DEMOGRAPHY TOPIC PAPER

STRUCTURE PLAN

MALTESE ISLANDS

DEMOGRAPHY
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Executive Summary
May 2001

INTRODUCTION

This report presents demographic projections for the Maltese Islands for the period 1995 to 2020 and is a summary version of the study "Structure Plan for the Maltese Islands: Demographic Projections" commissioned by the Planning Authority as part of the Structure Plan Review.

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METHODOLOGY

The 1995 Population and Housing Census data is used as a basis for this set of population projections. A twenty-five year projection period has been used. The methodology used for the purposes of the national projections in the Maltese Islands is the cohort component method. Regional population projections are based on the areas covered by the seven Local Plans, as defined by the Planning Authority.

Four sets of national population projections, including a Baseline Variant and three other Variants (High, Medium, Low), were produced in the run up to this report. At a regional level, two Variants were considered (Constant and Moderate) for the projections. The national forecasts have also been translated into Household Projections, for which three separate Variants (Constant, Individualistic, High Individualistic) were produced.

This report only reproduces the results of the Baseline and Medium Variants for the National population projections, the High and Low Variants being considered as less likely to occur by the research team.
In the case of the Local Plan projections, the results of the Moderate Variant were preferred over those of the Constant Variant. Both were based on national Medium Variants for mortality and fertility. The difference between these two scenarios is the result of different hypotheses on internal migration. The Moderate Variant assumed a more favourable socio-economic set-up in the Grand Harbour Local Plan Area.

For household figures, the Individualistic Household Variant was considered to be the most likely scenario.

NATIONAL PROJECTIONS

Baseline Variant Key Assumptions and Findings

The Baseline Variant is based on the assumption that current demographic trends will broadly continue. With regard to Mortality, it is hypothesised that life expectancy for the Maltese people will increase, and that the current life expectancy gap between males and females will sustain the current (year 2000) difference of 5.8 years until 2005, and subsequently narrow to 5.2 years in 2020. With regard to Fertility, the Baseline Variant assumes fluctuations in the Total Fertility Rate but the record low of 1.81 (1995) is not expected to re-occur. The hypothesis on Migration states that constant net-migration flows at 3,870 are expected for each five-year projection period, which represents the mid-1990's rates as observed in the last intercensal period.

The Baseline variant predicts that population will increase from 376,744 in 1995 to 389,972 in 2000, 403,907 in 2005, 417,428 in 2010, reaching 429,703 in 2015, and in 2020, 439,520. Summarised results are shown in Table 1.

Medium Variant Key Assumptions and Findings

The Medium Variant varies from the Baseline in the assumptions on Mortality, Fertility and Migration rates. The Medium Variant assumes that Total Fertility Rates will increase marginally over that of the Baseline. With respect to Migration the Medium Variant assumes that net-migration flows will reach 3,000 till 2005 and subsequently increase to 3,871 till 2020. With respect to Mortality, male life expectancy is expected to improve at a relatively faster rate than the female rate to reach 76.5 years as against the female 81.5 years over the study period.

The Medium variant predicts that population will increase from 388,594 in

2000 to 400,840 in 2005, and 413,509 in 2010, reaching 425,061 in 2015, and in 2020, 434,260. Summarised results are shown in Table 1.

PROJECTIONS BY LOCAL PLAN

Regional population projections are based on the seven Local Plans (LPs) as defined by the Planning Authority, namely Central Malta, Gozo and Comino, Grand Harbour, Marsaxlokk Bay, North Harbours, North West and South Malta LP Areas. The seven LP areas were used as a basis for aggregation of internal Migration flows, with 1994-1995 Census of Population and Housing data on internal migration serving as a starting point for the analysis. Long term trends data on internal migration is not available. The Census data remains the only source of authoritative information for use for projections purposes.

Moderate Variant Key Assumptions and Findings

The population forecasts for the Moderate Variant were based on the Medium Variant National population forecasts, which were checked for applicability at a regional level. Fertility rates were assumed as not varying among Local Plans. This was based on the assumption that place of residence does not affect reproductive aspirations. Likewise, Mortality rates were tested and found not to vary significantly. On the other hand, internal migration was considered to be a crucial determinant of regional change in population size and structure. The migration hypothesis was introduced separately for each Local Plan.

In summary, all Local Plan areas are expected to experience an increase in their population, except for the Grand Harbour Local Plan which will continue to experience depopulation. In addition, the Moderate Variant predicts that by 2020, the Central Malta Local Plan Area will be the most populated region in Malta, as opposed to the South Malta Local Plan Area which was the most populated area in 1995. This is one of the findings of the Local Plan population forecasts. Further results are shown in Table 2.

HOUSEHOLD PROJECTIONS

The Constant Variant for household projections assumed that household headship rates would stay constant at 1995 levels for the period 2000-2020, whilst the High Individualistic Variant assumed that a slightly stronger process of individualisation would be expected. Both these scenarios were discarded, the Individualistic Variant being considered to be based on more realistic assumptions.

Individualistic Variant Key Assumptions and Findings

The Individualistic Variant makes assumptions on the age, gender and marriage structures of private households will change. There will be an increase in the number of single person households, aged 20 to 39 years, in the number of separated or divorced individuals, aged 20 to 59 years, and in the headship rates for married couples aged 75 years and over. The institutionalised population is expected to decrease as a result of less children, adolescents and elderly being institutionalised. The Individualistic Household Variant predicts that starting from the 1995 base number of households of 119,479 there will be 127,897 in 2000, 136,776 households in 2005, 145,640 in 2010, 153,642 households in 2015 and 159,926 households in 2020. This Variant also indicates a decline in the mean household size from 3.0 in 2000, to 2.7 in 2020. Further results at National and Local Plan level are shown in Table 3.

FINDINGS

The report forecasts that in comparison to 1995, in 2020 there will be:

A larger population: from 376,744 in 1995, to 434,260 in 2020.

A higher proportion of males:females, from a ratio of 97:100 in 1995, to 100:100, in 2020.

A higher proportion of persons aged over 60 years: from 16 per cent in 1995, to 25 per cent in 2020.

A slightly lower birth rate: from 12.5 per 1,000 in 1995, to 12.3 per 1,000 in 2020 (rising between 1995 and 2010, then falling again).

A higher death rate: from 7.8 per 1,000 in 1995, to 9.8 per 1,000 in 2020.

A higher fertility rate: from 1.81 in 1995, to 1.97 in 2020.

A higher life expectancy for males: from 74.9 years in 1995, to 76.5 in 2020 and a marginally higher life expectancy for females: from 80.25 years in 1995, to 81.5 in 2020.

An assumed average international migration of 775 in 2020, as opposed to 600 in 1995.

A smaller household size: from 3.1 in 1995 to 2.7 in 2020.

More households: from 119,479 in 1995 to 159,926 in 2020.

More persons in institutions: from 4,087 in 1995 to 8,747 in 2020.

A relatively higher proportion of the population residing in the Central Malta Local Plan area: from 27 per cent in 1995 to 31 per cent in 2020. There will be 10,662 more households by 2020 in the CMLP in comparison to 1995.

A slightly lower proportion of the population residing in the Gozo and Comino Local Plan area: from 8 per cent in 1995 to 7 per cent in 2020. There will be 3,606 more households by 2020 in comparison to 1995.

A lower proportion of the population residing in the Grand Harbour Local Plan area: from 8 per cent in 1995 to 3 per cent in 2020. There will be 1,256 less households by 2020, in comparison to 1995.

The same proportion of the population residing in the Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan area: at 3 per cent in both 1995 and 2020. There will be 2,358 more households by 2020 in the MBLP in comparison to 1995.

A slightly lower proportion of the population residing in the North Harbours Local Plan area: from 16 per cent in 1995 to 15 per cent in 2020. There will be 7,967 more households by 2020 in the NHLP in comparison to 1995.

The same proportion of the population residing in the North West Local Plan area: at 9 per cent in 1995 and 2020. There will be 5,714 more households by 2020 in the NWLP in comparison to 1995.

A higher proportion of the population residing in the South Malta Local Plan area: from 29 per cent in 1995 to 31 per cent in 2020. There will be 11,396 more households by 2020 in the SMLP in comparison to 1995.

Population and household forecasts comprise the staple statistical on which Structure Plan Review foundations are built. It is important to keep these findings monitored and updated at regular intervals, as the value of any set of demographic projections deteriorates with time. Hypotheses need to be verified and adjusted to better represent the demographic situation of the day.

TABLE 1 : NATIONAL POPULATION PROJECTIONS BASELINE AND MEDIUM VARIANTS

	1995	2000	2000	2005	2005	2010	2010	2015	2015	2020	2020
		Baseline	Medium	Baseline	Medium	Baseline	Medium	Baseline	Medium	Baseline	Medium
Life Expectancy Males	75.2	75.8	74.9	76.3	75.2	77.0	76.0	77.2	76.3	77.6	76.5
Life Expectancy Females	81.0	81.5	80.25	81.8	80.9	82.5	81.15	82.6	81.4	82.8	81.5
Gender Gap	5.8	5.8	5.35	5.5	5.70	5.5	5.15	5.4	5.10	5.2	5.00
Total Fertility Rate	1.81	1.82	1.90	1.88	1.90	1.89	1.91	1.93	1.95	1.95	1.97
Migration	3,870	3,870	3,003	3,870	3,003	3,870	3,871	3,870	3,871	3,870	3,871
Births	-	23,852	23,815	25,428	25,318	26,307	26,445	26,675	26,829	26,215	26,375
(-) Deaths	-	14,493	14,968	15,363	16,074	16,656	17,647	18,270	19,149	20,268	21,047
(+) Migration	3,870	3,870	3,003	3,870	3,003	3,870	3,871	3,870	3,871	3,870	3,871
(=) Net Change	-	13,228	11,850	13,935	12,247	13,521	12,669	12,275	11,551	9,817	9,199
Population Outcome	376,744	389,972	388,594	403,907	400,840	417,428	413,509	429,703	425,061	439,520	434,260

TABLE 2: LOCAL PLAN POPULATION PROJECTIONS MODERATE VARIANT

Local Plan Area	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Central Malta	102,900	110,600	118,600	125,100	131,500	137,400
Gozo and Comino	28,900	29,400	29,900	30,500	31,300	31,900
Grand Harbour	30,700	26,800	22,600	20,000	17,100	13,800
Marsaxlokk Bay	10,100	10,800	11,500	12,100	12,700	13,300
North Harbours	61,800	62,000	62,200	63,100	63,800	64,100
North West	32,300	33,800	35,300	36,700	38,000	39,100
South Malta	110,000	115,200	120,800	126,000	130,800	134,700

TABLE 3: HOUSEHOLD PROJECTIONS INDIVIDUALISTIC VARIANT

Local Plan Area	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Central Malta	31,718	33,253	36,246	38,595	40,715	42,380
Gozo and Comino	9,188	10,232	10,942	11,651	12,291	12,794
Grand Harbour	10,852	9,592	8,207	8,738	9,219	9,596
Marsaxlokk Bay	3,239	4,477	4,787	5,097	5,377	5,597
North Harbours	20,820	22,382	24,620	26,215	27,656	28,787
North West	10,279	12,150	13,678	14,564	15,364	15,993
South Malta	33,383	35,811	38,297	40,779	43,020	44,779
Total Households	119,479	127,897	136,777	145,639	153,642	159,926
Population in Households	372,657	382,592	394,114	406,109	416,983	425,513
Mean Household Size	3.1	3.0	2.9	2.8	2.7	2.7