

Transformations in Cultural Governance: Devolution and Inclusion Strategies in Regional Cultural Policies in Malta

Valerie Visanich,
University of Malta
Valerie.Visanich@um.edu.mt

Cultural Policy Transformation Working
Meeting

Aim of Presentation:

- The aim is to examine regional cultural development as a counter movement in the context of rising illiberalism around the world.
- Focus on the cultural strategic approaches to decentralize and diversify cultural policies and emphasising cultural rights to all. Examine existing inclusion/exclusion factors.
- Examine the drafting process of regional cultural policies (2018-2020) to develop horizontal overarching strategies for the five distinctive regions of Malta (Southern Harbour, Central, South Eastern, Northern, and Gozo and Comino).
- Frame the drafting process in wider political processes.



The island state of Malta: A population of over half a million and a total land area of 316 square kilometres.



Questions to Explore:

1. Devolution and regional governance: What are the cultural specificities of regions in a small island state? Structures, powers and processes in place.
 2. Cultural rights and participation: How are cultural rights accentuated in the new National and Regional Cultural Policies? How can arts-based strategies be used to promote social inclusion on a regional level?
- Mapping Malta in wider context: How does the Maltese case on regional cultural devolution differ from illiberal political trends?

Background

- The densely populated small island state of Malta consists of three islands, Malta, Gozo and Comino.
- Politically, Malta functions as a parliamentary democracy after becoming independent from the United Kingdom in 1964.
- The Maltese Islands adopted political and administrative decentralisation by the setting up of local councils, established in 1993 following Parliament's approval, in June 1993, of the Local Councils Act, 1993 (Act No. XV) (Government of Malta, 2008).
- However there was partial administrative devolution in the transfer of administrative responsibility to a local level public authority because the authorities are not autonomous and independent of the devolving authority. At present, very limited power where decision-making, resources and revenues.
- Recent focus on the need to decentralise cultural management by conducting research and drafting 5 distinctive regional cultural policies.

National Cultural Policy 2020 -2025

- National Cultural Policy 2020 reaffirms the principle that cultural access is a right that is to be enjoyed by all.
- An investment in cultural education provides citizens with knowledge and skills to exercise their right to freedom of expression, to access and participate in culture, to develop a sense of aesthetics and to develop critical thinking.
- Creative skills and participation in arts and culture are key components of a holistic education that must start from early childhood.

Recent Changes in Demographics:

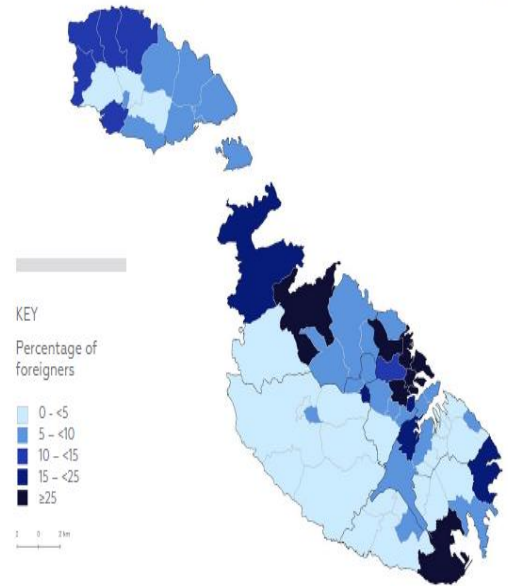
- **Internationalisation of communities through economic migration**

There is a high concentration foreigners residing in the Northern, Central and South Eastern regions due to a higher availability of work attracting foreign workers including with the gaming industry.

- **Ageing population**

There has been a significant increase in the elderly population cohort between 2011 and 2017. The 70-79 age cohort increased by 37.7% in the six-year period (Regional Statistics, 2017).

MAP 1.1.3 – Percentage of foreigners to the total population of each locality: 2017 (LAU 2)



Cultural Devolution: Implications on Cultural Governance

- The White Paper on Local Government Reform (2018) proposes measures for the assurance of Local Government autonomy and decentralization.
- Impact on cultural governance on a local and regional level:
 - New responsibilities for regional councils to be entrusted.
 - The cultural and creative sectors to empower regional and local councils to engage in cultural governance.
 - The new Cultural Policy (2020) calls on the development of distinctive regional cultural strategies that reflect the cultural specificities of the regions and the transformation in regional governance.
 - Focus on the inclusion for all including ‘inside-out communities’.

Regional Cultural Research & The Drafting of Cultural Policies

The background features a large, solid blue triangle on the left side that tapers towards the right. On the right side, there is a cluster of overlapping triangles in various shades of blue and a single lime green triangle at the bottom center.

Diagnostic analysis of existent data

- Develop an overarching review of published literature and reflect on emerging patterns to inform the design process of the wider research.

Assess the role of local councils and regions

Data collected from Local Councils on events, audience participation and expenditure.

Write a strategy on cultural events on a regional basis

- Present 5 cultural strategies taking into consideration the peculiarities of every region – how do we create a distinctive regional strategy based on the distinctive identities of the localities?

Regional Cultural Strategies:

- Enable regions to identify cultural priorities.
 - Cultural organisations and events in various localities in Malta and not centralised in the capital city.
 - Facilitate and improve the design process adopted by localities in determining what cultural initiative are the most effective impact on communities.
 - Collaboration with stakeholders from the local governments, reflecting on participatory approach to policy implementation as a strategic focus on the diverse communities making up Malta's cultural ecology.
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- Transversal Themes: Talent Development
Audience Development
Heritage Innovation

Overview

SIZE OF REGION:

23.6KM2 (7%) 320KM2 (NATIONAL)

POPULATION:

102,847 (2008) | **138,025** (2018)
410,926 (NATIONAL) | 493,559 (NATIONAL)

POPULATION COMPOUND ANNUAL GROWTH RATE (CAGR):

3.0% (2009-2019)

LOCALITIES WITH SIGNIFICANT CHANGES:

6%

MSIDA

5.7%

ST. JULIANS

5.1%

GZIRA

5.4%

SLIEMA

48,611

NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS

180,054 (NATIONAL)

€16,804

MEAN INCOME EQUIVALISED

€15,879 (NATIONAL)



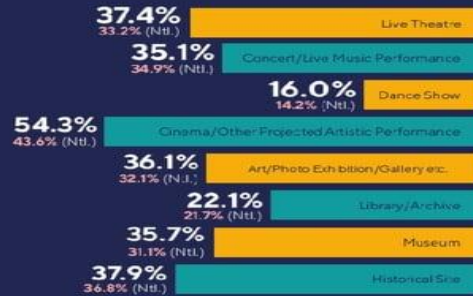
Cultural Specificities in the Central Region:

- In cultural participation and interests.
- Specificities in interest in traditional events like the Parish feasts

CULTURAL PARTICIPATION

(2016)

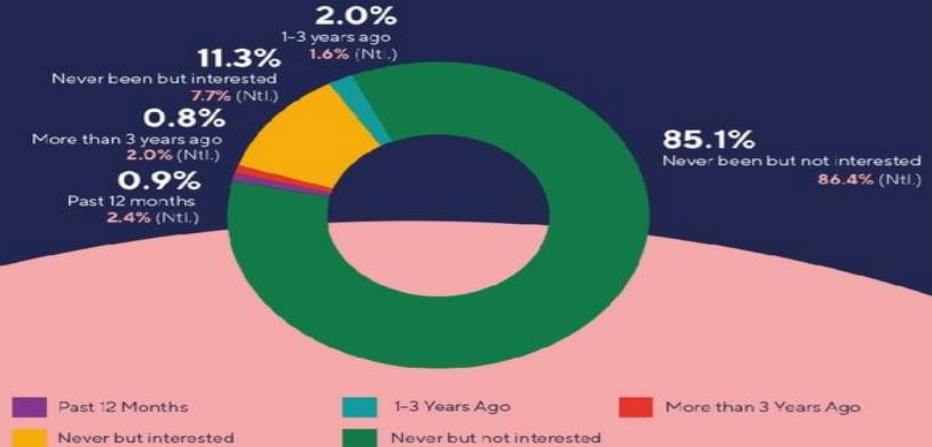
% of population in region attending



% of population in region attending local



% OF POPULATION ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN LOCAL COUNCIL FESTIVITIES



Factors of Inclusion/Exclusion during the *Festa*



Sense of belonging
for 'insiders'.
State funded –
clientelism



Cultural Rights and Participation

- The Cultural Policy for local Councils and Regional Committees recognises the need for cultural rights to all:

Inclusion through Lifelong learning programmes: Reflects the needs of the community, taking into consideration shifts in demographics and population. Specifically, in regions with a high concentration of foreigners living there (North, South Eastern, Central regions), the regional committee shall design programmes tailor-made for this shift with the objective to integrate all members of the regions.

Collaboration and networking of regions in their design of their cultural programmes and their role in the management of cultural heritage, their input in the restoration of facades and in their efforts for sustainable managements of the cultural environment.

Coordinator for Culture: Invest in human resources and have persons assigned to plan and coordinate cultural events.

Mapping Malta in Wider Context: Where does Malta place in the illiberal political mode?

Partly decentralisation by 'necessity': Part of Regional development strategies (EU Regional Development Fund 2014-2020).

Neoliberal approach to culture: Culture to propel the Cultural and Creative industry (CP 2011)

Important factors in the adaptation, if any, into the illiberal political mode:

- **Small island state:** The small geographic space of the Maltese Islands and the degree of decentralisation and local government (notable tendencies of Clientelism). Decentralisation can be reverted back in the future (as the case of waste management in Malta).
- **Advancement in minority rights:** Malta has been recognised for providing high degree of liberty to LGBTQ citizens, including with the ban of conversion therapy (ranked 1st since 2015 by ILGA-Europe).
- **'Slow motion' changes and its implication on the spread of neoliberal and illiberal political mode:** Malta, like other southern European countries adapts at different speed to broader European socio-economic systems (Economically [post-colonial part and late industrialisation] and culturally [accommodation of modern and traditional]).
- **Emergence of the spirit of illiberalism:** Its intersections with political and economic changes.

Works in Progress

- Study closely the application of how regional policies will indeed counter illiberal tendencies.
- Analyse closely political studies on the position of Malta and how it adapts to wider political trends.
- Explore in more detail the characteristics of a small island state impact on this adaptation?
- Do these cultural policies represent a new model of action in the field?
- To what extent will these regional strategies engage cultural actors and communities?