

Migration and Social Wellbeing in Gozo

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Abstract:

In this paper, data from the 2021 census on population and housing will be used to find out which areas in Gozo have experienced an increase in population. To find out what effect this increase in population has had on Xlendi and Marsalforn, the two areas that have witnessed a drastic increase in population, data from the needs assessment survey carried out by The Malta Trust Foundation in 2022, will be used.

Keywords:

Migration, Gozo.

Author's Bio-Note:

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Migration and Social Wellbeing in Gozo

In this paper, the focus will be on the population changes which Gozo has experienced in the last decade, and how prepared Gozo is when it comes to the integration of migrants. The United Nation's International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2019a, p. 132) regards the word 'migrant' as:

"An umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. The term includes a number of well-defined legal categories of people, such as migrant workers; persons whose particular types of movements are legally-defined, such as smuggled migrants; as well as those whose status or means of movement are not specifically defined under international law, such as international students."

Gozo's drastic population change in the period between 2011 and 2021 was evident mainly in Xlendi and Marsalforn. A needs assessment study (Cutajar, 2022) was carried out in these two localities since these were mentioned in an exploratory exercise which The Malta Trust Foundation conducted in 2021. A number

of psycho-social experts who took part in this study expressed their concern that certain segments of the population residing in these localities were at risk of poverty, social exclusion, abuse and perhaps violence on the basis of their migration status, sex, family status and income. Although there were Gozitans who were also at risk, migrants, they feared, did not have access to an informal social network which the rest of the Gozitans depend upon to survive, namely the extended family. This informal safety network is crucial on an island which suffers from double insularity, and where a good number of services and amenities provided by the government, private or non-governmental sectors are available in Malta, but not in Gozo due to economies of scale.

Armed with the suggestions and recommendations made by the psycho-social experts, The Malta Trust Foundation approached the Gozo Regional Development Authority and persuaded this entity to conduct a needs analysis study in Marsalforn and Xlendi. The arrangement was to eventually conduct the research in other areas of Gozo, and to take Marsalforn and Xlendi as pilot studies. The research was designed by Prof Cutajar, and involved a survey conducted with 86 residents (59 from Marsalforn and 27 from Xlendi) on a face to face basis, while face to face interviews were also conducted with 14 enterprise owners or managers who ran businesses in the localities. The data was collected by MISCO for the Gozo Regional Development Authority from December 2021 up to February 2022, and analyzed for The Malta Trust Foundation by Cutajar. A descriptive analysis of the data was undertaken since this was a pilot project and the purpose was to find out the viability of the research design before it was carried out in other localities in Gozo (Cutajar, 2022).

The study set out to see how satisfied the respondents were with

the different services and amenities available in Gozo in general or in their locality of residence, and whether there were gaps in services / amenities offered in these localities which the respondents were concerned about. This study also found which segments of the population depended on which services or amenities, and who they resorted to when they could not access these.

Analytical levels

The survey and the qualitative part of the research focused on the individuals' perception of what was taking place around them. Individuals tend to be embedded in a household or family, which in turn forms part of a community or group, which tends to be situated in a broader social environment (IOM, 2019b) - regional, national or supra-national. All these levels can put the individual at risk or protection, depending on a number of issues as will be underlined in this section.

At the individual level, a person's status in society, is often linked to their physical and biological characteristics. Their sex, gender, sexual orientation, race, ability, family status or age among others, can put them at risk or improve their capabilities to avoid, cope with or recover from negative experiences. A Gozitan able bodied, Roman Catholic, middle-aged, heterosexual male who has a Mediterranean countenance, is less likely to face ill treatment in Gozo - but perhaps not in Malta. He is less likely to face exploitation or exclusion from health, education or other services available in Gozo. Non-Gozitan persons, especially Third Country nationals, might be more at risk of social exclusion and/or discrimination in Gozo. Apart from their physical and biological characteristics, other factors can put them at risk. These include their histories and experiences, their beliefs and

traditions together with their emotional, psychological and cognitive character as well as their physical and mental wellbeing (IOM, 2019b).

Different groups of people enjoy a differential status in a given locality at particular moments of time. Their status is linked to their political, cultural and social characteristics. In a country where the Roman Catholic church and the discourse related with this institution abound, non Roman Catholic persons might find themselves socially excluded and their lack of belonging to the mainstream community might affect their access to social contacts and hence information, which in turn can influence access to resources, whether these are material or immaterial. Their positionality can also lead to discrimination, harassment and barriers when it comes to accessing services and resources. When individuals belonging to minority groups are not supported by other members of the community, they can become isolated and vulnerable. They then become easy targets for people who can abuse or exploit them (IOM, 2019b).

Migrants - whether these are Maltese and non-Maltese - are more vulnerable when they are not part of a group. Gozitans for example migrate to Malta in search of work and employment, and they are vulnerable, but being part of a group, helps safeguard their interests. Maltese migrate to Gozo, and in turn they are also vulnerable. This status interacting with sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, family status and disability, can also influence people's experiences within families and communities - whether within migrant groups, or mainstream community in a particular locality or in general.

Families / households and communities tend to reflect and sustain structural inequalities present in any given society (IOM, 2019b). That is why in the survey, although the focus was on individuals, data

was also collected on their positionality within the household and family in which they were located. Consideration was taken of their age, sex, gender, social class, nationality, level of education, migration history, and religion among others, since the intersection of these can render individuals vulnerable to discrimination or exploitation if they do not have the support provided by the extended family, community members and/or social welfare services.

The household and family can constitute risk, depending on the individual's role and position within these structures, as well as the family's circumstances, history and experiences. The family can however prove to be a safety net for those who need support, especially those facing racism (Hill Collins, 2000). Individuals who do not have this safety net to depend on, in regions, or communities where some of the social services and amenities that make life easier are not available, are at risk. Gozo, because of its double insularity and limited economies of scales, is missing certain services and amenities available in Malta. This paper will also explore the effect this has on non-Maltese migrants.

Individual's, family's, household's and household's wellbeing is effected by the economic, cultural and social structures made available in a given community - whether these are found on a local or regional (Gozo) level. The International Organization for Migration (2019b) maintains that a community consists of a number of persons who interact with each other within a particular space, and tend to share common norms, values, attitudes and beliefs. Not all communities have strong social networks that ensure that all individuals and groups embedded within them have access to resources, or are provided with the needed support and protection. Certain individuals or groups are socially excluded on the basis of their sex, gender, race, ability, and others. Access to quality

educational opportunities, health care, social services, leisure and sports resources, decent employment opportunities, and the natural environment depend on one's location in such communities and how the community reacts to people who are different on the characteristics mentioned above (IOM, 2019b). This is what the study set out to find - who had access to what, and on which basis.

Structural factors include the political, economic, social and environmental conditions and institutions found at a local, regional, national and supra-national level (namely, the European Union). The study focused mainly on the local and district, namely Gozo. Racist, sexist, ableist and any other discriminatory discourses and policies at local, regional, national and supra-national level, can lead to systemic marginalization and discrimination of certain groups. So does poor governance, absence of accountability mechanisms and weak rule of law, according to the International Organization for Migration (2019b).

Gozo - the Context

Gozo, Malta's sister island, faces problems of double insularity, for movement of people, import, export, and other economic activities which are vital for the island's quality of life and economic performance. Gozo's GDP performance is underpinned by constraints on economic production and the ability to reap economies of scale, the lack of diversification of products, high transport costs, low attractiveness for investment opportunities, a large public-sector activity and a lack of absorption of technological capacities (Malta Independent, 2012, n.p.).

Apart from this, job opportunities in Gozo are limited, so a number

of people residing there either migrate permanently to Malta or abroad, or commute to Malta for work purposes (Smallwood Cassar, 2020). NSO (2022a) stated that in 2021, 3,642 persons, 1 out of 5 employed residents in Gozo, of which 50.7% were female.

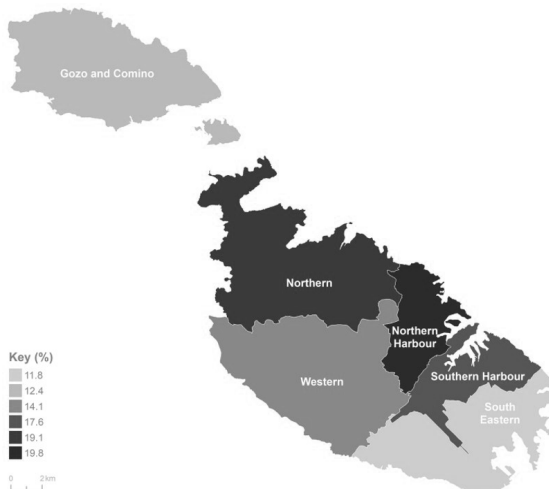
NSO (2022a) data also demonstrates that in 2021, a higher percentage of Gozo residents (35.5%) worked in the public sector when compared with Malta residents (20.1%). Gozo residing workers, like their Maltese counterparts who were employed on a full time basis in the private sector, were during the time-frame mentioned above, concentrated in wholesale and retail; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles; transportation and storage; accommodation and food services activities (38.9% of Gozo residing workers' total jobs vis-a-vis 23.6% of Malta ones). In the public sector, Gozitans were concentrated in "the public administration and defense; compulsory social security; education; human health and social work activities (O, P and Q) (NSO, 2022a, p. 2).

Briguglio (2016) adds that people who work in Gozo are paid a lower hourly rate than that earned in Malta in any one industry. Data cited by the Malta Independent demonstrates that "the average basic pay for Malta was €19,721 while the one in Gozo was €17,533 showing a €2,188 discrepancy between the two" in 2019. This happens despite the fact that the number of Gozo university and MCAST graduates proportionally surpasses that of Malta. Briguglio (2016) also notes that a higher proportion of those who reside in Gozo have access to low paid jobs. This couples with the factors mentioned before means that those who work in Gozo might face underemployment (Cutajar, 2000).

At risk of poverty rate

Although the wages earned by Gozo residents might be low, the NSO SILC maintains that the Gozo and Comino district had the lowest at risk of poverty rate in 2021 at 12.4% (*Map 1*). The NSO (2022b) notes that the Gozo and Comino district had the lowest at risk of poverty and social exclusion rate by district in 2021 at 13.8% when compared to the other districts. This low rate of poverty and social exclusion is very surprising when one takes into consideration the fact that those who work in Gozo are paid a lower hourly rate, and that the average basic pay is more than 2,000 euro lower than that in Malta. This lower at risk of poverty might be due to the fact that Gozitans tend to have more than one job (Cutajar, 2000) to make up for this income difference. Briguglio (2016) would add that the latter might be in the informal economy. What economists leave out is the fact that Gozitans tend to produce some of the food they consume. This helps to reduce the household's expenditure when it comes to food intake.

Map 1 - Distribution of at-risk-of-poverty rate (ARP) by district: 2021



Source: NSO, 2022b, p. 7

Gozo and Migration

According to the 2021 census, Marsalforn and Xlendi experienced the highest population increases in Gozo and Malta (NSO, 2022c). The psycho-social experts consulted in 2021 noted that people were moving from Malta to Gozo because of the relatively cheaper property rates in Gozo; others were being sent there by social housing officials.

The 2021 Census demonstrates that the Żebbuġ Local Council, which Marsalforn is part of, and the Munxar Local Council, which Xlendi is part of, both experienced a drastic increase in population. Between 1995 and 2021, the population more than doubled in size. Munxar Local Council was also one of the localities which recorded one of the highest increases in population in 2021 due to an increase in residents residing in Xlendi. The population in this locality increased by 75.4% between 2011 and 2022 (NSO, 2022c). Borg (2021) notes that in 2020, the localities with the highest ratio of foreign residents were Marsalforn (28.39% of the population), Xlendi (22.7% of the population) and San Lawrenz (20.1% of the population).

The majority of the people who migrated to these localities were young, adult, males. Their move to Gozo helped to slightly reduce the average age, but to date, Gozitan “residents are still older than their Maltese counterparts” (NSO, 2022c, p. 30). As Gozitans know from experience, this is due to the fact that a good number of young Gozitans aged 18 and over move to Malta or beyond to further their education or to find lucrative employment (Cutajar 2000). Some of those who migrate never return, resulting in aging population and brain drain (Taylor, 2022).

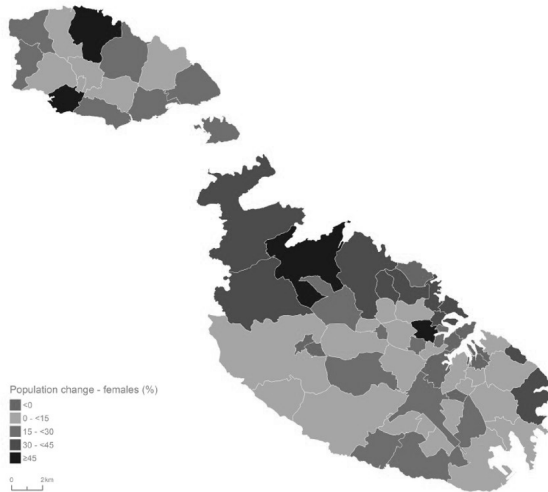
The average age of those who reside in Gozo is also high because a number of British expats set up residence there when they retire.

As cited by Wilton (2021), the University College London stated that the number of expats in Malta has increased since 2014. Gozo also experiences the return migration of Gozitans who in the past had emigrated in search of better job opportunities abroad (Malta Daily, 2021). These factors explain why the average age in Gozo is higher than the national one, even with the incursion of new types of migrants.

Migration helps to address demographic challenges, maintains Gauci (2020), namely depopulation and ageing. It helps rejuvenate the work force in rural areas and small cities. In the case of Gozo, migrants are providing basic services (rubbish collection, street cleaning) and low-skilled work such as farming, caring for the elderly and construction. Their presence helps secure the viability of basic services such as schools, hospitals and shops. Economic growth, as highlighted by Gauci (2020), is associated with greater diversity. This is not an aspect that is not being taken into consideration by some sectors of the population that espouses xenophobic sentiments regarding certain groups of migrants.

Migrants who moved to Malta tended to be “predominantly males (59.3 per cent) and nine years younger (an average of 34.9 years) than their Maltese counterparts (43.6 years) (*Map 2*).” Those residing in Gozo, however, were just two years younger (42.1 years) than the rest of the population in 2021 (NSO, 2022c, p. 32). Migration has also led to change in the male to female ratio in some areas. There were more men than women mainly in Żebbuġ and Munxar (NSO, 2022c). In 2021, 53.1% and 55.6% of the population residing in Munxar and Żebbuġ respectively, were male (NSO, 2022c, p. 48). The short and long term ramifications of the increase of single men (some of these might have families back home), needs to be explored.

Map 2 - Population change - Females (percentage): 2011-2022



Source: NSO, 2022b, p. 7

Due to this in-migration, Munxar and Żebbuġ have a more diverse age striated population than other areas of Gozo. Due to this, the population in these localities had a lower average age when compared to other Gozitan localities (NSO, 2022c, pp. 55, 57). In Munxar, the average age for men was 40.2, while that for women was 42.1 years. This means that in Munxar, women were older than men on average by around 2 years in 2021. When it came to Żebbuġ, the average age for both men and women was around 41 years old (NSO 2022c, p. 59).

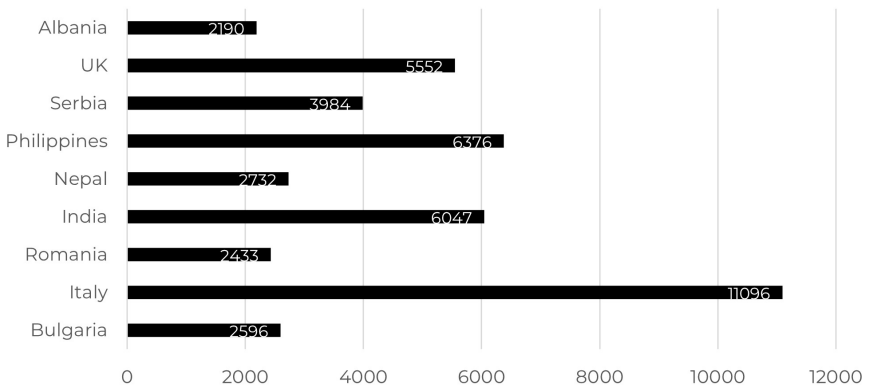
The old-age dependency by locality in Munxar and Żebbuġ in 2021 stood at 21.2 and 24.8 respectively. It has remained one of the lowest in Gozo thanks to the influx of migrants. The same could not be said of other localities in Gozo (NSO, 2022c, p. 62).

Foreign workers

Not all those who have migrated to Malta or Gozo did so for employment prospects only, but this section will focus on foreign workers.

In 2020, there were 3,079 foreign workers working in Gozo, which amounted to 21% of the total labour force in Gozo. The majority of these workers derived from the UK (616), Italy (534), Albania (317), and Serbia (202) (Borg, 2021). Data produced by Jobsplus (2022) denotes that the majority of foreign workers in the Maltese Islands mainly derive from EU member states. The highest represented nationalities are listed in *Chart 1*. When one compares the Gozo with the national Maltese data, one can see that the concentration of nationalities found in the Gozo labour force is somewhat different from that of the Maltese archipelago.

Chart 1 - Top 9 highly represented nationalities in total Maltese labour force, 2021

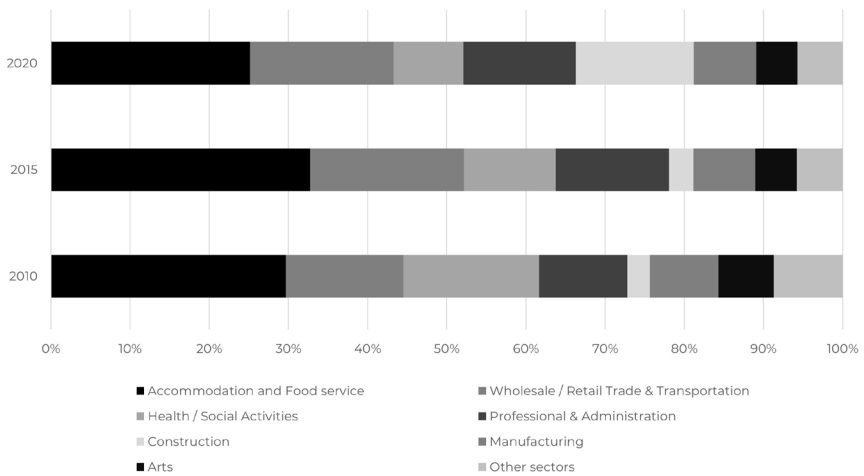


Source: Adaptation of data derived from Jobsplus (2022)

Different nationalities tend to be concentrated in different economic sectors. For example, Indian nationals are more likely

to be working in the health sector; Syrians in construction related employment. Borg (2021) sustains that between 2010 - 2020, 30% of the Gozitan foreign workers were working in accommodation and food activities. In 2020, 15% of these workers were found in the construction sector. The rest were working in the wholesale and retail; professional, scientific, technical, administrative and support services sectors (*Chart 2*).

Chart 2 - Share of migrant workers in Gozo by NACE, 2010-2020

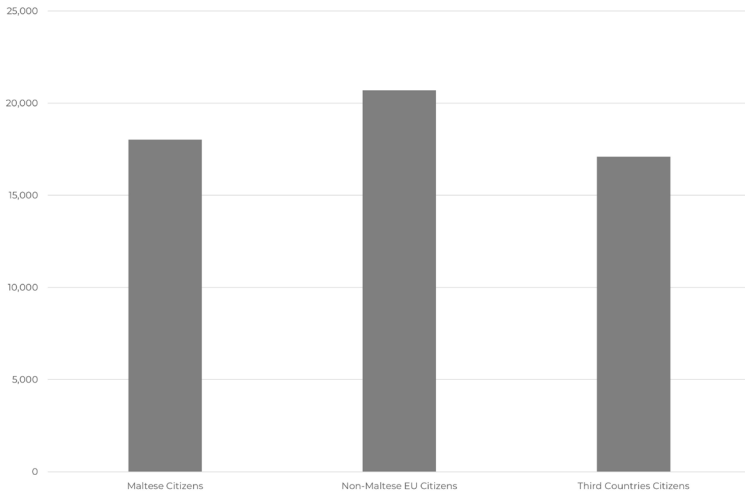


Source: Borg, 2021, p. 6

Maltese, EU and non-EU nationals tend to be concentrated in different major occupational categories. In 2017, Third Country nationals tended to be concentrated in elementary occupations, services and sales together with craft and related trades occupations in the Maltese islands (Cutajar, 2021). This meant that the majority of Maltese and EU nationals were more likely to be concentrated in better paid occupations. The fact that Maltese, EU and non-EU workers were concentrated in different economic sectors and occupational categories had an impact on the average basic salary made. Non-EU workers had a lower

average annual basic salary in 2017 (*Chart 3*) when compared to Maltese and EU nationals.

Chart 3 - Average annual basic salary by citizenship (2017)



Source: *Cutajar, 2021*

Characteristics of people living in Xlendi and Marsalforn

All participants who took part in the survey said that they lived in an apartment. The majority (55%) owned - fully or partially - their property. According to the Central Bank of Malta (2016), the home-ownership rate in Malta stands at 80% of the population. In this sample, the home ownership rate was lower than the national average. The rest (36%) of the respondents, were renting from the private sector, while 9% were in receipt of subsidized rent.

Over 90% wanted to remain living in these two localities because of the natural beauty of the area in which they lived and the employment opportunities they found there; four wanted to emigrate and another

four wanted to find accommodation outside Xlendi.

When asked why they were living in the locality in question, various answers were given. The majority of respondents (25) were more likely to say they had moved to these localities because of the natural environment; 21 respondents stated that they had lived there all their life. Others had moved to these localities because of the good working opportunities found in the area. Some had moved there to be near family or friends. A substantial number - 13 - had moved there for other reasons. A few had been sent there by the Housing Authority or because of the affordable housing found in the locality (*Table 1*).

Table 1 - Reasons why the participants were living in Marsalforn / Xlendi

Sent here by Housing Authority	4
Low priced accommodation	7
Good working opportunities	14
To be near family or friends	13
Natural environment	25
Married somebody from Marsalforn	7
Lived here all my life	21
Other	13
The good number of services and facilities available in the area	3
Inherited property	1
Other	1

Source: Cutajar, 2022

Marsalforn and Xlendi have been described by the psycho-social experts consulted as areas which attract those in search of affordable housing. At 2.8%, the rate of housing cost overburden in Malta is one of the lowest in the EU (7.9%), notes the European Commission report for Malta (EC, 2022). Non-nationals, the European Commission country report (EC, 2022, p.12) notes, “face a much heavier burden with a rate of 25%, against 2.1% for Maltese citizens”.

The business respondents who took part in this research described the population in Marsalforn and Xlendi as consisting mainly of a mix of middle, working and low class households. They also noted that these localities had a noticeable mix of Gozitan, Maltese, and non-Maltese households living together, and yet led separate, parallel lives.

Those who took part in the qualitative part of the research were asked whether they felt that the population living in Marsalforn and Xlendi were constantly changing. A constant population turnover makes it harder for migrants to integrate. The answers were mixed, depending on the clientele they dealt with. Some felt that “the non-Maltese workers change accommodation with a change of job.”

The Gozitan families do not change. Two added that “the constant turnover occurs amongst those in rented accommodation” because the “rent is too high to find something cheaper.”

The participants were asked what effect this constant shifting of residents has on the ‘community.’ The majority answered that it does not have any effect because “the Gozitan community ignores it.” The focus seems to be on the socio-emotional and financial wellbeing of Gozitans only since the rest - the Others - are perceived as transients. One participant underlined that “little community building” occurs.

Who needed help and when

When the participants who took part in the qualitative part of the research were asked whether there was a material divide between Gozitans, Maltese and migrant workers’ living in the two localities, two said no, four said yes and eight said don’t know.

What was clear from the survey though was the fact that the non-Maltese respondents were more likely to depend on state provided services. For example, non-Maltese female respondents with young children - and some Maltese ones at that - were more likely to say they needed childcare facilities after 5 pm or during school holidays. Working respondents who did not resort to the services provided by the extended family tended to rely on alternative structures when schools were closed. The same cohort maintained that their children needed help with their homework which they nor their non-present relatives could not provide. Non-Maltese participants were also more likely than their Maltese cohort to rely on public transport when it came to access work, school, health clinic and other services. They were also more likely than their Maltese counterparts to rely on state healthcare facilities. Around 62% of the non-Maltese cohorts used the health centre or the hospital (25%) - only around 19% depended on the family's doctor. Maltese respondents in both localities were more likely to resort to a private family doctor when they did not feel well.

Non-Maltese respondents who had age related mobility issues, relied on friends and neighbours, or transport for the elderly. They were less likely to be in a position to depend on family members to access banks, go on an outing, attend the health centre or hospital appointments, pharmacy or place of worship when this structure was missing.

It was clear from the data that those who had moved to Gozo, had to form their own support system to be able to survive when the services needed to enable them to live independently were not available. Childcare was an issue with a few. The scoping meetings with the psycho-social experts underlined that the childcare facilities available in Gozo close before the ones available in Malta.

The psycho-social experts also underlined that some of the services

provided by the state or civil society are not available in Gozo, which could prove to be a setback for those who need help. This for example became evident in an exercise which compared and contrasted FSWS services available in Malta and Gozo (*Annex B*).

Means of communication used in these multi-cultural localities

The respondents who took part in the qualitative part of the research were asked which language was used to facilitate communication between the different nationalities living in these two localities. In Xlendi, respondents mentioned that English, Italian and French were used as the primary means of communication. In Marsalforn, the primary means of communication were English and Maltese.

From the data collected it was obvious that some groups/individuals who did not speak Maltese, English, Italian or French were losing out. When the participants were asked whether there was an entity which was helping adults, youth and children to learn Maltese and/or English. They were not clear whether one existed. A Xlendi respondent mentioned the fact that a French man was conducting some language lessons. Another added that *“naħseb li hawn xi nies jgħallmu l-Malti u l-Ingliż b’mod privat. Isemmu wkoll l-iskola ta’ Kerċem”* (I think there are people who give private lessons in Maltese and English. They also mention the school in Kerċem).

A Google search was undertaken to find out whether there were any Maltese and English language learning provisions available in Gozo. From the data it was clear that the respondents would prefer state provided ones. A cursory look at the Migrant Learners’ Unit

site (Government of Malta, 2016, analysed on 22 October 2022) demonstrates that English language lessons are not provided by state or NGOs in Gozo:

Integra Foundation - Free lessons in English and Maltese. Offered in Malta.

Directorate for Lifelong Learning and Early School Leavers (Ministry for Education and Employment) - against payment at the same rate as Maltese citizens but may be offered free on a case-by-case basis. No language learning sessions were available in the Gozo sites listed.

St Andrew's Scots Church, Valletta, Malta - Lessons provided are free.

Youth.Inc - Free lessons, St Venera, Malta.

Unilang International School of Languages, General Workers' Union, Valletta, Malta - Lessons are given against payment.

Jobsplus Training Complex, Hal Far, Malta - Jobsplus offers free English courses.

In one of the scoping exercises undertaken with psycho-social professionals working in Gozo it was noted that some of the bigger enterprises who employ a number of non-Maltese nationals, offer their employees English language lessons. These experts however underlined that in certain areas of Gozo, more resources were needed to deliver induction lessons in Maltese and English to the children of migrant workers and the parents themselves. These participants underlined that in some schools in Gozo, the majority of the students in class did not speak Maltese and/or English, to

the detriment of the students in question. The MLU Induction Programme website mentions Naxxar as a hub for students attending secondary schools - no hub was mentioned as catering for secondary students in Gozo (Government of Malta, 2016).

Religious minorities

As underline in Annex A (*Chart D*), a number of respondents were not Roman Catholic. The only two religions with a devoted space of worship available in Gozo include Kingdom Hall of the Jehovah Witnesses in Victoria. Anglicans can also attend the Roman Catholic English masses at the Gozo seminary, but “if they wish to take the Sacrament they need to apply for written permission from the Bishop of Gozo” (Gozo Diocese, 2007).

The respondents who took part in the qualitative research were asked if they knew where non Roman Catholics worshipped and whether they were familiar with some of these community’s religious leader. None of them knew whether non-Roman Catholic communities met together to pray, where or who was their religious leader. It seemed that non-Roman Catholics kept their religious practices and mores hidden.

What can help bring the different ethnic groups together?

The participants who were running or managing a business were asked what can be done to help bring the myriad groups living in the two localities together. The majority (eight) stated that nothing can be done since these groups lead separate lives and do not want to mix. A few did not want any ‘mixing’ to be undertaken.

The most crucial thing for others was learning to communicate with each other. The next step would involve the organization of inter-cultural activities so that they would get to know more about each other's culture. From the data collected through the survey, it seemed that only the non-Maltese respondents were interested in these types of activities. As Gauci (2020, p. 10) citing the Council of Europe points out, integration is “a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States”. Integration can only occur when community members view people, irrespective of their sex, age, race, ability, sexual orientation, nationality or ethnicity as full and equal participants in a community's cultural, social, economic and political life (IOM, 2019b).

A few of the respondents pointed that a number of these non-Maltese, due to their language barriers they were facing and xenophobia among the few, were at risk of exploitation by employers and landlord who took advantage of their lack of knowledge of local conditions, and the reduced bargaining powers in the community (IOM, 2019b). Exploitation and discrimination tend to foment anger and distrust. This can lead to trouble – people who are not happy, often turn to substance abuse and that is when *“jinqala' l-inkwiet”* (trouble ensues), the participants pointed out.

As these statements show, non-Maltese were seen as different, and the general contention was that they should deal with their own integration. Only a few felt that this should be the prerogative of the Maltese authorities. Unfortunately, as we have seen, the Maltese authorities, when they act, tend to provide services in Malta, leaving Gozitans to deal with such issues on their own.

Conclusion

Gauci (2021) sustains that in rural and smaller cities, migrants benefit from greater interaction with locals. He maintains that in this space, migrants find it easier to develop social networks that support their integration and they are at less risk of suffering from structural segregation. Insular and anti-immigration discourses might prove an impediment though. Gauci (2021) however adds that when it comes to the integration, and the social protection of some vulnerable groups, rural and smaller islands are left to deal with these issues on their own. This seems to be the case in Gozo in certain areas as has been underlined above.

Gauci (2021) is of the opinion that since they have less population, rural and smaller cities can be used to test policies and programmed approaches, supported by the provision of institutional structures. They would need skilled human resources and financial support to be in a position to implement integration measures. These are more likely to be given to larger cities. This is because smaller cities or smaller islands might find it difficult to access EU funding.

Malta, the larger island, is trying to address this issue with the help of formal and informal partnerships with civil society. Although such partnerships are available in Gozo, only a few of the entities there specialize in integration issues. The focus to date has been on soft integration measures such as the promotion of language acquisition and material help rather than cultural competencies or the promotion of employment skills.

This research has started the ball rolling. It has conducted a needs assessment analysis to find out the services Maltese and non-Maltese are accessing, and how satisfied they are with the services. The data collected will be used to tease out what other services are

needed, and what needs to be done, whether it is capacity building support for migrants and other vulnerable groups, training or material sustenance.

At the same time the primary objective of this study is to underline that different groups and individuals living on Gozo have distinct realities among themselves and when compared to those on the mainland.

Integration, Gauci (2021) notes, is both a process and an outcome. It involves the development and implementation of policies that promote the interaction between locals and migrants - some locals will resist interacting with the latter, as this research found. At the national level, the government needs to improve policies to ensure a more equitable access to employment, education, healthcare, social services, family, as well as other public goods and services. Policies are also needed to provide migrants with adequate protection (IOM, 2019b). These need to be complimented with the pursuit of pro-poor and equitable development policies which need to be implemented in all areas of Malta and Gozo, not just Malta.

The Maltese government, on its own or in collaboration with civil society, needs to address the barriers that lead to discrimination against specific groups. The efficacy of such policies will depend on whether or not, the population in question were consulted in the framing, development, implementation and monitoring of such policies, sustains Gauci (2021). These policies need to be accompanied by public information campaign on who migrants are, and how they benefit a country / locality. Migrants are needed for the promotion of the Maltese and Gozitan economy and society in general. The Maltese and Gozitans need to be informed about this state of fact.

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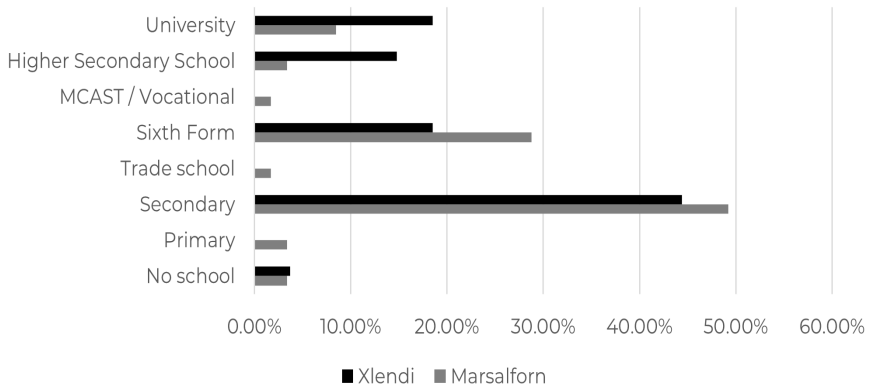
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Annex A - Survey (Sample) Characteristics

The focus of this section of the paper will be on the participants who took part in the survey. The majority (80%) of those who took part in this survey had been living in Marsalforn or Xlendi for less than 10 years. This might be an indication of the transient nature of the people who live in these localities. The majority were married (64% of respondents) or cohabiting (17.4%). The rest were single, widowed, or separated / divorced. The majority of those who took part were parents (47.4%) or other (41.9%).

The bulk of the respondents had a secondary level of education (47.7%) or a post-secondary level of education (34.9%). Only a few had a primary level or tertiary level of education (*Chart A*).

Chart A - Respondents' level of education



With regards to citizenship, the bulk 57 (66.3%) were Maltese, 7% were EU nationals, 4.7% were Brexit, 15.1% were Permanent Residents and 7% were Third Country nationals (*Chart B*). The highest represented nationalities among the respondents were those deriving from the UK, followed by Macedonians, Syrians and Serbians.

Chart B - Citizenship status of participants

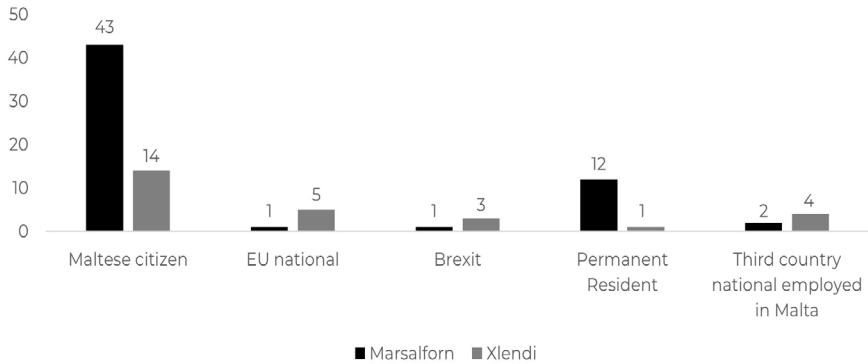


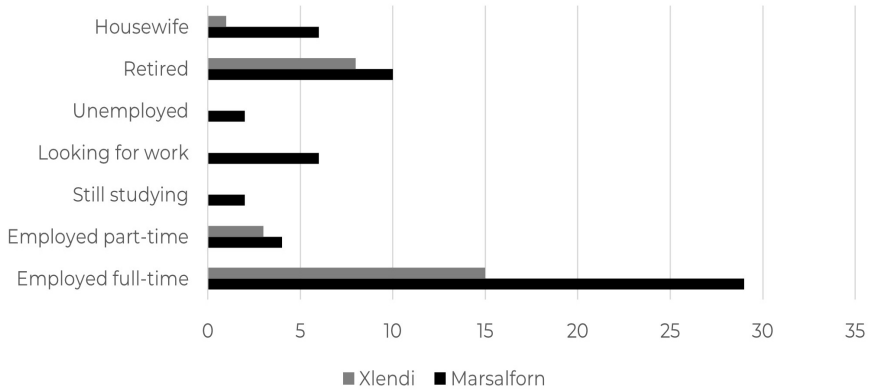
Table A - Nationality of migrant population in Marsalforn and Xlendi

Nationality	Xlendi	Marsalforn	Total
Serbia	1	1	2
Ukraine	1		1
Somalia	1		1
United Kingdom	4	4	8
Macedonia (F.R.Y.)	1	4	5
Italy	1		1
France	1		1
Romania	1		1
Pakistan		1	1
Poland	1		1
Netherlands	1	1	2
Nigeria		1	1
Syrian Arab Republic		4	4

The majority 51 (59%) were employed on a full-time or part-time basis, two were studying, eight were unemployed, eighteen were retired and only seven were housewives (*Chart C*). Marsalforn residents

were more likely to be in employment since on average they were younger than the respondents who took part in the survey.

Chart C - Employment status of participants



When it came to religion, the majority of the Maltese respondents stated that they were Roman Catholic. The rest of the respondents stated they had no religion, other, Russian Orthodox, Muslim and Christian (*Chart D*). The variety in nationality, age, sex and religion among the non-Maltese respondents underlines their diversity.

Chart D - Participants' religious affiliation

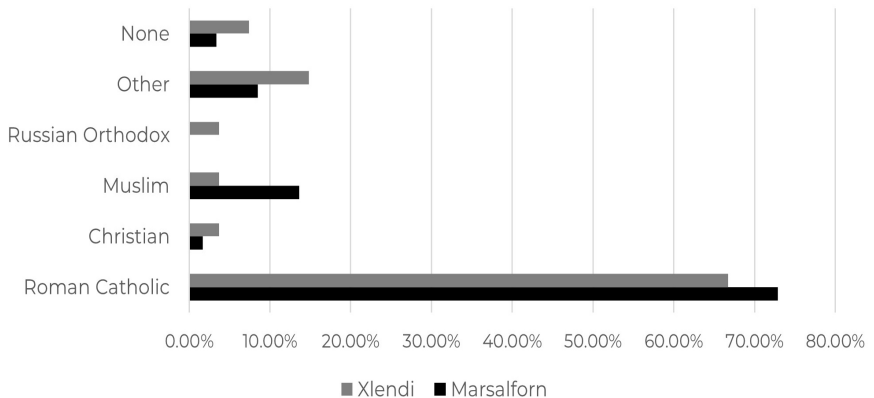


Chart E - Age

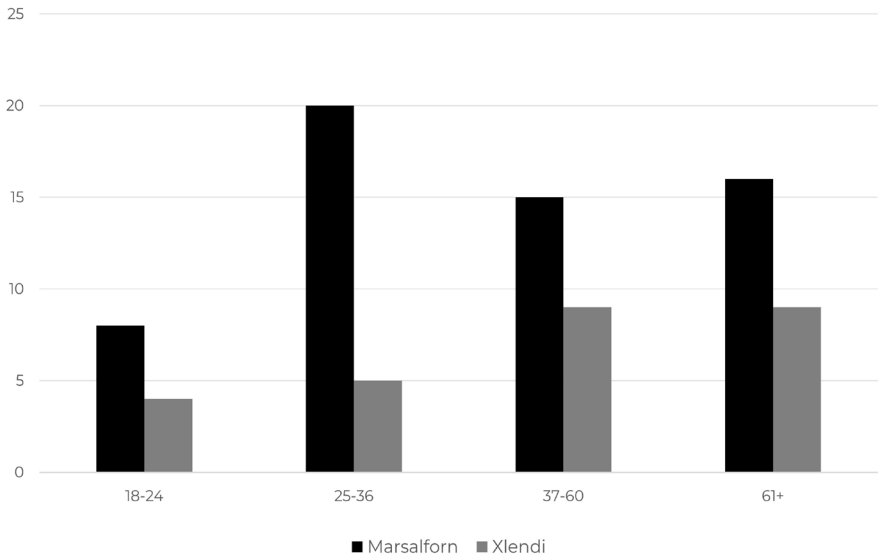


Chart F - How long have you lived there?

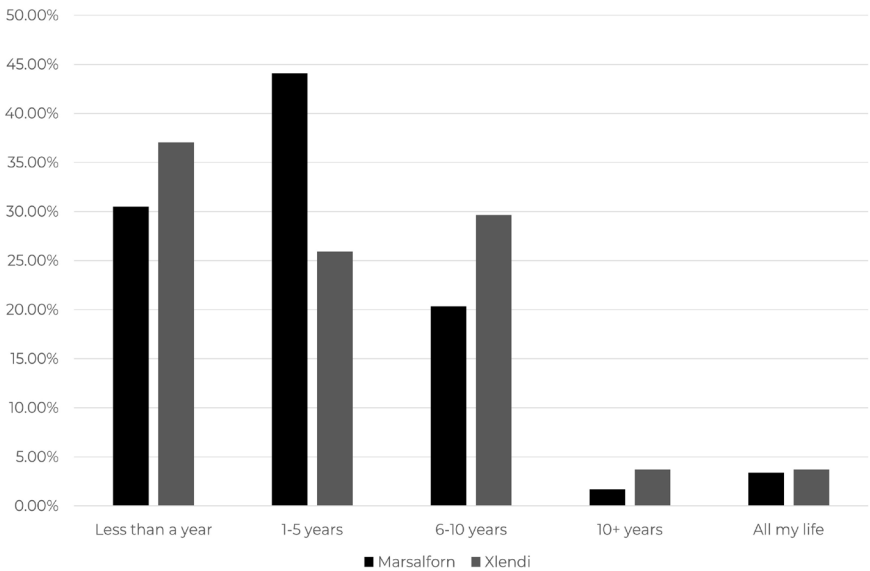
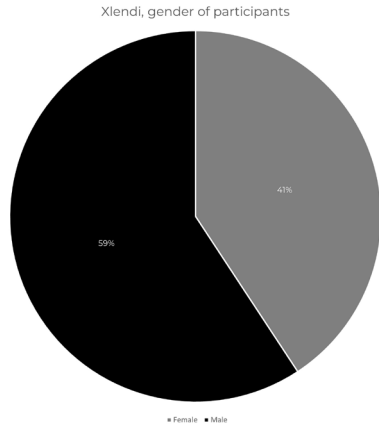
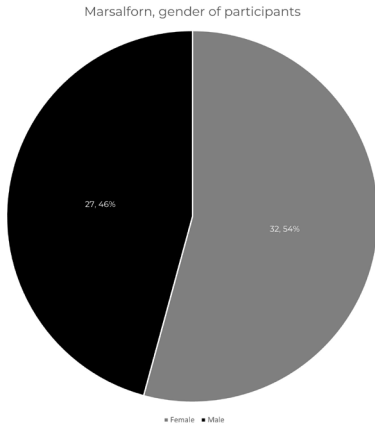


Chart G - Gender of participants



Annex B

FSWS Malta	FSWS Gozo
Residential Homes and High Support Service	Generic Social work Service
Siblings Community Home	Emergency On-call Service
Warm Haven Community Home	Marsalforn Community Service
Safe Haven Community Home	Victoria Community Family Centre
Toorak Flats	Home-Based Therapeutic Service
Carini Flats	Psychotherapeutic Service
Sta Margherita Home	Looked After Children - Gozo
Sempreviva Flat	Fostering Service - Gozo
Youth in Focus	Home-Start - Gozo
Adolescent Day Programme	Supervised Access Visits Service
Embark for life	TFAL 3 Program - Gozo
Emergency On-Call Team	Skola-Sajf Program - Gozo
Adoption Service	Gozo Prison Project
Fostering Service	Gozo General Hospital Social Work Service
Active Ageing and Community Care	Gozo General Hospital - Psychiatric Unit Social Work Service
Child Web Alert Hotline	
Intake & Family Support Service	
Human Trafficking	
Domestic Violence Service	
Sexual Assault Response Team	
Għabex Shelter	
Stop! The Violence and Abuse Service	
Benniena Service	
Oncology Social Work Service - Sir Anthony Mamo Oncology Centre (SAMOC)	
Looked After Children Service	

Social Contact Service	
Children Dreams and Children's Funds	
International Social Services	
Media Assessments	
Child to Parent Violence	
Child and Young People's Service	
Programm Uljed Darna - Generic Programme	
Programm Uljed Darna - Progett Tereza	
Supportline 179	
Hotline & Helpline	