63}\) Korostelina, Karina V., Social Identity and Conflict: Structures, Dynamics and Implications, 128.


each other, and finally to identify with their own groups for instance by calling themselves the ‘Eagles’ or the ‘Rattlers,’ and also creating a matching group symbol. Crisp and Turner argue that this already showed “the development of a group norm and social identity.” Moreover, similar to Tajfel et al.’s 1971 study (see section 1.4.2), mere categorization led groups to call for competition. Yet the organizers then sought to purposely introduce an element of competition between the two groups via competitive games like tug-of-war and baseball, in order to analyse the impact of such games. Competition in fact led to forms of conflicts between the groups, since participants would maltreat members from the other groups including by attacking the groups’ symbols.

Conflicts may arise on tangible issues and escalate when prejudices come into the picture and are used as a lens through which to see the conflict. In fact Allport argues that

“Realistic conflict is like a note on an organ. It sets all prejudices that are attuned to it into simultaneous vibration. The listener can scarcely distinguish the pure note from the surrounding jangle.”

By way of example, writing in the 1950s, Allport mentions the perceived threat of dark-skinned labourers taking jobs of white-skinned ones. Yet he highlights how what happens in such cases is competition between two individuals over a job, yet it would be framed as a competition between two groups owing to their different skin-colour.

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68 ibid., 230.
Yet, as has been seen earlier in the discussion on prejudice-reduction, cooperation rather than competition has been seen to be effective in reducing tensions between the groups. This was in fact tested in the afore-mentioned study by Sherif et al, since in the final stage of the experiment, the organizers sought to make participants from the two groups cooperate between them (via arranging for the bus transporting them to an activity to breakdown), since either group would not have succeeded in accomplishing the task without the help of the other. Such cooperation was seen to improve relations between the two groups. Yet, the type of cooperation has also been qualified by later studies. In referring to Allport’s third condition, Blanchard et al. for instance, argued that “cooperation worked best when the outcome of the superordinate goal is successful.” Furthermore, Pettigrew adds that not only does cooperation need to take place, but over time in order to have “cumulative effects,” since a one-off instance of cooperation may not necessarily improve relations.

1.4.2 Ingroup-favoritism

In contrast to other experimental studies, such as the above-mentioned Sherif study and the study by Ferguson and Kelly (1964), Tajfel et al. highlight how “competition is not a necessary condition for creating discrimination between the in-group and the out-group.”

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To prove this, Tajfel et al. (1971) conducted two experiments to test whether mere social categorization leads to in-group in contrast to the ‘out-group,’ to be favoured.\(^7\) In the first experiment, teenage male students were randomly split into four groups (and individually briefed on the group they formed part of), but made to believe that the division was based on how well they fared in estimating the amount of dots that were projected on the screen. They were then required to allot rewards and penalties (of a 1/10 penny) in a booklet to the other individuals in the study, without knowing who they were (since everyone was given codenames), and without having the possibility of rewarding oneself. In the second experiment, a similar group of students, were made to choose between a painting by Klee or Kandinsky, and were then informed that they were being split into groups based on their preferences, which was not the case, since the division was random. Similarly to the first experiment, students were then told to allocate money to other individuals from the Kandinsky and Klee groups other than oneself, and were individually given a booklet with the name of the group they formed part of, to complete the task.

The results from the study showed that even in cases when participants were arbitrarily split into groups, even without contact with the out-group, and are faced with an alternative between everyone (from both groups) benefitting versus their group benefitting the most, they chose to favour their in-group.\(^7\) In other words, “mere categorization –

\(^{72}\) ibid.

\(^{73}\) Tajfel et al., “Social Categorization and Intergroup Behaviour,” 172.
simply knowing that someone is in the same group as you – was sufficient to illicit intergroup bias.”\textsuperscript{74} This premise laid the foundation for social identity theory.

As Fisher sums up, “Social identity theory tells us that the simple perceptual act of group categorization in a minimally competitive context will set in motion a process of group differentiation with resulting in-group favoritism.”\textsuperscript{75} The reason for this, Tajfel and Turner argue is, that one feels committed “to increase the status of our own group,” since “if our group does better than others then we also look good as individual members of that group,”\textsuperscript{76} which links back to the individual’s need for a positive self-esteem. By extension, this leads to putting down the out-group.

1.4.3 Racism

One result of categorization and of the need to put down the out-group is racism. Crisp and Turner argue that there are two forms of racism.\textsuperscript{77} Firstly there is what they call “old-fashioned racism,” whereby one applies negative stereotypes to individuals simply because they form part of a category to which do not subscribe.\textsuperscript{78} Secondly there is a more modern form of racism called “aversive racism” that is put forward by Gartner and Dovidio according to which one has some negative feelings towards the ‘out-group’ but is stuck in a dilemma since one knows that all should be treated equally and so such negative emotions

\textsuperscript{74} Crisp and Turner, \textit{Essential Social Psychology}, 216.
\textsuperscript{75} Fisher, “Intergroup Conflict,” 180–181.
\textsuperscript{76} Tajfel and Turner, 1979, in Crisp and Turner, \textit{Essential Social Psychology}, 220.
\textsuperscript{77} Crisp and Turner, \textit{Essential Social Psychology}, 190.
\textsuperscript{78} ibid., 190.
are out of place\textsuperscript{79}; consequently the individual experiences “negative emotions such as uneasiness, fear and discomfort” and decides to refrain from meetings individuals from the ‘out-group’ altogether.\textsuperscript{80}

### 1.4.4 Models on discriminative and genocidal behaviour

Numerous models have been put forward to demonstrate the extent to which intergroup relations may deteriorate, starting from categorizing others to hating them and trying to eradicate them, especially in the face of competition:

1. *Allport’s “Degrees of negative action”:* According to this model, people pass from different stages, starting from the “least energetic,” as follows: (1). Antilocution (which implies having prejudices but only speaking about them mainly with “like-minded friends”), (2). Avoidance (in this case the individual does not only have prejudices about another but struggles to avoid contact with him), (3). Discrimination (the prejudiced individual would treat others whom he/she is prejudiced against, differently than to ingroup members), (4). Physical attack (in the case the prejudice becomes more severe it may be expressed through violence or threats to the outgroup members), (5). Extermination (in the most extreme case, the individual would try to eradicate the other, which could also take form in genocide).\textsuperscript{81}

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\textsuperscript{80} Crisp and Turner, *Essential Social Psychology*, 190.

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2. **Korostelina’s 4C Model**: This model describes the “dynamic of identity conflict,” namely steps leading to identity conflicts. There are four stages (1) Comparison (in this stage individuals from different identity groups compare themselves to outgroup members, which may include having negative perceptions about the outgroup), (2) Competition (in this second stage individuals from different groups start competing for the same resources, which may be further triggered through threats), (3) Confrontation (in the this third stage one’s social identity is used to mobilize action against outgroup members, further deepening the divide between ‘Us’ and ‘them’) and (4) Counteraction (in the final stage this us-them dichotomy gains so much of an importance that the conflict takes it is perceived to be morally good to fight or discriminate against the outgroup).\(^{82}\)

While one may argue that it may be far-fetched for categorization to escalate to a level of genocide, as Allport notes “it is true that activity on one level makes transition to a more intense level easier.”\(^{83}\)

### 1.5 Conclusion

This literature review has discussed how intergroup relations develop by focusing on categorization, perceptions and behaviors. First, individuals were seen to associate with certain groups, in contrast to others, and embrace a social identity. This stems from one’s

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\(^{82}\) Korostelina, Karina V., *Social Identity and Conflict: Structures, Dynamics and Implications*, 147.

need for self-esteem in part by feeling unique and thereby different from others. Social categorization thereby takes place whereby one cognitively classifies peoples as members of the we-group or not, making it easier for oneself to process one’s interactions with others.

Through categorization, one identifies ‘prototypes,’ a typical example of an out-group member, based on what characteristics one perceives to be standard of that out-group, including stereotypes. One also tends to attribute negative behaviours to out-group members. Since one perceives all out-group members to be the same, it is hard to change one’s perceptions of them. Additionally, perceiving others to be very different from oneself, can lead to an increase in social distance between the individual and oneself. One also tends to fear the ‘Other,’ especially the less one knows them, which contributes to anxiety felt as a result of interactions with the other. Social psychologists have sought to find ways to reduce prejudice, and contact between groups was in part seen to be a solution. Yet again, the extent to which one is ready to generalize a positive relationship with an individual to the out-group at large, has an impact on whether one’s attitude towards out-group members would change.

Finally, actual behavior between groups can take both a positive and a negative route. If relations take place in a competitive rather than a cooperative context, they would already create tensions between groups. This is especially so when one favours one’s own groups at the expense of others in order to acquire the most gains for one’s own group.
When such behaviours are taken to the extreme, they may result in discriminating against members of out-groups, simply because of their group membership. Taken to the extreme, intergroup relations may regress to such an extent that groups would seek their mutual annihilation.

Consequently one could see the crucial impact categorization and perceptions of other groups have on the nature of contact between groups. Policies may in part be the key to turn hostilities between Sumner’s ‘we-group’ and ‘others-group’ into peaceful relations.
CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW II:
MIGRATION: THE CASE OF MALTA

2.1 Introduction

Following the previous chapter that laid the foundations for the study, this chapter will focus on the narrower case study of Malta. Malta is a small island in the Mediterranean of 80 km south of Sicily and 284 km east from Tunisia. Although the national language in Malta is Maltese, English and Maltese are the official languages used on the island. Roman Catholicism is the official religion in the country. Its strategic position in the Mediterranean between the European and African continents has led it become the centre of both emigration and immigration. Since the following study will deal with migration in Malta, this chapter will first give a brief overview on the background to migration in Malta, before discussing relevant laws and policies applicable to migration in Malta, giving an overview on the way immigrants are referred to in Malta, and finally linking the former chapter with the data presented here.
2.2 Background to the migration phenomenon in Malta

As Durick notes, “Malta has a very long history of multiple invasions and sieges and this is strongly imprinted upon the social memory.”¹ Most notable is the Great Siege of 1565, in which Malta prides itself for winning over the Ottoman Empire. Yet for the purpose of this study due to time and word limitations, the overview of migration in Malta will start with Malta under British rule.

2.2.1 19th and 20th Century: Emigration from Malta

The British came to Malta in 1800, during the French blockade, and Malta officially became and British colony in 1813. Years under British rule were amongst others shaped by Maltese struggle for constitutional rights. Moreover, in the face of unemployment, the British encouraged Maltese to emigrate to other English-speaking lands (that would in turn help to populate them), such as Canada, Australia.²

Yet these were not easy journeys for the Maltese, particularly since many were unable to speak English, and thereby found it hard to integrate into the societies. In fact they would leave Malta with a sign stating their name and where they are going in order to hopefully find help once they get to their destination. Quite large amounts of Maltese

people emigrated at the time. While some decided to stay there (in fact it is said that there are more Maltese living in Australia, if you count second and third generations too, than in Malta), others eventually sought to return to Malta. In fact, till this day Malta gets an influx of former Maltese emigrants. Additionally, Maltese Emigration remains imprinted in the minds of the Maltese until today.

It is in fact in 1950 that the Emigrants’ Commission, which is a voluntary, non-profitable and non-governmental organization, came about in order to assist Maltese migrating abroad due to the rising unemployment and overpopulation on the island.³

Malta gained its independence from Great Britain on the 21st September 1964. The 1970s was then a period in which Maltese that had formerly emigrated overseas, returned to Malta. Durick notes how the Maltese population accepted them and they blended in with the rest of the population, although one still sees house names in Gozo called ‘God Bless Australia’ or God Bless Canada.”⁴ Moreover, the return of these migrants “was not seen as a risk for future socio-economic prospects…” of the Maltese.⁵

Meanwhile, on the 13th December 1974, Malta became a Republic (thereby no longer under the rule of the Queen of England), and the final British vessels officially left Malta on the 31st March 1979.

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⁵ Cauchi, quoted in Amore, 2005, 7-8, quoted in ibid.
2.2.2 The official start of migration to Malta: 2002-2013:

In 2002, the tables turned. This time Malta was no longer a country of origin of migrants to Australia and Canada amongst others, but it started receiving flows of migrants from the Horn of Africa. Despite the fact, that Malta had also received immigrants from Iraq as a result of the Gulf war, Malta was not prepared for this flow of immigrants. Yet Malta came into international limelight when the Nationalist government came into the limelight at the time for deporting 220 Eritreans back to their home country, where they were allegedly tortured. Moreover, on the 1st May 2004, Malta became a member state of the European Union (E.U.). Along with increased security at the EU’s Eastern Mediterranean border between Greece and the non-EU Eastern countries, and the Western Moroccan-Spain border, from which migrants used to enter the EU, EU accession is said to have been a factor in increasing migration flows to Malta. In fact, the migrant flows were seen to increase as from 2004, slumping in 2010 (see appendix VIII). Yet, as a result of the Arab Spring of 2011 that was characterized by turmoil that spread out through North Africa and the Middle East, ‘boat arrivals’ to Malta further increased. Moreover the Labour government came under scrutiny in July 2013 when he threatened to “push-back” migrants to Libya, owing to the increased flow off migrants to Malta and the lack of solidarity from other member states, but this was blocked by the European Court of Human

7 Christine M. Cassar, Researching Migration and Asylum in Malta: A Guide, 12.
Rights following pressure by local NGOs.\textsuperscript{9} Yet it was an issue of much controversy both locally and internationally.

According to the UNHCR, most immigrants that arrive in Malta by sea are Sub-Saharan African. In 2013, while 50\% of the migrants were Somali, 23\% Eritrean, while only 8\% were Syrians.\textsuperscript{10} Similarly according to the latest statistics, boat arrivals in Malta in 2014 were mainly from the Somalia (38\%), Sudan (13\%), the Gambia (13\%) and Nigeria (10\%). Consequently research on immigration in Malta would do well to focus on Sub-Saharan African migrants.

Yet, despite the influx of Sub-Saharan African migrants, according to the latest Malta Census by the National Statistics Office (2011) more British living in Malta than Sub-Saharan Africans; the highest numbers of non-Maltese residents in Malta, which total 20,289, come from the U.K (6,652), Somalia (1,041), Italy (947), Bulgaria (850) and Germans.\textsuperscript{11} While UNHCR highlights that while around 19,000 migrants have arrived in Malta since 2002, only around 30\% remain in Malta, others being resettled to other


countries or applying for assisted voluntary return (See Appendix I). Research in the field must also keep in mind the transitoriness of the immigrant population in Malta.

2.3 Migration law and policy in Malta

As has been seen from the previous chapter, law and policy have an impact on the handling of migration. Malta’s cases on returning migrants in 2002 and 2013 further highlight that Malta needs to abide by international and local laws when it comes to the treatment of immigrants. Due to the new situation in Malta consequent to the new influx of migrants, Malta has had to adapt to the situation and to create frameworks to deal with it.

2.3.1 International Law

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights first mentioned the right to seek asylum under Article 14: “Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution,” but it was non-binding. It was followed by the United Nations Refugee Convention (1951) relating to the status of refugees, of which Malta is a signatory and thereby bound by, since the 17th June 1971, as well as its adjunct protocol of 1967, which removes the temporal and geographic limits of the convention, since the 15th

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September 1971. The Refugee Convention (Article 1), as amended by the 1967 Protocol, defined a ‘refugee’ as a person, who:

“owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.”

Moreover the Convention identifies the refugees’ rights and states’ legal obligations towards them. Of importance is the fact that the Refugee Convention also established the principle of ‘non-refoulement’ (prohibition of expulsion or return):

“No Contracting State shall expel or return (“refouler”) a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.”

This key principle was recognized as ‘customary international law,’ via a” Declaration of States parties to the 1951 Convention and/or its 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees,’ in Geneva in December 2001.

2.3.2 European Law

The Right to Asylum is also guaranteed by Article 18 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000/ C 364/ 01):

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15 ibid., p. 4.
“The right to asylum shall be guaranteed with due respect for the rules of the Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951 and the Protocol of 31 January 1967 relating to the status of refugees and in accordance with the Treaty establishing the European Community.”\textsuperscript{16}

As highlighted earlier, migration to Malta has increased following its joining to the EU. It thereby extended the EU’s reach and became one of the EU’s external borders, which is not without implications. Why is this so? It is because of the fact that “freedom of movement” is one of the four main principles of the E.U. meaning that E.U. nationals could travel to any E.U. country, without being stopped at borders. This was further set in stone when the Schengen Agreement (1985) became part of the acquis communautaire (the EU’s body of law), according to which Maltese nationals (like any other E.U. citizen) has the right to travel to other E.U. member states without requiring a visa or needing to present a passport; one’s valid identity card is sufficient. In December 1997, Malta joined the Schengen area.\textsuperscript{17}

Moreover, just like other EU countries, Malta is bound by laws that regulate immigration from third-country nationals. Since 1999, the EU has being trying to set up a Common European Asylum System (CEAS), in order to ensure that asylum seekers are uniformly dealt with across the E.U.

Of much controversy in particular, has been the Council Regulation (EC) No. 343/2003, known better as the “Dublin II Regulation.” According to this regulation, which replaces the 1990 Dublin Regulation, an asylum application can be launched in a single EU member state, in order to prevent the moving of asylum seekers between different countries, and to pre-empt the abuse of the asylum system by asylum seekers, by launching multiple asylum applications in different countries.18 This regulation sets out the criteria in chronological of precedence, according to which E.U. member states determine which state is responsible to take charge of the asylum application, namely according to: the principle of family unity (as much as possible asylum applications of family members are processed together, or in the E.U. member state where another family member is legally present), depending on the state that issued a residence permit or visa, the state in which the asylum seeker entered legally or illegally (the first point of entry, in the case that no other criteria can be fulfilled), and the airport in which an application is launched in the international transit area.19

The Directives that form part of CEAS, namely the Qualification Directive (that defines criteria to be granted protection, which was agreed to in 2011 and became applicable since the 21st December 2013), the Dublin III regulation20 (adopted on 26 June

19 ibid.
2013 and applicable as from 1st January 2014), and the Asylum Procedures Direction, the Reception Conditions Directive, and the EURODAC Regulation (concerning the E.U. database of fingerprints of the asylum seekers), have been revised in 2013 to ensure for greater harmonization of rules pertaining to asylum in the EU, and they will come into force as from July 2015. The new EU Reception Conditions Directive in particular, puts increasing pressure on EU Members states to limit the use of detention to exceptional circumstances and for very short periods, and making it also subject to judicial review.

Malta is responsible for a large Search and Rescue area which means that naval vessels entering the area “with no flag state” and whose occupants do not carry the legal documentation that allows them to travel, would be intercepted and rescued by the Malta Armed Forces. Yet in October 2013, the Mare Nostrum Operation, which is an aero-naval operation, was deployed to embellish search and rescue mission. The operation has run into difficulty since Italy perceives itself to be left alone in its mission. In fact recent discussions have been under way to supplement the mission with an EU mission called ‘Frontex Plus.’

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24 “#knowthefacts - Publication on Migration and Asylum for MEP Candidates and Stakeholders,” 6.
In addition, Malta receives funds from the EU to deal with migration, known as EU solidarity funds. For the 2007-2013 funding period, Malta received more than €90 m in funds under the External Borders Fund, European Refugee Fund, European Return Fund, European Integration Fund and Emergency Funds.26

2.3.3 Maltese Law

Malta also has its own specific law dealing with migration, in line with European and International law. First of all there is the Refugee Act, which transposed the UN Refugee Convention that deals with the reception of migrants and granting them status. Malta also has a detention policy that deals with the reception of migrants. The Maltese parliament approved the Refugee Act (Chapter 420 of the Laws of Malta) on 25 July 2000 and along with its subsidiary regulations entered into force in October 2001.27 The Office of the Refugee Commissioner and the Refugee Appeals board, mentioned below, are established under this act.28 Moreover, immigration in Malta was decriminalized in 2002.29 Immigrants are seen to pass through a lengthy process starting from arrival to their integration in the community, the main aspects of which is listed below.

26 “#knowthefacts - Publication on Migration and Asylum for MEP Candidates and Stakeholders,” 4.
27 UNHCR Malta, “History of UNHCR.”
28 ibid.
29 European Migration Network (EMN), The Organisation of Asylum and Migration Policies - Factsheet: Malta.
2.3.3.1 Arrival in Malta

In the cases when migrants arrive in Malta by boat (the way the majority of immigrants reach the Maltese islands), they undergo a brief medical check and given a police-number for instance 11-A-07, which consists of the year of their arrival (in the year ‘2011’), a letter representing the boat (‘A’ is the letter of the first boat that arrives on Maltese shores), and an individual identification number given to each person on the boat (‘07’).³⁰

2.3.3.2 Applying for asylum

If the migrants arrive without a valid passport or visa (indiscriminately whether they arrive by sea or plane), they are for the time being subject to a Removal Order under the Immigration Act, at least until the launch an asylum application,³¹ and are detained in one of the detention centres. However they have sixty days in which to apply for asylum. Under international law, everyone has a right to apply for asylum and no one can deny an individual to apply for such a right. An alternative to asylum provided by the International Organization of Migration (IOM) is a programme known as “Assisted Voluntary Return and Sustainable Reintegration in the Country of Origin programme” (AVR), whereby migrants are returned to their country of origin but given some form of monetary assistance to start off a business or something. 73 migrants opted for this option in Malta in 2013.³²

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³¹ ibid., 15.
³² “#knowthefacts - Publication on Migration and Asylum for MEP Candidates and Stakeholders,” 10.
If migrants decide to apply for asylum, they fill in a detailed preliminary questionnaire (PQ) which registers their original interest in applying for asylum. This questionnaire is passed on to the Office of the Refugee Commissioner in Malta, who is ultimately responsible to decide on asylum cases. In the case of unaccompanied migrants who claim to be underage (less than 18), they are subject to an age-assessment test by the AWAS, to prove whether they are minors or not. In the case that they are minors, they are released from detention, put under care-order and housed in one of the centres for unaccompanied minors (UAMs), namely Dar il-Liedna or Dar is-Sliem. Families as well as pregnant women are also released earlier from detention and housed in an open centre upon confirmations that there is a real bond between the couple in question. Other migrants including those who were not accepted as UAMs, are then called for an interview with the Refugee Commissioner wherein they fill in another more detailed application and are given an opportunity to present their case for asylum (when possible supported by documents they may be in possession of). At this point, the migrants are not provided with a lawyer, unless they pay for one. Following the interview, the migrants wait for the outcome of their asylum application.

2.3.3.3 Protection granted in Malta

Migrants could be granted one of four different types of statuses, each of which entitles them to different rights:

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i) **Refugee status**: this is the ultimate status that could be granted to people fleeing direct persecution on religious, ethnic, cultural grounds if they had to return to their country. A very small percentage of asylum applicants are granted such a status. With a refugee status, migrants are granted the same rights as Maltese to work and social benefits, however they would only be entitled to apply for Maltese citizenship after living in Malta for 10 years.\(^{34}\) They also “have the right to be issued a Convention Travel Document to enable them to travel.”\(^{35}\) “Family reunification is only open to recognized refugees, allowing them to apply to obtain authorization for their spouse and/or minor children to come to Malta.”\(^{36}\) “Recognised refugees are entitled to access the labour market under the same conditions as Maltese nationals; however, they require a work permit.”\(^{37}\)

ii) **Subsidiary protection**: this form of protection is granted to individuals who have a legitimate fear that they would be persecuted if they should return home, but not as an individual but because of the group they are part of. They cannot return to their home country at least until their current government would still be in place. They are granted very little rights. In fact, a number of migrants who acquired subsidiary protection choose to apply for the Resettlement programme by the UNHCR for instance to the United States. This is more common form of protection than refugee status. “Beneficiaries of subsidiary

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\(^{34}\) aditus and UNHCR, “Nitkellmu? Refugee Integration Perspectives in Malta.”

\(^{35}\) Procedural Regulations, Article 14, in ibid., Naturalisation, Family life and Future Plans.

\(^{36}\) ibid.

protection may apply for an ‘alien’s passport.’” “Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection have no right to family reunification in Malta.” “Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection are required to apply for a work permit, issued by the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC), and this must be renewed annually. Under Maltese legislation, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection are granted access to employment subject to the undefined “labour market restrictions.” They are not eligible to register as unemployed, with the consequence that they do not qualify for regular unemployment benefits. In transposing the Qualification Directive, Malta granted beneficiaries of subsidiary protection the right to be granted “core social welfare benefits,” a level of benefits that has been interpreted as meaning ‘social assistance’ in terms of the Malta Social Security Act.”

iii) **Temporary humanitarian protection:** This is a form of protection found only in Malta which is given to migrants who for serious health reasons or because of their sexual orientation, should not be sent back to their home country.

iv) **Rejection:** The claim for asylum may also be rejected. In this case migrants have a week to apply for an appeal of the decision, should they wish to do so, and are provided with a lawyer by law. Rejected migrants are not entitled to any rights as Maltese, but are allowed to work. Such migrants may also be

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39 ibid.


41 ibid.
deported if the Maltese government makes arrangements with the governments of their country of origin, as has been done in the case of a number of Nigerians in April 2014.\(^{42}\)

\subsection*{2.3.3.4 Detention centres}

During their wait for the outcome of the asylum procedure, migrants are confined to one of the three closed detention centres: the Hermes Block at Lyster Barracks and Warehouse One and B Block (Safi Barracks).\(^{43}\) If the migrants receive a positive answer that they would be granted a form of status, they would be released from detention upon receiving the decision. However if they do not receive a decision by the end of 12 months in detention, they are released from detention. In the case of migrants who were not granted a positive status that would grant them the right to be released from detention, they would remain in detention for a further six months and are automatically released once the 18 months are up. If migrants are not granted protection, Malta reserves the right to deport them back to their country, subject to international and European law; Malta returned 460 such migrants in 2013.\(^{44}\)

The conditions in the detention centres have been criticized by numerous organisations amongst them Amnesty International. Médecins sans Frontières who used to


\(^{44}\) "#knowthefacts - Publication on Migration and Asylum for MEP Candidates and Stakeholders,” 10.
help in the detention centres refuse to work there any longer due to the conditions. UNHCR Malta reiterated the need to reform Malta’s detention policy. Not only is it seen unacceptable to keep a large amount of migrants together in such closed confinements with one hour of “sunshine” a day seen to be inhumane, but they are also limited as to what they can do all day, and live in a rather unclean barracks without proper clean water. In fact, two cases at the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in 2013, confirmed that “Malta’s detention policy and framework is not in conformity with the European Convention on Human Rights” but Maltese authorities highlight that a detention reform is being considered.  

2.3.3.5 Open centres

Upon being released from the detention centres migrants are usually taken to one of the open centres available, namely the Marsa Open Centre, the Hal Far Open Centre, Hal Far Tent Village and Hal Far Reception Centre, Dar il-Liedna (Fgura) and Dar is-Sliem (St. Venera), that are administered by AWAS. For the purpose of this study the centres in Hal Far are taken to be included under the general name ‘Hal Far Open Centre,’ since they are not the focus of the study. They migrants allowed to live here for a year and are given a per diem allowance, if they report to the authorities of the Open Centres three times a week. Following a year in the centre, they could continue living there even if they would have found a job, as long as they pay for their stay (35 euros a month). Moreover the

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45 ibid., 9.
46 Christine M. Cassar, Researching Migration and Asylum in Malta: A Guide, 44.
Emigrant’s Commission is also in charge of 14 residencies in different localities, the Balzan Open Centre (as will be seen later on).

2.3.3.6 Living in the community

Alternatively, if they find a job and manage to find a job and an apartment where to say, they are given an amount of money to help them with the funding of the house for the first few months. Yet as a study on acquisition of housing among migrants by the NCPE shows, this is not always an easy task, since migrants face discrimination in searching for housing in Malta.⁴⁷ There are several localities in which migrants are staying especially Birzebbuġa, Bugibba, Msida, Balzan and Marsa. The highest numbers of migrant populations can be found in Bugibba, Msida, Gżira and Marsa.⁴⁸

2.3.3.7 Integration

So far, Malta does not have a comprehensive integration policy when it comes to migrants, which according to Aditus “remains a major challenge for protection beneficiaries, and asylum-seekers, living in Malta.”⁴⁹

Studies have taken place concerning the extent of integration in Malta. A recent report ‘Nitkellmu?’ by Aditus and UNHCR present results on two projects that focused on

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⁴⁸ Christine M. Cassar, Researching Migration and Asylum in Malta: A Guide, 43.
the dynamics of settlement and integration in Malta, one from the points of view of beneficiaries of protection, titled ‘Meet the Other,’ wherein mainly refugees living in private accommodation in the community chiefly in Msida, Gzira, Valletta, Hamrun or in other central localities, where interviewed, and the second ‘Stakeholder Information Sessions,’ that brought together service-providers linked to migrants in Malta, in order to help them to better handle the new realities they are facing.

The above mentioned funds, such as the European Refugee Fund, have also been made use of by NGOs such as SOS Malta to foster further integration of migrants into the Maltese community, for instance via the 2011 ‘Same Difference’ project, that aimed to bring Maltese and immigrants together in an informal setting through the means of ethnic food, and the ‘Youth Upbeat’ project, through which young migrants and Maltese come together through performing arts.

Moreover a 13-month study was undertaken from 2012-2013, by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner, titled ‘Putting Integration into Perspective: Studying the Integration Efforts of Beneficiaries of International Protection and Identifying Areas where Special Input is Needed,’ in which the current level of integration of migrants was analysed, relevant stakeholders in the field were brought together to discuss five topics pertaining to migrant integration (housing, social benefits, employment, education and

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language, and social life inclusion), areas for improvement were identified and information leaflets were created as aids to migrants.\textsuperscript{52}

\textbf{2.3.3.8 Acquisition of Maltese citizenship}

Finally refugees who have lived in Malta for ten years are eligible to acquire citizenship, subject to the discretion of the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs\textsuperscript{53} Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection cannot apply for Maltese citizenship, owing to their status.\textsuperscript{54} However both refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection may be conferred Maltese citizenship if they get married to a Maltese, just as is the case with other non-Maltese individuals.\textsuperscript{55} As for children who are born to migrants in Malta (including refugees), they are listed down in the public registry, but it still does not automatically make them Maltese citizens.\textsuperscript{56}

\textbf{2.3.3.9 Resettlement}

An alternative to integration, especially with migrants who have subsidiary protection and are thus not given the whole array of rights like refugees, for instance they do not have access to “family reunification,”\textsuperscript{57} “resettlement” is available. This is “a

\textsuperscript{52} Office of the Refugee Commissioner, \textit{Putting Integration into Perspective: Studying Integration Efforts of Beneficiaries and Identifying Areas Where Special Input Is Needed}, 2013.
\textsuperscript{54} ibid.
\textsuperscript{55} ibid.
\textsuperscript{56} ibid.
\textsuperscript{57} ibid.
protection tool that meets the specific needs of individual refugees whose fundamental rights might be at risk in the country where they have sought refuge or where there is a lack of integration prospects.” So far in 2014 for instance, 226 migrants have been resettled to the United States.

### 2.4 How are immigrants in Malta referred to?

Different ways have been sought in order to categorise migrants, and while the terms are used interchangeably, they do not always mean the same thing. UNHCR highlights, how the term “illegal immigrant” is used, this is in fact in correct, since in countries like Malta, who have decriminalized immigration, entering the country is not criminal but an administrative violation. Similarly referring to migrants as “clandestines” (in Maltese “klandestini”), also portrays an element of illegality, which is even worse when migrants are legally living in Malta but still referred to in that way. Instead, “irregular immigrants” is the term that is preferred. As Durick notes, in Malta the definition of an “irregular immigrant,” “clandestine/undocumented migrant or migrant in an irregular situation,” is given by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), to mean someone who “owing to unauthorized entry, breach of a condition of entry, or the expiry of his or her visa, lacks legal status in a transit or host country,” including if the individual took up “unauthorized employment” once the visa would have expired.

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58 “#knowthefacts - Publication on Migration and Asylum for MEP Candidates and Stakeholders,” 10.
60 “#knowthefacts - Publication on Migration and Asylum for MEP Candidates and Stakeholders,” 13.
2.5 The case-study: Contact between the Maltese and Sub-Saharan African migrants in Balzan and Marsa

The first chapter has given an indication that intergroup relations are in part shaped by one’s identity as well as competition over resources, this has set the stage for a study on what happens when differing groups come into contact. Moreover, as this chapter has highlighted, Sub-Saharan African migrants are the largest number of migrants that arrive irregularly. Studies have taken place, dealing with contact between the Maltese and Sub-Saharan African migrants in an educational setting in which Caruana found out that intergroup contact did not change perceptions towards the extent to which migrant should be integrated into the community, a quantitative survey by UNHCR (2012) survey was also conducted on the perceptions Maltese have of migrants, Clark and Bradford on the other hand focused on the perceptions migrants have of the Maltese. Yet, studies have so far not seemed to focus on migration within the localities, something that this study seeks to do. The chosen localities, both with an open centre but that are largely dissimilar are Balzan and Marsa (see the Methodology Chapter 3 for further justification).

This leads to the formulation of the research question, namely:

What is are the nature and dynamics of the interaction between the Maltese and the Sub-Saharan migrants in the two localities?

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More specifically,

a) What are the main problems in the interaction between these two groups?

b) How do the Maltese and the immigrants categorise each other?

c) How is the perception of social contact interconnected with: (A) The perception of threat, and (B) Assessment of the detention/migration policies and institutions?

2.6 Conclusion

Following a survey on literature pertaining to theories of intergroup conflict (Chapter 1) and an overview on migration in Malta (Chapter 2), the researcher has honed in on the particular case-study of this study, namely the contact between the Maltese and the Sub-Saharan African migrants in Balzan and Marsa. The next chapter will deal with the methodology adopted in order to research the subject in question.
CHAPTER THREE – METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Following a review of literature on intergroup relations (Chapter 1) and of the situation of migration in Malta (Chapter 2), the topics chosen for this study was chosen to be an analysis of the dynamics of the contact between Maltese and Sub-Saharan African migrants in the localities of Balzan and Marsa, focusing on the way individuals from the two groups categorise each other, the perception of contact they have with members of the other group, their perception of mutual threat and their assessment of policies pertaining to migration and detention, the latter being the ones that seem to have the largest potential impact on their relations. The resultant research question is: What are the nature and dynamics of the interaction between the Maltese and the Sub-Saharan African migrants? What are the main problems in the interaction between these two groups? This chapter will delve more into the justifications for the research and focus on the research design and methods used, in order to answer the research question.
3.2 Justification for research

The choice of the research topic was given much thought and the researcher sought to narrow the topic down as much as possible in order to make sure that the study is specific enough to be analysed in more detail, rather than tackling the subject on a more general level.

3.2.1 Choice of research topic: Migration in Malta

The researcher became attracted to the general topic of intergroup relations, since relations between individuals/groups are what ultimately lies at the heart of conflict. After delving into relevant literature in the field, the researcher sought to focus on contact theory specifically. As has been seen, numerous studies were conducted in the field. One study focused on Malta, and seems to be the only one of its kind to date, was a 2012 study by Roxanne Caruana that analysed “The Effects of Intergroup Contact on Maltese Adolescents’ Evaluations of Interracial Exclusion.” She highlighted that although the field of contact theory is developing, “Malta lacks research in this area,” and consequently further study is needed concerning contact theory in Malta. Consequently this study aims to contribute to fill in such a research gap.¹

Knowledge of the Maltese language and the local culture was seen as an asset by the researcher, since it would allow the researcher to get a better grasp of the local context.

This would especially be advantageous when it comes to interviews, since Maltese participants would be able to speak in their mother tongue, in which they may potentially feel more comfortable. Additionally, the researcher chose to focus on the local context, due to the potentially greater availability of data, especially taking time and word constraints into consideration.

Since the start of substantial numbers of migrant arrivals by boat in Malta since 2002 (see Chapter 2), as was seen, migration has come to be an issue high on the agenda in Malta. Calleya and Lutterbeck also argue that policy related to illegal immigration has been ranked as “one of Malta’s top policy priorities” already in 2008. Having volunteered locally in an NGO in the field of migration, the researcher was herself interested in the topic.

As a result intergroup relations were chosen to be studied in the context of migration in Malta.

3.2.2 Choice of migrants target group: Sub-Saharan Africans

As highlighted in the previous Chapter, there are several groups of migrants in Malta. Yet, Sub-Saharan African migrants constitute the largest group of migrants that

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arrive in Malta.\textsuperscript{3} As a consequence, this group of migrants was selected for the case study, in order to get a better understanding of the contact between the Maltese and the largest migrant group (despite the differences in the countries of origins).

### 3.3 Research design

The study being socio-psychological in nature, the researcher sought to analyse the intergroup relations by honing in on the individual’s perceptions of the situation, the reason being that they play a large role in the way individuals see the outgroup and relations with it. Like other studies before it, this research seeks to apply contact theory to a particular context. Hewstone and Brown highlight that numerous field (rather than laboratory) studies have taken place in various social settings for instance in educational or occupational settings, in the army and in places of residence, in order to test the contact hypothesis.\textsuperscript{4} This was therefore another reason why the researcher selected field research as the method of assessing the contact between the Maltese and Sub-Saharan African migrants. This meant that interviews with people from both groups, was found to be the most appropriate method to conduct this type of research. Since qualitative research, focuses on research objects “in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them,”\textsuperscript{5} and this research focuses on perceptions, that are mental

\textsuperscript{4} Brown and Hewstone, “Contact Is Not Enough: An Intergroup Perspective on the Contact Hypothesis,” 6.
constructs, a qualitative rather than a quantitative form of research was opted for. The researcher in fact, also refrained from making use of an experimental design and inviting participants to take part in an exercise that is independent of their usual life, in order not to take the relations between the two groups out of context, but to give interviews an opportunity to share their perceptions based on their own experiences. In this way, results could also be used to find ways how relations could tangibly be improved (if necessary), it being a study of a real-life interaction.

Interviewee questions were also chosen to be semi-structured in nature. Similar to the research conducted by Aditus, “the focus of the interviews was to engage in an open discussion” with the migrants. Consequently the researcher left the interviewee somewhat open as to what to talk about, while directing them towards the questions when necessary in order to stick to the main themes.

Interviews were to be conducted with both Maltese and migrants for three main reasons. Firstly, the researcher believes that a more holistic view of the situation can be acquired by asking both parties involved. Secondly, so far, studies on migration in Malta have often focused on one side of the coin, be it the Maltese people’s perspectives, for instance the study mentioned earlier, as well as others mentioned in Chapter 2 by Vassallo, UNHCR, Durick or the university student survey, or the migrants’ perspectives, namely

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6 aditus and UNHCR, “Nitkellmu? Refugee Integration Perspectives in Malta.”
the one by Clark, “time constraints,” being one of the reasons given. Thirdly, since migrants’ as the People for Change Foundation noted, “very few efforts were made to describe migration from the migrants’ perspective,” and Pettigrew argues that perceptions of minorities are generally not much looked into, this research aims to look into both sides of the story.

3.4 Sampling

The selection of the sample had to include the choice of the contact setting, the type of residence of the migrants, the localities as well as the number of individuals to be interviewed.

3.4.1 Contact setting: Residential contact

Keeping time and word constraints in mind, the researcher had to select a particular setting where contact between Maltese and Sub-Saharan African migrants takes place. According to the results by the 2012 UNHCR survey “What do you think?” the Maltese respondents answered that their contact with refugees/ migrants happens “at work” (36.4%), “on the street” (34.2%), “in a shop” (9.8%) and “on a bus” (2.7%) amongst

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others.\textsuperscript{10} Due to the fact that hand-picking individuals in the occupational sector would be both difficult and may raise ethical concerns due to perceived harm on the employer or employee in speaking about the other, or the possibility of working as an unregistered workers, and since most contact seems to take place in residential areas (on the street/ in a shop/ on the bus), the researcher chose to focus on the residential setting. Caruana Scicluna mentioned earlier, who conducted her research in a school-setting, also noted that “had participants been chosen based on locality, for example, the frequency of contact might have been much higher.”\textsuperscript{11}

\subsection*{3.4.2 Choice of type of migrant residence: Open Centres}

As was seen in Chapter 2, during their stay in Malta, sub-Saharan African migrants live in the detention centres, open centres or in the community. When it came to the choice of a sample for the interviews, the researcher first selected which migrant residence to focus on.

The detention centres were not chosen for a number of reasons. Due to the fact that detention centres are closed, the actual opportunity of contact between the Maltese and Sub-Saharan African migrants (save for the staff or NGOs) is minimal, therefore it would be difficult to analyse contact in that setting. Furthermore, access to detention centres and permission to interview migrants is harder in detention centres especially since one would


\textsuperscript{11} Caruana Scicluna, R., “The Effects of Intergroup Contact on Maltese Adolescents’ Evaluations of Interracial Exclusion [digital Dissertation],” 43.
be dealing with vulnerable populations. Thirdly, the populations in the detention centres are less stable than those in open centres or in the community, where migrants spend more time. Thus generalizability of results may have proven to have been harder.

The migrants living in a community were not generally chosen (with the exception of one from each locality), since similar to the occupational setting it would have proven to be problematic to select migrants in the community. This would have proven to be more difficult since “[t]here is no comprehensive data available with regard to the number of beneficiaries of protection residing in rented accommodation.”

In fact migrants in private accommodation are rarely interviewed amongst others due to “logistical and sampling challenges of locating the migrant.” Moreover, similar interviews were recently conducted by Aditus in the community during house-to-house visits.

The choice fell on the open centres of which there were nine to choose from. These were seen as the most appropriate since the migrant population would be more contained and thereby easier to contact. Furthermore, recruitment may be easier due to the backing of the management of the respective centres.


13 Christine M. Cassar, Researching Migration and Asylum in Malta: A Guide, 43.

14 aditus and UNHCR, “Nitkellmu? Refugee Integration Perspectives in Malta.”
3.4.3 Choice of localities: Balzan and Marsa

There are 9 different open centres, yet the researcher decided to focus on two, which could then be compared, due to the time and word limitations of the study. Following a conference on migration in Malta in October 2013 that featured representatives of the Marsa and Balzan local councils due to the open centres present in these two localities, as well as two articles comparing the two localities published in the Times of Malta, the researcher decided to follow-up on these materials and to focus on these open centres for the purpose of this study. Moreover, while the Hal Far Open Centre is also mentioned a lot, it is located much further out from the Hal Far residents than is the case of Marsa or Balzan. Thus is would have been harder to gauge such contact.

3.4.4 Selected sample: 38 interviewees

A quarter-sampling method was sought in order to conduct interviews, in order to select both a group of Maltese and a group of migrants from both Marsa and Balzan. According to Brounéus, in peace research the usual amount of interviews would be between 10 and 40.\textsuperscript{15} As a consequence an average of 7-10 people per group was to be interviewed. In total 38 individuals were interviewed (see Appendix II – Breakdown of interviewees). 10 people each from amongst the migrants in Marsa and Balzan and the Maltese from Balzan, and 8 Maltese from Marsa. The researcher found more backing in

the selection of Maltese interviewees from Balzan than from Marsa, and was forewarned that it would most likely be so.

3.5 Preparation

3.5.1 Requesting permission

Since the researcher sought to interview migrants in two open centres, permission needed to be sought to do so. The researcher contacted the FSM for the Marsa Open Centre and Fr. Alfred Vella from the Emigrant’s Commission for the Balzan Open Centre and was granted access to the centres.

3.5.2 Preparing interview questions

Interview questions were drafted following general readings on categorization, contact, threat and policies (see Chapter 1). These were also taken to be the four main themes of the interviews. Of particular importance were the “list of variables” proposed by Allport in order to analyse the “kinds of contact” that take place between people\(^\text{16}\) (see Appendix III – Kinds of contact). These variables were sought in order to conduct the study in line with other research in the field of contact theory. The variables made use of are the following:

"Quantitative aspects of contact": a. Frequency, b. Duration;
Status aspects of contact: Minority member status [e.g. their refugee status or otherwise];
the group status
Role aspects of the contact: a. Is the relationship one of competitive or cooperative activity? b. Is there a superordinate or subordinate role relation involved; e.g. master-servant, employer-employee, teacher-pupil?
Social atmosphere surrounding the contact: a. Is segregation prevalent, or is egalitarianism expected? b. Is the contact voluntary or involuntary? c. Is the contact “real” or “artificial”?
Personality of the individual experiencing contact: a. Is his initial prejudice level high, low, medium? c. Has he basic security in his own life, or is he fearful and suspicious? d. What is his previous experience with the group in question, and what is the strength of his present stereotypes? e. What is his age?

The researcher sought also to include the interviewees’ “judged outcome of contact” as positive or negative, as suggested by Hewstone and Brown (1986) (see Appendix IV – Model of Intergroup Contact), since as they argue “it is the interactants’ perceptions of contact as positive or as negative that matter; that in turn these perceptions determine how the target outgroup member is viewed.”

The researcher also chose to ask participants of both groups the same questions in order to give the study balanced and symmetrical; the only words that changed were “Maltese” with “migrants.”

The semi-structured interview questions in English and Maltese are found in Appendix V.

3.5.3 Interview trial run

No pilot study was carried out but in preparation for the interview, by carrying out a trial run of the interview with a family member (a Maltese), a question was added to get the conversation going for the Maltese participants, namely “Min huma l-immigranti ghalik?” meaning “Who are immigrants for you?” in order to help interviewees to feel comfortable at the start of the interview, while being introduced to the topic. At the same time, this question served to establish how the interviewee defines an “immigrant,” to make this clear for the researcher. Following this question, the researcher then asked questions on their categorization of migrants, before moving on to questions on their perceptions of contact with them. This question was also necessary since while the migrants only were to answer questions about their relations with one group (namely the Maltese), since the question was left more open for the Maltese, they could refer to many different groups of immigrants and not necessarily Sub-Saharan African migrants. In fact, the migrants were first asked questions about their contact with Maltese, and then about how they categorise Maltese people, before proceeding to other questions.

3.6 Interviews

3.6.1 Selection criteria

Interviewees had to fit the criteria below, since they had to be:

1. *Sub-Saharan African migrants or Maltese* - There were migrants from different nationalities, yet the majority were still Somali, that corresponded to the proportion of migrants stemming from Somalia;
2. **over 18 years of age** – This was to avoid asking children, being the most vulnerable;

3. **From Balzan and Marsa** – In the case of migrants, preference was given to individuals living in the open centres, although 1 interviewee from each locality was a former open centre resident in that locality and now lives in the community.

4. The researcher tried to make sure a somewhat equal distribution of interviewees among the two sexes - This however proved to be challenge since no females reside in the Marsa Open Centre and very few females in the Balzan Open centre consented to be interviewed.

5. The researcher tried to find a Maltese people with similar roles in both localities for instance a mayor, a parish priest, residents and shop owners.

6. **Speak Maltese or English**

### 3.6.2 Languages: Maltese and English

The two languages chosen for the study were Maltese and English, the former being the national language in Malta and both languages being the official languages on the island. Moreover, in Malta, the “lingua franca in the migration sector is English.”[^18] In its guide to Migration research in Malta, the People for Change Foundation recommended holding interviews in both Maltese and English, if one is to interview locals.[^19] Although allowing migrants to speak in their native tongues would have been preferable, since they may have been more comfortable and articulate, this could not be done due to the time.

[^19]: ibid.
constraints and need of an interpreter. Yet in two cases among the migrants in Balzan, a fellow resident helped out in the interview due to difficulties in speaking either language. In such a case the researcher would confirm whether what is being said is what the interviewee himself/herself said, or not.

Although many refugees living in the community, where found to be able to speak in English or Maltese in the case of the Aditus Nitkellmu? Project, this was not the case during this study. In this case, one the hurdles to be overcome, was to find people who could do so.

A disadvantage with selecting migrants who spoke either of the two languages was that there may have been a possibility that such migrants have integrated more into the Maltese society and had more contact than those who do not. It would be interesting to see the extent of contact migrants who do not speak either language, have with the Maltese.

3.6.3 Recruitment

When it came to recruitment the researcher relied mainly on what Brounéus refers to as “gatekeepers,” individuals who could help the researcher contact potential interviewees and gain access to them. Mr. Guido Borg from the Balzan Local Council and the staff at the Foundation for Shelter and Support to Migrants (FSM), who lead the

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20 aditus and UNHCR, “Nitkellmu? Refugee Integration Perspectives in Malta.”
Marsa Open Centre, were very helpful in aiding the researcher to recruit potential interviewees mainly by contacting the individuals themselves to speak to the researcher, or by paving the way by informing them in advance about the research and that they might be interviewed, should they agree. As will be discussed in chapters 4 and 5, finding participants at the Balzan Open Centre or amongst Marsa residents was more difficult. Although staff at the Centre and also from the local council, helped out including by suggesting potential candidates, it was difficult to interview these participants. Some participants were contacted by third parties, who thought the individuals may be willing to participate in the study. The “snowball effect” was also used particularly among the residents of the Balzan Open Centre. Of particular interest is the fact that two interviewees from the said centre were also recruited via the “snowball effect” through a recommendation by a Maltese resident from Balzan, who the researcher interviewed too.

Another challenge in the recruitment phase was explaining what the nature of the research was and what is was about. The researcher often needed to explain that anyone (who fit the general criteria) could answer the interview, since the perceptions of Maltese and did not need to be a figure-head or have a high-level educated.

A copy of the recruitment scripts in Maltese and English are found in Appendix VI.
3.7 Holding the interviews

3.7.1 Time-frame

The time-frame for all the interviews was from April to July 2014. Due to the fact that different incidents happened before and during this time-frame, that may have had an impact on the interviewee’s responses, below is a list of some of them:

- Tuesday 25th February 2014: Riots broke out in the afternoon at Lyster Barracks (Hal-Far Detention Centre) by rejected asylum seekers during a visit by four members of Parliament (Deborah Schembri, Marlene Pullicino, Claudette Buttigieg and Jason Azzopardi) during a “fact-finding mission.”

- In April 2014, agreements were made between the Maltese and the Nigerian government to deport Nigerians.

- The Member of Parliament (MEP) elections resulted in the far-right candidate Norman Lowell increasing in popularity

- Boat arrivals resumed – 8th June 2014 (after first boat in February)

- Aditus (a local NGO) spoke about giving migrants the right to vote and to participate in elections.

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3.7.2 Location

Interviews were held according to the preference of the interviewee in order to allow the individual to feel the most comfortable. Interviews with migrants from the Marsa Open Centre and the Balzan Open Centre were held at the respective centres, except for the female from Balzan who invited me to her home. Interviews with the Maltese took place in the homes of interviewees, in public places or in shops/ offices. Moreover the researcher sought to interview participants in the absence of an individual from the other participating group in the study in order to allow for the person to be more comfortable and for no potential conflict to arise.

3.7.3 Informed consent

Before the commencement of the interviews, participants were handed an informed consent form (see Appendix VII), which was explained to them. The researcher highlighted in particular that the information divulged during the interview would be used for the sole purpose of the study and that it would remain confidential and anonymous, with the participants’ name not featuring anywhere. Participants were also given an opportunity to ask clarifying questions. Approval was sought from the participants before commencing the interview. Most interviewees consented to be audio recorded, save for three of the migrants, who were not recorded. A signature was not required in order to preserve the anonymity of the individual.
3.7.4 Interview questions

During interviews with migrants, the researcher sought to ask the individuals at some point in the interview, what their current status in the asylum process was (namely refugee status/ subsidiary protection and so on, as discussed in chapter 2), in order to see whether potential positive or negative outlooks may be linked to their acquired status. The question about their status however, did not play a role in the selection of interviewees.

In some cases, when people could not tell me what they believe to be the characteristics of the other group, the researcher would ask something like, “But how would you describe a Maltese/ migrant? If I had to tell you to write a paragraph, about what a Maltese/ migrant is to me, what would you write?” However this question did not need to be asked to everyone.

At times the researcher left the question on a large group out, especially when it came to migrants, since the question applied to the Maltese and the way the question was, was a bit misleading, although the researcher indirectly had in mind to compare the situation in the localities of Balzan and Marsa. Some people got to it alone, but others needed to be aided.

The researcher also sought to conclude all the interviews with both Maltese and migrants with a general question on how they see the relations between them and members of the other group in their locality, in order to close off on a more neutral note, rather than ending the interview with the topic about “detention” or “threat.” This also proved to be
beneficial, since interviewees mostly highlighted their main and most salient argument in the final comment.

3.7.5 Recording data

Most interviewees were audio recorded and notes were also taken by the researcher. In the case when interviewees did not accept to be audio-recorded, notes taken were more in detail and interviewees generally spoke more slowly or gave the researcher sufficient time to write down what they said (they were considerate about it). Somewhere uneasy or afraid to be recorded especially the migrants, whereas other Maltese both from Marsa and Balzan had no problem to be recorded or even quoted by name.

3.7.6 Potential biases

Due to the fact that the researcher also volunteered at the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), an NGO that seeks to serve, accompany and defend refugees and asylum seekers, some potential biases may be singled out, although the research was conducted independently from the NGO and the researcher did all in her capacity to avoid biases, including by not mentioning the NGO:

i) in framing the questions – the researcher had herself visited the detention and open centres before, yet she tried not to leave her biases reflect onto the questions;

ii) some members of the FSM referred to the researcher as a “friend,” “good person from JRS” or as someone “on our side” in helping the researcher to recruit migrants in Marsa;
iii) while interviewing a migrant from Balzan and another from Marsa, the issue that the researcher volunteered with JRS came up, and one of them said that he trusts the researcher like he trusts them (JRS) and that he does not usually open up to people in the way he did.

Another potential bias is the fact that the researcher is herself Maltese, and thereby a member of one of the groups. Yet, the researcher did not introduce herself as a Maltese and only mentioned it when she was asked specifically. Besides, the researcher is neither a resident at Balzan or Marsa, thereby she could not have been a participant in the study all the same.

### 3.7.7 Need for (cultural) sensitivity

The researcher also needed to be culturally sensitive in conducting the research. First of all, when possible the researcher avoided interviewing migrants on a Friday, it being a Muslim prayer day. Similarly one of the interviews was temporarily interrupted since the migrant needed to go to the Mosque.

Sensitivity also needed to be showed vis-à-vis the topic in question, especially when it came to detention. Similar to Aditus\(^2^3\) that “omitted” questions that were “unsuitable to ask,” in the case of one of the migrants who did not want to speak about detention since it seemed to have been a traumatic experience and he wanted to forget about it, the researcher did not bring up the topic again. Similarly, another migrant stopped the interview since

\(^2^3\) aditus and UNHCR, “Nitkellmu? Refugee Integration Perspectives in Malta.”
during the interview he received a phone call with news that a friend had passed away. The researcher suggested stopping the interview if it was better for the individual.

3.8 Data Collection, Analysis and Presentation

Following the interviews, the researcher collected the data recorded via the digital audio-recorder and the written notes, on four separate excel sheets, each pertaining to one of the groups of one of the localities. Each individual was given a code number such as ‘1MIGM,’ which would mean the first migrant interviewed from Marsa, in order to distinguish between the different interviewees.

The information was documented in the columns of the respective question that was colour-coded according to one of the four themes: categorization, contact, threat or policies. A thematic analysis was chosen as the most appropriate way to analyse such quantitative data. Upon reading the data, themes that kept on recurring, were singled out as sub-themes for further analysis. The sub-themes of each group were kept separate at first.

Then the researcher sought to analyse the data under the sub-themes of the separate localities by integrating the Maltese and the migrant group in the separate localities in order to get a better picture of the situation in the separate localities. The data was presented in two separate chapters, Chapter 4 for Balzan and chapter 5 for Marsa. The aim was to analyse the situations in both localities separately first. Since excerpts from the interviews
were in Maltese, the researcher sought to provide both the original version and to write up a translation of the text, in the case when the text was in Maltese. Then the results of both localities were compared in Chapter 6. Moreover, the results from both Maltese groups, and both migrant groups were compared separately, in order to get a more general picture of the contact from the Maltese point of view and from the migrants' perspective. Both these analyses were also presented in chapter 6.

Similar to Allport and Hewstone and Brown, the researcher sought also to analyse the policy implications of the research, by seeing what is being done (including in terms of policies) and what should be done. Recommendations were also presented at the end of Chapter 6.

3.9 Limitations

Firstly, due to time and word constraints, the research could not incorporate more localities, participants or cases, but the greatest effort to provide a more comprehensive picture, was made under the circumstances.

Secondly, due to the nature of qualitative research itself, as Luker notes, it is harder to generalize results to a population at large. Yet perceptions of individuals in a setting are still very relevant and the main focus on such studies. Moreover, since the migrant population changes (due to the influx of new immigrants), and the migrants also come from very different countries, this may also limit the extent of generalizability, also a trend can
be decoded, by asking migrants coming from different areas of sub-Saharan Africa, rather than one country.

Besides, asking about what the groups thought of each other before was a bit difficult and may have not rendered proper results, since participants are asked to think retro-actively. As Hewstone and Brown argue,

“The studies [concerning the contact hypothesis] are ex post facto in nature, or 'after only', involving attitude measures taken at only one point in time and with contact already under way. Thus there is reliance on retrospective reports of contact experiences ... and the possibility of subject-selection biases.”

Ideally the question would have been asked before the migrants came to Balzan, similar in experimental design studies. Yet, in the absence of such prior research, research that may give an indication on previous perceptions is a step in the right direction.

Since only individuals willing to be interviewed participated in the study, some people with potentially strong positions against migrants, such as an individual that was contacted by one of the people who helped in the recruitment process but did not consent to be interviewed, may have passed through the sieve.

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3.10 Conclusion

The methodology used to answer the research question developed in the previous two chapters was highlighted. Justifications for the choice of the case-study were also made reference to. The next chapters will follow with the presentation of results of the interviews and an analysis drawing on the literature reviewed in the first two chapters.
CHAPTER FOUR - ANALYSIS OF INTERGROUP RELATIONS:

CASE STUDY I: BALZAN

4.1 Introduction

The stage has been set for the analysis of intergroup relations between the Maltese and the Sub-Saharan African migrants. Previous chapters have looked into the theories of intergroup relations and background to migration that led to the formulation of the research questions. Finally the methodology used to attempt to answer the research question has been set out. This chapter will focus on the first case study, namely the relations between the Maltese and Sub-Saharan African migrants in Balzan. The aim will be to answer the following research questions:

i) What is are the nature and dynamics of the interaction between the Maltese and the Sub-Saharan migrants in Balzan?
ii) More specifically,
   a) What are the main problems in the interaction between these two groups?
   b) How do the Maltese and the immigrants categorise each other?
   c) How is the perception of social contact interconnected with: (A) The perception of threat, and (B) Assessment of the detention/ migration policies and institutions?

After providing a background to Balzan and the Balzan Open Centre (BOC), a discussion on the availability of interviewees will made, following which data on the perceptions of
contact between the Maltese and Sub-Saharan African migrants in Balzan, categorisation, perception of threat and policies and institutions, will be presented and analysed.

4.2 Background to Balzan and the Balzan Open Centre (BOC)

The village of Balzan is located in central Malta and is flanked by Birkirkara, Attard and Lija. According to the last Malta Census (2011), Balzan covers an area of 0.60 km² and has a population of 4,101. According to the website of the Balzan local council, a number of residents in Balzan stem from different countries namely Europe and Africa, and Balzan has been “renowned for its tolerance” and welcoming spirit towards people with different cultures, “political, religious and racial views,” who are seen to “enrich” the community of Balzan.

The Sisters of the Good Shepherd managed the Balzan Open Centre (also known as the Good Shepherd’s Home or ‘Bon Pastur’), which is one of the 14 houses for immigrants with a total of 400 beds in total in 14 localities, namely Gwardiamangia, Msida, Valletta, Floriana, St. Venera, St. Julians and Balzan, coordinated by the Emigrants’ Commission. Due to a lack of literature on the centre, an expert interview conducted by the researcher with Fr. Alfred Vella (Head of the Emigrants’ Commission) provided

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3 ibid., 4.
background about the Balzan Open Centre. The Centre knows it start to Christmas 1992, when an immigrant family from Sudan came knocking on the door of the Emigrant’s Commission (then led by Mons. Philip Calleja) with no place to stay. Mons Calleja called the Sisters of Bon Pastur to ask whether they could house the family. Although the place was not being used and was thus not prepared, they took the first family in. From that time the Centre started to house immigrants especially following the rise of boat arrivals consequent to the Gulf War in 1995. At first the centre used to house single males, yet in 2005 it was refurbishing and started to accommodate single females and families, and the building was enlarged in 2009.

The Emigrants’ Commission notifies AWAS about vacancies in the centre and the latter refers people to the Emigrants’ Commission. In selecting residents for the Balzan Open Centre, priority is given to the handicapped migrants, the aged (45 to 55, taking into consideration the average life expectancy of the migrants) and the single mothers. The centre is split into three and their full capacity is as follows: Single males (40 people), single females (22 people) and 46 family units (which could be families with both parents and children, as well as single parents) and there are a total of 172 beds. The exact number of residents in a given time cannot be calculated due to the continuously fluctuating population. The Balzan Open Centre also offers optional courses to residents, which are organised by volunteers on a regular basis, namely: English and Maltese courses, computer lessons and culture-oriented courses.

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4.3 Availability of interviewees

The method of recruitment of the interviewees and the cross-section of interviews has been discussed in the previous chapter. The researcher managed to interview 10 Maltese and 10 migrants from Balzan, 9 living in the BOC and one living in the community. While the researcher did not encounter problems to interview Maltese people from Balzan (and interviewed some while they went on with their work), it was very hard to speak to migrants from Balzan due to the fact that they did not speak English or Maltese (fluently), where not available when the researcher was at BOC (because they worked for instance), and some did not want to amongst others because they claimed that they were being interviewed too often or were busy at the time. Some interviewees invited the researcher into their private homes, including a Balzan migrant who was not interviewed in the end. 3 out of 10 migrants in Balzan conducted the interview in Maltese.

Finally, despite the fact that the researcher gave all the interviewees an informed consent form, explained it and asked whether the respondent had any questions about it, some interviewees seemed to remain suspicious as to the purpose of the research and who commissioned it. The researcher wonders whether this is the reason why 3MIGB’s answers were rather brief at times, for instance “good” and “everything is good,” although language limitations are not ruled out.
4.4 Data presentation and analysis

This section will deal with the presentation and simultaneous analysis of results of the Maltese and migrants of Balzan. In order to maintain the anonymity of interviewees, each interviewee was given a code with: a number from 1 to 10, depending on the order they were interviewed, ‘MLT’ or ‘MIG’ depending on the group they were part of, and ‘B’ for Balzan. The four sections will deal with perceptions of contact, categorisation, perception of threat and policies and institutions.

4.4.1 Perceptions of Contact

Perceptions of contact between the Maltese and migrants were analysed according to the type of contact, its assessment by the two groups, factors that impacted contact and the change contact brought about.

4.4.1.1 TYPE OF CONTACT

The location, the scope and the regularity were focused on to analyse the type of contact:

Location

The most contact the Maltese have with migrants is in Balzan. In fact, all of the respondents mentioned this form of contact which takes place mainly in the streets (8 out
of 10 respondents), in a bar (2 out of 10), in a shop (2 out of 10), or at Bon Pastur itself (1 out of 10). Yet interviewees 4MLTB and 5MLTB revealed that Maltese and migrants do not mingle much with each other in Balzan (4MLTB; 5MLTB). 4MLTB notes how even Maltese and migrant children who attend the same primary school of Lija/ Balzan, do not mingle with each other while they wait for the bus.

A few Maltese also see migrants outside of Balzan namely 3 at work (1MLTB works in the building of Dar is-Sliem, 6MLTB visits people in prisons and 10MLTB is a doctor at the Juvenile Prison (Mtahleb)), 1MLTB everywhere (including in Paceville, which is a place of entertainment or on Facebook), 8MLTB on the bus, and both 3MLTB and 9MLTB meet migrants at Smart Supermarket, where the latter work. 8MLTB commented that the most places of contact between the two groups are workplaces (like in the construction industry), and during one’s recreation (like Paceville, since a number of them are also young people who want to have fun).

Migrants mostly have contact with Maltese people outside of Balzan. Only half of the migrants from Balzan mentioned that they meet Maltese in Balzan, which includes the staff that work at the BOC and the volunteers that go there. While 5MIGB gets on well with the people in Balzan like neighbours, shop owners nearby and the bakers, she said “Ghandi l-ġirien hawnhekk f’din it-triq, ma nikkuntatjahomx hafna, ma nitkellinx maghhom” [I have neighbours over here, I do not contact them much, don’t talk to them]. While she holds longer conversations with the others, in her street she just greets and
leaves. This shows that living next to each other might not necessarily improve the contact but there needs to be another scope for the contact. Allport’s conditions about having a ‘common project/ aim’ should perhaps be extended to include economic transactions/purchase, since it is where people have a greater opportunity to interact since they have a specific reason to do so.

Alternatively half of the migrants also met Maltese at work or on the bus(-stop), 4 respondents mentioned that they meet Maltese anywhere in Malta including at the shop or when they visit public places (such as places of interest), 2 (4MIGB and 8MIGB) participated in a project by JRS, two (5MIGB and 8MIGB) have contact with volunteers they met at the Hal Far Open Centre, 7MIGB meets Maltese people at the gym and 9MIGB meets the parents of the children who go to school with her children.

Consequently, while the Maltese meet migrants mostly in Balzan, the majority of the contact migrants have with Maltese, takes place outside of Balzan.

**Scope of contact**

8 Maltese meet migrants by coincidence. 3 Maltese meet migrants by circumstance since they work in a shop or bar in Balzan (2MLTB, 7MLTB, 9MLTB), 6MLTB visits migrants in prison during his job related to drug rehabilitation, and 10MLTB is a doctor both at Bon Pastur and at the Juvenile Prison, which currently houses mainly Somalis and Eritreans.
4 mentioned collaborative activities with the migrants organised by the Parish/ local council or youth centre (5MLTB, 6MLTB, 8MLTB and 10MLTB) to encourage migrants to feel welcome, since they form part of the Balzan parish/ village. 6MLTB and 10MLTB spoke about an ‘Intercultural Night,’ that has been organised for the past two years by the local council in October in which various stakeholders in Balzan such as the youth group, the band clubs, the Embassy of Spain and the migrants at the BOC are invited to put up stalls and sell food from a different country. The Somalis and Eritreans prepared their traditional food and sold all of it; the Maltese did not refrain from eating the food because they are “black” for instance, but became “curious” of what their food is like (6MLTB). Migrants are also invited to recount their stories during Lenten talks at the youth centre (6MLTB). Besides, 5MLTB spoke of an inter-religious prayer that they organised. The parish of Balzan is dedicated to the Annunciation of Our Lady, whose feast is on the 25th March. In Lebanon this day was declared a public holiday, since it brings together Catholics and Muslims. So for the last four years the Balzan Parish organises an inter-religious prayer and reflection during that period, in which the Imam as well as migrants from BOC are invited. The parish priest and the Imam read the story of the Annunciation of Our Lady according to their own texts, and then there would be a researched talk and finger foods. Unfortunately only few came from BOC but 5MLTB sees the experience as a positive one since “Toħloq kuntatt… nibnu fuq dak li hemm komuni. Ghax huma jemmnu hafna fil-Madonna. Ghallura nibnu fuq dak li jghaqqadna: Alla wiehed, Marija li…weldet lil Ġesu” [It brings about contact… building on commonalities. Because they believe a lot in the Holy Mary. So we build on what unites us: One God, Mary who … bore Jesus”].

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3 Maltese mentioned instances of cooperation with migrants (3MLTB speaks to one of the migrants and gives him money sometimes, 4MLTB puts up the hem of the trousers of one of the migrant children and 9MLTB employs migrant workers as cleaners). 9MLTB mentioned that she took one of the migrant cleaners and her husband out on family outings.

As for the migrants, 5 migrants met the Maltese by coincidence. 5 of the respondents met Maltese at work, and two of which made friends with colleagues and meet them separately (7MIGB and 9MIGB).

Two however participated in similar common projects with the Maltese branch of JRS in which a group of migrants went to primary and secondary schools, 4MIGB from January to April 2014 and 8MIGB from January to June 2014, speaking to students to find out who they think refugees are, and trying to eliminate certain misconceptions (“wrong idea”) (4MIGB) for instance that all migrants are uneducated (8MIGB). Moreover, since migrants who stemmed from different African countries, all had their reasons for leaving the country and recounted their stories, it was a way of reversing the OHE (see Chapter 1) since children could hear about the differences, hands-on.

3 mentioned instances of cooperation with the Maltese when volunteers come to the BOC (6MIGB), 8MIGB has contact with a volunteer from Hal Far Open Centre and 5MIGB meets up with the foster family who takes care of her son.
Besides, although it is positive that the parish/ local council/ youth centre organised collaborative activities to try to foster contact between the two communities, there does not seem to be long-lasting contact; in fact none of the migrants mentioned them.

As a result, Maltese people mainly meet migrants by coincidence or by circumstance. Migrants also meet Maltese by coincidence but also at work, where they have also made friends.

**Regularity**

Both the Maltese and the migrants meet members of the other group often (9 out of 10 respondents). 1 individual in each group meets them only sometimes (6MLTB, 6MIGB).

**4.4.1.2. ASSESSMENT OF CONTACT**

6 of the Maltese mentioned that their contact with migrants is positive, while 4 mentioned that it is mostly good with some exceptions (1MLTB, 2MLTB, 7MLTB, 10MLTB). Yet some also mentioned that other Maltese might have a different opinion; 4MLTB has friends from outside Balzan who pass racist comments, 6MLTB mentioned that some youths comment about migrants coming to the youth centre and while 8MLTB only witnessed one fight between migrants in Balzan, she heard of fights elsewhere.
3 migrants mentioned that their contact with Maltese is positive, of whom 1MIGB mentioned that he also just has normal contact at times, since he just greets the Maltese and they greet back. 2MIGB mentioned that contact is positive in Balzan but negative outside Balzan. The majority (6 out of 10) mentioned that the contact is mostly good, yet they mentioned several instances of negative contact (4MIGB, 5MIGB, 7MIGB, 8MIGB, 9MIGB, 10MIGB). The migrants’ assessment of contact seemed to play into their categorisation of the Maltese.

**Positive contact**

Contact was seen to be positive for a number of factors that are split into four groups, namely behaviour, personal characteristics, assimilation and interpersonal relations:

**Behaviour**

*Helping out:* A Maltese resident (4MLTB) has some contact with one of the migrant women, since she noticed that her son’s trouser was getting short so she offered to put down the hem for her. Both 1MLTB and 4MLTB also commented how some migrants come to help the Maltese when they are carrying heavy bags. Some of the Maltese also spoke of a migrant who lives and sleeps outside on the bench or on the floor, although he had a place in BOC, which he refused, and efforts have been made including with the Emigrant’s Commission to find ways to help him, in vain. 5MLTB sees contact between
this migrant and the people as positive since they help him for instance by giving him to eat or to drink (and at times he knocks on their doors).

5MIGB also has positive contact with a “foster family” who takes care of her son and they first came into contact through the daughter in the family who works at the Hal Far Open Centre Office. She eats at their place and they come to Balzan too. 10MIGB also noticed how sometimes people drive him somewhere by car, when it is raining. 1MIGB also has positive contact with the security officers at BOC who give him coffee.

Kind gestures: 1MLT on the other hand notes how when she was still young one of the migrants was really nice and used to bring her water colours. When he came to leave Malta, he gave her a token to remember him. The Parish priest also offered a Muslim to come and pray in the Church in his own way, and although he used to come at first, he stopped since he must have felt out of place with people looking at him.

8MIGB once met a 70-year old woman on the bus with an “open face” who told her to sit next to her. She gave 8MIGB personal advice from her own experience, to continue making an effort and learning for instance through courses at MCAST. Technically, when 8MIGB worked in Maltese households as a cleaner, her status was lower than that of her employers. However, three of the four families were kind to her for instance they prepared food for her, told her to take breaks to rest, would drive her back to her home, call her the night before to check whether she is still available to clean and if she cannot
because she is feeling sick they ask whether they could help her and ask her whether she is feeling better the next time she comes, and one of the families trusts her enough to leave the house to herself and tells her to take any food she needs. She feels “happy” when she works for these families since they are welcoming. In such a situation, contact would thereby still be possible since by being kind and showing trust in the individual with a supposedly lower-status, her self-esteem may be raised and so contact between the individuals of the two groups would be more equal.

Giving good directions: 3MIGB mentioned that most of the Maltese people “give you a hand” for instance they give you good directions when one is lost.

Job offers: 3MIGB said that he finds it good that some Maltese people come to BOC to see whether migrants want to work with them, they pick them up and take them back to the BOC afterwards.

Personal characteristics

Education and manners: 2MLTB spoke of a migrant who comes to the bar with his boss, and they pay drinks for each other, is always dressed well and speaks to her and asks whether all is well. She considers him to be exemplary and wishes everyone were like him. 8MLTB who is an elderly woman also commented how migrants are the ones who get up to leave you sit instead of them on the bus first, even if they are at the back of the bus.
**Honesty:** 9MLTB on her part once gave a migrant a €10 instead of a €5 euro phone card by mistake, and he came back to return it when he realised.

**Assimilation**

*Assimilation:* 2MLTB gets on well with a large majority of migrants as they often come to the bar where she works to have a drink, remain quite, watch a game of football and do not bother anybody. One of the migrants she has most contact with, told them to call him “Joseph,” because his name is difficult to pronounce for the Maltese. Moreover, she mentions that his children go to catechism classes and had their Holy Communion, the family comes to watch football, he sides with Chelsea and people buy him a beer. Consequently he seemed to adopt the strategy of assimilation, by even calling himself a name that is more common in Malta, and participating in Roman Catholic (the main religion of Malta) practices.

*Language:* Speaking Maltese (another form of assimilation), augurs for better contact. One of the Maltese whom 2MLTB speaks to most and who really integrated into the community and made friends speaks Maltese. On the other hand, 4MLTB managed to speak to a migrant couple “ghax jitkellmu Malti sew” [they speak Maltese well].

Moreover 5MIGB who conducted her interview in Maltese, pointed out that she learnt Maltese through her Maltese colleagues when she worked in a factory in Bulebel.
Furthermore, 3MIGB likes to speak to Maltese people in Balzan, amongst others in order to improve his English and Maltese since he needs it for work.

**Similarity:** 4MIGB noted how when the migrants gave examples of how their childhood was similar to that of the students during their projects with JRS, for instance when they spoke of their family, education or love for cycling, students would come closer. It seems that in line with the similarity-attraction theory, individuals bond more when they become aware of their similarities.

**Interpersonal relations**

**Friendships:** 7MIGB has had positive contact on the workplace, where he has even made friends. When he worked as a delivery man in Qormi, when the family would have a party or a dinner, they would invite him. At his current workplace his colleagues and the boss are Maltese and sometimes he meets them at their houses. He considers one of his colleagues to be his friend. They go on break together and eat together, and since his friend is a farmer, he taught him how to farm, and he also goes hunting with him, since he is a hunter. With regards to Maltese people in fact, 7MIGB says “I stay with them all day, even for night events for 600 people, I cooperate with them.” Cooperation is one of the conditions that portend positive contacts between the Maltese and migrants; he has in fact made friends on the workplace. 7MIGB also made friends with people who taught him how to use the equipment at the gym he goes to, but he just meets them there. 9MIGB also has a friend at work, who is a supervisor, and every morning, she explains to her what would
be written on her children’s school circulars. Moreover, 9MIGB has Maltese friends with whom she meets up for a coffee, celebrates birthdays and even her national feast. It is interesting to note that both these individuals who have built friendships have been in Malta for quite a long time (6 and 9 years respectively) and both work.

**Negative contact**

The factors that contributed to the negative contact between Maltese and migrants in Balzan and elsewhere can be split into three groups, namely:

**Cultural factors**

*Xenophobia:* At times 8MIGB sits on a bench in Balzan with her husband, and people who pass by look at them differently. She thinks that “the people, they don’t understand our colour,” but she seems to want to explain to them that they are normal but just from Africa, so they could sit next to them. Migrants often highlighted that in the bus there would be an empty chair next to them and the bus will be full of people and the people prefer to stand than to sit next to them (2MIGB, 8MIGB, 9MIGB). They ask themselves why, and perceive the Maltese to be “racist” (10MIGB), and 8MIGB sees this as discrimination, since all people wake up in the morning “as a human.” 9MIGB also overheard a Maltese woman saying “U leee, ma noqghodx hdejhom, nibża' minnhom!” [Noooo, I don’t sit next to them. I’m afraid of them!].
Speaking different languages: During the party organised by the youth centre in which there were both Maltese and migrant youth since they did not understand each others’ language, they did not interact much (5MLTB). 7MLTB who is a shop owner, pointed out that some of the migrants have a language problem since not all of the migrants are able to speak/understand English or Maltese and he does not understand their language either, so at times when they are looking for a particular item, they do not manage to understand each other and so the customer does not get what he wants. Moreover 6MIGB’s husband mentioned that while that his wife has no contact with Maltese as she is always inside, she does not work and she does not speak English or Maltese.

Verbal or written abuse: 4MLTB also commented that many Maltese do not want immigrants for instance when some of her friends who do not live in Balzan, see an “iswa” [black man] selling glasses during camping, they tell him “U mur go pajjiżek!” [Just go back to your country!], which she does not find right. 10MIGB also believes that the “Maltese don’t want immigrants,” for instance he saw “Out blacks” in a bus-stop area in Żejtun.

Ingroup favouritism, discrimination and racism: Price discrimination is seen to occur. 9MIGB mentioned that migrants split the rent between themselves so that it would not be expensive but when the landlord/lady notice that they are renting to foreigners, they raise the price. Similarly a shop-owner once thought another woman was a foreigner, but when she realised that she was Maltese, she put the price down.
9MIGB mentions how when she used to work as a housekeeper in a hotel, Maltese people would get fewer rooms to clean and she would have to clean the dirtiest ones. This is in line with a study by Aditus, according to which “Some interviewees reported that they were often assigned tougher work tasks than those assigned to their Maltese colleagues.”

She also said that once instead of calling her out, by her name, a supervisor called her “iswed.”

2MIGB commented that on the bus-stop Maltese people stand away or greet the Maltese who is next to them, but not them. This could be a form of ingroup favouritism.

Moreover, in the past when 9MIGB used to be at the bus-stop, the bus would keep going, so she would have to wait for a white person to come, or the bus would not stop. 10MIGB argued that sometimes when there is a problem between him and the bus driver, “people think it’s the immigrant’s problem.”

Moreover, 5MIGB mentioned how “Wahdiet ma jhobbux lil iswed hafna. Ma jhobbux barranin hafna” [A few do not like the ‘black’ people much. They do not like foreigners much]. 4MIGB also mentioned how once on the bus there were a group of Somalis and Eritreans and a Maltese man pressed the bell and came up to them abusing

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6 aditus and UNHCR, “Nitkellmu? Refugee Integration Perspectives in Malta,” Refugee Integration Perspectives in Malta.
their country and religion and claiming that they did not even have the right to press the bell of the bus.

Another time a Maltese person got onto the bus with €10 to buy a ticket of €1.50, and the driver gave him one. However, when she came to do the same, he told her “No go back.” She said, “How go back? You have money, if you don't have change, I can go back, but now you have money.” He answered, “I'm talking to you, go back.” She refused and he they kept arguing about it. She also offered to pay for a week rather than a day ticket and he refused. The bus driver started swearing and shouting. Then an African man (Somali or Eritrean) asked her what happened in Somali and she told him and he gave her money for the bus. The bus driver then told her that she had the money after all, but she told him that someone else had given it to her. She offered to repay the man but he refused. Still when she sees this bus driver, she does not board but takes another bus. 8MIGB believes that the bus driver’s behaviour was “racist.” Since the bus driver gave the Maltese person before her, who was in the same situation, a ticket and he did not do the same to her, this might constitute preferential treatment towards one’s own group (since she seems to consider the bus driver and the client to be part of the same group), while discriminating against outgroup members.

Finally 4MIGB underlined that “To face discrimination, I prefer to die in my country.”
4MIGB compares racism to two goats: both usually stand on four legs but one of them is standing on two legs to reach a tree. However while this goat is “feeling great,” it cannot discriminate against the other goat. Analysing this from a social identity point of view, the interviewee does not see why in order to raise one’s own self-esteem, one must put others down. 2MIGB also commented how in today’s day and age it is “Not the time for racists.”

_Fear to report racism:_ ”I can snap pictures or I can take videos of when they are behaving us like this but we are afraid you know” (4MIGB). He mentioned how it is better to keep “silent,” as in his words:

“always if they abuse you, if they dehumanise you, he's just shouting in front of your face and he's leaving but if you make a mistake, it's worse, .. you're loosing your freedom, the police arriving and they are more talkative than you, so always you cannot defend yourself.” It's best, it's good to be silent… even when they are wrong to you.”

In fact 4MIGB mentioned how a fellow migrant is “hiding a lot of information.”

**Behaviour**

_Harassment:_ 1MLTB mentioned for instance how some migrants look at her and harass her nowadays, even if they would just have arrived at the BOC. Yet, instead of informing the police, one can tell the migrant who is in charge of them, to draw their attention.
**Over-confidence:** 1MLTB does not like the fact that some migrants “jaghmlu l-post taghhom” [act as though they own the place], meaning that she is fine with the fact that migrants live in Balzan, but says that they have to share.

**Misbehaviour in a bar:** Since she and her husband opened the bar, 2MLTB can recall only one group of migrants, who always caused problems in the bar, despite several warnings by the owner to behave, and these migrants did the same in other clubs. This Somali man used to come to the bar and treat her and the bartenders badly, “lanqas annimali” [one wouldn’t even treat animals like that], for instance instead of coming to order a drink, he would just raise his hand and call out. He used to come with his friends who behaved like him. They tried to steal beer from the fridge or to get a reduction on the price of two bottles although they had the money. They also did not leave one of the bartenders move her car since they were near it, when she wanted to. 2MLTB says that she had to ask the persons who take care of them from the BOC, a Maltese and some one of “l-listess nazzjonalita’ taghhom” [their same nationality] and “jaf il-lingwa taghhom” (knows their language), for help. He excused himself with the bar owner and expelled the other migrants from Balzan. She did not know exactly where he came from but she considered him to be part of their group, perhaps because he was a migrant himself. Moreover she highlighted how she thinks the migrants were drunk on the day and 3MLTB noted that one of them had a handicap, so he thought it might be his way of revenge. So these respondents seem to be using situational rather dispositional attribution, which negates the fundamental attribution error.
**Fighting:** 8MLTB witnessed only one fight in the street in Balzan but it was between two migrants and she tried to intervene. Their carer, whom she referred to as “bħalhom” [like them], came to the site.

**Aggressive behaviour on the bus:** 4MIGB highlighted that “Most bus drivers are aggressive.” Once he and his friend wanted to take the bus from Marsa, and as he was climbing the bus, the driver shut the door when he was half in. He reported him.

**Exploitation:** 3MLTB also heard of exploitation of migrants taking place, for instance he hears some Maltese say “Jien niehu iswed, ikun hemm trakk ramel, intih €20, intih hobża u Coca u j dahhlu kollu” [I take a black guy, there would be a truck full of sand, I give him €20, a bread and Coca Cola, and he takes it all in].

10MIGB spoke of an instance in 2012, when he was sitting near the Church and a Maltese man passed by with his car, asked whether he wanted a job and they went. He worked for two weeks and then he told him to leave, without paying him. He said, “You live in my island and you're asking for money. How are you asking for money, a black man?” 10MIGB also said that man often does the same thing in other villages and does not pay. This also shows how although working together has its benefits, it may also turn sour, which goes back to what Blanchard et al. said, namely that the outcome of the cooperation has a better impact if it is successful, in this case if the employer gets the job done and the migrant gets his wage.
Problems of perceptions

*Fear:* 1MLTB finds one of the migrants mentioned earlier, who sleeps outside, as scary, for instance once she was outside and he asked her why she was outside and whether she should be inside and it seemed as though he was following her. She said “tiffreakja ruhek” [you freak out], although she wonders whether he might have a mental disorder.

*False accusation:* Once when the laundry service offered by 6MLTB’s shops was delayed, one of the migrants who was waiting for his laundry, claimed that she delayed it because he is black. However after telling him that it was unfair to say so since they always treated them well and respected them, he excused himself.

4.4.1.3 FACTORS THAT IMPACT CONTACT

A number of factors that impact the nature of contact between the Maltese are migrants, were highlighted by the interviewees, as exemplified below:

- *Comfort within the ingroup:* 5MLTB mentioned that during the youth centre party in which there were both Maltese and migrant youths, they did not mingle “daqs li kieku kollha Maltin pereżempju” [as would have been the case, had they all been Maltese, for instance]. This shows that distinctions are being made between the two groups and that the Maltese would have been more comfortable to speak to people who like them form part of the ‘Maltese’ group.
- **Lack of neighbourliness:** Although 4MLTB has little contact with migrants, she notes that she only speaks to her direct neighbours on either side and does not really know other Maltese in Balzan.

Similarly, 8MIGB notes that very few people in Balzan go in or out of their homes. In Somalia, for instance, when a new family comes to stay next door, their neighbours get to know each other, talk to each other and sometimes spend time together at each others’ houses once they would have finished their chores. However in Malta (but she does not know whether only Malta it is like this, or in Europe too), “Every home is closed and when you see these people, you are not interfering.” 8MIGB also notes however how even the six Somali families who live in the same corridor at the BOC, did not really have much contact with one another except in the kitchen, and stayed in their rooms with “closed doors.” She also notes that “Even if I need something at least, because we are neighbours, something if I don't have, even I can't ask them.” They got to know for instance that a neighbour was in hospital only two days later. Yet now they got to know each other and help each other.

- **Degree of openness:** 2MIGB who has been in Malta for 10 months argues with reference to the Maltese that “their face is not open.” 3MIGB also said that some people do not like to talk to you, and 9MIGB said that some look at her negatively. When the researcher asked him why he did not ask Maltese people to join him and his friends during football matches he said “Didn’t try because I didn’t see an open
face.” Even so 7MIGB who has been living in Malta for 5 years and meets Maltese people in different places, said that the “majority are open.” 7MIGB argues that the extent to which one gets on with one’s neighbours depends on one’s attitude towards them: “We still have neighbours but not much close, but it depends on you and how open you are to speak to people.”

- **Effort:** Contact depends on both sides to make an effort “Jien irrid nilqghu u hu jrid ihossu milqugh” [I need to welcome him, and he needs to feel welcomed] (6MLTB).

8MIGB also notes that not much interaction takes place in Balzan, because while the migrants tend to stay in, “no Maltese come to them”: “even if you like to contact with people, if they don’t like, how to contact?”

- **Different perceptions of each other:** Maltese and migrants both have perceptions of each other. 1MLTB mentioned that migrants have a darker skin complexion and classify the Maltese as “white people” and with “riha ta’ halib” [smelling like milk], according to a migrant she spoke to in Balzan, which they consider to be a disgusting smell, and she said the Maltese consider the migrants to have a different smell, including that of sweat at times.

- **One’s personality/character (7MIGB):** 4MLTB does not know why she has a more welcoming approach to migrants (at least in Balzan), and attributes it to her own
personality. 6MLTB by nature does not like to judge or label people. Additionally 10MLTB argues that some individuals are xenophobic against one band club or another or care about whether you came from one village or another, for instance they would consider someone living in Balzan for 20 or 30 years to be a village outsider, if he first lived elsewhere. So some individuals are xenophobic about anything “mhux biss il-kulur jew ir-reliġjon, minn fejn ġejt u ta’ min int” [not one’s colour or religion, but where you’re from and whom you belong to] and they are going to remain that way. On the other hand, 1MIGB is by nature quiet, so it may impact relations with others.

- **Type of Maltese in the locality:** According to 7MIGB the type of Maltese people may also vary by locality: “L-irhula għandhom il-karatteristiċi taghhom. Anke n-nies… ma irrid nghid xejn kontra ghax tas-south imma għandhom karattru, tan-north għandhom karattru….” [Villages have their own characteristics. Even the people… I do not want to say anything against people from the ‘south’ but they have a particular character, those from the ‘north’ have a particular character…].

- **The extent of generalization:** Mostly both the Maltese and the migrants tended to highlight that there are all sorts of people, and they did not generalize their contact with some people to the whole population (so the outgroup homogeneity effect, mentioned in Chapter 1, did not take place).
8MIGB metaphorically said:

“Our fingers, they are not the same. One of them is tall, the other is short… and the people not for the height but their mentality, they are not the same."

Yet some interviewees at least might have sought not to generalize in view of the fact that they are being quoted in the interview, but the researcher wonders whether more generalization of the outgroup actually takes place on a daily basis. Generalization could happen by both groups, even unconsciously:

“A guy from Gzira asked where I'm from. When I said "Somalia", he said, "oh because you people drink". I said not all are the same, some do. Perhaps Maltese think that all Somalis drink” (2MIGB).

4.4.1.4 BEFORE CONTACT, AFTER CONTACT

The researcher admits that asking what an interviewee’s perception of an outgroup member was before meeting them (what Allport would consider as ‘prejudices’) is not optimal due to its retroactivity, but it was the closest one could get to assessing the change in perceptions brought about through contact, since they were not assessed before they met. Some interesting results transpired.

2 Maltese respondents did not think about migrants before or after contact. Yet some amended or confirmed their perceptions post contact:

- *Africans as nice to talk to*: One of the Maltese mentioned that what he knew about the migrants prior to meeting them was from what his son, who used to build tower
communications in Ghana and Nigeria used to tell him. He saw them as very appreciative, for instance when his son and wife distributed items to the people, a boy who was given two sweets, went to give one of them to another boy. In Malta, he said, the child would have queued up for another sweet. After meeting migrants he saw them as people whom one can talk to, especially the women, whom one meets at the grocer (3MLTB).

- **Not harmful:** 5MLTB mentioned that the first he got to know about the migrants was when there was commotion as “Ġej vapur mimli immigranti” [a ship full of immigrants is coming], when they came to Malta for the first time. They landed in St. Paul’s Bay and people had gone to welcome them, gave them food and drink and even doctors had gone. He did not have any racist thoughts or think that they would do them harm; after all, St. Paul was actually the first immigrant in Malta. After he met them, he confirmed his thoughts.

- **Greater understanding and empathy:** 8MLTB and 9MLTB both had thought that the Maltese were in a similar situation when they emigrated abroad. After contact some Maltese commented for instance that migrants would not have left their countries and families behind had they not had problems (6MLTB, 8MLTB). 9MLTB felt more sorry for the migrants after getting to know about what the migrants were fleeing from, through her daily contact with them, for instance forced marriage at 9 years, the selling of organs, putting people out in the sun to turn blind
and use them to beg for money, and having one’s wife and three children shot in front of oneself. Although 7MLTB notes that when he was young few migrants would come to Malta and he did not know who they are, later they started to increase and he got to know that immigrants came to Malta after fleeing their country. Yet after speaking to them he could understand their plight better.

6 of the migrants had not thought about the Maltese but had some perceptions about Malta. Contact brought about change:

- *Knowledge of facts about Malta:* Before they came to Malta, a number of migrants thought that Malta and Italy are the same country, but then they realised that they have different governments (10MIGB). 10MIGB whose status is a ‘double reject’ also noted that migrants have different opportunities in Malta and Italy because migrants cannot leave Malta because of the fingerprints taken when they arrive, due to the Dublin system, whereas it is possible in Italy. 4MIGB was not planning on coming to Malta but when he heard of it in Somalia, he thought Malta was not European, Arabic or Italian, but independent, and whose people are originally ethnically Italian. However now he knows that “Maltese come from different ancestors” and that their language is a mixture of Arabic and Italian.
- *Maltese people as ‘good’: 7MIG on the other hand, who has been in Malta for 6 years, knew that Malta was a European country, but then realised that the Maltese are “good people.”

It seems that the migration phenomenon was new to the Maltese so prejudices could not develop that much. Yet contact fostered greater empathy and understanding. Migrants barely had an idea about Malta, let alone the Maltese, but got to know both better upon contact.

### 4.4.2 Categorization

This section deals with the definition of ‘immigrants,’ the relevance of the migration of the Maltese, categorisation of groups as a single whole or as including differences, and the generalization of interpersonal relations to the outgroup.

#### 4.4.2.1 Defining ‘immigrants’

Maltese people found the question ‘Who is an immigrant?’ hard to answer. While some took a broader view of who immigrants are (namely anyone who enters the country), others distinguished between regular and irregular migration, and others considered ‘Sub-Saharan Africans’ to be migrants. Some Maltese also struggled with whether fellow EU citizens who come to Malta, could be regarded as ‘immigrants’ since some come as tourists or come to work, and they perceive their presence in Malta to be legal (4MLTB, 5MLTB,
Yet according to the latest census, the amount of British permanent residents in Malta exceeds the number of Somalis on the island.\(^7\)

### 4.4.2.2 Maltese migration

Migration of the Maltese featured in the discussions on categorization for both Maltese and migrants. In coming to define who ‘immigrants’ are, a number of Maltese highlighted how Maltese were also ‘migrants’ when they emigrated to Canada, Australia and the U.S. (see Chapter 2) and they were welcomed (4MLTB, 7 MLTB, 8 MLTB, 9MLTB, 10MLTB), for instance 4MIGB’s siblings still live overseas. Yet according to 9MLTB, Maltese people she talks to do not believe the immigration situation in Malta to be comparable with Maltese emigration in the 1950s/1960s.

Simultaneously, 2MIGB believes that the Maltese people did not travel a lot and so do not have experiences with people from different countries and nationalities. From experience, he has changed since he left his country because he met different people. Could the Maltese potentially have more of an insular mentality being islanders?

### 4.4.2.3 One group or differences?

9 of the Maltese considered migrants to be different between them in terms of their behaviour, physical features, cultures, countries of origin, religion and food. 10MLTB mentioned how they differ as regards to their reasons for leaving the country (war, 

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\(^7\) Cooke, P., “Brits Highest Number of Foreigners in Malta.”
persecution, financial reasons, and desperation), their individuality (different capabilities, educational backgrounds, images) and their regular or irregular entry into the country.

2MLTB and 5MLTB considered migrants to be regular or irregular but the same within each group.

4MLTB considered migrants to be a single group, based on their different skin-colour to the Maltese. Of note is that at times, the Maltese referred to African immigrants as “is-suwed” meaning “the blacks.” Yet As 8MLTB explained by way of example that “dawn li jkunu mis-Somalja, ma jfissirx li jkunu suwed suwed, imma jgħidu ‘dahļlu s-suwed.’ Hekk il-kelma infissruha” [it does not mean that Somalis are that black, but one says ‘the blacks came.’ That’s how the term is used].

7 of the migrants also recognised differences amongst the Maltese. 6 of them perceived two types of Maltese to exist: those who greeted them, helped them, were open to them and spoke to them (the good people), in contrast to those who would not talk to them, discriminated against them or where even racist (the bad people). Although 8MIGB did not even want to call the latter “bad people.” She seems not to want to consider the person him or herself as ‘bad’ (dispositional attribution).

4MIGB saw two main differences in the Maltese population. Those “pure” Maltese who fear interacting with others, which they got from their ancestors, for example they
believe refugees will stay in Malta permanently and take away their jobs, whereas others “believe in the common idea and they have their own idea,” namely people who know who refugees are, what plight they fled and what their rights are, and who work for refugees and think that the Maltese should respect them. This dichotomy is similar to that between one’s social identity (the common idea of the “pure” Maltese people) and one’s individual identity (“own idea”). Which one of the two the individual adopts seems to be related to the salience of that identity to the individual.

6MIGB on the other hand highlighted how since she does not have much contact with Maltese people, she does not know whether they are one group or more, so she saw them as a single group. It is harder to see differences between outgroup members if one does not spend enough time with them.

4.4.2.4 *Interpersonal versus intergroup relations*

At times interviewees themselves (3 of the Maltese and 2 of the migrants) seemed to distinguish between interpersonal and intergroup relations. When asked about how they perceive their relations with outgroup members, they said that they speak to each other just like any other individual and do not pay attention (at least consciously or purposely) to which group they form part of; their contact with them is as a human. 10MLTB for instance said “they are individuals and I usually deal within an individual on an individual basis. It’s not where he comes from, what colour or what religion.” This Hewstone and Brown
(1986) would argue (see Chapter 1) does not augur well for intergroup relations, if relations with individuals are not seen as relations with an outgroup member.

### 4.4.3 Perceptions of Threat

This section will deal with reactions upon encountering the ‘Other,’ different perceptions of threat, the role of the media and threat in Balzan compared to Marsa.

#### 4.4.3.1 Reactions upon encountering the ‘Other’

While most migrants and Maltese had no particular reaction upon encountering each other, some are of note.

6 of the Maltese had no particular reaction. Yet others reacted differently:

- **Curiosity about the ‘Other:**’ When 2MLTB sees immigrants, she asks herself several questions such as why the migrant left, whether he left because he did something wrong, whether he left a family behind and how long he stayed at sea.

- **Recognition of suffering:** 5MLTB thinks about how much suffering migrants endured on their way to Malta, including tragedies that take place for instance when they lose family members such as in the Lampedusa tragedy. In fact they once we brought an article in the Parish newspaper ‘Leħen il-Parroċċa,’ in which a refugee was recounting his story, to raise awareness that these people should be helped and not looked at as a threat, or wondering why they came here in the first place.
- **Diversity on one’s doorstep:** 8MLTB points out that “Dari rari tara re, tara lira tara re” [In the past one would see kings rarely, only on coins]; before one would have to go abroad to see people from different countries but nowadays people from various nations come to Malta.

- **Problem for Malta:** 6MLTB recognizes Malta’s problem to deal with asylum claims, while not keeping migrants in detention for long.

5 of the migrants made not reaction but others did, as seen below:

- **Character of the Maltese:** 7MIGB notes that the “First time I met a Maltese, was not a normal Maltese, army, and they are tough.” 6MIGB saw the Maltese as good since they rescued them from the sea.

- **Fear:** 4MIGB notes that when they were on the boat and the Maltese soldiers came, they did not realise that they were Maltese and they were counting them using Arabic numbers and saying words that sound Arabic like “ejwa” (slang for ‘iva’ meaning yes) and ‘ejja mmorru’ (let’s go). Since he feared they were Libyans, he wanted to jump from the boat but they realised they were Maltese from the flag. Moreover, 9MIGB experienced fear since she was sick.

- **Happiness:** 5MIGB was happy that the Maltese welcomed them and gave them food, unlike the Libyans.
4.4.3.2 Different perceptions of threat

- **Language and fear:** Maltese and migrants experience fear through not knowing each others’ language or through the intonation of their languages.

1MLTB also reported fear of not understanding the language of migrants, mentioning that when one is the only white person on the bus next to ETC in Luqa “you feel a bit awkward,” since migrants speak their own language, and she would not know what they are saying. Linked to the discussion on media, she fears what would happen if they have a mentality to maltreat white people. On the Internet (to whom she attributes the fact that negative things are highlighted) she saw that the women “get raped and then they butcher them.”

4MIGB is fluent in English and said that he is not afraid of the Maltese because “If you’re understanding everything, you’re not afraid,” since he has the ability for instance to speak to the Maltese themselves if issues arise during his interaction with them, make use of the law to report problems or contact the police. Yet he says that some non-English speaking migrants feel “fear” since they believe that Maltese people respect the law but that the law could be used against them: “if you don't understand the language, you think that he's threatening or he's abusing you." This may also link to the point that some migrants may fear reporting racism and hence would not speak out against it. 9MIGB also mentions that when she was in detention and was taken to the Boffa hospital since she felt ill, she said that instead of carrying out a checkup, the doctor asked them to take her away, because
he could not understand her language (she did not speak Maltese at the time). So she says “Wara dan it-tabib kont nibża’ li kulhadd bhalu ma jridx jghinna lill-immigranti” [After this doctor, I was afraid that like him, no one wants to help us immigrants], signaling that peoples’ perceptions are easily influenced.

On a different note, 4MIGB also highlight that both in the case of the Somali and Maltese language, the expression of the language may sound “threatening” and as though people are using “hot words,” when in fact people would be holding a normal conversation.

- Economic threat: Economic issues, namely the fact that migrants need to get proper wages and pay social contributions, and perceptions of migrants taking the jobs of the Maltese, play into perceptions of threat.

Wages and social contributions: 1MLTB does not find it fair that the Maltese pay the taxes and social contributions, and migrants use the services, and questions why they are still given benefits if they work. 1MLTB also highlights that one is trying to make sure that migrants get paid well and would also contribute. The latter is however what 6MLTB perceives to be the problem. He argues that if migrants should turn into a threat and one fears that they are taking the jobs of the Maltese, it is the Maltese peoples’ fault because they abuse of migrants; employers employ migrants instead of Maltese workers with lower wages, exploit them and “kieku qed ihaddmu bil-ktieb tax-xogħol u hekk, qed jagħti xi ħaga lura lil pajjiż” [if he had to employ him with a work permit, he would be giving back
something to society]. 2MIGB mentioned how when he starts working, he would not take social benefits: “Religion (Islam) forbids to take government money if you have a job.”

*Fear that migrants take jobs from the Maltese:* As regards the fear that migrants are taking jobs from the Maltese, 6MLTB notes that there are many foreigners who are “white” but still not Maltese, like Italians and Bulgarians, who no one is complaining about, although he doubts whether they work with a work permit. 7MLTB believes that migrants carry out the jobs Maltese people do not want to do. Notwithstanding some people who would have had that job, may feel threatened by migrants, since the employers might want to employ them instead, at a lower pay (7MLTB). Yet he also criticizes the Maltese mentality, in that Maltese people would not agree to work at a low pay, but would register for social benefits instead. Conversely, 6MLTB highlights sacrifices some migrants who have a high level of education (for instance are doctors), but whose qualifications are not recognised in Malta make, by carrying out menial jobs, after so many years of studying – education they probably had to pay for, unlike is the case in Malta. So it seems that internal problems are projected onto the outgroup by giving them an image as a threat or ‘scapegoating’ them.

*Relative deprivation:* Some migrants commented that sometimes Maltese people wonder for instance where 10MIGB gets his phone from. 10MIGB says the “[m]ajority of Maltese they think that black people get all opportunities and money.” Another time a man commented on 9MIGB’s nail polish and a woman said “F’pajjiżha ma kellhiex biex tiekol ħobż” [In her country she did not even have money to buy bread]. So she told her
“X’jimpurtak? By flusi xtrajthom” [It’s none of your business I bought them with my own money]. Such reactions may be seen as feelings of relative deprivation amongst the Maltese.

**Limited capacity:** Migrants can be seen as a threat to Malta being a small country, because Malta does not have the capacity to cater for all of the migrants since they come in large numbers, so they should be shared among the 28 EU member states (8MLTB).

Consequently, she said

“Ghalhekk dak il-‘waiting list’ li hemm u iddum is-sighat, ghax huma qed jinqdew u jippretendi li jridu jinqdew qabel il-Maltin, tmur ġo sptar, heqq. Anke l-mediċini, mhux biftors ffit out of stock? Ara kemm qed johdulna mediċini, inaqṣulna ... mill-benefiċċji taghma. Ghax jiena mmur l-isptar, narahom hi, mimlijin bihom ikun...Jinqalgħalhom xi haga hemm iridu jmorru… U kollha nisa tqal. Mhux kollox minn taghma? Ahna pajiż żghir, ma nifihux għal da kollu…M’għandi xejn kontrihom, bnedmin bhali.’’ (8MLTB)

[That’s why we have waiting lists and it takes long to be served, because they are being served and expect to be served before the Maltese, in hospital, see. Isn’t it also obvious that medicines would be a bit out of stock? Look at how much medicine they are taking from us, reducing ... from our benefits. Because I go to hospital, and I see them, we’re full of them. If something happens to them, that’s where they go…. And all of them are pregnant? Isn’t it all funded from ours? We are a small country, and can’t handle it all. I have nothing against them, people like us] (8MLTB).

Yet on the other hand 8MIGB recounts how she has been feeling pain for nine months and she has been going to hospital but they have not given her the results of her blood and other tests yet, since they did not know who her referral doctor was and could not find them, and they kept sending her from place to place, and in the meantime she says “I am in a lot of pain and no one gave me even one tablet.” In fact she now decided no
longer to go to hospital or to a healthcare centre when she is in pain. Consequently, there may be instances where the majority group feels relative deprivation of some kind and blames the minority for it (scapegoating).

- **Body communication and manners:** One’s body communication and (lack of) manners contributes to the perception of threat. 1MLTB says she feels threatened depending on the individual’s body communication, for instance how migrants look at her. On his part, 2MIGB pointed out that Maltese people do not greet unless migrants start.

7MLTB also adds that one’s contact with migrants also depends on their behaviour, for instance he believes that their level of education is not like that of the Maltese; they were not taught to wait in the queue or to say ‘thank you’ like the Maltese. So in both cases he is using situational attribution to understand his actions, as well as those of the outgroup members. 2MLTB says that as long as migrants behave themselves well she has no problem with them, but if the numbers keep increasing she does not want Malta to finish up like Lampedusa “li aktar tara ‘suwed’ milli ‘bojod’” [where you see more ‘blacks’ than ‘whites’].

- **Threat to national security:** 8MLTB argues that since migrants come without documents, just as they could be doctors or lawyers for instance, they could be criminals, since one has no means to identify them. Moreover as happens with
Maltese youths, if one undertakes a criminal act, others may be encouraged to follow suit. Consequently she believes that if migrants are dispersed around Malta, threat may increase.

- **Spiritual threat:** 6MLTB highlights that some Maltese believe that migrants pose a spiritual threat, in that Malta would become Muslim.

- **Xenophobic and racist attitudes:** Some Maltese fear the migrants for instance in Msida and Bugibba and do not like to go out or pass by them (9MLTB). However, 9MLTB notes that migrants can bring up fights, just as Maltese people can. 4MIGB reads the comments posted by some Maltese in an online newspaper portal and they speak of being afraid to go outside because of the migrants, but he thinks “What do they think we are? Cat family? We are eating them? We are not criminals” and as a journalist he believes that it is the media’s fault since they have the most impact on ideas.

The perception of threat also depends on the attitude of the Maltese people, for instance some people say that since Balzan is full of migrants, the value of the property went down, and others reject that (9MIGB). She considers them to be racists and she believes that if she likes a house she would buy it because just as one may get along with migrants, one may be disturbed by the Maltese. However as 10MLTB explains, since the migrants in BOC make up 350 out of the 4000 residents in Balzan, there’s a 10% impact on the locality, so it is natural that xenophobic issues arise among certain residents for
instance regarding the diminishing price of their property. Yet he attests that “it is not the individual but perceptions of certain people” (10MLTB). This links to the discussion on discrimination and racism in the contact section, which shows how perception of threat and real threats, are present in daily contacts.

- **No threat:** Despite the mentions of threats, half of the Maltese respondents and 9 of the migrants did not perceive each other specifically as a threat.

Some believe that outgroup members could bother them just as ingroups ones (3MLTB, 7MLTB), so no preferential treatment seems to take place. Others try not to bother the others and they do not bother them (6MIGB, 6MLTB).

On the contrary 9MLTB actually asks why migrants do not stay in Malta. She speaks to them and sees them as intelligent people, for instance one of them speaks 11 languages. 7MIGB does not see Maltese as posing a threat: “We joke, we laugh, where we work.” Since the latter two have more contact with outgroup members, one may suggest that increased friendly contact reduces perceptions of threat.

4.4.3.3 Role of the media

Three of the Maltese and two of the migrants spoke about the media’s impact on their relations with each other.

3MLTB suggests that media tends to highlight the negative things about migrants, for instance that they broke things, but they do not speak about the positive things they do,
so people would not want them here. However he believes one cannot generalize, but see what individuals are doing, and notes that no one understands what migrants would be going through. It is interesting whether this individual is trying to understand the migrants better because of his contact with migrants in Balzan or not. IMLTB and 4MLTB also mentioned how media helped to bring about the image of migrants as dark-skinned people coming to Malta by boat.

On his part 7MIGB highlights that in detention “we also watched T.V. and that some Maltese don’t want migrants to live in Malta, and we used to know about that.” 4MIGB who is a journalist by profession suggests that media can be the migrants’ friend or foe: “if they explain the Maltese people why those peoples are staying in our countries, the Maltese people always they are not scared... they are not feeling bad against refugees…”

4.4.3.4 Threat in Balzan versus Marsa

Some Maltese residents in Balzan compared the lack of threat from migrants they feel in Balzan with feeling threatened in Marsa.

10MLTB mentions how in Marsa there’s a problem in contrast to Balzan, similar as there used to be in Balzan: “‘this is like when we had the Iraqis, single males getting drunk and causing problems. When you've got a family, the tendency is, that they integrate better… because they are taking care of a family;” families are “far less disruptive.”
Similarly, 6MLTB compares what is happening in Marsa to what used to happen in Balzan before more structure was introduced possibly even through social workers. He mentions how when the BOC was more open, migrants sometimes stole things and the police would come and at times chase them on the roofs and sometimes other migrants who arrived illegally and even bypassed detention came to live with the other migrants. Besides, there is a drug problem in the MOC, where Maltese people are using migrants to sell drugs (6MLTB).

Additionally while everyone has a job in Balzan, in Marsa they are looking for jobs, are disorganised and seem lost (3MLTB). 2MLTB in fact considers the fact that migrants wait outside in Marsa for people to offer them a job is an “eye soar” for tourists; if she would go abroad, she would question what people are doing there.

6MLTB also highlights how although ‘Albert Town’ always had a negative connotation, one started to house migrants in this place, which already had a bad reputation. In fact 9MLTB mentioned that people who pass from Marsa “lir-refugijati jarawhom bhala nies ghal-prostituzzjoni, speċjalment in-nisa” [see refugees as people for prostitution, especially the women] (9MLTB).

Additionally, in Marsa migrants may be a threat to residents since they are a “group” unlike in Balzan (3M1GB). In fact, 7M1GB spoke to a Maltese woman and she said: “that when we're alone ok, but when we walk together or in a group (like 5), she
would be afraid.” 5MLTB also thinks that Marsa residents would feel more threatened “ghax hemm numru hafna ikbar” (numbers are much larger) and 10MLTB mentioned that the MOC is even bigger than BOC. 5MLTB adds that in Marsa one may feel a sense of threat, not because migrants would harm you but because there are so many of them that they see them as “johonqu l-identita’ Maltija, qisek m’ghadekx Malta hemm” [suffocating Maltese identity, as though one no longer is in Malta over there]. In fact, 2MLTB commented on how in Marsa there are more ‘blacks’ than ‘whites.’ In contrast, in Balzan a few would be sitting on the benches using their mobile phones or listening to songs. It seems that in Marsa, the migrants’ visibility is much higher and migrants may thus seem as a threat, whereas in Balzan the migrants blend more into society.

Besides, 4MLTB says that while she is not afraid of the male migrants in Balzan, since there is a section for the males and a section for the families, with reference to Marsa she says “imbaghad li kieku kelli noqghod ‘l hemm isfel ma noqghodx” [given the opportunity, I would not go to live there]. It seems that the concentration of male migrants scares the interviewee. Additionally it shows that positive contact with a group of migrants may not generalize to all migrants. The fact that the centre is split in two in Balzan, while only male migrants live in Marsa, may make a difference. She also notes that residents have got used to migrants living in Balzan and see them as neighbours. Could residential contact actually increase the bond between Maltese and migrants, since they come to see each other not necessarily as members of the other group but part of the same group (neighbours) – dual categorisation?
Finally, some people argue that property value decreases because of the migrants in both Balzan and Marsa, since people fear for instance that migrants would cause problems (7MLTB). However 7MLTB attests that “hija aktar perçezzjoni ġażina… għalmenu ġo Hal Balzan mhux il-kas” [it is more of a bad perception… at least in Balzan, it’s not the case].

### 4.4.4 Policies and Institutions

#### 4.4.4.1 Knowledge on migration policies and its implications

6 of the Maltese respondents reported that they lacked knowledge on migration policies in Malta. 1MLTB and 5MLTB noted that they only know what they hear from the media.

4 of the Maltese also mentioned that they are not very interested in migration policy, unless it affects them (7MLTB). This lack of willingness to know basic facts may feed into misperceptions about migrants and about how the local situation is being handled in Malta. As Hewstone and Brown argue, ignorance leads to increased fear of the ‘Other.’ Such a factor must be taken into consideration when trying to seek means to prevent an escalation of conflict between the two groups in Malta and trying to relieve possible intergroup tensions.

Some misperceptions related to the detention centres. 2MLTB for instance, who does not consider herself to be informed about migration policy, mentioned that migrants
are closed in detention for a reason, which is indicative of the fact that “l-mgiėba tagghom mhijiex tajba” [their behaviour is not so good], or they are unable to integrate with the people, as “Kieku qeghdin magħluqin kollha mhux min qiegħed barra” [otherwise all of them would be closed in, not some of them are out]. 4MLTB, who feels sorry for migrants in detention, does not believe that they should be kept like ‘chickens’ but after they check them for illnesses, they should release them and not keep them there for 3 to 5 years. After clarifying to her that the migrants are kept in detention for a maximum of 18 months, she said “Sena u nofs jaħasra, kemm se jдумu jaghmlulhom it-testijiet tal-mard, biex ma ġibux mard?” [A year and a half poor things! How long are they going keep testing them for sicknesses, so that they don’t get sicknesses with them?].

When it comes to the migrants, 3 of them have no knowledge on migration policies, while the knowledge five of them had as regards migration policies related to the experience they passed through. 5MIGB however considers migration policies as the state’s business, and she is happy with the government, because they are given social benefits, although there is not enough to go round for her and her son.

4.4.4.2 Politics as highlighting or fuelling racism

3 Maltese respondents spoke of the link between politics and racism. 8MLTB and 9MLTB underlined that the result of the latest European Parliament elections, in which Normal Lowell (a far-right candidate), gained as much as the two main parties or more (9MLTB) confirmed that “in-nies, hawn biċċiet minnhom preġudizzji fuq il-klandestini”
[some of the people are prejudiced against the ‘clandestines’]; Lowell wanted to get rid of migrants (9MLTB) and he even said “ngharraqhom” [I would drown them], which 8MLTB disagrees with. Moreover 5MLTB argued that when discussions take place regarding the push-back policy, it can increase racism, since a number of Maltese do not what migrants in Malta.

4.4.4.3 Assessment of detention centres

Maltese and migrants have highlighted the pros and cons of detention centres. 7MLTB argues that the state decides on detention, and he does want to interfere or have an opinion about it. The following are the main arguments, starting with the positive:

- Identification of migrants: Some of the respondents agreed with detention until one gets to know who the migrants are (until they get their documents) (1MLTB, 8 MLTB), and until medical checks are made, but some question whether keeping migrants there for so long is necessary. 4MIGB attests that Maltese people are right to put migrants in detention before they identify them, but wrong because the rest of Europe do not keep migrants in detention, and once one keeps them there, one must give them “something to keep his mind healthy” since there are “healthy peoples but they lost their mind” and end up in hospital.

- Detention as a deterrent: Since migrants would have contact with other migrants who have not yet come, knowing that they would face detention may act as a
deterrent to discourage migrants from coming (5MLTB). 10MLTB said that while he may not agree with the detention centres themselves, he thinks it might be a way of funneling migrants or “trying to push-back in a polite way” by discouraging economic migrants from following the migratory route, just as is being done in the Spanish enclaves in Morocco, and in Lampedusa, and they therefore head to Sicily or Italy (in fact, they do not intend to come to Malta).

- **Availability of foods and goods:** Detention is positive in that although one does not get an allowance, one is daily given breakfast, lunch and dinner. Moreover they are given a pack of toiletries monthly and when it is cold, they are given jackets or second-hand clothes, which are good for inside detention (8MIGB).

The negative is also highlighted:

- **Nothing to do:** 3MIGB says he did not like detention since one cannot go out and one sits idle everyday. 10MIGB commented on how he always had the same routine in detention: “get up – sleep, get up – sleep.” 6MIGB said, “kont niekol, nixrob u norqod” [I used to eat, drink and sleep]. 9MIGB in fact said that Muscat had told Gonzi (the former Prime Minister) to start teaching Maltese in detention, but he did not do so when he became Prime Minister. While 8MLTB gets angry when the migrants rebel at the detention centres since they should be happy to have got somewhere, she can understand that they may revolt against being kept locked
inside (especially without being criminals), not having anything to do and not wanting to come to Malta in the first place.

- **Health problems:** 4MIGB is against overcrowding for instance 20 people sleeping in one small room for health reasons (if someone is sick) and psychological reasons (some have mental problems and do not like noise, and fight or think of committing suicide). While 10MIGB was healthy before, he says he got a sugar and blood pressure problem in detention. Yet at least in detention one had access to healthcare, unlike in Libya, where one could not go to hospital (4MIGB).

- **Lack of freedom and loss of hope:** Some are against detention since as 1MLTB argues, migrants left their countries where there was no democracy, only to have freedom, which is an integral part of democracy (despite the responsibilities that go with it), taken away from them. In fact they feel sorry for the migrants (5MLTB). Additionally 4MIGB said that since one would have fled one’s country and endured suffering in Libya and come to detention, which is like a prison, the person might think that “all over the world is full of trouble. So he’s losing the hope and you’re thinking of killing yourself if you are a weak person.”

- **Detention is like a prison:** 8MIGB says that when they rescued them from the sea, they gave them a wrist band with their police number and “the police, they are guarding. They direct us to prison.” 8MIGB explains how in detention, migrants
“think that they are criminal.” Even when someone is taken to hospital, the individual and the interpreter (a fellow migrant) who goes with them, are handcuffed so that they do not escape, however 8MIGB notes that “When you come to the community and you hand-cuff, you think that you are criminal. It's shocking, but they will make mostly like this.” 3MLTB suggested that prisoners are treated better than migrants in detention: Prisoners go out into courtyard or are let out on occasions like Christmas and Good Friday, but the migrants in detention stay in. While it is good to integrate prisoners with other people and not to portray them as criminal but to accept them, foreigners should also be accepted.

- **Long stay in detention:** 6MLTB believes that the government needs to see how to treat migrants better during the asylum procedure, since it takes very long and they remain closed in a centre. 8MIGB mentioned that upon arriving in detention, migrants who were there longer explained the situation but also told them that if the result of their interview with RefCom was positive, they would be released, “Otherwise, you will sit like us.”

- **Fear of the unknown:** Migrants might not understand why they are in detention but think that they are in a prison, since they cannot get out (7MLTB). In fact, in detention 8MIGB was “very very afraid,” did not know her rights and obligations and thought that something would happen if she says “one word.” Yet out of detention she is not afraid since she knows her rights and obligations and does not cause problems, “So everything will be straight.”
4.4.4.4 What’s in a name?

In inquiring whether the fact that the ‘detention centre’ is called a ‘detention centre’ makes a difference, there were varied answers. Some like 2MIGB did not seem to know whereas 4MIGB said they use ‘closed’ rather than ‘detention’ centre.

6MLTB thinks the name has an impact yet he says that now that the building already exists, one can call it ‘Ċentru tal-Fjuri’ (Flower Centre) but Maltese people would still see it the way it is, since “once li ha tikketta mal-Maltin, aħna ilsienna iebeś” [once the Maltese labeled the place, it is difficult to alter its image]. Similarly 10MLTB compared it to calling the Corradino prison ‘Corradino Hilton,’ since once people are locked up, it does not make a difference what you call it.

Instead, the name of the village where the detention centre is seems to have more of an impact than the name of the detention centre itself. 2MLTB said that when one mentions ‘Ħal Far’ she immediately thinks of the migrant detention centre of which she hears a lot about, for instance that the migrants attacked security or that they do not want to eat the food that was given to them.

4.4.4.5 Impact of the detention centre on contact

Migrants have very little contact with Maltese people in detention, except for the soldiers (5MIGB, 6MIGB, 7MIGB, 9MIGB), Integra (who give English lessons but since every week they go to another zone, a month passes until they return to one’s zone), JRS
(who come with a very big team of psychologists, social workers and lawyers to guide migrants through the asylum procedure), members of AWAS also come to make assessments for underage, and journalists come to interview people (8MIGB).

10MLTB argued that the attitudes of the migrants and the soldiers in detention towards each other, namely: “‘I don’t want to be here,’ and ‘I don’t want you here,’” respectively, is what causes “friction” and “animosity.” He also mentioned for instance with reference to the soldiers: “Normali jien ma dħalltx l-armata biex noqghod insajjar ghall-immigranti” [I did not enter the army to cook for immigrants].

6MLTB thinks that while some of the people working in detention may be genuine, hard-working and supportive, others may see migrants as a threat or something similar, which is why issues crop up. Similarly, 9MIGB said that when one of the soldiers, who was really kind-hearted, was on shift, he started taking them out into fresh air, and would support them and bring them food, water, sweets and items they needed for their menstrual period, whereas another would remain seated and throw water at them when they knocked on the door.

Conversely, 4MIGB says that the soldiers in detention were helpful and respected them, in contrast to the detention in Libya, where one would be beaten for looking out of

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the window. Moreover, 1MIGB points out that one of the security guards who currently works in BOC and with whom he has friendly relations, used to work in the detention centre, and that is where they first met each other. Positive relations could still ensue in places where Maltese and migrants have little contact, but it is fostered through more contact later on.

It would be good for future research to look into intergroup contact in detention between the staff and migrants in detention and between the migrants themselves, keeping the transitoriness of their stay in mind.

As for the impact of detention on relations with the wider Maltese community, 7MIGB highlighted issues of status:

“Someone like in a prison and another in a normal life, don't seem the same or look as though they are equal. So can impact contact between Maltese and migrants as they think they did a crime."

Allport would argue in fact that equal status is one of the conditions for better contact. At the same time, some Maltese argued that while the migrants are in detention, they are seen to pose less of a threat than when they are in the open centres, since they cannot get out (5MLTB, 6MLTB). This might link to the idea in Chapter 1 that bringing groups on an equal level might not lead to improved contact since the higher-status group might not want the low-status group to gain more influence.
4.4.4.6 Detention centres and their impact on perceptions

Detention centres are seen to lead some migrants to get a bad impression of the Maltese and the Maltese to see them as ‘criminal.’

1MLTB and 5MLTB think that the fact that migrants are kept in a closed centre, or something like a “cage” would make them angry towards the Maltese and give them a bad impression of them.

Upon arriving in detention, migrants first thought that the Maltese were behind it, however when one explained to them why they were in detention, and that they would not stay there endlessly, they felt better (4MIGB). Similarly, 8MIGB argues that in detention, while migrants see people like those from JRS as “good people” and “helpful”, they would question why Malta would keep them closed up in the centre and think that Malta is “not good” since Malta is not like Italy, where there is no detention (8MIGB). Similarly, as far as 4MIGB knows, European rules do not stipulate the need for detention, and unlike Malta, other Europeans do not have detention centres.

10MIGB (who has a double reject) thought the Maltese where “nice people” because “when in Africa, saw Europeans as good people and with humanity” and he said that “I have a problem with the government, not the Maltese people.” However, by the end of the interview he mentioned that AWAS asked him to leave the BOC by August, and he said that since the Refugee Commissioner and workers are all Maltese people, if they are
not good, neither will the Maltese be because “All in the world, if government nice, people nice” so the Maltese and the government are bad.

Yet, the migrants’ problems with policies are not always projected onto the Maltese population it seems, but are usually kept separate. 7MIGB did not like detention but since that is how the law is, Maltese would obey the law. 9MIGB also had a problem with the policies, not the Maltese people.

As for the migrants, since they are locked inside, one would think they are criminals, as that is where criminals are taken (4MLTB). In fact according to 9MLTB, many Maltese consider detention to be “ħabs għar-refuġġjati” [a prison for refugees].

4.4.4.7 Impact of Ħal Far Open Centre on contact

7 of the migrants at BOC lived in Hal Far Open centre before coming to Balzan, and they underlined its impact on contact with Maltese from various angles:

- **Isolated location:** 8MIGB describes Ħal Far as “very very far from everywhere and it’s isolated place.” Once a week one sees cars and motorcycles, since there is a race track, one also hears noises from the industrial area nearby, but there are no people or shops around. In fact, 2MLTB highlights how while migrants in Balzan are not complained about, people prefer not to pass next to the Ħal Far Open Centre, especially Maltese women.
- **Kind grocer:** 8MIGB notes how a man called Mario goes daily to the HF OC with his car at 5 p.m. to sell to the migrants anything they may need, for instance food, vegetables, and he also brings clothes. An Eritrean assists him. Mario also makes arrangements for migrants to pay him back when they get their next allowance, if they would be unable to pay at that time. 8MIGB notes how many migrants even from Bugibba or Marsaxlokk, including herself, still buy their things at him in Hal Far (he then delivers her goods in Balzan, so that she would not need to carry them).

- **Maltese volunteers at Hal Far:** Hal Far is an open centre so when Maltese people would see migrants, they would come to speak to them and bring them clothes, like a woman called Antoinette, known as ‘Mama Africa’ who also goes weekly to Balzan (5MIGB). 8MIGB in fact mentioned volunteers who brought clothes, food, pushchairs, bed sheets, toys, as some of the contact she had with Maltese in Hal Far. Joanna also asks people on Facebook to donate things migrants need (from the list she would have made) and comes to distribute the items at Hal Far, and weekly in Balzan.

- **Language as key to enter the heart of the Maltese:** 8MIGB met Joanna (one of the volunteers), with whom she is still in contact in Hal Far. Joanna was surprised that she spoke English well (as a Somali woman), and they agreed that she would support her to find a job. The two are still in contact and 8MIGB seeks advice from Joanna regarding employment options, and asks her to check some of them out,
when she is not sure, for instance what the families who need a cleaner, are like, as she would be a “little bit afraid,” if she does not know them. Consequently, language is being seen as a very important tool in the interaction between Maltese and migrants. Thus perhaps in cases of intergroup contact between groups that do not share the same language, finding a common language or becoming acquainted with the language of the other, may be considered as key.

- **Health issues:** 4MIGB notes that health wise, the Hal Far open centre is better than detention since toilets and baths are clean. This he argues, impacts the Maltese community, because if migrants become sick, they could become sick too, when interacting for instance on the bus. Moreover, before signing for their allowances three times a week, all migrants must clean their own container from the outside, or their allowance would be deducted (8MIGB).

- **Exploitation and racism:** 4MIGB notes how Maltese people also come to Hal Far and offer people jobs in construction or gardening because they see it as a pool for “cheap labour.” Furthermore both 4MIGB and 10MIGB mentioned how in Hal Far, Birżebbuġa and Ħamrun, children/young people often passed by with their cars at a high-speed and threw eggs at them.

- **Perception of threat:** The Maltese argue that Birżebbuġa is full of migrants (because the ones of Hal Far go there for instance to swim in the bay) and residents feel harassed by them (8MLTB) and are afraid to go out or to leave the door open.
(3MLTB). 3MLTB adds that even in the news, he heard about the situation and he often hears the words “kif iddominawna!” [how they dominated us!], but questions how a population of 5,000 could take over a country. This links back to the fact that the perception of threat could impact intergroup contact.

4.4.4.8 Impact of BOC on contact

The nature of the BOC and its management also has an impact on the type of contact experienced in Balzan. A number of factors were highlighted:

- **Control and security**: 6MLTB notes that in the past, when the migrants started arriving, there was a lack of control of the migrants and no security officers controlled exit and entry to BOC, like there is today. The nuns who offered them a place to live, amongst them Sr. Agnes (who was already elderly), was limited as to how much she could control them, but concentrated her efforts of providing them with foods and support they needed. Problems would arise like noise, some Maltese would come to profit out of them, fights between Maltese and migrants would ensue, and some migrants used to steal as well. Notwithstanding, when surveillance cameras were put up in BOC, it helped to solve some problems. Yet, 8MIGB also explains how whereas people used to pass through different doors in Hal Far, in Balzan one has to pass either through the door of the single men or families and the security officers ask people for reasons why they entered. This might make it harder for Maltese people to get in.
- **Isolation of migrants:** 5MLTB notes that migrants “qeghdin ghalihom” [live apart]; once migrants get into the BOC, there is a corridor and they live behind that, so it is not like when migrants are living in the community like in Marsa. There does not seem to be much opportunity for contact within the centre as “Maltese mostly they can't come here and the people who live in here most of them I don't know what is wrong with them but somehow they are isolated, you know, all of them they are living here. When I wake up in the morning I see everyone is wake up, he cooks his things and he come back to his room” (8MIGB).

She attributes not knowing the language as a possible part of the problem. It seems that a number of the migrants in Balzan, do not go out of their rooms except to shop when they get their allowance. This does not facilitate contact with the Maltese.

- **Impact of sharing items:** 7MLTB argues that just like anyone may have some quarrels with one’s family or neighbours, migrants can have them too; the fact that they live in a single place and have to share things like washing machines and cookers, increases the opportunity for arguments to arise.

- **Integration:** 2MLTB also agrees with the BOC, since there are families with children and the adults go to work. 3MLT notes that some Maltese actually foster migrant children when their parents go to work, for instance during the weekend. 10MLTB also highlights that with the exception of a few, migrants “integrated well,” “they pay their bills, they don’t fight, they don’t cause disturbance.”
- **Order and cleanliness:** 2MIGB likes Balzan better than Hal Far since it is “nice and clean.” 4MIGB mentions that he likes the security officers, managers, and Fr. Vella and the fact that law is obeyed in the house, for instance 2MIGB said that Fr. Vella puts up a cleaning schedule (who does not stick to it is expelled from BOC), and everyone must clean up after them (8MIGB). This may contribute to the positive images migrants have in Balzan since both 2MLTB and 9MLTB noted that the parents keep their children “nodfà” (clean).

- **Positive image of migrants:** 2MIGB also noted that “if you speak to Maltese and they ask whether from Balzan, they respect you as from there.” This concurs with 3MLTB’s idea that while in detention, migrants are considered to be ‘criminals,’ in Balzan they are ‘refugees.’

- **‘Accepted presence’:** Although there are also those who would comment “Ara naqra Ħal Balzan, kif ġie!” [Look at how Balzan ended up!], 5MLTB refers to migrants in Balzan as “preżenza aċċettata” (an accepted presence). 1MLTB for instance agrees with migrants living in Balzan, since they have to live somewhere, and she wonders whether they would otherwise be alive or not. 5MLTB also sees Balzan as enriched since people from different cultures and religions are living together without “friction.” 2MIGB seems to suggest that this acceptance may be linked to who owns the BOC. He says that while Maltese people in other areas are busy and their faces are not “open,” people in Balzan “have open faces as they respect Sr. Agnes.” While it is positive that he considers Balzan residents to have
“open faces” it is interesting whether they are that way out of respect and support to an “ingroup” member, or because they are really more open to foreigners. Yet 8MLTB also says that the image of the Maltese in Balzan seems to be a positive one since the residents welcome migrants, for instance even when Maltese people need cleaners or painters in their homes, they go and ask for workers at the BOC and are bound to give them a certain payment.

So 5MLTB concludes that no contact takes place between Maltese and migrants in Balzan. This implies that there remains a distance between the two groups, both physically, although their centre is in the locality, and socially.

4.4.4.9 Impact of living in the community on contact

The two groups also assessed the impact of living in the community on intergroup contact:

- **Positive experience:** 7MIGB would prefer living in the community than in the BOC, since one would have neighbours, and he has some friends who “get on with their neighbours.” 10MLTB also mentioned how people from different nationalities (including from Rwanda) who live outside the BOC had integrated well into the community, and even learnt Maltese (which seems to be a bonus). 5MIGB also mentions what a positive experience she had with the Maltese when she lived in the community in Gudja, since the Maltese used to help her and her son also used to go to the band club to help to manufacture fireworks. 3MLTB also prefers integrating
migrants with the people in the community, depending on their behaviour, rather than keeping them in detention.

- **Equal status:** 9MIGB who lives in Balzan but outside BOC, mentioned how people automatically thought she lives in BOC since she is a Balzan resident. However when one woman got to know, she said, “Eh, mela sirtu bħalna?” [Oh, so you became like us?] and others tell you “Brava!” [Good girl!] because you live outside the BOC (9MIGB). This may indicate that there are implicit class levels between the Maltese and migrant groups, which may impede contact from reducing prejudice, the latter not being between people of an equal status, according to Allport.

- **Problem with numbers:** 6MLTB argued that possibly if one family of migrants goes to live in a block of flats peacefully with its neighbours, there would not be any problems but “jekk ikun hemm blokok shah bihom, nahseb ija, għal Malti taffetwa dik nahseb iva” [if there had to be flats full of them, yes, I think it does affect the Maltese]. After the researcher inquired why this happens, he suggested that the same happens if the family had to be Arab, since the Maltese have prejudices against these cultures. Besides, “Il-Malti” [the Maltese person] seems to refer to the prototype/standard Maltese person, to be generalized to the Maltese population at large.
As a result, the Maltese were seen not to be very knowledgeable and/or interested about migration policies. Migrants base their knowledge on experience. Detention was seen as fostering mutual negative perceptions between the two groups and increasing the inequality between them. The ‘openness,’ of the Ħal Far Open Centre encouraged more interaction with migrants, yet only contact with volunteers and a grocer were reported. However, large numbers of migrants from this centre seemed to threaten people in Birzebbuja. Large numbers were also seen to be a potential problem with migrants living in the community, in an otherwise positive experience wherein the two groups had an equal status. Finally BOC was seen as a mixture between an open centre and living in the community: while only volunteers are seen to enter BOC, only those migrants who have mingled with the Maltese have integrated into society and are on par with the Maltese. However, contact between the two groups is still minimal.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to analyse the nature and dynamic of contact between the Maltese and Sub-Saharan African migrants in Balzan.

In terms of the perceptions of contact, the type of contact between the two groups from the Maltese’s point of view was mainly residential (within Balzan) and by coincidence. Half of the migrants had some contact in Balzan but the other half met Maltese in several other places. Similarly only half of their contact with the Maltese was by coincidence, since they worked with the Maltese and also built friendships. Both groups
reported regularly meeting outgroup members. Allport seems to have been right in that working together towards a common goal would better relations; friendships resulted. However living in a residential setting alone, did not lead to substantial contact, especially due to a lack of neighbourliness.

Contact between the two groups was seen as generally positive but with exceptions, especially among the migrants, who did not only speak about the situation in Balzan. Positive contact was mainly seen through helpful behaviour and kind gestures, personal characteristics such as good manners and honesty, assimilating into the community including through knowing English or Maltese, and friendly interpersonal relations. In contrast, negative contact resulted from cultural factors such as cultural differences and xenophobia, discrimination and racism, negative behaviour such as harassment, over-confidence and aggressiveness, and problems of perceptions relating to fear and false accusations. Moreover various factors impacted contact between the two groups: comfort within the ingroup, lack of neighbourliness, the degree of openness, effort, perceptions, personality/character, the type of Maltese and generalization of relations.

Consequently Maltese relations with migrants were better, the more similar they were to the ingroup and the less they differed from the ingroup’s norms. Migrants felt happier and thereby increased their self-esteem when they were treated like other Maltese on an equal level, and included in the ingroup. When ingroup favouritism (or perceptions thereof) took place, which led to unequal treatment of outgroup members, problems
ensued. Language in particular was seen as a tool of integration when it was shared and an obstacle when not. Yet efforts to be more open to the ‘Other’ was needed on both sides. Contact after all has positive implications in that it fosters greater understanding, empathy and knowledge about the ‘Other.’

When it came to categorising each other, the Maltese struggled to arrive at a definition of ‘immigrants.’ Moreover not only did the issue of Maltese emigration feature in their quest for a definition, but migrants used the Maltese’s experiences abroad as a yardstick to measure their openness. While migrants tended to differentiate Maltese on the good or bad divide, the Maltese classified them by their skin colour or recognised their differences as individuals. One migrant seemed to highlight the social versus individual identity dichotomy amongst the Maltese. Generally relations between the two groups were also seen as interpersonal rather than intergroup relations. This Hewstone and Brown would argue, minimizes the possibility of positive relations to be generalized to the outgroup. Yet it also prevents negative generalizations from taking place too.

The discussion continued with perceptions of threat. The first encounter with the ‘Other’ was characterised by mixed feelings. Again, lack of knowledge of the languages spoken by outgroup members, contributed to the fear. The Furthermore perceptions of threat seemed to increase where economy and resources came into the picture. Besides, the impact that one’s behaviour, on the one hand, and xenophobic attitudes, on the other, have on threat perception were also highlighted. Moreover the perceptions of those who did not
feel threatened were mentioned. The extent of the media’s impact on making or breaking relations was also recognised, before comparing perception of threat in Balzan with that of Marsa to see it is impact on intergroup contact in the two localities. According to the residents in Balzan, relations in Balzan are less subject to threat than in Marsa. It seems that when the livelihood of the ingroup or the individual was seen at risk, perception of threat increased.

Finally, the look at the impact of policies and institutions on intergroup contact first revealed how knowledge on migration policies is generally lacking (although some migrants know from experience) and it helps to breed misconceptions, contributing to a negative attitude towards the outgroup. Contact between the Maltese and migrants was seen to be limited and of an unequal nature in detention. The Ħal Far Open Centre and BOC where seen as allowing more contact, with important distinctions. HFOC was more isolated and its large numbers perceived as a threat, whereas BOC is situated within Balzan, but some migrants do not leave the place much. Entry into HFOC is much easier, which facilitates contact, whereas entry into BOC is restricted. Contact in such a setting is still unequal since migrants and Maltese have different residences and relations are often of a donor-recipient, shop-keeper-client or employer-employee nature. Contact in the community brings the two groups on an equal level and it could result in positive relations as Allport would argue. However if the ingroup feels threatened by the outgroup members and consequently acts in a hostile way towards them, problems can ensue.
Just as the connections between contact and categorisation, perception of threat and policies and institutions have been analysed for the case of Balzan, the next Chapter will follow a similar thread but focus on Marsa.
CHAPTER FIVE - ANALYSIS OF INTERGROUP RELATIONS:

CASE STUDY II: MARSA

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has analysed intergroup relations between the Maltese and Sub-Saharan African migrants in Balzan, and has sought to answer the research questions in the light of that case study. This chapter will deal with another locality, namely Marsa, which is the seat of the Marsa Open Centre, and will similarly attempt to answer the following research questions:

i) What are the nature and dynamics of the interaction between the Maltese and the Sub-Saharan migrants in Marsa?

ii) More specifically,

a) What are the main problems in the interaction between these two groups?

b) How do the Maltese and the immigrants categorise each other?

c) How is the perception of social contact interconnected with: (A) The perception of threat, and (B) Assessment of the detention/ migration policies?
Results from this chapter will then be compared with those of Chapter 4 and synthesized in Chapter 6. This chapter will start by giving some background information about Marsa and the Marsa Open Centre before moving on to a discussion on perceptions of contact, categorisation, perception of threat and the impact of policies and institutions on contact.

5.2 Background to Marsa and the Marsa Open Centre (MOC)

According to the latest Census (2012), the locality of Marsa which covers an area of 2.76 km²¹ and has a population of 4,788.²

The MOC was originally opened in 2002, when the government had to move migrants out of the closed centre since their time there had expired, and they needed to be housed somewhere.³ Currently, the Foundation for Shelter and Support to Migrants (FSM) is “a service-provider” to government for the MOC, while the centre is funded and managed by the Ministry for Home Affairs (MHA) through the Agency for Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS).”⁴ Ms. Schembri Wismayer (Services Manager at FSM), provided the researcher with the information below about the centre.⁵ In the past a government trade school for boys up to the age of 15 years was found at the site of the

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¹ Census of Population and Housing 2011 Final Report, 93.
² ibid., 4.
⁵ Personal electronic correspondence, Sandra Schembri Wismayer, August 7, 2014.
current MOC. This was however closed down and remained empty for a number of years. When the MOC was opened in 2005 it was managed by the Fondazzjoni Suret il-Bniedem via a contract with the government, until it came under the management of FSM in 2010. While the centre is made to house 500 people, exact numbers cannot be given since they fluctuate weekly, yet “[t]he house count during the months April to July 2014 was around two hundred persons.” Compulsory classes are given at the centre, namely English, Cultural Orientation and Computer courses and vocational courses in Food Handling License B. Moreover various activities are organized weekly/ monthly, for instance “football tournaments, movie nights, music festivals, games sessions.” A “Medical Clinic, social work, residential care workers” are also available on site.6

5.3 Availability of interviewees

Contact to the migrants at the Marsa Open Centre was largely facilitated by the staff at FSM. They also hand-picked migrants who were able to communicate in English. As has been mentioned, the drawback with this is that migrants who do not speak Maltese and English may have a lesser chance to integrate, but their perceptions are not made known through the interviews. As for the Maltese, despite assistance by the Marsa local council, it was highlighted that it may be potentially difficult to speak to Marsa residents on the subject. The researcher saw this as indicative of a problem in itself. In fact, during one of the attempts to contact a Marsa resident, she said “Taf x’nista’ nghidlek dwar 1-

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immigranti? Li sawwutli t-tifla tlett darbiet u qassmuli l-hgiega. Dak li nista’ nghidlek fuqhom’ [You know what I can tell you about the immigrants? That they beat my daughter three times and smashed the glass [of her shop counter]. That's what I can tell you about them]. To be fair she was also busy and it was during the week of the Marsa village feast. As a consequence, the researcher managed to interview 10 migrants and 8 Maltese, from Marsa.

5.4 Data presentation and analysis

Similar to the previous chapter, Maltese and migrants were each given a code such as ‘12MIGM.’ The first number represents the chronological order in which interviews were conducted, the letters indicate the group the individual forms part of and the last letter represents the initial of the locality they stem from. The following sections will deal with perceptions of contact, categorisation, perceptions of threat and policies and institutions.

5.4.1 Perceptions of Contact

This section will focus on the type of contact that takes place between the Maltese and migrants in Marsa, their assessment of the contact, factors that impact contact and the change contact brought about.

5.4.1.1 TYPE OF CONTACT

The location, scope and regularity of the contact between the two groups was analysed. These are the results:
Location

All of the Maltese respondents reported meeting migrants in Marsa; 5 out of 8 of them met migrants in the street (1MLTM, 2MLTM, 4MLTM, 7MLTM and 8MLTM), 4 in shops in Marsa (5MLTM, 6MLTM, 7MLTM 8MLTM), 1 in a bar (7MLTM) and 7MLTM at his son’s school. 1MLTM reported meeting migrants at a bar in St. Julians where he works.

With regards to the migrants 1MLTM, who has very little contact with them, asserts “għall-inqas fl-opinjoni tiegħi għandhom tendenza jżommu għalihom” [at least in my opinion, they have a tendency to live apart]. The researcher asked however whether they stay apart or whether he does not go to them. 1MLTM highlighted that in the Marsa community there were a number of divisions based on band clubs and politics and he frequents the football club. Therefore, just as he did not go to other communities, he did not go to the MOC.

2MLTM noted how similar to the old people who do not leave their homes or people who are estranged from the church, he does not have contact with migrants, because “Jghixu għalihom” [They live apart]. So he considers them to be living in the same locality with him, but not part of the community.

Conversely, 3 out of 10 migrants met Maltese people in Marsa (7MIGM, 8MIGM and 10MIGM) and 4 met Maltese who work at the MOC or came to ask questions (5MIGM, 8MIGM, 9MIGM, 10MIGM). 1MIGM had only been out of detention for two and a half
months and he has very little contact with Maltese people since he had “very little time” to meet them, moreover since he was working, when he would come home he would be too tired to go out again, not because he would not want to meet Maltese people. He added however that one would not meet Maltese people in Marsa but in Sliema or Valletta. Similarly 8MIGM mentions that in Marsa he only has contact with the staff at MOC since when he wakes up in the morning, he goes to work and comes back with the same bus, so he has less of an opportunity to contact Maltese people. 6MIGM also mentioned that while he had made friends when he was living in the Ħal Far Open Centre, he has not made friends yet in MOC, where he has only been for two weeks, since he is “new” there.

Most contact with Maltese took place elsewhere. Half of the migrants met Maltese at the work place, 2MIGM met Maltese during a project with JRS and at MCAST, 3MIGM met Maltese at the St. Venera Football Club and at the University of Malta Sports Complex and 3 met Maltese at their former residences (namely Dar is-Sliem for 3MIGM and Ħal Far Open Center for 6MIGM and 8MIGM). 4 migrants highlighted that they meet Maltese everywhere, two of whom mentioned the bus in particular.

Scope of contact

5 Maltese met migrants by coincidence (1MLTM, 2MLTM, 4MLTM, 7MLTM, 8MLTM); 2MLTM in fact refers to his contact with migrants as “superfiċjali” (superficial), since he just greets them. Three Maltese meet migrants by circumstance since they work in a bar or shop in Marsa (3MLTM, 5MLTM, 6MLTM). 6MLTM mentioned for instance
that she only has contact with migrants inside her shop, and would ask them where they came from out of curiosity, but would not do so outside. 4MLTM meets with migrants when he offers them jobs as cleaners and when he meets former employees, in the MOC by coincidence, and asks them for their opinion on issues pertaining to Marsa. 3MLTM and 7MLTM have had a drink or met up with migrants at a restaurant.

Upon being asked by the researcher, 2MLTM said that no common projects between the Maltese and migrants take place in Marsa, because they never had the occasion to and the people never really showed the wish to; migrants were never really on the “agenda” in Marsa. Similarly, in answer to whether the local council organised something between the Maltese and the migrants, 4MLTM notes that with reference to migrants, so far Marsa residents do not yet feel that migrants are part of their community, and so:

“trid toqghod attent fiha din fil-bidu, ghax jekk inti hemm barra ghandek massa ta' nies li forsi għadhom iħarsu lejn l-immigranti b'mod ikrah, għallura fil-bidu ahjar le. Ahjar thalli ż-żmien iktar għaddej biex l-individwu jkun lahaq dara s-sistema li qed jghix fil-lokalita' tieghek.”

[one has to be careful about this in the beginning, because if out there you have a mass of people who perhaps still see migrants negatively, then in the beginning, it is better not. It is better to leave time pass so that the individual would have got used to the system that the migrants are living in their community].

As for the migrants, 7 of them met Maltese people by coincidence and five met them at work (4MIGM, 6MIGM, 7MIGM, 8MIGM, 10MIGM). 4MIGM mentioned that contacts increase depending on where one is working, not depending on where one is living.
Two migrants worked with Maltese on common projects. A Maltese used to give 1MIGM clothes to sell, which shows cooperation between the two, which Allport would argue could lead to reduced prejudice between them. 2MIGM participated in an outreach project called ‘REACT’ by JRS in schools to raise awareness on the immigration issue in Malta, to explain that migrants left their countries for a reason, and to call upon people to “love” them, regardless their skin colour. Additionally, he mentioned that when he meets teachers who he would have met in the schools, outside, they come up to him and speak to him. So despite the fact that the project addressed children, it also had a lasting impact on contact between members of the two groups in general.

3 met Maltese people by circumstance (2MIGM attended a course at MCAST, 3MIGM played football with Maltese, 9MIGM meets the staff at MOC). 4 migrants reported meeting up with Maltese friends (3MIGM, 6MIGM, 7MIGM, 10MIGM).

**Regularity**

7 Maltese reported meeting migrants often/ every day and 8MIGM only sometimes when she is in Marsa. 3MLTM, 4MLTM and 7MLTM also reported meeting friends, people at the MOC or migrant parents of his son’s classmates at school, respectively, sometimes.

8 migrants met the Maltese sometimes, while 7MIGM and 9MIGM met Maltese people every day.
It seems like the contact Marsa residents have with migrants is largely residential and most of them meet them every day. Yet migrants meet Maltese in many different situations and not often in Marsa, but they only have contact with Maltese people sometimes. 2 Maltese and 4 migrants mentioned meeting members from the other group on a friendly basis. This is considered one of the most positive forms of contact, yet whether the individuals generalize their positive encounter to outgroup members would impact on their attitude towards the outgroup.

5.4.1.2 ASSESSMENT OF CONTACT

When it came to assessing their contact with outgroup members, amongst the Maltese, 1MLTM rated the contact as mostly good, 3MLTM (who used to meet migrants a lot) as very positive, 5MLTM, 6MLTM and 7MLTM as positive and 8MLTM as negative. 4MLTM specified that it is normal contact, when he sees migrants and corrects their behaviour so that they understand what bothers the Maltese, or when he meets migrants at MOC, positive, when he offers migrants jobs since they could feel part of the community, and negative, when migrants loiter. 2MLTM who considers contact with migrants to be one in which they are asking for help rated it as ‘neutral’ because, it is positive since they give him an opportunity to help them, but negative because it means that they would be in need.

The migrants alternatively saw contact as positive (1MIGM, 4MIGM, 5MIGM, 9MIGM). 4MIGM has friendly relations at the work place, but that is also the only place
where he meets people. 5MIGM does not see any problems but considers everything to be good; he only met with JRS and people from other organizations. Moreover, 2MIGM and 10MIGM saw contact as mostly good but with exceptions, 3MIGM and 7MIGM mentioned both good and bad contact and 6MIGM and 8MIGM as normal contact.

Both the Maltese and the migrants differed greatly in the way they assessed contact with members of the other group and their responses where at times not a clear-cut positive or negative.

Positive contact

The following factors were seen to have shaped positive contact. They are split into four groups, namely behaviour, personal characteristics, assimilation and interpersonal relations:

Behaviour

- *Help and trust:* 3MLTM mentioned how from the start migrants would help him in the restaurant he owned near the MOC and clean up after them and one of them would actually sweep. He used to help them too, for instance many had money problems so he would give some of them (because some would also try to abuse of him), food for free or via instalments for who works. One migrant in particular was not employed with him but he used to help him a lot as a volunteer by cleaning, for instance even after 3MLTM closes the restaurant, and would clean up the empty bottles that would have been left from the night before. 3MLTM would give him
food and drink for free. The migrant also slept at 3MLTM’s house for a week until he found a place to rent. When he used to wash 3MLTM’s car and other Maltese used to see him, 3MLTM used to tell them that he pays him €5 so that the migrant would get money for the service. He is in Sweden now, but they are still in contact. Besides, the migrants own a restaurant next to the MOC and when their gas finishes, they call 3MLTM and he brings them gas from Hamrun.

7MLTM knew a Somali who used to help out a lot in the shops, he never stole anything and the people would trust him completely. He says “iktar minn Malti kienu javdawh” [they used to trust him more than they would trust a Maltese person]. Since one would usually be willing to trust ingroup members more, merely by being ingroup members, trusting an outgroup member more, is very significant.

3MIGM described how he once was going to Dar is-Sliem in the night bus and “there was an old man in the bus and I helped him and we crossed the road together.” 7MIGM mentioned as a positive point that the Maltese rescued them from the sea; something that he does not forget.

- **Greeting:** 3MIGM greets people like old men.

- **Support to migrant parents:** 7MLTM mentions how quite a number of good-willed people from Marsa, keep the children of migrant parents, who live in private
residences in the Marsa community, whom they would know and who would have some difficulties, until the parents get back from work. He also notes that one of the migrant women sends her son to school, but since she was not granted refugee status, she needs to pay for his tuition, which she cannot. 7MLTM believes that some Maltese are paying them for her until the issue is resolved.

- **Charity:** 3MLTM also used to give two of the immigrants whom he met at the restaurant, second-hand clothes that he would have, in order to keep them or to distribute them in the MOC, to who needs them. Many of them would respect him and say “you are my father.”

**Personal characteristics**

- **Importance of cleanliness:** 4MLTM mentioned that he sees offering migrants jobs as cleaners of Marsa as positive since they feel part of the community and get paid. In addition, he notes that some Maltese residents “jara grupp ta’ suwed jghidlek dan ġie jhammigiли hawnhekk” [when they see a group of migrants, they think that they came to dirty the place], to alter their perception to see another side of migrants, as people who keep the place clean.

- **Respect for diversity:** 3MLTM who first used to serve Maltese and later migrants of the MOC, used to keep two sets of pans in order to fry eggs for the migrants in one pan and bacon for the Maltese in another, because the migrants would not want
to touch food contaminated with pork because of their religious beliefs, so he figured that it would not be “fair” to them otherwise.

7MIGM meets Maltese people outside of the bar in Marsa, but since he does not drink alcohol he drinks soft drinks, so neither the Maltese nor he disregarded their culture or preferences but spoke regardless. 10MIGM mentioned how when he was still in detention he was introduced to the Jehovah Witnesses since they came to distribute a magazine. Since he had their contact, when he was granted freedom from detention, they met in Marsa. They spoke to him about the Bible (although he is Pentecostal), but then he said “we stopped the religion debate, but friendly he advised us,” for instance about finding jobs and to “accept different behaviour of Malta.”

Assimilation

- Benefits of integration: After getting to know Maltese people, after some time, the job topic comes up and 7MIGM asks whether they have any recommendations. He sent 50 CVs to different hotels but in speaking to the people, one of them highlighted vacancies at the company where he used to work. He went there and got the job. In fact he attests: “That’s why I like integration more. Integration facilitates you, you see, things.”
- **Speaking the same language:** 7MLTM notes that the migrants do not have many difficulties to understand Maltese. The Somalis and the Nigerians find Maltese the most difficult to understand at first. However then he says “fit taż-ţmien jibdew jidrawh ukoll il- Malti” [after some time they get to know Maltese as well]. The researcher wonders whether the ability of the migrants to grasp a language like Maltese depends on their extent of contact with the Maltese and their pre-knowledge in Arabic (since the Maltese language has Arabic roots). Moreover although language is an area that needs to be worked on in intergroup relations, not all migrants could face the same problem in this respect.

1MLTM usually speaks to Africans he meets in English, unless he tries to say some words in French, but he would be unable to keep a conversation going. It depends on their level of English and on one’s fluency in the language on that particular day (1MLTM). He also noted that “Gieli jkollok tbaxxi l-livell” [Sometimes one needs to lower one’s language level]. So it seems that rather than waiting for migrants to be very fluent in the languages 1MLTM tries to speak a language they might speak too, or use easier words to be understood, if necessary. Thereby the individual may be bringing his relations with the migrants on a more equal level, and auguring well for prejudices to be reduced.

8MIGM was happy when he arrived in Malta because they spoke English and so he could understand what people were saying, whereas he had problems in Libya because he could not speak Arabic. 10MIGM says how he had to adapt to the Maltese in the sense
that if one knows English when one is searching for work, they are “impressed.” Speaking English also allowed him to integrate better into the community.

- **Acceptance of one’s fate in Malta:** 7MLTM mentions that when he used to meet the Somali who lives in his road, they used to drum it in his mind that he has no future in Malta, and he used to understand and accept it, which he found to be positive.

- **Assimilation:** 3MLTM mentioned how “[t]ipo taghna n-Nijerjani ghalija” [Nigerians are our kind of person] since he used to take them out to drink with his friends, and “bhalna” (like us) he would want to pay a round of drinks for everyone although they would not leave them. Similarly, 7MLTM mentions how he and his friends, used to meet up a migrant, who was their friend, for a drink. He notes “ghax hu kien dera l-kultura taghna” [he had got used to our culture] and “Ghal-ewwel kien jixrob wiehed, imbaghad jixrob tnejn, imbaghad baqa' jixrob maghna” [At first he used to take one drink, then two and then he continued drinking with us]. Moreover he adds with respect to the children of migrants, who go to school, that since children would go to school they “bdew prattikament kważi, jintegraw fully mas-soćjeta’ Maltija” [practically started to integrate fully into Maltese society] and “to abide by our rules.” Consequently it seems that step-by-step assimilation of migrants in the community is looked at positively.
- **Compatible behaviours:** 4MLTM believes that if the manners or lifestyles of the migrants are seen to be compatible with those of the Maltese, they would look at them positively.

**Interpersonal Relations**

- **Friendship:** The mother of a friend of 7MLTM’s, who is about 84 years old, lives in his road and took care of a Somali for about 8 years since he is one of those who was beaten by other migrants in the MOC. He mentioned how everyone in his road knew him, “he was a very nice man” and he misses him a little. 7MLTM mentioned how he had asked the Somali about his situation and was told that his family was dispersed all over the world (South Africa, America and Finland) and to prove to him that he was a “true refugee,” he took off his t-shirt and showed him the deep scars and three bullets holes he had on his back. 7MLTM mentions how if they were suspicious about him before, at that point “il-kas miegħu kien magħluq” [in his case the case was closed]. Consequently, while it is positive that friendships are built and individuals are given the opportunity to understand each other better, this positive result does not seem to generalize to other outgroup members. 3MLTM also had a Nigerian friend whom he used to take out with him when he met up with some friends to drink in the evening or to go to a ‘fenkata’ (eat rabbit). However he only had a few of these immigrant friends.
3MIGM has made a number of friends in Malta for instance by playing with a football club in St. Venera. He also met Maltese people separately to play football in Ta’ Qali and when the 7 or 8 of them met him in Valletta, they came to him and greeted him and they agreed to organise another match. He also says that when there is a group of Maltese he would not know all of them but some of them; “Step-by-step, you’d know someone and he becomes your friend.” Since he had made contact with Maltese during friendlies organised by Dar is-Sliem, 3MLTM suggested to “organise something, meet together, we’d know each other. Friends would come from there.” 6MIGM mentions how he has friends who he got to know through other migrants who were there longer when he was in HFOC. They would visit HFOC, and he got to know them inside there first. Similarly 7MIGM used to work with some Maltese in a company; they became friends and introduced him to their friends once outside of the work place.

- Conversations: 5MLTM mentioned how she was speaking to a migrant from Ghana. She was reading the Bible when a migrant came to her and they started talking. She told him that she reads the Bible and he said he reads the Muslim one. She also quoted pieces of the Bible, which she encouraged him to read. 5MLTM enjoyed speaking to him and said “he was nice.”

2MIGM spoke of a very positive conversation he had inside the bus. Both men and women speak to him but the women are usually a little bit older.
- **Volunteering:** 3MIGM explained how every Friday a group of Maltese and foreign volunteers would come to Dar is-Sliem, and they taught them about Maltese culture, went for outings, played football and one used to write him some Maltese words so that he learns them. Consequently he says “If I want to go to a different place in Malta I can go, because I know Malta now.”

- **Outings:** 7MLTM mentions how at times he takes out some migrant children along with his son and takes them to the playground.

- **Contact when asking for/ giving directions:** Both migrants (1MIGM, 2MIGM, 7MIGM) and Maltese (1MLTM) spoke of positive contact between the two groups when it comes to migrants asking the Maltese for directions; Maltese people were helpful, and an old lady actually took 7MIGM personally to his destination.

**Negative contact**

Other factors have seen as contributing to negative contact, and they can be split into three groups, namely cultural factors, behaviours and problems of perceptions:

**Cultural factors**

- **Not speaking the same language:** 4MLTM notes that a number of migrants do not how to speak English or Italian, which keeps them at a distance from the population: “Il-lingwa iżżomhom” [The language acts as an obstacle]. 4MLTM thinks that the
Maltese get annoyed when they cannot understand what migrants are saying when they speak their own language, since they may feel that migrants would be planning something against them or speaking about them, even when it is not the case.

When 3MIGM was applying for a job he noted that some job assistants only speak Maltese and that to apply for jobs one must speak Maltese and English. Similarly 9MIGM mentioned that “Maltese generally speak Maltese. They concentrate on speaking Maltese rather than English so it is hard to understand them because of the language difference.” 10MIGM also noted how some immigrants who cannot “comprehend” Maltese encounter problems. Even some Maltese people who are educated, do not speak English but Maltese. So they run into difficulty.

Yet 3MIGM said “it is very important in life to learn different languages. It's good, because you can understand different people from different countries.”

- *Mentality vis-à-vis women:* In shops 7MLTM says, if his wife enters a grocery and the grocer would know her and ask her what she needs, he sees some migrants as thinking that not only should they be served first as they were before her, but because they are men. They also become a little aggressive especially if a woman shouts at them; something they cannot stand. However he thinks that the Eritreans and Nigerians are the most quarrelsome.
- *Shouting to talk:* 7MLTM considers the fact that the migrants shout to talk between them and with Maltese people as negative and he compares them to what one used to call “hammad Maltese” [rude Maltese].

- *Difficulties to adapt:* 7MLTM mentions that some migrants get a “shock” when they come to Malta until they switch from the hardships they had in their country to life in Malta, after having been granted a status.

- *Different skin-colour:* 7MLTM mentioned that “anke l-kulur tal-karnagqjon qisek dik id-distintjoni bejn abjad u iswed, minghajr ma trid ukoll tohloq distintjoni…” [even the skin-colour, the difference between white and black, creates a distinction between people, without wanting it to].

- *Racism and discrimination:* 7MIGM sees a few people at work who are racist and discriminating against the individual but he ignores them because the majority are “good people, who are just behaving to me positively.” 7MIGM highlighted how it is not the first them that he would be next to the bus-stop, the bus driver him, “he sees you as a black,” and he keeps on driving. 7MIGM also considered the fact that sometimes he is asked for his I.D. card, whereas the rest of the people on the bus would not have been asked, as discrimination.

Additionally, 2MIGM notes with reference to some Maltese people, mainly the women, that: “inside the bus there are two seats. Maybe that is the only seat that is left
inside the bus. They prefer standing than to sit beside a black man.” He has experienced this several times. 7MIGM also experienced this, and when he sits next to others, they turn away. So now he says “instead of feeling your mind something pressure… it’s good for you to stand.” It seems that such situations psychologically torment him, so he tries to avoid them. He also suggests that some Maltese see him as a threat. 9MIGM also mentions that some people do not like to sit close to him on the bus, or ignore him.

**Behaviour**

- **Loitering**: 4MLTM sees the loitering of migrants as negative because “[q]ed tirreduċi l-lokal ghal ċertu abbużi” [one reduces the locality to certain abuses].

- **Negative comments and consequent avoidance**: 8MLTM mentioned that at times when she is walking in the street in Marsa, migrants pass comments that are “hamallu” [rude] or they try to pick on you (although she notes that some regular immigrants also pass such comments). She tries to avoid having a conversation with the irregular immigrants because they generally would have passed such a comment and she would be a little afraid. However she would speak to them if they asked for directions for instance.

- **Hygiene**: 6MLTM mentioned that her sister sees migrants urinating in the plants belonging to one of the shops, and she considers migrants not be “hygienic” at all. Similarly, 7MLTM notes that the migrants’ hygiene “leaves much to be desired” and some are worse than others.
- **Exceeding the limit:** 7MLTM mentioned that the night before he had seen a group of migrants (he thinks that it was more than a hundred) who were supporting the Brazil football team during a World Cup match and every time the team scored, they got up together dancing, shouting and having fun. He says that when they are like that “up to a certain extent, we don’t mind them.” However, they are bothered when migrants exceed the limit, for instance when they drink and would not have been accustomed to it, and get out of control. 7MLTM also mentioned how in many shops there is an “unofficial bodyguard,” so that if someone exceeds the limit, they are thrown out. 3MLTM noted that it was not the first time that fights took place between the migrants and the Maltese (including with knives) during the Trinity feast; once a Maltese got a migrant’s guts out. 7MLTM notes that the main factor in fights with the Maltese is when they are under the influence of alcohol. Similarly, 1MLTM mentioned that contact with immigrants at the bar is generally good, unless someone would have been a bit drunk and caused some problem.

- **Ignoring:** 7MLTM mentions how when he enters shops and there would be “issuwed” (blacks), “l-ewwel ħaga ma naghtix kashom u nħarixx lejhom, ghal t'apposta nagħmilha, ghax huma qishom b'harsa, qishom jistudjawk. Ghallura jiena drajhom, jiena ma naghtihomx wiċċ...” [first of all I ignore them, don’t look at them, on purpose because when they look at you it seems as though they are analysing you. So I got used to them and do not look at them...].
- **Lack of manners:** 3MLTM noticed from the Somalis’ attitude that they lack education, for instance they do not stick to queues (even other migrants complain about it), or excuse themselves.

- **Alienation:** 1MLTM believes that in the case of the migrants and Maltese in Marsa, “flok il-ġiex komunitajiet qed jaraw kif jistgħu jsiru komunita’ waħda, qegħdin jaljenaw ruħhom minn xulxin” [Instead of seeing how they are going to become one community, they are alienating themselves from each other]. By way of example he notes how next to the Church one sees a bar and grocer in which there would be Maltese, and a bar and grocer opened by immigrants themselves next to it, where there would be immigrants. He questions, why they could not have gone to the same place.

- **Begging for money:** 2MLTM notes how some immigrants come to him, begging for money. Instead he prefers to give them value for the money, for instance food or clothes depending on what they need, as he does with Maltese people, due to their limited budget and in order not to set a precedent. Amongst others he notes how once he went to get food for an immigrant in this situation, but until he came back the individual vanished. Consequently he began to wonder whether the individual was begging for money or really needed help. Another time two Muslim migrants came to him and said that they want to convert to Christianity. After telling them that one cannot become a Christian overnight and referring them to the
Emigrants’ Commission, one of them asked, “M’ghandekx xi flus?” [You don’t have some money by any chance?].

- *Exploitation*: 4MLT notes however that ‘il-Malti’ [the Maltese, seen as generalizing a standard Maltese person], has the tendency to see migrants as vulnerable and in need for money and thus exploits them.

- *Advance ... retreat*: 2MLTM mentioned that similar to what he saw in Brooklyn “jersqu fejn jersqu s-suwed, l-abjad jibda jirtira” [wherever the ‘blacks’ move to, the ‘whites’ starts to retreat] and migrants start to occupy homes next to each other. He seems to suggest that it is a phenomenon that affects both blacks and whites, because when one is searching for a place where to live, one tries to look for the people or environment that appeals to them most so the skin colour or culture of one’s neighbours may play a role. With this argument 2MLTM seems to refer to the similarity-attraction theory, since one has a tendency to be attracted most to those who are most similar to oneself and thus it is natural that one would try to live next to them.

3MLTM notes that when migrants came to his restaurant, Maltese left: “meta bdew ... jithalltuli bdejt nara l-Maltin jaqtghu ftit ftit ftit ftit sakemm spiċċajt bihom biss. Imbaghad bdejt nimxi ghal ghajn l-immigranti” [when the two started to mix, I started seeing the Maltese leave little by little until I finished up with them only. Then I
started working more towards the immigrants’ needs], for instance he used to cook lamb, which he did not before.

7MIGM mentioned how he used to go to Hamrun and two old men used to get up off the bench when he would sit next to them. So when he saw them coming, he did not sit next to them but on the bench opposite them. However when one of them left, he decided to side beside the remaining one since the “pressure” was lower. He said “Hi, are you fine?” and the latter replied and they started a conversation. In this way 7MIGM tried to convert the individual-to-group relationship to an individual-to-individual relationship (interpersonal relationship) between members of different groups, making it more manageable. The next day when he went, the old man told his friend that “this guy is very good,” and as a result “[w]hen I come, two of them sit, they are not going to leave.” This seems to be a form of extended contact since the second old man would have a better impression of an outgroup member through his friend’s contact with him. Similar to 3MIGM, he sees it as a “step-by-step” approach.

Problems of perceptions

- **Lack of appreciation**: 7MLTM highlights that in the past, he would be angry at the migrants since the government would give them pocket money, cards for one’s mobile phone and food like chicken, and he says that they did not appreciate it and throw it away.
7MIGM mentioned how most immigrants would say that “Maltese are not good, they’re bad.” Yet he tells them:

“Listen, Maltese people they rescue you in the sea, when you were dying, they rescue you, they care you in detention, they give you some medication, they give you freedom, they give you document, even if you’re not working, they give you some money to live, they give you free education, they give you.. why are you abusing? They give you resettlement, for another country because it's very small. So I don't see any area that you can abuse.”

5.4.1.3 FACTORS IMPACTING CONTACT

Contact can also be impacted by a number of other variables. Below are some examples:

- *The salience of religious identity among the Maltese*: Two individuals seem to be struggling between their Christian identity and their sentiments towards migrants. 5MLTM mentioned that she is Roman Catholic and that she loves migrants and does not hate them, but then she mentions that she would want to give them the things they need and send them back where they came from. So she may be struggling between her religious and individual identity. Similarly, 6MLTM mentioned that “aħna nsara” [we are Christians], “bnedmin bhalna” [they are people like us], and that “idaħhluhom, hux, ghax aħna Nsara, ma nafux nerġghu nibaghtuhom ‘l hemm” [migrants are brought in, because we are Christians, we do not know how to send them back]. It seems that Christianity rather than international law is taken to be the reason why migrants are not pushed back.
- **Age:** 8MLTM who receives negative comments from migrants also notes that if it were her mum, the migrants would not probably pass such comments, because of the age difference.

- **No link:** 1MLTM said with reference to migrants, “Jekk hemm bżonn inkellimhom, imma bhal Malti iehor, jekk ikun hemm raġuni” [If there is the need, I would speak to them, but like any other Maltese, only if there is a reason].

In fact, 9MIGM realises that some people would want to speak to you but there would be “no link” and that “Maltese don’t speak to you unless there’s a link.” So although he tries to greet them, they ignore him.

- **(Financial) gain:** 3MLTM, who used to own a bar next to the MOC, seems to have positive relations with immigrants, yet he says “[m]aghhom qlajt il-flus ukoll” [I also earned money through them]. Conversely, 2MLTM does not think that there is much contact between Maltese and migrants because “x’joffru lil Maltin huwa ristrett ħafna” [They are very limited in what they could offer to the Maltese].

- **Insular mentality:** Asked by the researcher to describe the Maltese 7MIGM referred to them as people who live in a small island who need to get to know different countries “[b]ecause they will get you know, different opinions. So they will forget this racism and discrimination, everything. They will see, you know, what human
is you know." He also seems to equate being human to being “good”/ “positive.” Perhaps he sees locals as having a more insular mentality, and exposure to something/ someone different would help to widen their horizons.

- **Different statuses in society:** 7MLTM attests that what really bothers Maltese people from Marsa “hija l-livell li hemm bejna u bejnhom… huma qishom il-Maltin ta’ 90 mitt sena ilu... l-attitudni taghhom, hekk hi” [is the level between us and them…they are like the Maltese from ages ago…that’s how their attitude is]. He sees this in terms of the relationships between them, including how they treat women, by their low level of cleanliness and to a large extent low level of education. 2MLTM suggested that migrants may not have a high level of education, so some behaviours that would have been termed bad-mannered and reduced in frequency in Malta since the advent of education, still occur among some migrants. Having a more European mentality, what the respondent calls being more “pro-European,” seems to be the yardstick 7MLTM uses to calculate one’s status; the closer you are to the European mentality, the higher your status would be. This individual’s European identity may be considered salient to him in this contact.

Moreover, 9MIGM argues that the “colour-difference” effects contact in and out of detention, since Maltese people know that “most blacks on the streets are migrants,” so “[t]here’s a level.”
Referring back to contact theory, such an issue is significant, since “equal status” of the parties coming into contact is one of the conditions needed according to Allport, in order to reduce prejudice between them. Therefore, if this is missing, it may not augur well for the type of contact that can take place in the interactions between the two groups.

- **Personality**: One’s relations with others are also dependent on one’s personality.

  “Some of them are very free. Some of them once they sit close to you, smile at you, ‘Hi, how are you?’ ask your name, where you come from, so they make me feel happy.” 7MIGM also noted that some Maltese do not start a conversation, even if he would be with them for a long time. However, he tries to start the conversation.

  2MIGM mentions how although he likes making friends, it seems that he is not the type to approach people himself. Additionally, he is also a “gentle” person and does not like making trouble. 8MIGM also thinks that he may not be the kind of person to “make relations so fast with people.” 10MIGM also seems to have ‘Menschenkenntnis’ so he realises the kind of person a person is quickly and adapts to him before hand and so he does not encounter problems in his interactions with Maltese people, but they move “smoothly.”

- **Misbehaviour and generalization**: 6MLTM argues that just as in Malta one can find different sorts of people, the same thing goes for the whole world. So she does not seem to generalize the behaviour of single individuals onto the whole group.
1MLTM also thinks that one cannot generalize behaviour of an individual in a bar, to where he comes from.

On the other hand, 2MIGM notes that when migrants enter the bus, they make comments about them. He thinks the reason may be because they would have heard about who would have acted in an “irresponsible” manner: “When some group of Africans come to the bus, they start making noise, so they reflect it on everybody like this, ‘Because that is how they all do…’” In fact he hears the Maltese say “They are all the same.” 2MIGM also went to Paceville once, where he saw Somalis fighting with Maltese people, he seemed concerned about it because he argued that “that could reflect to other black persons as people who fight us in our country. They would think that everyone comes from the same country,” despite the fact that the African continent is so diverse. Consequently, while he recognises that migrants are in part to blame for their negative image, the Maltese seem to generalize their behaviour to the whole group, in line with the outgroup homogeneity effect. 3MIGM similarly mentioned how he entered the bus once with a ticket he had just bought and his friend went in with an expired one, and how another time there was a thief from Hal Far. Yet he says that “Doing a wrong action, people would think all are like that.”

7MIGM on a similar vein notes that the Maltese residents in Marsa look at how immigrants are behaving. If migrants are behaving well and hardworking, there would be no problems with them. However he suggests that the majority of immigrants do not behave well, for instance they drink alcohol, fight in the streets between them, or break appliances
in their rented homes or keep them dirty. So Maltese people would not like that but “hate” them, speak to each other about it and would not want to rent to immigrants. So he says “they have to behave well first.” After the researcher asked why migrants would misbehave, 7MIGM suggested that when one lives in a country which did not have a government for 22 years there would not be governmental respect and no consequences for peoples’ action, in contrast to Malta. In answer to the researcher, 7MIGM said that Somali culture also requires people to keep things neat and orderly, and one must respect that.

On the contrary, 5MIGM argues that if one does something bad, other people would not call everyone bad; maybe only one person is bad. 3MIGM adds that “Anywhere you go in the world, you're going to see bad people, you are going to see good people.”

5.4.1.4 BEFORE CONTACT, AFTER CONTACT

The researcher notes that it is not ideal to inquire on peoples’ perceptions of the ‘Other’ retroactively, but it is the best option in the circumstance. Half of the Maltese had not thought about the Sub-Saharan African migrants before they met them in person, yet some still commented on how they see them now:

- **Prejudice-reduction:** 1MLTM mentioned that before one meets people “dak in-naqa’ preġudizzju dejjem ħa jkun hemm” [there is always going to be that little amount of prejudice], even in terms of stereotypes, for instance that the British drink tea. Yet he mentioned that Maltese society are more prejudiced against who
comes from North Africa and the like, for example one says “ghax dak Gharbi, 
oqghod attent” [because he’s an Arab, so be careful], although he never had 
problems with Arabs himself. Moreover since he was younger he pointed out that 
one would also fear a compatriot, before one gets to know him. So upon meeting 
the ‘Other,’ he saw them as people just like any other, just with a different culture.

- **Less hostile:** 7MLTM did not think of migrants positively before, yet now he is still cautious. However, the Maltese seem to have got used to them somewhat.

- **Respect:** After 3MLTM got to know migrants, he does not say anything against them and respects them as much as he respects his brothers.

- **Empathy:** 2MLTM had experienced Somalis that had escaped their countries in Kenya, before he saw migrants in Malta. He thought of the suffering and precarious situation in their country (in terms of the economy, political leadership, own security) they must have had, to escape their countries, and the travelling difficulties they encountered on their way to Malta. His idea did not change when he met them in Malta. 4MLTM mentioned how before contact he saw migrants as normal people and he highlighted that the media often shows how Malta helps their countries of origin, and he even has a friends who are priests, who work in these countries. His idea remained the same only he saw them as people with different
needs and who had to leave their country for different reasons, and he felt sorry for them.

- Avoidance: 8MLTM always remembers migrants in her community so she never consciously thought about how or why they came. After coming into contact with migrants who pass negative comments, although she does not think one can generalize, she came to the conclusion that when she sees someone who fits the characteristics of ‘irregular immigrants’ “noqghod naqra lura ghax nghid, da jista’ jaghmilli xi hağa” [I act with caution, because I think that they may harm me]. Notwithstanding, this only happens with male migrants and not with females because she knows that they would not harm her.

Several migrants mentioned that they had not thought of the Maltese before they met them (1MIGM, 4MIGM, 7MIGM) and 8MIGM and 9MIGM mentioned that he does not see how one can think of someone before one knows them, although 9MIGM also said that “I have not seen any other white people in another country.” Other responses were:

- From facts to impressions: 2MIGM did not know anything about Maltese people but that Malta was a country close to Italy, because he studied it in geography in school. Yet when he came to Malta, he got a good impression of it, because unlike other Nigerians, he was granted protection. 10MIGM has heard that Malta has characteristics like Italy since it is nearest to it. Since Eritrea was colonised by Italy
and their language is mixed with Italian, he thought that he could get along better with the Maltese. He found out that both Maltese and Italians are “hard-working” so they are similar in that way, but that “they do not have the same mother,” so there are some differences.

- **Getting to know the ‘Other’ through contact:** 4MIGM notes that “In conversation with someone you get to know something about them and they about you.” Similarly 6MIGM mentioned that since Malta is not the first place he has been to, but that he went to Sudan and Libya before and when one goes to a new country one always meets new people and new cultures, he finds it easy to make contact with people and for that reason “I am not thinking.” However, after meeting the Maltese he saw them as "They like joke something … They are open, they are free."

- **All sorts:** After meeting Maltese people he saw some that just like all over the world, there are positive and negative people (10MIGM).

### 5.4.2 Categorisation

#### 5.4.2.1 Defining a ‘Maltese’

Some migrants gave descriptions of Maltese people or spoke of the ways they recognise them. 1MIGM said “I see Maltese people believe a lot in their religion,” and 3MIGM, 4MIGM and 10MIGM saw them as “very patient,” “friendly,” and “helpful” and also carrying out voluntary work, respectively.
2MIGM finds it difficult to recognise Maltese people, for instance to distinguish them from British people, but he realises when people are not Maltese from “the language and intonation when they speak.”

8MIGM also finds it very hard to distinguish Maltese people from other nationalities especially Libyans; except for the fact that he sees Swedes or British people to be a little different to the Maltese in terms of their “hair colour, face colour, the height…” since he thinks that “most Maltese people are short and bald.” He does recognise Maltese people from the way they talk, for instance they often say ‘al madonna’ or ‘al ostja’ (that are swear words). They also use interjections like ‘mela’ [so] and ‘issa’ [now]; 8MIGM explained, “[e]ven if they are speaking English, they use these words. Like you now that you’re doing.” Consequently this interviewee not only sought some commonalities among the Maltese that help him to identify/ categorise them, but he also considered the researcher herself to be part of that group of Maltese, since she also used some interjections like “issa,” while she was speaking.

5.4.2.2 Same group or differences?

All but 2MLTM of the 8 Maltese respondents believe that migrants cannot be classified into a single group. The latter sees them as one group as people who suffered and does not distinguish between nationalities. He also has little contact with the migrants.

As for the other Maltese, 5MLTM considered migrants to come “from all over the world,” although she gave Somalia and Mali as examples. She 5MLTM also spoke of
differences in the characters of migrants, namely: playboy attitude, quiet, pick on people, are aggressive, give you negative looks, some answer to one’s greetings or smiles and others do not. Although she does not generalize a particular character of migrants and recognizes the differences, 5MLTM still does not seem to want migrants in Malta. 1MLTM on the other hand said that migrants differ in terms of their countries, cultures, political affiliations, ideologies and religions.

4MLTM splits migrants into two groups, illegal ones (whose defining factor is “issuwed”) and returned Maltese emigrants. 8MLTM also dichotomizes migrants as regular ones (who come to Malta legally and have different cultures) and irregular ones (who can come from different places, but generally come by boat from Africa in Malta’s case). She considers the latter to be a single group, with their characteristics being ‘dark-skinned’ and African. Of note is that she only meets migrants sometimes. Moreover, she notes that these migrants are the one’s one hears about most on the news and they always came from Africa. Consequently she said “forsi hija naqra biased bhala opinjoni, imma minn dak li nisma’ fil-medja, hloqt l-opinjoni tieghi” [Perhaps my opinion is a bit biased but I formed my opinion through the media]. Besides, 8MLTM adds that she does not usually classify persons as forming part of one group or another and would not classify dark-skinned males in Sliema to be irregular migrants, but she does so in Marsa, because she is conscious of the situation there.
Alternatively, 3MLTM, 6MLTM and 7MLTM are specific in terms of the individual characteristics of African migrants, and Arab migrants too in the case of 7MLTM, whom they consider to be immigrants. They distinguish them from each other in terms of their appearance and behaviours. Interestingly, all three seem to have more contact with migrants since 3MLTM and 7MLTM also have migrant friends, and said that after spending time with migrants or getting used to them, one begins to differentiate between them, and 6MLTM meets them every day in her shop.

Specifically, 7MLTM notes that they first classify migrants by race (since they got used to them, they recognise them by their figure), then by the quality of their hygiene (that shows the importance of cleanliness for the Maltese) and then by their type of culture (the style of clothes). He also noted that they do not have categories “bħalna” (like the Maltese) for instance going by the different levels of education (university/ upper higher). Some do however, for instance he mentioned a migrant who has been living in the MOC for a number of years, is a qualified electronic engineer and does not work as such in Malta.

Besides, after some thought, 6MLTM added that the Maltese who go to Australia could also be emigrants. However they differed to the migrants that came to Maltese since they did not escape (by sea) from Malta, unless, she thought, someone is sending them.

As for the migrants, half saw differences between the Maltese; 1MIGM, 2MIGM and 6MIGM said, that just like in all over the world there are good and bad people. Both
2MIGM and 10MIGM mentioned how “All fingers are not equal… in every country in every part of the world, there are some good ones, and there are some bad ones” (2MIGM). 3MIGM so far saw only good Maltese people but wonders whether there are others. 9MIGM see all Maltese as different since they are individuals, but says that he “can’t differentiate between Maltese people very much because I don’t know them.” Yet in terms of gender differences, he sees the males as friendlier than females because of the “male-to-male reaction,” whereas females would ignore a migrant man who is talking to her.

4MIGM and 7MIGM saw the Maltese as one group since they are all humans, but there are differences between them; 7MIGM noted that Maltese are mostly positive however. 4MIGM differentiated Maltese from each other depending on the lifestyle (see below).

10MIGM considered Maltese to be a single group, some have aggressive behaviour, but in general Maltese people are respectful and polite. 5MIGM and 8MIGM considered that Maltese to be a single group, a single tribe not different ones. Similar to the use of heuristics, one tries to compare what one sees in front of oneself to something one already knows in order to try to make sense of it.

5.4.2.3 Is-“suwed”

2MIGM mentioned that when one says “l-immigranti,” "Hija understood li huma ‘is-suwed’ [It is understood that we are referring to the ‘blacks.’” However, 1MLTM noted
that “Bejn il-Marsin, ahna n- nies tas-South, ha, preġudizzju fuq in-nies tas-south stess, naqra ‘slavaġġ’ ghallura speċi minghajr ma trid tghid ‘is-suwed’ halli ma toqghodx iddur mal-lewża. L-aqwa li fthemna” [Between us the people from Marsa, we are the people from the South, see, a prejudice about people from the South itself, we’re a little ‘wild,’ so kind of without wanting to, one says ‘is-suwed’ (the blacks) so that one doesn’t keep beating around the bush. What’s important is that we understood whom we’re talking about.”] He pointed out that whether saying “suwed,” is meant positively or negatively depends on the intention of who is saying it.

5.4.2.4 The process of categorisation

6MIGM went into the process of categorization. He mentioned that when he sees someone he tries to guess what nationality they have, and sometimes he is right and sometimes he is wrong; he guessed that the researcher was Maltese. After the latter asked why he thinks so he said, “because I watch so much Maltese. Because of that I guess.” He said it is similar to how the researcher would see a Somali and try and guess whether he is West African or East African. Consequently 6MIGM tries to categorise people according to how he sees the characteristics of different groups (nationalities) to be, perhaps by comparing them to what he considers to be a typical group member (prototype).

5.4.2.5 Dealing with exceptions

A Maltese and a migrant from Marsa both encountered an exception to their categorization.
8MLTM highlights that there is only one person who shares the similar characteristics as the group of irregular immigrants, since she is African and dark-skinned, however 8MLTM thinks that she arrived regularly because she works with 8MLTM’s mother. She speaks to her regularly and also takes her home at times when 8MLTM goes to pick up her mother after work. When the researcher inquired whether 8MLTM ever asked her whether she came regularly or irregularly she said “Le qatt ma tkellimna bil-mod kif ġiet, imma la għandha l-ktieb tax-xogħol, nimmajna li qegħda Malta b’mod regolari, ghax kieku ma jkollokkɔ ktieb tax-xogħol” [No we never spoke about the way she came, but since she has a work permit, I imagine that she is in Malta regularly, since she would not otherwise have a work permit]. This respondent seemed to struggle as to how to categorise an individual who had characteristics that are usually attributed to irregular migrants, but who worked with a work permit, due to the perception that migrants who enter irregularly, do not have a work permit.

Only 4MIGM, who has been living for 7 years in Malta, and thus may have had more exposure to the Maltese, spoke of “an African-Maltese, American-Maltese, English-Maltese, Indian-Maltese” to name a few. He said that from experience of knowing other cultures one realises the differences in cultures. He classifies the Maltese according to “how a person acts towards a lifestyle.” He might be making use of what he considers to be prototype English, Americans, Indians and Scandinavians and comparing the Maltese to them so that they fit into his pre-set category. Yet he also mentions that the security officers of MOC for instance do not fit under this category. He also believes that there is a
Maltese culture but does not know how to define it. It is consequently interesting whether
4MIGM would consider Maltese who do not fit into a category as exceptions or as members
of this other group of Maltese, whose characteristics he has difficulty to define.

5.4.2.6 Outgroup Homogeneity Effect (OHE)

8MIGM gave good examples of the OHE. He said that he was speaking to a Maltese
colleague at work, where there are Eritreans, two Somalis and West African people about
the fact that they find it hard to identify which groups they form part of, for instance how
to identify a Maltese from the group of ‘Europeans,’ or a Somali from the group of
‘Africans,’ but it happens both ways. At the same time, they recognise that they themselves
are different from other Europeans or Africans, which clearly shows the OHE in that while
one perceives outgroup members to be the same, one recognises differences among ingroup
members:

“'Me I can't differentiate,' I tell him that, 'Maltese from Europeans. How can I
differentiate them? Maybe with Libyans…I think mostly Libyans are more like
Maltese,' I tell him.
'No, we're different,' he says.
'No, but when I see Maltese and Libyans, they're the same.'
'Yes for me, when I see Somalis and Eritreans are the same.'"

Moreover, besides the fact that they both are part of a group based on their
nationality, they both seem to be part of an even larger group, based on the continent where
they are coming from and their physical features, meaning that they each may have more
similarities with other members of the ‘continent’ group, than with members of the ‘outgroup.’

5.4.3 Perceptions of Threat

This section will deal with reactions upon encountering the ‘Other,’ different perceptions of threat, the role of the media and perceptions as not necessarily founded.

5.4.3.1 Reactions upon encountering the ‘Other’

2 Maltese respondents made no particular reaction upon encountering migrants, but others did, as follows:

- **Recognition of inequality:** 2MLTM mentioned that his first encounter with Africans/ “is-suwed,” [‘blacks’] was not in Malta but in Kenya, Zambia, Tanzania and Libya, since he was linked to missionaries there. He mentioned how the Africans used to refer to the missionaries as ‘muzungu’ meaning white and rich. Moreover, when he used to meet a shepherd he would say: “How’s this, you white money, and I’m black no money?”

- **Suffering:** 6MLTM thought that migrants must have been unhappy to have left their country, and she also mentioned that migrants do not only come to Malta, but Italy is full of them.
- **Need getting used to:** 3MLTM noted that one needs to get used to each other’s characters, since migrants are different from the Maltese.

- **Shock:** 7MLTM’s first encounter with “klandestini” (clandestines) was when one Palestinian family came to Marsa about twenty years before, and he says “kienet xi haga kbira ghalina” [it was something big for us]. The people from Marsa however used to take care of them, give them food, someone gave them a place where to stay and 7MLTM used to take out their children on outings. He saw his reaction as very normal because they integrated well, used to speak Maltese and their children used to go to school in Marsa. His first encounter with Sub-Saharan African migrants was when the MOC was opened and “il-Marsa kollha” [all of Marsa] was “in a bit of a shock.” Similarly, 5MLTM mentioned that Malta is not used to “is-suwed,” and whereas one would come every now and then and one would be shocked by it, let alone the “xita u flottot li deħlin” [the rain and fleets that are coming].

- **Fear:** The first time 8MLTM met an irregular immigrant she was going to catch the bus to Valletta and a migrant made rather rude gestures. When she arrived in Valletta this man started following her till she came to board the bus back to Marsa. She had to call her parents to come for her. She thinks that this is why she is afraid of male irregular immigrants.
3 migrants made no particular reaction upon encountering Maltese people. 6 migrants spoke of their first encounter with Maltese to have been at sea:

- **Lack of understanding:** The first time 4MIGM met Maltese, he was sick and so he could not understand much about what was going on. Not being in a good physical condition, may also impact relations. The researcher wonders whether it may be linked to Allport’s equal status condition. When 6MIGM first met Maltese soldiers, he did not seem to realise that they were Maltese and he also comments that he could not speak English but had to speak via a translator at the time.

- **Happiness:** While 8MIGM did not realise either that the marine soldiers were Maltese and thought they may be Libyans, he was happy because they spoke English (and he could thereby understand them). He also said that “They cooperate with us when we were in the sea. It was very nice,” and it seemed to have contrasted greatly with what they had experienced in Libya were they were not accepted and treated badly instead. The AFM were also the first Maltese 2MIGM encountered when they came to rescue them from the sea. He said that although they spoke to them, they took a long time to transfer them to their boat, but he sees them as good.

- **Welcoming:** 7MIGM’s encounter with the Maltese (although they did not realise that they were Maltese at first but maybe Italian or Tunisian), was when they came
to rescue him and he saw them as “very good rescue people” with “very welcoming face” and they gave them water and biscuits.

- **Surprise:** 10MIGM mentioned how when the Maltese came to rescue them at sea they covered their mouth and used gloves, so the migrants were surprised and thought that they are not “animals.” He seems bothered by it so he made himself believe that it was because of the smell of the sea salt. Moreover, when they came to rescue them their boat was going to sink so they tried to jump from their boat onto the navy’s boat. However they were told not to touch the navy boat but to stay where they were. They also waited for five hours at sea until the other boat came. He felt bad, since they were at sea and not on flat ground. 10MIGM also believes that they could have talked slowly or politely “slowly you will go one, by one…” not aggressively. Although the Maltese who were there were security/ soldiers/ navy/ armed forces, he wondered whether their attitude was like that because they are Maltese.

5MIGM’s encounter differed from the rest:

**Shock:** He had just come out of detention a month before when he was walking with two others on the road next to the Church in Marsa and they passed by about fifteen young people who were next to their four cars (“I don’t know, Libyan or Maltese”). 5MIGM and the two others did not say anything but the others “[t]hey just started a fight” and had “stone or something metal.” He thought they were “thieves or something” so he
ran until he saw people and shouted. Then they started the car and escaped. They had broken a bone of one of his friends. He was “shocked” since he does not know why they were attacked but says that they could have attacked anybody, perhaps they were angry because they had fought other people before. Consequently he seemed to use situational attribution to analyse their behaviour. However, asked by the researcher to describe his aggressors he noted

“The person is white you know, not black. So maybe like other countries from … If black, you know he's from Africa. So if you're white, you must not necessarily be a Maltese but could be another person.”

Yet, despite this episode, it did not change the way he thinks about Malta or the Maltese, but he is happy to be in Malta “alive.”

It seems that the first encounters between the two groups were characterised by a mixture of recognition of suffering, lack of understanding as to what was taking place, shock and a welcoming spirit. While 8MLTM fears immigrants after her first encounter and 10MIGM wondered whether the soldiers where the way they were, because they were Maltese, 5MIGM does not generalize his negative experience to relations with the Maltese.

5.4.3.2 Different perceptions of threat:

- Discomfort with different attitudes and cultures: 4MLTM who distinguished between two types of migrants: illegal and returned Maltese emigrants, mentioned that
“Jiena nahseb li n-nies u forsi jista’ jkun anke jiena, mal-emigranti Maltin li jirritornaw lura u immigranti oħrajn ta’ nazzjonalitajiet differenti li aktar iqarrbu lejna ...ma nahsibx li thosso skomdu. Inhossuna skomdi ... mal-attitudni tal-immigranti li ghandna illegali li hawn fiċ-ċentru miftuh”

[I think that the people and perhaps me too, we do not feel uncomfortable with … Maltese emigrants who return or with immigrants from other nationalities that resemble us. We feel uncomfortable … with the attitude of the illegal immigrants that we have in the open centre].

4MLTM specified how they differ from the Maltese, in terms of their attitude (they do not seem to be aware of rules) and culture (manners and actions they may feel comfortable to do abroad but are not tolerable locally nowadays), like dirtying the place, sleeping on a bench or washing themselves outside. He also mentioned that returned Maltese emigrants would not be considered as illegal migrants but “bhala parti mill-kommunita' tieghek, li jkunu neqsin mill-lokalita' tieghek ghal ftit żmien” [a part of your community, that was missing from your locality for a short while]. This shows that similarity with the ingroup breeds attraction. The bond of similarity that binds ingroup members is also seen as strong enough to extend to Maltese diasporas. On the contrary, outgroup members whose behaviour is seen to contradict ingroup norms are looked down upon and kept at a distance.

- **Threat of taking-over one’s territory:** 5MLTM was convinced that migrants are going to be a threat to Malta: “L-ewwelnett inti ha johdulek pajjiżek. Dik l-ikbar theddida li qatt jista’ jkollok! Da invadewna ta’…” [First of all they are going to take one’s country. That is the biggest threat that one could ever have! They invaded us, you know…]. Notwithstanding 2MLTM highlighted that before people start to
label migrants one must realise that migrants did not want to come here in the first place, and rather than invading Malta, the Maltese themselves went out to get them.

3MLTM mentioned that “jien ma naqbilx li jieħdu over fuqna hux, ghax dana pajjizek hux” (I do not agree that they take over, because it is our country after all). Similarly 8MLTM argues that the Marsa residents think that the immigrants “qishom qed johdulna l-lokalita' taghna” [seem as though they are taking our locality away from us]. In fact, she sees migrants as having a certain attitude “hawn tieghi” [This is my place]. 8MLTM is also bothered by the fact that she does not even feel safe to go out and walk in her own locality. She considers herself to be in a ‘minority’ now.

However, 4MLTM seems to suggest that if people take over one’s territory, and makes use of the place where one usually goes it is not really a threat, but an inconvenience. However, one just needs to make sure to keep the locality under control. Besides, he wonders whether if migrants are seen as a threat, it ever crossed someone’s mind that migrants were housed “hajt ma'hajt m'ajruport ...poġżejniedhom f'post strateġiku li għandna Malta u l-uniku post strateġiku li għandna, l-ajruport...” [adjacent to the airport…we put them in a strategic place in Malta and the only strategic place that we have, the airport…]. 4MLTM also does not think that the government considers migrants as a threat to security because if the migrants that are in Malta (he estimates 20,000), and those that are coming had to stage a rebellion against the Maltese Armed Forces, they former are far larger in
number. He said that although riots so far have been contained in detention centres, one cannot know what will happen.

- **Fear of the ‘Other’:** Numerous reasons for fear where highlighted by the respondents:

  *Fear of harm:* 8MLTM is afraid of being alone in the road with irregular migrants because since they pass a lot of negative comments, she is afraid that they would harm her.

  *Xenophobia:* 5MLTM who runs a Jeweller’s shop in Marsa, mentioned how "Jien l-business hawn spiččali minibhabba fihom ghax jibżghu jiġu n-nies ghax jibżghu mis-suwed." [My business here finished because of them, because people are afraid to come because they are afraid of the blacks].

  *Fear of the future:* 5MLTM is afraid that future Maltese would be victims to the migration problem "Mhux għalija, ghax jiena sejra barra mid-dinja, intom iż-żgħar ha tbatu... Issa tara x'inhu ġej ghalikom u ghat-tfal tat-tfal tieghi!" [Not for my sake, because I am going to leave the earth, you the youth suffer … Now you’ll see what is coming your and my children’s children’s way!].

  - **Different skin-colour:** Several issues were raised pertaining to the different skin-colour Sub-Saharan African migrants have to the Maltese:
Selective acceptance: 4MLTM considers the Maltese to be somewhat racist. He argues “Il-Malti nahseb tittikah l-iktar ghara l-complexion skura” [I think the Maltese are most annoyed because they see a dark skin-complexion]. In fact he asks people:

“‘li kieku kelli nbiddhomkom dawn, naghmilhomkom kollha russi, x'tghidu?’ Ma jiddejjqux ghax il-projection ta’ mara Russa hija sabiha. Ghallura kieku jgibbulhom l-Open Centre kollha nisa russi, ara kemm jibdew jittlajjaw hemm isfel il-Malti…”

[‘if I had to exchange these people in the Open Centre with Russians, what would you say?’ They do not mind, because the projection of a Russian woman is that she is pretty. So if the Open Centre was to be filled with Russians, you can bet how the Maltese would loiter there…]

4MLTM also highlighted that ‘San Gejtanu’ (St. Gaetan) is dark-skinned. He questions whether one has no objection to him because he is a saint, but whether one would if he were a person. Conversely, 5MLTM considers migrants to “hate white people,” because a migrant whom she spoke to from Ghana told her that this is so in his country.

Threat of having children of a mixed race: 5MLTM fears that Maltese people will mix with other races. She seems to want to keep the ‘pure Maltese’ and refers to Maltese ancestors who fought against the Turks and the Phoenicians amongst others, and that now the Maltese allow a group of 3,000 migrants to unite and make a riot and break down Malta. More specifically 6MLTM mentioned “dal-hafna żwieg taż-żgħar, l-iżwieġ, u partita trabi jiġu suwed, mhix oħra dik?” [these lots of marriages of young people, marrying and a series of babies being black, isn’t that also an issue?] and similarly 5MLTM announced “U nisa Maltin sbieħ, tara kull mara sabiha tmur magħhom. U leee, jiena ma jogħġbunix. Thallatna
ikrah ukoll” [And pretty Maltese women, you see these pretty women going with them. Nooooo, I don’t like them. We mixed in an ugly way too].

However 4MLTM noticed that although some argue against migrants, he wonders whether these people know that they are harming themselves, since he argues that if second generation migrants, who would be Maltese, would be ‘suwed,’ would the Maltese remain negative towards them?

*Fear of having migrants in government:* 5MLTM fears “ha jkollna Prim Ministru iswedta,’ bhal Amerika” [We are going to have a black Prime Minister like in America]. Moreover, 7MLTM commented on a proposal by Aditus to let migrants elect candidates in local council elections. He disagrees with this since he believes that if migrants mobilize a group, a migrant could also be elected as mayor. He also questions, how a migrant would know what the main needs of the Maltese would be.

- *Threat to tourism:* 5MLTM considered Malta’s potential as a tourist site in the Mediterranean but that the Maltese “kissirnieh” [broke it] because of the “suwed.”

- *Threat to health:* 4MLTM does not have a problem with migrants making businesses to progress in life and create jobs, but not if it poses threats to health, since “ma jeżistix ċertu ċiġene” [certain hygiene is non-existent), and one cannot permit epidemics or “food poisoning” to result in the process. He believes that this
is something the Health Department needs to consider in issuing licenses and he doubts whether health inspections are made in these outlets.

8MIGM sees some Maltese people coming with their cars with clothes and leaving them around Marsa. He thinks that it could be interpreted either positively or negatively:

“maybe they are thinking, these people they need clothes, maybe that's why they bring clothes and throw here. And the second thing you think, when you see these things as a negative thing, maybe they think this place is dirty because we leave it dirty, so they are also making it more dirtier.”

- Feeling of relative deprivation: There have also been instances when some Maltese seem to feel that the migrants are better off than them:

  Best clothes: 5MLTM commented that the migrants “jixtru l-ahjar ilbies, second-hand clothes ma jridux” [buy the best clothes and do not want second-hand clothes]. She had offered them second-hand clothes from her children who are “avukati ta’ jiğiżieri” [lawyers, I mean]. The researcher considers this to imply that the clothes were rather fancy.

  Have money: 7MLTM mentioned how he is amazed by the fact that some skilled migrants do not work, but would still have substantial amounts of money. Unskilled workers on the other hand, “do all the odd jobs” like collecting rubbish, cutting grass, sweeping, working with contractors. After the researcher asked whether the skilled also do such jobs, he said that he thinks they are a little lazy to do them.
Buy expensive meat: 5MLTM mentioned that when she is at the butcher, she sees migrants buying a T-bone steak, which is expensive meat, which she does not buy herself, although she adds that it is not because she cannot afford it.

Mobile phones: 7MLTM mentions that at times he cannot afford to buy mobile phones that the migrants would buy (although he does not know whether it is on credit or not).

Having a lot of children: 5MLTM notes how the migrants have lots of children, and the Maltese stick to two children, because they cannot afford it.

Enjoying life: 5MLTM also considers that the migrants “Ahjar minni ghaddejjin ghax jien qeghda hawnhekk bilfors ma niflahx ghandi rasi tuğghani, qalli t-tabib biex inmur nimtedd, u huma ghaddejjin ħajja ta' xalata” [They are better off than me, because I have to be here [at work], and I am sick with a headache and the doctor told me to lie down, and they are having a party].

- Economic threats: Numerous economic threats were highlighted:

Threat to jobs: 4MLTM thinks that the Maltese people see migrants as a threat to their jobs, because they take their jobs, although the Maltese would not want to do certain jobs. 4MLTM argues that if Maltese people see the fact that migrants work as a threat, even if they do not know what wage he is earning and that he is earning something that cannot even be referred to as a wage but is more like “pocket money,” “il-Malti qisu jghir ghalih
ghax hadlu dak il-ftit u ma jkunx jaf il-verita' ta' xi jkun qed jiehu dan” [the Maltese would feel jealous of him for taking that little bit, although he would not know in reality what he would be earning]. Moreover as Allport notes, although it would be the individuals who would be competing for jobs, they are framed in group terms.

Conversely, 2MLTM does not see migrants as a threat. He mentions that they give a service to the community through carrying out jobs such as picking up rubbish or sweeping streets that the Maltese do not want to do, but he hopes that they would be paid well for it.

*Dependence on social benefits:* 2MLTM also mentions how some Maltese would not want to do certain jobs because they register for work, but before accepting a job offering to them, they calculate whether it is more worth it to rely on social benefits instead and to do some other job simultaneously. He doubts whether migrants could do something like this, for instance whether he can register for work. Conversely, 7MIGM mentions how some migrants depend on social benefits and do not work, but he does not like that.

*Financial threat:* For the Maltese 4MLTM, thinks that migrants could be considered as a financial threat since money is being spent to keep them in Malta, “u dawn ma jhallsu xejn u ahna nhallsu t-taxxi...” [and these don’t pay anything and we pay taxes]. He mentions that when media speaks of the Maltese government spending “so much money,” the Maltese can become worried by it. 4MLTM also considers the Maltese to be very
concerned about money and what they spend and not, and if one had to say the migrants “ġabu kaxxi fiha miljuni tal-liri” [brought boxes with millions of pounds] he thinks that the Maltese people would not be bothered by them any longer, just like the Maltese welcome tourists. 5MLTM also mentioned that migrants “didn’t bring any wealth with them,” but “[ġ]abu diżastru fil-pajjiż” [They brought about a disaster in the country].

9MIGM, whose status is a reject, feels that he can contribute to society when he works, however he says that “I don’t feel comfortable, because society does not recognise me.”

Lack of recognition of qualifications: 10MIGM highlights that so many migrants are educated that “they [the Maltese] have to respect immigrants for themselves, not for immigrant.” Malta could “profit” by making use of the educated people. He is himself a surgeon but cannot find work as such in Malta.

Low wages: 10MIGM also notes that people should be paid for the work they do, for instance for construction work if someone “had fear of God, he could not employ to work by €2 per hour.”

- Putting a group of migrants in a locality: 2MLTM and 6MLTM mentioned how a few years back one tried to convert the secondary school in Marsa into a centre for immigrants. However 2MLTM notes that the residents of Marsa see it as a blessing
that it was taken over by the Augustinians, since the migrants would otherwise have been at the heart of the village of Marsa. Pressure was made by the local authorities so that this does not happen. He highlights that when the Marsa Open Centre was opened, the Marsa residents had no say about it, but he would not have been surprised had they preferred the migrants to be housed elsewhere. Moreover two issues are of note:

*Large numbers and outgroup visibility:* 2MLTM suggests that there are large numbers of migrants and one is more aware that they are there because they have an area where they live that is reserved for them, moreover some migrants buy or rent places in the community. Yet it seems that this resistance to change in Marsa, especially among its ageing population is linked to the fact that migrants are dark-skinned (4MLTM). Similarly, 3MLTM mentioned that although there are immigrants from many different nationalities like Chinese and Russian people, no one knows about them, since they do not come by ‘boat.’ The media may contribute to the increased visibility of such a group of migrants.

*Threat as a normal reaction:* 1MLTM argued that before the feudal, colonial or state systems, tribes were the first to exist so

“ghadha ġol-mohh tal-bniedem li jekk inti qed tqieghed group ta’ nies *en masse* ġo ċertu area, ma tkunx konxju tal-haga, imma mohhok ikun qed jghidelek “it's another tribe” ghallura in a way thoss dik iċ-ċertu sens ta' theddida, “ahna” u “huma,” qeghdniehom hemm u qeghdin *en masse*.”

[There’s this thing in peoples’ minds that if you put a group of people *en masse* in a certain place, although one would not be conscious about it, one’s mind tells you ‘it’s
another tribe’ so in a way you feel a sense of threat, “us” and “them,” we put them there, and they are en masse.]

1MLTM also notes that people who do not realise this psychological reaction are influenced by politics, TV and propaganda. Furthermore, he thinks that many Maltese have more of a racial/ prejudiced stance “ghax dawk Afrikani qeghdin hemm u ma nithalltux maghhom” [as those Africans are over there and we do not mingle with them].

- **Spoken threats:** An interviewee (5MLTM) claimed that she personally heard migrants saying “Id-dghajjes li ġejna bihom ahna tmorru bihom intom” [The boats we came with, you will go back with].

- **Language and fear:** 6MIGM notes how some people are “afraid” in the sense that they could not understand others (for instance if they do not speak Maltese or English), and if they meet, they would not be able to understand each other, and so the individual prefers not to meet the other. So 6MIGM further explains that “he's not bad, that person not bad, they're just only they're afraid of each other. But if they understand each other, they are not afraid.” By understanding each other’s language threat maybe somewhat minimized and people might also be encouraged to meet each other more since they would not have the added fear that they would be misunderstood and so not even make the step to talk to each other.
- **No threat:** Although instances of threat were mentioned, 6 of the 8 Maltese did not see immigrants specifically as a threat. 1MLTM mentioned that as an anarcho-communist who does not believe that states or governments should exist, he does not see migrants as a national or cultural threat. 4MLTM argues that no threat can be perceived if certain actions like criminality, abuses or prostitutions have not increased in a locality, where a group of immigrants of any kind resides. He said that in the case of Marsa the rates of criminality and prostitution remained the same but only shifted from the Maltese to the migrants. Alternatively, 5MLTM believes that since one cannot know who the migrants are, they can be “mafiosi,” “qattiela” (killers) or “ħallelin” (robbers).

9 out of the 10 respondents did not consider Maltese people to be a threat. 10MIGM mentioned that at first when they rescued him from the boat and he saw them with gloves, they thought “Oh! Are we coming to another Libya?” and life in Libya was “very very hard,” but by time they got used to the security.

6MIGM seems to suggest that he did not perceive Malta as threatening, on the contrary since he had just fled war in Libya in 2011: “First I was in war in Libya and here I think comfortable place. Because of that I'm not scared.” Similarly, 8MIGM does not see how he can see the Maltese as enemies, since he is living on their land and they are providing them with food, clothes (for instance a woman called ‘Mama Africa’ who takes
clothes to detention), shelter and medicine, so unlike Libya, he has a “good feeling” about Malta.

Besides, 6MIGM says that “Because I am not making any bad. If I am not making you wrong something, I am not scared.” 4MIGM on the other hand sees what others do to him as a result of what he would have done to them.

5.4.3.3 Role of the Media

Some respondents also mentioned the impact media can have on peoples’ perceptions.

1MLTM noted that

“jekk ha tisma’ xi haga fuq l-inews, ġeneralment mhux se jghidlek li ġara xi haga tajba fid-detention centre, li tisma’ ”Inqalghat riot fid-detention centre.” Ghalhiex ma jghidlekx eżatt. Jghidlek qabbdru l-ġebel u ingarawhom lis-suldati u ġargu r-riot squad … Iss grazzi.”

[if you hear about something on the news, they’re generally not going to mention that something positive happened in the detention centre, what you hear about is “A riot broke out in the detention centre.” Why, they don’t tell you exactly. They tell you that they grabbed stones and hurled them at the soldiers and the riot squad came … gee, thanks!”].

4MLTM argues that most Maltese do not have contact with migrants but base their opinion on what influential media feed them, so if the migration issue is projected as a problem, the Maltese would accept it as such. He also mentioned that one gets to know about fights between Africans abroad, and while fights between Maltese are taken lightly (which shows ingroup bias), these do not. Moreover some Maltese have heard about the
fact that migrants are said to have taken over London and it still resonating in the minds of Maltese people (4MLTM). He argues: “Xi kultant nghid, inqas ma jisma’ l-Malti ... ahbarijiet, f'kwistjoni tal-immigranti, jghix maghhom trankwil iktar” [Sometimes I say, that the less Maltese people listen to news, when it comes to immigrants, the more he lives with them in tranquility]. This shows the power of media.

5.4.3.4 Threat as not necessarily founded

2MLTM says that sometimes people tell him not to leave his motorcycle out because migrants pass, yet he reasons that a white man can be as harmful as a black man. Moreover he heard of few instances of problems with migrants (for instance some migrants who pick on women), but do not white men do the same? The latter also steal handbags, which the migrants did not. 2MLTM mentions how some individuals “ghandhom ċerta...jew allergiija jew bżgħat mhux bilfors tkun fundata” [Have some form of allergy vis-à-vis immigrant or fears that are not necessarily founded].

Similarly, 3MLTM highlights that "Meta l-bniemed ma tkunx tafu tibda taqla' hafna qlajjiet fuqu. Imma meta imbagħad tibda tagħmilha mieghu, tghid ara jien kemm kont hażin fuqu dal-bniemed. Jista' jkun Malti ta.' ghax il-bniemed trid tagħmilha mieghu” [When one does not know a person, one starts to make up a lot of stories about him. Yet when one familiarizes oneself with the person, one thinks how wrong one would have been about the person. It could also be a Maltese person...because one needs to get to know the individual].
Similarly 8MLTM does not think that the perceptions of the Maltese vis-à-vis the immigrants, namely that they could harm them in some way or pick on them, would be different depending on where the immigrants are staying:

“Jekk inti jkollok dil-perception li l-immigranti huma hekk hekk u hekk, jistgħu jkunu jghixu kwalunkwe' lokalita,' xorta l-istess perception ha jkollok, sakemm ma issirx tafhom b'mod individwali u forsi tghid 'Ara dan mhux hekk,' pereżempju...”

[If you have this perceptions that immigrants are in a certain way, they could be living in any locality, because you are still going to have the same perception, unless you get to know them personally and perhaps you ‘Look, this guys is not the way I thought he was, for instance].

Consequently the Maltese respondents seemed to feel more threatened by the immigrants, who have a different skin-colour and have been housed in their locality. Migrants generally do not feel threatened since they have been welcomed in another’s territory, with the exception of when it comes to economic issues.

5.4.4 Policies and Institutions

5.4.4.1 Knowledge on migration policies and its implications

Amongst the Maltese 5MLTM and 8MLTM do not consider themselves to be informed on migration policies, but 2MLT, 4MLTM and 7MLTM do. 1MLT does not know much about irregular migration policies but never felt the need to be informed. Moreover he politically does not see the point in asking for permission to enter other countries. 3MLTM knows very little from speaking to the security officers and MOC and 6MLTM likes to listen to debates on T.V.
As a result of lack of knowledge, some misconceptions arise. 1MLTM considered refugees to be ‘temporary emigrants’ who could return back home once problems in their country subside. In fact he was unsure whether to consider them as immigrants or not. 3MLTM mentioned with regards to the immigrants “ma nafx kemm hawn eżatt, 20,000?” Yet according to the latest statistics of UNHCR, “UNCHR estimates that less than 30% of the around 19,000 of the individuals who arrived by boat from Libya since 2002 remain in Malta”\(^7\) (see Appendices I and VIII). 5MLTM mentioned that migrants spend about 6 months at sea. As for 6MLTM, she said

“Qeghdin id-detenzjoni imbaghad johorġuhom minn hemm għax ikunu irrangaw ruhhom, hux hekk? Id-detenzjoni, għalhekk qeghdha hemm, jagħmlu xi sentejn ghandi jkun... Imbaghad isiru qishom Maltin, mhux hekk bdew jgħidu fuq it-T.V.?”

[They are in detention, and then they get them out as they would have bettered themselves, isn’t that right? That’s why detention is there, they spend about two years as far as I know… And then they become like Maltese. Isn’t that what they said on T.V?]

As for the migrants, half of them considered themselves to be uninformed about migration policies, 10MIGM knows a little, 1MIGM, 6MIGM and 8MIGM know what the little they know from their own experience and 7MIGM knows about migration policies particularly the resettlement policy.

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5.4.4.2 Assessment of policies

According to 2MLTM Malta’s policy has and is to help migrants in their own countries (the Church in fact sends people in the migrants’ country of origin even when it is not easy), and trying to prevent them from coming to Malta:


[I am sure that starting from the President to every Maltese person, prefers that the migrants are not here. They should stay in their country and we make an effort to help them there, as the Church reasons on a universal level. That is in fact the work of the missionaries].

2MLTM argues that the reason is that since large numbers come, that would not have been factored in, and they bring with them their difficulties, Malta does not necessarily have the ability to handle them, especially considering that Malta is already small and overpopulated. He also argues that Malta needs more funds and support. He also adds that when countries agree to take some migrants Malta “nghidulu grazzi f’qies pubbliku u qisna irridu ninċensawh” [one thanks him in the name of the Maltese population, and it would be as though we feel eternally grateful].

With regards to the resettlement policy, 7MIGM who seems to be informed about immigration policies, for instance he finds it positive that the Prime Minister is calling upon fellow EU member states to take some of the migrants since Malta is a small country, and to resettle them. While 10 MIGM wants to leave Malta “because the rules are always
are heavy,” 7MIGM is only seeking resettlement since Malta does not allow him to bring his wife or to be granted citizenship and thereby be equal to all other nationals in the country. Consequently if their status would be an equal one via citizenship for instance, according to Allport’s conditions, relations could improve.

5MLTM is in favour of push-backs and believes that migrants should be given what they need and sent back. She argues:

“Kemm oppożizzjoni u kemm il-Prim Ministru, qas jafu f’liema diżgrazzja qeghdin, qas jafū, qas qed jahdmu fuqha. Anzi miskin Joseph ried jaghmel push-back u kulhadd tela’ fuqu. Iżgur, ghax l-Unjoni Ewropea ma tohodhomx, jitfagghom fuq haddiehör. Tohodhom fpajjiżha, l-Unjoni Ewropea! Ghax jiena naf inmur naghmel speech ta.’”

[Both the opposition and the Prime Minister, don’t have a clue in what bad luck we’re in, they don’t know and they’re not even doing anything about it. At least, poor Joseph, wanted to do a push-back and everyone jumped on him. Sure, because the EU doesn’t take them, it leaves them up to others. The EU should take them to its own country! Because I am able to go an hold a speech, you know…”]

Finally, 4MLTM does not consider the good result achieved by the far-right candidate Norman Lowell in the recent elections to have necessarily been linked to the migrants issue but to people who are fed up of the two main parties or who had expectations from them.

5.4.4.3 Assessment of detention centres

Some of the respondents have noted the pros and cons of detention. As for the positive side:
- *Detention seen as lawful:* 2MLTM cannot understand how migrants could be considered criminals if they were travelling by boat, found themselves in difficulties, the Maltese went out to get them and brought them here.

Conversely, 8MIGM considers detention to be better than a jail sentence, because since migrants entered “somebody’s territory illegally,” he figured that they would be criminals so they should go to jail, but instead they are put in detention. Besides, 3MIGM argues that “Every country has their own law. That’s the law of Malta.”

However although 8MIGM has not experienced living there for a year and a half but stayed there for four months, he considers staying there to be the “worst thing” and one’s mind could not take it. 1MIGM, who had only come out of detention two months earlier, did not even want to speak about detention where he spent a long time (18 months) but wanted to forget it (so the researcher did not pursue this subject).

- *Verification:* 3MLTM agrees with detention to verify who the person who entered the country without documents is, since it has an impact on state security.

- *Deterrent:* 2MLTM believes that detention centres were originally made to serve as a deterrent, so that the migrants pass on the message to others not to pass by Malta or they would be kept closed in detention. 7MLTM believes that some form of structure to serve as a deterrent is necessary.
- **Intercultural experience and familiarizing with Malta through others:** 10MIGM considers detention to be “very very important” if it not so long that people go crazy, since there would be people from different parts of Africa or Asia it is an opportunity “to express, exchange of culture and experience of life skills,” and his friends used to call him to tell him about the characteristics of Malta, so that when he got freedom, he was already familiar with it.

- **Peace of mind:** 4MIGM agrees with detention since it is a place where one can have peace of mind and take care of oneself; it depends if you “fall in,” you need to be taken care of.

- **Check one’s health:** 5MIGM then he saw it as something “maybe good,” for instance in the case that one hurts, they check your health.

Negative points were also highlighted:

- **Nothing to do:** 2MLTM does not see detention to be healthy since migrants would be put in a place, with nothing to do and they would go crazy. 4MLTM argues that although migrants are locked up because they entered the country illegally, he does not agree with leaving migrants locked up for a year and a half without seeing what benefits they may offer to the country or how one could keep them occupied since one would be wasting the person’s time. He suggests instead that within the same period migrants are offered educational opportunities of some sort, while remaining under Malta’s control/ custody.
- *Detention as a prison:* 2MTLM described detention as a prison. 2MIGM and 9MIGM mentioned for instance “Detention is not a place to be. It's just like prison, no freedom of movement, you can't go out, just one hour to go out in the sun and come back inside” (2MIGM). Migrants would also have gone through a lot and when they end up in a closed compound they think a lot and go crazy.

6MIGM also compared detention to a prison and believes that it would be better if it were open instead of closed. 7MIGM prefers living in an open centre like in Sweden, UK or Germany while one’s asylum claim is processed by the Refugee Commissioner. 9MIGM similarly suggested that Malta puts up camps like other countries since it would give them an opportunity to identify who is good from who is bad and put the bad in jail, instead of putting all together in detention.

- *Lack of information:* 9MIGM underlined that once in detention, no one would know how the system works or why they are there. Moreover both 5MIGM and 7MIGM wondered why they were in something like a prison, since they had not commit a criminal offence, although 5MIGM was then informed on why they were really there.

- *Quarrels between migrants in detention or open centre:* There are many migrants and not everyone can be simultaneously pleased; while some want the lights or the fan on, others do not, and arguments may ensue (2MIGM). 7MIGM also notes how
in detention there are people from different nationalities (Somali/ Eritrean/ Nigerian) in the same place, who want to use the same things like the kitchen at the same time, so fighting results. He says “When they fight, you know the news, everything, they are listening ok? Malta TV are coming” so “[t]he perception that you are taking…is, they come now in Malta and they fighting each other. So when they come in the community, what will they do?” and they would think that “These people are not good.” The Maltese may perceive threat especially owing to the detention centre.

8MLTM hears a lot about the fact that migrants would have broken something or acted violently in the centres, and at times she thinks they are right and at others wrong, but she thinks that it may contribute to the Maltese’s perceptions of threat. Besides, 5MLTM argues that instead of keeping migrants in detention, where “ikissru u jfarrku” [they wreck everything], she would send them back where they came from.

- Mixed feelings: On the one hand 1MLTM can understand Maltese people who do not know what migrants are feeling and who complain that extra or useless taxes are paid on detention, but he could also understand immigrants who left their countries for different reasons in the hope of a better life and they are kept locked inside a place with soldiers, which may be worse than what they escaped from.
- **Health issues**: 7MLTM does not agree with migrants being put together in small quarters (similar to MOC), for health reasons. Similarly, 8MLTM believes that, although Malta speaks a lot about human rights and the like, the conditions in detention are bad since many would be living in the same room, there is no privacy and problems with hygiene.

5MLTM says with regards to detention that she thinks that it serves migrants right to be in detention, because she does not believe that migrants who would be sick should be left out and make other people sick. In fact she says, “Mela ahna qatt kellna dal-mard kollu?” [Did we ever have all these sicknesses?].

### 5.4.4.4 What’s in a name?

While some respondents did not know whether the name ‘detention centre’ has an impact like 4MIGM and others like 5MIGM and 10MIGM perceived no impact, answers varied:

- **Need to keep distance**: 8MLTM does not see the name of the detention centre as positive since one already starts to think that migrants may have done something wrong to be there. As a consequence people naturally think “ara ha nżomm id-distanza” [let me keep a distance] for fear that something might happen.
- **Against detention itself:** 6MIGM mentioned that it is not with the name that migrants have a problem but with detention itself: “We don’t like it because of that place we not out, that's why we don't like it, not because of his name. I'm not thinking this name is ok or bad.”

- **Self-explanatory:** While 2MIGM says “'Detention’ is a clear explanation – detention is detention.” 8MIGM also deems the word ‘detention’ to be self-explanatory since people would be detained for a short period of time.

- **Perception as criminal:** 1MLTM considers ‘detention’ to mean that one broke the law or other peoples’ expectations. The connotation is something negative or something bad, after all one would not know the migrants’ individual stories, namely whether the person was escaping the bullets or firing them himself for instance.

Yet 2MIGM does not see the word “detention” as “normal” since when he told a non-Maltese that he was in detention, they asked whether he killed someone or committed a crime. 7MIGM suggests that the name may also contribute to the negative image Maltese people may have of migrants, since ‘detention’ comes from the word ‘detain,’ so perhaps it could be changed to ‘open centre,’ “Immigrants welcoming open centre” or “Immigrants welcoming area” so that “society will see that these people didn’t do something, they are welcomed.”
- **Need for re-branding:** 4MLTM disagrees with the word ‘detention’ and argues that one has also changed the name of the prison in Kordin, to ‘Corradino Correctional Facility.’ He believes that the name should be changed to ‘Ċentru kulturali’ (Cultural Centre) or ‘Ċentru edukattiv għal-immigranti’ (Educational Centre for Immigrants). Asked by the researcher whether this could impact the contact between migrants and Maltese, he argued that ‘branding’ always has an impact, and it would be positive to give migrants educational opportunities. 7MLTM also believes a ‘rebranding’ of the name ‘detention’ is needed, just as has happened with the prison. He also thinks that the UN does not like the name. He thinks it should be changed to ‘closed’ centre. He thinks the name has a negative impact since migrants would think that the Maltese are cruel to them.

5.4.4.5 Impact of the detention centre on contact

Contact between the Maltese and the migrants in the detention centre is limited:

- **Little intergroup contact:** 2MIGM and 7MIGM mentioned how people in detention could neither go out and can neither be visited by anybody. 6MIGM only met the security officers in detention, but his contact with them was good.

9MIGM also mentioned that other people come to detention to see what it is like for instance JRS (lawyers), bishops and priests on Sunday. Only Maltese people who have
a pass could enter the soldier barracks (detention). So migrants would not know what Maltese are like, when they are in detention but only when they get out.

- Relations between the security officers and the immigrants: 7MLTM mentions that migrants are seen to give security officers in detention (he has friends there) some “hard time” but he recognises the fact that it is because they have escaped their countries only to be locked up in a prison. 9MIGM recognised that it is “[v]ery hard for detention officers sometimes to coordinate.”

2MIGM spoke of the staff at the detention, some of whom are good (for instance they spoke and give cigarettes to migrants in detention who smoke), while others would say “I bought this with a lot of money, I can’t give you.” 8MIGM mentioned that in the detention centre one’s only contact is with soldiers, some of whom “don’t like black peoples,” while others “don’t care about colour.”

- Rebellion: Both 3MLTM and 8MLTM mention that migrants rebel against the Maltese for keeping them in detention at times, but the latter said she never spoke to a migrant who could tell her about it. 5MLTM believes that migrants would be against the Maltese since they would have kept them locked up in something like a prison (in fact they throw their food at the soldiers).

- No link: 8MLTM doubted how many Maltese would go and speak to migrants in detention or anywhere else “mhux ghax immigranti imma persuna li ma tafx, mhux
ha tmur qisek tqghod tkellimha” [not because they are immigrants, but you don’t go to speak to people you don’t know].

-  **Aftermath:** 7MLTM mentions that when migrants are inside he does not think that the contact is positive since they would automatically consider themselves to be in a prison, and when migrants come out there would be “a period of time it would be difficult for them and for us” to talk to one another. 3MLT seems to suggest that the impact detention has on contact may be limited, since upon leaving detention, they leave the past behind them. Migrants tell him that they spent a year in “prison.”

5.4.4.6  **Impact of the detention centre on perceptions**

The perceptions Maltese and migrants have of each other, was seen as varied:

-  **Former use of detention centres:** 2MLTM mentioned that when he sees the detention centres between Safi and Kirkop he remembers them housing prisoners of war during the war. He remembers how the British used to be fully-armed and the way they used to treat them. So one is giving a message that if someone breaks the law that is how they are going to be treated.

-  **Negative image of the Maltese:** 4MLTM and 8MLTM believe that migrants may think negatively of the Maltese for keeping them locked up in a place for two years with bad conditions. While 7MLTM believes that the Maltese society or the
Maltese need to give an image that they are a little strict. In fact 10MIGM argues that in detention migrants

“they meet a few peoples, a few security ... that's why they are not seeing, they are not searching any other Maltese. That's why maybe they can think, they are only this behaviour, these Maltese not good, or Maltese not... because of these few soldier security.”

However in the community, they could look for other people.

- **Status-dependent:** 2MIGM says that it is very hard for Nigerians to be granted refugee status, but in his case he did. So he says “I was lucky in Malta, so my impression about Malta is good.” Yet he says that some people who stayed longer in detention and where still there at the time of speaking, “have a bad impression of the Maltese people and the Maltese government,” especially since they are “afraid” of being deported and “[g]oing back to face what he or she ran away from.” Yet he does not blame Malta for deporting because of its small size.

- **Long time in detention:** 9MIGM mentioned that when migrants are picked out of the sea, they are detained so that they are identified but he does not agree that they are kept in detention for long, and believes that that’s what makes migrants think “negatively of the country.” 3MIGM mentioned that for people like him detention is nothing; he was there for 1 month and still played football. However others for
instance who stayed longer “perhaps they feel angry about it” are stressed and have too many problems to think about.

- **Image of migrants:** 8MLTM argues that most of the Maltese would not know that the migrants would have been in the closed centre but just see them out in the street then. 2MIGM also mentions that many Maltese (except those who work with refugees) would not know that migrants would have been in detention and in any case, that’s how the Maltese law/policy is.

Yet, 6MLTM’s brother-in-law is a soldier in the detention centre. She says that the soldiers work hard to stay with the migrants and that at times the migrants also threw away their food because they said that it was not what they wanted. She said “Issib min hu kattiv hafna” [Some people are really cruel]. Conversely, 1MLTM seems to suggest that speaking to soldiers might be biased, since for someone in a precarious situation like that, who faces them every day it is natural to see them as “demons” just like an employee sees his boss.

Besides, 2MLTM notes that by keeping migrants locked up one is giving a negative image that these people must have done something bad and is consequently being punished, because he thinks that the ‘allergy’ some Maltese have against them, must be coming from somewhere.

7MIGM also suggests that since Maltese people would see them in detention, they would think that the immigrants would have done something bad to be there.
- **Stereotype:** 7MIGM suggested that the detention areas and camps increased the stereotype Maltese have of migrants, because when they see how they live in such places, they would think that they would live the same when they entered the community.

- **Far-right extremism:** 1MLTM notes that it may encourage people to turn to the extreme right ideology.

- **Law:** 3MLTM believes migrants could become cross at the authorities, not the Maltese. 9MIGM also knows that the detention officers are only there to take care of migrant so it is the government of Malta that would keep them in detention and decide their cases. 10MIGM suggests that migrants are in detention because of the law, but not because of the Maltese.

- **Mixed perceptions:** 1MLTM mentioned how he never spoke to migrants in detention to know how detention is really like, but he hears “hafna nies jghidulek ċiġi ittrattati ta' rejiet u ma japprezzawx, hafna nies jghidulek ghax imsieken joqghodu ġo post bilkemm tieħu hsiebu” [Many people tell you that they are treated like kings and they do not appreciate, many people tell you that the “poor things” live in a place that is barely taken care of].

- **Fraternal deprivation:** 2MIGM notes that “What really makes a lot of Nigerians go crazy is that people from Somalia would stay for 3-4 months or 6 months and would
be granted freedom and protection, but people from Nigeria would stay for 12-18 months, “[s]omething like discrimination.” Consequently it “[i]mpacts the way they see Maltese people, because in Italy it is not like this.” 9MIGM for instance also mentioned that he is not happy in Malta because he does not have protection since he was rejected, but he cannot stay here or he will be deported. He cannot understand one some get protection and others do not.

- Different perceptions inside and out of detention: 9MIGM notes that when one is in detention one does not appreciate what Malta is doing for them, since they would have spent a year closed inside and would have been rejected, so “they feel that the Maltese are ‘wicked.’” Some time after the migrants come out of detention however, they change their perception about the Maltese; “They make you cry, and now at the end of the day, come to say, ‘Hey, stop crying.’ You think differently you know?”

5.4.4.7 Impact of the Marsa Open Centre on contact

Both the Maltese and the migrants voiced their opinion on the MOC and explained what impact the centre has on intergroup contact and perceptions of each other:

- Not good for immigrants either: 3MLTM notes how the building of the MOC was formerly a government primary school that was closed because the teachers complained about the smell of drainage, which persists till today. He finds it ridiculous that migrants are housed there, since if it is not good for the Maltese, neither would it be for the immigrants, although it was Malta’s first experience with
immigrants. He notes however how it has been refurbished in the meantime. 8MLTM likewise notes that the MOC does not have good enough conditions to house people. 5MLTM and 4MLTM object to the lack of hygiene and restricted sleeping space and privacy.

- **Initial shock:** 4MLTM notes that the Marsa residents who’s majority are elderly was shocked at first when the MOC was opened, since they did not feel free to leave their houses since they did not know who the migrants were, until they got used to them.

- **Good centre:** 1MLTM sees the MOC as giving migrants an opportunity to stay somewhere to stay until they find a home (like an old peoples’ home or a nursing home); 6MLTM has similar views. 3MLTM believes the MOC is good for the migrants who do not work, since they do not need to pay for food, water or electricity.

Migrants seem to have a positive image of the Maltese for providing such a centre.

2MIGM considers the MOC to be a place of support

“[w]hen I was released from detention, I was not pushed out on the street. No option. I only thank Maltese people to have a place like this for immigrants to stay, to have a job and move out from the open centre whenever they wish, but the contract is for 1 year.”

Similarly, 4MIGM who believes that “everyone should be given freedom, to do business, get himself educated,” seems to be given the opportunity to do that at MOC, since
he could work and get education. Moreover 10MIGM also mentioned that there are many courses at MOC including language courses. He is a surgeon by profession and did not find a course that appealed to him (despite the fact that he also works, and he already speaks English). Yet he enjoyed the course on cultural orientation on Malta and the European Union and believes that other migrants who are not educated, profited from the MOC. He also highlighted that the teachers are Maltese and very old so “they can advise as a father not a teacher.”

Yet 3MIGM who could use the Internet, PlayStation and TV in Dar is-Sliem, mentions that the centre lacks entertainment facilities, otherwise he would prefer to stay in MOC.

- More control: 3MLTM notes that whereas before migrants could enter and leave as they pleased, since Mr. Bugre is the manager, he instilled discipline in the MOC so that now people need to show their I.D. card to the security officers before entering, and there are also fixed visitor hours.

Besides, Marsa is part of the district of Hamrun so 7MLTM notices that there used to be numerous quarrels and troubles between the migrants themselves and with the Maltese, but there were not enough policemen to go round. Yet, now the situation changed and there is a permanent structure of policemen in Marsa too.
Mixed cultures: 7MLTM mentioned that one of the “gross concerns” is that there people from different races who fight, so he suggests the migrants from different cultures should be segregated to avoid problems.

Employers meet workers: 10MIGM also sees living in Marsa as positive since there is a small area that is a “mid-point of worker and someone who need worker.”

Large numbers: 3MLTM mentioned that the government should not keep migrants all in the same place but split them among different localities, and thereby one would not realise that migrants are living amongst the Maltese population, and migrants could get used to living in the community, with the neighbours in turn respecting them more. 8MLTM also suggested dispersing them. 3MLTM said “Meta ghandek lokal ta' 4, 000 u jkollok 8,000 minnhom ha tiddarras naqra, tkun kemm tkun close...” [When you have a locality with a population of 4, 000 and you have 8, 000 of them, one is bothered by it, however close you might be with them]. This gives an indication that although personal relations between Maltese and migrants would take place (in fact 3MLTM also has migrant friends), it still does not mean that they would accept the way the policy is. 7MLTM noted that when the open centre was opened, there was a parliamentary question for MP Jason Azzopardi to give an account on when the MOC was to be opened and how many people were going to be living there, and he had said that it houses “something over 400.” Yet 7MLTM considers this to be “a truly and blatant lie" because “not to say the least, hemm 3 times as much for sure.” He says that the reason is that migrants
have a tendency to invite their friends from different centres over, but instead of staying for a few hours and leaving, like the Maltese do, they sleep there. Yet, during the time of the interviews approximately 200 people lived at MOC, the centre is made to house 500, and only between 2008 and 2010 one estimated that 1,000 lived there because of squatters from Hal Far Open Centre.\(^8\) Outgroup visibility mentioned earlier may also account for why there are the perceptions of larger numbers.

8MLTM also does not see it as right for Marsa residents to have a concentration of people in their locality whom they do not know, who have a different culture and particular habits, and to be expected to adapt to it.

3MLTM commented also that large numbers are a problem, “ghax jaghmlu l-arja” [they become over-confident]. Such a phenomenon is in line with social identity theory since when more people form a group, they are stronger through ingroup support, and may try to belittle others in order to increase their confidence. 5MLTM and 6MLTM both mentioned how Marsa is full of migrants in the evening and one barely sees any Maltese, whereas the former said that “They feel that they are superior” and the latter mentioning that if they increase, “jinvagawna” [They would stifle us].

\(^8\) Personal communication, Sandra Schembri Wismayer.
Health and drug problems: 7MLTM says that in Marsa there are some old sicknesses that they did not pay attention to like lice and certain viruses, and they suspect that they were re-introduced through them in Malta when Maltese and migrants come into contact, because he considers migrants not to be hygienic. He thinks that until migrants get used to the Maltese, the children would also have fleas.

8MIGM suggests that “a place which is small and more Africans live, the place… gets dirty, which is what we bring you know?” for instance in Marsa. He highlights how some migrants were farmers and may not have seen a city before Valletta, so they would not know how to keep it clean. Moreover there are also drug-dealers and MOC and there often is fighting. So he suggests that from the Maltese perspective, “when you see your country getting dirty, you feel something you know?” and might start hating the place.

Prostitution: 2MLTM also highlighted that it is not the first time that he sees young women loitering in the streets where the migrants would be. However he blames the Maltese for bringing about an environment of prostitution and not them. 7MLTM also mentioned that close to where he lives there is an area for prostitution, in which there would be not only Maltese but a lot of “suwed” (men/ women/ “gays”).

Both isolated and not: 4MLTM notes with regards to the MOC that although it is at a distance from the centre of the locality, it is still part of it. 6MLTM considers
migrants at the open centre to be “[g]halihom” [living apart] but different people
go to sell them food or things they need.

- **Noise:** 4MLTM notes how in the beginning and even now a little, in the evening
migrants used to drink any type of alcohol, and take some drugs, till their money is
finished. This would lead them to react in certain ways. Maltese who would not
have been used to such noise, and “l-lingwa tagghom twassal” (their voice
projects), late at night, would become angry. Yet he also notes that if one gets used
to it, it does not mean that it is something good. 2MLTM also mentioned migrants
having a habit to speak loudly between them, even when they would be holding a
normal conversation, but although he also says that the Maltese and people from
Marsa do the same, in the former’s case one would not understand their language.

- **Resistance to change:** 4MLTM notes that Maltese people may not be realising that
their life is changing yet, but this feeling may lead people to feel rebellious and
depressed. Some fear that if the same rate of migrants would continue coming to
Marsa, the place would turn African, since the Maltese population is reducing and
more migrants are being put in Marsa. 5MLTM said, “Rajt il-Marsa tinbidel mill-
Maltin ghas-‘suwed’” [I saw the population of Marsa change from the Maltese to
the ‘blacks’]. The researcher wonders whether this comment is linked to a book that
is quite well-known in Malta called ‘Rajt Malta Tinbidel’ by Herbert Ganado, in
which the author recounts Maltese history that he lived through, over four volumes.
Perhaps the underlying message is that similar to how Ganado saw Malta change
she is seeing changes in Marsa.⁹

- Fraternal relative deprivation: 4MLTM also notes that since Marsa is split into
different zones, the zone at the bottom, which is mostly impacted by migrants,
although the MOC is part of the area of Albert Town, feels disadvantaged compared
to the northern part of Marsa who are not really influenced by migrants.

- Image and stigma of Marsa: 4MLTM notes that just as some other localities are
perceived to be linked to prostitution or criminality, Marsa is being given the image
as “post tal-klandestini” (the clandestines’ place) or “post tas-suwed” (the blacks’
place), which downgrades the locality. He believes that this bothers locals. In fact
when some Marsa residents are qualified, some are amazed that qualified people
come from Marsa. 8MLTM also notes that always when one meets someone and
they get to know that you are from Marsa, they say “Ehh, hemmhekk tas-suwed”
[Ohh, that’s the blacks place”] or “ara kif mintix sewda?” [Wow, how come you’re
not black?] So she is bothered by the fact that the Maltese and migrants are taken
to be one group, as though all are dark-skinned.

⁹ “‘Rajt Malta Tinbidel Now in Print,’” The Malta Independent, July 5, 2009,
- *Maltese near MOC*: 6MLTM believes Maltese people pass by the MOC and speak to migrants, while 4MLTM notes that although the Marsa residents are starting to get used to some individual migrants, “ma jfittxuhomx” [They do not particularly seek contact].

3MIGM says that he sees a few Maltese boys who come to the restaurant near MOC. However his Somali friend who has been in Malta for 10 years told him that one would never see Maltese people there before. Yet 9MIGM points out that generally no one comes to see migrants except for those working in MOC. 6MIGM mentioned how in Marsa he does not see many Maltese people outside the door of MOC and he contacts the people at the office but they leave after office hours, so he has contact with the security guards. However he has contact with many Maltese by the virtue of the fact that he is living in Malta.

- *Lack of integration*: 7MIGM suggests that by living at MOC it is very hard to integrate with society or get a job, the reason being that in order not to lose the social assistance money, one has to sign three times a week at the MOC (which also takes long) and people would be preoccupied to sign or they would lose their money. Whereas when one lives in the community and one does not work, one only needs to sign once a week.
- **Need for common activities:** 3MIGM highlighted that “in Marsa if they make sport with Maltese, we'd know each other and friends would start from there e.g. if I sit here every day, how can I know people, how can I meet people. I never meet people.”

- **Empathy:** 7MLTM empathises with migrants to an extent and feels sorry for them, since the MOC is not an idea place for them to stay. In fact, he notes how some migrants try their utmost to rent a place outside, to leave.

- **Contact with staff at MOC:** Migrants at MOC largely speak highly of the staff at the MOC. They help migrants find work (1MIGM, 8MIGM, 10MIGM), provide advice (9MIGM, 10MIGM) and are seen as a “friend” (3MIGM). The staff are also seen to “care for immigrants” and “[e]verything they facilitate him to live” (7MIGM). 2MIGM also says that they are always smiling and for instance when they see that he would be angry, they call him to see what would be the matter with him; 2MIGM says “They make me feel happy and like someone cares about me.”

8MIGM compares the care-workers to “nannies,” since “every night they go to every single room and they check that everybody's ok, everybody is sleeping, turn off the light, go… it's just like baby-sitting.” If migrants have a problem with each other for instance if they would want the individual to switch on the lights, they inform the office and a care-worker comes to speak to him. He also recounts how
“[m]aybe some people they come in the night drinking, they say whatever they want, and you stay standing like this and you say ‘Ok, alright my friend, alright..’ all the time, that's what they do.”

8MIGM says that they try to solve the situation peacefully without needing to call the police. He praises them and says that he would not have the patience like them to do such a job. 2MIGM also wonders whether “it really is their job to make relationships with everyone.” 10MIGM suggests a reason for the positive behaviour of the staff at MOC: “They learn different behaviours because they are stay for a long period of time. That's why they know how they can understand us.”

Although he had planned to leave MOC after the first month 10MIGM has stayed on for already 3 months because he refers to the social workers and care workers as his “spirit mothers,” like his own mother at home; “Even when you are coming from outside, like a mother, if you get a work, they're very happy, all of them.” He also says that “If I need something at any time, when the office is closed, they will open even from their own time.” 10MIGM said that even if immigrants wanted to leave Malta “because of the characteristics of security in detention,” upon meeting the social workers, he changes his mind.

One of the security officers sees migrants as having criminal faces. When 10MIGM asked him why he sees them in that way, he said “I can see a criminal face, because I’m Maltese.” Asked by the researcher whether he would rate this contact as positive, negative
or normal (in line with Hewstone and Brown’s 1986 model of intergroup contact), he said “it’s positive because he may be not skilled or not experienced in life-skills,” which is also why he considers him to be aggressive (not behaviour-wise). Thus 10MIGM believes that he can “understand him” and “adapt for him.”

5.4.4.8 Impact of the Hal Far Open Centre on contact

Respondents mentioned Hal Far very little. 8MLTM mentioned Catherine Mercieca, who makes posts on Facebook and collects clothes and nappies for migrants, to distribute them at Hal Far, whereas 4MLTM compares the Hal Far Centre to a war camp since before, actual tents used to house migrants, similar to those that the UN puts up on the borders between countries at war, for instance for refugees. In Hal Far he also feels as though one arrived in Africa, since migrants there live a different reality to the Maltese, especially when it comes to cleaning habits. 4MLTM asks several questions on how such an isolated place as Hal Far was chosen, whether it is to escape from reality or to hide it, he asks what the difference would be if the detention centre would be in Ta’ Qali and whether it is not there because of the American Embassy.

Comparisons are also drawn between the MOC and Hal Far Open Centre. 4MLTM notes that while migrants living in the MOC have more access to the centre of Marsa since it is more central, migrants living in Hal Far have been isolated and there is “nuqqas ta’ kuntatt” [lack of contact] with the Maltese. Furthermore, 6MIGM notes that in MOC no Maltese enter besides the people working there “because if you want to enter Marsa, they
are asking you I.D. card,” and one only finds other Maltese people outside. In contrast, in Hal Far it is an “open centre plus nobody asking you I.D. Because of that you get so much Maltese.” Yet he cannot gauge whether he has more contact in MOC or Hal Far OC because in both cases, if he leaves the premises he has more of an opportunity to meet Maltese people. Conversely, 7MIGM argues that the migrants in both centres need to integrate with the Maltese but have no opportunity to do so.

5.4.4.9 Impact of the Balzan Open Centre

The respondents from Marsa do not seem to know much about the BOC: 1MLTM and 8MLTM did not know about it at all, 2MIGM just knows that there are couples because a friend lives there, 4MIGM did not hear about other centres and 9MIGM just heard that there were different camps.

4MLTM mentions that families with children live in Balzan, so the Maltese have a tendency to empathise with them, since it is human nature to do so, and he thinks that there is positive contact between Maltese and migrants in Balzan. He adds that residents from Balzan would not have a problem with migrants if their lives would not have changed since their arrival. They would, he argues, if they come to sell their house and see that the value of their property reduced even though they would not have had any problems with the migrants.
Respondents also compared MOC to BOC. 4MLTM notes that in comparison to Marsa, where there is a lot of activity in the morning, nothing much goes on in the morning in places like Balzan since everyone would be off to work, so one actually sees the people exiting and entering their homes. As a consequence “ma taffewahomx daqshekk” [they are not really impacted by it]. Notwithstanding, 7MLTM hears from friends who live in Balzan that they are not happy with the migrants living among them and they complain a lot about them, and they tell him something like “Dawn x'ivvintaw jaghmlu s-sorijiet din?” [Why did the nuns go on inventing this?]. However 7MLTM attests: “Ahna li ghandna dik in-naqra vantaġġ illi l-open centre kemm qieghed il-Marsa, qieghed daqxejn maqtugh ghalih, qed tifhem? Ħal Balzan qeghdin litteralment fil-qalba ta’ Ħal Balzan...” [We are at a slight advantage in that although the Open Centre is in Marsa, it is a little apart, you know? In Balzan it is literally at the centre of Balzan].

When the researcher mentioned that she had not heard much about this from Balzan, 7MLTM explained that while people from Marsa are more “open,” “outspoken,” and say what they have to say, the people in Balzan “forsi huma ħarira iktar riżervati” [are perhaps a little more reserved] and when they speak, they do it kind of in “an undertone.”

5.4.4.10 Impact of living in the community on contact

Maltese and migrant respondents have equally voiced their opinions about migrants living in the community. These were the salient points highlighted:
- **Need to set up housing units:** 4MLTM believes housing units should be set up instead of the MOC in Marsa with inhabitants having the responsibility of returning the house in the same condition that they found it once they leave, to teach the migrants how to live in a housing community. He argues that it would be beneficial both for them and the Maltese, because no new “slums” would be created. Moreover, 3MLTM suggested that the government houses migrants near Selmun where there are the old British barracks, the White Rocks (Bahar iċ-Ċaghaq) and he said “li kieku jagħmel ftit barracks ghamel area ghalihom u jgħixu hafna ahjar ukoll huma” [if one had to build some barracks they would have an area for themselves and live better too]. However from a social identity perspective, by keeping migrants secluded from the population even more, while it may ease current tensions with the locals since they would not face them in their daily lives, by time a community of migrants could develop separate from the Maltese people creating more divisions among the two communities, and in the very long run they may go as far as to ask for their autonomy or independence.

- **Learning from the Maltese:** 7MIGM also highlights how in the community one can “understand people” better, and it gives him an opportunity to learn from the Maltese. While he would be renting a place with some others, with no money in his pocket, he sees Maltese people who own their own house, getting up earlier than him to go to work for instance, and it drives him not to laze about but to work for a
better future and to look for job and apply for things. In contrast in the MOC he would see people sleeping, playing football or smoking a cigarette.

- Impact on prejudice: 1MLTM notes how contact could impact prejudice in different ways: some may think that since migrants live next to them, they need to heighten their security since they would be ‘up to no good,’ others like him do not bother, and others would say on a more capitalist note that the property’s value reduced.

In fact 4MLTM notes that Marsa residents may see the migrants as negative, even if they would not have done anything wrong, because their property value would have reduced since migrants live in the community, because of the “istint” (instinct) of individuals to live next to Maltese people. 7MLTM and 8MLTM had similar views. After the researcher asked why the property values should diminish due to immigrants living close by, 4MLTM pointed out, with reference to when one notices who one’s next door neighbour is going to be, "jekk inti tara Malti tghid ‘ija inserrah rasi minnu dan…” [If you see a Maltese person, you’d say ‘yep I can set my mind at rest with this one’]. This shows how clearly mere categorization as an ingroup or outgroup member can lead to attraction and more trust towards one’s own group – if the person is Maltese it seems, even if one might not necessarily know the person, or his background, he must be trustworthy (at least compared to an outgroup member).
However 1MLTM, does not think that if someone European, white or Asian had to come to live next to Maltese people, they would bother as much as if Arabs or Africans had to do so, in which case they would say “Oh my God, x’għandi maġenbi.” [Oh my God, look whom I have next door!].

- *Participation in community feasts: 7MIGM* (who currently lives in the community in Marsa) mentioned how when he was living in the community in Ħamrun the Maltese celebrated a Catholic religious feast and he says “That day you know, they make celebration, they make everything, even the emotion is very very high so I part of them you know? Even that day my emotion is very high, as I see my community, their emotion is very high so I join them.”

So despite the fact that he does not share the religion of the majority, he celebrated with them and partook in the community spirit. He has not yet participated in feasts in Marsa, since he has not seen any yet.

- *Integration: 7MIGM* mentioned that he moved out from MOC “to get my target integrate society,” and specified that:

“One of the reasons that I moved outside is to integrate people. The second is to get job. The third is to understand the world you see, and how the world is going, you know, how Maltese, how they are feeling, how you can, you know, join them, how you can get very happy with them.”

So moving out and gaining one’s independence is seen as a way to integrate better into society and settle down. In fact, 1MLTM believes it is a positive thing that migrants
would have managed to get out of the open centre and find a home; it is nicer for a person to have his autonomy than to depend on the state for shelter.

- More intergroup contact: 8MLTM argues that if people are living in the same locality it is inevitable that one is going to have some form of contact with each other, even at the grocers’ or on the bus-stop. 8MIGM also highlighted that if a migrant had to rent a house in the community, since the owner would be Maltese, every time he comes to get his pay, he would foster his relations with him, and one would also have neighbours.

- Relations depend on the individual: 7MLTM thinks that one’s relations with migrants in the community depends on the kind of person one meets since he says that generally the migrants who leave the MOC are the quiet type who would have become bothered with the attitude of fellow migrants. 8MIGM also noted that the nature of one’s relations (good or bad) would depend on one’s own behaviour.

- Circulating the economy: 2MLTM mentioned how Maltese people who rent out to migrants to live in the community are profiting from them because they are buying the houses left empty in Marsa and thereby circulating the economy.
- **Assimilation:** 2MLTM saw migrants putting their garbage in bags neatly in front of the door like the Maltese do, something they would not necessarily have done back home.

- **Need to get used to each other:** 7MLTM notes that when migrants come to live in the community at first there is a form of uneasiness/perception of threat, until the Maltese get used to migrants and vice-versa, but then if migrants are seen to behave themselves, the Maltese would help them. He argues that “it has to take a generation or two” until “full integration” takes place.

- **Lack of neighbourliness:** 1MLTM mentions how “Ghandi xorti naghmel kuntatt mal-ġirien li joqghodu maġenbi. Jekk narahom ha nsellem ‘hello,’ forsi tagħmel referenza ghat-temp” [I barely contact my neighbours who live next to me. If I see them, I would greet ‘hello,’ and perhaps one makes reference to the weather].

10MIGM sees living in the community as positive since everyone would mind his own business and people would not interfere with what the other is doing. However he mentioned that “if you are neighbours you have to exchange something.” He does not know whether in Malta they do like the Eritrean culture, but in that case if houses are next to each other for instance, they consider “my house is your house,” so if one runs out of something for instance gas, they could take the gas of the other and use it. So he sees it as negative that the Maltese do not exchange things between them.
7MIMG notes how when one sees one’s neighbour for so many months going in and out of their house “you are recognising you know, this is your neighbour, you have to say 'hi,' you have to integrate, you have to welcome…” So one of the days he saw his neighbour who is a lady and he told her “hi sister,” and she made a negative reaction. He was surprised and started wondering what he may have done wrong, but then thought she might have been angry on the day, so he decided “to say ‘hi’ another time, when she is happy.” Consequently he seemed to have used situational attribution to analyse her reaction. So another time he saw her outside, “she was smoking, she was very happy” and he told her “Hi sister!” She then answered, “What’s this ‘hi sister’? You have to keep going.” He then mentioned how:

“You know, that makes you ... all that night, I was not happy. All that day, night even in the dinner, I take the dinner, then I said ok, I will eat tomorrow, I sleep. Cause I feel you know, you see, that... I'm not human, you see...”

Consequently it shows that contact in the community must not necessarily turn out positively.

As has been seen a lack of knowledge on migration policies leads to misconceptions that may potentially be harmful. Moreover while detention centres themselves are not much contested, their management and conditions are. In detention migrants also tend to form a negative image of Maltese people based on their situation and the little contact they have, whereas some Maltese think negatively about migrants in detention. In both cases the perceptions do not impact face-to-face encounters much. While the MOC was seen as a place of support to migrants, contact with the Maltese depended on how much they leave the MOC. Yet Maltese people have problems with the large number of migrants. Little
contact was seen in the HFOC that is characterised by “isolation,” whereas intergroup contact in Balzan, where life is less hectic is seen positively. Although life in the community reaps benefits, it depends on everyone’s behaviour.

5.5 Conclusion

This Chapter sought to analyse the intergroup contact between the Maltese and Sub-Saharan African migrants in Marsa.

From the beginning it was clear that while the contact all the Maltese residents have with migrants is largely limited to Marsa (consequently a residential context), migrants spent little time in Marsa but met Maltese people at work, MCAST and recreational centres. Most contact the Maltese had with migrants was superficial but regular, while a number of migrants worked on common projects with the Maltese but not always on a regular basis. While 2 Maltese met up with migrants on a friendly basis, 4 migrants met up with Maltese for this reason. Allport would argue that relations that involve more cooperation between groups would reduce intergroup tension. Pettigrew on the other hand highlights how important friendships are to better contact. In fact the migrants in general seemed to report less problems with the Maltese and to perceive them as less threatening.

Contact between the two groups was assessed and factors that were seen as positive and negative in intergroup relations were pointed out. Positive factors dealt mainly with helpful behaviour, personal characteristics like cleanliness and respect for diversity, the
extent of assimilation or acceptance of the main culture, and positive occasions through which the groups met such as friendships and outings. Negative factors pertained mostly to cultural clashes, behavior seen as contravening the ingroup norm and clashes in perceptions. Factors impacting contact such as one’s salient identity, age, link with others, gain out of the relations, mentality, level, personality, behavior and generalization of others’ behaviour were also highlighted. Furthermore it was seen that with some exceptions, after contact (especially over time) individuals got used to each other more and tensions reduced.

Next, challenges faced in categorizing each other were discussed, including how to deal with exceptions. Both groups also tended to see each other as individuals and different from the group, especially the better one had the opportunity to get to know individual characters. Yet the fact that one tends to perceive more differences within the ingroup rather than the outgroup (outgroup homogeneity effect) was also shown to be true.

The respondents’ perceptions of outgroup threat were also tackled. The initial reactions upon encountering the outgroup tended to be shock/surprise or happiness/welcome. Moreover, several forms of threat were highlighted such as threat of domination, xenophobia, dealing with other cultures or people with different skin-colours, health issues, feeling of relative deprivation economic threats, the impact language has on threat perception and instances of no threat. Moreover, the role of the media and the issue that threat perception is not necessarily founded was also discussed.
As regards policies, several respondents were seen not to be knowledgeable about them, which led them to have misperceptions, that may further fuel their potential negative image of the outgroup members, especially when it comes to an exaggeration of the number of migrants in Marsa. Moreover, detention was not much objected too, as long its hygienic conditions improve and migrants are kept occupied. Some preferred an open centre to it. Yet contact is very limited within detention. In the MOC, migrants are more supported yet not much contact with Marsa residents takes places anyway but more outside of the community. This may in part be due to the distance the Open centre is from the centre of Marsa (see Appendix IX). Yet it is better than HFOC that is “isolated.” Balzan Open Centre on the other hand seems to have better contact, but life also goes at a slower pace, although it is not without its problems. While the integration of migrants in the community was seen as positive, it depends on a number of factors including one’s behavior and approach to others.

The next chapter will serve as a synthesis of this and the previous chapter to compare and contrast the two, before proposing recommendations to try to better relations.
CHAPTER SIX – SYNTHESIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters have sought to analyse in detail the main research question of this study, namely: What is are the nature and dynamics of the interaction between the Maltese and the Sub-Saharan migrants in Balzan and Marsa? While these case-studies show similarities, there are also important differences. This chapter will compare and contrast the two case-studies by using the research questions of the study as a backbone, before naming some recommendations.

6.2 What are the main problems in the interaction between the two groups?

A number of problems were encountered in the relations between the two groups, yet these were mixed with positive experiences. The salient points of the contact between the Maltese and migrants in Balzan and Marsa are mentioned below:

Little contact: In both Balzan and in Marsa, contact between the Maltese and the migrants is seen to be limited and coincidental. Contact in Balzan was generally perceived to be positive especially when it involved instances of helping one another (1MLTB,
4MLTB, 8MIGB). Yet, if little contact takes place, and the two groups are merely co-existing in the same locality, the researcher questions to what extent one even has the possibility to get to know whether one’s relations with outgroup members are good or not. 4MLTB in fact, who only speaks to a single migrant couple, told the researcher that she wonders whether speaking to migrants is like speaking to Maltese. Consequently the researcher sees this as indicative of the fact that interpersonal contact is very limited. In Marsa on the other hand, although respondents seemed to show a certain resistance to migrants in general, their contact with individual migrants with whom they had the opportunity to speak to, was generally good and pleasant (5MLTM, 6MLTM, 7MLTM). This is however not without exceptions since 8MLTM who regularly receives negative comments from migrants, does not try to establish contact with them, but tries to avoid them as much as possible. Additionally in Marsa, there is also the question of large numbers so it seems that in that locality, the Maltese and migrants are not merely co-existing but their behaviour is impacting each other, particularly the Maltese. 4MLTM notes that while in Marsa there would be a lot of activity in the morning, he notes that in Balzán, the migrants would go to work in the morning, so the two groups could see each other at most entering or exiting their homes. This links to lack of neighbourliness. The migrants interviewed on the other hand do not spend much time in Marsa, and very few Maltese are seen to come next to the MOC (3MLTM).

**Interpersonal relations:** Some relationships between Maltese and migrants were seen to bring about positive results. The following are examples of such relationships.
Service-provider-customer relations: 3MLTM used to take some Nigerian migrants whom he met at his restaurant to the pub with him. As 2MLTB (a bar-tender), 1MLTM (a bar-tender) and 7MLTB (shopkeeper) mentioned, one tends to become closer to some clients during one’s job. 6MLTM (shop-keeper) did not mention such a relationship with clients but although she speaks to them, when they are in her shop, she does not do so outside.

Employer-employee friendships: In the case of 9MLTB, the migrants she befriended were those whom she used to employ as a cleaner, so friendships are also seen to result, from employer-employee relations. 2MLTB for instance mentions how one of the migrants she knows, comes to the bar with his boss and they buy each other drinks. Moreover, 7MIGB used to be invited to events or occasions by his former boss, when he was a delivery-man in Qormi.

Befriending colleagues: 7MIGB has also made Maltese friends at the work place, and not only shares his break with one of them, but is invited to their homes, and they teach him new skills like farming or hunting. 9MIGB similarly has made Maltese friends even through her work, and they celebrate occasions like her national holiday together.

Making friends through friends: Some interviewees have also made friends with outgroup members through other friends. 7MLTM for instance made friends with a Somali through his close friend and they used to go for a drink together. 6MIGM had initially met
Maltese people in the Hal Far Open Centre, since they were friends with some migrants who had been there for longer, and they became friends and started to meet up.

**Organised activities:** 3MIGM who is the youngest migrant interviewed and had just left Dar is-Sliem a few weeks before the interview, highlighted that he made friends with the Maltese through activities organised by the volunteers such as friendly football matches. Nonetheless while the Maltese in Balzan (5MLTB, 8MLTB) spoke highly of the inter-religious prayer and ‘Intercultural night’ they organised, to which migrants where invited, the migrants did not mention them, so common organised activities, may not always increase friendships.

Nonetheless, Pettigrew sees friendships as a positive way to reduce prejudice. By way of example after speaking to his Somali friend about why he left his country and the latter showed him the deep wounds on his back, 7MLTM realised at that point that his friend was a real refugee.

**Generalization:** The problem is that while interpersonal relations are often seen to be positive between the interviewees, as the above examples have shown, this positive image is not generalized to the outgroup. Consequently one might still bear a grudge against the outgroup more generally. Why is this so? Linked to the issue of categorization as well as perception of threat, 4MLTM believes that the Maltese tend to see immigrants as a single group, because they perceive them as a threat. In fact 5MLTM mentioned that
she does not speak a lot to migrants, but when she does it is not a negative experience, yet at the same time, she does not want to see migrants (since she sees many passing in front of her shop in Marsa every day) and she is in favour of push-backs.

Yet on the bright side, negative behaviours themselves are not always generalized to the whole outgroup either, for instance the Maltese respondents did not say that all migrants have a habit of becoming drunk and the migrants did not say that all the Maltese discriminate against them. Alternatively both groups of interviewees often saw the individual as an individual and recognised that there are both ‘good’ and ‘bad’ members of the outgroups. Additionally 10MLTB pointed out explicitly that ‘it's the individual that causes the problem…not where they come from.’ The dichotomy between good and bad people also seemed to also shape the way migrants categorize the Maltese. Some of them for instance, mentioned that one’s fingers are not the same (8MIGB, 2MIGM, 10MIGM), meaning that people are all different and just as one has long or short fingers, there are ‘good’ and ‘bad’ people.

Notwithstanding some migrant respondents still fear that the Maltese would generalize the behaviour of some migrants for instance stealing (3MIGB), making noise on the bus or fighting (2MIGM) or being drunk (8MIGM), to the whole group.

*Change upon encountering the ‘Other:*’ Respondents from both localities, reported that contact between groups has brought about some changes in their perceptions,
that were positive in the main, such as seeing the ‘Other’ as nice to talk to or as good people, prejudice-reduction, empathy and better understanding of each other. Yet changes in perceptions were not as positive amongst some Maltese respondents in Marsa, since one has a less hostile attitude towards the ‘Other’ post-contact, albeit it not a welcoming one, while contact has led 8MLTM to try to avoid contact with migrants altogether.

**Racism, discrimination, xenophobia and false accusations:** Several migrants mentioned instances in which they were discriminated against or endured racist behaviour on the part of some Maltese. Most discrimination was seen on the bus (2MIGB, 8MIGB, 4MIGB, 2MIGM, 7MIGM). Several migrants recounted how in the bus there would be two seats and if they would be seated on one of them and the bus is full but there is only one seat that is left empty next to them, the Maltese they met generally prefer to stand. Moreover there is also an element of xenophobia or fear of the unknown amongst some Maltese, that may contribute to perceptions of racism and discrimination for instance in terms of sitting next to each other on the bus (9MIGB). Nonetheless, one the other hand 9MTLB seemed to point out that problems may ensue when the Maltese are accused of discrimination, when this is not the case. A migrant for instance once complained that she delayed the laundry service she was offering in her shop, because he was ‘black.’ Yet they resolved the situation when he explained that it was unfair to accuse her of something like that she she always respects them and treats them fairly, and in the end, he excused himself.
**General lack of neighbourliness:** Respondants reported a general lack of neighbourliness in both localities. Some Maltese respondants (like 4MLTB an 1MLTM) noted that they in general do not have much contact with their neighbours (who are Maltese). Meanwhile some migrants who stem from Somalia (8MIGB and 7MIGM) and Eritrea (10MIGM) spoke of the fact that in their cultures, when a new family enters a neighbourhood, it is welcomed by the other neighbours. Neighbours would also have good relations and go to each others’ houses and speak to each other for instance after finishing their daily chores. Moreover they mentioned how neighbours exchange items so if one of the neighbours runs out of a particular good, it is normal for that individual to borrow it from his neighbour. However these migrants do not to see such a thing happening in Malta. While 10MIGM seems to see the benefit of Maltese neighbourhoods in the sense that all individuals are left to do their own business and one does not interfere in each others’ lives, he seems to miss neighbourliness found in his country. As a consequence this constitutes a form of clash of cultures. Meanwhile it may also account for the fact that many Maltese in Balzan only have coincidental contact with the migrants living next to them, a similar contact they may potentially have with other Maltese neighbours.

**No link:** 9MIGM and 8MLTM both mentioned that individuals from both groups might not necessarily interact, because they would not have a reason to. While 9MIGM notes that some people would want to speak to but there would be “no link” between oneself and the other individual, 8MLTM similarly noted how she doubts whether Maltese
people would go to Hal Far or anywhere else to meet migrants, simply because they would not know who they are.

**Differences in the two parishes:** Some differences between the two parishes and their management are noted. While the parish priest of Balzan has been in place for 14 years (and had the opportunity to get used to migrants living in his parish), the Holy Trinity parish priest of Marsa has been in place for less than a year. The researcher questions whether the fact that the former is a diocesan priest, while Marsa parish priest is a Capuchin Friar (missionary order), may also play a role in the nature of their relations with migrants, in fact the latter believes that migrants should be helped in their countries of origin. Both parish priests considered the migrants to be “ghalihom” [apart from the Maltese], yet while the Balzan parish priest considered them to be part of his parish albeit not integrated (with the exception of one of the migrant families that is Catholic and participates in the Church life in Balzan), the parish priest from Marsa, saw migrants as members of the locality of Marsa but not part of the parish itself. Both priests have mainly coincidental contact with migrants but both mentioned that some migrants come to beg for something at times. While the Church in Balzan has a food box in which people could put food for the migrants that would then be distributed in the BOC and 6MLTB also mentioned that the residents from Balzan also have the possibility to donate a shopping every month, yet in Marsa, while food is distributed by the Deacon’s Commission to the Maltese, the same is not done to the migrants. That said, in the BOC migrants cook their own food and they are a lesser number, whereas in the MOC migrants are given prepared food and their numbers are larger.
Finally, while an inter-religious prayer meeting is organised yearly close to the feast of the Annunciation of Our Lady in Balzan, where the Parish goes by the same name, the Holy Trinity parish of Marsa, does not do something similar, where migrants do not seem to be on the agenda so far.

**Differences in the local councils:** 5MLTB referred to migrants in Balzan as an ‘accepted presence,’ yet 4MLTM did not see the same to be the case in Marsa, where he says that the people still need to get used to migrants living amidst them. While the local council of Balzan organised an ‘Intercultural Night’ to which migrants in BOC where invited, 4MLTM highlighted that it would be unwise to organise an event between the Maltese and the migrants for now, until they get used to each other. Even so, the initiative for the event that was organised in Balzan, stemmed from the youth leader who manages the Balzan Youth Centre.

**The issue of hygiene:** In Balzan 2MLTB and 9MLTB mentioned specifically that migrants keep their children “nodfa” (clean), whereas in Marsa several respondents mentioned how dirty or unhygienic the MOC is and that certain migrants have unhygienic behaviour (for instance 2MLTM and 6MLTM). The researcher wonders whether this may be somewhat linked to the institutions that the migrants form part of, in the sense that migrants in BOC mentioned that they have a cleaning schedule that they must stick to and if they do not, they are expelled from the BOC, whereas migrants did not mention such a schedule or anything similar in MOC, although the researcher does not exclude something
similar to be in place. The migrants of BOC in themselves were also more conscious of keeping the place clean. The researcher questions whether this may in part be linked to the fact that families live in BOC. Yet the MOC is already located in a place that was considered unhygienic prior to the migrants’ arrival. This however does not exclude that certain migrants do not keep clean, since according to 8MIGM, a place that is small and where Africans live, the place is bound to be dirty, one of the reasons being that some migrants are not used to living in cities. Moreover, when migrants live in the community, 7MIGM notes that some migrants do not keep the rented places tidy and also damage them at times. He seems to suggest that it might also be linked to the fact that when one comes from a country in which there was no government for a long time (for instance in Somalia), some people might not have come to appreciate that there are consequences for their actions, like in Malta. Alternatively, 2MLTM mentioned how other migrants keep clean for instance by placing the garbage back in front of their housedoor, like the Maltese do.

Assimilation, respect and contravening ingroup norms: Assimilation of migrants into the community was looked at favourably by the Maltese respondents. Some mentioned that the migrants come to the pub with them and are just like them (3MLTB, 3MLTM, 7MLTM) and others mentioned (as highlighted below) that migrants speak English or even Maltese. Moreover, the children of the migrants (living in the BOC or in the community in Marsa) are also seen to have integrated well into society in both Balzan, where some also attend the football nursery and go to Catechism classes, and in Marsa, where the migrants’ children go to school with other Maltese students (7MLTM). 7MLTM noticed that it would
be easier for these children to integrate into Maltese society since they would be brought up aware of the rules in Malta.

Nonetheless, instances have also been mentioned when migrants and Maltese had good relations, not because they were based on similarity, but respect of differences. By way of example, 5MLTB encouraged a Muslim migrant to pray in his way at the Balzan Church, 3MLTM used to make sure not to touch the food he would cook for the migrants with pork, a Pentecostal migrant meets with a Maltese Jehovah witness who gives him advice on life in Malta (10MIGM) and 7MIGM meets Maltese people over a drink, but while they drink alcohol, he sticks to soft drinks.

In contrast when some migrants are seen to act in contravention to Maltese societal norms, for instance by washing themselves outside the house (4MLTM), urinating outside (6MLTM), sleeping outside (1MLTB) and not maintaining their general hygiene (2MLTM), the Maltese tend to frown upon such behaviour. In fact such behaviour is perceived as threatening since it targets norms that are at the heart of the ingroup.

Consequently different factors were seen to have an impact on whether intergroup contact would be positive or negative. In both localities, positive contact resulted mainly from helpful behaviour and kind gestures, personal characteristics like manners, cleanliness and respect for diversity, assimilation and knowing a common language and positive interpersonal relationships like friendships and conversations. Conversely, factors
that led to negative contact, contrasted substantially with the positive factors. The main factors in this case were behaviours that involved harassment, over-confidence, lack of manners, fighting and exploitation in both localities as well as loitering in Marsa, cultural factors like xenophobia, discrimination and racism in both localities, and differing mentalities, different skin-colour and problems to adapt in Marsa, as well as perceptions of a lack of appreciation or fear.

6.3 How do the Maltese and the immigrants categorise each other?

The Maltese and migrants were seen to characterise each other in different ways. These are the main results:

**Defining immigrants:** Some Maltese had a difficulty to define who immigrants are, whether the definition should be restricted to sub-Saharan African migrants, to Maltese who emigrated to Australia and even returned, or even to EU citizens. However the latter’s immigration was seen as legal (4MLTB, 5MLTB, 7MLTB and 9MLTB), and therefore differing from the picture of immigrants, as ‘black’ Africans coming to Malta irregularly by boat; an image which 4MLTB and 8MLTM attribute to the media. Yet the researcher notes that ‘l-immigranti’ [the immigrants] may be a culturally loaded term in Malta. In fact, 2MLTM noted that “l-immigranti” is immediately taken to be “is-suwed” (the blacks).
**Skin-colour:** Skin-colour was used to distinguish between migrants as a natural characteristic. A number of respondents referred to the migrants as “suwed” (blacks). Yet 8MLTB explained that it is not necessarily because they are black but because that is how the immigrants are referred to and 1MLTM highlighted that the intention behind the word, depends on who is saying it. The migrants did not use ‘skin colour’ to categorise Maltese, yet made reference to it when they mentioned that they find trouble distinguishing Maltese people from other Europeans or Libyans.

**Defining the Maltese:** Migrants generally perceived differences amongst the Maltese. A number of them considered two types of Maltese to exist, namely the ‘good’ and the ‘bad.’ Two migrants considered the Maltese to form part of the same group, in the sense that they are part of the same ‘tribe’ not different tribes. This indicates that one’s categorisation tends to be linked to what one is familiar with and one makes sense of a new phenomenon through comparisons with pre-set categories.

**More contact, more decategorization:** More time spent with migrants led to an ability to speak about their individual characteristics and behaviours more (9MLTB, 3MLTM, 6MLTM, 7MLTM). Similarly, some migrants, especially those from Marsa, who seemed to have more contact with the Maltese through work, highlighted different characteristics of the Maltese on more personal levels, such as related to the way they speak and to their character. In contrast, both 6MIGB and 9MIGM could not differentiate between the Maltese since they did not have much contact with them.
6.4 How is the perception of social contact interconnected with the perception of threat?

The contact between the two groups has led to certain perceptions of threat, which has in turn impacted contact. The main issues have been singled out:

*Economic threats:* A number of economic threats were highlighted by the respondents. Some considered the Maltese to pay taxes and social contributions and the migrants as non-contributory (1MLTB), while migrants were also seen as taking the jobs of the Maltese. Yet others highlighted that migrants take the jobs Maltese do not want to do, yet being paid lower wages, the employers would prefer employ them instead (7MLTB), since some Maltese would prefer not to take up low-paid jobs but to rely on social benefits, and perhaps to do a side job instead (2MLTM). However, 6MLTB noted that some migrants do not pay contributions because some Maltese employers abuse of the system since if migrants work without a work permit and at a low pay, they cannot pay social contributions. Exploiting workers by giving them hard jobs to do, at a very low pay was mentioned not only by some Maltese (3MLTB, 4MLTM), but also by a migrant from Marsa, who mentioned that certain wages were unacceptable, such as €2 an hour for a job in the construction industry. Moreover another problem that was seen from the migrants’ side is the fact that their qualifications are not recognised. As regards social benefits, 9MIGB who has a ‘double reject’ status mentioned that she still pays social contribution although she does not benefit anything out of it, while 7MIGM mentioned however how some migrants do not work but depend on social benefits, which he disagrees with.
**Property value:** Issues have arisen in which although migrants would not cause problems in a locality, problems arise in coming to sell one’s house, since prospective buyers would not want to live next to migrants and as a result the value of the property diminishes, even if migrants would not have caused any problems (7MLTB, 4MLTM). In turn, migrants go to live next door to fellow migrants. Seen from a social identity theory perspective, in both the cases of the Maltese and migrants, ingroup members would feel safer and more attracted to living next to ingroup members, as compared to outgroup members, whom they could potentially perceive as a threat, simply by being different to them. This results however in migrants renting houses for instance in Marsa, and the Maltese retreating. Yet, this is not a phenomenon only found in Malta but also abroad (2MLTM).

**Relative deprivation:** Linked to economic threats, some migrants in Balzan mentioned how certain Maltese see migrants as having money (9MIG, 10MIGB), while a number of Maltese in Marsa mentioned how migrants buy the best clothes, buy expensive meat, have expensive mobile phones or can afford to have more children than them (5MLTM, 7MLT) amongst others. It consequently seems that some Maltese feel a sense of relative deprivation in the sense that they see migrants as better off than them, or perhaps do not expect migrants to be in a similar position like them.

**Large numbers, outgroup visibility and threat of domination:** The fact that large numbers of migrants live in the MOC, and a number of them also spend time in the centre
of Marsa particularly in the evening, is seen as a threat by the Maltese respondents. In contrast although a number of migrants are also seen to sit on the benches in the Balzan centre in the evening especially in Summer (3MLTB, 5MLTM), they are not seen to disturb anybody, but the numbers of the migrants resident in BOC is also smaller. The problem with large numbers is that it increases the outgroup visibility, rather than if the migrants had to be dispersed into the community, where 3MLTM suggests that one would not notice that migrants are there and they could have the opportunity to have good relations with their neighbours. 4MLTM also seems to suggest that the outgroup visibility is also increased by the fact that the migrants are dark-skinned, due to an element of racism among a segment of the Maltese population. He suggests in fact that the Maltese would probably not mind to have Russian migrants (who have a fairer skin complexion) to be housed in the MOC, if this had to be the case. Similarly, 1MLTM mentions how the Maltese people are more prejudiced against Africans and Arabs, than against other groups of people, and would have stronger objections to them living next door.

Some Maltese from Marsa also perceived a threat of domination in Marsa, in part owing to the large numbers of migrants there (3MLTM, 5MLTM, 8MLTM). 8MLTM goes as far as mentioning that she feels that she is in a minority in her own locality, where she does not feel safe. This is in part due to what Maltese respondents saw as an “over-confidence” attitude amongst the migrants, who give them the impression that they own the place. This “over-confidence” could be explained by the fact that when individuals form groups, they are naturally stronger and increase their self-esteem relative to others,
by showing their strength. In fact 2MLTB also mentioned a clash she had with migrants in her bar in Balzan, which also involved a group of migrants who seemed to be “over-confident.” Nonetheless excessive drink may also increase the reaction of some individuals. 7MLTM also mentioned that he sees the mentality migrants have vis-à-vis women to be different; if migrants stem from male-dominating cultures this may be one of ways cultural clashes could occur with the Maltese. Perceptions of large numbers, linked with misconceptions resulting from lack of knowledge, can further lead to increased perception of threat when for instance the numbers of migrants are perceived to be larger than they really are.

**Language and fear:** Language was seen as a very important factor in facilitating the relations between members of different groups. Some migrants were seen to integrate well into the community since they could speak English or Maltese (2MLTB, 4MLTB, 9MLTB, 4MIGB, 5MIGB, 10MIGM, 7MLTM). Moreover 1MLTM also reported trying to speak some French to a French-speaking migrant. Besides the fact that this leads to people from both groups to be able to speak to each other, and they could thereby come to understand each other better even if they do not agree with each other, knowing the same language is a form of ‘similarity’ and according to the theory of similarity-attraction, people have a tendency of becoming more attracted to others who are similar to them.

Yet, not knowing the language has contributed to negative results such misunderstandings leading migrants for instance not to get the product they need (7MLTB),
or even the required healthcare when they are sick, which also led 9MIGB’s first encounter with a Maltese to be a negative one, leading her to question whether other Maltese also do not help. Fear may also result amongst migrants who do not speak English or Maltese, since they may fear that these languages would be used against them by outgroup members and they would thus be abused of (4MIGB), or fear of being misunderstood, which leads some migrants to try to avoid meeting the ‘Other’ in the first place (10MIGM). Some Maltese also experienced fear at not knowing the language of the ‘Other;’ for instance when 1MLTB was on a bus on her own and the majority of the other passengers were migrants, or when migrants speak between them in the centre of Marsa, with a voice perceived to be loud but the Maltese would not understand what they would be saying (2MLTM).

**Role of the media:** A number of respondents also mentioned the role of the media. Some Maltese keep themselves informed on latest affairs via the media (1MLTB, 4MLTB, 8MLTB, 6MLTM, 7MLTM). Yet the media is also seen as fuelling angst of the people for instance by emphasising the numbers of migrant arrivals (1MLTM). Moreover, the image some Maltese have of who the migrants are, is also partly shaped by the media (4MLTB, 8MLTM), as mentioned earlier. The media is also seen to be selective in what it reports, for instance riots in detention are reported often but reasons do not seem to be highlighted, and good episodes are not given much importance either (1MLTM). On the other hand, migrants who have access to media in detention, also get to know about the way how Maltese people outside perceive them (7MIGB). In fact 4MIGB considers the media both
as an aid and a hindrance to migrants, depending on how it is used. He believes that if media portrays a positive image of migrants, they would be welcomed more, but if not, they are bound to be rejected.

**Perception of threat may be unfounded:** Some respondents seemed to highlight that although perceptions of threat exist, they may not constitute real threats but in meeting the ‘Other’ especially on an individual level, one may realise that one’s perceptions about the individual would have been erroneous, but that the person is in fact amiable (3MLTM, 8MLTM).

**Threat perception in Marsa and Balzan:** The respondents from Balzan consider themselves to feel less threat from the migrants there than if they had to go to Marsa; in fact while 4MLTB considers migrants in Balzan to be her neighbours, she would not want to go and live in Marsa. Why is this so? The MOC is larger than the BOC and the number of migrants is much larger in Marsa. Additionally the MOC is all-male, while besides the single males, families, single women and single mothers also live in the BOC. As 10MLTB explains, while in Marsa, similarly to what had been the case in Balzan before, there is a large concentration of males, who get drunk and cause problems, families tend to be “less disruptive,” since they would be bringing up their children. 4MLTM also adds that people tend to empathise with families more, and thereby they are not perceived as much as a threat. Moreover while migrants seem to be more visible through their large numbers and their tendency to be in groups, thereby giving the impression to Marsa residents that they
are dominating the place, in Balzan the migrants still sit outside on the benches but in lesser numbers and they seem to blend into society. Moreover, life in Marsa is considered to be more active in the morning and migrants would pass by, whereas in Balzan, many migrants would work in the morning, so little is seen of them.

As a result, intergroup contact has at times led to the perception of threat. This in turn has an impact on contact since it may lead to avoidance to interact with the ‘Other;’ in general in the case of 8MLTM because of fear of harm, and in the case of the migrants 10MIGM mentioned, out of fear of being misunderstood, and in public places such as at the grocer’s (7MLTM) and on the bus in the case of 7MIGM, where the latter has decided to remain standing when he is on the bus, in order to avoid having to go through this “pressure” that Maltese people do not sit next to him, everytime. Threat perception has also triggered xenophobia (10MLTB), which may also lead people to avoid contact, for instance sitting with outgroup members on the bus (9MIGB).

6.5 How is the perception of social contact interconnected with assessment of the detention/ migration policies and institutions?

Intergroup contact has been impacted by policies (and knowledge of them) as well as the institutions that house migrants. The main factors respondents spoke of are listed below:

*Lack of knowledge on migration policies*: There was a general lack of knowledge on detention and migration policies among the Maltese respondents in both Balzan and in
Marsa. What the researcher considers worrying is the fact that a number of Maltese respondents mentioned that they are not interested to know about such policies, since they believe that it does not affect them. This is an issue to be kept in mind when in suggesting what could be done to improve intergroup relations.

**Misconceptions:** Misconceptions have been seen to result, partly due to the media’s messages becoming lost on the way. These may have a negative impact on intergroup contact if they impact the attitude the Maltese may have towards the migrants.

**Policies/ laws and government:** Although migrants at times objected to certain policies/ laws, while accepting them as such, their impressions of them were kept separate to their perceptions of the Maltese, with the exception of 10MIGB who came to believe that like in every country, the people and the government are a single unit.

**The impact of detention on contact:** Migrants are seen to have certain negative impressions of the Maltese at first when they arrive in detention, until they are briefed on the reason why they are kept there, and even when they are not granted protection (2MIGM, 9MIGM). Yet once they are out, they seem to leave the past behind them and start their relations with Maltese people from afresh (3MLTM, 9MIGM). Maltese people on the other hand may tend to see migrants as ‘criminals’ or as carriers of some sicknesses, in part, based on misconceptions they have regarding the purpose of keeping migrants in detention. Yet when they see migrants on the street, former perceptions do not seem to have much of
an impact, since they do not think about the fact that migrants would have been in detention (8MLTM).

Origin of the BOC and MOC: Balzan Open Centre (BOC) knows its start to December 1992, when the a Sudanese migrant family came knocking on the door of the Emigrants’ Commission, and the Good Shepherd Sisters eventually started opening their doors to migrants. In contrast the Marsa Open Centre (MOC) was opened in 2002, in a former trade school that had been closed down due to the unpleasant smells and for safety reasons amongst others, on the outskirts of Albert Town, an area already notorious for prostitution. Consequently it is clear that the Maltese residents living in Balzan had a longer time to adapt to migrants living among them (although their nationalities were not always Sub-Saharan but Iraqi due to the Gulf War amongst others). Moreover since the location of the MOC is already not looked at favourably, it would only encourage a negative light to be shed on its residents.

Location of BOC and MOC: The BOC is situated within Balzan close to the village centre and the Parish Church, whereas the MOC is more towards the outskirts of Marsa and further away from the Holy Trinity parish (the closest parish of the two in Marsa), as can be seen by the maps in Appendix. Consequently the BOC is seen to be in the Maltese community, whereas MOC is partly isolated and partly within the community. Yet as 5MLTB notes the migrants in the BOC are still at a distance from the Maltese as once they enter the building, there is a long corridor and after that their actual residential
area is located. Moreover, 8MIGB argued that some of the residents of BOC do not go out of the centre. On the other hand, not many Maltese are seen to pass by the MOC.

**Population of BOC and MOC:** The BOC is home to both families, single females and single mothers, as well as single males, with vulnerable individuals given a priority in the selection of residents, while in MOC population is only male. The population in BOC is also smaller, than in the MOC, so the large numbers mentioned earlier do not seem to be a big issue there. BOC migrants are also seen to have more stability (fixed jobs), whereas some of those from MOC are looking for jobs. Some respondents commented on the fact that a number of migrants would sit next to the roundabout of Marsa waiting for someone to give them a job (5MLTB, 2MLTM). Yet while 2MLTM saw this as an “eye sore” and wondered what tourists may think of Malta, 10MIGM found the area to be beneficial as a contact place between employers and job seekers. Alternatively 3MIGB and 8MLTM mentioned how some people, who require jobs to be done, go specifically to the BOC to ask for workers there.

**Preventing conflict escalation in Balzan and Marsa:** Respondents mentioned how a known migrant in Balzan on the one hand, and the staff at the MOC on the other, are called when problems arise like harassment (1MLTB), fights (2MLTB, 8MLTB) or potential disagreements (8MIGM), in order to solve the problems and prevent their escalation. Consequently issues are resolved without the need of contacting the police to intervene. The researcher applauds the sterling work such individuals are doing.
**More security:** 6MLTB mentioned how in the past in Balzan there were robberies and problems that are found in Marsa today. While this may indicate that Balzan has had the time to adapt to migrants, increased security within BOC also seems to play a role and in fact, people have to inform the security officers on why they want to enter the BOC before being granted access. This however may impede the Maltese from making their way to BOC. Similarly since more controls were introduced at MOC for instance through the need to show one’s ID card to enter and through visiting hours, 3MLTM argues that there is more discipline. Yet at the same time 6MIGM mentioned how it is now harder for people to enter MOC in contrast to the Ħal Far Open Centre, where there are less controls on who enters and exists, and where he had made friends with Maltese people who came to visit other migrants. Nonetheless HF OC is seen as more “isolated” (4MLTM) from the people and in fact hardly anyone passes near that centre, and no shops are around.

**Effort and behavior:** Both Maltese and migrant respondents have highlighted the benefits of migrants owning private housing and thereby having more of an opportunity to integrate into the community. Yet while the experience may be a positive one for instance in which migrants are welcomed by the community and receive support (5MIGB), migrants may also be rejected by their neighbours (8MIGB). Consequently the researcher argues that contact in the community is dependent on two factors mentioned by the respondents. 6MLTB and 8MIGB both pointed out the fact that the relations between groups also depends on both sides putting effort into their relationship, since the agency of one of the
parties in not enough. Moreover 7MLTM and 8MIGM both mentioned that relations with others also depend on one’s behavior towards them.

6.6 Recommendations

As Allport suggested, “Those who wish to improve group relations would do well to engage in a many-pronged attack.”1 Consequently, different recommendations are being put forward:

1. Teaching languages to migrants: Those migrants who do not speak English or Maltese could be taught English as a first step (or actively encouraged to do so), even if they would not be staying in Malta, since as 4MLTM suggested, Malta would be making the time they spent in Malta fruitful, by teaching them a language used internationally. For those migrants who are going to stay in Malta, it is suggested that they would also be taught Maltese. During the writing of this study a pilot project was launched between the Maltese government and the Elanguest school, whereby a number of refugees are to be given free English classes over the next scholastic year.2 Such an initiative is applauded and its results still need to be seen.

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2. **Employer-job seeker service:** It is suggested that a service is set up within the MOC, where employers would be encouraged to come to the centre to have access to a pool of job-seekers and the latter would register their interest that they would like to work, through this system. A similar proposal was made in October 2013, whereby a designated area would be set up within the MOC where this service could be offered. Such a system is encouraged since while both employers and employees have a means to contact the other, the migrants would not have to wait at the round-about area in Marsa and Maltese may feel less threatened by them as a consequence, and the situation may be regularised more since employers would need to give migrants proper wages and the latter would in turn be able to contribute to social security, thereby reducing the economic threat perceived by locals.

3. **Information campaign for migrants:** The researcher suggests informing migrants through the means of courses, brief meetings or another medium (seen as the most suitable after further analysis) about Maltese culture, laws and norms, including about behaviours that are not seen to go down well amongst locals especially, when it comes to hygiene or loud behaviour after certain hours. Although cultural awareness courses do take place in both centres, it seems that more needs to be done to reach out to all migrants in order to prevent certain negative behaviour from

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impacting their own relations with Maltese and the relations other migrants have with the Maltese.

4. **Media campaign directed at the Maltese:** Since media has been seen to be influential amongst certain Maltese, a media campaign could be directed at them, based on the questions ‘Why should I care about migration policies/ issues? How does it affect me?’ The reason is that since such policies are impacting the locals since they are ultimately living side-by-side with the migrants, and lack of knowledge, has led to misperceptions that may increase tensions. Moreover the next step would be making sure that the Maltese are aware of the facts pertaining to migration issues, as the ‘#knowthefacts’ publication by UNHCR Malta and the European Parliament Office in Malta sought to do. In addition, media could be used to “convey positive information” about “the value of immigrants to the economy and the future well-being of the country” as suggested by Stephan in order to encourage a more positive outlook towards them.

5. **Highlighting one’s dual identity**: As highlighted some Maltese and migrants have mentioned the benefits of integrating into the community. Yet 4MLTB also mentioned that although she may fear migrants in Marsa for instance, she sees the migrants in Balzan as “neighbours.” Consequently the researcher encourages re-

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4 “#knowthefacts - Publication on Migration and Asylum for MEP Candidates and Stakeholders.”
categorization to take place, for instance by encouraging migrants and Maltese in the community to maintain their own identities as Maltese or as Sub-Saharan African (Somali, Eritrean and so on), while embracing their common identity as ‘residents from Balzan,’ or ‘neighbours,’ thereby shedding light on a common factor that unites them. This may lead individuals from each group to see each other as part of the same group while maintaining their differences and opening the door to more solidarity and support, as already is taking place to a certain extent in Balzan.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter has compared and contrasted the main results of the two case-studies in order to get a better idea about the nature of the contact in the two localities.

In sum, the situation of intergroup contact in Balzan and Marsa were seen to differ in a number of ways. Firstly, the BOC was opened a decade earlier than the one is Marsa, giving the Balzan community more of an opportunity to adapt to the situation and trouble-shoot when problems arose. Secondly, while the BOC is more physically integrated into the community, the MOC still forms part of Marsa but is more isolated. Thirdly, the numbers of migrants in the two localities vary, in that larger numbers of migrants live in the MOC. Additionally, while the MOC is all-male that may be perceived as more threatening, particularly when the migrants move in groups, the BOC includes single males.
as well as single mothers, single women and families, the latter seen as “less disruptive.”

Moreover, while the BOC residents seem to have entered a daily routine and some of them have a fixed job, many migrants in Marsa are seen looking for jobs for instance next to the roundabout area, thereby increasing their visibility. As a consequence, since less activity seems to take place in Balzan in the morning, the residents’ lives’ may potentially be less influenced by the migrants, than is the case in Marsa.

Additionally, the intergroup contact experience differed among the Maltese and the migrants. It is clear that the majority of the contact the Maltese have with the migrants takes place within the residential areas and encounters are largely coincidental and circumstantial. In contrast, migrants meet Maltese more in their work places or during other activities, and have thereby had more of an opportunity to cooperate with Maltese people and to build friendships. In both the cases of the Maltese and the immigrants, their assessment of contact was mostly good, with the exception of some behaviours or perceptions of threat. The Maltese perceived migrants as threats more than vice-versa; the former feeling their area being encroached upon by the migrants (particularly in Marsa) and perceiving threats of an economic and at times cultural nature, the latter feeling generally happy that they were welcomed in Malta, although some experience fear when they cannot speak the language of the locals, but raise concerns regarding the level of xenophobia, racism, discrimination and exploitation they encounter.
Keeping the different intergroup contact experiences in the two localities and amongst the two groups in mind, five recommendations were put forward in order to attempt to mitigate certain problems that were highlighted, namely teaching English and Maltese to migrants, setting up an employer-job seeker service, launching an information campaign for migrants and a media campaign for the Maltese, and encouraging people to embrace a dual identity. They aim to serve as steps towards improving intergroup contact not only in the two localities of Marsa and Balzan but on a general level in Malta, since the contact migrants had with Maltese took place mainly outside of these two localities. The final chapter will wrap up the study and propose further areas of research.
CONCLUSION

This study endeavoured to answer the following research questions: **What are the nature and dynamics of the interaction between the Maltese and the Sub-Saharan African migrants? What are the main problems in the interaction between these two groups?** How do the Maltese and the immigrants categorise each other? How is the perception of social contact interconnected with: (A) The perception of threat, and (B) Assessment of the detention/ migration policies and institutions?’

The first chapter started by presenting background literature on theories of intergroup relations. The concept of social identity was first brought to light; the idea that individuals feel the need to associate with like-minded individuals and form groups to provide them with support and increased self-esteem, simultaneously differentiating and distancing themselves from those perceived to be outgroup members, by embracing their group/ social identity. One’s social identity was seen to contribute to how one categorises and perceives the ‘Other,’ including whether the other is seen as a friend or foe, and one’s consequent behavior towards the ‘Other.’

While contact has in the past been seen as a means to reduce prejudice between groups, it was acknowledged that this is not necessarily the case, amongst others due to the fact that other factors such as one’s salient identity, as well as perception of threat. The second chapter provided the local context of the study by focusing on immigration in Malta.
The recent Maltese history of migration was mentioned, followed by a discussion on the phenomenon of the influx of mainly Sub-Saharan African migrants since 2002 up to the present day. Main migration law and policy in Malta was outlined, as the frame in which contact between the Maltese and Sub-Saharan African migrants takes place.

As a result these two chapters led the research questions to be further subdivided, to include the questions: How do the Maltese and the immigrants categorise each other? How is the perception of social contact interconnected with: (A) The perception of threat, and (B) Assessment of the detention/ migration policies and institutions?

The third chapter focused on the methods used to carry out the research, starting from the choice of the topic of migration and the localities of Balzan and Marsa. Moreover, a constructivist and thereby qualitative approach to the research was chosen, by relying on people’s perception of contact due to their influence on their interactions with others. In-depth interviews, with Maltese residents in both localities as well as 9 migrants in each locality living in the respective open centre, and one former resident living in the community, were the main source of data, which were analysed via thematic analysis and limitations of the study were highlighted.

Chapters 4 and 5 sought to give a detailed overview of the relations between the Maltese and the Sub-Saharan African migrants in Balzan and Marsa respectively, focusing
Chapter 6 synthesized the results of the two case studies and drew comparisons. The nature of the interaction between the Maltese and the migrants in Balzan and in Marsa was seen to differ in a number of important ways, partly influenced by the setting in which the contact takes place and the institutions in which the migrants live. In Balzan, the BOC has been opened for longer than the MOC, giving the residents more time to iron out difficulties they had with migrants and to adapt to them, whereas the latter was opened more recently and although changes have occurred in that the two groups are finding ways to co-exist, it still leaves much to be desired. Furthermore, while the BOC as a building belongs to the Good Shepherd Sisters, the location of the MOC was from the beginning considered insanitary and notorious for prostitution, that impact the perceptions locals may have of migrants. While the population in the BOC is smaller and diverse, including both families, single women, single mothers, and single men, the population of the MOC is all-male and larger, which is perceived to be more threatening. In fact, the women and children living in the Marsa community on the other hand, are seen to integrate better into the community and are supported. Help, support, assimilation, friendships and amiable conversations, and openness towards the ‘Other’ were the main features of positive relations, whereas perceived incompatibility of cultures, xenophobia, racism and discrimination, as well as false accusations thereof, exceeding the limit of tolerable behaviour, avoidance, harassment, fights and exploitation, shaped the negative relations.
Good manners, speaking the same language and attention to cleanliness, or lack thereof, where also major determinants as to whether relations would be positive or negative. Negative behaviour was seen to contribute the most to the individuals’ perception of outgroup threat, relating mainly to threat of dominance among the Maltese and the migrants’ perceived threat of being discriminated against. Interpersonal relations, were in contrast seen to be largely positive and friendships also resulted in some cases. Yet the respondents seemed to suggest that that both negative behaviours and positive behaviours are not necessarily always generalized to the whole outgroup, although it was seen to happen in some cases. The nature and dynamics of interactions between the two groups are thereby varied and dependent on various factors.

**Recommendations**

As a result the researcher proposes five recommendations in order to try to mitigate certain problems so as to allow for more positive relations to ensue, namely:

1. Teaching English and Maltese to migrants
2. Setting up an employer-job seeker service within MOC
3. Launching an information campaign for migrants about Maltese culture, norms and regulations
4. Launching a media campaign for Maltese on why migration policies should interest them and to clarify facts on migration in Malta
5. Highlighting one’s dual identity (for instance both as a Maltese or Sub-Saharan African, and a resident of Malta, Balzan or Marsa)

**Areas for further research**

Sub-Saharan African immigrants in Malta are a transitory population and the study was conducted in two localities, so it does not assume to be able to be generalized neither to all the immigrants that have, are or will be in Malta, or to all localities. Yet it is safe to say that general trends can be drawn and this study can be seen to be among the first of its nature in Malta, to be followed by others taking place in different localities at different times, including with different immigrant populations. Consequently some areas for further research, that have been touched upon in this study but were outside the remit of the research question, are suggested, namely analysing:

1. The impact of the Hal Far Open Centre has on contact between the Maltese and migrants especially since it was seen to be isolated. Yet this open centre would be also interesting to study due to its mixed population (singles/ adults/ families/ children);

2. The relations between the detention services staff and the migrants and what problems may be encountered;

3. Homes for migrant children under care-order (for instance Dar is-Sliem), to see what long-term impact living there during a period of one’s childhood has on one’s ability to integrate into the Maltese society later on and on one’s relations with the Maltese.
Another interesting topic to be studied, even on a smaller-scale, or even through a vox pop, would be on perceptions, mentioned by the local council mayor of Marsa: ‘What would the reaction of the Maltese be if one had to replace the Sub-Saharan African migrants in the open centre with Russian women?’ In order to see the impact gender, countries or origin and skin-colour have on the locals’ perceptions of others.

In conclusion, the researcher believes that it is unrealistic to say that problems in intergroup relations would not ensue. After all as has been seen in this study, it is a natural consequence of two groups differing from each other, with different backgrounds and different realities, coming into contact. Yet change is possible and tensions may be mitigated if both groups equally pull the same string, united by a common struggle to achieve their super ordinate goal: to make their co-existence a mutually supportive, mutually respecting and mutually re-enforcing one.


European Council on Refugees and Exiles. “ECtHR Blocks Pushback of Somali Migrants from Malta to Libya Following Outcry from Civil Society,” July 12, 2013.


APPENDICES
Appendix I – Malta Asylum Trends – 2014 midyear update (UNHCR Malta)

MALTA ASYLUM TRENDS
2014 midyear update

Sea arrivals
308 people arrived from Libya on 4 boats. So far 85,000 individuals were disembarked in Italy under the Mare Nostrum Operation.

31% declared to be children upon arrival
- Men 62%
- Women 7%

UNHCR estimates that close to 1,000 people lost their lives in the Mediterranean Sea this year.

Data as 31.07.2014

Reception
Around 370 individuals are held in detention as end July 2014. Over 1,900 individuals passed through detention in 2013.

619 asylum seekers, beneficiaries of protection and migrants reside in the open centres.

Data as 18.07.2014

Protection
52% of all asylum seekers were granted international protection in Malta. A further 9% were granted complementary forms of protection.

International Protection by nationality:
Somalia 37%
Syria 29%
Eritrea 17%
Libya 9%
Paradinas 3%

Data as 20.09.2014

Solutions
This year 391 refugees have been resettled to the United States of America as of July.

More than 2,600 beneficiaries of protection have been resettled/relocated since 2005.

54 individuals have returned home in 2014 through the Assisted Voluntary Return and Sustainable Reintegration in the Country of Origin programme.


www.unhcr.org.mt
Glossary

A Refugee according to the 1951 Convention (and also Maltese legislation) is a person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality or habitual residence and is not able to, or because of such fear, is not willing to avail himself of the protection of that country.

An Asylum-Seeker is a person who is seeking international protection. In countries with individualized procedures, an asylum-seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which he or she has submitted it. Not every asylum-seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee (or given another form of protection), but every refugee is initially an asylum-seeker.

Detention is a restriction of freedom of movement, usually through enforced confinement. In Malta, all individuals, including asylum seekers, who arrive in Malta without permission from immigration authorities may be detained in terms of immigration law and policy for a period of up to 12 months, or 18 months if their application for asylum is rejected. UNHCR does not consider it appropriate for any country to detain all asylum seekers who arrive without entry documents.

For more on this point refer to the Guidelines on the Applicable Criteria and Standards relating to the Detention of Asylum-Seekers and Alternatives to Detention (2012), available at: www.unhcr.org or www.refworld.org

Durable Solutions: Any means by which the situation of refugees can be satisfactorily and permanently resolved to enable them to live normal lives. UNHCR traditionally pursues three durable solutions: voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement.

Migrant: No universally accepted definition for “migrant” exists. The term migrant was usually understood to cover all cases where the decision to migrate was taken freely by the individual concerned for reasons of “personal convenience” and without intervention of an external compelling factor; it therefore applied to persons, and family members, moving to another country or region to better their material or social conditions and improve the prospect for themselves or their family.

Non-Refoulement is a core principle of international law that prohibits States from returning refugees (and also asylum-seekers) in any manner whatsoever to countries or territories in which their lives or freedom may be threatened. The principle of non-refoulement is a rule of customary international law and is therefore binding on all States, whether or not they are parties to the 1951 Refugee Convention.

Unaccompanied and Separated Children are persons below the legal age of majority who are not in the company of an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for them, such as parents, guardians or primary caregivers.

An Irregular migrant is a person who (a) has entered the territory without a valid visa/document (b) over-stayed his/her visa (c) has remained on the territory despite an expulsion request or order.

A Stateless person is an individual who has no effective nationality and therefore cannot benefit from rights deriving from citizenship.

Subsidiary Protection is a form of complementary protection given to those persons who, if returned to their country of origin, would suffer serious harm (death penalty or execution; torture or inhumane and degrading treatment/punishment; threat to life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict).

Temporary Humanitarian Protection is a form of national protection granted to applicants who do not satisfy the conditions for refugee status or subsidiary protection, but who nonetheless should not be returned in view of humanitarian considerations. It may be granted to minors, persons who should not be returned to their country of origin on medical grounds, and persons who should not be returned to their country of origin on other humanitarian grounds. THP affords the beneficiary the same protection as that enjoyed under subsidiary protection.

Such terms should not be used:

“Illegal Immigrant” - A term widely used in both public and official discourse to refer to persons who have entered a country without proper visas or identity papers. The term is, however, misleading as in most countries the nature of detention is administrative and not criminal. Also, the 1951 Refugee Convention says that States cannot penalize refugees and asylum-seekers just because of unauthorized entry.

“Clandestine” - This term has a strong negative connotation, invoking a sense of criminality. Sometimes refugees and asylum seekers are often referred as “clandestines” even if they would have permission to remain in the territory of a country.

One can use terms such as “irregular migrants” instead of “illegal immigrants”. Other terms, such as “people”, “persons”, “individuals”, “migrants”, “undocumented” might be more neutral. Depending on the case and circumstances, appropriate terms are “refugees”, “asylum-seekers”, “persons seeking protection”.

UNHCR’s general objectives in Malta

Monitoring the access to protection and conditions of asylum in Malta;
Advocating for a protection sensitive asylum system and related policies;
Strengthening the capacities of government and partner agencies;
Improving the availability of durable solutions, including through local integration and resettlement or intra-EU relocation;
Increasing the general awareness about asylum issues in the country.

Malta is a signatory to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 protocol since 1971. It officially lifted its geographical reservation on 13 December 2001. Malta is not a signatory to the UN Statelessness Conventions.

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Appendix II – Breakdown of Interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Approximate Duration</th>
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<td>37</td>
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<td>BOC</td>
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<td>BOC</td>
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<td>29</td>
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<td>11/06/2014</td>
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<td>27</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Eritrea</td>
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<td>Private home</td>
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<tr>
<td>10MICB</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>Somalia</td>
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<td>Double reject</td>
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<td>50 mins</td>
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Table 1 - Interviewees breakdown: Migrants Balzan
Table 2 - Interviewees breakdown: Maltese Balzan

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<th>Position</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Audio</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Approximate Duration</th>
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<td>1MLTB</td>
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<td>Private home</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>25/04/2014</td>
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<td>Kazin</td>
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<td>25/04/2014</td>
<td>36 mins</td>
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<td>67</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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</tr>
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<td>68</td>
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<td>Parish priest residence</td>
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<td>57 mins</td>
</tr>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>Balzan Youth Centre</td>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>Shop</td>
<td>Maltese</td>
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<td>15/05/2014</td>
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<td>8MLTB</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Balzan garden</td>
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<td>03/06/2014</td>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>Shop</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Age</td>
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<td>Status</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Audio</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
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<td>-----</td>
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<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
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<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1MIGM</td>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Double reject</td>
<td>Marsa Open Centre</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>2MIGM</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>Waiting</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Ghana</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Refugee status</td>
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<td>Male</td>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>Subsidiary protection</td>
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Table 4 - Interviewees breakdown: Maltese Marsa

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Audio</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Approximate Duration</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1MLTM</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Private house</td>
<td>Maltese</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>20/05/2014</td>
<td>1 hr 46 mins</td>
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<td>74</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Trinity parish convent</td>
<td>Maltese</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>06/06/2014 + 09/06/2014</td>
<td>1 hr 5 mins</td>
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<td>Bar</td>
<td>Maltese</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>53 mins</td>
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<td>4MLTM</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Marsa Local council</td>
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<td>University of Malta</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>30/06/2014</td>
<td>46 mins</td>
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</table>
Appendix III – Allport (1957), *The Nature of Prejudice* – Kinds of Contact

Quantitative aspects of contact:
- a. Frequency
- b. Duration
- c. Number of persons involved
- d. Variety

Status aspects of contact:
- a. Minority member has inferior status
- b. Minority member has equal status
- c. Minority member has superior status
- d. Not only may the individuals encountered vary thus in status; but the group as a whole may have relatively high status (e.g., Jews) or relatively low status (e.g.,Negroes).

Role aspects of contact:
- a. Is the relationship one of competitive or cooperative activity?
- b. Is there a superordinate or subordinate role relation involved; e.g., master-servant, employer-employee, teacher-pupil?

Social atmosphere surrounding the contact:
- a. Is segregation prevalent, or is egalitarianism expected?
- b. Is the contact voluntary or involuntary?
- c. Is the contact “real” or “artificial”?
- d. Is the contact perceived in terms of intergroup relations or not perceived as such?
- e. Is the contact regarded as “typical” or as “exceptional”?
- f. Is the contact regarded as important and intimate, or as trivial and transient?

Personality of the individual experiencing the contact:
- a. Is his initial prejudice level high, low, medium?
- b. Is his prejudice of a surface, conforming type, or is it deeply rooted in his character structure?
- c. Has he basic security in his own life, or is he fearful and suspicious?
- d. What is his previous experience with the group in question, and what is the strength of his present stereotypes?
- e. What are his age and general education level?
- f. Many other personality factors may influence the effect of contact.

Areas of contact:
- a. Casual
- b. Residential
- c. Occupational
- d. Recreational
- e. Religious
- f. Civic and fraternal
- g. Political
- h. Goodwill intergroup activities
Appendix IV – Hewstone and Brown (1986) – Model of Intergroup Contact
Appendix V – Interview Questions in English & Maltese

The semi-structured questions to be asked to the interviewees are as follows:

QUESTIONS (English version)

A. GENERAL INFORMATION
   • Nationality
   • Locality of residence
   • Gender
   • Age

The Maltese participants will be asked questions with reference to the immigrant population and vice-versa.

B. PERCEPTION OF CONTACT

1. How long have you been residing in Malta?
2. Have you ever encountered Maltese/ migrants?
3. [If so], in which context(s)/ setting(s)?
4. How long was the contact? How often?
5. What was the reason for the encounter? A coincidence/ common goal?
6. What was your impression about the contact? Was it positive, negative or otherwise?
7. Upon meeting the Maltese/ migrants do you perceive your ideas about them (if any) to have changed in some way, or have you confirmed them? In either case what has changed/ what was confirmed?

RQ1: HOW DO THE MALTESE AND THE IMMIGRANTS CATEGORISE EACH OTHER?

1. Do you refer to migrants/ Maltese as a group or are there differences between them?
2. [If you classify them as a single group], (a) do you call them/ refer to them in a particular way? [If so] what do you call them/ how do you refer to them? (b) what do you believe to be their common characteristics (physical features, cultures, traditions, customs, religion, behaviour, attitudes)?
3. [If you perceive the Maltese/ migrants to differ from each other (different kinds of migrants/ Maltese)], what types of migrants/ Maltese are there are there? What are their characteristics?
RQ2: HOW IS THE PERCEPTION OF SOCIAL CONTACT INTERCONNECTED WITH:

a) THE PERCEPTION OF THREATS?
[Depending on whether the participants considered the Maltese/immigrants to be a single group whose members are the same or whether there are variations within the group, ask the following questions for each category].

1. What is your first reaction upon encountering Maltese/ migrants?
2. Do you perceive the Maltese/ migrants as a threat to identity, security, personality, image, socioeconomic opportunities?
3. [If you do not perceive the Maltese/ migrants as a threat], how do you perceive them?
4. Do you think that the feeling of threat would increase with (a) more people of the same group living in an area, or (b) people from the same group being confined to a single place?

b) ASSESSMENT OF THE DETENTION/ MIGRATION POLICIES?

1. Are you informed about the current detention policy/ migration policies?
2. [If so], do you agree with it/ them or not? What impact do you believe such (a) policy/ policies has on the contact between the Maltese and the migrants?
3. [If you are unaware of the detention policy], what do you think about the closed detention centres? What do you think about the open centres? What about migrants living in the community? Does the migrants’ place of residence have an impact on their interaction with Maltese? Do they allow for contact between the two groups (the Maltese and the immigrant population)? If so, how do you rate the contact, positive/ negative?
4. What is the implication of calling the closed facility a “detention” centre on (i) the perception of migrants/ Maltese, and (ii) the interactions between migrants and Maltese?
5. Do you believe that when migrants are confined to a detention centre or to a common open center, this may compound a perception of threat?
MISTOQSIIJET (Verżjoni Maltija)

A. INFORMAZZJONI ĠERALI
• Nazzjonalità
• Lokalità fejn toqghod
• Sess
• Età

Il-mistoqsijiet lill-partecipanti Maltin ikunu jirreferu għal popolazzjoni tal-immigranti u viċi-versa.

B. PERĊEZZJONI TAL-KUNTATT
1. Kemm ilek tgħix Malta?
2. Qatt iltqajt ma’ Maltin/ immigranti?
3. Jekk iva, f’liem kuntest/ ambjent?
4. Kemm dam il-kuntatt? Kemm kien ta’ spiss il-kuntatt?
5. X’kien l-iskop li ltqajtu? Koinċidenza/ għan komuni?
6. X’impressjoni kellek tal-kuntatt? Wiehed pożittiv, negattiv jew xi impressjoni oħra?
x’ikkonfermajt?

MR1: B’LIEMA MOD IL-MALTIN U L-IMMIGRANTI JIKKATEGORIZZAW LIL XULXIN?
1. Tirreferi għal l-immigranti/ Maltin bhala grupp, jew hemm differenzi bejniethom?
2. [Jekk tikklassifikahom bhala grupp wiehed], (a) issejhilhom/ tirreferi ghalihom b’xi mod partikolari? [Jekk iva], b’liema mod? (b) x’tahseb li huma il-karatteristiċi komuni tagħhom (apparenza fiżika, kulturi, tradizzjonijiet, drawwiet, religjjon, imġiba, attitudni)?
3. [Jekk taħseb li hemm differenzi bejn il-Maltin/ l-immigranti infushom (hemm tipi differenti ta’ Maltin/ immigranti)], x’tip ta’ immigranti/ Maltin hemm? X’inhuma l-karatteristiċi tagħhom?

MR2: B’LIEMA MOD IL-PERĊEZZJONI TAL-KUNTATT SOĊJALI HUWA KONNESS MA’:

a) PERĊEZZJONI TA’ THEDDID?
[Il-partecipanti jiġu mistoqsija l-istess mistoqsijiet għal kull kategorija, jiddependi ikunux ikkunsidraw lil Maltin/ immigranti li jifjurmaw parti minn grupp wiehed li hu l-istess jew jekk hemmx varjazzjonijiet fi hdan il-grupp innifsu].
1. Xi tkun l-ewwel reazzjoni tieghek meta tiltaqta’ ma’ Maltin/ immigranti?
2. Tikkunsidra lil Maltin/ immigranti bhala theddida għal identità, sigurtà, personalità, kif nidhru, opportunitajiet soċjoekonomiċi?
3. [Jekk ma tikkunsidrax lil Maltin/ immigranti bhala theddida], b’liema mod tarahom/ kif tikkunsidrahom?
4. Taħseb li n-nies ihossuhom aktar mhadda meta (a) iżjed nies mill-istess grupp jghixu f’xi post/ lokalità, jew (b) meta nies mill-istess grupp ikunu kostretti li jghixu f’post wieħed partikolari?

b) STIMA TAL-POLITIKA TAD-DETENZJONI/ MIGRAZZJONI?

1. Tikkunsidra lilek innifsek infurmat dwar il-politika ta’ detenzjoni/ migrazzjoni?
2. [Jekk iva,] taqbel magħha/ magħhom jew le? X’impatt taħseb li għanda l-politika ta’ detenzjoni/ migrazzjoni fuq il-kuntatt bejn il-Maltin u l-immigranti?
4. X’inha l-implikazzjoni tal-fatt li ċ-ċentru magħluq jigi imsejjah ċentru ta’ “detenzjoni” fuq (a) il-perċezzjoni tal-immigranti/ Maltin, u (b) l-interazzjoni bejn l-immigranti u l-Maltin?
5. Taħseb li meta l-immigranti ikunu kostretti li jghixu f’ċentru ta’ detenzjoni jew ċentru miftuħ, din taf iżżid il-perċezzjoni ta’ theddid?
Appendix VI – Recruitment scripts in English & Maltese

Recruitment script

Good morning/ afternoon/ evening,

I’m Lynette Camilleri a student reading for the dual Master in Conflict Analysis, Resolution and Mediterranean Security at the University of Malta. As part of my course, I am conducting research for a dissertation titled ‘Intergroup encounters: The impact of contact on the relations between the Maltese and the sub-Saharan African migrants.’

The aim of the research is to come to understand what happens when representatives of the Maltese and the Sub-Saharan immigrant population come into contact and what the main problems of the interaction between members of the two groups, are. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to answer a few questions pertaining to your experience in coming to contact with members of the other group and your relationship with members of the said group. If you agree, I would appreciate it if you would permit me to audio record you, to make sure that I could refer back to the information to ensure accurate reporting of the data. However, information divulged during the interview would remain confidential and anonymous.

Thank you!

08/04/2014
Informazzjoni ghal parteċipanti potenzjali

Il-ġurnata t-tajba/ il-wara nofsinhar it-tajjeb/ ‘hello’,


Grazzi!

08/04/2014
Informed Consent Form (English version)

DISSEPTION TITLE: Intergroup encounters: The impact of contact on the relations between the Maltese and the sub-Saharan African migrants.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES
This research is being conducted in order to come to understand what happens when the Maltese and the Sub-Saharan immigrant population come into contact and what the main problems of the interaction between members of the two groups, are. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to answer a few questions pertaining to your experience in coming to contact with members of the other group and your relationship with members of the said group. The estimated time for the interview is 30 minutes.

RISKS
There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this research.

BENEFITS
There are no benefits to you as a participant other than to further research on the interactions between the Maltese and the local immigrant population so as to find ways and means to overcome potential hurdles encountered when the two groups come into contact, including through policy, which would benefit society at large.

CONFIDENTIALITY
The data in this study will be confidential and data from the individual interviews will not be shared. Names will be given a code and kept separate from the codes in order to ensure anonymity. In addition results of the study would be generalized.

PARTICIPATION
Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. If you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from the study, there is no penalty or loss of benefits (to which you are otherwise entitled to, outside this study). There are no costs to you or any other party.

AUDIO RECORDING
The interview will be audio recorded to ensure accurate reporting of the data. The recording would not be shared with third parties. Five years after the completion of the study, the recording will be deleted.

CONTACT
This research is being conducted by Lynette Camilleri, post-graduate student at the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies - MEDAC (University of Malta) and the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution - S-CAR (George Mason University, US). She may be reached at +356 2340 7501 for questions or to report a research-related problem. Her dissertation supervisor is Prof. Karyna Korostelina who may be reached at 703-993-1304. You may contact the George Mason University Office of Research Integrity & Assurance at 703-993-4121 if you have questions or comments regarding your rights as a participant in the research.

This research has been reviewed according to George Mason University procedures governing your participation in this research.

CONSENT
I have read this form and agree to participate in this study.

Revised: March 2014
Formula tal-Kunsens (Verżjoni bil-Malti)

TITLU TAT-TEŻI: Intergroup encounters: The impact of contact on the relations between the Maltese and the sub-Saharan African migrants.

IL-PROĊEDURI TAR-RIĊERKA
L-iskop ta’ din ir-riċerka hija li naslu biex nifhu x’jigri meta l-Maltin u l-immigranti Afrikani mis-Sub-Sahara jidhlu f’kuntatt ma’ xulxin u biex niskopru x’huma l-akbar problemi fl-interazzjoni bejn il-membri taż-żewġ gruppi. Jekk taqbel li tiipparteċipa, tiġi mistoqsij(ja) numru ta’ mistoqsijiet dwar l-esperjenza tieghek meta ġejit f’kuntatt ma’ membri tal-grupp l-ieħor u r-relazzjoni tieghek ma’ dawn il-persuni imsemmija. L-intervista iddum madwar 30 minuta.

RISKJI
Ma hemm l-ebda riskju prevedibbli fejn tidhol il-partecipazzjoni tieghek f’din ir-riċerka.

BENEFIĊĊJI
Il-partecipanti individwali ma jiksbu l-ebda beneficiċji mill-partecipazzjoni taghhom, apparti li jkunu qed jghin hu fl-iżvilupp tar-riċerka fuq l-interazzjoni bejn il-Maltin u l-popolazzjoni immigranta lokali, sabiex ikunu jistgħu jistabu mezzi biex jingħelbu l-problemi li jistgħu jinqalgħu meta ż-żewġ gruppi jidhlu f’kuntatt, per eżempju permezz ta’ politika fil-qasam, li minnha tista’ tiggwadanja s-soċjetà in-ġenerali.

KUNFIDENZJALITÀ

PARTEĊIPAZZJONI

MODIFIKAZJONI AWDJO
L-intervista se tiġi irrekordjata waqt l-istudju biex jiġi assurrat li l-informazzjoni tiegħu irraportata b’mod veritier. Ir-registrazzjoni awdjo ma tingħatat lil terzi persuni. Ir-registrazzjoni awdjo tithassar hames snin wara li jitlesta l-istudju.

KUNTATT

Din ir-riċerka hija konformi mal-proċeduri tal-Università ta’ George Mason fejn tidhol il-partecipazzjoni tieghek f’din ir-riċerka.

KUNSENS
Jiena qrajt din il-formola u qbilt li nippartecipip a’dan l-istudju.

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Appendix IX – Distances from the Open Centres to the Parish churches

Distance from the Balzan Open Centre to the Balzan parish church
Distance from the Marsa Open Centre to the Holy Trinity parish church
BIOGRAPHY

Lynette Camilleri graduated with a Bachelor of European Studies (Honours) with International Relations from the University of Malta in 2013. She is currently reading for her dual Master of Science in Conflict Analysis and Resolution (George Mason University) and Master of Arts in Conflict Resolution and Mediterranean Security (University of Malta).