patterns discussed above. Until we have labour force survey data, it would be incorrect to make any prediction about what these data indicate. However, they are in line with well-known industrial strategies of underdeveloped countries. Low-skill and low-pay female labour is utilised in the first phase of industrial development, mainly in manufacturing. This operates alongside forms of occupational closure in the public sector, such as marriage bars or disability categories that people have to start at a number of grades below the one they may have left to bear and rear children.

The private sector is likely to provide more opportunity to move in and out of the market, as well as to work hours that are more compatible with the ‘dual roles’ of paid and unpaid labour. The high percentage of Gozitan women in the self-employed category of the private sector suggests that one strategy could be to work on terms of one’s own as a self-employed person. The proportional decrease of female employees (not self-employed) in the private sector5 from 55% in 1990 to 45% in 1996 is indicative of the change to a tertiaryised economy (from manufacturing to services) with the concomitant ‘restructuring’ or massive contraction of the industrial sector. Despite the fact that in real terms the number of females in the private sector (excluding the self-employed) has not decreased but increased over these years, the proportion distribution between males and females in this category should not have changed as drastically as it has. The tertiarisation of the economy should have provided some opportunities for this group of women and one would need further study to see why Gozitan women are not benefiting from this labour market change. If the first to experience contracting in the labour market are Gozitan women, is this because the Gozitan economy has not yet made the shifts that the Malta-only economy has made?

Past histories of economic development continue to impact on the present labour market. In 1996, 10 females made up 65% of Gozitan private sector industrial workers, a high proportion of jobs in a sector that is likely to shrink further. In contrast females comprised only 1% of Gozitan private sector non-industrial workers. Further confirmation of a trend toward contraction of the Gozitan female labour market is the alarming drop, in 1997, of this group as a proportion of the Maltese11 female gainfully occupied in 1997. Gozitan females 15-64 have made up 43% of the female gainfully occupied whereas they made up 7% in 1990. Since 1990 a higher percent of Gozitan females (as a proportion of the Gozitan unemployed) have been unemployed when compared to Malta-only females, although Malta-only females are also now experiencing increasing difficulty in finding employment. This may be either because of (un)willingness or eligibility to register as unemployed and opportunities for marriage may be factors in the Gozitan case, a contraction in demand for female labour must also be seriously considered as providing an explanation.

Gozitan women and Self Employment

It is also interesting to note that whilst Gozitan females have made a 25% increase in self employment since 1985 (and men a 12% increase), a breakdown of male and female self-employed figures for 1996 demonstrates how many men are active in service sector occupations. Though the proportion of females in the wholesale and retail trade sub-group is higher than the average for the self-employed as whole, this difference between men and women is indicative of the difficulties women face even in so called ‘feminised’ sectors. Is it really an indication that is it even possible to have a steady increase in female self-employment from 1985 to 1996, we are now finding a downward turn as with Gozitan female employment in general?

Part-time Work

The Gozitan case reminds us that employer strategies regarding part-time work are as dependent on the vulnerability of certain sectors of the labour market as much as they are on the vulnerability of different groups of workers. For example, a summer-only tourist economy is more likely to need the flexibility of part-time work, and this is likely to include male workers as well as female. In looking at part-time work it is useful to distinguish between its rate and its incidence. Wickham refers to the average proportion of part-time work in the total work-force (or in establishments where part-time work is present). Incidence refers to the extent to which there are establishments in which at least one employee is working part-time. For 1997, I have computed13 the rate of part-time work14 for Malta-only and for Gozo. For Malta-only we find that the rate is 18% (with 82% working full-time) whilst for Gozo the rate is a very high 33% (and 67% work full-time).

This clearly indicates that the type of work available in Gozo is increasingly resembling new methods of employment or a result of past vulnerabilities, is not possible to determine here with this limited data. Some of these differences in rate in part-time work include, for example, textiles manufacture with a rate of 6% in Malta-only and 40% and retail trade with a rate of 9% in Malta-only and 40% in Gozo. Interestingly, Government services have a rate of 4% in Malta-only and 46% in Gozo15.

1 This paper is a summary of a chapter appearing in the Central Office of Statistics publication The Maltese Islands on the Move (Vella, 2000). I am grateful to the editor, Ms Catherine Vella, for permission to reproduce parts here. Readers who would wish to look at raw data on which the paper is based are asked to refer to the thesis of Roderick Attard. I would like to acknowledge the full support of the Honourable Helen Dalli, M.P. who during her term (1996-1998) as Parliamentary Secretary for Women’s Rights had the vision to prepare the structure for a Women’s Information Centre. She also commissioned in-depth research on the Maltese labour market, including on the specificity of Gozo. Part of the work reported here was carried during the period I was engaged as a consultant to the Secretariat. I would also like to acknowledge kind help from the Permanent Secretariat for Gozo (1996-1998) and from the Employment and Training Corporation.

References


GOZO IN THE WORLD AND THE WORLD IN GOZO

RAYMOND C. XERRI

A thesis submitted by Raymond Xerrri for a Ph.D from Victoria University of Technology, Melbourne, 2002 deals with "the cultural impact of migration and return migration on an island community". More specifically, it reviews in considerable detail the effect of migration on Gozo, from both positive and negative aspects. It explores the meaning and significance of migration and return migration between Gozo and Australia.

The thesis starts with a comprehensive discussion relating to the Maltese language, including chapters relating to Gozitan identity, cultural life in Gozo and linguistic peculiarities.

Another group of chapters describes life of Gozitan migrants in Melbourne's western suburbs where they tended to congregate, and the way that they transformed this foreign land into an image of Gozo with their habit of hard work and importation of cultural activities such as foster and other religious practices. It emphasises the role of religious life in the settlement process of Maltese migrants.

What this thesis lacks in empirical information is amply made for by a comprehensive description of the world in Gozo, particularly in the author's home village of Qala and the other places that they re-made in one particular area of the world.

It also represents a milestone in Maltese-Australian relationships - this is the first Ph.D thesis by a Maltese person writing about a Maltese topic, to be undertaken entirely at a foreign University, namely, the "Europe": The recent visit of Professor Jarlath Ronayne, the Vice-chancellor of this university, has served to continue to strengthen ties between the two universities, and to renew bilateral agreements first signed in 1989. It is hoped that more such bilateral exchanges will be encouraged through such agreements