

The Cultural Domain of the Harbour:

The potential of the maritime fortified cities as sustainable cultural economic drivers
for the Maltese Islands

Malcolm Borg, Saviour Formosa, Paul James

Dr Malcolm Borg
UN Global Compact Cities Programme Advisor
Heritage Enterprise Malta
heritage.enterprise.au@gmail.com

Dr Saviour Formosa
Department of Criminology, Faculty for Social Wellbeing
University of Malta
saviour.formosa@um.edu.mt

Professor Paul James
Director, UN Global Compact Cities Programme
University of Western Sydney
Sydney, Australia
p.james2@uws.edu.au

Abstract

This research gauges the potential of Maltese maritime fortified cities in the East Harbour through the application of the ‘Circles of Sustainability’ assessment.¹ The study was not carried out simply for academic purposes but because it measures effectively the political, economic socio-cultural dynamic of this hub established for hundreds of years and which represents Malta’s urbanisation from the 1500s to present day. The *Circles of Sustainability* method has been applied because of its proven record as a means ‘for assessing sustainability and for managing projects directed towards socially sustainable outcomes’.² This method has been considered because of the forward looking South-East Region’s vision with its submission to become a signatory to the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact Cities Programme. This paper is also a means to apply a holistic approach to understanding urban politics and urban planning in the South-East Region as well as a tool for conducting sustainability analysis and profiling sustainable development. The project followed criteria set by the *Circles of Sustainability* assessment. The research is also based on the parameters set by the European Walled Towns (EWT) constitution and embraces its mission to direct fortified cities to evolve as sanctuaries of conciliation and peace.³

Keywords

Fortified maritime cities, sustainable planning, Circles of Sustainability, European Walled Towns.

¹The approach builds upon the strengths of the UN Global Compact Cities Programme in association with Metropolis, World Vision and other key international organizations. It was developed through practical engagement in a number of cities around the world including Porto Alegre, Melbourne, San Francisco, Berlin and Milwaukee to name a few. See Paul James, et al. *Urban Sustainability in Theory and Practice*, Routledge, London, 2014.

² *Ibid.*

³ The European Walled Towns (EWT) Constitution refers to walled towns as “unique inheritances from times long past and should be treasured, maintained and safeguarded from neglect, damage and destruction and passed on into perpetuity as irreplaceable ‘Timestones of History’”. The Maltese maritime fortified cities also qualify fully as walled towns as according to EWT membership criteria ‘a town must be inhabited and have a significant portion of its wall intact and should be of historic interest to visitors and residents’. Available at: <http://walledtowns.com/> (accessed 1 July 2014).

The particular characteristics of fortified maritime cities makes them vulnerable, especially in times of peace. For centuries the fortified cities around the Malta Grand Harbour thrived during times of war and conflict as they were designed as sentinels of the Mediterranean and secure ports. This state of affairs indelibly marked the cities' raison d'être becoming safeguarded hubs. The fortification and arms build-up from the sixteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century created massive lines, structures and war machines. This development delimited spatial and urban development and created a garrison society and culture.⁴ This high dependence on colonial and imperial economies in exchange for security and safety led to a bond which is engrained in the cities' ethos. This character cannot change fully, fast and easily.

The post-war period (1945) significantly impacted the fortified maritime cities. Independence, Republicanism and neutrality (1964-1971) did not secure the maintenance of fortifications, the upkeep of docks or the management of ports. Malta had to quickly transform itself from garrison to 'playground' and survive on a micro-economy based on services, tourism and the building industry. The immediate impact was directed at the fortified maritime cities. First blitzed by the WWII axis attacks these war-machines had to adapt to an anachronistic existence dominated by a glorious past. The cities which had brought about victory had to survive on any other means. A paradoxical existence ensued where fortifications had to be accessible and showcased and cities had to host social housing and hotels not the garrison or the navy.

This paper outlines succinctly the current development of the East Harbour with its complex geography following the changes of the post-war period. The study will also consider the current situation based on the *Circles of Sustainability*, an approach which offers an integrated method for practically responding to complex issues of sustainability, resilience, adaptation, liveability and vibrancy. The study takes into consideration the urban area around the harbour delineated by the fortification lines and the fortified maritime cities which dominate the harbour coast. The analysis comprises the urban context, societies and communities.⁵ This approach has been adopted because it is forward looking and directed at providing not only a picture of the current situation through qualitative with quantitative indicators but it provides essentially a projection for the future. It provides a platform to propose sustainable development based on the main four domains: economics, ecology, politics and culture. The *Circles of Sustainability* may also be applicable across the very different contexts from neighbourhood to city and from the city to the region. As the method is sensitive to both the local and the global it puts the cities in context.

Defining the maritime fortified cities

The maritime fortified cities in the East Harbour may be defined more concretely as a space, context and geography when compared to the South-East Region. The group of cities are physically delineated by the coast and fortification lines. The South-East region is a more complex development. With the latter, governance and politics have played a significant part in modelling and shaping it into a system or agglomeration of Councils seeking to achieve balanced voting areas corresponding to the 13 electoral districts in Malta.

Are the fortified maritime cities of Malta, actual cities? Academics and scholars have made extensive and successive attempts at trying to define the city. This paper is not trying to address the issue but it must be said that the cities which make up the harbour area although called cities are not characteristic or textbook examples. Referring to a more academic context they do not "have enough surplus of raw materials to support trade and a relatively large population".⁶ They have a title of city, not only because Valletta is the State's Capital but as in the case of the British tradition, 'City' may be a nomenclature. In the case of Malta all the Cities were given a title by successive Grandmasters of the Order of St. John in certain cases commemorating their significant contribution in the defence of the Island as in the case of *Vittoriosa* and *Cospicua*.

⁴ The British forces in Malta during the period 1880-1884 were capable of investing in the highest technology. The projected installation of four 100-ton guns for the Island reflects the type of investment capabilities of the British Empire in a drive to maintain its domain in the Mediterranean.

⁵ The East-Harbour maritime fortified Cities are; Valletta and Floriana, Vittoriosa, Cospicua, Senglea. This research included Kalkara and Paola. The latter two are outside the fortification lines but are dominated and contained by extensions of the same i.e. The Cottonera Lines and the Corradino Lines.

⁶ Pacione, Michael (2001). *The City: Critical Concepts in The Social Sciences*. New York: Routledge. ISBN 0-415-25270-9.

The maritime fortified cities are essentially defined by the two harbours; the Grand Harbour to the East and the Marsamxett Harbour to the West and the intense girdle system of fortifications which envelop Valletta and Floriana, Vittoriosa, Cospicua and Senglea also referred to as the Three Cities. Kalkara and Paola have been included because of their physical proximity and because of their historical connection to the outer defence lines of Corradino and Cottonera.

Without dwelling further on the qualification of these localities as cities, this spectacular network develops over the coastal area of the Grand Harbour and are interconnected quasi-intermittently by fortifications. The four peninsular systems (Valletta and Floriana, Ricasoli, Vittoriosa and Senglea) dominate the natural harbour and form creeks and basins with low cliffs on the Ricasoli side and higher cliffs around the Corradino Heights which reach 64 meters above sea level.⁷ The sheer divide between the coast and land is further accentuated by the artificial coastline which has been rebuilt either in limestone through the fortification walls rising at a steep gradient from the sea or in concrete through the development of wharves, moles and docks that line the whole extent of the Grand Harbour and Marsamxett Harbour.

Valletta and Floriana built over the Mount Sceberras headland point to the North-East and dominate the mouth of the Harbour with St.Elmo Point whereas in the South-East, Ricasoli Point encloses the entrance to the port. The harbour is sheltered by an extensive arm of the breakwater which controls sea currents as well as shipping. The shore from Ricasoli to Marsa is formed by headlands and creeks; Rinella Creek, Kalkara Creek, Dockyard Creek and the French Creek provide natural shelter. These creeks are dominated by Vittoriosa, Cospicua and Senglea forming a crescent and amphitheatre-like system over Dockyard Creek.

The basin formed by these cities is actually one development and conurbation defining to a great extent the Southern Harbour area (27%).⁸ This conurbation is within a three-kilometre radius of Floriana making it one of the most urbanised areas in Malta together with the Northern Harbour. It is also the most densely populated in Malta and Europe. The restricted urban fortified cities may not have the highest populations in the Southern Harbour area but record the highest densities in Malta and exceed the population densities in Europe. Senglea, Valletta and Cospicua top the list with 17,146 (per square km), 6,836 (per square km) and 5,782 (per square km). These are by far greater than the densities recorded in the EU 27, the Netherlands, Belgium and the United Kingdom which have the highest densities in Europe (Refer to Table 2 and Figure 1).

These cities are also contained within one of the most critical cultural heritage landscapes in the Malta Scheduled Property Register. In 1998 the Maltese State listed on the UNESCO Tentative List the Knights' Fortifications around the Harbours of Malta. As part of the process the Planning Authority (later the Malta Environment and Planning Authority) scheduled the listed site as Grade 1. In their complexity the area including the harbour were officially recognised as an Area of High Landscape Value. The Tentative List for UNESCO considered the 25 km of fortifications around the Grand Harbour of World Heritage Value representing: (i) "...a masterpiece of human creative genius" and (ii) exhibiting... "an important interchange of human values, over a span of time.." and portraying "developments in architecture (and) technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design". The harbour fortifications are also defined as (iv) "an outstanding example of...(an) architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates significant stages in human history".⁹ **The Knights' Fortifications around the Harbours of Malta have been listed because they represent over 400 years fortification building "designed by engineers from most of the major military power: Spanish, Italian, French and British, the result of which is one of the**

⁷ Encyclopedia of the World's Coastal Landforms, Ed. Eric C. F. Bird, Springer Reference, ISBN: 978-1-4020-8638-0, p.755.

⁸ The National Statistics Office considers the Southern Harbour area as comprising the following; **Cospicua, Fgura Floriana, Hal-Luqa, Hal-Tarxien, Haż-Żabbar, Kalkara, Marsa, Paola, Santa Luċija, Senglea, Valletta, Vittoriosa, Xghajra**. The cities under study are 7 out of the 14 which make up this Census region. Available at:http://www.nso.gov.mt/statdoc/document_file.aspx?id=3998 (Accessed 2 July 2014).

⁹ UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List. Available at: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/982/> (Accessed 2 July 2014).

finest collections of military architecture in the world. The report quotes Prof. Quentin Hughes, "a monumental heritage... for sheer concentration and majesty quite unmatched".¹⁰
Assessment Methods - The Urban Profile Process

This assessment as quoted previously considered the guidelines set in the *Urban Profile Process* and followed the ***Comprehensive Assessment Profile*** approach by completing the exercise at Level 3 and assigning metrics-based indicators to each point on the scale where possible.¹¹ It was conducted through the Paola Local Council and in consultation with the local council representatives of; Valletta, Floriana, Vittoriosa, Cospicua, Senglea and Kalkara. The city by city analysis comprised local representatives and experts in the field of Urban Planning, Demography and Geography who were involved as external expert assessors.¹² Other lay assessors were involved to maintain an objectivity in the whole assessment process which spanned over four months to cover the last quarter of 2013. At a final stage it was "critically assessed and, was analysed by the Director of the UN Global Compact Cities Programme Professor Paul James. The findings were then presented at the Sustainable Heritage Management Conference organised co-jointly by the Paola Local Council, Paola Heritage Foundation and the European Walled Towns in December 2013.¹³ The seven city assessments were based on indicators and statistics addressing the data collated from the; National Statistics Office, the Eurobarometer, Eurostat, World Health Organisation (WHO) and the annual State of the Heritage Report. Other specific reports published in local journals and other media have been selected to address and respond to the specific assessment of the seven perspectives of the fourth domain, culture.

The cultural domain and its perspectives come as part of the Circles of Social Life and are set up to support the process of responding to a series of key questions. Firstly, how are we best to understand and map the sustainability of our cities, communities and organizations in all their complexity—economic, ecological, political and cultural? Secondly, what are the central critical issues that relate to making the city or community more sustainable? Thirdly, what should be measured and how? Instead of designating a pre-given set of indicators, the approach provides a process for deciding upon indicators and analysing the relationship between them. Fourthly, how can a positive response be planned? The approach provides a series of pathways for achieving complex main objectives. It offers a deliberative process for negotiation over contested or contradictory critical objectives and multiple driving issues in relation to those main objectives. Finally it supports a monitoring and evaluation process and a reporting process. This is the broad framework, but within this approach it has been designed to then focus on specific issues such as the possible sustainable development of maritime fortified cities based on their performance, qualities and characteristics. This tool was adopted to assist Local Councils especially those members of the European Walled Towns but especially the signatories to the Global Cities Compact Programme to plan ahead on the various perspectives and aspects of social life, heritage, creativity, health and well-being (Table 4). This assessment was applied and spread over the seven cities seeking to have a picture at a micro-local level and finally build up the assessment to the wider aspects of the area under study. So rather than a broad brush approach on the whole area it was necessary to look into the singular cases even if these may have similar characteristics. This would assist in better understanding the texture and fabric of the singular cities and even to direct capital investment and projects. The stepped approach included a more objective assessment through the use of the Scale of Sustainability which gives the possibility to the group of assessors to access a wide range of results and increases the sensitivity of the tool. The assessment also was an ideal pilot tested on 'smaller' diverse cities when compared to previous applications.¹⁴

¹⁰UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List. Available at: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/982/> (Accessed 2 July 2014).

¹¹ James, Paul, Circles of Sustainability, Urban Profile Process.

¹² The local task force was led by Dr Malcolm Borg with Dr Saviour Formosa and Architect Victor Sladden Planner and consultant to the European Walled Towns Secretariat.

¹³ The Conference 18-19 December 2013 included participants from the participating city councils, representatives from the European Walled Towns, UN Global Compact Cities Programme Advisors and experts from other European states.

¹⁴ Previous applications of the Circles of Sustainability included; Porto Alegre, Melbourne, San Francisco, Berlin and Milwaukee.

Data collation and the seven perspectives of culture

It is not possible to collate indicators and statistics for the various perspectives. The data has been gathered to give guidance in tracing trends in various aspects of; demography, geography and socio-cultural life in the Southern Harbour with indications where possible to the performance of the fortified maritime cities. The research has been directed to five main areas where data was available; (i)ethnicity, language, religion and faith, (ii)celebrations, festivals, sports and play, (iii)memory and projection, (iv)education and research and (v) health and well being. Before delving into these five (5) areas it has been vital to outline basic demographics and data related to age, sex, and employment. These are being considered to gain a full picture of the fortified maritime cities' populations and how the fourth domain perspectives relate to the local texture and fabric. Reference is also being made to the 2011 Census and particular attention has been directed at the Southern Region and cities and towns making up the same enumeration area.

The Southern Harbour area has a predominantly male and ageing population.¹⁵ It has also been experiencing an alarming and persistent decrease in population for the past forty years. In the past century the cities' populations have fluctuated considerably. In 1901 the maritime fortified cities hosted the greater part of the local Maltese population. Valletta the capital counted 22,768 inhabitants and Floriana (5,687), Senglea (8,093), Cospicua (12,148) together with the capital were a major conurbation. The effects of World War II were severe especially on the Three Cities. Senglea lost 75% of its population and Cospicua and Vittoriosa 72% and 61% respectively.¹⁶ The uprooting of communities, victims of constant air-raids, the social upheaval brought by the war and the blitzed property in the fortified cities damaged indelibly the core of the Island fortress. The populations soared again between 1948-1957 for a decade as a result of the war damage reconstruction, extensive social housing projects designed by Harrison and Hubbard and newly established communities. This growth was short lived as between 1957-2011 the populations of the cities continued to drop as a consequence of social and physical degradation. In half a century Valletta the capital lost its local population to a commuter based society (-76%). Currently with 5,748 inhabitants Valletta has dwindled to 20% of the population in 1901. Not as acute but with similar consequences the Three cities lost most of their inhabitants to sub-urban development. Only Paola and Kalkara gained. Paola expanded as a Victorian and Edwardian planned town. Even with the effects of war Paola still quadrupled its population in a century reaching a peak in 1948 of 14,793 inhabitants.

Urbanisation and degradation has effected the vacancy rate over the years even though there is an active migration within the Southern Harbour. The vacancy rate in the region now stands at 21%, the second highest rate in Malta. The most impacted by vacancy are Valletta (32.3%) and Floriana (27.0%). Even in the Three Cities the rate is above average with the exception of Senglea which is still at 20%.¹⁷ This has had an effect on the dwelling stock. As observed for the total stock, dwellings found in the Northern District were in the best state as opposed to those in the Southern Harbour District. Mdina, Valletta and Floriana had the highest proportions of dwellings in need of serious repairs while Valletta, Cospicua and Mdina had the lowest proportions of dwellings in a good state of repair.

Identity is still strong especially in the Southern Harbour. This could be the result of a high percentage of Maltese still inhabiting the harbour area and maintaining local traditions. The urban texture and landscape is changing, with the latest statistics (2011) showing the Southern Region in fourth place with (39.3%) non-Maltese. The highest concentration of non-Maltese inhabitants is in the Three Cities and the Cottonera followed by Valletta and Floriana. In Senglea it is highest with 50.3%.¹⁸ This has not effected the predominant ethnic groups. On a National level Maltese still predominate with 95,3% with a very small percentage of British 1,6% and 3,1% other. The official languages remain Maltese and English and the religious affiliation remains predominantly Roman Catholic with 94% and other denominations at 6%. Multiculturalism in Malta is in it's early stages but is increasing significantly; "In Malta, we are happy to drive by the Corradino mosque and watch Muslims gathering for their prayers all trim and spruce. At the same time,

¹⁵ Census of the Population and Housing 2011, National Statistics Office, Malta 2014,p.3.

¹⁶ *Op.cit.*,p.3.

¹⁷ *Op.cit.*,p.221.

¹⁸Census of the Population and Housing 2011, National Statistics Office, Malta 2014,p.153.

our laws prevent a man from marrying four wives. On the one hand, we are "celebrating diversity"... on the other we are forcing Muslims to abide by the rules of the majority. How multicultural is that?"¹⁹

Secularisation is on the rise in Malta. Although statistics in the 2010 Gallup show Malta outside post-Christian Europe there was a drop in Church marriages by half and the introduction of divorce after the referendum of 2011 marked a definitive change with 52% of the population voting in favour. Vatican data for 2006[8] shows that 93.89% of the Maltese population is Roman Catholic, making the nation one of the most Catholic countries in the world. However in a report published in the same year only 52.6% of Maltese attended Sunday mass. Numbers of church goers have gone down from 75.1% in 1982 and 63.4% in 1995.

Although not tangible statistically the region has been changing becoming multi-cultural. The Island is "one of the closest European countries to Africa... (and) has one of the highest rate of asylum seekers per capita with 4980 applications per million inhabitants compared to the EU average of 660. This wave of migration started in 2002 partly due to a strengthening of patrols close to Spain and a change of migration route. This phenomenon is still ongoing as 1890 migrants and asylum seekers arrived by boat in 2012, 65% of them originating from Somalia and 24% from Eritrea."²⁰ The Southern Harbour and South-East Regions host most of the migrant population. In Marsa an open centre has been established since 2002. This centre "houses around 500 male residents from 19 different countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The larger majority of these residents are from East Africa, namely, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Sudan."²¹ In its proximity there are also detention centres. There are "three dedicated immigration detention facilities: the Hermes Block at Lyster Barracks, the Warehouse One at Safi Barracks, and the B-Block at Safi Barracks. The total capacity of these facilities was 740 in 2011, which include 380 at Hermes Block at Lyster Barracks, 200 at Warehouse One at Safi Barracks, and 160 at B-Block at Safi Barracks."²² Therefore changes in ethnicity is a physical not a statistical presence in the Southern Harbour Region. Because of the size this is very visible on a local level. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has highlighted this particular issue of density and impact. With "20 residing refugees per 1,000 inhabitants, Malta ranks eighth in the world and has the highest rate among its European neighbours."²³ The increasing numbers of irregular maritime arrivals has impacted the small but densely populated area and "have prompted the government to declare that undocumented immigration has reached an 'emergency scale' and that there is a 'national crisis' with respect to administrative detention."²⁴ This trend has now lasted over 10 years, "raising questions of the integration of these newcomers in Malta who might stay in the island until their older days"²⁵ This state of affairs has put the local communities, public services, security and safety measures under significant pressure. The changing texture and surmounting pressure on local populations may be identified from the effects on local schools. An example is the primary school of St Paul's Bay which has the highest percentage of foreign pupils in Malta with 31 different nationalities represented and over 300 foreign pupils out of 850. Josette Dalmas, Head of School, explains that the main issue that the school has to face is language. "My greatest problem is that I have 65 pupils who have no idea of English," she explains. "They come here, they don't know English so we can't communicate."²⁶ The total refugee inhabitants in the area add-up to a single small town in Malta at times even larger than the surrounding village populations.

¹⁹ Falzon, Mark-Anthony, The Times of Malta 'Wednesday, September 3, 2003.

²⁰ Available at: www.unhcr.org/mt/ (Accessed 6 July 2014).

²¹ Foundation for Shelter and Support to Migrants. Available at: <http://www.fsmmalta.org/projects-fsmm/moc-home> (Accessed 6 July 2014).

²² Global Detention Project, Malta Detention Profile. Available at: <http://www.globaldetentionproject.org/countries/europe/malta/introduction.html> (Accessed 6 July 2014).

²³ *Op.cit.*

²⁴ *Op.cit.*

²⁵ Malta urged to set an integration strategy, posted on 31. May 2013. Available at: <http://forcedmigrationmalta.mediajungle.dk/> (Accessed 6 July 2014).

²⁶ *Op.cit.*

Even though the impact of migration is heavy on small communities and neighbourhoods Maltese identity is still commemorated fervently through tradition expressed in local celebrations, festivals and play. The analysis of these social gatherings are crucial in gaining an insight of the cultural domain in the maritime fortified cities. The activities organised by local councils provide an indication of the involvement of citizens in celebrations, festivals and play. These have been recorded in the past years through the State of the Heritage Report published annually with the support of councils and government agencies by the Superintendent of Cultural Heritage. Other statistics gathered through surveys from the capital Valletta assist in forming a better picture on the cultural development of cities in the Southern Harbour.

The Local Councils are heavily involved in cultural activities. In total 91 exhibitions were organised by local councils in 2011, down from 117 in 2010. 32 local Councils (4 more than in 2010) reported that they did not organise exhibitions during 2011. Of the remaining 36 local councils (52.94%) that did organise exhibitions in 2011, 19 (52.78%) organised 1 event, 8 (22.22%) organised 2 events, 2 (5.56%) organised 3, and 7 (19.44%) organised 4 to 10. Local Councils have also been engaged in organising Heritage Trails and Walks for locals and tourists alike and therefore through these activities project their heritage and identity. There were 22 local councils which reported 64 heritage trails/walks through 2011. In 2010 this value stood at 63 trails organised by 24 Councils. Although the values have remained essentially constant for these last two years, fluctuations exist when considering the local councils actually organising them. As indicated in the survey, 32.35% of local councils reported to have organised heritage trails/walks exclusively for persons within their community. Although there has been a drop in activities essentially the initiatives are significant considering the resources available.²⁷

Local councils have been also engaged in school activities. therefore the exposure of Maltese culture and heritage to the younger community is also very important. During 2011, 20 local councils (29.41%) organised activities specifically for schools. Of these activities 90.00% were organised on the initiative taken by the local council, while the remaining 10.00% were organised further to requests received by the local council from one or more schools. Altogether, 51 activities for schools were organised by local councils. The busiest period was the last quarter of the year with; 19.61% registered in November and December (15.69%). There was a similar trend in the previous year. The number of local councils organising cultural events including music, drama or other forms of art. The activity increased from 53 in 2010 to 54 in 2011. This translates to 77.94% of local councils organising such events. Although there was a drop in activities from 2010 to 2011 still local councils' contribution to this sphere and public engagement is high showing a population interested and active in celebrating its culture and heritage.²⁸

Activities in the realm of culture and the arts are on the rise. In 2011 there was an increase of 42.31% over the previous year in the number of cultural events. These included music, drama other forms of art which amounted to 37, up from 26 in 2010. The St James Cavalier Centre for Creativity considered that, "...the recent collaborations between the National Museum of Fine Arts and St James Cavalier Centre for Creativity" catalysed this reaction. The "two institutions joined forces to maximise their potential, such as when St James Cavalier Centre for Creativity hosted the screening of a film on Antoine Camilleri, or when it hosted lectures by visiting artists exhibiting at the National Museum of Fine Arts. Similarly the National Museum of Fine Arts provided space for performances during the Žigužajg Children's Festival."²⁹ The central government expenditure and investment is growing. The financing of public entities in heritage and culture has been increasing constantly. In five years it increased by nearly 1M Euro reaching 7.5M Euros. Although there has been a slump in recurrent and operational expenditure between 2006 and 2009 in the cultural heritage sector (this includes restoration projects) in 2011 it reached 3.8M Euros matching the budgets of 2006.

A survey collated for the HERO Action Plan for Valletta sheds more light on the role of cultural activities, festivities and heritage. All those interviewed lived within the areas earmarked for the Hero Valletta Action Plan and were married within the Parish areas. Most of those interviewed had between 1 to 4 children who lived within Valletta and 26 of the same lived within the same house as their parents. Eighty out of those interviewed attended and were attracted to local cultural activities and events when they were younger, the rest

²⁷Superintendence of Cultural Heritage, State of the Heritage Report 2011 (May 2012), Available at: <http://www.culturalheritage.gov.mt/page.asp?p=21296&l=1> (Accessed 6 July 2014).

²⁸ *Op.cit.*

²⁹ *Op.cit.*

did not. Most of those interviewed were active within the Parishes of St. Augustine's Church or St. Dominic's Church. Only 88 interviewees were directly involved with the local feast days and a total of 90 were not. Most citizens were not directly involved with the preparation of the feasts or were active in the church *fešta* organisation groups.³⁰

Out of the 187 responding to the survey, 138 interviewees felt pride in contributing to the neighbourhood and 175 were proud to live within the area or neighbourhoods. Over 148 interviewees aspire to see more activities and would like to see more cultural events held within their location. These activities, according to those interviewed should be aimed at families and the younger generation. Over 173 felt that cultural activities made their community feel closer. Many were aware of the increase of tourists within the locality and 173 interviewees were happy to have more people visit these locations. An interesting result on identity comes from the awareness factor. The results show that 169 interviewees knew that Valletta was a World Heritage City (WHC) and were proud of it! Questions directed at sport and identity gave a similar result to high community spirit. The Valletta Football Club also gave a sense of belonging as Carnival which is the most well organised community based festival.³¹ Sports is significant in supporting community spirit and identity. Both the Paola Hibernians and the Valletta, and Floriana Football Club lead in this with very well established supporter clubs. On the other hand in the Three Cities there is an acute rivalry through the Regatta. This parochial rivalry also tangible in the local feasts has enriched the cultural activity and intensified locals' engagement in cultural and sporting activities.

The local council based statistics show how local citizens have an intense sense of belonging through local cultural heritage. The overall picture shows the growing awareness towards cultural heritage. The most significant contribution to memory may be gauged through the process of listing or scheduling. The Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA) scheduling register. The list represents the attachment to history, architecture and context in the urban areas. As outlined earlier one of the most extensive areas registered is the harbour area with the fortifications and ancillary military systems but also the area covered by the Area of High Landscape Value comprising the fortified cities and the harbour. This has been delineated on the visual connectivity between the sister cities. In an effort to avoid 'debasement of the coinage' the MEPA commissioned a report, *Sustainable Conservation - A New Approach* in 1998 to direct the register to more significant critical assets which necessitated protection. The recommendations set in the quoted report were not applied fully but since 2006 MEPA has placed its focus for scheduling on the most significant themes rather than selective individual buildings or sites as a priority to schedule. An effort was "made on monuments that have national significance, such as Valletta's Grade 1 buildings, parish churches, buildings and archaeological sites mentioned in the Antiquities List which were not yet scheduled."³² Other heritage assets included; "properties with stone balconies in Victoria, windmills, 20th century Modernist architecture, and other items which were at risk such as the British period cast iron telephone booths and letter boxes, the *Gonna tal-Kmand*, further wooden shop fronts and a number of miscellaneous properties at risk".³³ Other properties are protected through other planning policies and constraints.

Whereas heritage lists and cultural activities reflect the communities eagerness to engage in social gatherings and feel a sense of belonging the level of education in the localities sheds light on aspirations of society for the future. Unfortunately the education levels in the Southern Harbour are lowest. This may be attested through the literacy rates. In the region the average is 9.3% and the highest illiteracy rates altogether are within the fortification lines. Cospicua and Valletta top the list with 14.0% and 12.4% respectively.³⁴ Moreover the rates are also low when compared to other regions across all levels of education. In fact in the Southern region the proportion of inhabitants with no schooling is highest and the cities had amongst the lowest rates in post-secondary and tertiary education.³⁵ In 2011, the literacy rate in Malta stood at 93.6% for persons aged 10 and over, resulting in 24,074 illiterate persons (6.4 %). The literacy rate was found to be highly influenced by age, and consequently, older regions and localities also exhibited higher illiteracy rates than average. The illiteracy

³⁰ HERO - Valletta Action Plan, Valletta Local Council (2011), Full Report. Available at: http://www.cityofvalletta.org/news_detail.aspx?id=306713 (Accessed 6 July 2014).

³¹ *Op. cit.*

³² Superintendence of Cultural Heritage, State of the Heritage Report 2011 (May 2012), Available at: <http://www.culturalheritage.gov.mt/page.asp?p=21296&l=1> (Accessed 6 July 2014).

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Census of the Population and Housing 2011, National Statistics Office, Malta 2014, p.146

³⁵ *Op. cit.* p.159.

rate varied between 23.3% for persons aged 90 and over to 10.3% for those aged 60 to 69, and continued to decrease gradually to a minimum of 1.0% for persons aged 10 to 19.³⁶

When compared to the European Union “on average, pupils in the EU could expect to stay slightly longer than 17 years in education in 2009; up from a little less than 17 years in 2000 (+3 %). This covers some fairly wide differences across the EU Member States. Pupils in Malta, Bulgaria and Cyprus spend less than 16 years in the education system on average, whereas Finnish students spend more than 20 years (followed by Belgium and Sweden with slightly less than 20 years). Moreover, the biggest increases in the numbers of years spent in education over the period 2000 to 2009 can be found in Cyprus, Greece, Turkey and Portugal as well as in many of the new Member States from Eastern Europe.”³⁷ The trend in participation rates is similar. In the European Union there is a higher participation in Continued Vocational Training (CVT) courses: among male employees and managers. In 2010 “an average of almost 40 % of employees participated in planned CVT courses which took place away from their usual workplace, either managed by the company itself or by another training provider.” In most EU countries, “male employees participated more in training than female employees (38 % and 36 % respectively). The discrepancy between male and female employees was highest in the Czech Republic and Malta. In the Czech Republic on the one hand, male employees participated more than their female counterparts (65 % versus 55 %). On the other hand, the reverse was true in Malta and in the UK: more female than male employees participated in continuing vocational training (43 % versus 32 % in Malta, 32 % versus 27 % in the UK).”³⁸ In the South Eastern Harbour post-secondary and non-tertiary is still low compared to other regions.

In this scenario with low percentages in tertiary education, it is evident that research and development are not at the highest level either. In fact Malta’s progress in the realm of research and development has been slow with only a slight increase from 0.63% in 2010 to 0.73% in 2011. This (.10%) change was the result of significant increases in public and private expenditure with the total number of researchers (full-time equivalent) also increasing by 19% between 2009 and 2010. “Performance and economic output indicators all show positive development over the last decade, in particular the indicator on structural change of the economy which has increased at almost six times the rate of the EU average.” Although the increase is positive Malta remains amongst the lowest ranked of the European Member States in some key areas. The results are all based on investment and Malta is not only based on importation of goods and materials it is also highly dependent on research abroad or financed by foreign businesses. Malta has “the lowest public expenditure on research and development as % of GDP in the EU (0.25% compared to an EU average of 0.75% in 2010). Although 59% research and development of expenditure in Malta is performed by business enterprise (a share which was only slightly lower than the EU average of 62% in 2010), more than 80% of all business enterprise expenditure on research and development is spent by foreign-owned companies.”³⁹

Although in education and research the cities have a low performance the communities are comparatively healthy even with the impact and effects of a congested and a densely populated environment. In the realm of health and well-being Malta and the Southern Harbour are doing well when compared to global statistics. In 1998, the overall life expectancy in Malta was 77.5 years. The latest 3-year moving average (1997) was also 77.5 years. This ranks 14th of the 20 reference countries researched by the World Health Organisation (WHO). The 3-year moving averages were 80.0 years for women and 74.9 years for men. For men, life expectancy has exceeded the EU average since the late 1980s; for women, life expectancy has become very close to the EU average, increasing more rapidly than that of the EU in the past two decades. “Comparing the death rates from main causes between countries can indicate how far the observed mortality might be reduced. As almost all the causes underlying the deaths attributed to cardiovascular diseases, cancer and accidents are influenced by collective and individual habits and behaviour, a wide variety of health promotion and prevention measures can bring about changes to reduce health risks and thus disease and premature deaths.”⁴⁰ In Malta the most

³⁶ *Op.cit.*, p.xx.

³⁷ Eurostat, School enrolment and early leavers from education and training, Available at: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/ (Accessed 4 July 2014)

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Eurostat, [Innovation union progress at country level 2013](http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/pdf/state-of-the-union/2012/), Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/pdf/state-of-the-union/2012/> (Accessed 6 July 2014).

⁴⁰ Eurostat, Lifestyle, Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/health/archive/ph_determinants/life_style/mental/docs/malta.pdf (Accessed 6 July 2014).

frequent cause of death is cardiovascular diseases (CVD) this has declined from the 1970s and became relatively close to the EU average of 280 (1996).⁴¹

Of note is also the lower rates in cancer related mortality in Maltese males and females than the EU average. The mortality from lung cancer among men in the age group 0–64 years is also lower than the EU average and the “mortality from lung cancer among women has not been increasing as in the EU and remains among the lowest. Studies also show that there are “poor chances of surviving lung cancer.”⁴² This comes as a result of lack of resources especially for establishing a comprehensive screening programme for cancer.

Statistics related to lung cancer are significant when compared to data sources of air pollution. These seem to be on the rise especially impacting the Southern Harbour Region and South Eastern Region the impact of traffic congestion and the power stations in Marsa and Delimara are taking their toll. “The results found that one in every eight persons from Fgura and one in every ten persons in Zejtun has either asthma or suffers from asthma symptoms without knowing.” The inhabitants mostly at risk after Fgura are those from the Cottonera district. A report by Dr Martin Balzan and Dr Jason Bonnici reveals that “...in 2001, the number of people admitted in hospital from an asthma attack from the localities of Santa Lucija, Tarxien and Paola doubled in five years time.” In 2009 the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA) identified a number of polluting sources: heavy traffic, Marsa and Delimara power stations, shipbuilding, Rinella tank cleaning facility among others, all of them contributing to respiratory problems. The Marsa power station is at the centre of the Southern Harbour region and with Delimara power station it is considered to cause 62% of Malta’s pollution whereas 17% from transport.⁴³

The environment, climate and the socio-cultural background may contribute to better living. The suicide rate in Malta is one of the lowest in the EU27 (4.2 per 100,000 in 2005) but depression and anxiety according to the Eurobarometer is at 14%. The “population report to have or have had chronic anxiety or depression but 24% say are undergoing medical treatment for this reason. These figures are far above the EU average. With regard to children’s mental health “Malta is one of the countries with lowest bullying (13 year olds). Between 16% - 28% of children reported bullying others, and between 22% - 33% of children reported being bullied at least once in the previous couple of months.” However it is important to note that Malta has “very low scores on self-esteem (2004).

Assessment Results - The cultural domain of the maritime fortified cities

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Asthma: Pollution in Malta 37 times higher than norm, Maltastar, Available at: <http://www.maltastar.com/dart/20120502-asthma-pollution-in-malta-37-times-higher-than-norm> (Accessed 6 July 2014).

⁴³ *Op.cit.*

Photo 1. Fortresses of the sea and land HMS St. Angelo at the Vittoriosa headland in the background (1953). In the foreground the "aircraft carrier HMS THESEUS leaving Grand Harbour, Valletta, Malta. Astern are HMS GLASGOW, HMS CUMBERLAND and HMNZ BLACK PRINCE."



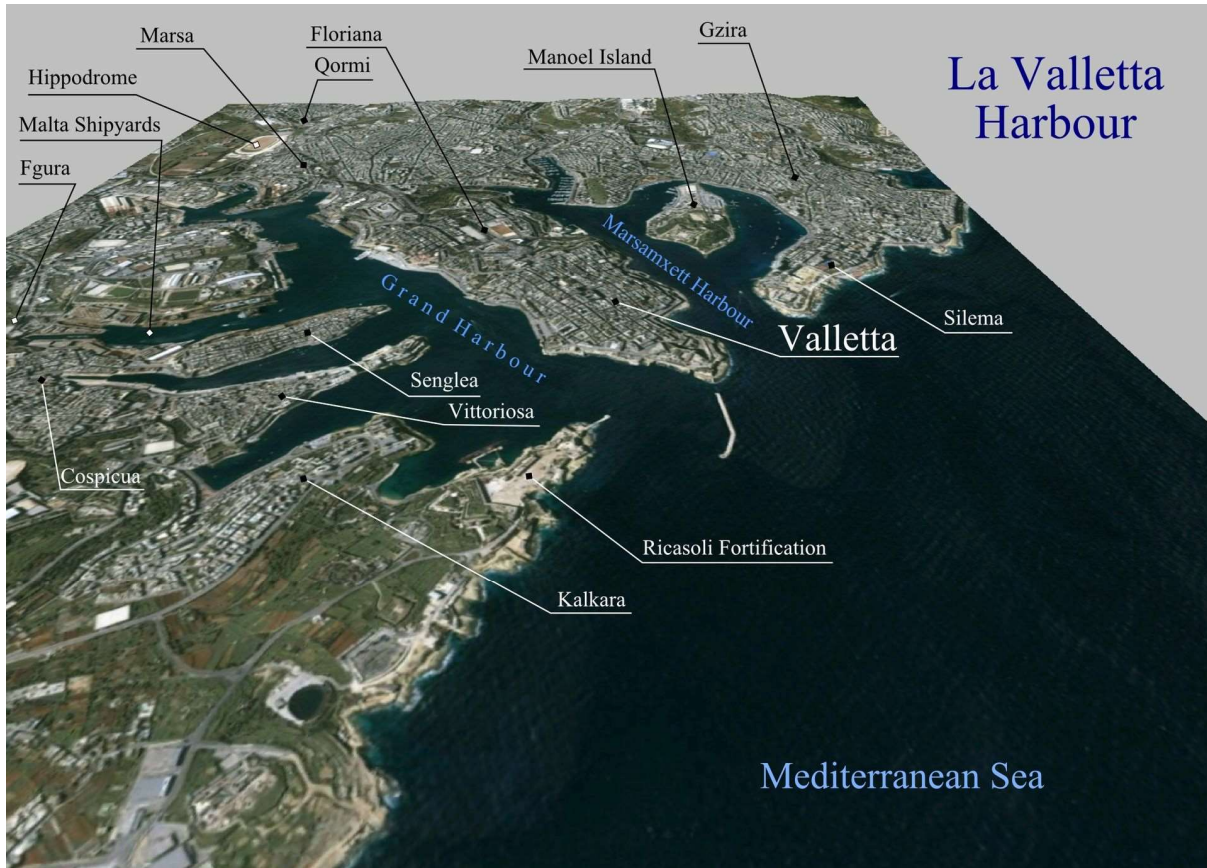
Courtesy Imperial War Museums(© IWM).⁴⁴

⁴⁴Imperial War Museums Collection, Available at: <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205016307> (Accessed 3 July 2014)

Photo 2. The fortified maritime cities and Grand Harbour in 2012 with Cruise Liner Terminal, Yacht Marina in Dockyard Creek and Dock re-adapted to service Super Yachts (Airphoto Malta).⁴⁵



⁴⁵ South Florida Business Journal, EDSA wins award for retail and residential project on island of Malta, 23 November 2012. Available at: <http://www.bizjournals.com/southflorida/print-edition/2012/11/23/edsa-wins-award-for-retail-and.html?page=all> (Accessed 3, July 2014).



Plan 1. The Grand Harbour; topographic data SRTM from NASA and World Imagery (NASA World Wind).

Table 1. Comparative populations of the fortified maritime cities and the Southern Harbour.

The fortified maritime cities		The Southern Harbour Region	
Valletta	5,748	Valletta	5,748
Floriana	2,014	Floriana	2,014
Vittoriosa (Birgu)	2,489	Vittoriosa (Birgu)	2,489
Cospicua (Bormla)	5,249	Cospicua (Bormla)	5,249
Senglea (Isla)	2,740	Senglea (Isla)	2,740
Paola (Casal Paola)	8,267	Paola (Casal Paola)	8,267
Kalkara	2,946	Kalkara	2,946
		Hal-Tarxien	8,380
		Fgura	11,449
		Marsa	4,788
		Hal-Luqa	5,911
		Haz-Żabbar	14,916
		Santa Lucija	2,970
		Xaghjra	1,571
Total	29,453	Total	79,438

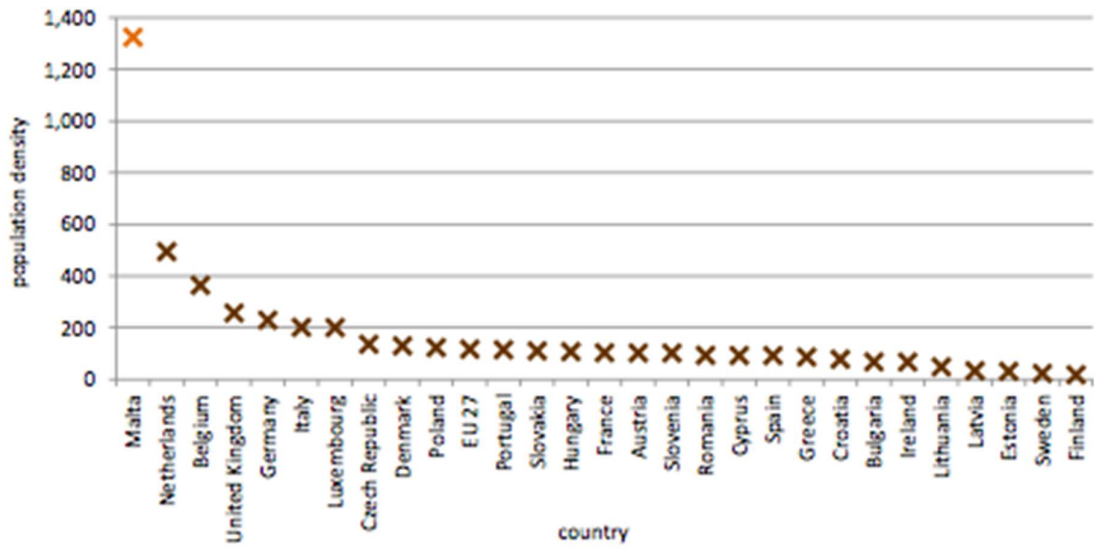
Table 2. The population densities of the Southern Harbour highlighting; Senglea, Valletta and Cospicua

District and locality	Population	Area (km ²)	Population per km ²
MALTA	417,432	315.15	1,325
Malta	386,057	246.49	1,566
Gozo and Comino	31,375	68.67	457
Southern Harbour	79,438	26.17	3,035
Cospicua	5,249	0.91	5,782
Fgura	11,449	1.14	10,019
Floriana	2,014	0.94	2,135
Hal Luqa	5,911	6.72	879
Hal Tarxien	8,380	0.88	9,555
Haz-Zabbar	14,916	5.35	2,788
Kalkara	2,946	1.76	1,675
Marsa	4,788	2.76	1,737
Paola	8,267	2.50	3,310
Santa Luċija	2,970	0.72	4,112
Senglea	2,740	0.16	17,146
Valletta	5,748	0.84	6,836
Vittoriosa	2,489	0.52	4,746
Xghajra	1,571	0.97	1,627

(National Statistics Office)⁴⁶.

⁴⁶Census of the Population and Housing 2011, National Statistics Office, Malta 2014,p.93.

Table 3. Comparative population densities in Europe (National Statistics Office)⁴⁷.

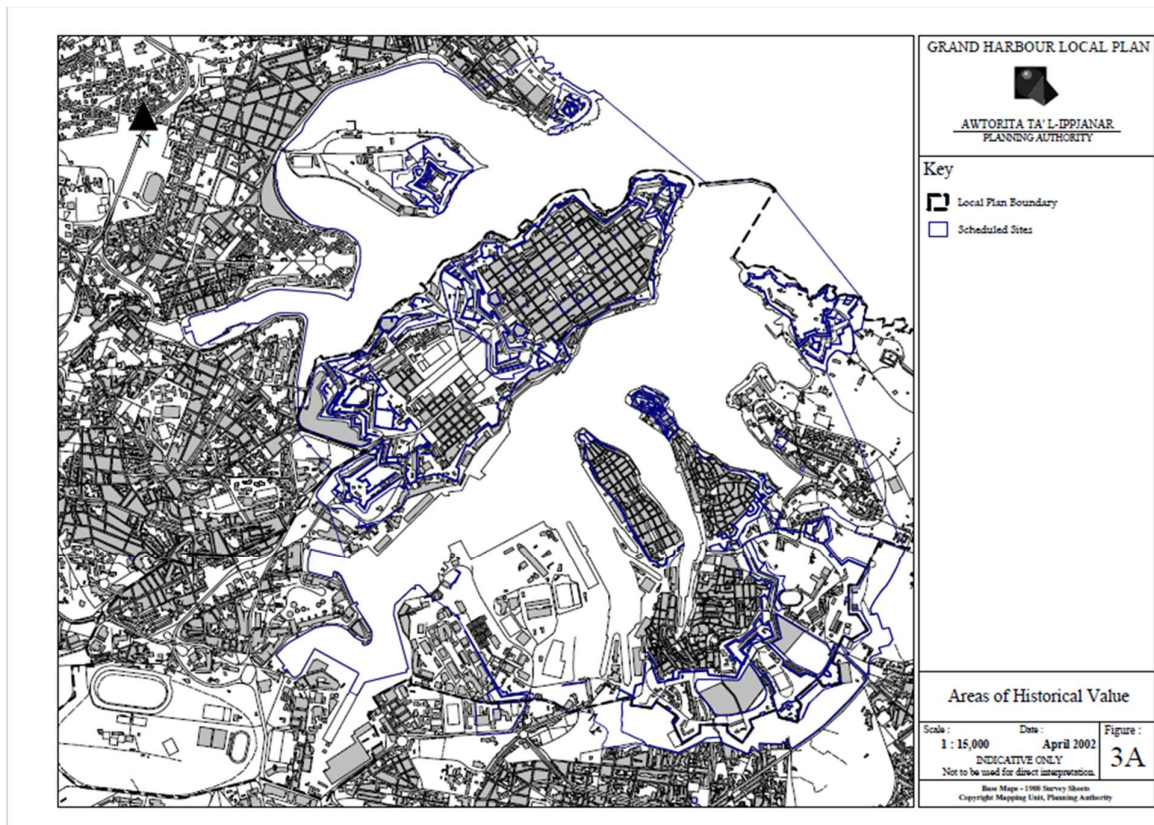


⁴⁷ Ibid., p. xiv.

Plan 2. Delineation of the Scheduled Fortifications and the Area of High Landscape Value highlighted in blue mostly covering the Southern Harbour. (Malta Environment and Planning Authority)⁴⁸.

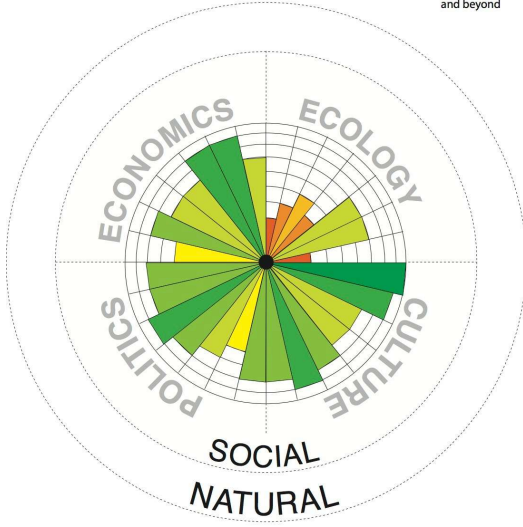
Figure 1. Circles of Social Life: Profile Process.

Table 4. Culture domain perspectives.



⁴⁸Refer to Government Notice 133 of 2001. Available at: <http://www.mepa.org.mt/LpDocumentDetails?syskey=%20707> (Accessed 2 July 2014).

CIRCLES of SOCIAL LIFE and beyond



1. Identity and Engagement
2. Creativity and Recreation
3. Memory and Projection
4. Beliefs and Ideas
5. Gender and Generations
6. Enquiry and Learning
7. Health and Wellbeing

Table 5. The Scale of Sustainability

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Critical	Bad	Highly Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Good	Vibrant

*Photo 3. Mariam Al-Batool Mosque in Paola (1978-82) is now part of the cultural landscape of the harbour area. The Islamic minaret and the Catholic domes and steeples mark the Paola skyline.*⁴⁹

⁴⁹ The Beautiful Mosques Gallery. Available at: <http://www.beautifulmosque.com/mariam-al-batool-mosque-in-paola-malta/> (Accessed 7 July 2014)



Table 6. Percentage of Maltese and Non-Maltese inhabitants in the Southern Harbour Region.⁵⁰

⁵⁰Census of the Population and Housing 2011, National Statistics Office, Malta 2014,p.115.

Southern Harbour	41.8	39.3
Cospicua	41.5	44.5
Fgura	38.6	38.1
Floriana	48.8	35.5
Hal Luqa	48.3	40.0
Hal Tarxien	39.2	40.8
Hal-Zabbar	38.9	38.9
Kalkara	39.7	50.1
Marsa	45.0	31.8
Paola	44.3	35.2
Santa Lucija	43.5	46.7
Senglea	43.6	50.3
Valletta	45.6	40.4
Vittoriosa	45.1	50.1

References