

Please state the relevance of your study to Malta's strategic priority as described in Article 6 of the Regulations.

I am submitting this research proposal with the aim of increasing the level of research in the ever expanding economic sectors in Malta. This study will address skills mismatches (Article 6.2.2 of Regulations) particularly in relation to health care, hospital management and administration and tourism.

Higher Value Added to Health Care systems in Malta

Like other field of history, medical history can be beneficial to today's medicine and hospital procedures. Through the study of colonial medical history in the Mediterranean, chiefly Malta, Cyprus and the Ionian Islands, I wish to recognize anthropological issues like insularity and isolation of small Islands in a defined Mediterranean culture under British rule. The histories of these islands are very similar and their medical and health care systems have common underlying patterns. Gallant (2002), through the study of a founding hospital in the Ionian Islands, explains how the local elite augmented their power and disposed of their obligations by exploiting colonial funds. Such subtle, or sometimes not so subtle, exploitation from the local islanders can also be found in Malta's asylums for aged people (Chircop 2004). These behavioural patterns cannot be explained away as part of a colonial scenario. I also aim at understanding what effect such intricate discourse left on today's Maltese health system.

Another interesting theme which I would like to explore in this doctorate research is the periphery-metropolis thesis in the context of these islands. Through the study of the administration of charitable institutions, hospital provisions and quarantine measures, amongst others, I will understand the relationship between the metropolis (British Colonial Office) and the peripheries (the Colonial Governments in the Islands) and the impact that these services and systems left on the health care and hospital management today.

Expanding Economic Sectors – Tourism

The Maltese history of medicine is rendered unique by the combination of an important geo-strategic position and the numerous successions of colonial rulers. With the arrival of the Knights of St. John and their sojourn in Malta, the islands benefitted from an excellent health care and hospital services. When Malta became a British colony, the hospital services built up on already existent systems created better health care systems for the naval and army forces and enforced a better quarantine system. Numerous applications of poor relief and admissions into asylums helped alleviate the problem of poverty amongst the islanders. In many instances during the 19th and 20th centuries, Malta played the role of 'nurse of the Mediterranean' whenever major wars or revolts took place. As a consequence many buildings in Malta were used either as temporary or permanent hospitals or asylums for the sick. This rich heritage has not yet been fully exploited especially in the tourism sector – mainly because there is no visual representation of medical history which makes it more difficult to present medical history to tourists or visitors.