

CHAPTER FOUR (PART A)

Operational Aspects I - NUTS Perspectives - Malta

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Introduction

This chapter presents the results obtained from the interviews conducted with the 64 local councils in Malta. Interviews were either conducted with the major or with the executive officer of the local council. For the purpose of analysis the Maltese Islands were analysed according to the six districts at NUTS 4 level. Malta is divided into five districts - the Southern Harbour district, the Northern Harbour district, the South-East district, the Western district and the Northern district, while the islands of Gozo and Comino make up the sixth district. The Southern Harbour district consists of Birgu, Bormla, Fgura, Floriana, Isla, Kalkara, Luqa, Marsa, Paola, Santa Luċija, Tarxien, Valletta, Xgħajra and Żabbar. The Northern Harbour district is made up of B'Kara, Gżira, Hamrun, Msida, Pembroke, Pietà, Qormi, San Ġwann, Santa Venera, Sliema, St. Julian's, Swieqi and Ta'Xbiex. While the South-East District comprises: Birżebbuġa, Ghaxaq, Gudja, Kirkop, Marsaskala, Marsaxlokk, Mqabba, Qrendi, Safi, Żejtun and Żurrieq. The Western district consists of Attard, Balzan, Dingle, Lija, Iklin, Mdina, Mtarfa, Siġġiewi and Żebbuġ. The fifth and final Maltese district is the Northern district comprising Għargħur, Mellieħa, Mgarr, Mosta, Naxxar and St Paul's Bay. Gozo together with Comino make up the sixth and final district of the Maltese Islands. The summary of the research conducted with members of the local councils will be presented here. They are presented as if someone is conducting a tour of the Maltese Islands, explaining a little bit of history, describing the landscape, as well as explaining social and crime problems. After a presentation of the first five districts a point form summary of Malta is given, after which Gozo will be presented. This chapter ends with a summary of the findings, according to the perceptions of the local authorities about the locality which they administer. Their perceptions are reviewed in conjunction with the data analysis presented in Chapters 7 and 8. This does not mean that they were stating non-facts, rather it shows that their reality could be clouded by other factors such as the amounts of reports/complaints they receive on certain areas. It is important to keep in mind that this chapter is presenting what the administrators said

about their locality which could be a far cry from reality. We will not continually repeat that it is the administrator's perception, but one should keep this in mind when reading this chapter.

The Southern Harbour District

District 1 comprises the following localities:

- Birgu
- Bormla
- Fgura
- Floriana
- Isla
- Kalkara
- Luqa
- Marsa
- Paola
- Santa Luċija
- Tarxien
- Valletta
- Xgħajra
- Żabbar

Birgu, Bormla and Isla, are commonly referred to as “The Three Cities”, together with Kalkara they make up what is called “Cottonera”. These three cities span around a deep harbour, which used to be home to the dockyard industry, (before it was closed down) and which has now been transformed in a thriving marina. This marina is now often frequented by super-yachts particularly, on Birgu's shore, which is also home to the exclusive Casino di Venezia (housed by a restored historic building), close to the Maritime museum on one side and the majestic fort St Angelo (now, part of it is used as the Knights' headquarters) on the other. Birgu's historical, harbour-side, old village has other gems, including the Inquisitor's palace, churches, quaint old houses, narrow, decorated roads, restaurants and wine bars. In Birgu, one also finds spectacular bastions and a playing field. In front of Birgu, across the harbour, one finds Isla, with its splendid bastion-garden (known as il-Gardjola) that regales breath-taking views of the grand harbour, Valletta (on one side), Birgu and Kalkara on the other (across the harbour). Isla is frequently visited by pilgrims that flock to its parish church to pray in front of the statue of Jesus the Redeemer – claimed to be miraculous. Like Birgu, Isla is spanned by old, quaint houses, narrow roads, with a few restaurants and pubs, particularly on the shore. Bormla is situated on the inner side of the harbour, right between Birgu and Isla. It has a majestic parish church,

perched on a flight of steps....steps being a characteristic of this quaint, old, harbour-side village. In fact, many side streets are actually flights of steps, with houses spanning on both sides. There are also government (social) housing estates.

The Three Cities or Cottonera are very rich in history and culture. In fact, culture-wise and class-wise, it once rivaled Mdina (where most aristocrats resided). The golden days of Cottonera might have started when the Knights landed in Birgu in 1530, building imposing premises and fortifications before they built and moved to Valletta. Like Mdina, Cottonera became home to the nobility and to high-class individuals. This trend might have gone on until the Second World War, when the zone was heavily bombarded by the Axis and those who could afford to seek refuge, fled to, what is considered, the north of Malta. Consequently, most of those who stayed in the Three Cities were the poor, the disadvantaged and those that worked at the dockyard....the people that sociologists would have referred to as the lower classes. After the Second World War, this area was in shambles....and the cost of property here became low...attracting even more the financially and socially disadvantaged. Consequently, in the Cottonera region, poverty and social hardships became the order of the day. Today, with the exceptions of some restored old residences (which are now owned by the affluent) and the harbour-facing luxury apartments, despite the efforts that were made and the drastic face-lift that was given to the zone, Cottonera remains home to a concentration of disadvantaged people, constantly facing social problems like: financial insecurity, family break-ups, substance-abuse and usury. Once one leaves Birgu, on one's way to Fgura, one can make a sharp turn on the right, heading yet again to the coast....to the boat-port, quaint, old village of Kalkara, with its road-level parish church practically reflecting in the sea water, surrounded by the old houses. Socially, the residents of Kalkara are comparable to those of the three cities.

- In the city of **Isla** (Senglea), the level of crime is not alarming. In fact, it is claimed that, perhaps thanks to the installation of some CCTV cameras (in the Gardjola and the football ground area), Isla seems to be one of the localities with the lowest crime rates. Also, there do not seem to be any ex-offenders living there. The bastion garden (il-Gardjola) is a hotspot for nuisance and vandalism. On a positive note, it is claimed that drug-abuse is on the decline in this locality. Although allegedly few, victims of crime seem to fall in the 25-40 years old bracket. Financial insecurity and poverty seems to reign. Proof of this is the fact that utility bills tend to be paid by instalments. It is felt that the proximity of Isla to the Casino di Venezia might exacerbate the situation, since the poor of the area might be more tempted to gamble the basics they already have...and it could have been made easier, for those with the gambling vice, to risk the livelihood of their impoverished families. CCTV cameras have been installed in the Gardjola (bastion garden) area and football ground area. In addition, the bring-in sites are being monitored. However, there is no neighbourhood watch scheme. Although

the police station is often closed, there is regular police foot and car patrol. Yet, the residents seem to feel more confident to report offences to the local council rather than the police.

- Ironically, in **Bormla** (Cospicua), it is claimed that the main hotspot is right next door to the Bormla police station. This spot is known for blatant and continuous drug-abuse. There seems to be quite a number of ex-offenders living in Bormla. Fear of crime is tangible, especially among the elderly who, are perceived as the main victims in this locality. Every social housing area in Bormla is considered a crime hotspot. Unfortunately, it seems that, residents of Bormla tend to be stereotyped and labelled. Consequently, this stigma tends to be carried by most of the children of Bormla. As regards health and safety, it is claimed that the unfinished infrastructural works being done to Bacir Number 1, pose a danger. Although police presence is evident (there is also a police station, which also acts as the police district headquarters), its affects are hardly felt. Like Isla residents, Bormla residents seem to feel more confident to report offences to the local council rather than the police.
- In **Birgu** (Vittoriosa), the level of crime is not as high as might be perceived. Although one finds offenders as young as 14, thefts from cars and vandalism has decreased over the past years. Drug-abuse is rampant and worsens the already precarious financial situation many residents might already be experiencing. Gambling seems to also be a problem and it is exacerbated by the presence of the Casino di Venezia (on the Birgu waterfront). Places like il-Foss (beneath the bastions) and the playing field seem to be fertile grounds for offences – due to lack of monitoring/supervision. Victims of crime tend to be the elderly and teenagers, especially the 14-year-olds, who are at a vulnerable and susceptible age. Police presence, it seems, is hardly felt and is desired, particularly by the elderly and the waterfront businesses. Like Isla and Bormla residents, Birgu residents seem to feel more confident to report offences to the local council rather than the police.
- In **Kalkara**, the level of crime is directly linked to the rampant drug-abuse. The local council is actually aware of two or three drug-pushers and of families of offenders that reside in Kalkara. It is alleged that sometimes, these cause nuisance and contribute to the residents' elevated fear of crime. Drug-abuse-related crime includes theft from cars and vandalism. There does not seem to be fixed crime spots. Crime and criminals move from one area to a perceived safer (for them) area – perhaps with lower visibility and lack of supervision. Victims of crime do not seem to be visible. In fact, it is claimed that not even the elderly experience fear of crime. It is held that a sense of learned helplessness and resignation has taken over. In face of crime, the villagers seem to remain passive. The village core is covered by CCTV cameras which serve as a deterrent. Neighbourhood watch was never supported by the residents, so

it was not feasible. Police presence is not satisfactory. In fact, it is claimed that, the police station is not always open and police patrols are not enough. However, if one refers to the regular police-council meetings, communication with the police could be considered as good but not as effective as expected.

Leaving the Cottonera area one encounters Fgura, Paola and the Addolorata cemetery, which is the largest cemetery in Malta, having its four sides touching Santa Luċija and Luqa (at the far end side), Marsa (the industrial zone – where one finds the entrance of the cemetery) and Tarxien (up the hill, across a round-about). So, if one drives up the hill, opposite the Addolorata cemetery and turns left, one arrives in Tarxien – home to prehistoric temples and the underground hypogeum. These are found in the midst of old, quaint town-houses and churches. The main road that cuts through Tarxien is also spanned by shops. After driving through Tarxien, one arrives at Paola, at a large square, opposite the majestic parish church. If one turns far left, one passes in front of Corradino Correctional Facility (the only prison in Malta). However, once at the square, proceeding straight ahead, one ends up in Fgura. In the main road, one finds a considerable number of shops, including a small shopping mall and cinema. In Fgura, there is a mixture of types of residences: quaint, old town-houses, terraced houses, maisonettes and apartments (particularly in the relatively modern housing estates). However, if one keeps driving straight ahead and eventually turns right (after Marsaskala), one arrives in Żabbar. Żabbar is another old village, with churches, quaint old houses, a private hospital and a few shops. Once one drives through Żabbar towards the coast, one ends up in Xgħajra – a picturesque quaint village by the sea, where one can enjoy a sea-side stroll on a panoramic promenade. Socially, the people living in this area (Tarxien, Paola, Fgura, Żabbar and Xgħajra) can be considered as mainly lower and working class. Although social problems here are the ones reflected by Maltese society in general (namely, broken-families, single-parenting, teenage/early pregnancies, substance abuse and usury), they tend to get magnified in this zone, inhabited mainly by the socially and economically disadvantaged.

- **Fgura:** Although the perception is that the crime rate is normal, with a few cases of domestic violence, theft from vehicles and vandalism, it seems that drug abuse and trafficking are the main offences, especially in the area of Wied Blandun (shared with Paola), which can be considered a hotspot. Another definite hotspot is the bar that is adjacent to the bocci (Maltese bowls) pitch, which is raided on a regular basis by the police drug squad. Since this hotspot is right next to the playground, the local council is planning on having the premises removed and gating the playground. The new ATM, referred to as the Tip Top (a shop in the main road of Fgura) bus stop, is being lit. The darkness and geographical shape (tunnel-like) of this area renders it ideal for crime. In fact, at least once (this was reported) it even became stage to a rape.

Since the crime rate is considered as low, officially at least, there are few victims of crime. There are two sets of CCTV cameras, one near the bring-in site and the other for traffic reasons. A third CCTV camera is to be installed in the square behind the parish church – in Piazza Reggie Miller, where nuisance and vandalism are a regular occurrence. Officially, there is no neighbourhood watch, but it is claimed that residents keep a watchful eye and help deter crime. The local council has a very good relationship with the district police and, it is claimed, Fgura is adequately covered by patrols and back-up. The residents report crimes and do so to the police, rather than to the local council. Being a thoroughfare, Fgura residents complain from traffic congestion and lack of parking spaces.

- **Paola:** Crime is extremely high in Paola not because of the locality being bad in itself, but because of its centrality. In fact, due to the polyclinic, about 90,000 syringes are distributed every year and most of these end up being dumped in Paola itself. Other forms of offences that are common are: vandalism, littering, thefts from houses, gambling and drug-abuse. The main abuse, rather than crime, hotspot is located in the Wied Blandun area, and near the Addolorata cemetery, especially the hind part where it is not lit in the evenings. It is notorious for loitering/prostitution and drug-abuse. There are several offenders living in Paola. The victims in the locality are undoubtedly the elderly. There were failed attempts at setting up a neighbourhood watch and police absence is felt to the extent that it has become a major issue for the local council. There are CCTV cameras installed at the local council premises as well as at the police station, however the police seem to either take a long time to react or even refrain from taking any action when law-breaking gets recorded on camera. Pollution and heavy traffic pose a major threat to the health and safety of the Paola residents.
- **Tarxien:** The crime rate here is kept quite high because of drug-abuse. This abuse leads to theft (from residences and cars) and vandalism. Sometimes, offenders use garage entrances to abuse drugs or cause a nuisance. Joanna Gardens (also frequented by outsiders) are also a nuisance area and a littering spot. There are a number of offenders living in Tarxien. Victims of crime have different social backgrounds so it is not easy to generalize who they are. Tarxien could be considered as a thoroughfare and the open spaces it has serve as congregation points, particularly for youths. Since society tends to fear youngsters – even law-abiders, let alone trouble-makers – it is weary of their presence. In response to this, the Tarxien local council has adopted a somewhat controversial strategy: the installation of a mosquito alarm in areas frequented by youngsters. The alarm gets triggered whenever the nuisance levels become too disruptive and the signal it emits irritates young ears so much, that their only option is to move away. All of Tarxien is covered by neighbourhood watch and it is considered successful (there is a councillor devoted to public order issues). The police are based in

Paola and cover Tarxien with patrols. In addition, police authorities regularly meet the local council. As in the Cottonera area, Tarxien residents seem to feel more confident to report offences to the local council rather than the police.

- **Żabbar:** Crime, in this locality, is predominantly drug-abuse-related and narcotic abuse is rampant. In fact, the playing field, found right behind the police station, is regularly littered with used syringes. A private security guard was once employed in an effort to tackle this problem, however, the lack of police powers, rendered him ineffective and consequently, out of a job. Together with other drug-abuse-related crime, theft and vandalism abound in this locality. The areas known as Biccieni and tal-Misrah are notorious for squabbles and nuisances. Gambling also seems to be a problem and this might have been exacerbated by the installation of gambling machines in some Żabbar bars. Several ex-offenders live in Żabbar. Victims of crime are, mainly the uneducated and poor youngsters who become addicted to narcotics. Fear of crime is tangible, particularly amongst the elderly. There is no neighbourhood watch, although there was a failed attempt to set up a similar initiative, intended, not to simply monitor the area and point out any troublemakers, but to reach out, especially to troubled youths. This was led by the parish priest in the area known as Sant' Andrija. A commission was actually set up but it died out. CCTV equipment is installed in the playing field and another is planned for the housing estate and St Peter's. The local council holds monthly meetings with the police, so communication wise, the local council cannot grumble. Yet, residents seem to feel helpless in face of the extent of drug-abuse and drug-abuse-related crime that goes on in Żabbar, especially since, not even having at least three very high-ranked police officials residing there, helped reduce it. Police presence only increases during the village feast season. It is claimed that the Żabbar residents have lost all faith in the police and they just do not trust them. To make matters worse, it is held that, not a single police-community activity was organized in Żabbar by the police, in the past twenty years. The local council feels that it is not its job to point out to the police where their action is needed. People do report crimes/offences, but they rather go to the local council than to the police because the police oblige the person filing the report to take the witness stand in court.
- **Xghajra:** Xghajra does not have an alarming crime rate and the offences committed are usually drug-abuse-related: theft (including from rural and open areas), substance abuse and illegal dumping/littering (particularly of used syringes in the locality's peripheries and even in vacant buildings). Dangerous driving also poses a problem. It is even claimed that some public transport drivers as well as police patrols race down the Xghajra roads. It seems that the elderly are more prone to becoming victims of crime. These include owners of fields that are distant and not under surveillance and those who are robbed by their own relatives (and thus find it hard to report their

victimisation). When it comes to unruly behaviour, fingers seem to be pointed at short-let, transitory residents. There is no neighbourhood watch and CCTV cameras are not yet installed, however they are planned for the new playground area. Police presence is very much desired but, with the exception of the summer months (when police foot patrols become frequent) it has dwindled drastically. There used to be police foot patrols and police on horseback as well as the contribution of the police canine section. These have been stopped. The local council does not know why this happened but supposes that police attention has been now focused on Marsaskala (where the prime minister lives) and on Żabbar (where the police commissioner lives). Residents seem afraid to report to the police and evidently, feel more comfortable reporting to the local council because only the local council can guarantee anonymity.

The Addolorata touches Santa Luċija and Luqa – at the far end side and Marsa (the industrial zone) – at the lower end side (the entrance to the cemetery). So, if one drives up the hill, opposite the Addolorata cemetery and turns right, one is in Santa Luċija. This is considered a relatively modern residential zone, mainly comprised of villas, terraced houses, maisonettes, apartments and a modern-style parish church. There is also a government housing estate. On the hind side of this zone, next to a secondary school, one finds a small but picturesque Chinese garden. With the exception, perhaps, of most of those living in the government flats, the residents of Santa Luċija could be considered as mainly middle and upper class. Family problems are found everywhere, but again, maybe because those most financially vulnerable feel the brunt more, one expects problems to be bigger in the area of the government flats.

If one exits Santa Luċija, turns left and proceeds straight (behind the Addolorata cemetery), one eventually ends up in Luqa. This is an old village, having traditional town houses around the parish church. There is also some agricultural land and farmhouses. With the exception of the restored farmhouses (generally owned by the wealthy), most Luqa residents could be considered as lower middle and working class. The village core in particular, is populated by the elderly.

If one drives through the village of Luqa, one passes near the Marsa Sports Ground, the old Turkish cemetery, and on one of the busiest, multi-lane thoroughfares in Malta. Driving in the direction of Valletta (straight ahead), one eventually can turn right, over a bridge, into the core of Marsa. Marsa is known as an industrial zone touching a bit of the grand harbour (known as il-Menqa) – where tug-boats and cargo vessels dock in very murky sea water. The sea water...and the air of Marsa...is heavily polluted with the Marsa power station (that runs on coal). In this area, one finds the Open Centre for irregular migrants (right in front of the harbouril-Menqa). In fact, migrants populate the roads close by, particularly a round-about in the vicinity, from where, it is held, they are picked

by prospective *ad-hoc* employers who, it seems, employ them abusively, on a daily, if not hourly, basis. Marsa has two main churches (one of which is the parish church dedicated to the Holy Trinity...the other is dedicated to Maria Regina. Ironically, this creates rivalry between the residents of these two main residential areas of Marsa). In Marsa, one finds a primary school, old town houses and a number of flats and maisonettes, particularly in the government housing estates. Most of the residents of Marsa can be considered as lower/working class people. Broken families, single parenting, early pregnancies, financial problems might render Marsa a breeding ground for trouble. Marsa touches Hamrun.

In fact, when one drives out of Marsa and turns right, one is on the main road of Hamrun, a road that leads to Floriana and Valletta. Once out of Hamrun, one drives through the Port de Bombs (an old, historical archway), through Floriana – particularly famous for the Granaries (where wheat and corn used to be stored underground, by the Knights of Malta) and its parish church (overlooking the granaries) dedicated to St Publius, the first Maltese bishop, directly ordained and appointed, it is held, by St Paul himself. In the main road of Floriana, one finds a number of shops, clubs and bars. Floriana also hosts a number of foreign embassies. In the back streets, there are old town houses and apartments, as well as government flats (known as *kerrejja*). Broken families, single parenting, early pregnancies, financial and social problems might render the government housing areas in Floriana, fertile ground for trouble. Also in the backstreets, one finds the police headquarters (which used to be a hospital in times gone by) and, right across the road, one finds the Curia (the main office of the Church in Malta).

The main road of Floriana leads to Valletta – the capital city of Malta. Known for its breath-taking views of the Grand Harbour (particularly from the Upper Barrakka Gardens) – where massive cruise liners dock, regularly populating the streets with tourists...and *karozzini* (the traditional, Maltese horse-driven carriages). Valletta – a peninsula – is famous for its historical buildings, particularly, the Fort of St Elmo, the Hospital of the Knights (now the Mediterranean Conference Centre), the Palace, St John's Co-Cathedral, the Museum for Archaeology, the number of churches and chapels, the different auberges of the Knights, the National Archives, and the Court House. There are mansions, offices (including the Prime Minister's), ministries, shops and boutiques, pubs, clubs, pizzerias, fast food outlets, shopping malls, a cinema, restaurants and a few residential, quaint, old houses. At the far end of Valletta, right opposite Fort St Elmo – all the way round the Valletta peninsula, facing Sliema (this zone is called *Marsamxett*) – one finds government housing estates (blocks of flats), including a notorious one, found in a place referred to as *il-Mandragg*. Whereas, about fifty years ago, high class people sought Valletta when it came to buying a house, buildings in the city are now mainly, either commercial or used as offices. The relatively few people that actually reside in Valletta tend to populate the government housing estates and may be considered as socially disadvantaged and

economically challenged...where broken families, teenage/premature pregnancies and single parenting may exacerbate the situation. These hardships may lead to poverty and poor supervision of children and youths living in this area, possibly resulting in delinquency and gang activity.

- **Santa Luċija:** The drug-abuse problem that was so prevalent in Santa Luċija, especially during the 1990s, has been drastically reduced. The murder of an elderly couple in their flat in Santa Luċija, about a decade ago, is still fresh in the residents' minds, consequently, it is difficult to control and reduce fear of crime in this locality. However, on the whole, there does not seem to be an alarming crime problem in Santa Luċija. It is more nuisances that prevail, like for example: over-speeding, noise (particularly in summer) and vandalism. There does not seem to be any ex-offenders living in Santa Luċija. There is no neighbourhood watch scheme nor is there any gating. However a number of CCTV cameras have been installed in the Chinese Garden. But there is no surveillance other than this. Police presence has improved (police patrols – by both the drug squad and the mobile squad – are frequent), even though the police station tends to remain closed. The residents tend to report a lot, but to the local council first, and then, perhaps, to the police.
- **Luqa:** In Luqa, the crime rate is not high. It is contraventions, such as vandalism (particularly in Hal-Farrug) and over-speeding (especially by taxis in New Street or near the airport), as well as littering and illegal dumping that abound. It is the elderly that are most prone to being victimised – especially those living in the rural areas. These often incur thefts from their fields (of agricultural produce and tools) and also suffer vandalism. CCTV cameras (managed by the local council) are installed near the Bank of Valletta. The playing field is not gated and sometimes nuisance arises. Although there is a police station in the main square, more police presence is needed. It is felt that, the badly-lit industrial estate poses a major threat to the security of the residents as it is fertile ground for different forms of abuse.
- **Marsa:** In Marsa, drug-abuse is rampant – as attested by the number of used syringes found in public gardens. Few thefts are reported to the police. Since the ex-trade school is now being used as an open-centre for irregular/illegal migrants, residents complain that this area, particularly the Albert Town area, has been taken over by them. Offences associated with these irregular migrants are: hate crime (inflicted by the Maltese upon them, and/or amongst themselves), loitering, heavy drinking and unacceptable behaviour in public gardens. It is claimed that the strong rivalry that used to be there between the devotees/supporters of the two major village feasts (the Holy Trinity church, which is the parish and the church dedicated to Maria Regina) – that which led to squabbles and disorder (and that sometimes compelled the Church authorities to cancel the outside feasts) has somewhat subsided. There is no neighbourhood

watch scheme (possibly due to the strong sense of belonging that faded away over the decades) but the local council is planning to install CCTV cameras in the garden areas. Communication with the police has been described as excellent, and since Marsa is becoming a district, police presence is expected to increase. The pollution emanating from the power station and the industrial zones are considered as major threats to the health and safety of the Marsa residents.

- **Floriana:** Drug-abuse constitutes a big problem, particularly among the Floriana youths. The illegal disposal of used syringes is even a bigger problem (these are found in the playground, near the health centre, behind the Capucchin Friars' church and in the subways). The Floriana health centre is responsible for the free distribution of syringes consequently, a number of drug abusers from different localities converge at Floriana to collect their free syringes. Theft from cars is quite predominant here. This is expected, considering the number of car parks found in Floriana. However, there were very few reported cases of theft from houses and shops. Vandalism and littering/illegal dumping (the Phoenicia area, Christ the King area, Mall Gardens and the area next to the local council office as well as that near the National Library) are two other problems. The playground entrance is equipped with a CCTV camera, however this needs to be tuned as no one is bothered to watch long hours of videotapes. All the embassies and Triq Santa Anna, leading to tal-Bombi area are equipped with CCTV cameras. There is no neighbourhood watch. The local council is requesting more police presence, especially during the night. However, the situation has improved in the last four years, as more police presence is being felt. The council even launched the award "Police Officer of the Year" – however, their nomination must be first approved by the police authorities. The local council claims that council-police communication channels are open but results are another matter. Lack of parking and the use of the Granaries for a lot of national activities are a cause of stress for Floriana residents.
- **Valetta:** It is claimed that, Valetta residents are suffering from stereotyping. They are being made to carry a stigma they inherited from some unruly residents of the rough areas of Valetta (the area of 'il-Mandragg', for an example). In fact, it is argued that, offenders tend to migrate to Valetta after they commit their crime. Statistics show a decrease in reported crimes (in Valetta) – a decrease of a third in 2010 when compared to 2009. Most crimes tend to be petty, such as theft from cars. It is claimed that, particularly, in the recent past, youth gangs (not Valetta residents) hung around the terminus area, causing 'trouble', targeting and intimidating people. Vandalism and illegal dumping are also a problem (especially in the Due Balli and Marsamxett area). It is claimed that shop owners are not doing their fair share (since they are not interested in installing CCTV cameras). Only Republic Street is equipped with CCTV cameras. The police were described as very efficient, reacting promptly. They were

only criticised for focusing on the commercial, rather than the residential, zone. So much so that the council has to pay for extra police duty so they can also give due attention to the residential part of Valletta. On a positive note, the introduction of police-on-Segways (two-wheeled self-balancing personal transport) has improved safety and security in Valletta.

District One: General Crime/Social Problems

- With the exception of Paola, Żabbar and Bormla, the level of crime is not alarming.
- Thefts from cars and vandalism has decreased over the past years but drug-abuse/trafficking seems rampant and worsens the already precarious financial situation many residents might already be experiencing. Ironically, it is claimed that, in Bormla, the main hotspot is right next door to the police station. This spot is known for blatant and continuous drug-abuse.
- Gambling seems to also be a problem and it is exacerbated by the proximity of the Casino di Venezia (on the Birgu waterfront) and the availability of gambling machines in some of the district's bars.
- In this district, one also could witness loitering/prostitution.
- Domestic violence (and rape) also emerges.
- Nuisances, squabbles/fights, an extent of gang activity, vandalism, littering and illegal dumping are also problems.
- Dangerous driving also poses a problem.
- Since the Marsa ex-trade school is now being used as an open-centre for irregular/illegal migrants, residents complain that this area, particularly the Albert Town area, has been taken over by them. Offences associated with these irregular migrants are: hate crime (inflicted by the Maltese upon them, and/or amongst themselves) loitering, heavy drinking and unacceptable behaviour in public gardens.
- Fear of crime is tangible, especially among the elderly.
- One finds offenders as young as 14.
- The elderly are perceived as the main potential or actual victims of crime.
- Teenagers are also considered as potentially at risk from crime/criminals (mainly the uneducated and poor youngsters who become easy prey to criminals and addicted to narcotics).
- The installation of some CCTV cameras might have helped reduce crime.
- Financial insecurity and poverty seems to reign.
- There are no official neighbourhood watch schemes.
- Every social housing area is a probable crime and social problems' hotspot.
- As regards health and safety in this district, it is claimed that: unfinished infrastructural works (example, those being done to 'Bacir Numru 1' at Bormla), pose a danger; heavy

traffic, lack of parking spaces and traffic pollution pose a major threat to the health and safety of the residents; The pollution emanating from the Marsa power station and the industrial zones are also considered as hazardous to the health and safety of the residents.

- With the exception of Fgura, Floriana and Valletta, in general, police performance in this district is considered as unsatisfactory, particularly in Paola (Police absence in Paola is felt to the extent that it has become a major issue for the local council. There are CCTV cameras installed at the local council premises as well as at the police station, however the police seem to either take a long time to react or even refrain from taking any action when law-breaking gets recorded on camera), Żabbar (Żabbar residents seem to have lost faith and confidence in the police) and Bormla (it is claimed that drug-abuse is practised blatantly in the area next to the police station). However, if one refers to the regular police-council meetings, communication with the police could be considered as good but not as effective as expected. In fact, police communication channels are open, but the results from this study state otherwise. Residents seem to feel more confident to report offences to the local council rather than the police. They evidently, seem to feel more comfortable reporting to the local council because, it is claimed, only the local council can guarantee anonymity.
- It is held that a sense of learned helplessness, resignation and apathy has taken over this district.

The Northern Harbour District

District two consists of the following localities in Malta:

- Birkirkara (B'Kara)
- Gżira
- Ħamrun
- Msida
- Pembroke
- Pietà
- Qormi
- San Ġwann
- Santa Venera
- Sliema
- St Julian's
- Swieqi
- Ta' Xbiex

Geographically, B'Kara Ħamrun, Qormi, San Ġwann and Santa Venera are found in central, in-land Malta and can thus be considered as very similar. They are urban, commercial and densely-populated, particularly at their cores. The village cores are surrounded by residential buildings. Although problems worsen during: rush hours, schooldays and Christmas time, nuisances and inconveniences created by the commercial core are not seasonal. From a sociological standpoint, it would seem that the more affluent have moved to zones that, although not remote, are considered quieter and more associated with middle/upper-class people. In fact, even commercially, it would seem that the shops in these localities target customers of modest income.

What follows is a brief overview of the social and crime problems in B'Kara, Ħamrun, Qormi, San Ġwann and Santa Venera:

- **B'Kara:** There is relatively not much crime whilst theft from houses and cars tend to be drug-abuse related. Thus, there is an extent of drug-abuse. There is no neighbourhood watch and the only CCTV cameras installed, monitor a public garden. Communication with the police is very good and there seems to be considerable police presence in B'Kara.
- **Ħamrun:** Here it seems that very few, if any migrants reside. The rate of legally separated people is in line with the national rate. Vandalism and drug abuse (mostly in public toilets) is rampant. In addition, illegal gambling (in the square, in front of the police station) is common-place. There are no CCTV cameras and the neighbourhood watch scheme has not been adopted. However, thefts from shops seem to be minimal as most shops are equipped with CCTV cameras. Communication with the police is satisfactory.

- **Qormi:** Social poverty seems to be rooted here with a steady increase in teenage pregnancies, separations and drug use (particularly in the playing field area), exacerbated by the residents' low level of education. Thefts are common-place, although there is a tangible reluctance to report. There are no CCTV cameras and the neighbourhood watch scheme has not been adopted. Communication with the police is satisfactory, although more police presence is needed.
- **San Ġwann:** This locality seems to be mainly populated by low income families. There seems to be very few or no migrants. Crime, including vandalism, is very low. There is no neighbourhood watch scheme or CCTV cameras. However, communication with the police is good.
- **Santa Venera:** Social poverty seems to be raising its head in this locality. It seems that the Housing Estate can be considered a crime hotspot since it seems to have become a breeding ground for delinquency (mainly by deviant youths) and violence. There also seems to be an influx of migrants. Communication with the police is good, yet more police cooperation is expected by the local council. There are some CCTV cameras in a few streets, however the local council fears that not enough is being done, security-wise.

The localities of Gżira, Msida, Pietà, and Ta' Xbiex are connected to each other and have, what one might consider, as the geographical advantage of being in proximity of the sea. However, the geographic constitution of this area and the quality of the sea water here, only allows for a harbour ambience – a yacht marina. Although, people do swim in this area, particularly locals, and there are some popular pubs and restaurants, as well as shops, the zone in these localities cannot be considered as a well-sought, bathers' paradise, entertainment zone or commercial hub. Historically, during the Second World War (Malta was a British colony – a fortress colony, to be exact), since it was so close to the harbour district/to Valletta – the capital city of Malta (only a boat ride from this zone to Marsamxett harbour, Valletta), this zone became very popular with the British army and navy officers. And as the law of economics dictates: their demand created supply... that of pubs and prostitutes. Although the shore is lined with some beautiful, harbour/Valletta-view villas (now most of them are official residences of dignitaries) and a number of popular wine bars, entertainment spots and good restaurants, the zone is associated with people of modest income and backgrounds.

- **Gżira:** This locality experiences petty thefts and drug abuse, but the situation is not alarming. Communication with the police is satisfactory and there is enough police presence. The re-opening of the police station in this locality was considered as very beneficial. There is no neighbourhood watch scheme and a CCTV camera has been installed on the strand area, but only for traffic reasons.

- **Msida:** This locality is considered as somewhat cosmopolitan with particular crime-related issues, such as drug abuse, vandalism and the rampant loitering (particularly in the areas close to Gżira and Ta' Xbiex). Some migrants live in this area, and quite a number have been caught driving without a license. Msida seems to be a hub for refugees. Social poverty is felt, especially in housing estates. Single parents and separated parents are on the increase, leading to a diminishing quality of life and poor child-supervision. Communication with the police is satisfactory but there is no neighbourhood watch scheme.
- **Pietà :** Here, social poverty is evident with single parents and separated parents on the increase. A few migrants reside in Pietà. There is also an aging population (residents are mostly over 60 years of age). Crime seems to be on the decrease. Theft from houses and shops is sporadic (most of which takes place while residents – mostly elderly – attend the 7am mass). However vandalism does constitute a problem, particularly in the playing field, which today is gated and the Marina gardens (mostly, it is claimed, at the hands of youths/students who attend the Junior College at Msida. There is no neighbourhood watch scheme and although contact with police is satisfactory, the fact that Pietà has no police station, poses a problem.
- **Ta' Xbiex:** This locality mainly experiences thefts from shops and cars. A particular area (known as the Guzeppa Cali area) is monitored by CCTV cameras, mainly to deter loitering and prostitution. Loitering and prostitution remain a problem in this area. Communication with the police is satisfactory however, it is felt that police presence is lacking.

The localities of Pembroke, Sliema, St Julian's and Swieqi are somewhat different. Ta' Xbiex leads to Sliema, which, in turn leads to St Julian's and Pembroke. All these localities can be reached by boat as they face the enticing, crystal-clear, blue sea. Swieqi can be considered as the residential zone touching St Julian's and Pembroke, but having no direct access to the sea. Sliema (although not in its entirety...in fact, there is a particular area in back-street Sliema that is associated with the lower-class and the underclass) is commonly associated with the high-class and the affluent, particularly with successful business people. It is spanned by a breath-taking promenade, at the foot of block upon block of very expensive, sea-facing apartments. Sliema is popular with young families as it offers: a long sea-side promenade; playing fields, ice-cream parlours, sea-side lidos, fine restaurants, hotels, cafes and wine bars... not to mention the spectacular rock beaches that are ideal for swimming. Understandably, it is also very popular with tourists. Walking up from Ta' Xbiex, through Sliema and onwards (on the coast), one would eventually reach St Julian's. In times gone by, this area used to be a small fishing village. Nowadays, although the little port still harbours some residue, traditional fishing boats, St Julian's is renowned as

a night-spot...the entertainment hotspot. There are some shops, but there are much more pubs, night-clubs, restaurants and hotels. There are also two casinos, gentlemen's bars, a bowling hall, discotheques and, what is considered, an extensive cinema place housing 16 cinema theatres. St Julian's is particularly popular with the party-lovers: adolescents, the young and the young-at-heart. Especially in summer, it gets crowded by groups of young foreign students who come to Malta to study English. Sociologically-speaking, St Julian's can be considered as the meeting ground for the majority of Maltese (and Gozitan) youth who seem to flock to this area (especially during weekends) from all walks of life and from all backgrounds. This is where cultures breed and clash.

Our walk on the sea-front would eventually land us in Pembroke – just after leaving four large hotels and the Institute for Tourism Studies (where prospective hoteliers, chefs and any other prospective professional in the tourism industry follows practical and academic courses). The English used Pembroke as a residential zone when Malta was still a colony (1800-1964). Once the very last English officials were out of Malta (1979), Pembroke became clusters of government housing estates which were allotted to those whose applications were accepted and subsequently selected. Thus, although most of the houses (the majority of which are terraced houses), in this residential zone, benefit from breathtaking seaviews, since the area is associated with the lower classes, it tends not to be sought-after by the affluent and the higher classes.

After walking through the housing estates of Pembroke and crossing the main road, one arrives in Swieqi. Swieqi is also connected to St Julian's, but from the back-streets. In fact, it has no direct access to the sea. Swieqi is a residential zone. Since it is not associated with government housing schemes and since it is considered as a good location (close to the sea, close to the entertainment zone, and close to the shops), it is popular with the middle and upper class home-owners. Most of the houses here are terraced houses.

- **Sliema:** Sliema seems to experience quite a volume of petty crime, especially theft, particularly in summer. Pick-pocketing and theft from beaches seem to constitute a problem in summer. In fact, beaches become crime hotspots during summer. As regards CCTV cameras: most shops have their own. There is no neighbourhood watch. Communication with the police is good but Sliema needs greater police presence.
- **St Julian's:** Vandalism is rampant in St Julian's, particularly in the village core where, it is claimed, cars get targeted by foreign students who come to Malta to study English. Vandalism is also evident around the coast: on trees, plants and lighting equipment. This also peaks in summer. Like Sliema, theft from beaches is common. However, the frequent occurrence of fights is a problem, particularly in bars. There are neither neighbourhood watch schemes nor CCTV cameras. However, most houses have their own alarms and security cameras. It is held that, especially during summer, more police surveillance is needed.

- **Swieqi:** Since Swieqi is connected to St Julian's vandalism is a problem rampant particularly in summer when cars in this area are targeted by students who come to Malta to study English. Another crime involving these students is indecent exposure. It seems they (especially the Spanish students) have made a habit out of running around in the nude, in the middle of the night. Few thefts. Drug users (particularly in a dilapidated building site). No neighbourhood watch, ONE CCTV camera (traffic related), no police station, not enough police presence (police concentrate on Paceville) are some of the problems mentioned. However contact with the police is OK.
- **Pembroke:** Although in Pembroke, crime is a round-the-year problem, it escalates in summer. Vandalism is rampant and most delinquents seem to be youth. One might thus conclude that this attests: a low level of education, lack of police support as well as lack of discipline. Residents do not communicate much between themselves and the locality lacks a sense of belonging. Thefts occur on a daily basis but tend to go unreported. A lot of visitors (considered as strangers) visit the area daily for different reasons (for example for work or for romantic relationships). The locality lacks a sense of territoriality and belonging. On average, five cases of rape are reported every summer and there are other rape cases that are not officially reported. A lot of foreign students reside and hang around Pembroke during summer and, most teenagers seem to be sexually promiscuous. There is no neighbourhood watch and there are no CCTV cameras. Dirt can be seen lying around, like empty alcohol bottles dumped in streets. It is claimed that there is not enough police presence as the police concentrates on St Julian's. However, communication with the police is satisfactory and the mobile squad responds immediately when called.

District 2: General Crime/Social Problems

- Crime in general seems to be on the decrease. However, although theft from houses and shops is sporadic (most of which takes place while residents – mostly elderly – attend the 7 am mass), it occurs.
- Vandalism constitutes a problem all over the district.
- Thefts are common-place, although there is a tangible reluctance to report.
- Theft from houses and cars tend to be drug-abuse related.
- Theft from beaches.
- Pick pocketing occurs.
- Thefts from shops seem to be kept to a minimum as most shops are equipped with CCTV cameras.
- There is an extent of drug-abuse.
- It seems that the housing estates can be considered as a potential crime hotspots since, in some cases, they seem to have become a breeding ground for delinquency (mainly, it is claimed, by deviant youths) and violence.
- There seems to be a steady increase in teenage pregnancies, separations and drug abuse (particularly in playing fields and public toilets).
- The level of crime is exacerbated by the general mediocre level of education.
- Vandalism is rampant.
- Illegal gambling (particularly in Ħamrun, in the square in front of the police station) is common-place.
- A number of people have been caught driving without a license.
- Single parents and separated parents are on the increase, leading to a diminished quality of life and poor child-supervision.
- Loitering and prostitution remain a problem in this district.
- The frequent occurrence of fights is a problem, particularly in bars.
- Indecent exposure in residential areas, in the middle of the night.
- Cases of rape are reported every summer and there are other rape cases that go unreported.
- Dirt can be seen lying around, like empty alcohol bottles dumped in streets.
- There is no neighbourhood watch and the installation of CCTV cameras (for security, not traffic reasons) is minimal.
- On the whole, communication with the police is very good but most zones require more police presence.

The South-East District

The third district comprises the following localities:

- Birżebbuġa
- Ġhaxaq
- Gudja
- Kirkop
- Marsaskala
- Marsaxlokk
- Mqabba
- Qrendi
- Safi
- Żejtun
- Żurrieq

Kirkop, Mqabba, Qrendi, Safi and Żurrieq, are situated very close to the airport (Gudja). In fact, once one drives out of the airport, turns left and drives on for about five minutes, one finds herself in the Kirkop, Mqabba,, Qrendi, Safi and Żurrieq area. These villages are practically connected and are thus very similar, physically: small, quaint (particularly in the village cores with, relatively modern housing estates on the fringes), residential, agricultural, encompassing industrial zones (part of the airport, factories and quarries). However, although the village of Żurrieq is very similar to Kirkop, Mqabba, Qrendi and Safi, once one leaves the actual village and starts driving towards the sea (this part of the island is the cliff-side facing the very small, uninhabited island of Filfla), one reaches the very small fishing village of Żurrieq, from where one could take a boat trip to the famous Blue Grotto. So clearly, unlike Kirkop, Mqabba, Qrendi and Safi, this part of Żurrieq is extremely popular with the tourists. Although Qrendi also has a tourist attraction called “Il-Maqluba” (where a sizeable piece of land (found next to a country chapel) caved in and is now virtually a big gaping hole, harbouring unique green ecosystems), however, this site is not as popular with tourists as the Blue Grotto.

From a sociological standpoint, the rate of marital separations and single parenthoods is significant but comparable to the national one. Poverty is felt in some zones in Kirkop, Mqabba and Qrendi, mainly due to lack of education, marital separations and/or sudden redundancy. It seems that there is a trend for school children to abandon their studies early and opt to try and find a job, rather than further their education. However, this trend does not seem to apply to Safi and Żurrieq where the educational standard of residents seems to be on the increase. The little village of Safi can actually boast of having seven medical doctors and a lawyer amongst its locals...something that was unheard of thirty years ago!

Crime/Social Problems:

- **Kirkop:** Few offenders live in Kirkop, however it is claimed that, due to the proximity of the village to the airport, a number of known drug barons from the Cottonera area live here for convenience. The main offence is theft of money and gold from residences and drug abuse. Vandalism was also a great issue, but the neighbourhood watch scheme, that now covers all Kirkop, reduced it. CCTV cameras have been installed in response to a number of thefts, targeting the elderly. It is claimed that Kirkop has the highest number of wardens on the beat and, it is believed, that this helped reduce further crime. There seems to be lack of confidence in the police (it is held that this is the consequence of police inaction) and the consequential *omertà*. It seems that residents find it easier and more natural to report crimes to the local council, rather than to the police. Residents' fears of insecurity are augmented by their proximity to the airport and two fireworks factories which did explode in the past.
- **Mqabba:** Only three residents are serving a prison sentence. Thefts are rare however, there are some drug abuse hotspots, where youths convene. In addition, it is a known fact that under-aged youths/children drive around without a license. Conveniently, the local council office is housed by the same building that houses the police station. There is no neighbourhood watch scheme and no CCTV cameras have been installed. It is claimed that there is not enough police (on-the-beat) presence.
- **Qrendi:** There is not a lot of crime in Qrendi however, judging by the amount of syringes found in the area, albeit not alarming, drug abuse, could be an issue. There is no neighbourhood watch as, it is claimed, the high level of *omertà* in the area would render this scheme ineffective. Communication with the police is satisfactory.
- **Safi:** It is claimed that the elderly of Safi have been repeatedly targeted and suffered theft with violence in their own homes in the 1990s. In fact, it was reported that, some of the victims were even tied up and beaten up by the criminals. Although this victimisation was incurred in the 1990s, their fear of crime lives on and the victimisation of the Safi elderly continues, psychologically. There were reports of drug abuse. In fact, there were people from Safi who overdosed on it. Otherwise, there is not much crime in this locality and neither is it inhabited by any known offenders. All of Safi is covered by neighbourhood watch and there are some CCTV cameras around, including those owned by property owners. Although the police station is not always open, police presence is felt as regular patrols are noted. However, as in Kirkop and Żurrieq, it seems that residents find it easier to report crimes to the local council, rather than to the police.
- **Żurrieq:** Although crime in this locality is on the decrease, domestic abuse and drug abuse seems to be quite widespread. Vandalism and littering also seem to constitute a problem. Other nuisances include: illegal parking, over-speeding and noise. These are

generally blamed on youths. CCTV cameras have been installed and police presence is satisfactory (it is held that the police station is always open and patrols are frequent). As in Kirkop and Safi, it seems that residents find it easier to report crimes to the local council, rather than to the police. There is no neighbourhood watch scheme.

Birżebbuġa, Ġhaxaq, Gudja, Marsaskala, Marsaxlokk and Żejtun, are also situated very close to the airport (Gudja). However, once one drives out of the airport, one has to keep going round the round-about and turn far right. After driving on for about five minutes, one arrives in Gudja (the airport is situated on the outskirts of Gudja). If one turns again to the right, one enters Ġhaxaq. Gudja and Ġhaxaq are practically connected.

Physically, Ġhaxaq and Gudja are very similar. They are quaint, old, small villages. In the village core, one finds old houses, on the fringes there are found housing estates (mainly terraced houses) whilst the borders (mainly agricultural) are dotted by restored farmhouses. If one continues driving through Ġhaxaq, crosses at the round-about and keeps going straight, one reaches Żejtun. Żejtun is quaint and old and has similar residences as Ġhaxaq or Gudja, but is quite big, compared to these two villages. If one drives back, out of Żejtun, turns left and carries on, past another village called “Bir id-Deheb” and then turns left again, one enters Marsaxlokk – the fishing village. Marsaxlokk has the advantage of being right next to the sea...a fishing port, really... dotted by the colourful, traditional Maltese boats. Marsaxlokk is a small, quaint, old village by the sea, where one can enjoy a stroll on the promenade and meet the old fishermen, who would probably be mending their fishing nets and tackle. Marsaxlokk hosts the famous, traditional Sunday market (by the sea) which is crowded by hawkers (selling anything from souvenirs, clothes, soft furnishings, Maltese culinary products and fresh fish) and buyers – locals and tourists.

From Marsaxlokk, one could either keep driving inwards, to the right and eventually end up in Marsascala or turn left, drive through Marsaxlokk and eventually end up in Birżebbuġia. Marsascala is another sea-side village, popular, to a certain extent, with tourists because of its long, panoramic, sea-side promenade, hotels, holiday flats, pubs, take-aways, ice-cream parlours, restaurants (including Chinese and Sicilian), cafes and a playing field. There are buildings that are old, but on the whole, buildings are relatively modern, particularly the luxury apartments, and the modest but aesthetically pleasant flats near “Taz-Zonqor” area. On the other side of Marsascala, one mainly finds relatively modern terraced houses, some villas, a hotel and restored farmhouses on the very edge of this sea-side village. Marsascala has a water-polo pitch but consists mainly of a small-boat-harbour. However, Marsascala tends to be popular, particularly with the locals, for swimming.

If, while in Marsaxlokk, one decided to drive through this village, one would eventually end up in Birżebbuġia. This is yet another sea-side village which is bigger

than Marsaxlokk. It is mainly a small boat harbour, however it boasts of a sizeable sandy beach, which became bigger after the sea currents were altered as a consequence of the construction of the Free-Port. The Free-Port is a sizeable harbour for cargo-ships that use Malta as a transit point for the containers they carry. Birzebbugia is quaint, particularly in the village core where one finds mostly old, traditional Maltese houses. However, there are flats, apartments, maisonettes, terraced houses, particularly in the housing estates. There are also some villas and restored farmhouses, especially in the agricultural area. On the coast of Birzebbugia, one finds a monument to commemorate the signing of the document that ended the cold war. Presidents Gorbachev and Bush were supposed to sign this document on a vessel far out at sea, but the area was hit by a violent storm and they asked for shelter in Malta. Even in Birzebbugia, one finds a long, panoramic, sea-side promenade, and a considerable number of pubs, (a discotheque even), hotels, holiday flats, pubs, take-aways, ice-cream parlours, restaurants and cafes. Right next to the beach there is a sizeable playing field which also houses areas for playing ball games. Again, this area is frequented by tourists, but is mainly popular with locals.

Crime/Social Problems:

- **Birzebbuġa:** Crime seems to be seasonal. Theft from beaches and cars increases in summer. Drug-abuse is widespread and, it is claimed, drug-trafficking goes on, undisturbed in uninhabited places. A considerable amount of syringes are found in the playground that is adjacent to the primary school. There is no neighbourhood watch scheme (although the local council tried setting it up) and the only CCTV cameras were installed on the local council's premises. In an effort to prevent crime and abuse, barbecues were banned from the beaches. The elderly tend to be the main victims of crime, consequently, they suffer a high level of fear of crime. As in Kirkop, Safi, and Żurrieq, it seems that Birzebbuġa residents find it easier to report crimes to the local council, rather than to the police. And they only approach the local council with reports usually after deep reflection and with hesitation. It is claimed that the Delimara power station and the Freeport industrial zone poses a threat to the safety and security of residents. Strangely, the age-old gas-distribution-plant was not mentioned. Communication with the police is satisfactory but the residents avoid involving the police.
- **Għaxaq:** The crime rate is perceived as low, with law breaking being limited to traffic contraventions (especially speeding in the Għaxaq bypass). However, the tangible village feast rivalry (ironically between the followers of St Mary and those of St Joseph) constitutes a threat to the tranquillity and security of this little village. The playing field seems to be the main crime hotspot, especially in summer when young people gather, causing what is considered as nuisance by the residents. Vandalism and littering,

particularly in the housing estate garden, is an issue. In fact, CCTV cameras were installed in this area. There is no neighbourhood watch. There is a police station in the heart of Ghaxaq, but it is not always open. Wardens do most of the foot-patrols, but these officials only tackle contraventions. As in Birzebbugia, Kirkop, Safi and Żurrieq, it seems that Ghaxaq residents find it easier to report crimes to the local council, rather than to the police.

- **Gudja:** Overall, the crime rate is perceived as low (theft is rare and when it occurs, it is mainly petty theft, probably to sustain drug abuse), however drug-abuse is considered a problem, although since syringes are usually found on the outskirts of Gudja (the football ground where youths convene), it is claimed that the abusers could easily be outsiders. It is claimed that, since Gudja is a thoroughfare, outsiders use it to illegally dump their rubbish (including used syringes). It seems that the victims of crime in Gudja tend to be the elderly, consequently, they suffer a high level fear of crime. Typical, village feast related offences (rowdy, unruly behaviour, fights and possibly indecent exposure) are committed during the feast-periods: both (*tac-Cintura* and *tar-Ruzarju*) in October. In comparison, St Mary (in August) is quiet. There is no neighbourhood watch scheme in operation – nor are there any CCTV cameras. The Gudja police station is not always open, however the area is covered by frequent police car patrols.
- **Marsaskala:** Crime seems to be on the decrease, although there have been reports of vandalism, theft from cars and theft from beaches. The playing field near the church and the area near *Il-Maghluq* (in this zone there are some nightclubs that lure the younger generations to convene) are considered crime/nuisance hotspots. There is no neighbourhood watch scheme. This was largely blamed on the weak sense of belonging. The only CCTV cameras were installed by the banks (to monitor their premises). The recent provision of a police station in Marsaskala was welcomed by the residents.
- **Marsaxlokk:** The perception is that crime is low... except for drug-abuse which, is claimed to be a big problem. This seems to occur frequently in vacant buildings. Next in line is vandalism. Very few ex-offenders live here. It seems that the elderly frequently fall prey to criminals in Marsaxlokk as well. Pleasure boats that pass from the port of Marsaxlokk, are considered as being a source of loud noise and consequently are blamed for constituting a threat to the safety, security and tranquillity of Marsaxlokk. There does not seem to be any crime hotspots. There are no CCTV cameras installed and there is no neighbourhood watch scheme (this was blamed on the apparent apathy of the residents). Police presence is acceptable and there are police patrols during the evenings, conducted by the Birzebbuġa police.
- **Żejtun:** Overall, the crime rate is not considered high however there seems to be a drug-abuse problem which seems to take place particularly in public gardens. It seems that, in Żejtun, the victims of crime tend to be the elderly consequently they suffer

a high level fear of crime. It is claimed that it is outsiders that cause problems since they lack a sense of belonging. Over speeding is considered as one of the problems of Żejtun, particularly in the arterial roads and the outskirts. There are law offenders living in Żejtun (some of which regularly visit the local police station to sign). There is a neighbourhood watch scheme behind the Żejtun parish church, especially tailored for the elderly that live there. The local council complains that, although regular meetings are held with the police, the police are not proactive: they are not present and they do not interact with the residents of Żejtun.

District 3: General Crime/Social Problems

- The main offences seem to be: theft, drug-abuse, domestic violence, driving without a license, over speeding plus other traffic contraventions, offences related to village feasts (getting drunk, disturbing the peace, urinating in public, indecent exposure and fighting) littering plus illegal dumping and vandalism.
- The young are considered as potential trouble-makers/criminals and thus a threat.
- The elderly have been victimised by criminals in the past and thus are generally afflicted by an acute fear of crime.
- There is a neighbourhood watch scheme that covers all Kirkop but this seems to be an exception. The other villages do not have a similar scheme.
- Although few and far apart, some CCTV cameras have been installed in this district.
- Although, as a whole, communication with the police is satisfactory, there seems to be a general lack of confidence in the police and *omertà* is tangible. In fact, it seems that residents find it easier and more natural to report crimes to the local council, rather than to the police.
- The residents that live close to the airport, (this district is close to the airport) feel somewhat at risk precisely because of their proximity to the airport and fireworks factories which did explode in the past. It is claimed that the *Delimara* power station and the Freeport industrial zone (found in this district) pose a threat to the safety and security of residents that live close by.

The Western District

District four comprises the following localities:

- Attard
- Balzan
- Dingli
- Lija
- Iklin
- Mdina
- Mtarfa
- Siġġiewi
- Żebbuġ

Attard, Balzan and Lija are commonly referred to as the three villages. Geographically, they are central, inland, situated in an area famous for its citrus fruit. Attard, Balzan, and Lija are very popular with home buyers. They are mainly residential, with a few shops, particularly in the village cores. Balzan is the first village one finds as soon as one drives out of Birkirkara, driving in the direction of Dingli (via Attard). It is a quaint, old, picturesque village, having narrow roads and consisting mainly of old houses/mansions, some villas, churches, chapels and convents (including that of the Good Shepherd which hosts irregular migrants, besides other disadvantaged/marginalized/needful persons). There are also wine bars, coffee shops and restaurants. In the modern part of Balzan, one also finds apartments and maisonettes. Socially, Balzan residents seem high on the ladder – belonging predominantly to the upper middle class with the exception of the irregular migrants/refugees (as well as other Maltese protégés) residing at the Good Shepherd convent. Unemployment is very low and there is no social housing in Balzan. Balzan is characterised by an ageing population. The elderly tend to live alone and thus are potential targets of thieves (theft from residences).

Driving out of Balzan, passing from in front of San Anton Gardens/the Palace of the President, past a five-star hotel, one arrives in Attard. With the exception of the old village core, which, like Lija, has narrow roads and old, quaint houses and restored farm houses, right next to the old parish church, the outer sections of Attard are relatively new. Up till the early nineties, Attard was known for its villas and high-class terraced houses, some of which even had pools. Now, the trend is for developers to demolish these family buildings and replace them with blocks of high-rise apartments. In fact, from a tranquil village and residential zone, Attard is gradually, but steadily being transformed into a hectic thoroughfare where traffic congests (particularly in the rush hours) and parking is problematic. There are also two residential homes for the elderly as well as some coffee shops/bars/pizzerias. Social problems might be present (especially in the social housing

area) but are not that evident. Most of the elderly reside in the village core around the parish church, and the population of Attard is characterised by young couples migrating to Attard from different localities since, besides being central and convenient, property in Attard is considered as up-market. So, socially, residents are a mixture of middle/upper middle class and lower class (especially from the social housing estate).

Right behind San Anton Gardens, sandwiched between part of Attard and Balzan, is the third village, called Lija. Lija is a residential area however there are factories and a small industrial zone in its outskirts. Lija is a typical Maltese village which has developed at a very fast rate. One finds the old village core around the parish church and the new buildings date back to about 25 years ago. There were open areas/fields in the proximity of the village core however most of these have now been built. One example is the University of Malta residence. Lija boasts of villas with a particular history, such as Villa Francia, Villa Depiro Gourgon, Villa Preziosi (Lord Strickland lived here), Villa Depiro and Villa Ganado. So it comes as no surprise that a considerable number of wealthy people built their villas in Lija (village core and country-side). However, there is also a social housing estate. According to old documents, San Anton Gardens were once part of Lija. Socially, Lija is a mixture of upper and lower class people (especially in the social housing estate). Lija has an aging population. Although not part of the three villages, Iklin is very close to Lija.

When one drives out of Lija and turns left onto the main road, drives for about two minutes, then turns right (across the main road), one ends up in Iklin. Iklin is a residential area, spanned by well-kept terraced houses, some villas, apartments and maisonettes. It is considered as a relatively tranquil area, however a considerable amount of traffic passes through it every day, particularly since the Birkirkara bypass is so close to it. The rate of broken families (separated people) reflects that of the national one, and social problems are not evident. As in Attard, Balzan, and Lija, the education level seems to be quite elevated as most youths seem to join university and unemployment is low.

- **Attard:** This town seems to be plagued by vandalism. Its public gardens, public toilets and even the local council premises are regularly targeted by vandals. A number of thefts from houses have been reported and used syringes are often found in public gardens and central strips (evidence of drug abuse). There was a neighbourhood watch system, however this did not work and consequently, it was abandoned. Public gardens and the local council premises are monitored by CCTV cameras. In addition, some residences have their own CCTV cameras and alarms while the new modern complexes have their own private roads monitored and secured by alarms and CCTV cameras. It is felt that there is not enough police presence in Attard and often, the Attard police station is found closed. Thus, residents are forced to call at the B'Kara station when they find the Attard police station closed. However, the communication between the local council and the police is good.

- **Balzan:** In Balzan there are about three extended families that commit crime and are repeated offenders. Vandalism and drug abuse prove to be recurring problems. These problems spill over from three villages (i.e Attard and Lija) as well as Iklin and the neighbouring B'Kara. In cases of vandalism committed by youths, the local council did intervene by implementing voluntary community service so as to avoid taking the young culprits to court. There is also a trend that youths run around on bikes, dreaming up dares and petty deviant acts. A neighbourhood watch scheme was launched however, it was claimed that, it created more problems than it solved. So, this initiative was abandoned. In addition, CCTV cameras were removed, as they were deemed as not financially viable. However, some residences have their own CCTV cameras. The council plans to install CCTV cameras in the playing field and public toilets facility in response to recurring acts of vandalism. The council has a good relationship with neighbouring villages and with the police. Regular meetings are held with the police and, since 2011, the Balzan police station has been opening regularly and an inspector has been posted here (perhaps due to the fact that Balzan has now become the main centre of the three villages).
- **Lija:** It is claimed that there are no real crime-related issues in Lija and thus, the need to set up a neighbourhood watch system was never felt. However, the Lija local council was recently targeted: someone stole €150 from its premises. The elderly feel they are potential targets of criminals. Their fear of crime has been fueled by incidents of theft from houses as well as snatch and grab. There are no CCTV cameras installed and run but the local council but some residences have their own CCTV cameras. The Lija local council has a good relationship with the police, however, there is no police station in Lija.
- **Iklin:** In Iklin, the incidence of crime is considered as rare and minimal. In fact, only a few sporadic thefts are reported. However, vandalism and foul language do stand out particularly in the playground area, especially at night. Another problem is the illegal dumping of spray cans which youths sniff in the playground. Used syringes are illegally dumped in the nearby by-pass (situated between Iklin and B'Kara), however this is not a problem linked to Iklin. There is no neighbourhood watch programme. The only CCTV camera installed by the local council is a traffic-control device. Some residents (mostly the villas) have their own CCTV cameras. In addition, the area is very well lit during the night. Contacts between the police and the Iklin local council are regular. In fact, the local council even meets up with the representatives of different police squads, like, for example that of the police drug squad. This networking is considered as being very helpful. The police mobile squad patrol Iklin frequently and regularly.

Driving out of Attard, uphill, heading north-west, up a main road flanked by trees on both sides (Attard Road), in the direction of Rabat, one is greeted by the picturesque sight of Mdina – the old capital of Malta, also referred to as “The Silent City”. It was built by the Arabs to safeguard Malta. In fact, Mdina is a small fortified, very old city, perched on bastions, overlooking the rolling fields of Rabat and Mtarfa as well as a good part of Malta. Mdina is associated with the old Maltese aristocracy (most of whom either resided here or still do) and is very rich in culture, tradition and history. It has very narrow roads and is rich with magnificent old houses, mansions and palazzos. In Mdina one finds the Malta Cathedral and the official residence of the Archbishop of Malta (as well as the impressive Cathedral Museum). There are convents (such as that of the cloistered nuns) and chapels all around Mdina. In Mdina, one finds tourist shops, thematic tourist features, coffee shops, pizzerias, exclusive restaurants (even a five star hotel) and a traditional gilder. Only residents can drive through and/or park their cars here. Mdina is a residential and touristic place, however most tourism boils down to one-day visits. Mdina has about 300 residents: there are no known social issues (no poverty, unemployment or migrants). It is characterised by an aging population, since the young prefer to move out of Mdina. Socially, one would only expect the upper classes and the affluent to reside in Mdina. If there are any family problems, they tend to be well-hidden.

When you walk out of Mdina via the back (not the main) entrance, and then drive up a tunnelled hill, unto a round-about (near the historic Roman Villa – which was actually a Roman Townhouse), one enters Rabat. Rabat is a combination of residential, agricultural, touristic and commercial areas. It is perched on the same hill that holds Mdina high. In fact, during Roman times, Mdina and Rabat were one city. In the core centre of Rabat, one finds churches, chapels, the old casino, the National Archives (once a hospital called “Santu Spirtu”), homes for the elderly, convents, tourist attractions and museums (like the Wignacourt Museum, the St Agatha’s Catacombs and Museum as well as the St Paul’s Catacombs and Grotto), as well as wine bars, clubs, bars, restaurants and shops. A flea market is also organized every Sunday in the centre of Rabat. The core village is very quaint, characterised by narrow roads and old houses. Rabat shares Mdina’s rich history. During World War II, a considerable amount of people from the south of Malta sought refuge (from the heavy bombardments) within Rabat, with the Rabat families. Rabat is also characterised by an aging population (especially in the village core). Socially, the lower classes seem to mainly reside in and around the government housing estates of Hal Qajjet and Hal Bajjada. The middle and higher classes seem to tend to prefer living in the Tal-Virtu area. Here, one finds terraced houses and villas. Family/social problems appear to reflect the national ones, although a number of battered/victimized women regularly call at the local council for help and the elderly tend to lead a substandard life due to their home-stairs and humid households. It has been reported that poverty is on the increase

as attested by illegal gambling. Yet drug abuse is minimal. The low level of education predominant in Rabat may lead its residents to have different priorities. This could be a different form of poverty.

Again, walking out of Mdina's back entrance, out of the tunnel and taking a sharp right, down a narrow country road, (driving past where the old and only train used to stop), and straight ahead, across the Mtarfa by-pass, and into a hill-top village, one would have arrived at Mtarfa. Mtarfa is where the British army had its hospital and where the British resided. The local council has been busy promoting Mtarfa's historical military heritage through, for example, the annual event called "Military Mtarfa". Besides other military building, Mtarfa boasts the tower clock and the old military hospital. After the British Navy's departure, most of Mtarfa became home to many Maltese families under government housing schemes. In fact, Mtarfa is a highly dense residential area thanks to the number of housing estates that has crowded this locality since the late nineties. There is also a home for the elderly however most of its residents come from neighbouring villages. In addition, there are two centres that cater for the needs of people with disability, namely: The Adult Training Centre (government owned) and the Dar il-Kaptan (privately owned). From a social perspective, poverty tends to be hidden however the number of separations is quite high. There are only around 60 elderly people residing in Mtarfa out of a population of around 2,500. The level of education and employment is quite satisfactory. Only ten migrants seem to live in Mtarfa.

Once out of Mtarfa, via Rabat, heading North-West, one finds the picturesque, country-side village of Dingli – made famous by its cliffs. Although geographically close to Rabat, Dingli is quite remote. The traditional village core (the parish church, dedicated to St Mary, found on the highest point – surrounded by old houses, which are mainly inhabited by the elderly and a few shops) is surrounded by relatively new government housing estates (mainly terraced houses) which are, in turn, surrounded by the countryside – cultivated and non-cultivated fields. In Dingli, one finds two political clubs, a band club (also used as a music school for band members) and a football club (Dingli Swallows). In between two government housing estates, one finds the football ground and a public garden. Another public garden is found nearer to the cliffs. Dingli is, in itself, a tourist attraction, however, it also boasts of war-time shelters and the recently restored "Ghajjn tal-Hasselin" – where the village women used to convene to wash clothes together. Besides the parish church, chapels, residences, shops and clubs, one also finds wine bars and restaurants. Socially, it is mainly working class and lower middle class. Although poverty has been described as minimal, it is claimed that educational levels tend to be low. This may be attested by manifested attitudes and literacy issues (as was recorded in parish statistics).

A drive along the panoramic Dingli cliffs, heading south, eventually lands one in Siggiewi – another quaint, countryside village, surrounded by fields. Siggiewi is a

combination of agricultural and residential zones. As with other traditional villages, the Siggiewi village core has, at its heart, the parish church (dedicated to St Nicholas) which is surrounded by old houses. This area is, in turn surrounded by government housing estates – mainly terraced houses. In turn, these housing estates are surrounded by countryside and fields: cultivated or otherwise. In Siggiewi, besides the parish church and residences, one finds several shops, bars and clubs, as well as three main tourist attractions/places of interest (“The Malta Limestone Heritage”, “The Birds of Prey Centre” and the “Tal-Girgenti” Open Chapel, where allegedly, the Holy Mary used to appear to a saintly elderly woman). Socially, the residents of Siggiewi tend to be predominantly working class and lower middle class. There is a number of single parents. The housing estates are hotspots for poverty but one cannot claim that poverty is a characteristic. The level of education and employment is considered satisfactory.

Żebbuġ practically neighbours Siggiewi. So a drive through Siggiewi could easily land one in Żebbuġ. As with other traditional Maltese villages, Żebbuġ has, at its centre, the parish church (dedicated to St Philip). This is surrounded by old, traditional houses, flanking narrow roads. The village core is quite big and stretches out. On the outskirts of Żebbuġ, one finds clusters of relatively modern terraced houses. Żebbuġ (one of the oldest towns on the island) is, mainly a residential area with a history of rural economy. The Ghar-Ram and Hal Mula areas host micro-firms which operate on a light industrial scale. Żebbuġ boasts of two houses of particular historical importance: Dun Mikiel Scerri’s and Dun Karm Preca’s. Other landmarks include: the Rohan Gate, Villa San Filep, the Palazz Baruni Azzopardi and the Hunting Lodge of grandmaster de Vilhena. Socially, the Żebbuġ residents tend to be mainly working class and lower middle class. Reflecting the national trend, marital separations in Żebbuġ are on the increase. With regards to the educational level of Żebbuġ residents, there seems to be a mixture of people with postgraduate education, average education and poor education. Cases of poverty can be found around Żebbuġ. Most elderly persons live by themselves and the need is felt for the provision of a home for the elderly in Żebbuġ. It is claimed that, street littering is evidence that the Żebbuġ residence lack civic pride.

- **Dingli:** It is held that crime is low in Dingli, yet drug abuse on the cliffs (not necessarily committed by Dingli residents) is a cause for concern. In summer, vandalism features a lot, particularly in the public gardens. Excessive speeding, especially in the main roads, constitutes another problem. Public gardens and the local council premises are monitored by CCTV cameras – however, CCTV cameras were removed from the main square. Contact with the police is considered as satisfactory however, it is claimed, more police presence is needed.
- **Mdina:** Crime seems to be non-existent in Mdina. This could be the result of Mdina being inhabited by a small close-knit community. In addition, Mdina has restricted

entrances: two – and these are monitored by CCTV cameras on a 24/7 basis by the police. There are also three other CCTV cameras around Mdina, consequently, the area is monitored all day and all year round. Also – all shops have alarms and/or CCTV cameras. To further enhance security in Mdina, it also has a police station.

- **Mtarfa:** Vandalism is rampant and widespread in Mtarfa. It is claimed that this vandalism is mostly carried out by teenage gang groups, who tend to hang around, inventing trouble, like for example: destroying lamp posts, cars' mirrors, notices and lights. Two other pressing problems are: the theft of gas cylinders (those left unattended, outside residences, for the gas-distributors) and the burning of skips. There is no neighbourhood watch system and neither are there CCTV cameras. Ironically, the reason for this lack of CCTV camera surveillance is that, the ones there were before, were either broken or stolen. The Mtarfa police station is regularly closed and consequently, there is not much police presence in the area. However, contact with the police is considered as satisfactory.
- **Rabat:** Theft from cars, houses and fields is sporadic in Rabat. The zone where the flats are, used to be a target but the local council intervened by setting up an intercom system as a security measure. Offenders, held not to be from Rabat, target particular areas, especially zones situated in the outskirts. Crime in the centre is believed to be minimal, perhaps due to the fact that, since it is constantly busy, the centre is constantly unofficially monitored by locals. There is no neighbourhood watch scheme and only private residences have CCTV cameras. Police presence is felt to be lacking and it was pointed out that, it seems that, frequently, the Rabat police do not even have a car available.
- **Sigġiewi:** Few thefts are reported in Sigġiewi but drug abuse and vandalism seem to be very common in the housing estates. According to reports, most vandalism is committed by minors. Heated arguments are a common occurrence in the village core. Usually, tempers flare over parking-related issues. Apparently, there are few ex-convicts living in Sigġiewi. There is no neighbourhood watch system but a number of residences have their own alarms and CCTV cameras. Contact with the police is considered as satisfactory, however often the Sigġiewi police station is left closed, the reason being that Sigġiewi is considered as a very quiet and tranquil locality.
- **Żebbuġ:** A number of thefts are reported annually but it is not an alarming situation. On the other hand, the constant illegal dumping of dead animals in the Żebbuġ valleys and the illegal dumping of waste on the outskirts is a cause for concern. There have been reports of isolated vandalism cases. This happens on particular days, for example, when the lights are out for hours. There is no neighbourhood watch system and there are no CCTV cameras installed (since the latter were found to be economically unfeasible). Contact with the police was described as very good. It was also claimed

that police presence has been enhanced by the posting of a new police inspector at the Żebbuġ police station.

District Four: General Crime/Social Problems

- Thefts from houses, cars and fields as well as snatch and grab cases have been reported.
- Drug abuse has been reported.
- Vandalism has been incurred.
- Illegal dumping is a problem – especially that of used syringes and of spray cans which, it has been alleged, youths sniff as well as that of dead animals and waste.
- Over speeding seems to also be a problem.
- Heated arguments could be a common occurrence in the village cores particularly over parking spots.
- The use of foul language seems to be a common occurrence.
- There is also a trend that youths run around on bikes, dreaming up dares and petty deviant acts.
- There seems to be the perception that neighbourhood watch systems create more problems than they solve.
- The elderly feel they are potential targets of criminals and thus fear crime.

The Northern District

District five comprises the following localities:

- Ghargħur
- Mellicha
- Mgarr
- Mosta
- Naxxar
- St Paul's Bay

Ghargħur, Mosta and Naxxar are three central, neighbouring villages. Driving in a straight line out of San Gwann, towards the north, one eventually finds a round-about. Turning right and right again would land you in the picturesque, quaint, old, quiet, small village of Ghargħur. Perched on a hill, overlooking a spectacular valley that, on one side leads inwards into the Maltese countryside and on the other side, leads to the Coast Road (or Bahar ic-Cagħaq). The village core is comprised of a church, surrounded by charming, old-fashioned, traditional Maltese houses. In Ghargħur, one finds a few shops, clubs, at least two restaurants and wine bars as well as a primary school. Most town houses on the outskirts of Ghargħur were demolished and replaced by flats. There are also a number of farmhouses scattered in the nearby fields. Ghargħur could be considered as a rural village as it is surrounded by lush countryside. Socially, when it comes to employment and wealth, the people of Ghargħur seem blessed. However, family break-ups and separations are also evident here and, it seems that the majority of middle-aged and elderly residents of Ghargħur did not complete their formal schooling and could be classified as early school dropouts. It could be that, since most Ghargħur families seem to own fields, the young could have been encouraged to skip school to work in the fields and help their families. On the positive side, although this could have been common practice in times gone by, nowadays only a few youngsters seem to be quitting school to work the fields. A considerable number of elderly people live in Ghargħur and, it seems, the younger generations choose to keep living in Ghargħur even after settling in with their own partner. Outsiders note that newcomers, "strangers", as they are referred to, are not made immediately welcome as they tend to be regarded with suspicion. The population of Ghargħur increased considerably in the past few years, since there seems to be an influx of young couples who took up residence in the modern flats.

Once out of Ghargħur, back at the round-about, if one proceeds towards the right, one finds herself in the neighbouring village of Naxxar. Another traditional village, similar to Ghargħur, but bigger and not as quiet. In the village core, at the centre, one finds the parish church, surrounded by residences (now mainly flats that have replaced town houses), Palazzo Parisio (a palace that is, in part, the residence of a Maltese noble family, and in

part, open to the public as a tourist attraction/place of cultural interest), restaurants, wine bars, clubs, shops, a bank and a petrol station. Of course, especially close to the parish church, one finds traditional, old Maltese town houses and further in, one finds at least three schools: a primary school, a secondary school and a post-secondary school. Thus, Naxxar is frequented by quite a number of adolescents and young adults. Another point of interest is, perhaps the old windmill next to the schools. On the outskirts of Naxxar (and Gharghur), one finds impressive villas and modern terraced houses. Like its neighbour Gharghur, Naxxar is perched on a hill, on one side overlooking Attard and Mosta, on the other side, overlooking Bumarrad, St Paul's Bay and a part of the Coast Road (Bahar ic-Caghaq). Like Gharghur, but to a lesser extent, it is surrounded by fields. Socially, Naxxar residents seem to be at an acceptable level. There is neither poverty nor migrant issues. This could be expected since the cost of either buying or renting a residence in Naxxar is on the high side. It is claimed that those who are unemployed fall under the category of "not wanting employment". When it comes to single-parenthood and marital separations, Naxxar reflects the national trend, which seems to be quite high anyways. In Naxxar, there is a considerable number of elderly persons. These elderly residents seem to suffer from loneliness. The local council tries to address this problem by the provision of services at the Family Day Care Centre. In addition, there are homes for the elderly, administered by the private sector ("Holy Family Home" and "Loyal House"). Needy Naxxar residents tend to resort to the parish priest more readily than they would seek help from the local council. The Naxxar local council does its part by providing as much information about the existent services as possible.

As one drives around the Naxxar parish church, towards its front door and down the hill (which is flanked by trees on both sides), one finds the main road, at a round-about. Turning right and heading straight, one enters Mosta. In the centre of Mosta, one finds the awe-inspiring Mosta Dome (or Rotunda) – the parish church dedicated to the Assumption of Our Lady (St Mary), the church that was made famous by the World War II bomb that fell through its ceiling (two others bounced off), ending up in the church that was full of people and did not explode. This was considered a miracle. Quite a lot of traffic passes particularly through central Mosta, where one finds several shops, restaurants, two banks, wine bars, clubs, take-aways, the police station, civic centre and the district health centre. Of course, especially in central Mosta, one finds traditional Maltese houses, however, further out, one finds apartments and maisonettes, then on the fringes of Mosta (touching Naxxar), one finds villas and modern terraced houses. There are also a number of housing estates (St Joseph Street, Santa Margherita, Tad-Dieb, Ta' Mliet and the 'Blata Gholja' housing estates). Mosta is also famous for its valley, called Wied il-Ghasel and the chapel one finds herein. Legend has it, that during a Turk invasion, a shepherd-girl sought refuge in a cave. As the Turks advanced, combing fields, she hid and prayed to the Virgin Mary,

asking her to deliver her from the Turks. When the Turks approached the cave entrance where she hid, they decided not to bother searching the cave because its entrance had been miraculously sealed by a spider's web. When one stops and looks from the edge of Mosta, touching Naxxar and overlooking Burmarrad, St Paul's Bay and part of the Coast Road, one can also see the gaping quarries below Mosta, parts of the Victoria Lines, the garden that is called 'Il-Gnien tal-Gharusa tal-Mosta', 'tat-Targa Battery', 'Ta' Bistra Catacombs' and the Mosta Fort. With all these landmarks, besides being residential and commercial, Mosta is also a touristic zone. Socially, most Mosta residents, seem to enjoy a satisfactory standard of living. A considerable number of Mosta youths attend University. Marital separation seems to be on the increase, but this phenomenon is comparable to the national level. Once separated, people seem to move out of Mosta, since housing here tends to be expensive. For this reason, and since residence is cheaper in St Paul's Bay, separated people tend to move from Mosta to St Paul's Bay. Mosta is a close-knit community and the church seems to have a strong influence on Mosta residents. In fact, a considerable number of Mosta residents provide voluntary services to the church. The Mosta local council does its part to, especially when it comes to youth-care. In fact, it has employed a youth worker to provide services to Mosta youths. The 'Gnien l-Gharusa' has been identified as the potential site for the development of an area dedicated to youths. The village core is home to a lot of elderly persons, who tend to live alone. There are four residential homes for the elderly in Mosta (a government one, Casa Arkati – which is private-owned, Central Home, which is also private-owned, and a home for the elderly run by the Franciscans) and the local council Day Care Centre for the Elderly. The Mosta Civic Centre provides health and social services to all Mosta residents, (the new District Clinic actually provides services to the whole district around Mosta).

- **Gharghur:** Few crimes get reported in Gharghur. However, there is a particular zone, referred to as "Top of the World", which lacks lighting and attracts drug abusers from other localities. An added, adverse consequence of this abuse, is the illegal disposal of syringes. This village has a police station and benefits from satisfactory police foot-patrol. There are no CCTV cameras, no banks and no ATM machines. The locals are worried about the potential setting up of a juvenile detention centre in Gharghur. This, it is claimed, could render the Gharghur area a crime hot spot.
- **Naxxar:** The Naxxar housing estate of 'Binja Hamrija' is characterised by vandalism and children loitering. Other vandalism hotspots (even in the form of arson) include the public gardens, residence doors and the playground. This, it is claimed, is performed by youth gangs (15 to 20 youths in a gang) who are non-Naxxar-residents. They come from neighbouring areas. These acts of vandalism usually take place after 7:30pm. The perception of the residents seems to be that there is rampant drug abuse and trafficking in Naxxar. There is not much police presence in Naxxar. Contact with

the police is satisfactory. Meetings with the police are held bi-monthly and whenever the need arises. There is no neighbourhood watch scheme and the only CCTV camera (administered by the local council) that had been placed in the square, was removed because, it is held, created more problems than it solved. Most villas in the area have anti-theft/burglary systems (alarms and/or CCTV cameras).

- **Mosta:** Vandalism is rampant, especially in the open space and particularly during the summer months. Vandals seem to target the area behind the police station, areas that are not well lit and the pedestrian zone. Acts of vandalism include the breaking of cars' mirrors and damage to road signs. Moreover, the residents of the housing estate are complaining that their gas cylinders are being stolen. Incredibly but true, even billboards have been stolen. There is no neighbourhood watch. Most villas have their own CCTV systems. The Civic Centre is monitored by CCTV. Contact with the police is satisfactory but it has been noted that there are not enough police on the beat, especially in the areas known as vandalism hotspots.

Once one drives out from the fringes of Mosta, across the bridge over the valley (Wied il-Ghasel), one ends up at a round-about. If one proceeds in a straight line, one finds another round-about, turn right and head straight, and you will eventually arrive in Mġarr. This is one of the smallest villages on the island. At the centre of the village core, one finds the parish church (dedicated to St Mary), which is surrounded by quaint houses, a number of clubs and restaurants. Mġarr is famous for rabbit. In fact, many Maltese flock to Mġarr, not only for the annual strawberry-fair, but regularly, to feast on rabbit – a traditional Maltese specialty. Mġarr is predominantly agricultural but has quite a number of residences, some old houses, some apartments/maisonettes, but mostly relatively-modern terraced houses. However, like Mosta, Mġarr is also frequented by tourists, not only for its parish church (the building of which was financed by the farmers' income from the selling of eggs....hence the egg-shape form of the parish church) and vicinity to the scenic 'Gnejna' (meaning little garden) beach, but also, and especially, thanks to its restaurants that specialize in traditional Maltese food. Socially, in Mġarr there does seem to be some disadvantaged residents. Marital separations feature highly, particularly in the government housing estate. An extent of poverty can be felt, especially in the rented government flats. The parish administers the distribution of food stuffs funded by the European Union. In this residential zone, the housing authority allocated a number of units to people with mental health issues, thus creating an inconvenience to neighbouring residents. An extended family lifestyle features in Mġarr. Consequently, most elderly residents seem to live with their children. However, this cannot be said of those elderly people whose children have settled abroad. The elderly who need care and nursing, live in residential homes for the elderly.

Back to the fringes of Mosta, overlooking the quarries and St Paul's Bay, one could decide to descend a steep hill, referred to as the hill of "God and his Mother" (it-telgha ta' Alla u Ommu). Once at the foot of the hill (facing the salt pans), turning left into the main road (the last part of the Coast Road), through Kennedy Grove (a family park which is very popular with Maltese families for picnics), then right, one arrives at Qawra (a sea-side, relatively modern village, which used to be considered mainly as a summer resort/touristic area). Driving through the Qawra main/coast road – which is flanked on the right, by a wide promenade, overlooking the sea and the Coast Road (Bahar ic-Caghaq and Maghtab) – one sees high-rising apartments/flats, bars, a small number of shops, restaurants and hotels. Qawra is mainly residential and although it was originally considered mainly as a summer resort, (where the Maltese who owned a second home would pass their summer holidays in) and touristic area, it seems, has become home to several Maltese families. Qawra could be considered as the first zone that belongs to St Paul's Bay.

As one drives on and turns slightly left round the bend (known as Ta' Fra Ben – now home to the National Aquarium), one will eventually arrive in the area known as Bugibba – another part of St Paul's Bay. If one stops and looks out from the promenade, across the sea, one would notice a small, uninhabited island with the statue of St Paul on it (and a fish farm in front of it). It is held that, after Saint Paul was arrested by the Romans and was on his way to Rome (to be tried there as a Roman citizen), the ship he was on got shipwrecked right there – on that island. It is believed that it was St Paul who brought the Roman Catholic faith to Malta because, while he was in Malta, he preached to and converted the Maltese. One of the most popular stories related to St Paul (even documented in the Holy Bible) narrates how, after being saved from drowning and while the islanders were providing a commendable level of hospitality (in fact, this Maltese characteristic is also emphasized in the Holy Bible)...as he was warming himself in front of the fire, a viper sprung out, bit St Paul's hand, but miraculously left him unharmed. At first, the Maltese expected him to drop dead and mumbled amongst themselves that, St Paul must have been an evil man, since the gods had delivered him from drowning, yet sent a viper to kill him. When he did not die, they quickly claimed that he was a god. It is claimed that St Paul's preaching left an indelible mark on Maltese culture. Like Qawra, until a few years ago, Bugibba was considered mainly as a tourist zone and a place where locals had their summer home. Nowadays, things have changed. Perhaps because property here costs somewhat less than property in central Malta, like Qawra, Bugibba is fast becoming home to many, but particularly to disadvantaged families. Although along the coast of Qawra and Bugibba, one does find a few villas, residences in this area are mainly high-rise apartments. As one would expect, like Qawra, Bugibba boasts of several bars, restaurants, hotels and shops (particularly at the centre).

As one drives on, one eventually reaches St Paul's Bay ...in the area humorously known as "the lazy area" (Tal-Ghazzenin). Here one finds the water-polo pitch, where the popular water-polo team, "The Neptunes", practice. This is also a lido, where, in summer, families convene to have a snack and swim. Driving past this lido/water-polo pitch...past the old watch tower (built by the Knights)...looking down, one sees the shimmering, blue sea and whitish rocks. On this side of St Paul's Bay, one finds the sailing-boat club and the St Paul's Bay primary school. This part of St Paul's Bay is the oldest part. In fact, one finds the old parish church (on the main road), curiously flanked, one on each side, by clubs of the two main political parties in Malta (the Labour Party and the Nationalist Party). As happens in other old villages, the parish church is surrounded by old, town houses. However, even in this part of St Paul's Bay, one finds quite a number of high-rise apartments, bars, restaurants and shops.

As one leaves this area and drives down a hill (called tal-Vecca), one finds, in the very last part of St Paul's Bay, Xemxija. This is a small boat port. On one side, there is the open sea and the island of St Paul. On the other side, spectacular Maltese countryside – the Pwales valley. As one drives round the bay and up the hill, the last land-mark of St Paul's Bay is the hill-top church. This had to be rebuilt, because, due to a fault in its foundations, the former church was gradually sinking into the ground. Like the other areas of St Paul's Bay, Xemxija used to be considered primarily a touristic/summer-resort area. Nowadays, it is fast becoming home to many people. In Xemxija, one finds a few old, traditional houses, but mainly, one finds apartments. There are also a few shops, bars and restaurants...and at least two sizeable hotels.

Several problematic issues are evident in St Paul's Bay. These include: mental health problems, school-related behavioural problems, single parenting, the fast-developing multi-ethnic community, the black economy, unemployment, non-registered migrants, marital separations and illiteracy (particularly in Bugibba and Qawra where social problems seem to be rampant). Identity crisis features highly amongst children of foreigners whilst poverty tends to remain hidden within these households. The St Paul's local council refers several people in need of counseling, to Agenzija Appogg. In addition, the local council provides community work in Qawra via Agenzija Access. Residents tend to migrate internally from one flat to another, in the same area. This is a consequence of the fact that land-owners ask for reasonably low rents and offer short-let options. As a result, these flats now constitute hotspots for social problems.

- **Mġarr:** Crime problems in Mġarr emerge in the form of violence, exhibitionism and theft. Violence and exhibitionism might stem from mental health issues, not criminal tendencies however, they still constitute crimes. There are no crime hotspots but the playground seems to be regularly targeted by vandals. Few thefts are reported – either because a few thefts get committed or because, it is claimed, the residents do not have

a lot of confidence in the police. Yet, the Mġarr local council has a good relationship with the police and contact is satisfactory. There is no neighbourhood scheme and neither is there any CCTV systems installed, except for the one at the local council premises. Some shops do have anti-theft or burglary systems.

- **St. Paul's Bay:** Apparently, crime is a daily occurrence in St Paul's Bay. This includes cases of: vandalism, theft, hold-ups, fights (particularly behind the Qawra Palace and the Suncrest hotels), drug abuse, child abuse, prostitution and a few cases of incest. There are two police stations in St Paul's Bay: one in Qawra and another one in the area called "Of the Lazy" (Tal-Ghazzenin). Contact with the police is good, however it is held that police presence in St Paul's Bay is lacking. There are no CCTV systems installed in the streets and neither is there a neighbourhood watch scheme.

Once one leaves St Paul's Bay and proceeds further north, past the areas called "Mistra" and "Ta' Selmun", one eventually reaches a sizeable, quaint, old village, perched on a hill, overlooking Malta's biggest sandy beach, "Ghadira" (meaning "Pool"). This village is called "Mellieħa" (meaning "Salty"). At the heart of this village, one finds a majestic parish church, dedicated to Our Lady. Right next to it, one finds St Mary's Sanctuary and the old war shelters. A walk down-hill, across the main road, would land a person in St Mary's Grotto...a place considered holy, where prayers are allegedly answered by Our Lady, as can be attested by the many testimonials (of miracles received - pictures/casts/newspaper cutting - on the wall. Behind the parish church, one finds a small cemetery. Right next to this cemetery, is a small playing field for children and a small snack-bar, which enjoys the breath-taking view of "Ghadira" beach, the Red Tower (a fort built by the Knights), the island of Comino and part of the sister island, Gozo. In the core of Mellieħa, one finds traditional, old Maltese houses, shops, restaurants, a home for the elderly, schools and at least two hotels. Further out from the core, one finds flats (particularly in "Ghadira") and villas (especially in the areas known as "Santa Maria Estate" and "Qortin"). The village core of Mellieħa was always predominantly residential. Not the same can be said of Ghadira, Santa Maria Estate and Qortin. However, it could be that today, necessity is compelling some families to set up base even as far as Ghadira....and some, even in the boat-houses (which, in reality, are sea-front garages that have been made into make-shift homes). Socially, Mellieħa seems to be quite healthy. Residents appear to be industrious and busy, mostly working in Mellieħa. In fact, unemployment rates in Mellieħa are amongst the lowest on the islands. Most Mellieħa women either work part-time or full-time. Thus, there are no poverty issues. There seem to be no drug and/or theft problems either. Thefts mostly occur in summer, from the beaches. However, having said that, these thefts seem to be on the decrease. The needs of the elderly, youths and persons with disability are met in one complex ("Dar Madonna tal-Mellieħa"). In this building, one finds: a Day Centre

for the Elderly (where they are taught how to use computers/mobiles and are offered craft courses and where they can benefit from the services of a podologist and a hairdresser); a gymnasium (where coaches attend regularly, at least once a week); a night dormitory/ respite for 8 persons and a health clinic (medical service is provided for free, twice a week). Most Employment and Training Centre (ETC) courses are run within this complex and thus, the residents do not need to travel to ETC, at Hal-Far (which is quite a distance away – on the other side of the island) to receive their employment training.

- **Mellieħa:** Although thefts from Mellieħa houses seem to be very rare, thefts from the Mellieħa beaches appear to be quite common. Drug abuse seems to be minimal and mostly appears to happen on the beaches. It is held that the abusers are mostly youths, coming from other places around the island. Vandalism is rampant in public gardens. To date, there are two functional neighbourhood watch schemes, however another three are planned. There are only a few CCTV cameras installed. Contact with the police has been described as ‘very good’. In fact, besides the monthly meetings with the district inspector, a number of meetings are held regularly with different members of the police force.

District Five: General Crime/Social Problems

- As marital separations and family break-ups are fast becoming the trend on the island, the adverse consequences of this phenomenon seem to also be on the increase. These consequences include: violence, fights, mental issues and children left roaming the streets unsupervised. St Paul’s Bay seems to be the worst hit, socially and crime-wise.
- The cases of exhibitionism reported (in Mgarr) might stem from mental health issues, not criminal tendencies however, it still constitutes a crime.
- Vandalism seems to be rampant in this district.
- Apparently, drug abuse/trafficking and the illegal disposal of syringes constitutes a grave problem in district five.
- Child abuse seems to be a common occurrence.
- Cases of prostitution have also been reported in this district.
- Theft and hold-ups have also been reported.

General Crime/Social Problems in Malta

- In Malta, the crime rate is not perceived as alarming. However, financial insecurity and poverty seems to reign in areas considered as industrial and working/lower class. Here, a sense of learned helplessness, resignation and apathy has taken over and residents, particularly the young who are not academically successfully and are unemployed, tend to resort to escapisms such as substance abuse.

- As, it appears, marital separations and family break-ups are fast becoming the trend in Malta, the adverse consequences of this phenomenon seem to also be on the increase. These consequences include: violence, fights, mental issues and children left roaming the streets unsupervised.
- It seems that the housing estates can be considered as potential crime hotspots since, in some cases, they seem to have become a breeding ground for delinquency (mainly, it is claimed, by deviant youths) and violence.
- The frequent occurrence of nuisances, squabbles/fights is a problem, particularly amongst neighbours and in bars/entertainment zones.
- The use of foul language seems to be a common occurrence.
- All over Malta, there seems to be a steady increase in teenage pregnancies, single parenting and marital separations, leading to a diminished quality of life and poor child-supervision.
- Crime in general seems to be on the decrease. However, although theft from houses and shops is sporadic (most of which takes place while residents – mostly elderly – attend mass), it occurs. In fact, thefts from houses, hold-ups, theft from cars, theft of bicycles/vehicles/boats, theft from fields, theft from beaches, pick-pocketing as well as snatch and grab cases have been reported.
- The main offences seem to be: theft, drug-abuse, domestic violence (even child abuse and incest), traffic contraventions (dangerous driving, driving without license, abusive parking, not wearing seatbelts and using mobiles while driving), offences-related-to-village-feasts/carnival (getting drunk, disturbing the peace, urinating in public, indecent exposure and fighting) littering and vandalism.
- Illegal dumping is a problem – especially that of used syringes and of spray cans which, it has been alleged, youths sniff as well as that of dead animals and waste.
- Illegal gambling is an issue in Malta.
- The age-old loitering and prostitution still goes on in Malta.
- There have been cases of indecent exposure in residential areas, in the middle of the night.
- A number of rape cases are reported, particularly during summer and there are other rape cases that go unreported.
- An extent of gang activity has also been registered.
- The young are considered as potential trouble-makers/criminals...and thus a threat. It is claimed that one finds offenders as young as 14.
- It is claimed that it is common for youths to run around on bikes, dreaming up dares and petty deviant acts.
- However, teenagers are also considered as potentially at risk from crime/criminals (mainly the uneducated and poor youngsters who become easy prey to criminals and addicted to narcotics).

- The elderly are perceived as the main potential or actual victims of crime.
- The elderly have been victimised by criminals in the past and thus are generally afflicted by an acute fear of crime.
- Irregular/illegal migrants seem to be viewed with suspicion and resentment. They have been, in fact, associated with offences such as: hate crime (inflicted by the Maltese upon them, and/or amongst themselves) loitering, heavy drinking and unacceptable behaviour in public gardens.
- Neighbourhood watch schemes are rarely operative. There seems to be the general perception that neighbourhood watch systems create more problems than they solves.
- The installation of CCTV cameras (for security, not traffic reasons) is minimal despite the fact that, there seems to be the perception that, the installation of some CCTV cameras might have helped reduce crime.
- Although, on the whole, communication with the police is satisfactory, there seems to be a general lack of confidence in the police and *omertà* (the typical Mediterranean code of silence, whereby everyone is expected to mind his/her own business) is tangible. In fact, it seems that the Maltese find it easier and more natural to report crimes to the local council, rather than to the police (because, it is claimed, only the local council can guarantee anonymity). Evidently, it is felt that most zones require more police presence and improved police performance. This is especially felt in industrial, lower/working class areas where it is felt that, the authorities have given up and criminals have taken over.

District Six - Gozo and Comino

Gozo (or Ghawdex in Maltese), is the sister island of Malta. Compared to Malta, Gozo is considered as more rural (less developed) and is known for its many hills, spectacular, rolling fields, quaint villages and breath-taking sea views. It could be claimed that Gozo enjoys a somewhat mystical and mysterious allure. In fact, legend has it, that it was home to the nymph Calypso – the witch that allegedly cast a spell over the literary (or legendary) Homer – as narrated in the *Odyssey*. The story narrates how Homer was kept under a spell by Calypso until she finally freed him so he could proceed homewards, to his wife, Penelope.

Gozo is famous for its pre-historic, megalithic temple, *Ħaġar Qim* (in *Xagħra*) and the *Ta' Pinu* Sanctuary (in *Għarb*) – the magnificent church erected on the site where *Our Lady* allegedly appeared repeatedly to a peasant mystic called *Karmni Grima*. To date, it is held that 'Our Lady of *Ta' Pinu*' intercedes and grants miracles to her devotees, as attested by the many artefacts found in an adjacent rooms – proofs of graces received thanks to her intervention. In addition, in the *Għarb* village core one finds, what was once home to *Frenc* – a mystic and very religious man, known as a healer.... active and effective even after death, as is believed by many. If religion is considered as very important by the Maltese, it evidently takes the major role in Gozo, In fact, although Gozo is a small island, it has forty-six, beautifully and artistically adorned churches.

When it comes to natural beauty, Gozo is a gem. For example, the *Azure Window*, found in *Dwejra* (down *San Lawrenz*), could very well be one of the most spectacular features of the Island of Gozo. It is a natural arch over the sea, formed millions of years ago, when a limestone cave collapsed. This place is so awe-inspiring, that it has caught the attention of international cinema directors and has served as back-drop to a number of films, such as: the original "Clash of the Titans", "Homer's *Odyssey*" and "Troy". Gozo boasts of several rocky and sandy beaches, such as *Marsalforn*, the *Red Beach* (*Ir-Ramla l-Hamra*), *Qbajjar*, *Hondoq ir-Rummien*, *Imgarr ix-Xini*, *San Blas*, *Dahlet Qorrot* and *Dwejra*.

The population of Gozo is of about 31,000 persons as of 2005, comparable to the combined population size of two of the largest towns in Malta: *Birkirkara* and *Attard*. It is held that, Gozo has been wiped clean of its inhabitants on several occasions, particularly at the hands of Turkish invaders. The relative remoteness of the island of Gozo is a double-edged sword: on the one hand, it has helped preserve the natural beauty of the island, but on the other hand, it has robbed the islanders of the more comfortable life enjoyed by most Maltese people. Lured by the prospect of a better future, especially in the 60s, many *Gozitans* decided to try their luck abroad and emigrated (mainly to the US or Australia). Some of them returned after saving enough money to guarantee a good life in Gozo. Proof of this is the fact that several houses are called: "God Bless Australia" and "God Bless America".

Since the young Gozitan generation tends to prefer living in Malta (perhaps because the main university campus is in Malta and perhaps because young Gozitans tend to be lured to Malta by job prospects), the Gozitan population seems to be an ageing one. In Gozo everybody seems to know everyone, so one would expect the inhabitants to live by the code of *omertà*, binding Gozitans to mind their own business and treat outsiders with suspicion. Consequently, one cannot expect conducting research on social problems and crime issues in Gozo to be easy.

District six (Gozo and Comino) comprises the following localities:

- Fontana
- Ghajnsielem (the island of Comino is administered by Ghajnsielem)
- Għarb
- Għasri
- Kerċem
- Munxar
- Nadur
- Qala
- Rabat
- San Lawrenz
- Sannat
- Xagħra
- Xewkija
- Żebbuġ

A cursory view of the map of Gozo shows that, to proceed smoothly from one village to the next, one would be wise to always drive via the centre of Gozo – Rabat (or Victoria, as the English renamed it). So, **Rabat** (Victoria) is the capital city of Gozo. This locality has a population of around 7, 500 people. There are no hamlets/ local community committees.

Rabat is essentially residential, commercial and touristic. It is subdivided into Taċ-Ċawla area, Kappučċini/Bellija, Ta' Gedrin (on the way to Ta' Pinu), Ta' Kana and Ta' Pompei. The upkeep by the residents is satisfactory and the local council has initiated projects that have upgraded the playground area, introducing turf in the pitch area and pavements. There are no known areas of dilapidation. The housing estate (Taċ-Ċawla) is well kept. It is the social stigma attached to living there that has an impact on the residents.

The perception is that the main social issues are concentrated in Taċ-Ċawla, since people needing social housing were allocated there some 40/50 years ago. There are a number of broken families or married couples that have separated, and a high percentage of single mothers. Again this is due to the concentration of people with social needs that live in this

area. Taċ-Ċawla used to be a 'no-go' zone, since it was even associated with drug trafficking. However, with education, the stigma is being slowly removed. So much so that, a number of Tac-Cawla residents have taken up tertiary education. In fact, the mayor believes that the Taċ-Ċawla subculture can largely be addressed through education. However, the general level of education is still below the national average. As one would expect, since most Tac-Cawla residents are officially on welfare benefits, unemployment is high. But, as regards the whole locality (Rabat/Victoria), there is a very high percentage of self-employed people – even more than in Malta. This could very well be the result of historical, geographical and cultural factors.

Generally, in Rabat, one gets the impression that there is a large number of families whose children have emigrated. This gets increasingly evident at Christmas time, when a considerable number of elderly residents join in the Christmas activities (even carol singing). The population of Rabat is already an aging population, but this seems to be getting higher. This may be due to the fact that the residents' children may choose to live outside of Rabat or even to work and settle in Malta. There are a number of NGOs (non-governmental organizations) lending their support with the socially-deprived, such as: Oasi for drugs and for awareness on over-spending, Alcoholics Anonymous, Ċentru Moviment Azzjoni Soċjali (MAS), Friends of the Sick and Elderly, Fondazzjoni Arka together with Caritas (Gozo) and the Knights of St John, who cater for the sick. The Church has a very important role to play in catering for social issues, and the Ċentru Ragħaj it-Tajjeb (The Good Shepherd) is doing sterling work. The local council organizes parenting skills courses (has also targeted Taċ-Ċawla area), computers, educational and craft courses. The elderly have activities organized for them, both in the locality and outside, even cultural visits to Malta. The local council likes to focus on those elderly residents who are not very mobile and who spend a lot of their time at home. These mostly reside in the village core. There is inter-council migration since a lot of the main services are located in Rabat, such as: the courts, schools (MCast and Sixth Form), government departments, as well as services provided by the private sector and the Church.

Crime

Like the rest of Gozo, there seems to be a certain level of fear of crime which seems to be particularly felt by the elderly. This fear of crime is fuelled by reports of theft from elderly people's homes, which, is claimed to have been perpetrated by people from 'outside the locality'. These thefts have stopped for the past two years. The main concern is drug abuse, as it is claimed to be quite obvious as the abuse seems to be practiced blatantly. The CCTV that was installed for traffic and enforcement in Pjazza San Franġisk served indirectly to eliminate (or at least reduce) the drug trafficking that was allegedly taking place there. In fact, thanks to this, two traffickers were actually arraigned in court.

The offenders (who do not fit into any particular stereotype) living in Rabat are mostly linked to drug abuse, although the most notorious offender of all was Totò Riina (the Sicilian mafia boss who actually took residence in Rabat, Gozo). They tend to be quite sociable and civilized, thus one would not readily label them as offenders. The main crime hotspot seems to be the playground – which lacks lighting. This zone is particularly popular with vandals. The area is being embellished by the local council.

Taċ-Ċawla earned the reputation of crime hotspot because here, neighbours are always bickering amongst themselves. There was a temporary hotspot in the pedestrianized area of Rabat, where, it is alleged, youths would meet in the evenings in two bars and create nuisance in the area. However, with the help of the police, this problem was solved. The extent of police presence leaves much to be desired. The police seem to be more occupied with patrolling the rest of Gozo rather than focusing on the locality of Rabat. Now, with the roads project, they are also involved in traffic management and are therefore kept quite busy. There are closed circuit televisions (CCTVs) in Pjazza San Ġorġ. There are no neighbourhood watch schemes. Fear of crime largely affects the elderly, who panic over a street light bulb that needs changing. Residents fear reporting to the police and, in the few instances in which they do report, they prefer going to the local council first. Residents know how to protect themselves and their property but they still need to learn more. For example, some Rabat residents still have this habit of leaving the key in the front door, or disclosing that they would be going abroad on internet, (their Facebook wall). Since Rabat has a number of nightclubs, and nightclubbing seems to be the activity that has the greatest negative impact on the safety and security of the Rabat residents, this now constitutes an issue, together with traffic and parking problems, which is to be expected, since, if one is to reach villages without complications, one tends to always drive through Rabat.

Munxar is a Sannat hamlet, found on the southern side of Rabat and is frequently considered in conjunction with the neighbouring **Xlendi** bay. Xlendi is a valley which runs down to a sandy beach and the open sea. It is characterized by breath-taking views of cliffs, deep blue sea and countryside. Xlendi is a well-known swimming/diving/fishing/summer resort. In Xlendi one finds bars, restaurants, hotels and other holiday accommodation. The parish church of Munxar is dedicated to St. Paul. Once past the parish church, one could choose whether to take the road to ‘Ras il-Bajjada’ or to Xlendi Bay. Munxar is popular for relaxing walks, particularly because of the spectacular panoramas it offers of the Mediterranean sea. Munxar has a population of around 1000 residents in contrast with Xlendi’s 200 (naturally, this number does not include tourists/holiday-makers). The Munxar population is largely made up of families with children under 18 years of age. Conversely, Xlendi, has more elderly than young residents.

Munxar and Xlendi are essentially residential, agricultural, and touristic – especially

Xlendi. The residents keep their locality as clean as possible, except for the few vacant houses that might need maintenance in Munxar and a few vacant flats in Xlendi.

In Munxar and Xlendi there seems to be a handful of broken families/separated couples (3 or less) and they are mostly located in the new housing area. Actual unemployment seems to be negligible. The number of university graduates from Munxar is steadily increasing, but Xlendi's modest education levels bring down the educational level of the area to average. The Munxar elderly do not reside in a particular area but are an integral part of the Munxar community. They hardly live alone, not only because of Munxar's close-knit family system, but also due to the frequent social and cultural activities organised for them by the local council. The church in Munxar actually provides outreach services to the elderly in particular – but not exclusively.

Crime

Like the rest of Gozo, there seems to be a certain level of fear of crime, particularly felt by the elderly residents. This anguish emerged after a series of thefts suffered by the Munxar elderly in their homes. This crime, which has subsided in the past two years, is alleged to have been perpetrated by people from outside the locality. Otherwise, there only seem to be contraventions – mainly traffic-related.

There are a few offenders that reside permanently and others who reside temporarily – and they all seem to live in Xlendi, perhaps due to the availability of apartments. These consist of murderers and drug traffickers. Allegedly, drug trafficking occurs in Xlendi, perhaps due to the close proximity of 'the Grotta' discotheque. In fact, a drug trafficker was apprehended in the main square of Munxar. Syringes used during drug-abuse are frequently found in both Munxar and Xlendi. In fact, the authorities have taken to raking the Xlendi sand to prevent the injury of those who frequent the beach.

The extent of police presence leaves much to be desired. Despite patrols from the Rabat police, fear of crime has been escalating, largely due to the Grotta discotheque activity. Besides being a crime hotspot, the Grotta discotheque represents a nuisance to residents because of the rowdy revellers who frequent it and who speed up and down the roads of Munxar and Xlendi after closing time. This has led the Munxar local council to choose to have the Xlendi police station open more than the one in Munxar, especially in summer. There are CCTV cameras on the bring-in site. When this report was being compiled, the Munxar local council was considering installing more close circuit television cameras (CCTVs) on its own premises in an effort to monitor the main square and curb the nightly nuisance caused by the Grotta revellers.

Vandalism also abounds when the revellers get bored and turn to destroying property. A neighbourhood watch scheme never existed in the locality (Munxar/Xlendi) because the local council did not find the indispensable cooperation of the residents. Throughout

the year, the playing field seems to be the main crime/delinquency hotspot, with typical nuisance generated by the youngsters that frequent the area. The residents are extremely reluctant to report crime to the police and even to the local council. As for victims, apart from the elderly, there exists bullying among schoolchildren of any school age. There might also be cases of domestic violence, but there does not seem to be alcoholism. There also is drug trafficking, however, this does not necessarily implicate Munxar residents. It seems that Xlendi offers the greatest challenge to Munxar's safety and security.

Sannat: near Xlendi and Munxar, one finds **Sannat** – or, more precisely, Ta' Sannat. This locality is found at the south of Gozo. It is popular for its characteristic high cliffs and, consequent, breathtaking views of the Mediterranean sea and the island of Malta. There are 4 subdivisions: 'Tal-in-Wara', behind the school (Main Street), tal-Pjazza, Ta' Seguna, and Ta' Ċenċ. There are other landmarks – the Hotel, the Imramma temple, plus cart ruts, dolmens, Bidni Park and id-Dahla taċ-Ċnus. The village core consists largely of Main Street. Interestingly, in 1951, England's queen Elizabeth II visited "The Lace House", found in the Sannat square called "Tax-Xelina".

Sannat is essentially residential and touristic due to the Hotel Ta' Ċenċ, the temple and cart ruts. This locality is well-kept and there do not seem to be any dilapidated zones. Abuses, such as littering, are mostly performed by people passing through Sannat and misusing the bring-in site.

The researcher was given the impression that Sannat family problems were only shared with the parish priest of Sannat. In fact, the Sannat local council could not provide any information regarding this issue. A rise in unemployment was registered lately and the level of education, in Sannat, seems to be below the national average. In effect, literacy is perceived to be quite low, consequently, the local council organises literacy courses. The Sannat local council likes to organise Notte Scarlata, since red is the colour of Sannat, of its football club and of St Margaret (the patron saint). Every year there is a different cultural theme for Notte Scarlata.

Sannat has a population of around 2,300 residents. Out of these, about 800 are elderly persons who tend to live in Main Street. For this reason, Main Street is considered as a top priority for the local council's social initiatives. In fact, the local council has asked for more police patrols, in this area where the elderly live, also increasing street lighting in this zone.

Crime

Like the rest of Gozo, fear of crime seems to be particularly experienced by the elderly, due to actual thefts that have been incurred by the elderly in their homes. These crimes, which have stopped for the past two years, have allegedly been perpetrated by people from 'outside the locality'. Yet, amazingly, residents keep leaving their keys in the front door and their cars open, with the keys in the ignition.

Apart from littering in uninhabited areas, there seems to be widespread drug abuse and property-vandalism. For example, the destruction of the large traffic mirrors installed to ease the traffic flow in blind spots. Residents are extremely reluctant to report crime, and when they finally do, they evidently find it easier to call the local council rather than the police.

It is common to find used syringes (left by drug-abusers) in the area known as id-Daħla taċ-Ċnus. The playing field seems to be the main crime hotspot since residents constantly complain about the nuisance that, is alleged, is regularly caused by young people. The extent of police presence is certainly not satisfactory. It is claimed that the Sannat police station gets so cold in winter that police officers prefer to stay in their cars, rather than in it, as their cars tend to be warmer.

There do not seem to be any crime offenders living in Sannat. The victims of crime tend to be: the elderly people, drug users and youngsters aged 15 to 18 who suffer from peer pressure and bullying. There aren't any industries or activities that impact negatively on the safety and security of Ta' Sannat.

Fontana is a Rabat suburb, found on the road between Rabat and Xlendi. Fontana is known for its lush-green, fertile Lunzjata Valley and the famous water stream that flows out of a spring in this valley. The locality is essentially residential, agricultural, and touristic (the Loggia/ natural water springs, and cottage industry are tourist attractions). It has three main areas: the village core, Ta' Randu and Ta' Mulejja (which includes the Jesuits' retreat home called Dar Manresa). The locality is well-kept although, there are a considerable number of vacant houses due to inheritance issues that are falling into disrepair and looking dilapidated. These are mostly concentrated round the church area.

Although the Fontana local council is involved in a lot of environmentally-friendly projects related to EkoGħawdex, according to the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA), Fontana has one of the highest rates of traffic pollution. The junction between Triq tal-Għajn, Triq Vajring and Pjazza Santu Wistin is a major traffic node that might well contribute to this pollution. So although Fontana is one of the smallest and greenest villages in Gozo (its valley even has a population of the protected, sweet-water, endemic, crab), its residents are still plagued by dense traffic and the consequent car and noise pollution.

Fontana has a population of around 850 residents – about 40 of whom are elderly. Thirty of these elderly people live completely on their own so, the Fontana local councils makes it a point to keep constant contact with them, even by offering the midday meal on special days of the year. There do not seem to be more than four broken families/ separated married couples. Unemployment is negligible and the education standard seems to conform to the national average. There were a number of professionals that left

Fontana to find work elsewhere or were married outside of the locality. There is not much land left that can be developed by local residents and so Fontana people tend to move out permanently.

Crime

In Fontana, the crime rate seems to be extremely low – with the occasional theft. But Fontana residents still leave their keys in the front door and in their cars. There are two residents who are convicted offenders. The most common offences are traffic contraventions, mostly over-speeding. It was claimed that, the authorities refuse to install any speed cameras, even though 3 persons died in the area in the past 10 years as a result of over-speeding in Triq il-Għajn.

The researcher was told that police presence in Fontana is almost negligible. Evidently, there is an over-reliance on the Rabat police station. When compelled to seek help, the Fontana residents prefer turning to the local council rather than to the police. CCTVs are located near the spring and there are no neighbourhood watch schemes. The noise pollution that emanates from the Grotta discotheque (in the Xlendi/Munxar zone) negatively affects Fontana. In fact, the noise can be heard from as far as Dar Manresa which is located on the other end of Fontana. The frequent car races and engine-revving, in the dead of the night, greatly disturbs residents. In fact, the Grotta discotheque is the activity that greatly and adversely affects the safety and security of the locality.

It is the Fontana elderly that suffer most from the negative effects of the fear of crime. News, especially bad news, travels rapidly in Gozo, and the stories about other elderly people getting robbed in broad daylight, traumatizes the Fontana elderly. As for drug-abuse: there are the occasional syringes found along the sides of the arterial road (Triq il-Għajn) that might belong to the revelers of the Grotta discotheque or people going through Fontana. Another issue that afflicts Fontana are the huge quarry trucks that use the arterial road. It is held that these huge trucks can also create structural damages to houses due to the vibration caused by the vehicles. Consequently, besides suffering the dirt, noise and diesel pollution created by these trucks, Fontana residents endure the anxiety of possible structural damage to their homes.

Nadur is perched on a hill, on the east side of Gozo. It's location rendered it an ideal look-out place for the protectors of the island and in fact, traditionally, this has been the role of Nadur. The Locality is divided into six main areas: Ta' Hida, Tal-Ħali, San Blas, Ta' Kenuna, Tad-Duru and Ta' Grinju. Although most Nadur residents live in the village core, residences spread from the centre into the countryside, overlooking spectacular valleys and the coast, particularly the breath-taking bays of San Blas, Dahlet Qorrot and Ramla

(under the famous Calypso Cave). Nadur is mainly residential and agricultural. There are Armed Forces of Malta (AFM) barracks at Ta' Soppu and a series of quarries on the Qala side. Nadur has no dilapidated areas and there is a high level of upkeep and cleanliness by the residents. Nadur is very much sought for its 29th of June parish feast (Imnarja) – the feast of St Peter and St Paul and for its famous carnival.

There seems to be a small number of broken families/separated married couples. In Nadur, unemployment seems to be negligible but jobs in Gozo are few and getting fewer, consequently, Gozitans need to go to Malta permanently to find work. The level of education here seems to be above the national average. Nadur has a population of around 4,800, of which about 1,920 are elderly residents. The elderly are concentrated in the older parts of the six areas. The Nadur local council tends to these residents by frequently organizing cultural visits and social events, specifically with the elderly in mind. There seems to be a younger family cohort in the Tal-Ħali housing estate, and for this reason, one would expect the Nadur population to be composed of a good number of children and young people. The population of Nadur tends to grow during summer, when immigrants return from abroad to visit. People with social problems tend to approach the church rather than the local council, so the interviewee was not very knowledgeable about social problems in Nadur.

Crime

It seems that the elevated fear of crime experienced by the Nadur elderly, reflects the level of fear of crime suffered by the rest of Gozo. This fear was powered by the thefts incurred by the elderly, in their homes. Although this type of crime spree, allegedly driven and engaged in by people from 'outside the locality' has stopped occurring in the past two years, its residue negative effects are still evident. Otherwise, the only crime-related issues faced by Nadur people seem to be, in actual fact, merely traffic contraventions. Residents still leave their keys in the main door or/and in their cars.

Police presence is considered satisfactory. However, it is felt that, although there are regular police patrols, these are not enough, especially during the carnival season (Nadur is famous for its carnival festivities – to which, people from all over the Maltese islands flock), when fear of crime evidently raises its ugly head. It is ironic that, during the carnival festivities organized in Nadur, Nadur residents are known to stay indoors and to worry excessively that their property is going to be vandalised. And sometimes, Nadur property gets damaged/vandalized by the carnival revelers, mostly by those who get drunk. Nadur residents, it seems, suffer the effects of the rowdiness and general disrespectful of the people who visit Nadur for carnival (mostly Maltese). The Nadur carnival festivities are spread over five days. Moral panic gets fueled, particular during the days that precede the opening of the Nadur carnival festivities. This panic manifests itself through: the barrage

of complaints and recommendations that reach the Nadur local council – mainly to take crime-prevention measures (for example, by fixing broken/non-functioning street lamps); and the residents' frantic efforts to protect their property. The carnival activity in Nadur peaks on Saturday, but between Monday and Tuesday it calms down. The locality never had neighbourhood watch schemes and has no closed circuit televisions (CCTVs).

The main, not crime, but rowdy hotspot in Nadur, is the playground at Tal-Ħali, at Ġnien il-Kunsill. It seems to be taken over by rowdy young people who disturb residents. However, their rowdiness gets displaced elsewhere when the police turn up. The Nadur residents prefer reporting crime to the local council first, before contacting the police. The same cannot be said of the foreign (European) residents, of whom there is an increasing number living in Nadur.

In Nadur, there are also known offenders living. When it comes to victims of crime, being considered vulnerable, it is the elderly that get labelled as potential crime victims. With the exception of the carnival activities, in Nadur, there are no particular industries or activities that affect the safety and security of the area.

Ta' Kerċem, a village with a population of around 1,905 residents, is found close to the south-west of Rabat, between the Lunzjata Valley (limits of Fontana), the lush hills of Tal-Mixta, Ghal Ilma and Ta' Dbiegi, rolling up to the Pond of San Rafflu and Xlendi cliffs. Out of the estimated 1,905 residents, around 500 are under 18 years of age; circa 100 are foreigners; and another 100 are Maltese people with a registered Gozitan ID card (who most probably live in Malta most of the year). **Santa Luċija** is considered as a Ta' Kerċem hamlet, with its own, bucolic church square where its residents (mainly farmers) meet before and after mass at their old chapel, dedicated to St Lucy. The Ta' Kerċem local council also administers the Santa Luċija hamlet, which is too small to be divided into smaller administrative areas. Ta' Kerċem and Santa Luċija are essentially residential and agricultural. Like most of Gozo, the area is very well kept by residents, with very few vacant houses that look slightly rundown due to lack of maintenance. There is an issue with large trucks carrying quarry material that pass through the tiny village, damaging roads with their weight and causing noise pollution.

In Ta' Kerċem and Santa Luċija there only seems to be a handful of broken families/separated married couples. Unemployment is negligible. There seems to be a balanced distribution between people holding menial jobs and those considered as having a profession. Agriculture, which used to be the main job-area in post-war Gozo, now claims only a fraction of the employment range. There are no issues regarding immigration. The level of education reflects the national average. The social fabric has been affected by the building of a new housing estate in the last 20 years. This housing estate injected Ta' Kerċem with new young families and thus altered the balance of an ageing population.

The elderly residents are not concentrated in any particular area but are evenly distributed around the locality.

Crime

Apparently, the elevated fear of crime experienced by the Ta' Kerċem/Santa Luċija elderly, reflects the level of fear of crime suffered by the rest of Gozo. This is the consequence of a number of thefts suffered by the elderly, in their homes, allegedly perpetrated by outsiders, but which has stopped for the past two years. Otherwise, only contraventions (mainly traffic-related) seem to be occurring, not crimes. As regards drug trafficking, the Ta' Kerċem local council only got to know of one used syringe that was found in the main square about eight years ago. The general idea is that: the locality is secure; there are no offenders residing in Ta' Kerċem/Santa Luċija; there are no crime victims, except maybe the elderly who fear crime because they feel vulnerable and targeted. The locality is sufficiently patrolled by the Rabat police (the police station in Ta' Kerċem is almost always closed). The community is willing to file reports with the local council, rather than the police, however these do not concern crime. There are no by-laws, neighbourhood watch schemes, gating or identified crime hotspots. A closed circuit camera has been installed in the bring-in site.

Għajnsielem is the first village encountered as one drives out of the Mġarr harbour (where the ferry docks). The locality has a population of around 3,260 residents, of whom around 200 are non-Maltese who live there, permanently. There was a time when Għajnsielem was considered part of Nadur. Għajnsielem is famous for its Christmas/Nativity-village, erected almost yearly by enthusiasts and volunteers as part of the annual, December Għajnsielem Fest activities. This endeavour is undoubtedly inspired by the twinning Għajnsielem has with Bethlehem (a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the two localities, in relation to religious tourism). The island of Comino is administered by the Għajnsielem Local Council. Comino has only three permanent residents, but it has a strong tourism influx during the summer months.

Għajnsielem is mainly residential, agricultural (farms at Ta' Kordina), commercial and touristic (Grand Hotel, Mġarr Harbour, Chambray, remains of Calypso and other wrecks in Xatt l-Aħmar, fougasse and has Neolithic remains at Borġ Gharib, tal-Qieghan, and tal-Imrejżbiet; there is also the Torri Mġarr ix-Xini and Kappella Santa Ċeċilja, which is the oldest chapel in Gozo and a large WWII shelter). Għajnsielem is divided into three areas: Tal-Gudja, ta' ġol-Kaxxa and Ta' Kordina.

When it comes to the general upkeep of the village, it can be considered as high standard. However, due to complications, the Church and the community now cannot benefit from a European Union grant to embellish the area leading to its entrance, and

so, this has been left in need of maintenance work. Since it is the first thing that impacts visitors, this has given the centre of Ghajnsielem a dilapidated look. In addition, there are a number of vacant dwellings that are not maintained by the owners due to inheritance issues. These might also give the impression of dilapidation. Geographically Ghajnsielem is blessed with natural water springs. In fact, there was a time when, a former minister (The Hon Mr Lorry Sant) planned to export natural water from Ghajnsielem to Malta.

In Ghajnsielem there only appear to be a handful of broken families/separated married couples, and hardly any unemployment. The population is not an ageing one, as perhaps people might assume. Evidence of this is the large number of families with young children. The elderly are largely concentrated in the village core area. The level of education is on the rise, although one expects Ghajnsielem people with professions to settle in Malta – where there are more job opportunities for them. Dar Ġużeppa Debono houses single pregnant mothers, who sometimes come from Malta to give birth in Gozo. Ghajnsielem also houses Gozo's Respite Centre for adults and there is another for children, as well as the Day Care Centre for the elderly (which is used by all Gozitan local councils). Ghajnsielem also houses: the Education Ministry's Arts Centre (which caters for all of Gozo); a private English language school; and a youth hostel for foreigners run by the Church at Dar San Ġużepp. Ghajnsielem Fest is held every December and its Nativity village attracts a lot of people from all over the Maltese islands. There is in-migration especially by Maltese and foreigners, but there is no out-migration from the locality, except for residents working in Malta.

Crime

Like the rest of Gozo, the people of Ghajnsielem, particularly the elderly, experience fear of crime. This came about after a series of thefts incurred by the elderly in their own homes. Ghajnsielem has a reputation of being the place where the largest amount of alcohol is consumed in Gozo and this can be traced back to when the British were stationed in Fort Chambray. The main hotspot seems to be the dilapidated main square, which attracts nuisance such as the rowdiness of young people gathering there late at night. In addition, it is alleged that these youngsters are, frequently, also the authors of vandalism and littering. This nuisance seems to be allowed to persist, since the police station remains closed most of the time.

The interviewee was not aware of any offenders living in Ghajnsielem and the general perception on crime is that it occurs very rarely. Drugs are abused, largely in the area around the football club and there is a major traffic problem in Triq l-Imġarr, since it is a major thoroughfare for all of Gozo. In fact, it is believed that many accidents occur on that road. This could be the direct cause of the traffic exiting the Gozo ferry. There is also a littering problem behind the cemetery, largely due to building contractors dumping material there.

Comino also suffers from littering, particularly that left after barbeques. In Ghajnsielem there are no neighbourhood watch schemes due to lack of public participation. Bullying was cited as the main form of victimization and its victims' ages vary from young school children to adolescents to adults and the elderly. The main activity that influences the safety and security of Ghajnsielem is largely the Gozo ferry traffic.

Qala: If you happen to be enjoying a glass of wine in one of the many wine bars in the **Qala** church square, you are in the village that is furthest away from Rabat. Of course, instead you could be enjoying its unobstructed, breath-taking views of its coastline (particularly of Hondoq ir-Rummien's bay) and the island of Comino. With the largest surface area (spanning from Mgarr to Dahlet Qorrot), Qala has a population of around 2,500 residents, of whom about 500 are non-locals. There are about 250 foreigners and another 150 Maltese who have their ID registered in Qala.

The locality is mainly residential and agricultural, having some industrial activity in terms of quarrying. There are no housing estates and the younger people seem to be moving out of Qala. Qala is not divided into sections. It is claimed that more than half of its roads are new and that the rural roads (in existence since the 1970s) desperately need resurfacing. Qala is well-kept. There are a lot of vacant buildings due to inheritance issues, especially around the village core. There are three major projects that have taken place recently: the setting up of a Folklore Museum, the restoration of Fort Sant'Antnin, and the setting up of the heritage trail and picnic area at the entrance of Qala, near the football ground.

It seems that Qala only has a few broken families/separated married couples and that the level of unemployment reflects the national average. The educational standard of the people of Qala seems to be on the rise. About a third of the residents are elderly people – who mainly live in the village core. It is claimed that those who live on their own are the ones who most suffer fear of crime and loneliness.

Crime

The crime rate seems to be low in Qala, the predominant crime being drug-abuse among young people. There is the occasional house break-in, or theft, or vandalism. There are offenders living in Qala and some of them are serving prison sentences, too. There are no particular hotspots to point out. There are closed circuit cameras installed in the playing field, the school and the folklore museum areas. In Qala, there were never any neighbourhood watch schemes set up. The police station is generally open, but more foot patrols in the square are needed to possibly prevent the irregular parking that occurs constantly, possibly because of the patrons of the five restaurants/wine-bars in the main square.

There seems to be two main categories of victims of crime: the elderly (who fear crime)

and the young people/students (drug-addicts). There are also cases of child abuse that the local council has come to know of and has passed on to the police. The residents prefer reporting to the local council rather than to the police because, in that way, anonymity is guaranteed. The main activity that disrupts the safety and security of Qala is the heavy quarry trucks going through the locality from the quarries on the outskirts.

Xagħra (or, more correctly, **ix-Xagħra**) is considered as the place where the first inhabitants of Gozo probably lived. In fact, it is in Xagħra that one finds the well-preserved, mystical, prehistoric Ggantija Temples. However, these temples are not the only tourist-magnet in Xagħra. In their proximity, one can visit the traditional Ta' Kola's windmill. In addition, also in Xagħra, one can enjoy fascinating, underground, geographical features at Xerri's Grotto and Ninu's Cave. Xagħra is also home to one of Gozo's most popular hotels. Yet Xagħra retained its quaint, village features. It has a population of around 5,000 residents of whom, about 800 are registered as living in Xagħra (Maltese people with Gozitan identity cards) but who clearly live elsewhere – probably in Malta.

Xagħra is mainly residential, touristic, commercial (there are a number of shops, pubs and restaurants) and agricultural. The locality is well-kept and clean. There are five predominant areas: Pjazza, Sant'Anton, Tan-Nazzarenu, taċ-Ċimiterju (including Triq tas-Sruġ and Triq tal-Kortoll) and Bullara (the hotel area). Tan-Nazzarenu is like a separate village. It is believed to have housed one of the earlier settlements of Xagħra and yet, anthropologically, the people from the Pjazza area seem to look down at the ones from Tan-Nazzarenu. This could be because Xagħra has a larger parish and greater funds than the Tan-Nazzarenu church.

The interviewer acquired the perception that, there is so much drug abuse in Xagħra, that if a strong wind were to blow, the people in and around the locality would get high on cocaine. This affects the social stability of Xagħra since, unfortunately, drug addiction does not seem to have spared young couples and families. This leads to a level of latent poverty. With the exception of these young couples/families, Xagħra seems to have an increasingly aging population caused by the steady exodus of young people who are compelled to leave Xagħra/Gozo to go to Malta to either work or study. The interviewee claimed that in Xagħra, one 'stops being a parent' when the children reach 16 years of age. This is when most children leave the family homes and the parents remain alone. The elderly residents are largely concentrated in San Anton and Tan-Nazzarenu areas.

Crime

Like the rest of Gozo, the people of Xagħra, particularly the elderly, experience fear of crime. This came about after a series of thefts incurred by the elderly in their own homes;

it is claimed, at the hands of outsiders, but which have stopped for the past two years. Since drug abuse seems to be so predominant in Xaghra, and drugs do not come cheap, the community's fear of crime seems to be fuelled by the awareness of this drug problem. There are a number of offenders living in Xaghra, but they do not seem to generate fear of crime – instead, it is claimed, they just create nuisances.

There are no crime hotspots or neighbourhood watch schemes. Police presence is negligible even though, it is claimed, drug traffickers are seen operating in broad daylight, in the main square. The interviewee insisted that drug traffickers are not even disturbed by the police. There are closed circuit cameras near bring-in sites and playing fields. The elderly are considered as victims of crime, since they are afflicted by fear of crime. In addition, drug addicts/abusers are another category of victims, especially in cases where minors are involved. However, incredibly, keys are still left in main doors and in cars. The interviewee explained that car keys are left in vehicles, because, he claimed: 'if one had to steal a car, where could he/she go?' This implies that the diminutive size of Gozo offers a sense of security, albeit that could be a false sense of security. There is no industry or activity that impacts the safety/security of the area in a negative way.

Għarb is a traditional, quaint, centuries-old village, which started as a hamlet. It is found at the westernmost part of Gozo. Għarb is well-known for its interesting folklore museum and Ta' Dbiegi crafts village however, it is its mystic characteristics that probably attracts most local and foreign tourists. The late Karmni Grima and Frenc Tal-Għarb are two famous Għarb residents. It is believed that the Blessed Virgin Mary made herself known to Karmni Grima – and this led to the erection of the awe-inspiring Ta' Pinu Basilica. Frenc Tal-Għarb is known as a saintly, humble man and a healer – claimed to be still in action, after his death. Għarb has a population of around 1,300 residents, of whom 120 are of primary school age. The population almost doubles in the summer months especially July/ August, due to tourism.

Għarb is mainly residential, agricultural and touristic. It consists of four areas: Tat-Trux, Birbuba, Santu Pietru and the new part - Il-Parti l-Ġdida. The upkeep of Għarb can be described as excellent. Għarb residents tend to their property and keep the locality clean. This optimal level of upkeep decreases steadily in the areas between Għarb and San Lawrenz, known as tal-Wileġ.

The perception is that: there are hardly any social problems (not more than two separated married couples); negligible unemployment; no evidence of poverty; and the level of education is above the national average. There is an influx of immigrants who work in an ETC-funded agricultural scheme related to tomato picking. Otherwise, there is no inter-council migration of any sort. The population is an ageing one. The elderly residents tend to be concentrated largely round the areas of San Pietru and Birbuba.

Crime

Like the rest of Gozo, the people of Għarb, particularly the elderly, experience fear of crime. This came about after a series of thefts incurred by the elderly in their own homes; as previously claimed by other local councils, at the hands of outsiders, but which have stopped for the past two years. The elderly used to be targeted for theft in the 70s and 80s but this has substantially subsided. During that time, the fear of crime was considerable. But, paradoxically, the habit of leaving the key in the front door survived the ages. In Għarb there are no neighbourhood watch schemes, no closed circuit cameras and no bye-laws related to crime prevention. Although there are mobile patrols in the evenings, police presence in Għarb tends to be sporadic. The interviewee claimed that there might actually be a level of theft that goes unreported. There do not seem to be any drug-abuse-related problems and the main contraventions seem to be nuisance-related. There might be one convicted offender living in the locality. As for victims of crime, in Għarb there does not seem to be a profile of the typical victim. In fact, the interviewee claimed that residents with different demographic characteristics fall victim to crimes such as theft. The activity/industry that has an impact on the safety/security of the locality is the Ta' Dbiegi crafts village.

Xewkija – considered the oldest village of Gozo – is found between the village of Ghajnsielem and Rabat. On entering Xewkija from the main road, one can observe the ruins of a mill which was built in the era of Grand Master Ramon Perellos. This mill is considered to be a particular one, since it has points that indicate the eight main wind directions. Xewkija is renowned for its parish church: The Rotunda, dedicated to St John the Baptist. This is where the Knights of St John used to convene, in Gozo. It is also famous for, what is referred to as, the marble slab of Majmuna: carved in this slab is an Arabic inscription, commemorating the death of an Arab girl called Sarah. In Xewkija today, one finds: the University of Malta annex; the Employment and Training Corporation offices; the Gozo stadium; the government farm; St Mary's cemetery; Xewkija cemetery; and an industrial estate. Xewkija has a population of around 3,000 residents. It is considered as the fourth largest village in Gozo. In fact, its escalating population required the development of housing estates in the Tal-Barmil, Ta' Gokk and Tal-Hamrija zones and the Tal-Barmil housing estate which is actually considered a hamlet.

Xewkija is mainly residential and agricultural however, there is a sizeable industrial estate within its confines. Almost all of Xewkija is an urban conservation area, except for Tal-Barmil and the industrial estate. Xewkija is divided into: the Tal-Barmil hamlet, Tal-Ħniena area (near the Chapel by the same name), il-Parti l-Qadima (surrounding the main Church), there's an area to the south known as Tal-Ħanzira on the limits with Munxar, the housing estate known as tal-Ħamrija (near the Industrial Estate), ta' Xhajma

on the way to Xagħra which is agricultural and incorporates the racecourse, and Ta' Ġokk area, which lies between the old part and Ta' Ħanżira.

In Xewkija there are only a few broken families/separated couples and hardly any unemployment. Education seems to be well catered for by the presence of MCAST in Xewkija, but a lot of young people still go to Malta to attend University and to work. The industrial zone pollution is known to affect children in the area, who suffer from asthma. There are around 800 elderly residents – and their residences are not concentrated in any area. The parish church has a strong influence on the social aspect of the community and provides outreach services to people with social problems.

Crime

Like the rest of Gozo, the people of Xewkija, particularly the elderly, experience fear of crime. There are no known offenders living in Xewkija, and police presence is satisfactory, with the refurbished police station being open most of the time and police patrols covering the streets during the evenings. The main hotspot is Triq il-Ħorob, near the MCAST playing field, where nuisances abound (particularly vandalism). There are no neighbourhood watch schemes and the only known closed circuit cameras were installed in: the local council premises, MCAST, and the schools in the locality. The elderly of Xewkija consider themselves as crime victims. The interviewee claims that the Xewkija community needs sessions in crime prevention awareness. The main activity, that is affecting the safety and security of Xewkija at the moment, is the extensive road building project.

Għasri is found in the west of Gozo. Although it covers an extensive area, Għasri has the smallest population of residents in Gozo: 521 residents – of whom, half are elderly. These are not concentrated in one residential area. This situation is further exacerbated by the exodus of locals who are choosing to live outside the village. Għasri is spread between Żebbuġ and Għammar. Għasri is known for its tal-Gordan Lighthouse, which overlooks lush fields and the deep, blue Mediterranean Sea. Għasri is also famous for its picturesque Wied il-Għasri – the valley which runs through fields and down into the sea. Għasri is mainly residential and agricultural. There are four areas: Ta' Għammar, tal-Fanal, iċ-Ċentru, and Wied Sara. The locality is very well-kept by both the local council and the residents.

The perception is that social problems are minimal. It is claimed that only those who do not want to work, do not find employment. There are three levels of education: the very high (tertiary), the average (normal schooling) and the illiterate – the small number who earn their livelihood from the fields. There are no immigrants although there is an in-migration due to the letting of farmhouses and flats to local and foreign tourists.

Crime

Like the rest of Gozo, the people of Ghasri, particularly the elderly, experience fear of crime. This came about after a series of thefts incurred on the elderly in their own homes – while attending church. Drug abuse – as well as other related crimes, might be occurring in the outskirts where there is lack of guardianship.

Police presence can be improved. There are no neighbourhood watch schemes, no closed circuit cameras or bye-laws related to crime prevention. The only hotspot is the bring-in site but, even this zone becomes so, only in summer, when tourists (staying in rented accommodations) do not abide by the rules. This is the most common form of nuisance that occurs, apart from the noise that sometimes emanates from rented farmhouses such as Ta' Frenċ Complex. It is the elderly that are considered as potential or actual victims of crime.

San Lawrenz: the quaint, traditional village of **San Lawrenz** is found on a plateau which is flanked by three hills, namely: Ghammar, Gelmus and Ta' Dbiegi. Although the village in itself is picturesque, San Lawrenz is world renowned for its Dwejra bay. As one drives down the winding road, admiring the panorama of cliffs, shimmering, deep blue Mediterranean sea, rolling fields and the valley on one side of the road, one can admire three special rock-features: The Azure Window and Fungus Rock on one side and the Inland Sea on the other. Although described as a natural arch, the Azure Window looks more like a tall, rock table – a dolmen – rather than an arch. The Azure ... or blue ... Window creates a spectacle, both when the sea, below it, is calm and when the sea is rough and foaming white. This natural, marine beauty spot (particularly what is referred to as the Blue Hole) is very popular with divers. As mentioned earlier, this zone is also popular with cinema directors. In fact, it provided the back-drop for films like: “Clash of the Titans”, “The Count of Monte Cristo” and “The Odyssey”. Fungus Rock looks like a huge rock-pillar. This mammoth limestone rock emerges from the deep, dark, Dwejra lagoon – on the left side as one drives down to Dwejra. From the Azure Window parking area, one can drive further down, on the right, towards the sea – and park, on the pebbles, near the boat-houses. Once out of the car, one can walk to the small quay that protrudes into a miniature, shallow, greenish lagoon that is fed by the open sea, through the cave-like hole in the cliff-wall that rises out from the depths, in front of this little pebbly bay – thus creating an inland sea ... or big pool, really. This is from where tourists go on boat-trips, out of the Inland Sea, through the hole in the cliff-wall, out in the open sea... where they can admire the awe-inspiring cliffs, the water-level and under water caves below the cliffs ... their coral ... and the Azure Window.

San Lawrenz has a population of around 550 residents – and, it seems, an increasing number of Maltese people who now have a Gozitan identity card and are registered as

living there, but who, in actual fact, still live in Malta. San Lawrenz – whose core practically comprises the entire village – is too small to be divided into smaller administrative areas. This locality is mainly residential and agricultural, with Dwejra and the Kempinski Resort being a tourist magnet. San Lawrenz is very well kept and clean. Not even the considerable number of vacant buildings are in a dilapidated state.

The perception is that there are no social problems, and negligible unemployment – with the exception of those who do not want to work. The San Lawrenz population is considered as an ageing one. The elderly residents are not concentrated in one specific area. Unfortunately, the breath-taking views push the property prices up and consequently, the locals find it hard to buy their own property and to settle in San Lawrenz. In addition, young people have to move out of San Lawrenz to seek employment. The level of education seems to match the national average.

Crime

Like the rest of Gozo, the people of San Lawrenz, particularly the elderly, experience fear of crime. Otherwise, only contraventions (mostly traffic-related – particularly failing to wear seat-belts) seem to be committed, not crimes. San Lawrenz people still leave their keys in the front doors of their houses. They also feel safe leaving their cars open, with the key inside. Although the police station has been restored, police presence is not considered as satisfactory. In fact, it is claimed that more patrols by the Rabat police are needed. There have never been any neighbourhood watch schemes. Apparently, the main hotspot is Dwejra. This may be due to its desolation – people do not live there. The interviewee described it as a ‘no man’s land’. This lack of informal supervision facilitates the theft of road signs and vandalism. The interviewee claims that people suspect that contraband is received here, too – and this would constitute crime. Closed circuit cameras monitor the main San Lawrenz square. Drug trafficking and drug abuse do not seem to constitute a problem in this locality. However, bicycles get frequently stolen from San Lawrenz. The elderly have their routine, weekly cultural visits and social events but otherwise, the local council does not have a social intervention programme of any sort. Unlike what happens in other villages, San Lawrenz residents (mostly those above 40 years of age) resort to the police before reporting anything to the local council. There are maybe one or two offenders living in San Lawrenz and crime victimization seems to be associated with the elderly.

Żebbuġ, (or **Iż-Żebbuġ**) is a village found in the northwest of Gozo, adjacent to Gharb and Marsalforn. It is perched on a hilltop, enjoying spectacular views of the countryside, rolling down to the rocky coast of Qbajjar – where one finds patchworks of traditional salt-pans that adorn the white rocks that drop sharply into the open, deep, blue Mediterranean Sea. This village is renowned for its olives and olive oil but it is also famous

for its lace. It is claimed that people have lived in Żebbuġ since antiquity. In fact, Żebbuġ also boasts of Bronze Age sites. The locality has a population of around 1,400 residents and another 1,300 people who reside in **Marsalforn** (possibly the most popular tourist/summer resort in Gozo). Besides having a spectacular coast – rocky and sandy in places – a panoramic walking area and a playing field for children, it is dotted with wine bars, pubs, restaurants, holiday accommodations and hotels. The beaches of Qbajjar and Xwejni also fall within Żebbuġ's local council jurisdiction.

Żebbuġ is mainly residential, commercial (there are small industries, such as: construction contractors and salt pans) and agricultural. Apart from being residential and commercial, Marsalforn is touristic. Żebbuġ is divided into two zones, aptly named according to the geographical shape of the locality: il-Ponta (which translated means, The Point – found behind the parish church) and ix-Xagħra l-Kbira (which translated means, The Big Square – the area one enters Żebbuġ from, as one drives to Żebbuġ from Għasri. It is claimed that, especially due to rainwater flowing down to low-lying places and damaging rubble walls in winter, maintenance is perpetually on-going.

The perception is that the poverty level matches that of the national average. There are a few broken families and unemployment reflects the national average. The interviewee feels that the level of education is on the increase. Apart from Żebbuġ itself, there is migration into Marsalforn from other areas of Gozo, as well as by Maltese people who might also reside in Marsalforn, especially during the weekends (there are more flats than farmhouses for rent). An estimated two out of five Żebbuġ residents are elderly and their residences are not concentrated in a particular area of Żebbuġ or Marsalforn.

Crime

Like the rest of Gozo, the people of San Lawrenz, particularly the elderly, experience fear of crime. In fact, the mayor's own parents' house was broken into, two weeks before being interviewed for this research, and, it is claimed, it took the police forensic team very long to reach Gozo. There were an estimate 12 break-ins in a three year period and there are no patterns that can be identified to assist the authorities predict the next targets. This could suggest that the crimes committed could fall under the category of crimes of opportunity, although, it was pointed out that the victims' routines were observed and studied beforehand.

There are known offenders living in Żebbuġ (drug-traffickers) and there are others who are transient and live in Marsalforn. Victims of crime are, virtually, of all ages and constitute those whose houses have been broken into. The local council is aware of syringes used in drug abuse that are often found in fields (there is no particular hotspot).

It is claimed that police presence is hardly noticeable. Salt is thrown in the proverbial wound when a retired member of the judiciary is provided with a fixed point (an officer

guarding his house), whenever he goes to stay at his holiday residence (be it summer, over long holidays or over weekends) – when it is the whole of Żebbuġ that requires police presence. It seems that the police prefer to affect mobile patrols in the evenings, however this is not enough.

Like what happens in San Lawrenz, the people of Żebbuġ report more to the police than to the local council. As for contraventions, nuisances abound. The Żebbuġ Garden (Ġnien Tlett Għoljiet, found on the way to ix-Xagħra) is often vandalised. There is a closed circuit camera installed near the bring-in site adjacent to the cemetery – on the outskirts of Żebbuġ. As for Marsalforn: the police station there is often open. There were 8 break-ins in Marsalforn in the 6 months prior to the research interview. In these break-ins, gold was mostly stolen. Vandalism also abounds. Two murders occurred in Marsalforn. Burglar alarms seem to be the preferred crime prevention measure by residents. All in all, it seems that all the residents, irrespective of age, suffer from fear of crime. This has been fueled by the break-ins incurred by Marsalforn residents while they attended mass.

District 6: General Crime/Social Problems

- It seems that there are not a lot of broken families/separated married couples in Gozo.
- The level of unemployment in Gozo reflects the national average.
- The educational standard of the Gozitans reflects the national one, and it seems to be on the rise.
- Gozo's population seems to be an aging one.
- Gozitans appear to experience fear of crime which seems to be particularly felt by the elderly.
- Interestingly, the interviewees always claimed that crimes are perpetrated by outsiders.
- Youths tend to get the blame for any nuisances and/or crime.
- Although the Gozo crime rate is considered as low, it does not mean that crimes, such as murders, do not occur in Gozo. Examples of killings are the two murders that took place in Marsalforn.
- Drug trafficking and drug abuse appear to be pressing problems in Gozo. In fact used syringes (left by drug-abusers) are frequently found lying around, even in public places.
- Alcoholism may also be a cause for concern.
- There do not seem to be a considerable number of offenders/ex-inmates living in Gozo ... although the notorious offender Totò Riina (the Sicilian mafia boss) actually took residence in Rabat, Gozo, before being apprehended.
- Contraventions, particularly those related to traffic (especially dangerous driving), public peace (mainly neighbours squabbling) and littering, appear to be quite common occurrences.
- Vandalism also abounds. For example, the destruction of street furniture.

- In Gozo, crime victimization is mainly associated with the elderly, however, it is claimed that there exists bullying among schoolchildren of any school age. In addition, there might also be cases of domestic violence (including child abuse).
- The extent of police presence in Gozo leaves much to be desired.
- In Gozo, there is limited use of closed circuit televisions (CCTVs).
- There are no neighbourhood watch schemes in Gozo.
- Gozitans fear reporting to the police and, in the few instances in which they do report, most Gozitans prefer going to the local council first (with the exception of San Lawrenz and Żebbuġ where residents tend to report more to the police rather than to the local council).
- Gozitans seem to know how to protect themselves and their property but would still benefit from awareness campaigns.
- There are still Gozitans with the habits of: leaving the key in the front door; leaving the car key in their open vehicle; and/or disclosing that they would be going abroad on internet (their Facebook wall) – a habit that does not seem to be restricted to Gozo.
- Besides traffic congestion, over-speeding, heavy trucks damaging residences and the roads, pollution and parking problems, clubbing and revelling seem to be the activities that have the greatest negative impact on the safety and security of Gozitans.

Conclusion

When one takes a cursory look at the findings one can conclude that crime problems are perceived as minimal by the local councils, with the island of Gozo being perceived as relatively crime free and when crime occurs is blamed on outsiders. In Gozo people still leave their keys hanging outside their doors. The major preoccupation was shown vis-à-vis the number of family breakdown and family problems such as teenage pregnancies and single parent families. The problems mentioned were those of drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, prostitution and the young as potential trouble makers – morally based crimes, indicating that society feels safe. There is the mention of the elderly feeling unsafe, this being mainly due to the fact that often times the elderly are targeted by criminals. Although there is good co-operation with the police by the local council, a number of councils said that people prefer to report crimes to them rather than go to the police. This was found in both Malta and Gozo. This feeling of *omertà* is typical in the Mediterranean islands, indicating that the Maltese islands are still a closed knit society where the neighbours are more to be trusted than outsiders.

