

A STUDY OF SPATIAL PLANNING
USING PARTICIPATORY GIS IN THE MALTESE CONTEXT

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the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
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Wendy Jo Mifsud

To my family, for believing in the value of knowledge

ABSTRACT

Spatial planning engages with the many controversies that characterise a dynamic built environment. Its practice in a highly dense archipelago such as the Maltese Islands often brings issues of stakeholder representation and good governance to the fore. The social milieu within which spatial planning takes place is therefore of relevance, especially in the light of the influence of characteristics related to highly networked communities. Commencing with an assessment of the role of the spatial planner over time and the challenges the profession faces today, the implications of value-based planning and the characteristics of dialogue are considered.

This is placed in the context of Malta as a relatively young nation and an even more recent member of the European Union. Of notice is the role of interest groups, stakeholders and community groups in statutory processes of representation, with a focus on the power relations affecting all participants, whether practicing planners or stakeholders. In this regard, the potential impact of Participatory GIS as a decision-support-system is assessed. GIS being already integrated into spatial planning in Malta, it is its value as a tool for fostering dialogue between participants that is of primary interest.

These matters were further analysed through an ethnographic process of engagement in participant observation, in-depth interviews and a tri-partite Participatory GIS initiative. The ensuing observations resulted in positive correlations between the use of participatory mapping technologies and the extent to which stakeholders are proactive, as opposed to simply reactive; and thus, on the potential for dialogue in the statutory representation process. Despite this, socio-political factors cannot be ignored, and the dissertation concludes with a call for improved representation towards balancing values, context, legitimacy and efficacy in spatial planning in Malta.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	17
1.1. Addressing a gap in knowledge	20
1.2. The structure of the thesis	24
2. Phronesis in planning research	27
2.1. Value-rational social research	29
2.1.1. Ethnography in planning research	30
2.1.2. Ethnographic tools in practice	32
2.2. Methodological outline of the thesis	36
2.2.1. Engaging in planning practice	38
2.2.2. Interviewing in context	41
2.2.3. A Participatory GIS opportunity	45
3. Society and Space in Participatory Planning.....	51
3.1. Social structures and associations	53
3.1.1. Dynamics of change in the built environment	56
3.1.2. Social cohesion towards social capital	58
3.1.3. Hierarchies of participation	61
3.2. Socio-spatial dynamics in the Maltese context	66
3.2.1. Political factions in society	68
3.2.2. A culture of patronage and clientelism	70
3.3. Conclusion: Analysis of motivation in participatory planning	72
4. The Planner and the Public Interest.....	75
4.1. Planning as a rational and reflective endeavour.....	77
4.1.1. The planner as advocate	78
4.1.2. The planner as reflective practitioner	81
4.1.3. The public interest	82
4.1.4. Values in spatial planning	84
4.2. Communicative action in spatial planning.....	86
4.2.1. Counteracting communicative action	87
4.2.2. Consensus-building	89
4.2.3. Cognitive planning	91
4.3. Conclusion: Analysis of planning as a balance of interests	94

5. Spatial Planning in a European Malta	97
5.1. Towards strategic planning in Malta.....	101
5.1.1. Malta within the European Union	104
5.1.2. Contemporary planning framework	106
5.2. Statutory processes of public participation	108
5.2.1. Malta’s ratification of the Aarhus Convention	111
5.2.2. Public consultation in Maltese planning legislation	113
5.3. Conclusion: Analysis of participation towards actionable policy.....	117
6. GIS and changing social geographies	121
6.1. Participatory GIS.....	124
6.1.1. Ethical considerations of PGIS	128
6.1.2. Factors of inclusion in PGIS	129
6.1.3. Grassroots democracy through PGIS	133
6.1.4. PGIS as an aid to participatory planning	135
6.2. GIS and PGIS applications in Malta	136
6.2.1. GIS decision-support-systems	138
6.2.2. Stakeholder inclusion in statutory mapping applications	139
7. Mapping the City.....	143
7.1. Cultural Infrastructure Sites	146
7.1.1. Valletta Design Cluster at il-Biċċerija	152
7.1.2. National Museum of Art (MUŻA)	157
7.1.3. Strait Street Art, Culture and Entertainment Hub	161
7.1.4. Valletta Indoor Market	165
7.2. Tri-partite PGIS test-case study	169
7.2.1. Part 1 - Participatory Mapping Workshop	175
7.2.2. Part 2 - Design4DCity Online Campaign	181
7.2.3. Part 3 - Participatory Mapping Walkabout	185
7.3. Conclusion: Analysis of the potential for PGIS in Malta	191
7.3.1. Comparing contributions from PGIS and statutory representations	199
7.3.2. Topics for future analysis	206

8. Conclusion	209
8.1. Deconstructing binaries in spatial planning	211
8.1.1. Socio-political relations in Malta	213
8.1.2. The potential of PGIS in spatial planning	216
8.1.3. Balancing the scales	218
References	220
Appendices	245
Appendix A	246
CONSENT FORMS AND CODED INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS	246
Appendix B	289
HISTORY OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE MALTESE ISLANDS.....	289
Appendix C	297
MAPS PRODUCED DURING THE PARTICIPATORY MAPPING WORKSHOP	297
Appendix D	301
LIVING CITIES LIVEABLE SPACES PROGRAMME	301
Appendix E	307
MAPPING SHEETS DISTRIBUTED TO PARTICIPANTS OF THE WALKABOUT	307
Appendix F	313
ANALYSIS OF STATUTORY REPRESENTATIONS	313

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	The structure of the analytical review of the literature	25
Figure 2	Focused thematic codes in order of priority, visualised by interviewee..	44
Figure 3	Visualisation of the priority given to each of the focused thematic codes by the interviewees	44
Figure 4	Two ‘ladders of participation’, that of Arnstein (1969) to the left and Wiedemann & Ferners (1993) to the right.....	63
Figure 5	Presentation and interpretation of interaction from Forester (2009)	85
Figure 6	Three ‘ladders of participation’, that of Arnstein (1969) to the left, and Armstrong, Nyerges, Wang, & Wright (2011) in the centre, and Haklay (2013) to the right.....	126
Figure 7	The location of the four sites of cultural infrastructure within Valletta	146
Figure 8	The Principal Urban Area as delineated in the SPED	150
Figure 9	The building that will host the Valletta Design Cluster at il-Biċċerija..	155
Figure 10	The front (above) and back (below) facades of MUŻA	159
Figure 11	Views of the Strait Street Art, Culture and Entertainment Hub	163
Figure 12	The newly redeveloped Valletta Indoor Market	167
Figure 13	The landing screen from the digital mapping (above) and MAP-it paper mapping (below) parts of the PGIS workshop	179
Figure 14	The three GIFs created to promote the PGIS online campaign on social media websites	183
Figure 15	Participants at the PGIS walkabout using Mapping for Change and paper mapping technique.....	189
Figure 16	Visualisation of the percentage participants (outer ring) and percentage contributions (inner ring) shown in Table 1.....	195
Figure 17	Visualisation of the digital and paper mapping rates shown in Table 2	196

Figure 18	Screen captures of the participatory mapping platform at varying scales.....	198
Figure 19	Bar chart showing the count of issues mentioned in representations ...	201
Figure 20	Pie chart showing the percentage proportion of statutory representees	201
Figure 21	Pie chart showing the percentage proportion of representation type....	203
Figure 22	Visualisation of the contribution type shown in Table 3	204

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Participant and contribution statistics for each of the PGIS initiatives.....	195
Table 2	Type of contribution for each of the PGIS initiatives	196
Table 3	Comparative table of the type of contributions gathered	203

The richness of messy, often emotional, stories offers a window on the everyday politics, ethics and rationalities of planning practice.

(Hillier & Healey, 2008)

1. INTRODUCTION

The potential for spatial planning to be practiced as a participatory endeavour forms the basis of this thesis. As such, it explores the link between spatial planning, power relations and participation-led inclusion; the commonality between these three themes being a strong interest in understanding the role of the planner in current socio-spatial environments. Over time, planners have been categorised according to the dominant principles of the age in which they practice. Whether considered as advocates of democratisation, being reflective in action or applying value-based sensitivity through cognitive practice, planners nevertheless are often at the fulcrum of politically charged debates on the allocation of resources.

Context, be it social, economic or environmental, is a primary consideration of spatial planning practice. In Malta, one can argue that context refers to an interrelated set of factors influenced by the post-colonial evolving culture of a young nation with geographic specificities. As part of the European Union, the Maltese Islands are a peripheral, small-island state with a developing spatial planning system based on centralised control (Baldacchino, 2013). It is often observed that whilst democratic legitimacy remains an overarching goal, ingrained patronage and clientelism weighs down efforts towards the establishment of contemporary methods of inclusion and participation (Boissevain & Gatt, 2000).

In today's Digital Age, previously established hierarchies of participation are increasingly influenced by the attainment of technical capital. Interest groups have woken up to the realisation that access to data and data-interpretation tools is essential to enable local traditional knowledge to be imparted to decision-makers (Savage, 2013). Digital maps are an example of such tools, exemplified by the increased ubiquity of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in the realm of decision-making. GIS is particularly useful in spatial planning since it has the combined capabilities of data gathering, analysis and visualisation; which when juxtaposed with participatory methods of decision-making can be termed Participatory Geographic Information Science (PGIS)¹ (McCall, Martinez, & Verplanke, 2015).

The Maltese Islands

The Maltese Islands, an archipelago at the centre of the Mediterranean composed of Malta, Gozo and Comino, are one of five European island states², the others being Great Britain, Iceland, Ireland and Cyprus; and one of two archipelago states, the other being the United Kingdom (Plejjel, 2014). The Maltese Islands have the highest population density of all European countries, and consequently of all European islands, with 1,263 persons per km², compared to an EU average density on islands of 117 persons per km². This tenfold variance highlights the pressures related to resource allocation, including that of land; a situation exacerbated by the

¹ PGIS is a discipline first consolidated as a practice at the 'Mapping for Change' conference in Nairobi in July 2005, though participatory mapping practices had been undertaken since the 1980s. Both the terms Public Participation GIS (PPGIS) and Participatory GIS (PGIS) are used, with little clear definition. PPGIS originated during meetings of the National Centre for Geographic Information and Analysis (NCGIA) to describe the interrelation of participatory planning and GIS technology in land use planning applications (Schroeder, 1996), whilst PGIS has been used mostly in relation to participatory planning in rural areas of developing countries (PGIS '05, 2005). To further clarify the distinction in terminology, PPGIS is often differentiated from PGIS in terms of social capital. Whereas social capital is cited as an essential product and development goal of a PGIS exercise, it is not central to PPGIS despite the possibility of its creation as a secondary product.

² Eurostat's definition of an island is that it must be more than 1km² large, lie more than 1km from the mainland and permanently support more than 50 people.

inability of successive strategic land-use plans to adequately address these pressures (Moncada, Camilleri, Formosa, & Galea, 2009).

Malta's planning system is based on that of the United Kingdom, a development common to former colonies which has led to the coining of the term 'Post Colonialism'. This refers to the legacy of European territorial colonisation, whereby planning was used as a tool to authorise the exploitation of resources by the colonial rulers. The de-colonisation of the 20th century saw this legacy being consolidated into the spatial planning practices of the newly independent countries such as Malta, with the political class taking on the role of the former colonial authorities (Allmendinger, 2017; Porter, 2017).

On a community level, it has been noted that islanders are used to adopting multiple roles depending on opportunities that arise, these having been termed 'opportunities of scope'; and in this manner build a strong social capital by means of being engaged in multiple networks (Baldacchino, 2014). These networks are characterised by deep seated political allegiance with strong place-based links, a fact Mitchell (2002) attributes to the relationship between the development of political parties and socio-spatial factors such as the access to desired employment.

In a converse scenario, Baldacchino's (2006) PROFIT model proposes a premise whereby islands view the mainland as an extra-terrestrial resource to be colonised and exploited by the island, in lieu of any hinterland. In such cases, he cites diplomacy, low-level funding, local industry and economic management as key traits that require fostering. Small-island states such as Malta have necessarily had to rely on industrialisation and the development of services in a post-agricultural economy, seeking export-promotion and protection from cheaper imports. This has left an impact on the Maltese environment, with the ever-increasing demand for developable land prompting mixed reactions from stakeholders, many demanding legitimate representation and good governance in spatial planning processes.

1.1. Addressing a gap in knowledge

Following Tewdwr-Jones' (2012) suggestion that "we should at least debate and challenge the wider expectations of why planning exists locally, what and whom it serves, and what shape it performs in assisting in the development of places" (p. 205), an in-depth analysis of statutory spatial planning processes has been undertaken, particularly of the potential influence that participation through PGIS could have on current practices. The analysis focuses therefore on the dynamics of production in the built environment, the way Malta's political history influenced current planning practices and the concept of 'localism' as applied in the Maltese context. In tandem with these overarching issues, the issues of planning as a client-oriented consumable good and the role of the planner as a coordinator of change are discussed and the role of the spatial planner highlighted in this socio-political milieu.

By way of a preliminary definition, stakeholders are defined as those people who have an interest in the spatial planning context at hand. It is not a definition that is presupposed by the planner since interest must be shown on an individual level; neither is it a definition that encompasses all possible stakeholders in the scenario. Rather, it is confined to those who express an interest and who participate in decision-making, with the caveat that this participation occurs to the extent allowed by the power structures and method of governance. Furthermore, a stakeholder or community group is not necessarily a group united in thought and action. It must be acknowledged that such groups can behold a diverse range of interests, whether in the public or indeed in their personal interest.

The planner, as a player in the spatial planning scene, strives to be aware of the interests of stakeholder and community groups, and can use the most adept methods of bringing about this awareness. Engaging in participatory spatial planning may however turn out to be more rewarding as a process than as a means to an end, since the significance of the practice is in allowing for opportunities for social capital to develop, as well as in the resulting plan. The way the process of value-based understanding is translated into planning policy is a matter that remains a challenge, both to achieve and to a certain extent, to understand. It seems however that stakeholder groups are becoming increasingly capable of using various means at

their disposal to get their message across and thereby in participating to a certain extent in decision-making. This is sometimes happening through both statutory representation processes and through more informal channels of communication such as by means of social media, aided by the increasingly ubiquitous use of digital technologies that has allowed PGIS to develop.

Research objectives and questions

The premise upon which the research has been formulated is that the decision-support capabilities of GIS, augmented with the participatory remit of PGIS can form an effective interdisciplinary platform for spatial planning in Malta. Considering the Maltese context, an observed characteristic of planner-stakeholder relations is a somewhat mutual cynicism. A factor contributing to this mentality is the system of patronage³ ingrained in systems of governance, which brings about widespread clientelism practices that pervade decision-making practices in the interest of influential groups and individuals.

In the light of this socio-political context, the primary objective of this thesis has been

1. to understand the relationship between participatory endeavours and these traits of the spatial planning system in Malta.

It has been concluded however that although systems such as PGIS do have the disruptive potential to induce more in-depth dialogue on the matters at hand, the current political system is built upon the relationship between patron and client.

³ Boissevain (2013) categorises dependency relations into:

- Patronage: a patron-client relation based on loyalty in return for material resources;
- Patron/brokerage: a client bargaining multiple patrons who lobby personal contacts within an organisation to gain access to resources in order to win clients; and
- Organisational brokerage: a situation whence a broker and the client are part of the same group and pressure for favours can be applied from within the organisational structure.

From constituency level and higher, the battle for votes is one that cannot be ignored in the allocation of resources central to spatial planning. The disruptive potential of PGIS has therefore been analysed, towards the secondary objective of

2. defining a possible role for PGIS in the ongoing quest for better stakeholder representation in spatial planning processes.

Based upon the above objectives, an overarching research question was formulated which was further developed into four subsidiary research questions throughout the course of the research; these regarding participatory spatial planning processes, determinants and power relationships in spatial planning, and digitally mediated social interactions as follows:

Will integrating PGIS in spatial planning procedures motivate reciprocal stakeholder engagement in Malta?

- What correlations are there between participatory spatial planning and stakeholder motivation?
- Can participatory processes be equally and universally applied to spatial planning practice?
- How can alternative participatory planning procedures lead to actionable policies?
- How can participatory mapping through PGIS be used in statutory representation processes in Malta?

The way an answer to the above research questions has been attempted is based on phronetic method, which is the value-based study of society towards the understanding of the phenomenon at hand (Flyvbjerg, 2001). To this end, ethnographic methods of data collection have been employed in a mixed-methods approach. Firstly, the experience of the author in spatial planning practice has been utilised as a source of participant observation; secondly, interviews with pertinent persons were organised to add multiple voices to the continuous stream of observations being made. Thirdly, a PGIS initiative was embarked upon to assess the hitherto little tried practice in Malta. This too was undertaken in three stages for comparison, and constitutes three ways in which PGIS can be applied to spatial planning.

The spatial planning milieu in Malta was interpreted in the light of the opportunities of digitally-mediated decision-making. Indeed, digital technologies have had the acclaim of having been the purveyors of a wider recognition of the impact of spatial planning endeavours; these often overshadowed by the controversies prevalent in the built environment. Indeed, spatial planning endeavours are often brought to the fore when they strike too close to home for comfort and therefore inspire a fear of the unknown, of change, and on occasion, of the planners themselves. It is to be hoped that continued research in the way spatial planning can become less of an enigma to society at large will continue to be undertaken and emerging technologies continued to be employed.

It has also been highlighted that societies have their own unique characteristics, just as geographical places have specificities. Also, the planning system operates on the physical environment within social networks of associations in a complex manner that does not allow for the assumption that participation in spatial planning is a universally accepted goal to be striven towards. The integration of adequate participatory methods in spatial planning practice must be based on the understanding of the history, identity and values of the society within which it is to be implemented (Heywood, 2011). Finally, it has been shown that power relations significantly influence the spatial planning process, and that these must be thoroughly understood prior to proposing the integration of new methods such as the use of PGIS, as has been put forward in this thesis.

The process of discovery and analysis also brought about a significant product of this thesis; that of having procured the licence to a well-established PGIS platform. The licence for Mapping for Change currently held by the University of Malta in collaboration with University College London is a springboard of opportunity for those who would like to undertake participatory mapping research. Many students, academics and practitioners alike have shown interest in using the platform; some have already used it in their research since its procurement. This ethos of collaboration is in line with the perceived benefits of participation and with the ambition to build bridges between theory and practice which permeates the following narrative.

1.2. The structure of the thesis

The forthcoming body of work is structured over eight chapters. An introductory chapter is followed by a chapter outlining the methodology followed in the research; setting the scene for the next four chapters. These constitute a theoretical body of work with concurrent analytical observations on the subjects at hand. A test-case study follows, in which a description of how the analytical observations were tested on a real-time project is given. The concluding chapter synthesises the author's learning trajectory and juxtaposes the insights gained from the literature with their manifestations from the empirical research carried out.

A guiding concept of this thesis was the value-rational approach known as *phronesis*, presented in Chapter 2. This chapter outlines the methodology followed throughout the course of the research and is presented early in the text to clarify the framework of the narrative. The process of participant observation that permeated the research is presented, as are the interviews used to obtain alternative perspectives on what was being observed in practice, and the participatory mapping initiatives that then provided insights into the issues related to participatory planning in the field. Having been undertaken in juxtaposition to gaining theoretical understanding, the two research strands cannot be seen in isolation, but rather as complementary and indeed contemporary to one another.

The theoretical body of work presented in Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 is structured as a double helix shown in Figure 1 below. The strand of theoretical knowledge that permeates this thesis is intertwined with the application of theory to the Maltese context. Each topic is therefore presented in a dualistic manner starting with the theory and followed by its localisation, these then brought together with a concluding section at the end of each chapter. In addition, a temporal scale was adhered to whereby the concepts presented in each section follow a timeline, aiding in the clarity of the work.

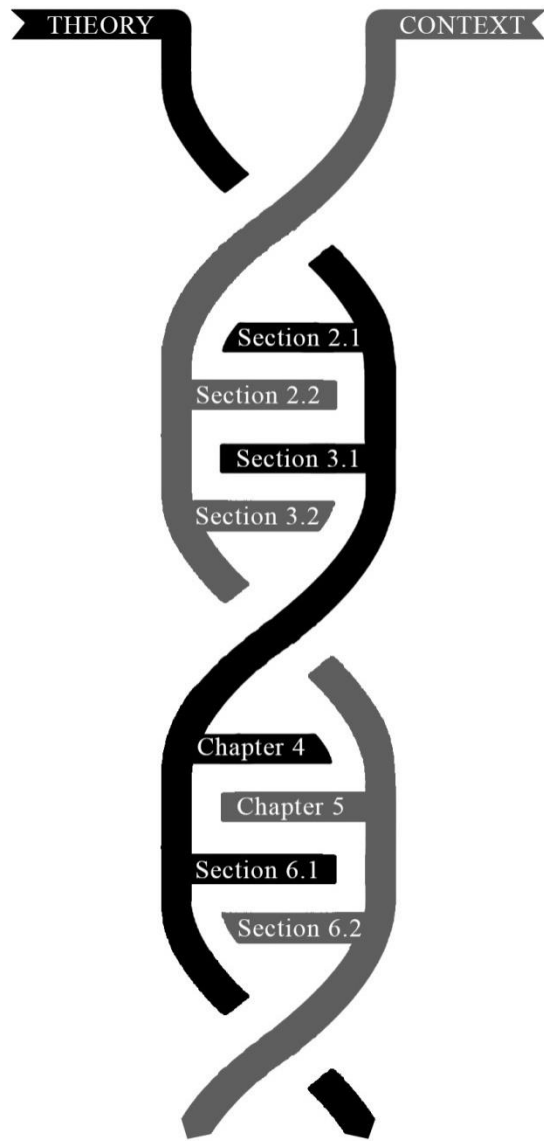


Figure 1 The structure of the analytical review of the literature

In an effort to structure the narrative along a clear trajectory, the overarching concept of society is delved into first. Chapter 3 therefore presents a scenario of society and space in a dynamic relationship which ultimately affects stakeholder motivation in participatory planning. Having set the scene, Chapter 4 features a discussion on the role of the planner in the face of competing interests and leads to Chapter 5, wherein this role is analysed in the Maltese socio-political context. Chapter 6 builds upon this background and assesses the use of PGIS as a decision-support-system in the light of societal determinants and spatial planning challenges.

The conclusions ensuing from each of these chapters are tested in the test-case study presented in Chapter 7, this being a tri-partite PGIS initiative developed within a wider research project under the aegis of the Valletta 2018 Foundation. Factors of participant motivation, political influence in spatial planning and the disruptive potential of PGIS amongst others were assessed through the organisation of three participatory mapping projects: a workshop, an online campaign and a walkabout. The results from the initiative are taken forward through an in-depth discussion on the potential impacts of introducing PGIS into statutory representation processes in Malta.

Inevitably, topics for future research were inspired by the observational and analytical process of the thesis. It is hoped that opportunities to take these forward present themselves and further augment the knowledge gained during this research.

The goal is to help restore social science to its classical position as a practical, intellectual activity aimed at clarifying the problems, risks, and possibilities we face as humans and societies.

(Flyvbjerg, 2001)

2. PHRONESIS IN PLANNING RESEARCH

An early realisation during the research process has been the intertwining of power with spatial planning and indeed the presence of conflict that permeates the practice. Flyvbjerg's (2001) description of his work as a spatial planner in Ministries and Regional Development Authorities in Denmark was enlightening, and influenced the methodology of this thesis. Particularly influential was the juxtaposition of politically influenced planning practice, technical expertise and academic research. In his own words: "in modern society, conflict and power are phenomena constitutive of social and political inquiry" (p. 3) and indeed social science can be undertaken as "a practical, intellectual activity aimed at clarifying the problems, risks, and possibilities we face as humans and societies" (p. 4).

The study of the Maltese spatial planning system, of contemporary planning issues and of current practices, has revealed much detail about the socio-political phenomena of interest. As the local situation has developed through the six years during which the thesis has been undertaken, an attempt has been made to follow a flexible approach, responding to the requirements of the research with an aim to retain its relevance. This is primarily because cultural elements are responsive to an individual's environment, and as such are difficult to analyse as part of an inflexible methodological context (Boellstorff, Nardi, Pearce, & Taylor, 2012).

A primary interest of this thesis is the understanding of factors that motivate or repress participation in spatial planning in the Maltese Islands. The nature of cultural elements such as motivation and repression however renders them liable to interpretation, since they are matters operating in the subconscious of individuals. To this end, a trajectory of exploration has been the guiding motive of the research, using an ethnographic approach to elucidate broad matters related to planning culture; a decision with methodological repercussions as will be described in this chapter.

The research questions listed above have therefore developed over the course of the research and have been informed in an iterative manner by data provided by the field of planning practice. The author's direct participation in spatial planning throughout the course of the research has aided the ongoing development of these questions in an ethnographic manner. This has led towards increasingly arriving at the discovery and interpretation of the determinants, causes and effects of motivation in the field of participatory planning in Malta.

During the research it has often been the case that initial ideas on the nature of factors influencing participation in spatial planning have had to be revised, at times fundamentally. It has been enlightening to analyse contemporary practices in the light of historical events and to realise that cultural phenomena are rather slower to respond to change than technological ones. This matter of 'change' has been central to the research and Campbell's (2014) observation that "planning's appreciation of the interplay between theory and practice (research and action) is a necessary prerequisite to drive forward intellectual scholarship, both within planning and crucially beyond" (p.25) is significant in this regard.

As will be later delved into, the spatial planning case chosen to test aspects of the research has been studied through engagement in participant observation, in-depth interviewing and practical initiatives in participatory mapping. It has been held throughout that one cannot disassociate the description of a case from its narrative since the key to its understanding is in its values. The use of a test-case study in this

thesis is in the tradition of ‘phronesis’: linking theoretical thought to practical research through a value system (Flyvbjerg, 2001).

2.1. Value-rational social research

In his critique of pure objectivity, Bourdieu (1980) states that “every genuine sociological undertaking is, inseparably, a socio-analysis” (p. 20), and that when researching a society’s thoughts and perceptions one must allow oneself to explore the irrational, the common and the banal in order to arrive at a true understanding of the subject being observed. Flyvbjerg (2001) goes so far as to say that when designing social research, “the context for an event studied by a researcher thus determines whether the event should at all count as a relevant event for the study” (p. 42).

The context-dependency implied by Flyvbjerg is echoed by Bourdieu when emphasising the fact that research of a social phenomenon cannot be comprehensively considered unless within its context. Bourdieu (1980) thus describes the objective–subjective divide in social research; balancing experiential knowledge of the social world on the one hand and the objective conditions of this experience on the other hand. Confronting the long-held assertion that a theory can only be considered as such if it is proven to be context-independent, he states conversely that the researcher must delve with active presence into *habitus*⁴, to be within the practice of interest and to be immersed in the subject being observed. A case is therefore seen in its totality; its history, its values and ultimately its contribution to the study of society, both through observation and through practice. It

⁴ The concept of *habitus* conceived by Bourdieu refers to a space composed of one’s lifeworld and therefore formed from one’s socialisation, creating a network of similarly socialised individuals who share both physical mannerisms and value-systems amongst them. Since both mannerisms and value-systems are often inherited, *habitus* can be perceived as a self-propagating social structure.

is to this end that Flyvbjerg (2001; 2006) emphasises the importance of contextuality.

The context-dependency of the study is therefore pre-supposed, as is the assertion that higher levels of learning must include an element of context, intuition and experientially based action. These contribute to qualitative expertise which allows the learner to augment analytical rationality with experiential rationality, thereby reaching higher levels of understanding which cannot be reached by the former alone. This premise is particularly true in the case of social sciences, where context-dependent elements are central to the understanding of a phenomenon (Flyvbjerg, 2001).

Flyvbjerg elaborates upon this view by describing the distinction between the three intellectual virtues: episteme, techne and phronesis. Episteme defines scientific knowledge based on analytical rationality, techne is production-oriented based on practical instrumental rationality, and phronesis is ethics and value-based whilst being oriented towards action, thereby based on practical value-rationality: “that activity by which instrumental-rationality is balanced by value-rationality” (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p. 4). He is seconded in this assertion by Carr (2006), who also considers phronesis as a derivative of Aristotle’s practical philosophy.

2.1.1. Ethnography in planning research

Ethnography is a context-responsive discipline. In this sense, it is not static, but process based; and can be moulded to the research process as it progresses. Ethnography allows the researcher to understand other people’s experiences more deeply, for example by participating in the same activities being undertaken or by observing practices as they unfold in their natural contexts. It is therefore most useful when an analysis of people’s life-world is required to answer the research questions of a study (Pink, et al., 2015).

Indeed, one aspect of planning research constitutes the researcher being immersed in planning practice during the research with the aim of observing planners in a setting 'natural' to them (Forester, 2009). Forester does not however restrict himself to participant observation of the behaviour of planners in planning meetings but expands his field of view to include residents in public meetings and interaction with other stakeholders such as developers in the construction industry. In addition, he adopts a mixed method approach common in ethnographic research which also includes interviews with these stakeholders (Farthing, 2015).

Embarking upon an ethnographic approach to planning research does however pose several challenges. Particularly, the researcher must become well-acquainted with the social dynamics of the research context, its governance approach and the geographic scale at which these dynamics operate. An understanding of the interests involved at each scale of the power hierarchy, including the knowledge and values held at each tier is an integral part of the ethnographic process. This will then allow the researcher to place planning episodes in their socio-political context of power relations (Pinel, 2014).

In today's Digital Age, digitally mediated communication is changing the way people interact with each other and has provided a new realm within which communication takes place. Digital ethnography is a contemporary aspect of ethnographic inquiry and is concerned with research practices that integrate the digital as yet another part of the world we inhabit, considering all material, sensory and social aspects of it. It allows interpretations of the world as experienced through the digital milieu and often adapts traditional ethnographic methods to understanding participants in a digital context. Such methods can include participant observation and interviews outside the digital realm and when used also "in mediated contact with participants rather than in direct presence" (Pink, et al., 2015, p. 3), can lead to a more holistic analysis of the physical-digital interrelation.

Digital ethnography can therefore be carried out both through the medium of technology and in direct contact with the subjects being studied. It is a discipline that

centres on the analysis of a process and is therefore often open-ended and flexible in its design. It is also a process that is inherently collaborative, often requiring direct interaction with the subjects being observed. In this manner, digital ethnography “generates embedded descriptions and understandings of how people use digital technologies and content in the contexts of everyday places, practices, relationships and routine” (Pink, et al., 2015, p. 46).

2.1.2. Ethnographic tools in practice

Pinel (2014) outlines three categories of ethnographic inquiry related to planning research, the outline of which has informed the ethnographic inquiry for this thesis:

- Participant observation;
- Interviews; and
- Participatory mapping.

The first category, participant observation, is undertaken whereby the researcher forms relationships with members of the community or stakeholder group to open avenues of inquiry (Silverman, 2014). Secondly, interviews are a crucial aspect of the inquiry, whereby coding techniques and textual analysis can be applied to transcripts to extract meanings and values (Buunk & Van der Weide, 2014; Silverman, 2014; Saldaña, 2015). Thirdly, participatory mapping forms an essential link in the ethnographic process by allowing the researcher to unearth stakeholder relationships and practices (Duhr, 2014).

Participant observation

It is recognised that ethnography is “a methodological approach in which participant observation is a critical element, and in which research is guided by experience unfolding in the field” (Boellstorff, Nardi, Pearce, & Taylor, 2012, p. 15). Participant observation is thus used by researchers to understand cultural aspects of a community through direct participation in the routines of that community. It constitutes an understanding of the community and the interpretation of the data

collected from the community. Participant observation has the advantages of enhancing the interpretation of the collected data, as well as informing more relevant research questions throughout the course of the research; making it both a data collection and analysis tool (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2010).

Considering the immersion of the researcher in the routines of the community being studied, participant observation demands that the researcher grapples with the multiple social worlds, or socialities, which make up every day routines. It also demands of the researcher a mind observant of fluid human networks and the transitions of the community within these networks. One must therefore consider that the immersion into a social world is simultaneously an immersion into a multitude of connected social worlds. When observing the digital milieu, the situation is given a further dimension using virtual, interconnected worlds (Pink, et al., 2015). Participation can range from passive, to moderate, to active and finally to complete; in a range of immersion from solely observing a group to becoming part of a group and participating fully in any activity that is undertaken (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2010).

In planning research, participant observation follows the same approach set out by anthropologists undertaking social research. Here, the participant observation is undertaken in the context of a policy-making scenario. The social context is composed of the planning team and the relevant stakeholders. The spatial context is often the office or boardroom. The intimate nature of these meetings does not always allow for commonly used ethnographic methods of data gathering such as video-taping. Other methods such as notes-taking have however proven useful and can nonetheless be interpreted in the usual manner pertaining to participant observation (Gordon & Manosevitch, 2011).

Interviews

A research tool often used in tandem with participant observation is interviewing. Interviews can provide useful data to understand people's narratives and to give the researcher further insight into a culture being closely observed. Particularly, interviews with individuals allows for private conversations which may throw light upon matters which the interviewee may not wish to discuss publicly. It is usually the objective of the researcher to allow the informant the necessary freedom to express opinions in depth. The researcher must be flexible in approach and responsive to that which is being imparted (Boellstorff, Nardi, Pearce, & Taylor, 2012).

As part of the interviewee selection process prior to in-depth interviews, a filtering process can be undertaken to recognise who is best suited to inform upon the themes of the research. It also allows for the interviewee to be matched to a theme of interest rather than the converse scenario of targeting an interviewee with little prior introduction. A structured approach is thus achieved for the process overall, despite the interviewing itself having the option of being conducted upon semi-structured lines.

Once interviews have been conducted, their transcripts are coded to undergo in-depth qualitative analysis. Several coding techniques exist, amongst which are open coding and focussed or selective coding. In the former, codes are applied to excerpts of transcripts and other documents. In the latter, coding is taken a step further and the results of open coding are analysed to form a shortlist of thematic categories within which data can be sorted (Silverman, 2014; Neuman L. W., 2014; Saldaña, 2015).

Interview transcripts that have been coded then undergo textual analysis. This allows for the extraction of values held by the interviewee to be analysed; thereby allowing for the participant's world view to be understood. When analysing spatial planning matters, the method can be used to extract the values associated with spatial planning by the participants according to their own individual experience in the field. Values have much in them to be unravelled by the researcher, whether they are "deeply felt

beliefs, general preferences or more practical judgements” (Buunk & Van der Weide, 2014, p. 216).

Participatory mapping

Participatory mapping is used as an ethnographic tool in planning research as it enables the researcher to gather data about local traditional knowledge, especially in cases when the research is based on analysing complex socio-spatial contexts. Observation and engagement with the experience of mapping constitutes the way in which meanings and significance of subjects are understood during the ethnographic practice (Pink, et al., 2015). It has also been found that participatory mapping is a useful tool for the participating community to understand the multitude of values held amongst them and therefore aids in the building of trusted relationships both within the group and with the researchers themselves, ultimately enhancing their social capital (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2010).

Duhr (2014) holds that although the production of maps can be a means of fostering debate on spatial planning matters, it must be kept in mind that maps can equally be tools of collaboration and of manipulation. In the latter case, one is made to consider spatial planning maps as “expressions of political interest” (Duhr, 2014, p. 194) since they are produced with an agenda in mind. Yet another consideration is that maps are personal interpretations of a data-set. The map-maker must continuously decide on the rationalisation of data to scale down reality to a cartographic representation, making maps doubly a product of social constructs.

Overall, participatory mapping has been somewhat under-recognised as an ethnographic tool, especially in situations where spatial planning is concerned. This seems to be a significant omission, especially when viewed in the light of maps as social constructs. Taking the matter further, the analysis of the way in which a map is developed can also provide insights into the socio-political contexts that produced them (Duhr, 2014).

When undertaken within a GIS platform, participatory mapping is termed PGIS and is carried out through the context of digital media. Mapping software is programmed in a manner which allows high degrees of usability to participants, these using a range of digital hardware with which to populate the map (Brown & Kyttä, 2014). The ethnographic approach is however similar, since elements of dialogue, understanding and mapping of local traditional knowledge are nonetheless present. Indeed, it is sometimes the case that both participatory mapping on paper maps and digital maps are used concurrently.

2.2. Methodological outline of the thesis

Phronesis is a guiding principle throughout this thesis because it is based upon a detailed investigation of human activity in its context by means of inviting the actors involved to share reflections on their own values through dialogue undertaken in different ways (Carr, 2006). By means of participant observation, in-depth interviews and participatory mapping initiatives, this thesis has been a journey in understanding the spatial planning context of the Maltese Islands, but moreover, in placing it within the philosophical, theoretical and practical contexts within which it operates. The case study chosen to contextualise the research is the series of four Valletta 2018 European Capital of Culture cultural infrastructure projects. These projects highlight the varied and constantly evolving nature of spatial planning, a factor that has been acknowledged in the overall methodology outlined below.

The ontology of the research is constructivist, in that it is an image of social reality that is based upon the notion that the definition of society is negotiable and fluid: society as a construct composed of multiple realities (Grix, 2002; Slevitch, 2011). Several epistemologies for spatial planning research have been categorised by Farthing (2015) as follows:

- **Explanatory research**, that is hypothesis-testing towards understanding the cause of a planning phenomenon;
- **Interpretive research**, that is analysing the meanings behind planning culture in specific socio-economic contexts;
- **Formative research**, that is informing planning practice as a decision support tool in policy-making;
- **Evaluative research**, that is monitoring and understanding research planning practice by determining outcomes and impacts; and
- **Emancipatory research**, that is aiming to raise awareness of socio-economic situations.

The research presented here exhibits characteristics of interpretive and formative research over its course. In the early, more exploratory stages of the research, the approach taken was one whereby multiple avenues of gaining knowledge about the relevant subject matter were followed. Once a clearer picture of correlations between different phenomena started to formulate, and a test-case study was chosen that was best suited to the research questions posed. In this manner, an interpretive approach allowed for the understanding of underlying meanings in the socio-spatial context of the test-case study. Towards the end of the research, a formative approach guided the analysis of PGIS as a decision-support-system, leading to the consequent disproof of initial ideas on the nature of the relationship between spatial planning and participatory technologies.

In this manner, the research started from the observation of phenomena of interest and progressed towards the realisation of patterns and associations. In real terms, the research started with the aspiration to understand the potential for digitally-mediated participatory spatial planning in Malta and a series of research questions were developed along the way. Progress was then made towards identifying ancillary determinants such as networked societies, power relations and digital decision-support-systems. In line with the inductive nature of the research, a better-informed hypothesis was formulated once a deeper understanding of these correlations was gained.

These initial thoughts on the subject were juxtaposed with empirical research. It must be noted however that a circular thought process emerged during the research since aspects of initial perceptions on the subject were disproved once the empirical research was underway. Back to the drawing board, further research did indeed evolve into a more nuanced understanding of spatial planning in Malta. The influences present and their manifestation in real situations was enlightening to say the least and resulted in revised perceptions which have been consolidated into the general conclusions of this thesis.

2.2.1. Engaging in planning practice

The course of this thesis has been strongly influenced by the author's engagement in planning practice, a brief contextual history of which is outlined below. Having worked and studied in the United Kingdom, useful knowledge on the theory and practice of participatory planning was gained, particularly when working within an established urban design and community planning practice and later during a work-phase with Southwark Borough Council. Upon returning to Malta in 2010, a first project to be undertaken was the coordination of the Valletta World Heritage Management Plan, a precursor to the Strategy for Valletta (Government of Malta, 2017), on behalf of the then Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs in collaboration with Dr Paul Gauci from the University of Malta. During the process of drafting the Management Plan, a series of four round-table meetings was held with stakeholders of the plan.

These meetings, held in 2012, constituted a forum for Community Ambassadors organised in collaboration with the Valletta 2018 Foundation, a forum for people engaged in the Creative Economies, a forum on Commerce and Enterprise to which members of Valletta's various business communities were invited; and a forum on Management, key stakeholders in which were the Valletta Local Council and other statutory entities. The fora were successful opportunities for extracting key issues to be tackled in the Management Plan and were particularly enlightening as to the juxtaposition of these issues in the high-density context of Valletta. They were

indeed an important experience in stakeholder management and required much relationship building in the run-up to their organisation; relationships which afterwards proved fruitful during the drafting phases of the plan.

Concurrently, the Valletta Design Cluster at il-Biċċerija was initiated, originally as a centre for voluntary organisations. As project architect, the author was directly involved in the process during this initial phase. From a planning perspective, a series of interesting discussions were held with the then Minister for Resources and Rural Affairs on the use of the building, since the area was zoned in the Grand Harbour Local Plan (Government of Malta, 2002) as a Residential Area. An agreement was reached when it was decided that an element of residential use was to be integrated into the project, but that the building was to be converted into an element of cultural infrastructure in line with the pre-selection bidding process by the Valletta 2018 Foundation, which was working on the nomination for the European Capital of Culture.

It is to be noted that the afore-mentioned stakeholder meetings influenced the decision-making process, since their views on the dearth of cultural infrastructure in Valletta were held to be valid and therefore of direct relevance during discussions between the project architect and the Minister. Also, as Ministry representative to the Valletta 2018 Foundation, the author was able to continue collaborating in the Valletta 2018 bidding process by means of the monthly attendance at inter-ministerial meetings organised under the aegis of the Valletta 2018 Foundation. Here, related matters were discussed in a transdisciplinary manner and cross-boundary ideas were often put forward and implemented. The project planning stage of the Valletta Design Cluster at il-Biċċerija is a case in point.

In 2013, Valletta was declared European Capital of Culture 2018, soon after a change in administration brought about by a general election. Though the objectives of the Valletta 2018 Foundation were retained, the organisational structure was altered to reflect the new political mandate. Significantly, the change in government brought about changes in personnel at the topmost levels of decision-making, this

necessitating a lengthy programme of forming new relationships and coming to new agreements on projects yet at planning stage.

The process was observed by the author; at the time a Ministerial employee attempting to ride the wave of change whilst retaining a role in the planning structures of the fledgling cultural infrastructure. The change in remit of the newly termed Ministry for Transport and Infrastructure however shifted the role of many project architects personally engaged in the pre-design planning process to being implementers of previously decided project proposals, with little input at planning stage. It was at this time that the opportunity arose to participate in external projects bridging the divide between academia and practice.

As a visiting lecturer at the Faculty of the Built Environment, discussing the potential of participatory planning with students enrolled in the Master's in Architecture and Urban Design course, it was enlightening to note an interest in the socio-cultural aspects of the subjects being presented. Simultaneously having been invited to participate in a project assessing quality in the built environment, the prospect of implementing a PGIS project under the aegis of the University of Malta and the Valletta 2018 Foundation was enticing. Working with Dr Antoine Zammit of the University of Malta, a series of participatory mapping initiatives were organised; these ultimately forming the basis of the participatory mapping test-case study presented below. The opportunity to actively assess the potential of PGIS in a spatial planning context was therefore made the most of and juxtaposed with a growing appreciation for social, cultural and political determinants of attitudes towards spatial planning in Malta.

To further align the ongoing research with professional practice, the author then accepted the post of Senior Planning Officer at the Strategic Planning Unit within the Planning Authority in Malta. The daily interaction with professional planners and the immersion into the spatial planning system of Malta brought about a heightened appreciation of the challenges which the introduction of more participatory forms of spatial planning must overcome. Undertaking policy reviews, carrying out policy

monitoring and engaging with an often-sceptical public enabled the gradual formulation of responses to the research questions set out earlier in the trajectory of the research.

2.2.2. Interviewing in context

In view of the author's engagement in planning practice, the interviewing process was initially unstructured, based mostly on conversations related to the professional milieu rather than specifically targeted to the subject of the thesis. This allowed for the free exploration of issues and was often very insightful as to the experiences of the person being engaged in conversation. Having been held with long-time professional planners, with activists engaged in public representations as well as with other professionals interested in the subject of participation in spatial planning, these conversations were invaluable to provide a general experiential context throughout the research. It is to be noted that the author clearly stated that the topics being discussed were related to ongoing research, so as not to mislead people as to the nature of the conversation.

A snapshot of the topics discussed encompasses the drafting of national spatial plans ranging from high level plans such as the Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development (SPED) and the Local Plans, to lower level plans such as Development Briefs and Masterplans for specific areas in Malta. The remit of the plans to reflect government objectives whilst being correct in their interpretation of planning principles was frequently brought up during these conversations. Also of interest was the perception of the planning profession among the public as well as amongst activists, especially from an environmental and heritage perspective.

Much emphasis here was placed on the cynicism towards planning processes in the drafting of plans, consequently translated into a distrust of the wider planning profession. The integration of participatory mapping, whether digital or otherwise, was also discussed. The conversation frequently centred upon the technical capital required by the participants to engage stakeholders successfully, though the matter of

integration into statutory representation processes also came up. Here, stumbling blocks such as political intervention and issues of good governance were often cited.

These conversations, held over the course of the research, developed into semi-structured interviews through the identification of people who had an interest in spatial planning in Malta. The semi-structured interviews were held based on a method outlined by Silverman (2014), whereby the interviewee signed an informed consent statement and a discussion on general theme-based questions with follow-up questions ensued⁵. With the aim of acquiring a broad range of insights, the semi-structured interviews were held with Perit Stephen Farrugia⁶ - a professional planner-architect who had been in a headship position at the Planning Authority, Dr Petra Caruana Dingli⁷ - an academic-activist who presided over an environmental and heritage non-governmental organisation (NGO) in Malta; and Dr Gordon Cordina⁸ - a leading economist in professional practice. The three interviewees were thus able to provide insights on matters related to both the physical environment as well as on the socio-economic context being researched.

⁵ Refer to Appendix A for full transcripts of the interviews held.

⁶ Perit Stephen Farrugia is an urban designer/planner working in the private sector and currently leads a variety of public and private sector projects. He is a graduate of Oxford Brookes University (UK) and is a former Director of Planning at the then Malta Environment and Planning Authority. His remit at MEPA included development planning, development control, enforcement and the formulation of a number of Local Plans.

⁷ Dr Petra Caruana Dingli is a Senior Lecturer at the Edward de Bono Institute for the Design and Development of Thinking at the University of Malta. She was Director for Environmental Protection at the Malta Environment and Planning Authority from 2011-2013. Dr Caruana Dingli is currently Deputy Director General of the think-tank Today Public Policy Institute (TPPI), a member of various NGOs, boards and committees as well as a regular contributor and blogger from the Sunday Times of Malta and the Times of Malta online.

⁸ Dr Gordon Cordina is an economist involved in research and consultancy projects with institutions including the EU Commission, Government ministries and authorities, NGOs and private sector entities. He has served as Director General of the National Statistics Office of Malta, as Economic Advisor to the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development, as Head of the Research Department of the Central Bank of Malta and as Head of the Economics Department of the University of Malta.

Having selected the above-mentioned interviewees, the interviews were set up, held and recorded. Each interview was around an hour long and once transcribed, textual analysis was carried out by means of a three-step thematic coding methodology to extract the key values that emerged from the exercise. Firstly, open coding was carried out on each excerpt of the transcripts produced, which were then processed further to extract focused codes. The excerpts from the textual data were then sorted according to these themes and agglomerated⁹. This thematic consideration of the qualitative data gained from the interviews aided in the assessing the relevance of the insights gained from the interviewees. One cannot exclude the presence of personal interests which emerged upon detailed consideration of the information gained from the interviewees. When placed in the context of their current involvement in their professional fields however, the salient points proved very useful to enrich and elucidate the results presented in this thesis.

The focused thematic codes arising from the data shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3 highlight the fact that though all three interviewees were rather equally willing to discuss the primary objective of the research – that of participation in statutory processes of representation, they were less equally willing to discuss how GIS can influence the outcomes of such representation processes. The theme of GIS was only discussed at length with Dr Gordon Cordina, who showed a strong interest in diversifying current practices in order to increase their legitimacy. Indeed, he proposed that pilot projects such as the PGIS initiatives undertaken through this research were essential for policy makers and stakeholders to familiarise themselves with the technology and to be inspired to undertake similar initiatives. He posits that the motivation to organise and participate in PGIS initiatives can be significantly increased if the potential to actively disrupt the manner in which stakeholder participation occurs through statutory practices is recognised.

⁹ Refer to Appendix A for the thematic and focused codes of the transcripts from the interviews held.

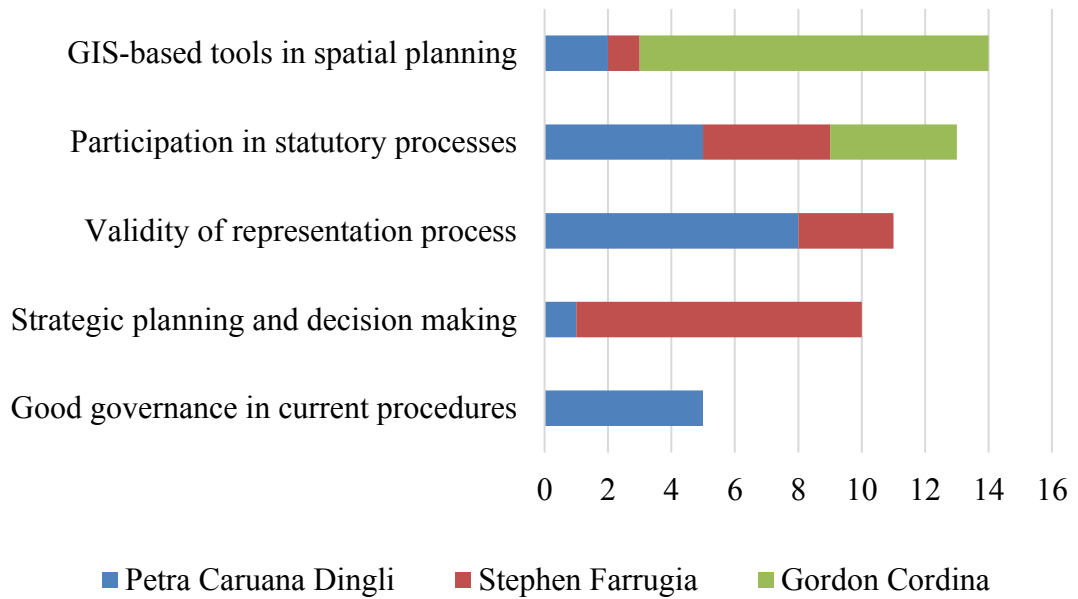


Figure 2 Focused thematic codes in order of priority, visualised by interviewee

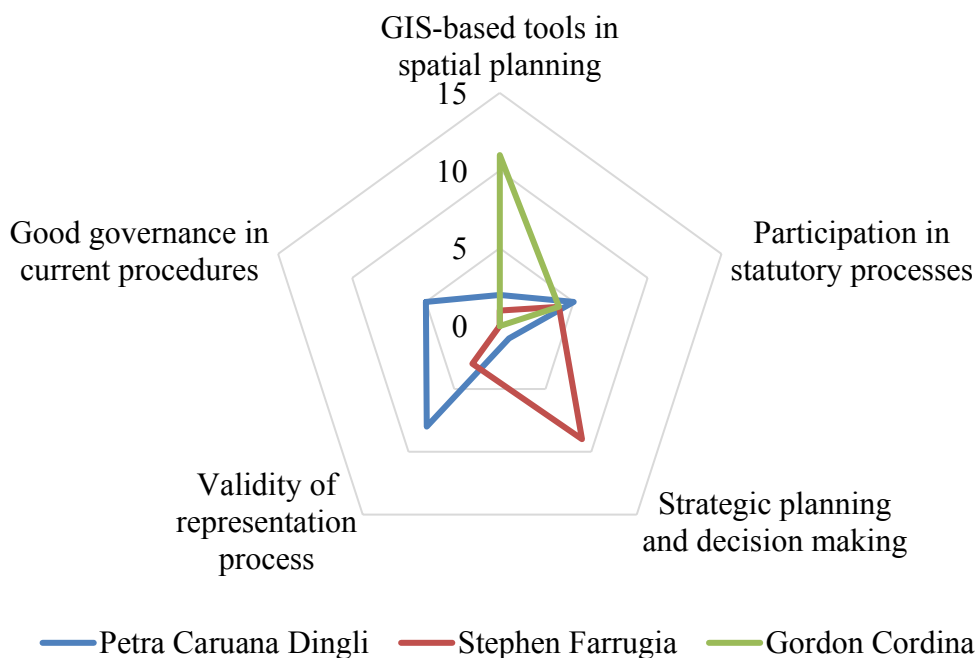


Figure 3 Visualisation of the priority given to each of the focused thematic codes by the interviewees

Dr Petra Caruana Dingli brought to the discussion in-depth understanding on the validity of current representation processes, a nuanced knowledge of how one is made to participate in such processes and the importance of good governance, that is, not only of rigorous legal procedures. Being involved in planning practice on a personal basis, Perit Stephen Farrugia also delved into the practical elements of statutory representation and juxtaposed this with reflections on the role of decision-makers in strategic planning. Here, the role of the politician was highlighted, critically as a person who has the responsibility of having the final say on spatial planning matters in Malta. Both these interviewees views further elucidated the insights gained through the participant observation that the author undertook concurrently and corroborated elements of Malta's institutionalised clientelist practices that feature in the literature related to this research.

2.2.3. A Participatory GIS opportunity

This thesis has been carried out during the six-year run-up to and realisation of the Valletta 2018 European Capital of Culture endeavour. An opportunity arose whereby the author was able to closely follow the proceedings of Valletta 2018 European Capital of Culture, particularly from a spatial planning perspective vis-à-vis major cultural infrastructure projects. In view of the Valletta 2018 mandate for inclusion and the crucial element of stakeholder participation to the European Capital of Culture proceedings, the author was entrusted with a stakeholder participation project which was to form part of a wider research project to assess the quality of the built environment in relation to major cultural infrastructure projects. Taking the author's interest in digitally mediated participatory planning as a basis for the project, a PGIS initiative was proposed and indeed welcomed by the management team of the Valletta 2018 Foundation.

The PGIS was carried out using three collaborative methods;

1. a workshop,
2. an online campaign and
3. a walkabout.

The PGIS platform used was Mapping for Change, a social enterprise under the aegis of University College London (Mapping for Change, 2018). The team from London guided the PGIS initiative throughout the process, offering both technical and practical support to the project. The remit of the initiative has been to enable stakeholders to participate in decision-making about factors which influence them directly, by providing a set of GIS-enabled tools for the gathering of relevant data, its analysis and ultimately its visualisation; in a highly collaborative manner encouraging dialogue throughout the process.

Indeed, Mapping for Change has offered the opportunity to assess how such participatory initiatives can be used in Malta, with the nation's specificities relating to its social, political and spatial contexts. From a methodological point of view, the project has highlighted matters relating to the challenges present in overcoming a seemingly inherent reticence towards participation and particularly towards imparting proactive ideas for the betterment of one's situation. It has also highlighted organisational stumbling blocks, in that initial favour is given to participatory projects by statutory organisations, but strict boundaries are rather subtly imposed on the extent to which the results of such projects are integrated into the higher echelons of decision-making within these same organisations.

Throughout the empirical aspect of this thesis, a critique of the implementation of PGIS processes in Malta has been juxtaposed with insights gained from interviews with community members, project managers in the cultural sector and practicing planners, in order to better understand the manner in which the hierarchies of power relations are influencing the motivation or repression of participation in spatial planning matters such as those processes governing Valletta 2018 European Capital of Culture cultural infrastructure projects. In line with these themes, the principal

research questions that have arisen since the start of the research have evolved into overarching trajectories of analysis; starting with the desire to broadly assess the relationship between the core subject of the thesis, that of participatory spatial planning, and the concept of networked societies.

As the research progressed, this broad relationship was deconstructed into its constituent elements and further tributaries of analysis emerged. Of interest throughout the research was the influence of planning thought on planning practice, and consequently on the development of the planning profession in the 21st century. This was queried in relation to participatory processes, particularly with reference to the motivating and inhibiting forces impinging upon these processes. Power relations feature regularly throughout the literature and in the analysis of participatory planning since it was realised rather early in the research process that they constitute an important fulcrum in planning practice.

Though the learning process on the implementation of PGIS has been constant since the commencement of the thesis and has benefitted much from discussions with people from a wide array of disciplines, a dearth of such practices to observe in the Maltese context has been keenly felt. The test-case study was therefore organised as a tri-partite PGIS initiative which has been invaluable in testing analytical conclusions gained over the course of the research. The opportunities and challenges brought to the fore by the organisation of such events have enabled the original research topic to be explored in real-world situations and in the socio-spatial context within which the research questions are posed.

Ethical considerations

Particular to planning research carried out with an element of participant observation and stakeholder participation, one encounters ethical considerations in the relationship of the researcher with these groups. Foremost amongst them is the respect to be shown to the community constituting the subject of the research. It is essential that their dignity, right and privacy is respected throughout, to build a

relationship of trust with them. A somewhat distinct role that one tries to maintain as the researcher must be balanced with the ability to empathise with the people willing to impart at times sensitive information within the collaborative setting (Thomas & Lo Piccolo, 2014).

The current research has also taken due precaution against unnecessary biases either in the formulation of the research questions or in the drawing up of conclusions following the analysis of the data. Despite acknowledged predispositions, initial thoughts on the subject were disproved during the research; resulting in a cycle of data gathering through participant observation, interviews and participatory mapping held concurrently with continued theoretical exploration. This helped in sifting the research of certain inherent biases which were admittedly present in initial drafts.

Efforts were also made to introduce varied sources of knowledge and to learn from stakeholders with different backgrounds. Carrying out the research over the course of six years and having maintained an element of practice in spatial planning throughout has helped to encounter many people from all walks of life, the conversations with whom have inspired different outlooks on the subjects being studied. Though researching social and spatial contexts which one may have considered to be familiar, it has been enlightening to delve deeper into different points of view and to radically alter preconceived mind-sets.

From an administrative aspect, submission of a University Research Ethics Committee Proposal Form was required to assess the ethical considerations of the proposed ethnographic inquiry. Since the stakeholders being involved were not being assessed based on any issues related to ethnicity, religious beliefs, health matters or genetic information, further ethical safeguards were not deemed requisite.

Limitations of the research

To conclude the Chapter, it is worth noting some limitations of the research undertaken. Firstly, the subjects researched are wide-ranging and have multiple offshoots which are research subjects in their own right. A research trajectory had to be chosen in order to formulate a clear narrative in relation to the research objectives. This has led to several topics for further research being defined, which are able to augment this study, but which were outside its scope¹⁰.

Additionally, the nature of spatial planning at a national level has proven a challenge in the choice of case study used to test the possibilities arising from PGIS in terms of stakeholder motivation. Since the method is yet not integrated into statutory processes of representation, it could not be used by the author specifically in development control processes or policy-making, despite concurrently participating in such process personally on a professional basis. The PGIS was therefore conducted on projects were indeed of national interest but which had already been subject to policy- making and development control processes.

The nature of the case study also influenced the type of participants who contributed to the PGIS results. Although the PGIS initiatives were open to the general public and actively promoted in the public domain at national and international level, participant demographic profiles and contribution rates are influenced by personal interests; indeed, this is a result of this research. Comparative results based on the difference between the PGIS initiatives and statutory representation processes must therefore be interpreted in the different scenarios within which they were undertaken.

¹⁰ See Section 7.3.2 for a discussion of the topics suggested for future research.

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*Plans work not by compelling consent, but by earning it.
Plans envision future alternatives that we can compare before we decide and act.*

(Hoch, 2007)

3. SOCIETY AND SPACE IN PARTICIPATORY PLANNING

Analysing the relationship between society and space is a starting point for ultimately arriving at an understanding of the factors which motivate stakeholders to participate in spatial planning. In this chapter, general theories of society are reviewed in the light of strengthening social cohesion and fostering social capital; issues critical for navigating through the hierarchies of participation. The assessment of these issues is followed by their application to the Maltese context, considering the political culture of the Islands. The chapter concludes with insights into how participant motivation is directly influenced by personal interests, the perceived impact to one's livelihood and affiliation with power structures.

Complexity is central to understanding the urban environment and its relationship to social structures. Newman and Paasi (1998) define complex environments as discursive landscapes¹¹, that is, dualistic relationships between space and society, geography and nationhood, the tangible and the intangible contexts, within which

¹¹ The term 'discursive landscape' defines a state of affairs whereby geography influences identity, often in situations where the indicators of national identity are being evaluated. The term landscape refers to both the tangible and intangible environments, in recognition of the multitude of social constructs which define the context within which actions are enacted (Newman & Paasi, 1998).

identity can develop. Postmodernist theorists attempted to deconstruct this socio-spatial dialectic, emphasising the inter-relationship between society and space; while space constitutes the physical framework for social interaction; and human behaviour continuously modifies space, driven by the need to compete for resources. Thus 'spatiality' can be considered a social construct; since the desire to interact with and modify space is a function of social relations (Soja, 1989). It follows therefore that space is inherently political and imbued with the values and meanings entailed by these social relations (Lefebvre, 1991).

A third dimension can also be introduced into the relationship between society and space: time. Foucault (1980) argues that space is inherently temporal and vice versa, since all actions are represented in space and often leave their mark on spatial entities. By this definition however, space is the staid sibling of time, the latter being the dynamic element of the dialectic. Massey (2005) writes that "[s]pace conquers time by being set up as the *representation of history/life/the real world*" (p. 30) and considers space as fluid, engaging and social. Thus, space becomes a reflection of the balance of power between social groups in specific temporal contexts.

Prior to understanding theories of society, the concept of community must be defined. Here too one notices a shift from the consideration of community as a fixed, cohesive entity to one that is more dynamic. 'Community' originates from the Latin word *communitas*, meaning organised society and harking to the Roman concept of citizenship within which are embedded the notions of connections and relationships between members of the society. *Communitas* also relates to the even earlier concept of the Greek polis and therefore adds the notion of place to that of human relations (Tönnies, 2001). Notably, Tönnies (2001) describes a distinction between community and society in his *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*. He defines community as neighbourhood-based and society as market-led; the former being more inclusive of the individual within the communal aura and the latter being a profit and loss computation within an overarching social entity.

More recently, Bauman (2013) asserts that the community is not a concept to be categorised into neat divisions and interpreted as such: "... 'community', as a way of referring to the totality of the population inhabiting the sovereign territory of the

state, sounds increasingly hollow” (p. 2). Communities are dynamic entities that construct and manoeuvre within socio-spatial environments; they are a function of the interactions of the people within them (Young, 2016). These views are seconded by authors writing about digital communities, who see a reflection of the social complexity of offline communities in those which are digitally mediated (Boellstorff, Nardi, Pearce, & Taylor, 2012; Pink, et al., 2015). Defined thus, “community is constantly in transition, an extremely adaptive social force by and through which people continue to experience and in some ways shape the world around them” (Evans, 2013, p. 79).

3.1. Social structures and associations

Commencing with an overview of social theories of society, the development of such theories is delved into to explain the phenomena constituting the building blocks of society. Of most relevance to this thesis have been the social theory of Structuration put forward by Anthony Giddens (Giddens, 1984) and the social theory of Associations by Bruno Latour (Latour, 2005). Of relevance also are Michel Foucault’s ideas on geographies of power (Foucault, 1980), the theory of Communicative Action by Jurgen Habermas (Habermas, 1984), Manuel Castells’ notion of the Network Society (Castells, 1996) and Zygmunt Bauman’s concept of Liquid Modernity (Bauman, 2013).

The term ‘social’ is often used to describe groupings, assemblages and entities. Giddens (1984) speaks of society as composed of hierarchically organised institutions. He emphasises the duality of structuration whereby structures in society are moreover self-reproducing due to inherent rules within the structure that ensure the propagation of the structure itself by controlling forces of resource allocation within society. Habermas (1984) proposes that these propagating forces within society are based on communicative rationality, whereby social interaction is achieved by intentionally manipulating one’s social environment through communication.

Latour (2005) puts forward another approach to understanding society: that of actor-network. He argues that earlier structural social theories are concerned with defined groupings based on a specific set of determinants; whereas the social theory of Associations he proposes is concerned with objectivity, that is, the social cohesion achieved through the transformative actions of multiple agencies of unification. Indeed, the more influences existing in one's milieu, the more 'social' one is said to be. Succinctly, "[t]o be a realistic whole is not an undisputed starting point but the provisional achievement of a composite assemblage" (Latour, 2005, p. 208).

In his endeavour to define a social theory alternative to Structuration, Latour therefore sets out to isolate the social from other phenomena, indeed shying away from treating the social as a phenomenon in itself; but acknowledging that the 'social' is inherent to every human endeavour. Society is not a dimension of its own or a context to be added to other phenomena to give them meaning; society is in fact the whole formed from the myriad phenomena that compose human endeavours. Societal association can therefore be conceptualised as a study of networks, not of groupings. In this sense, it is more fitting to study the reasons behind people's associations with multiple communities than to study an individual within a community in isolation.

Analysing the individual versus the community, Bauman (2013) argues that individuals are being left to their own devices; each one having to battle the injustices brought about by society at large. The redistribution of wealth brought about by the 'social state' or 'welfare state' as it is sometimes known, offered more in terms of protection than wealth; since it provided economic, cultural and social capital to those who were unable to create it for themselves. The breakdown of the 'social state' has emphasised the associative nature of social networks with ephemeral ties binding society; formed temporarily and broken at will once no longer required. In this context, it is more important to gain skills that allow for fast learning of new habits than to build upon previous structures: flexibility surpasses conformity (Bauman, 2013).

Bauman makes no reference to the role of digital media in bringing about such widespread transformation in society; even though other authors had written rather

convincingly on the subject. Particularly, the Network Society described by Castells (1996; 2006) emphasises these social transformations brought about by the Digital Age. The Network Society is a society based on digitally mediated social networks and the transmission of information for survival, in which technology and society are analogous. His assertion is that the Network Society is a hyper-social society, rather than an individualistic one, whereby traditional social relationships are formed in a continuum with those formed in virtual reality. Creativity and innovation are the new tools with which to keep up with the faster pace of global change, the networked characteristic of which permeates through to the local milieu (Castells, 2006).

Considering the spatial element of these theories of society, the analogy of the social theory of Associations can be transposed to the spatial, to understand space as a transformative agency. In this analogy, the macro scale is reduced in influence to yet another micro: the global to another local since indeed, every action has its own 'local' (Latour, 2005), a premise also emphasised by Giddens (1984) who states that every action in time has its own reference in space. The difference between the two theorists is in the way they perceive social relationships to being enacted in space. Giddens conceptualises the spatial context as the milieu within which individuals strive to consolidate and propagate hierarchical social institutions¹², while Latour conceives of the spatial context as an agency through which actors form networks. In the latter, hierarchical boundaries are in this sense done away with, giving precedence to ever-changing spaces particular to the associations being formed (Latour, 2005). Castells (2002) analyses the local-global paradigm in terms of increasingly pervasive technologies, stating that the local is subdued by the force of the global through the networks enabled by the World-Wide-Web.

¹² Giddens (1984), in 'The Constitution of Society', puts forward a spatial analogy for the structure of society, delineating regions in the city whereby those occupying central areas of the city are invested with positions of power and tend to intentionally create a distinction with peripheral areas in order to reinforce social hierarchies.

3.1.1. Dynamics of change in the built environment

Complex associations in society are mirrored by dynamics of change in the built environment. Indeed, correlations between society and space can be made by understanding the built environment as a series of relationships between people across multiple networks of associations. As in Latour's (2005) Actor-Network-Theory, each actor is inevitably connected to other actors in the network, the make-up of which provides an insight into the social life of space. It also provides a temporal scale with which to assess a place and therefore set the physical into its socio-temporal context (Yaneva & Heaphy, 2012).

In this manner, the urban environment is in a constant state of flux (Latour & Yaneva, 2008) and just like actors in Actor-Network-Theory form dynamic associations, space is mediated in a dynamic manner by the choices we make in terms of its use (Yaneva, 2009). The role of spatial planning is particularly relevant in managing this relationship between society and space (Yaneva, 2010) but is often derided as being paternalistic and deterministic in its approach. Carmona (2014) notes that balance between a deterministic approach to managing change and the converse value-led approach is difficult to achieve.

One way of achieving such balance is by understanding the narrative of a place. Furthering the analogy of Actor-Network-Theory with regard to the urban environment, it is useful to understand the way the present is networked to the past through socio-spatial associations. In this manner, the process of managing space forms a continuum with the past uses of the same space. This is especially evident in historic cities, where it is easier to understand the relationship of a present space with its past, through the medium of the heritage context. Though imbued with other associations, such as those political and those cultural, the commonality among them is the narrative embodied in the place. Throughout, it is a narrative that draws out the associations between the spatial and the social towards achieving spatial development (Carmona, 2014; Teh, 2014).

The socio-spatial narrative of place results from power relations (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986) and is directly influenced, for example, by situations of political turbulence and reforms of the planning system. This is problematic because long-term spatial strategies for managing change can be quickly unravelled before they would have matured. In such situations, planners may face becoming demotivated and increasingly resistant to change, employing ‘institutional conflict avoidance strategies’ that stifle the planning process in the face of changing urban environments (Allmendinger, 2017).

Yet another factor of change influencing socio-spatial relations is the increased requirement for top-down, bottom-up fluidity (Tewdwr-Jones, 2012). Krumholz & Forester (1990) suggest that politically-aware planners have an opportunity to achieve flexibility by being aware of the influence of power relations and working behind the scenes to circumvent long-winded processes, though how this can be done in a democratic, let alone participatory manner, is not clarified. Possibly, Forester’s later work gives a clue in this regard, advocating mediation as the planner’s primary role, based on specialised knowledge of the scenarios, and facilitating the discussion by working towards well-informed decision-making (Forester, 2009).

The role of the planner when dealing with such a situation is to be “a channel of communication between technical criteria and the political process” (Clifford & Tewdwr-Jones, 2014, p. 82). Participation becomes the link between the public and central government; and the planners become the medium through which that link is forged. Tewdwr-Jones (2012) suggests that a partnership approach is critical to the success of stakeholder engagement, based on a collective group agenda and an agreed direction to follow to reach the stated goals. This is however a challenge in view of communities with a lack of social cohesion and capital.

3.1.2. Social cohesion towards social capital

Social cohesion is considered an essential factor for participatory planning to occur. This is because meaningful participation builds upon networks and relationships that are found where people feel a sense of belonging in their community. Social cohesion “involves building shared values and communities of interpretation, ...and generally enabling people to have a sense that they are engaged in a common enterprise, facing shared challenges, and that they are members of the same community” (Maxwell, 1996, p. 13). Concisely, the term can be defined as a state of “a shared sense of morality and common purpose” (Forrest & Kearns, 2001, p. 2128), emphasising a sense of commitment towards a ‘collective life’ (Green, Preston, & Janmaat, 2006; Jensen, 1998; Friedkin, 2004).

There seems to be the assumption that a community is a cohesive entity with consistent views across the entire group; ignoring vested interests, lack of basic agreement, and lack of accountability and legitimacy (Ishikawa, 2003). In addition, the assumption ignores the presence of minorities, which become marginalised in the effort to achieve the semblance of social cohesion. The resulting construct of cohesion can develop into social repression, opposing rather than contributing to creating foundations upon which participation in planning can be undertaken (Clifford & Tewdwr-Jones, 2014).

Macro-economic characteristics of social cohesion are severe economic inequality and wealth concentration, which together undermine the social cohesion of a community (Consiglio, 2009). Indeed, 'social exclusion' can be defined as cumulative marginalisation, owing to unemployment, income poverty, exclusion from decision-making; disconnection from social networks of community, family and neighbours, and a low quality of life (Community Workers Co-operative, 2013). Bauman (2013) considers causes of marginalisation to be inherent to cities, in their infinite variety of opportunities. These opportunities are however not accessible to all on equal terms leading to the city being an ‘ambivalent experience’, some being enriched and exalted, others impoverished and oppressed within the same dense urban context.

Social exclusion can however be mitigated against. Accepting multiple views within a value-framework fosters a sense of identity and shared responsibility based on networking and joint allies (Taylor, 2000; Ishikawa, 2003; Sarkissian, Bunjamin-Mau, Cook, Walsh, & Vajda, 2009; Malta Better Regulation Unit , 2013). In areas where strong community leaders mobilise the community towards cohesion and subsequently participation, the benefits of this process are seen in the tangible regeneration of the locality.

To understand how participation can occur in a particular context, an understanding of the term ‘community’ for that context must be gained, considering wider cultural constructs rather than solely the residential community within which one lives. This more associative definition of community has been advocated by Latour (2005) in his social theory of Associations, in that there is no single group to which people subscribe themselves to, rather they form part of a web of associations. Speaking of the attainment of social capital, Hillier (2000) says “networks are relational links through which people can obtain access to material resources, knowledge and power” (p.35).

Building networks¹³ between both the represented and less represented groups within a community is therefore an important precursor to the creation of social cohesion, the fostering of social capital and to their consequent ability to participate in local governance (Taylor, 2000; Carroll & Rosson, 2003). The networks within a community create primary and secondary relationships between members (Pain, Barke, Fuller, & Gough, 2002) and can be defined in vertical and horizontal terms. The former alludes to the social hierarchies within the group, with connotations of collective responsibility and the subsequent ability to function independently from

¹³ A network can be defined as “a set of interconnected nodes” (Castells, 1996, p. 470). The nodes can be anything characterising the network which demands a meeting of participants. The nodes in social networks can be any distinct person, group or organisation, whereas the relationships between the nodes, defined as a binary whether a relationship exists or not, can be amongst others, collaboration, trust or communication (Butts & Acton, 2011).

state aid (Cutajar, 2008). Horizontal relationships allude to trans-boundary relationships between different sectors of the community.

The flexibility of the relationships themselves can characterise a community's spatial awareness, in that spatial boundaries can become amorphous in situations where tangible, spatial boundaries are unimportant (Marston, Jones, & Woodward, 2005). Communications technology has contributed to the break-down of these tangible, spatial boundaries; the outcome being the creation of a 'variable geometry' based on regional differences, interdependence, as well as an inherent selective inclusiveness which have together broken down traditional geo-economic structures. This variability has been attributed to new 'networks and flows' which drive the creation of different centres of production within the informational economy (Castells, 1996). Living in an 'information society' calls for new ways of achieving dialogue between the members of the community, to maintain strong links between themselves whilst continuously evaluating the identity of the community in terms of its projected image and authorised goals (Pickles, 1995; Carroll & Rosson, 2003).

Considering the relationship between social cohesion and social capital, the latter is defined as the levels of trust in a community and the degree to which the members of the community voluntarily contribute towards the greater good of the same community (Putnam, 2002). Contributions can take place formally, through one's involvement in stakeholder groups and voluntary organisations; striving to actively promote a cause. Contributions can also take place informally, through the upholding of traditions associated with a community and through one's participation in social events organised within the same community (Young, 2016). Social capital can also be related to governance processes. It can simultaneously be a desired result of government social policy as well as a product of the engagement of communities and stakeholder groups willing to participate in governance processes (Hall, 2002).

An important aspect of social capital is participation in local governance both at lower level governance such as community meetings and at higher levels such as forming part of a local authority (Sager, 2017). A reason for this is that such participation increases the potential for network building, monitoring policy implementation and for access to information (Taylor, 2000). Putnam too relates

social capital to participation in decision-making, stating however that the contemporary manifestation of social capital is focussed on private gain rather than the traditional definition of communal gain. It is therefore more liberating on an individual level, using networks and information to better one's access to resources, but misguided in the communal sense of the concept (Putnam, 2002).

Should one consider Putnam's observations, the fact that social cohesion is founded on social capital is put into question. The indicators of social cohesion are commonly held to be the attainment of common values, social order and social solidarity (Forrest & Kearns, 2001). These however allude to the homogeneity of a social group and to the rejection of private gain in favour of collective good; generally elusive situations that may have led Putnam to assert that social capital is not a wholly solidaristic enterprise (Putnam, 2002). Should Putnam's assertions hold true, participatory decision-making faces significant challenges, at least as a communal endeavour at the scale of the community, since it is acknowledged that collaborative action often requires preliminary agreement between parties to arrive at shared goals so as then to devise shared routes towards a desired situation (Moulaert & Mehmood, 2015).

3.1.3. Hierarchies of participation

It has been acknowledged that simply allowing the public to participate in consultation exercises is not necessarily conducive to participatory decision-making. Arnstein (1969), in her paper entitled 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation', starts by acknowledging the fact that participatory decision-making has political implications consequent of power-sharing. In her pointed words, "participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless" (p. 216).

She describes the hierarchy of participation as rungs of a ladder, represented in Figure 4 below. Arnstein's ladder has eight rungs, the first two rungs of which are termed 'non-participation', where events are held with the intention of coercing the public into agreement or convincing them that they need to be 'educated' into a

solution. The third and fourth rungs embody situations where participants are indeed allowed to hear and be heard, but they lack the ability to bring about real change at policy implementation stage. The fifth rung embodies a situation where advice is sought in a collaborative manner, but the right for decision-making is retained by those in power. These latter three rungs are termed 'tokenism' (Arnstein, 1969).

The sixth and seventh rungs are symptomatic of participation gaining clout in terms of either trade-offs with power-holders or by citizens having power to influence policy. The eighth rung denotes complete citizen control, and completes the hierarchy presented by the ladder. These latter three rungs are termed 'Citizen Power'. It must be kept in mind that the rungs are a simplification of the infinite gradients along the scale, and a simplification of the relationship between citizen participants and power-holders (Arnstein, 1969).

Wiedemann & Ferners (1993) established a similar 'ladder of participation' based on several case studies. Though having only six rungs, they tally with Arnstein's earlier ladder, except for the extremities defined in the latter as Manipulation and Citizen Control. This latter 'ladder of participation' refers to the consultation defined in Arnstein's ladder as the 'right to object'. Arnstein however did not restrict herself to this definition of consultation, keeping a wider view that included participatory events where dialogue from members of the public was invited.

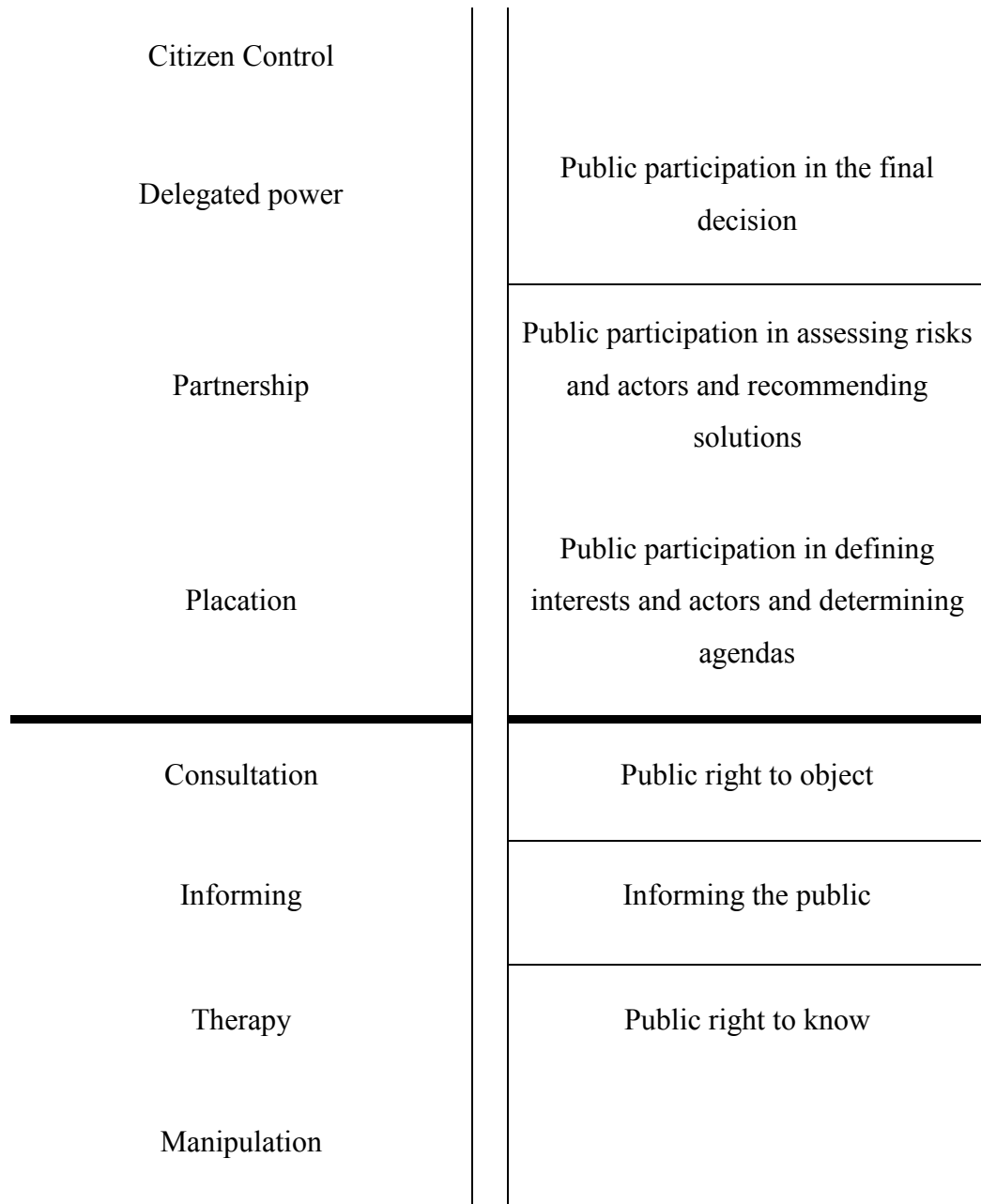


Figure 4 Two ‘ladders of participation’, that of Arnstein (1969) to the left and Wiedemann & Ferners (1993) to the right

Other authors have attempted to rationalise the participatory planning process. Kelly (2010) defines different approaches to participatory planning amongst them the:

- **Blended approach:** A mix of some of the below approaches;
- **Issue driven approach:** Driven by stakeholders, the process is based on key issues as identified by the stakeholders;
- **Vision driven approach:** Based on a single overarching vision, the only role of the stakeholders is to agree or disagree with it, and at most to redefine it;
- **Trend driven approach:** Requires less participation as it is based on statistical projections;
- **Opportunity driven approach:** Based on a technical analysis of opportunities and constraints; and
- **Goal driven approach:** Based on an identified long-term future.

The above approaches echo some rungs of Arnstein's ladder. The second approach reflects the Placation stage, also identified by Wiedemann & Ferners in which the stakeholders define issues pertinent to them. The third approach reflects Wiedemann & Ferners' right to object. The fourth, fifth and sixth approaches reflect the lower rungs of the ladders, in which the public are not invited to participate in the planning process.

Albrechts (2003) too corroborates Arnstein's ladder by allowing that planning is a function of power relationships. Political action has also been linked directly to social action in that for a planner to act

it is not enough for a problem to exist: its existence must be recognised by those power groups for which he works. Therefore his assumptions and working-context are implicit in the maintenance of the present techno-structure. If he attempts to forestall the next crisis without proper sanction, that might involve an attack on the status quo which would not be allowed. (Goodman, 1972, p. 44)

In a similar vein, Forester makes observations on the role of the planner as a politically aware mediator, capable of collaborating with residents and developers within a participation hierarchy; succinctly put - "They are often not authoritative problem-solvers...but, instead they are organisers (or disorganisers) of public attention" (Forester, 1989, p. 28).

In this regard, four categories of planners can be defined. There are those who:

1. Accept and indeed strive to justify the politico-cultural situation and therefore work within administrative, professional and political constraints;
2. Accept the politico-cultural situation but attempt promote inclusive practices within policy-making;
3. Reject the complexities of the situation they are called to intervene upon, and focus upon the design of a vision or utopia of their choice; or
4. Break down barriers between lay people and professional planners to form an interdisciplinary team of 'planners' free from traditional technocratic constraints (Goodman, 1972, p. 12).

Linked to the fourth type, participants in the planning process must however be composed of "people who are excluded from the machinery of government and power" (Goodman, 1972, p. 13), a situation difficult to achieve since both those planners who are public officers, as well as those who operate independent consultancies are rarely exempt from political influences. Indeed, planners work within an environment of contested activity through their role in coordinating change of socio-spatial environments (Tewdwr-Jones, 2011).

Lucy (1988) describes 'veto point occupants' – decision-makers in statutory roles amongst whom a culture of competition and favour-voting can easily arise, fuelling the cynicism felt by stakeholders towards the extent to which elected officials truly act in the public interest. This is related to clientelist practices, as described by Mitchell (2002), who argues that clientelism propagates a vicious cycle of cynicism towards political processes by some and conversely, increased motivation to participate in politics by others.

3.2. Socio-spatial dynamics in the Maltese context

Socio-spatial dynamics in the Maltese context are influenced by the Islands' post-colonial legacy. In an enlightening theory on the assimilation of colonisers' values into the customs of the colonised, Bourdieu (1980) explains how familiar procedures – *regularity*, become absorbed into the authorised discourse to become the *rule*. It is a process that eliminates the spontaneity of a practice, elevates it to a standard of obedience, and thereafter enshrines the practice into law; enabling power structures to further consolidate the practice. Through this trajectory, spatial planning can be used as an authorised tool to forward the interests of the colonisers (Allmendinger, 2017). This section will analyse such a trajectory as it has unfolded in Malta.

Frendo (2012), with reference to the colonial socio-political environment of early 20th century Malta, states that “the trouble lay in deciphering where culture stopped and politics began” (p. 542). Maltese society was so far from being identified with nationhood that one was categorised into either having an affinity to the British colonial authorities or being an irredentist with Italian affiliations. The significant omission in this dialectic is the consideration of the Maltese as being neither affiliated to Britain nor to Italy, a concept that generations of Maltese have since then struggled with after centuries of occupation by foreign forces (Frendo, 2012).

Writing about fledgling nationhood after having been under foreign rule, Zammit (1984) categorises the adaptation of the Maltese to their relative powerlessness under four headings namely:

- **Compliance with Paternalism** – lowering of personal goals to level authorised by the ruling class; prevalent amongst Maltese working classes in the manner described by Bourdieu;
- **Individual Manipulation** – the systems of patronage; prevalent in Malta across all sectors of society as a means of gaining resources from elected representatives;
- **Localism / Retreatism** – boycotting of authoritative structures to find fulfilment in alternative structures; in Malta provided for by the Church; and

- **Political Activism** – challenging of traditional power relations; evident in Malta through the foundation of political parties long before self-government was granted by the colonial rulers.

The last adaptive stance, political activism, is particularly related to social capital. In an analysis of global trends, Putnam (2002) draws up correlations between a decline in social capital and a similar decline in electoral turnout, participation in political parties, union membership and church attendance. Class consciousness is based on the desire to participate in decision-making; therefore, to have a degree of power. Zammit (1984) argues further that the relative powerlessness of the Maltese during successive waves of foreign rule led to a culture of alienation. The perception was reinforced by the rulers by emphasizing the dependence of the Maltese upon them through their lack of real decision-making power.

Converse to alienation is political activism, a stance taken by certain members of the domestic population at successive times in the history of the Islands. He states that

It is possible to identify situations where particular modes of adaptation prevail. Thus middle class suburbanites are most likely to be compliant; business-traditionalists and even many urban workers tend towards localism; industrial workers tend towards political activism – particularly of a reformist and possibly radical outlook. (p.39)

Politics does indeed play an important role even in the personal relationships between the Maltese, through political party activists lobbying their network of connections and within political party committees of these same localities. An insight into how political networks form in Malta is illustrated through the case of successful local professionals. Traditionally, the route to national political office was via the presidency of the local Band Club since there was no political representation in the form of local governance. After the establishment of local government in 1993, the Local Council supplanted the Band Club and became the nursery for aspirant national politicians. Successful professionals hailing from small communities strive to form intimate personal connections with other high-ranking citizens and thus increase their prestige as perceived by their potential constituency;

this eventually translating into becoming elected representatives at national level (Boissevain, 1993).

3.2.1. Political factions in society

Relative to their European counterparts, the Maltese today are still very much politically aware, with a consistent voter turnout of over 90% for general elections and enthusiastic participation in political debates. The Maltese electorate is traditionally rigidly bi-partisan with only a small percentage of voting being based upon the merits of the electoral mandate. Furthermore, the 50-50 split that traditionally characterised the political environment fostered ongoing competitiveness which peaks during the run-up to an election but permeates throughout the electoral term (Pirota G. , 1994).

This situation has changed somewhat during the 2013 and 2017 elections, with the electorate no longer being almost equally divided. Nevertheless, allegiance to political parties permeates the Maltese way of life and reflects the seeming desire to affiliate oneself with one faction or another. Boissevain (2013) attempts to explain this socio-political situation by analysing these factions in Maltese society. He defines a faction as a group characterised by divided public opinion and competing interests, more particularly as

[a] loosely ordered group in conflict with a similar group over a particular issue. It is not a corporate group, though at a certain point in time it may undergo a change and become a group of a higher order for which the term faction is no longer appropriate. (p. 29)

Political factions cut across horizontal social classifications; they do not pertain to a single social class but are vertically organised groups that permeate society and tend to be well balanced against each other. Moreover, factions do not differ significantly on an ideological basis. Rather, they compete against each other for power and the resources that this is associated with (Boissevain, 2013). It has been asserted that the root of these now deep-seated factions in Maltese society are a product of ‘divide-

and-conquer' tactics used by the British worldwide, which became a feature of Maltese politics in the late 1920s.

At this time, Maltese political parties formed counter-productive rivalries that had the effect of reversing important constitutional progress that had been gained by successive constitutions. Partisan politics did indeed become an ingrained source of factions in towns, villages and even families. Ganado (1977) further observes that since Malta was governed by foreign powers for centuries, the political class in the early 20th century went through a turbulent period wherein Maltese politicians had to learn how to be assertive in a constructive manner, whilst shouldering the burden of public responsibility and administrative responsibilities.

Considering Malta's fledgling economy at the time and the continued challenges the country faces today as a small-island state, Baldacchino (1994) states that participation on the Islands takes place in a manner which is sure to uphold current power relations in the arguably misguided interests of avoiding adverse economic impacts at all costs. Succinctly put, he states that there is an "absence of explicit policy measures directed towards building a direct relationship between effort and reward, along with the absence of supportive legal, educational and cultural baggage [which] both undermine participative dynamics" (Baldacchino, 1994, p. 587).

This mentality echoes the stance taken by planners in Malta in the late 1980s, whereby a technocratic process led by presumably apolitical experts was advocated. The detachment of physical planning from politics was meant to increase the possibility of long-term strategic planning, free from the pressures of electoral mandates and clientelism as experienced in the decades before. This drive towards technocracy was also a direct rejection of participatory practices, as it was held that participation would be biased by personal interests, in contrast to the planners' objective approach (Gauci, 2002).

3.2.2. A culture of patronage and clientelism

Bourdieu (1980) speaks of the expenditure of labour and time in return for favours as a form of distribution of forms of capital from those who can distribute to those who require it; thereby describing systems of patronage. Patronage has been a characteristic of the way the Maltese population has dealt with foreign rulers of the Islands since the Middle Ages, reaching institutional status in the lives of the Maltese during the rule of the Order of St John. Primarily embroiled within the culture of patronage were the Grandmaster, the Inquisitor and the Bishop; with whom the Maltese fostered relations to attain their own ends. During the time of British colonial rule, the lacuna formed by the lack of domestic institutional arrangements was filled by the Church, which developed political and economic functions. In this manner, the Church was further consolidating its culture of patronage and inadvertently or otherwise providing the colonial rulers with a society united by a common patron (Zammit, 1984).

Zammit (1984) attributes the roots of current attitudes of compliance to the reaction of locals' powerlessness and lack of representation channels during these times. Patronage has therefore been attributed to the culture of dependence fostered in the Maltese because of a history of occupation by foreign rulers. It was widely acknowledged that the distribution of resources was based upon the relations which individuals or social groups had with the occupiers, in tandem with the shadow economic activity and strengthening of informal relations associated with a population which was not given administrative rights (Gauci, 2002).

Systems of patronage seem to have been inherited and now manifest themselves in party allegiance which is related to local constituencies by relationships built with local politicians. The socio-spatial characteristics of patronage have been attributed to strong family ties in Maltese society, which are subsequently defined by the locality in which the family is predominant (Mitchell, 2002). These spatial biases can also be observed in participation in decision-making, termed also as 'geographies of participation'; and are more pronounced when no direct efforts at wider inclusion in participatory processes are made (Radil & Jiao, 2016).

Public administration in post-colonial Malta is still characterised by patronage and clientelism; “elected governmental representatives may feel themselves ‘first among equals’ due to their democratic mandate and formal accountability through the ballot box” (Vassallo, 2012, p. 211). Boissevain (2013) agrees with this view and describes the system of organisational relations which keeps traditional patronage practices existent within political structures. He argues that traditional village-bound patrons, brokers and clients were replaced by organizational specialists within government who therefore had access to State resources. Ministers became all-powerful patrons, more so than traditional village professionals; political appointees in government employment became brokers; and partisans of the political party in government became their clients, to the exclusion of people with loyalties to the parties of the Opposition.

It is due to this system of patronage that political accountability in Malta is often prejudiced, corrupt practices being brought under public scrutiny and made conspicuous by the apparent widespread impunity of the perpetrators¹⁴. This is in direct opposition to the Islands’ Constitution and often tainted by partisan politics, first loyalties being to the party in government. The proper implementation of the professed liberal democracy is therefore hindered by vicious cycle propagating such a culture whereby

[p]eople believe that rules are merely the starting point for bargaining and feel hard done when their demands are resisted. They are convinced that the reason why their demands have been rejected lies not in the fair administration of rules but in their distortion in the interests of others. (Pirota G. , 2012, p. 23)

The deep-seated system of patronage in Malta has a direct relationship to clientelism whereby “[c]lientelism complements the systemic features of patronage at a level of

¹⁴ The Maltese insular social context with its characteristic political polarisation are particularly susceptible to corruption. Fighting this propensity, are a number of anti-corruption institutions including the Malta Police Force, the Security Service, the Attorney General’s Office, the Judiciary, the Permanent Commission Against Corruption, the National Audit Office and the Ombudsman (Mercieca, 2012). It is when allegations of corruption are levelled against these institutions themselves that the perceived political accountability is at its lowest ebb.

practices. If patronage is a guiding principle, then clientelism is what is *done*” (Mitchell, 2002, p. 151). Boissevain (1974) notes that clientelism is widespread in Malta and that many Maltese foster relationships with people who may be of use to them sometime in the future; the term ‘use’ referring to the necessity of solving matters that arise in a complex society. He terms these contacts ‘saints’, stating that “the coalitions that people build to further their own interests are often short lived. Sometimes however they assume such organisational and ritual trappings that they become an accepted part of the social and cultural scenery” (Boissevain, 1974, p. 206).

It has been suggested that clientelism is replacing social networks such as friendship and fiefdom, for structures relating to the distribution of resources. The elected politicians and the officials within the governance structure become tasked with the management of these resources, creating the possibility of bartering resource allocation for votes (Healey, 1997; Lucy, 1988). Indeed, clientelism in Malta has been a factor of socio-political relations from the earliest days of self-government in 1921. Pirotta (1987) describes the spikes in government employment at election time, which are criticised by Opposition parties, the leaders of which end up being involved in the same practices once in power. Ganado (1977) too, in his autobiographical narrative of Malta’s socio-political milieu in the 20th century, cites an instance when a person admitted to showing him respect only because he believed that it would be helpful in winning him a cosy job.

3.3. Conclusion: Analysis of motivation in participatory planning

The first subsidiary research question put forward for analysis is based on the role that stakeholder motivation plays in the degree to which participatory practices are implemented in spatial planning. As a question, one can analyse: ‘what correlations are there between participatory spatial planning and stakeholder motivation?’ Answering this question has required a rejection of the notion of participatory planning as a strictly hierarchical process, particularly when attempting to understand the interrelationship between society and space.

A critical realisation that has resulted from the research is that participation in spatial planning need not be undertaken as an ‘all in’ or ‘all out’ endeavour, but that each planning context calls for value-judgements on the extent of stakeholder participation which that context calls for. In practice, not all planning endeavours can be subject or indeed require the same level of stakeholder participation. Also, the role of the planner as an advisor is crucial to the process and not to be belittled (S. Farrugia, personal communication, November 30, 2017). The critique of a value-judgement based system of participation is the difficulty to manage such a system in the face of often diverging interests and strict allegiance to political factions.

In Malta, the minimum standard of stakeholder representation set out by law applies unconditionally and is applied to many different planning contexts, with no room for context-based flexibility. Whilst it is held that Arnstein’s ‘ladder of participation’ (1969) remains a valid way of representing participation as a hierarchical scale, emphasis is to be made on the fluidity of its application in the sense that rungs can be scaled as best suited to the planning context at hand. Possibly, the metaphorical ladder can be festooned with a few webs of association in Latour’s (2005) manner, thus expanding its strictly hierarchical remit to consider important externalities.

It is acknowledged that the achievement of balance between a legitimate degree of inclusion and the application of professional knowledge may be difficult to accomplish, particularly since it is influenced by factors other than planning considerations, such as political intervention. Participation is often motivated by vested interests and that therefore, the interest generated by certain projects is often proportional to the perceived impact of such projects on an individual, that is, to the perceived change to one’s hyper-local context, whether physical, social or economic. One is led to conclude that it is the perceived impact on one’s property assets that is the defining factor in participant motivation, more so than the representation processes available through which to participate. Stakeholders find means to make their voices heard, whether through legitimate or clientelist means.

In other cases, calls for participation are refuted as a means of protest, as an overt show of distrust in the legitimacy of the process. Despite the pervading culture in Malta that stakeholder representation through statutory systems are submitted either

by architects or by lawyers, NGOs are increasingly being asked to formulate submissions to the Planning Authority, though in the usual form of objections to developments and attendance at public hearings. The challenges such organisations face include the time required to formulate submissions and attend public hearings; but critically the expertise essential to confidently argue technical matters in front of Board members.

Individuals with a track-record of prior involvement in voicing stakeholder objections are also being asked to make such submissions, reflecting a gradual widening of whom is an acceptable channel of representation. It has been observed however that there is a general reticence on behalf of technical individuals to personally put themselves forward since such professionals tend to fear making opponents of Board members and having their practice compromised (P. Caruana Dingli, personal communication, November 29, 2017). It will be interesting to continue to observe the development of this organisational set-up; and possibly, the increased diversification of such representations.

Yet another related question left to be asked concerns the role of digital technologies in motivating participation. Though it has been acknowledged that social capital is an essential element in the successful use of current statutory systems of stakeholder representation, the role of technical capital has yet to be given its due importance. The use of the available digital means of making a convincing spatial planning argument whilst generating interest and diversifying the stakeholder pool is not yet being exploited to its full potential.

To fully consider the potential of digital technologies, one must first delve deeper into the role of the planner in the participatory planning process; and the means available to steer the spatial planning system towards increased dialogue between the parties involved. The planner, as negotiator in a power contest whilst striving to understand a way forward in the public interest, is central to this debate. This is the subject of the following chapter, wherein the theoretical background to participatory planning is discussed with the aim of taking forward the notion of socio-spatial dynamics presented in this chapter, prior to localising these concepts to the Maltese context.

*what is special about place is
...the unavoidable challenge of negotiating a here-and-now;
and a negotiation which must take place within and between both human and nonhuman*

(Massey, 2005)

4. THE PLANNER AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST

Spatial planning is a process, the implementation of which often gives rise to an ideological divide between vision and reality. It is generally agreed that the practice is intended to achieve social, economic and environmental sustainability; concerned with the management of the consequences of the decisions taken to achieve a viable relationship between these three aspects. The way this balance is achieved is however determined by power relations, and consequently requires both technical expertise and an understanding of the way in which power relations are acted out in specific temporal, social, and spatial contexts. Indeed, the statement that “planners work on problems, with people” (Forester, 1989, p. 4) belies its simplicity.

Taking this premise as a basis for this chapter, the role of the planner entrusted with acting in the public interest will be delved into. It is a role which has changed over time and which is manifested in different ways according to the overall statutory mandate under which a planner practices. The pros and cons of planning action undertaken as a participatory practice are analysed, concluding with the realisation that a nuanced approach to acting in the public interest must be coupled with a degree of flexibility in the navigation of top-down and bottom-up spatial planning processes.

It has been argued that planners often categorise their actions through one of three rhetoric stances: the scientist, the advocate or the politician. The scientist chooses a rational method in which information is imparted and analysis provides outcomes. The advocate takes a moral, rather condescending position, towards right or wrong values. The politician takes a dynamic approach to dealing with fragmented, incremental change based on voter partisanship (Grant, 1994; Throgmorton, 1996).

The very segmentation of planning practice into these different epistemologies is of hindrance however, since it focuses on the moral, theoretical stance without taking due consideration of the socio-spatial context (Hillier & Healey, 2008). Also, many planners have over time adapted their methods to better reflect the changing and complex social environments within which they work (Neuman M. , 2000; Friedmann, 2011). This is particularly evident in Meyerson & Banfield's (1955) stance that

Our standard of good planning – rational decision-making – is an ideal one; the standard is, we think, useful for analysis, but real organisations (like real people), if the truth is told, do not make decisions in a substantially rational manner. (p. 15)

According to de Roo (2017), it is precisely because of this non-linear behaviour that 'wicked problems' arise, termed so because they "have no clear beginning and no clear end, they are hard to define precisely and undisputedly, and they cannot be solved" (p.321). These situations require the creation of a multidisciplinary setting in which planning strategies that are responsive to complex environments can be framed (Healey, 2007; Friedmann, 2011; Clifford & Tewdwr-Jones, 2014) and in which planners can manage change by undertaking multiple roles in order to open channels of communication with other professions (Allmendinger, 2017);.

The negotiation between communicative and instrumental rationalities that a planner can be called upon to undertake is often an ethical one - "It is way too easy to follow the lead of developers and politicians who make economic competitiveness the highest priority and give little or no consideration to questions of justice" (Fainstein, 2016, p. 269). Planners, called upon to strive for spatial justice despite market-led constraints imposed by power structures, must deal with criticism of consensus-based solutions and the realisation that participatory decision-making does not

inevitably presuppose the legitimacy of the planning outcome (Fainstein, 2017). It is an argument characterised by the debate on ‘process’ and ‘outcome’, in that neoliberalism has judged deliberative processes to be inefficient and has created “a culture where, quite literally, concrete signs of change are of highly symbolic political importance” (Campbell, Tait, & Watkins, 2016, p. 193).

4.1. Planning as a rational and reflective endeavour

Modernist planning thought is rooted in the Age of Enlightenment - a period towards the end of the eighteenth century which was characterised by the increased need to question the status quo. The critical nature of the age gave rise to an attempt to understand one’s present situation in a rational manner based on one’s own observations rather than to fatalistically accept the doctrine of the power relations, be they the State or the Church. The rational approach to spatial planning is in the tradition of the Enlightenment, whereby the future of place is a matter to be thoroughly envisioned and designed for using the scientific method (Allmendinger, 2017). In Wildavsky’s words, “planning is the attempt to control the consequences of our actions” and “to control the future by current acts” (Wildavsky, 1973, pp. 128, 151). Instrumental rationality has since been challenged but is hailed as the theory from which other planning theories, as counter arguments or otherwise, emerged (Hudson, Galloway, & Kaufman, 1979; Healey, McDougall, & Thomas, 1982).

The need to control space based on the continuous deliberation of evidence is fundamental to rational planning. Evidence-based planning lends the planner a framework within which to make decisions. This ‘process to product’ empirical method has produced numerous plans and is widely applied in the drawing up of Impact Assessments. Rational planning may however not sufficiently deal with the inherent irrationalities of complex societies (Meyerson & Banfield, 1955). These irrationalities often arise from socio-economic contexts; in particular, contexts that challenge our inbred will to believe in rational systems, despite the observance of failures of rational planning systems in certain environments (Wildavsky, 1973). Latour (2005) interestingly alludes to rationalism as “reducing [something] to dust

by showing it was made up” (p. 92) and further puts forward the argument that ‘irrationality’ should be considered when defining social relations, of which planning is inherently part of.

In a further critique of rational planning Lindblom (1959) argues that planning is not as clear cut as it may seem; values are intertwined making analysis convoluted, theories difficult to follow and solutions indiscernible. Planning, in its role as a state-led means of dealing with the inherent uncertainties in capitalist societies, is meant to ensure the provision of basic infrastructural needs such as healthcare and educational institutions. The balancing act between different demands is based on the agenda of the State and in this manner, planning becomes a direct political tool (Allmendinger, 2017). This runs the risk of producing decision-making that is not representative of socially relevant alternatives, going against planning’s role in the attainment of positive social change (Webber, 1963).

The application of conventional rationality to planning places less emphasis on the role of sentiment; that is, the human instinct for applying significance and meaning to situations (Flyvbjerg, 2001; Hoch, 2006). Though promoted as being objective, it has been criticised for becoming tokenistic in nature; whereby planners use legally enshrined procedures to provide legitimacy. Conversely, the turn for advocacy planning of the 1960s enabled planners to become aligned to the postmodernist epoch, during which new methods broke with rigid traditions, with more pragmatism becoming acceptable (Dear, 1986).

4.1.1. The planner as advocate

These socially-oriented thoughts were not new to the post-war era. As early as 1912, Mead (1912) addressed the City Club of Chicago, saying

As has already been said, there is one great group that has not in the past been represented in the City Club as it should have been represented. We have not had the great mass of the community represented. (p. 215)

Some decades later, Glass (1959) writes that

Diversity of needs, wants and aspirations in society is obscured; policy-makers and administrators can quite happily continue to regard their own subjective preferences as objective, universal ones. (p. 403)

Tellingly, Webber (1963) also describes the sociological influences on spatial planning in the 1950s by observing that there is increasingly less emphasis on the ultimate physical representation of planning, and more emphasis on the intangible processes that dynamically influence the urban form. Webber was writing at a time when advocacy, or equity planning, was being spurred by the social inequalities of the 1960s. The drive towards a utopian universality was criticised by advocacy planners who considered planning as a series of issues to be solved for the benefit of the stakeholders. They placed emphasis on consultation and coordination between technical experts, whilst fostering relationships with the community (Friedmann, 1965). The method goes beyond physical planning in a solely land-use sense and addresses socio-economic issues through the direct intervention of planners on behalf of marginalised groups (Checkoway, 1994).

The emphasis on human trial and error gave rise to socio-spatial theories based on the symbiotic relationship between humans and the urban space being inhabited (Hudson, Galloway, & Kaufman, 1979; Healey, McDougall, & Thomas, 1982). Krumholz (1982), as a practicing planner, describes the 'interventionist' approach taken following the principles of advocacy planning. The challenges he identified whilst Director of Planning in Cleveland during the 1970s were practical: immediate housing concerns; legal: inequalities in local politics; and theoretical: the ethical role of the planner.

He questioned why the same planning policies applied to places with a different demography were producing vastly different results; and why consequently, the marginalised were increasingly disadvantaged. Through a process of thorough understanding of these disadvantaged people's situation, Krumholz's team was able to channel funds to projects that directly addressed those needs, for example, providing extended public transport in recognition of the lack of car ownership, as opposed to building new streets in a neighbourhood (Krumholz, 1982). This method

had clear similarities to that described by Meyerson and Banfield (1955) three decades earlier.

On similar lines, Davidoff (1973) promotes advocacy planning as a democratisation of state planning. He argues that without the 'advocacy planners' at hand to forward matters of relevance to marginalised groups, planning cannot serve its social goals. He invites NGOs to participate in planning processes by bringing forward their ideas and working with statutory agents under the umbrella 'advocacy and plural planning'. Critically, he makes a distinction between stakeholders reacting to plans and those proposing plans for their betterment. The culprit for the continued propagation of the former mode, he argues, is the independent planning institution which becomes a monopoly that discourages pluralism; a system that has clear similarities, he says, to statutory centralist planning (Davidoff, 1973).

Advocacy planning has however been criticised for simplifying spatial planning issues into partisan disputes, which pitted one cohesive, single-minded community against another. Indeed, Peattie (1994, p. 152) says that advocacy planning moved away from a single-client setting to a situation more akin to a 'proactive social movement'; therefore placing itself on the boundary between planning and politics (Hillier & Healey, 2008). This change in scope from dealing with a single-client to a community situation led to the development of 'transactive planning' as Friedmann (1973) termed it.

Friedmann (1973) argues that transactive planning aims to bridge the gap between the planner and the public by promoting networks and lines of communication. The method also places emphasis on different roles, and without necessarily rejecting rational thought, promotes the application of scientific and technical intelligence to organised actions. It strives to have the best of both worlds by combining the technical knowledge of planners with the local knowledge of the public, in a process of mutual learning. Though criticised for the risk of not being representational and for being difficult to manage, the method was encouraged in instances where the planner has a clear goal, can invest a length of time in the issue and can lobby with people from all strata of the political hierarchy. It is a form of planning that is based

on long-term relationships that are formed before the policy is being drafted and continued whilst it is being implemented (Krumholz, 1982).

4.1.2. The planner as reflective practitioner

The last decade of the 20th century witnessed an emphasis on evidenced based planning which was aware of the uncertainties pertaining to the uniqueness of context. As described by Healey (2010), the image of planners has changed from ‘value-neutral objective scientists’ to people who are “... focused, through a mix of personal commitment, specialist training and professional identification, on promoting, in one way or another, the values of the planning project” (p. 201). Planners who favour the use of formal master-plans have been contrasted with those who attempt to understand value structures to influence their decisions (Hoch, 2006).

Social scientists promote the ‘sensitivity approach’, arguing that human judgement cannot be fully objective in any case. In planning, the term ‘pragmatism’ is used to define a method based on the expectation that planning is complex, and that spatial planning, just like the related socio-economic context, does not have clear-cut boundaries. Planning is in this sense overtly value-based; it addresses the range of significances that pertain to specific issues. It is based on democratic governance between the planner and the community and indeed between individual members of the community itself (Hoch, 1996; 2002; 2006; 2017). Shön (1983) describes the pragmatic planner as being able to act upon immediate thoughts: being ‘reflective in action’.

Reflective planning encompasses discussion, listening to viewpoints and even maintaining silence when necessary. It is not simply about pushing a point or giving an informative lecture to passive recipients but a reciprocal engagement through mutual interest on the issue at hand. Ultimately, this form of value-led pragmatic planning considers communication as inherent to the plan, not simply as party to the plan; with emphasis on the process leading towards a desired outcome (Forester, 1993; Hoch, 2002; 2007).

Inherent to being ‘reflective in action’ is the individuality of the planner. Current planning practice demands that planners work more efficiently whilst being increasingly audited both in terms of the physical representations of their decisions and in terms of the processes of participation they are increasingly expected to have instigated (Clifford & Tewdwr-Jones, 2014). The integrity of the planner is sometimes questioned by stakeholders who question the process leading to specific decisions. Critics often overlook the reality that planners in statutory authorities must simultaneously honour government objectives whilst striving to honour their professional expertise, as well as attempt to reach deadlines that leave little time for in-depth reflection (Allmendinger, 2017).

4.1.3. The public interest

Spatial planning is a practice that fluctuates temporally with the processes of change. Whilst focussing on process, there is however “a danger that the planning system will forget its *raison d’être* – the rational and just pursuit of the public interest” (Glass, 1959, p. 405). Jeremy Bentham, writing in the 19th century, has been remembered for his work on the concept of the ‘sum of particular interests’. He asserted that the public is composed of a set of individuals and that the whole is greater than a sum of parts. Bentham further puts forward the premise that everyone has both a social and self-regarding interest, with the latter being more dominant than the former (Gunn, 1968).

This way of thinking was a precursor to the concept of public interest, defined by Meyerson & Banfield (1955) as a reflection of the wellbeing of a whole population, as opposed to that of a part of the population. In recognition that spatial planning decisions may lead to the restriction of the rights of certain individuals, acting in the public interest therefore requires the identification of decisions which are of benefit to the wider public. This has given rise to criticism that acting in the public interest is populist, whereby the “greatest happiness of the greatest number” takes absolute priority over any minority views (Gunn, 1968, p. 405).

It is therefore recognised that acting in the public interest does not mean that those decisions which are supported by the greatest number of people are necessarily the most favourable. Moroni (2017) speaks of the role of planners, not as those who define the public interest, but who assist in allowing value plurality to flourish by promoting communication between stakeholders. This is in line with Hoch's (2017) pragmatist outlook on stakeholder engagement and Fainstein's (2017) assertion that the drive towards diversity is a just cause in the face of increasing populism.

Considering the public interest in this regard also places responsibility on the shoulders of elected politicians to direct legislation into the route of the higher good (Campbell & Marshall, 2002). Spatial planning, often called up to implement policies favourable to one group but opposed by another, becomes a reflection of contemporary political ideologies (Tewdwr-Jones, 2012). The public interest is therefore closely related to organisational maintenance: winning an election. It is held however that this relationship sometimes refers only to apparent concessions in the name of the public interest, whereby emphasis is placed on good public relations and the voter is placed in a position of choosing the lesser evil (Meyerson & Banfield, 1955; Altshuler, 1965). This bias towards political will, as opposed to public will, is a product of planning systems which have a technocratic elite professing to articulate the public interest in relation to land use and development, without meaningful participation from the same public (Healey, 1997).

The planner, in a position to advise upon the allocation of resources, is susceptible to being coerced into promoting a predetermined agenda, sacrificing the critical discourse of multiple objective views to maintain the authorised discourse of the few (Smith, 2006). Tewdwr-Jones (2011) notes however that planners must acknowledge that spatial planning is inherently political since it concerns the production of processes of change in contested environments; and that it is imperative for planners to be aware of their role in the wider socio-economic and environmental context.

Another pitfall in the articulation of the public interest is the reduction of planning to a balance sheet of costs and benefits, often in disregard of intangible costs and benefits (Reade, 1987). As a believer that aligning planning to the public interest can however be done in a participatory manner, Innes (1996) holds that participatory

planning experiences can result in the alignment of different objectives through shared knowledge of the issue at hand and the development of a universally understood set of criteria.

This has led some to consider ‘public participation’ to be a vague term, together with ‘preservation of community’ and ‘social factors’ (Reade, 1987), further hindered by the widespread culture of clientelism and patronage undermining legitimate spatial planning (Healey, 1997). It can be said that common understanding does not necessarily lead to discourses of consensus, and that planners acting in the public interest must at times oppose the dominant public perception (Clifford & Tewdwr-Jones, 2014).

4.1.4. Values in spatial planning

Glass (1959) states that “by and large sociological considerations in planning are, therefore, synonymous with studies of value judgements and studies of the ways in which criteria of appraisal can be developed and applied” (p. 394). Values however are difficult to define, since they are determined by each person or group (Throsby, 2002). A society embracing common values can be said to be one in which people voluntarily form part of a social context and subscribe to its core values while balancing the communal with the personal, social responsibilities with individual rights, and shared values with individual values (Etzioni, 1998).

Planners are faced with a series of overarching influences when attempting to define value. Keene (2003) outlines these as:

- The social institutions that filter the transmission of values;
- The interaction between economic activities and the built environment;
- Legal and planning procedures giving rise to societal norms; and
- Social and aesthetic factors of the built environment.

Forester (2009) prefers to attribute the influence of value to an individual’s point of view and cites three value-related matters determining the outcome of communication. The first is that analytical understanding is somewhat detached from

the emotional aspect of humanity. When considering what Hoch (2006) terms ‘emotions’ however, the planner’s role is not to judge the values held by a person or group, but rather to manage the spatial scenarios which arise from the juxtaposition of the values of multiple entities.

Secondly, people associate values with their identity whereby ‘deep value differences’ are not subject to bargaining, time or money (Forester, 2009). This confirms the premise that mutual understanding is not directly proportional to consensus, as defined by the social theory of Communicative Action (Habermas, 1984). The third is the difference between values and interests, in that interests are subject to possible compromise. Misunderstanding this difference can lead to situations of insincerity and misinterpretation as shown in Figure 5 below.

	B is expressing deep value commitments	or	B is posturing: framing interests as deep values
A (planner) sees B (resident) as expressing deep values	Result: A deep value dispute requiring mutual recognition and practical, collaborative problem-solving		Result: An inefficient, short-sighted, hampered negotiation with mutually poor compromises
or			
A sees B as posturing: treating preferences as though they were deep values	Result: Anger, escalation and resentment precluding recognition and problem-solving		Result: Positional bargaining

Figure 5 Presentation and interpretation of interaction from Forester (2009)

Forester’s (2009) distinction between deep value commitments and posturing brings to mind Bauman’s (2013) theory on uncertainty in society and Freire’s (1998) theory on unethical behaviour in society. Bauman (2013), speaking of neoliberalism in a postmodern world, states that the uncertainty evident in cities fosters an environment of fear leading to increased hostility “where socially conceived and incubated insecurities are confronted in a highly condensed and so particularly tangible form” (p. 71).

The second association is that ethical behaviour stems from the acknowledgement that one is responsible for one's own actions and that socio-cultural determinants are not a recipe for behaviour to be followed blindly. Fatalism is in Freire's opinion the basis on which neoliberalism has been founded. Indeed, he terms neoliberalism as a 'dehumanizing socio-political order' which results in people living precariously and uncertainly. Both authors are not alone in stating that neoliberalism has propagated uncertainty that intensified social exclusion, spurred by top-down authoritarianism that gives the lie to basic democracy (Freire, 1998; Bauman, 2013; Campbell, Tait, & Watkins, 2016; Fainstein, 2017; Roy, 2017).

4.2. Communicative action in spatial planning

The study of communicative action in relation to spatial planning is based on the premise that planning is an action undertaken in a socio-spatial context. Habermas (1984) states that all action is inherently social because it relies on some form of interaction. He advocates a scenario of idealised communication based on understanding that leads to a convergence of ideas (Davoudi, 2017). In the case of spatial planning, Hillier & Healey (2008) submit that communicative action is based on the premise that the "power of planning lies not in its formal procedures, its legislative foundations or its political role, but in the communicative practices of the social relations in which planning is entangled" (p. 3). To those who take a rather uncritical view of this statement, 'discourse communities' start from being in a state of disagreement which is rectified when full understanding leads to collective support of the issues at hand, following communication between the parties (Healey, 1992).

Friedmann (1987) defines this as 'Social Learning'; a process which begins and ends with action, that is, with purposeful activity. Social learning therefore implies the need for action that will change the reality of the actors; through a top-down transactive planning process. Attempts to apply communicative action in practice involve clarifying the narrative of the situation, thereby setting the stage for consensus through mutual recognition of the different social contexts (Forester,

2009). It is a complex process that involves, “political strategy and tactics, theories of reality, the values that inspire and direct the action” (Friedmann, 1987, p. 182) and “unlimited time” (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p. 91).

The bottom-up counter-argument to ‘Social Learning’ is ‘Social Mobilisation’ – based on a mandate to increase the cognitive liberty of people as per Giddensian philosophy (Friedmann, 1987). Giddens’ theory of Structuration puts forward the presumption that individuals are ultimately conscious beings who drive the reproduction of the social system but that are not tied to a single social setting. Rather, knowledgeable discourse allows relations to stretch across time and space within a social structure through the inherent desire of individuals to conform to rules by their knowledge and through their actions (Giddens, 1984).

Considering social mobilisation, Forester (1999) advocated the educative and participatory aspects of spatial planning when he defined the planning profession as ‘deliberative’, meaning that it requires a continuous learning cycle about society, its related issues and how to address them. In this manner, “rather than engaging in physical and social renewal *of* local communities, the current aspiration is to develop an approach *with* local communities” (Diamond & Liddle, 2005). These assertions allude to the relationship of communicative action with power relations, a factor which Flyvbjerg (1998) questions in relation to Habermas’ seeming disregard for the dichotomy.

4.2.1. Counteracting communicative action

Giddens offers no presumption of guaranteed social change on the lines upon which Habermas bases his communicative ideal. He concludes that Habermas’ positing of an egalitarian utopia based on universal understanding is dangerous since it may catalyse the urge to create such a community (Tucker, 1998). A theoretical concern with communicative action challenges the fundamental concept of a unifying agreement that underlies the theory (Davoudi, 2017). It is argued that not only is it an unreachable idea but consensus itself is not necessarily democratic and is

furthermore an imposition of one belief over another despite the overtly inclusive mandate (Tewdwr-Jones & Allmendinger, 1998; Warren, 2011; Metzger, 2017).

Communicative action implies moreover that real communication takes place between actors in the same circumstances, and distorted communication takes place when actors occupy different positions within the power hierarchy, the latter being the normative situation however (White, 1989). Habermasian communicative action has therefore been criticised for putting forward the presumption that participatory democracy between actors in the same circumstances is legitimate but that representative democracy between actors of different circumstances is not. This is despite the presupposition in communicative action that transparency in communication is a sure route to achieving consensus; a factor that would allow representative democracy to align itself to participatory democracy should the presumption be true (Tewdwr-Jones & Allmendinger, 1998).

It is however acknowledged that it is overly optimistic to assume that all participants will behave with complete honesty and openness, completely overcoming human tendencies to forward individual agendas or the agenda to which an individual pertains (Coles, 1992). The human tendency to behave irrationally undermines the achievement of a common value-base required for communicative rationality, especially in favour of significant personal gains over the public good (Tewdwr-Jones & Allmendinger, 1998). Considering that spatial planning often requires contests between multiple socio-spatial scenarios, it is unlikely that the participants will be from a similar value base; more likely is the dialogue become empty of meaning (Allmendinger, 2017). As argued by Foucault, Habermas is being utopian; and that utopias “present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down, but in any case these utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces” (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986, p. 24).

Disregarding the influence of power relations shows a clear disregard for political realities and indeed at times, the personal aspirations of decision-makers (Flyvbjerg, 1998). Foucault’s perspective is that all discourse is a factor of the exercise of power and discipline and that human freedom is inherently repressed by power relations. Indeed, “in such a heavily politicised arena as planning, consensus is completely

utopian – there will always be winners and losers – and it will never be possible for all individuals to abandon their political positions and act neutrally” (Tewdwr-Jones & Allmendinger, 1998, p. 1982).

It is therefore contended that participation is reliant on the governance structures that determine decision-making processes (Healey, 1997). Changes made to planning processes aiming to support procedural reform by setting up soft-power relations in consideration of the requirement for participation are to be reflected in the amendment of formal procedures. The test of the system is however the extent to which governance processes are transformed in line with the aspiration for increased top-down, bottom-up fluidity (Tewdwr-Jones, 2012).

4.2.2. Consensus-building

Forester (2009) deconstructs the Habermasian ideal into compromise on one hand and consensus on the other; the former leading to half-way solutions resulting in mutual loss, the latter resulting in the satisfaction of diverse values resulting in mutual gain. As mentioned, the principle of the attainment of consensus in planning is however challenged. Many consider it an unrealistic goal which disregards real-world conditions of power-led environments where planners, though compliant with the concept of acting in the public interest, must decide which of the groups to favour in scenarios where consensus-led win-win-win solutions between social, economic and environmental priorities are not always readily available (Neuman M., 2000).

Attempts to achieve win-win-win situations in pragmatic zeal result conversely in achieving ‘lowest common denominator solutions’ that satisfy none of the parties’ interests, and reinforces the perception that spatial planning is being undertaken as a problem-solving technique rather than a strategic application of policy (Tewdwr-Jones, 2012). Indeed, consensus-building is criticised for being reactive in its interpretation as an iterative long-term planning strategy (Huxley & Yiftachel, 2000) and ineffectual for large scale projects (Bailey & Grossardt, 2010).

The above criticism may however arise from the urge to ‘solve’ planning issues, thereby reducing planning to a product, rather than a process. Forester’s (2009) assertion that “mediators don’t make agreements any more than midwives make babies” (p.175) shows however that consensus-building is a process that aims to set milestones, interpreted as a series of planning decisions along the timeline of a project. In this regard, the role of the planner is to establish an environment of in-depth understanding of interests and values, and ensure real proposals for the future, and not loose ends which lead to further, and possibly destructive debate (Forester, 2009).

Practical challenges encountered during consensus-building include the lack of essential knowledge between stakeholders, both of the issue at hand and of awareness of the wider vision and its repercussions. Interest groups¹⁵ may expect to agree upon proposals incrementally, to benefit from the results of ‘quick-wins’, whereby planners may prefer longer term, strategic plans to implement long-term goals (Heywood, 2011). This perception was opposed by Innes (1996), who maintains that interest groups can accept strategic goals which they feel they have a good chance of retaining their involvement in forthcoming stages such as policy endorsement and implementation. Interest groups also face criticism from an increasingly wider audience, with some echoing the sentiment that decision-makers “tend to credit the public with more knowledge, greater rationality and enthusiasm for participation in decision-making than we perhaps ought” (Carver, 2003, p. 61).

The direction towards advocating the role of the planner simply as a proponent of democratically held consensus seems to imply the de-professionalization of the planner and has been criticised for the adverse consequence of instilling reluctance in professional planners to embrace more collaborative modes of decision-making (Tewdwr-Jones & Allmendinger, 1998). In recognition of the professional-public

¹⁵ Interest groups are otherwise known as ‘the third sector’ and ‘civil society’ but increasingly referred to under the all-encompassing term used in this study; that is, a group representing the interests of a specific stakeholder group within an organisational structure; differing from social partners which refer to trade unions, employers’ associations and the like.

divide, planners can try to further empower citizens to take on their own skill base towards the betterment of their society (Sager, 2017), but empowerment often has the undesirable effect of actually emphasising the divide (Hoch, 2007).

4.2.3. Cognitive planning

Cognitive planning provides an opportunity to address some of the challenges encountered in consensus-building by creating a knowledge-based framework to aid the understanding of a situation. It is a discipline that raises several questions in relation to the premise that planning is intrinsic to human psychology (Morris & Ward, 2005). Amongst these, transcribed from Hoch (2006, pp. 371, 380) are:

- How do emotions shape the imaginative art of plan making?
- What role do emotions play in shaping the different aspects of communication used to inform and persuade people about proposed plans?
- How do emotions shape the expectations and criteria used to judge the merits of planning methods, experience and outcomes?
- How do we attend to these psychological dimensions without sacrificing the contextual complexity and relevance of practical planning judgment?

It is argued that a planner can use both rational analysis and emotion in the consideration of planning decisions, and that the two need not be entirely separate nor mutually exclusive aspects of a planner's intellectual package (Flyvbjerg, 2001). Emotion reflects a person's cognitive response and guides a person subjectively during decision-making, based on the evolutionary need for humans to rely on feelings to survive potentially harmful situations (Hoch, 2006).

Cognitive planning theory can be used to define the distinction between top-down and bottom-up approaches. Hoch (1988) defined the former as an approach whereby 'higher order' knowledge informs basic decision-making. A top-down approach therefore leads to systematic and hierarchical plan-making whereby the scope is progressively clarified. It has been criticised for the tendency to expand the scope of the issue to be solved indefinitely (Morris & Ward, 2005), and usually but not

necessarily, culminates in a set of strategic plans, which are detailed by lower level plans. This form of planning can also be termed initial planning (Davies, 2005).

Bottom-up approaches, on the other hand, are based on a widespread information base, which is used on-the-fly to make sequential decisions, creating a process whereby new information is continuously being fed into the decision-making process. This leads to opportunistic and non-hierarchical planning which depends on the acquisition of new information to push the planning process forward, without the ability therefore, to set timeframes to the problem-solving process. This can thus be termed concurrent planning (Davies, 2005).

Albrechts (2004) differentiates between cognitive and collective planning very much on the same basis as initial and concurrent planning and cites complex environments, problems and values as determinants of the planning process chosen. In the first case, the feasibility of initial planning approaches is inversely proportional to the complexity of the situation, since complex problems often require iterative decision-making over time. Secondly, data input relevant to the problem at hand can change initial, rational processes into concurrent, opportunistic ones. Thirdly, it has been acknowledged that value judgements play a significant part in the planning process. In general, it has been found that when dealing with unfamiliar subjects, people prefer a concurrent, exploratory approach, veering to an initial systematic approach as more knowledge of the case is gained (Davies, 2005).

Emotional judgements therefore feed into decisions, together with the cognitive knowledge gained through information gathering. People need both emotional and cognitive attachment for the plan to be accepted and potentially acted upon. In Hoch's (2006) words "[a]nalysts who expect planners to offer 'objective' results about potential consequences that evoke neither feeling nor intentions may inspire indifference rather than understanding" (p.379), similar to Healey's (2010) assertion that planners are clearly "not value-neutral objective scientists" (p. 201).

Indeed, a planner's sensitivity to cognitive processes may help to understand participants' emotions, such as NIMBYism¹⁶ for example. Understanding humans' inherent fear of the unknown may help the planner overcome initial criticism of a new planning policy, with the aim of replacing fear with acceptance. Fear is not however necessarily negated by knowledge since certain issues may be genuinely hard to accept, even when understanding is gained. In such situations, people recognise honesty, and react more favourably to an honest answer, even if undesirable, than to a half-truth, which they will react to with suspicion and ultimately cynicism (Hoch, 2006).

Humans also tend to apply 'stored preferences' to planning situations, even when there is a clear goal set. This shows that rational planning is often influenced by irrational processes, which are based on the assignment of priority and personal preference. Understanding these cognitive processes allows the planner to better facilitate the interpretation of information and of the overall objectives, potentially contributing to a subsequently lesser irrationally negative reaction to a planning decision (Burgess, Simons, Coates, & Channon, 2005).

Considering the planners' point of view, taking part in participatory activities associated with bottom-up planning brings about the inherent questioning of the planner's professional privilege. It takes effort for planners to be reflective professionals who accept the public's views as a viable series of options to consider, even though the planners may agree with the democratic value of participation in principle. Planners are caught in a dilemma between their thoughts and their actions – between "theory and practice, between knowledge and action and between intention and implementation" (Clifford & Tewdwr-Jones, 2014, p. 220).

¹⁶ The term 'NIMBY' is an acronym of 'Not In My Back Yard'

4.3. Conclusion: Analysis of planning as a balance of interests

Another research question refers to the reciprocal stakeholder engagement and therefore to the two-way dialogue between decision-maker and stakeholder. The subsidiary question asked in this regard is: 'can participatory processes be equally and universally applied to spatial planning practice?' An understanding of the role of the professional planner is central to this question and indeed has been an ongoing matter of personal interest throughout the course of this thesis.

Ethical dilemmas in planning are manifold, because planning decisions made in the public interest are taken based on subjective notions of social morality and with the aim of deciding for an inherently uncertain future. Neither of these fundamental objectives of planning can be accomplished exclusively through the application of instrumental rationality. Indeed, critical considerations such as dealing with authority, achieving spatial justice and the ethical allocation of resources are particularly difficult to rationalise, and remain key challenges to planners acting in the public interest (Wachs, 2016).

Upon first consideration of the notion of the public interest however, one can be lured into thinking of it as a panacea for value-led judgements in spatial planning; should one hit upon this elusive public interest, then one has solved the planning problem being faced. A deeper analysis of the notion reveals however that a more nuanced approach is advisable, defining both the terms 'public' and 'interest' (Altshuler, 1965). As is often observed in planning practice, the public can be a dispersed set of individuals or several opposing factions. Interests will vary across these stakeholder groups, at times fundamentally. Indeed, stakeholder groups are often exclusionary by their very virtue of being inclusive only to those who conform to the ideology of a group. The notion of a single course of action which satisfies the interests of this public is therefore nothing more than a distant utopia.

Furthermore, the interests of stakeholder groups may not tally with government objectives, presumably made in the national interest at strategic policy level. Taking the spatial and social contexts as the determining factors of such an argument, these

are not always easily aligned to each other. Particularly significant in the dense urban environment of the Maltese Islands, one can mention the controversies surrounding the development of national infrastructural projects. Examples of such abound, especially from times where the investment in heavy industry was considered paramount to the country's development. To cite only three, one can mention the rise of the anti-pollution lobby evidenced through the case of Gozo Cement Plant in 1986, the Blockrete construction materials factory in 1969 and the Hal Far Cement Factory in 1974 (Attard Portughes, 1999)¹⁷.

To mention yet another balancing act, strategically necessary projects must be carefully considered in terms of their local impact. It has been documented that at times, stakeholders lose sight of material planning considerations and are influenced by other factors such as changes to property value (G. Cordina, personal communication, November 30, 2017), especially when directly affected by a particular spatial planning policy (Forester, 2009). Whilst attempting the balancing act between strategic goals and stakeholder interests, planners are often caught in the cross-fire between top-down objectives and bottom-up representations.

On the one hand, it has been observed during this thesis that it is often considered more feasible by public officials to follow top-down direction. On the other hand, government-led planning reforms lean towards consumer focussed planning and accountability targets, placing significant pressure on planners and reducing the flexibility required for contextual value-judgements to be taken (Clifford & Tewdwr-Jones, 2014). When juxtaposed with the complexity of strategic goals and the expertise required to understand the many aspects involved, the consequent outcome is that bottom-up interests are considered necessary evils to be overcome rather than opportunities for engaging in dialogue with stakeholders. A self-propagating vicious cycle of planner indifference and stakeholder cynicism thus emerges.

¹⁷ For a detailed history of these three controversial projects and an analysis of the local public media sources of the time see: Attard Portughes, M. (1999). *Mediated-Planning, Environmental Advocacy and the Cement Plant Dispute: Is building consensus yet another 'Bridge too Far'?*. MSc. University of Malta.

Such sentiments are very much evident in Malta, and deserve to be studied in depth. A discussion of the historical background of Malta's spatial planning system and a critical analysis of current practices is presented in the next chapter, in the light of the theoretical concepts outlined above. Particularly, the application of European and nation-wide legislation related to participatory planning is delved into, with the aim of leading to an assessment of methods that can aid in achieving more legitimate stakeholder representation in spatial planning processes.

Planning is the guidance of future action.

In a world of intensely conflicting interests and great inequalities of status and resources, planning in the face of power is at once a daily necessity and a constant ethical challenge.

(Forester, 1989)

5. SPATIAL PLANNING IN A EUROPEAN MALTA

Having considered the role of the planner and the public interest from a theoretical perspective, this chapter localises such issues to the Maltese spatial and social contexts. Malta's developing spatial planning system is analysed in the light of power relations as well against the backdrop of major changes in the Islands' governance structures. The transition to becoming an independent nation and thereafter to becoming a Member State of the European Union has left an indelible legacy that permeates the Islands' institutions, their spatial planning processes and stakeholder representation practices that are symptomatic of power struggles that influence the route to actionable policy.

The struggle between Malta's fledging political class and the British authorities during the early 19th century witnessed a drive by the Maltese to administer and control aspects of Malta's governance, departing from allowing foreign rulers full rein of government. In contrast to the initial welcome of the British as deliverers from the French occupiers, a difficult struggle ensued, with the degree of self-governance fluctuating during specific periods of British rule and culminating in

Malta gaining Independence in 1964 (Portelli, 2011; Frenco, 2012)¹⁸. In the run-up to Independence, Malta was engaged in a process of decolonisation, sovereignty and transitional democracy which brought about challenges inherent to such large-scale institutional upheaval.

Warrington (1999) classifies these challenges of institutional design into four categories, namely:

- Restructuring of seats of authority from multi-lateral pre-existing ones, including global structures and ungoverned structures;
- Re-evaluating the constitutional role of government vis-à-vis the governed, thereby introducing debates regarding the legitimacy of the new constitutional;
- Imbuing all citizens with the will to work towards the public interest, with government as opposed solely to being led by government; and
- Achieving diversity across decision-making structures and modes of governance towards institutional pluralism.

Western European imperialism, such as that experienced by Malta under British rule, is now widely acknowledged to have been both racially hierarchical and based on discriminatory governance. Members of native populations, though being given opportunities to develop, were treated so because of a belief in their inferiority when compared to nationals from the ruling country¹⁹. In Malta, this disparagement was evident in the aggressive drive towards Anglicisation; a drive successful in social and cultural spheres through its direct impact on employment and business opportunities for those individuals who relied on economic structures promoted by the British.

¹⁸ Refer to Appendix B for a description of Malta's constitutional history.

¹⁹ Very clearly put by Chircop (2015) one encounters "the colonial construction of the image of 'the Maltese native' as a shady and corrupt, laid-back and undisciplined 'half-Arabic', with the added dose of superstition brought about by Catholicism" (p.21).

Merchants, contractors, land-owners and certain members of the Curia also eventually became part of British-led power structures, though walking a tight-rope of power balance which did not presume their participation in decision-making; never on matters of national security and precariously on matters of local government (Chircop, 2015). Pirotta (2011) sums up the situation succinctly when he states that “[t]he Maltese had sought and thought that they had secured the blessings of a benevolent paternalism only to discover that they had entrusted themselves to a form of benign despotism” (p.33). Upon Malta gaining independence however, the transfer of allegiance was not simply from the British authorities to the Maltese authorities.

Parton and client relations between the lay population and Maltese politicians were well established even during British rule and gave rise to disputes on whether one owed allegiance to the Crown or to one’s effective patron. The way Malta’s higher civil service operates today is symptomatic of these divided loyalties, whereby supposedly permanent members of staff are appointed according to party allegiance, undermining the decision-making autonomy of the higher civil service and reflecting the pervasive influence of the governing political party on statutory institutions (Warrington, 2008). In this sense, "Ministers have become the new super 'saints'/ Members of parliament have become brokers, at best intermediaries between ministerial patrons and their own constituents" (Boissevain, 1993, p. 154).

Malta’s first modern planning instrument, the Development Plan for the Maltese Islands, 1959-64 (Government of Malta, 1959), recognised the requirement for independence from the British Service economy, emphasising a transition towards export-oriented manufacturing and ship repair, and later, tourism with a simultaneous investment in the infrastructure of the Islands (Brincat, 2015). In this manner, development in Malta has been led firstly from a strictly capital standpoint and secondly from an export-oriented standpoint, invariably with foreign intervention (Vella, 1994). The development of the Maltese economy was based on being necessarily opportunistic, on making the most of the few scant resources and on limiting the native population of the Islands (Frendo, 2013).

The scarcity of available resources remains a factor that influences the Maltese mentality to this day. Indeed, the enjoyment of property is a fundamental right of the individual enshrined in Chapter IV of the Constitution of Malta. The accumulation of property which is symptomatic of generalised affluence does however lead to significant disparities in wealth between different sectors of the population. Those who accumulate large reserves of property form a powerful lobby with the ability to influence power structures and thus, decision-making related to spatial planning is prone to clientelist practices due to the impact on the allocation of land-based resources and development rights. The institutional weakness resulting from patronage supported by public administrative structures described in the detailed history of state audit in Malta by Warrington and Pirotta (2014) is exemplified by numerous examples of lax governance.

Whereas good governance is a concept based on the pluralist principles underlying human rights, constitutional government and the public interest; the opposite is symptomatic of the unscrupulous will of those whom power has corrupted. It calls into question the accountability of elected representatives and even the democratic right to vote (Pirotta G. , 2012). Mercieca (2012) is of the opinion that the lack of moral concern at the misuse of public resources is an opportunist attitude inherited from colonial times based on the belief that resources are not one's own but of the occupying sovereign. He too refers to the lack of institutional transparency and widespread enforcement limitations, placing the blame partly on the insular nature of Maltese society and the strong centralisation of governance structures.

Goodman (1972, p. 35) states that "just as the institution of planning mechanisms does not necessarily democratise the economy, so the creation of superficial pluralist mechanisms to give voice to the opinions of particular pressure groups does little to alter the existing power structure." Though Malta is a signatory of the Criminal Law Convention on Corruption, 2000, the Civil Law Convention on Corruption, 2004 and the Additional Protocol to the Criminal Law Convention on Corruption, 2013; the perceived amount of corruption is conducive to a culture of distrust or cynicism towards power structures and furthermore, towards legitimate participatory planning practices, these being considered ineffective in the face of 'tried and tested'

clientelism. On the contrary, participatory planning practices are dismissed as a veil to underlying neoliberal political practices favouring the powerful to the detriment of acting in the public interest (Radil & Jiao, 2016).

Spatial planning has a unique role to play in public administrative structures, at the intersection of geographical and social issues in determining the quality of space and place (Tewdwr-Jones, 2011). The accountability of decision-making in spatial planning practice takes on added relevance in this regard. The decision-makers appointed to the Executive Council of the Planning Authority by the Minister responsible for planning, under the provisions of the Development Planning Act, 2016 (Cap 552) are thus expected to show due consideration to government objectives while adhering to principles of good governance and institutional rigour.

5.1. Towards strategic planning in Malta

The path towards strategic planning in Malta has been a convoluted one; some may also argue that it is also as yet inconclusive. This section will outline the history of Maltese planning legislation in the light of the transition from a British Crown Colony to an independent Republic, describing the contemporary planning framework and delving into current statutory procedures for public consultation. Following this, the Maltese spatial planning context will be placed within the overall European milieu, following the Islands' accession to the European Union and the influences of accession on top-down and bottom-up power relations.

To begin the narrative, one can note that the first modern planning law for Malta, The Laws and Regulations of Police for the Island of Malta and its Dependencies better known as known as the Code of Police Laws, was consolidated in 1854. The Sanitary Ordinance, enacted in 1880, amended the Code following deliberations regarding deteriorating public health. In line with contemporary developments in Britain during the late-19th century, it was recognised in Malta that health, housing and spatial planning were inexorably linked. The chief concern of the planners of the day was therefore the provision of infrastructure which would deter epidemics partly

by ensuring sanitary, more hygienic housing for the population. This led to the consideration of spatial planning as an endeavour concerned not only with town planning but also with the wider socio-economic situation of the day (Gauci, 2002).

The Sanitary Ordinance updated parts of The Code of Police Laws. It addressed the issue of sanitary housing provision with adequate ventilation and running water, together with hygienic sewage disposal. Further planning legislation was drafted in 1944 by the British authorities, as was being done in other colonies within the British Empire²⁰. The draft was never published, but despite criticism that it closely resembled a similar Ordinance for Palestine, it was incorporated into the 1947 White Paper entitled Draft Building (Control) Bill and Building Regulations (Aquilina, 1999).

Post-war, Malta experienced an increase in development that led to the ratification of the Special Development Areas Act (Cap. 149) of 1956, the Development Plan for the Maltese Islands 1959-1964 and the Development Plan for Malta 1981-85 Act (Cap. 297). The first Development Plan was published to lay the economic foundation for Independence whereby the second focussed on mitigating the haphazardness of the post-2nd World War reconstruction efforts that was prompting linear sprawl, a matter of concern to planners (Aquilina, 1999). There was also a predisposition towards tourism-related development to counter the relatively slow growth of the manufacturing sector that had most impact on coastal zones (Schembri, 2003).

In the 1960s, several plans were commissioned by foreign planners, but were never implemented (Azzopardi R. M., 2011). It may be the case that these plans did not make provision for ingrained social practices and were therefore shelved by the political class of the time (Gauci, 2002). In 1961, Jeffrey Switzer, an economist from

²⁰ Other related legislation passed prior to the 2nd World War was the Architects Ordinance, drawn up in 1919 to regulate the practice of architects and engineers, The Protection of Antiquities Act in 1925, the Fertile Soil Preservation Ordinance, the Aesthetic Building Ordinance and the Land Acquisition (Public Purposes) Ordinance, all in 1935.

the University of Cambridge, presented a report to the Governor of Malta outlining his vision of a flexible approach to planning, concerning amongst other matters the issue of the containment of urban sprawl. The report was entitled *The National Land Development Plan for the Maltese Islands* and within it Switzer refers to the requirement of a self-contained country such as Malta to have a physical plan.

Ordinance No. XV of 1962 was consequently issued as an Amendment to the Code of Police Laws, resulting in Malta being declared a 'planning area' in its entirety, thereby subjecting all land to planning regulations, a state of affairs that had been consistently resisted. The Planning Area Permits Board (PAPB) and the Commissioner of Lands were set up to implement the new law to oversee land development until a new Town Planning Act and a National Physical Plan were prepared. During the process of setting up of the Planning Area Permits Board (PAPB), much debate was held on the requirement to eradicate corruption, whilst other issues such as strategic planning and participatory planning were relegated (Aquilina, 1999; Gauci, 2002).

In 1963 under the chairmanship of Joseph Huntingford, a sub-committee of the Town Planning Board, known as the Huntingford Committee, was set up to draft a Town and County Planning Law, as provided for in Ordinance No. XV of 1962. The Huntingford Committee also made mention of corrupt practices within the fledgling land-use planning system. The Committee also recognised an increasing frustration with these practices and proposed that development plans should be subject to public consultation (Gauci, 2002).

The Town and Country Planning Act 1969 was issued with aspirations to imbue the system with greater accountability. The Act required the setting up of a Town Planning Commission and a Town Planning Appeals Tribunal, provisions which were however never put into force. At the time, it was proposed that the Act fell neither under the existing Ministry of Labour, Employment, and Welfare nor under the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works, but under a proposed Ministry for Town and Country Planning. The Building Development Areas Act 1983 (Cap 303) was later issued, a primary result of which was the development of more tracts of land being expropriated, divided into plots and sold at affordable rates. The proposed

areas to fall under this law were to be exhibited in public, in what was considered a demonstration of accountability and participatory zeal (Aquilina, 1999; Gauci, 2002).

The Structure Plan for the Maltese Islands, Preliminary Study funded by Commonwealth Foundation was presented in June 1988, stating that the Maltese Islands required a plan which must be less about “maps and drawings” and more about the “orderly allocation of land and other resources in the field of human welfare” (Switzer & Wells-Thorpe, 1988, p. 6). This was much in the spirit of the report Switzer had submitted to the Governor in 1961 and strove to implement a flexible approach to planning that could be implemented immediately.

The Structure Plan Brief (Government of Malta, 1988) was issued by the Town Planning Division, Ministry for Development of Infrastructure in 1988; and in 1990, the Structure Plan for the Maltese Islands - Draft Final Written Statement and Key Diagram (Government of Malta, 1990) and Explanatory Memorandum (Government of Malta, 1990) were published. The organisation of public consultation was a legal requirement also detailed in the Structure Plan. The results of this consultation were consolidated into a document entitled Structure Plan for the Maltese Islands: Summary of Public Consultation (Government of Malta, 1991).

5.1.1. Malta within the European Union

The foundation for Malta’s accession to the European Union (EU) started with the signing of an Association Agreement in 1970, which set up a customs union based on free trade between Malta and the European Economic Community. A formal application to join the European Community was submitted in 1990, the Eighth EU-Malta Association Council having set up a pre-accession strategy and adopting a resolution on the establishment of structural dialogue in 1995. In 1996, the government of the day put Malta’s application on hold, attempting to broker a deal whereby Malta has the closest relations possible with the EU, short of membership. The country’s application for full membership was reactivated in 1998, following a change of government; and formal accession negotiations were completed in 2002,

upon which a referendum was held to confirm the direction of the country towards accession (Attard C. , 2004; EU2017.MT, 2016).

The years leading up to Malta's accession were used to negotiate several 'chapters', these being topic-areas that required accession talks for Maltese policy to become more aligned to the EU *acquis*. The talks saw the transposition of more than 200 EU legal instruments into national legislation, a process which highlighted regional issues. Indeed by 2002, 76 special arrangements had been agreed upon to address concerns specific to Maltese civil society organisations. The Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC) and the Malta-EU Information Centre were set up to promote the inclusion of interested parties in the accession process (Attard C. , 2004).

Following a referendum on EU accession on 8 March 2003 and a general election on 12th April 2004, both of which confirmed Malta's direction towards EU accession, Malta became a Member State of the EU on 1st May 2004. Other countries joining the EU during the same enlargement process were Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia. This bloc included only one other island state apart from Malta - Cyprus, yet another Mediterranean territory.

Despite the inclusion of Malta and Cyprus in 2004, the EU definition of islands as yet excludes island states. This is considered a lack of awareness of issues pertaining to islands and particularly to small-island states within the EU. These are often issues arising from ultra-peripherality and insularity due to the lack of physical connections to mainland Europe. It is held that although issues particular to island states have been progressively considered, small-island specificities are often not adequately reflected in policy-making, showing that although policy has been written that is obliquely relevant to islands, little is directly related to such territories (Moncada, Camilleri, Formosa, & Galea, 2009; Baldacchino, 2013).

5.1.2. Contemporary planning framework

Land use planning in Malta is currently regulated under the Development Planning Act, 2016 (Cap 552) and environmental protection and management under the Environment Protection Act, 2016 (Cap 549) and the Environment and Planning Review Tribunal Act, 2016 (Cap 551); these having replaced the integrated Environment and Development Planning Act, 2010 (Cap 504). The latter had amalgamated the Development Planning Act, 1992 (Cap 356) and the Environment Protection Act, 2001 (Cap 435)²¹, legally merging the functions of the former Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA). MEPA had been set up to form one entity responsible for both land use planning and environmental protection and management. The current legislation allowed for the return to a demerger of these functions that led to the setting up of two bodies: The Planning Authority which is currently responsible for spatial planning, building control, and mapping; and the Environment and Resources Authority which is responsible for environmental protection and management.

Within the PA, forward planning and development control are dealt with separately. The Executive Council is a centralized entity responsible for the formulation, implementation and updating of plans; as well as for the enforcement of development control, the carrying out of national mapping, and the coordination of research, monitoring and technical assistance²². The Planning Board has the primary function of issuing development permission upon prior application for such

²¹ Maltese Acts and Legal Notices can be accessed through <http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt>

²² The Executive Council is composed of a Minister appointed Executive Chairperson, the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Planning Board, two Minister appointed independent members, two members appointed by the Environment and Resources Authority when applicable, the Superintendent of Cultural Heritage when applicable and other observatory members when applicable.

development at land or at sea. Other functions concern building regulation and the granting of licences related to the building industry²³ (Government of Malta, 2016).

Notwithstanding the demerger of environmental protection and management and land-use planning responsibilities of the Government, the functions of the PA as stated in Article 7(2) of the Development Planning Act (Government of Malta, 2016), bridge land use planning and environment planning, especially in terms of the emphasis on sustainable development and accountability. Closer analysis reveals however that the previous legislation had the primary objective of protecting and managing the environment whilst current legislation places greater emphasis on land use planning towards the aims of preserving, using and developing land and sea.

The principal planning instrument detailed in the Planning Act is the Spatial Strategy for the Environment and Development (SSED). Subsidiary to the SSED are:

- Subject Plans - policy-specific technical considerations;
- Local Plans – a set of policies detailing the implementation of the SSED;
- Action Plans (or Management Plans) – site-specific technical considerations; and
- Development Briefs – detailed, site-specific planning guidance.

The proposed SSED is currently termed the Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development (SPED), published in 2015. It is currently the highest instrument in the hierarchy and has the primary function of “regulating the sustainable management of land and sea resources” as per Article 44 of the Development Planning Act (Government of Malta, 2016). The officially stated objective of the SPED is to implement spatial, comprehensive planning in relation to land and sea resources,

²³ The Planning Board is composed of a Chairperson chosen from the five independent members, these having technical knowledge on matters related to development planning, a Chairperson from the Planning Commissions, two members from the House of Representatives of which one shall be appointed by the Prime Minister and the other by the Leader of the Opposition, a member nominated by NGOs, a member representing the Environment and Resources Authority, three public officers representing the Government on technical matters, and a member from the Local Council within which a major project application being discussed lies when applicable.

towards achieving balance between socio-economic and environmental factors. The SPED also aims to integrate the requirements of different land-users within the framework of other sectoral policies (Government of Malta, 2015).

5.2. Statutory processes of public participation

This section will consider planning legislation that deals particularly with processes of representation and stakeholder relations, both at EU level and on a national scale. It is evident that participation in spatial planning has evolved in tandem with Malta's accession to the EU and the increased opportunities for social dialogue this brought about. With a now Europe-wide audience, there is increased potential for enhancing the social capital of stakeholder groups and therefore, attempts to influence policy-making may be more effective. Ultimately, more inclusiveness into decision-making structures may be successfully demanded and achieved in line with the higher rungs of the above-mentioned hierarchies of participation.

The ability to lobby EU structures such as the European Parliament and the European Commission by Maltese stakeholder groups has indeed provided them with a strong source of empowerment in this regard (Briguglio, 2013). In Malta, not all stakeholder groups are equally Europeanised in the sense that they have a transformative impact at European level; but trade unions and employers' associations manifest a much higher degree of Europeanisation than social, human rights and environmental groups. It is suggested that Maltese trade unions and employers' associations, though being strongly internalised, manifest the desire for further supranationalisation as a consequence both of the perceived increased ability to reach goals within the Maltese context and also a result of their core policy domains being directly influenced by European-wide political ideologies (Vassallo, 2015).

Also, since Malta's EU accession, European incentives and programmes are being increasingly tapped into with the aid of MEUSAC and the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD). MEUSAC actively supports

organisations' internal structure and domestic responsiveness while MCESD has the mandate to facilitate European involvement and attitudinal transformation by promoting dialogue between social partners²⁴ and civil society. Time has shown that those who have been most successful at forging networks of communication are indeed supra-nationalised groups which have become affiliated to a larger European-wide network and groups of experts with high financial capital (Cutajar & Magro, 2009). In Malta, the two 'networks of civil society organisations' which in fact participate most in civil dialogue are the European Anti-Poverty Network Malta²⁵ and Caritas Malta (Grima, 2009).

Stakeholder groups however encounter barriers to participation when faced with public consultation exercises which are organised presumably to promote participatory decision-making, as required in Malta by the prerogative of EU law, but which are considered to be "going through the motions", with only powerful lobby groups being able to affect the outcome of these consultations (Cutajar, 2007, p. 15). These groups often experience inadequate human and financial resources, which when coupled with the easily available access to politicians, lessens the extent to which domestic responsiveness follows governance methods promoted by the EU (Vassallo, 2015).

A key element of participatory policy in the EU is the fostering of social dialogue²⁶ to connect top level policy-making and lower levels of influence. Malta's socio-

²⁴ Social partners in Malta include leading trade unions, employer organisations and government ministry representatives, who collaborate towards the country's socio-economic development within the framework of the Lisbon Treaty (signed in 2007, implemented since 2009), under the aegis of the MCESD.

²⁵ The European Anti-Poverty Network Malta is engaged in various forms of social work and includes Caritas Malta together with over forty other civil society organisations. Caritas Malta is a member of Caritas Europa and coordinates social work undertaken by Church organisations in Malta. The theme of social inclusion is central to these organisations, who strive to include social inclusion within the agenda of national planning policy.

²⁶ Social dialogue is a means for NGOs and voluntary organisations to participate with statutory bodies in governmental policy-making as part of a wider decision-support-system (Ishikawa, 2003). It is based on the cooperation between Government and social partners, these being composed of all

political climate in conjunction with a strong cohort of workers engaged in industrial employment and the presence of charismatic leaders with the ability to inspire allegiance have ensured an active element of social dialogue on the Islands through the presence of Trade Unions (Zammit, 2003). Baldacchino (2000) writes that even prior to Malta's accession to the EU, the country had a well-established social partnership model.

Social dialogue between employees and their management entities was already being carried out in almost complete conformity with the EU *acquis communautaire*, partly due to Trade Unions and unionised workforces in both the public and private sectors. One notes however that there is a strong relationship between major trade unions and political parties in Malta, originating in 1978 when the General Workers Union was amalgamated with the Labour Party; only for the relationship to be dissolved in 1987 but nevertheless retaining strong party sentiment (Pirota J. M., 1987).

Should one consider interest groups independently of partisanship, Malta is well-placed to benefit from social advocacy work, both due to the long tradition of advocacy and to the variety of civil society organisations engaged in this work at a hyper-local scale (Cutajar, 2008). These organisations can play an important role should they be allowed to forward matters of concern in direct dialogue with decision-makers (Ishikawa, 2003). Nevertheless, Vassallo (2012) states that they are characterised by their fragmentation and competitiveness; and have become competent at using lobbying techniques described by Van Schendelen (2005) such as coercive action through political lobbying, institutionalisation of previously autonomous groups, advocacy by means of dialogue with statutory parties and technical argumentation in favour of self-interest.

organisations related to employers and employees. Social dialogue also purposes to foster economic and social reform based on social partnership in industrial relations, implemented through workers' participation in information dissemination, consultation throughout the decision-making process and negotiation of agreements (Zammit, 2003).

5.2.1. Malta's ratification of the Aarhus Convention

The Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention), signed in 1998 and enforced in 2001, elaborates upon Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration (UNCED, 1992)²⁷. The Aarhus Convention states that:

[e]nvironmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided.

Under the Aarhus Convention, public opinion garnered from social dialogue is a material consideration in decision-making, and the rationale behind the policy must be published for the public to understand the process leading up to the decision. In practice, this translates into the requirement for regulatory bodies to

- Make public any environmental information; and
- To have the means to allow social dialogue to take place.

The Aarhus Convention is based on three principles:

1. Access to environmental information;
2. Public participation in environmental decision-making; and
3. Access to justice.

²⁷ The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development is the outcome of The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in 1992, also known as The Earth Summit. The Declaration consists of 27 principles which set out guidelines for the achievement of sustainable development, and advocates the integrated treatment of the three pillars.

Access to information, as defined in the Convention, includes data gathered by private bodies and not only data held by public institutions. To address the issue of lack of data, the Convention binds State Parties to publish “a national report on the state of the environment” (UNECE, 1998). Despite this unreserved access, data without technical interpretations is often meaningless to the lay public, and crucial elements can get shadowed beneath the cover of a large mass of data (Lee & Abbot, 2003).

To this end, the Convention specifies that the public must be invited to participate in the decision-making resulting from the analysis of this data (Lee & Abbot, 2003). The Convention does not however define methods of how to go about making participation more directly influential to policy-making. These procedures are the remit of the State Party, which is however obliged to be generally more accountable to stakeholders for decisions taken.

In this regard, the United National Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) (1998) defines three activities within which participation as set out in the Aarhus Convention can take place, namely:

- Decisions on specific activities;
- Plans, programmes and policies relating to the environment; and
- The preparation of executive regulations and/or generally applicable legally binding normative instruments.

Critiques stem from uncertainties regarding the extent to which the stakeholders invited to participate are indeed representative of the whole population of stakeholders and whether the methods used by different State Parties are conducive to participation during the critical decision-making stage. On a more strategic level, despite the ratification of the Convention, there is a disjoint between the inclusive mandate of territorial cohesion policy and national policy, possibly symptomatic of these criticisms.

The third principle of the Aarhus Convention, access to justice, is an attempt to address the above criticisms, and to ensure that issues relating to access of information and the right to participate in decision-making are honoured by State

Parties. In this sense, third-parties right to appeal is promoted and seen to be a necessary supplement to the other principles of the Convention (Lee & Abbot, 2003). Studies have shown however that exorbitant time and financial costs have led to few spatial planning decisions being revised by court, excluding the legislative procedures in place to legally enact higher level, national strategic plans (Justice and Environment, 2013).

5.2.2. Public consultation in Maltese planning legislation

Malta has ratified the Aarhus Convention and transposed the provisions of Directive 2003/4/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2003. The provisions of Directive 2003/35/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 May 2003 were also transposed, thereby providing for public participation in policy-making. A number of Legal Notices were published thereafter to deal with these provisions, amongst these the Plans and Programmes (Public Participation) Regulations, 2006 (LN 74/06); the Freedom of Access to Information on the Environment Regulations, 2005 (LN 116/05); the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2017 (LN 412/17); the European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register Reporting Obligations Regulations, 2007 (LN 152/2007); and the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations, 2010 (LN 497/10) (MJCL, 2016).

Public participation in decision-making related to the environment is enshrined in the Environment Protection Act, 2016 Article 4(d). It is noteworthy that the requirement to disseminate information to the public is followed up with the obligation to facilitate participatory decision-making. As in the Development Planning Act, any formal submissions made by the public during the six-week representation period are also to be taken into consideration. The Environment and Planning Review Tribunal Act, 2016 also refers to the Development Planning Act in that the procedures set out therein are to be followed during appeal procedures being held by the Tribunal. Particularly, this Act states that any registered stakeholder who has requested an appeal has the right for this to be heard and determined. Moreover, these sittings are to be open to public attendance.

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2017 (LN 412/2017) set out the process through which projects are assessed for their potential detrimental impact on sensitive landscapes. The regulations refer to the Aarhus Convention and define the public participation process as that pertaining to the Development Planning Act, described above. Similarly, the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Regulations, 2010 (LN 497/2010) set out the process for the assessment of plans and policies in terms of their environmental impact. These regulations however set out a maximum timeframe of sixteen weeks for representations to be submitted, during which the plans and environmental reports are to be made available, in digital format, to relevant authorities and the public, following the notice of such publication in the Government Gazette.

The Development Planning Act too sets out the procedures for public representation; relating to the drafting of plans, policies, and regulations, the evaluation of applications for development permission, the issue of orders. Commencing from the premise that spatial planning policies are endorsed by the Executive Council, the Minister in charge of the PA retains the right to vet all planning activity without prejudice however to the procedures for the preparation, review or withdrawal of the SSED and subsidiary plans as set out in the law. The Minister has however the authority to alter procedures followed by the Executive Council and procedures for public consultation should the intervention be necessary.

Within this procedure, timeframes regulating periods of representation vis-à-vis policy-making and planning permission applications is set up whereby not less than three weeks are to be allowed for representation prior to the drafting of the SSED or subsidiary plan and not less than six weeks is allowed after the draft has been published. The withdrawal of subsidiary plan must allow for not less than a six-week representation period. In the case of regulations and development orders, two weeks are to be allowed upon publishing of the draft unless the Minister deems the matter urgent or that the matter has already been put forward for public consultation.

In relation to applications for development permission, the Act, in Article 71(6), states that

Any person may declare an interest in a development and, on the basis of issues relevant to environment and planning, make representations on the development. Such declaration of interest and representations shall be in writing and is to be received by the Planning Board within such period as established by regulations prescribed by the Minister. A declaration that is not submitted within this stipulated period shall be considered null and may not be considered by the Planning Board.

Persons who have declared an interest in the development are then informed of new documentation submitted by the applicant's *perit*²⁸, and are notified of the date of the sitting during which the application will be discussed.

The meetings of the Executive Council during which planning control applications, and the de-scheduling or reconsideration of property are decided upon; and the meetings of the Planning Board, during which applications for development permission are deliberated, are open to an observatory public; as per Articles 38 and 64 of the Act respectively. Despite efforts at transparency, the representation processes remain limited to the submission of position papers from the public, which are then considered by the PA without scope for bilateral dialogue. Furthermore, the law does not differentiate between representations from lay persons, civil society organisations or statutory authorities, implying a 'one size fits all' mentality in the name of democratic representation.

Indeed, the colloquial nomenclature is symptomatic of the way in which current public consultation is viewed in Malta, whereby participants are referred to as 'objectors'; a reactive term which places negative emphasis on someone's interest to participate. This lack of discursive impetus may have led to the propagation of an opportunist culture of NIMBYism whereby the public will only participate to forward individual interests and that it is the planner's role to form a *public* interest out of the many individual interests (S. Farrugia, personal communication, November 30, 2017). It propagates a consumerist attitude towards planning

²⁸ The generic term *perit* refers to the professional warrant in Malta (Under the Periti Act (Cap 390)) which covers works in architecture, and civil and structural engineering.

‘objectors’, having been denied a meaningful relationship with the decision-makers, aggressively demand customer sovereignty, resulting in overly demanding and often inappropriate behaviour towards frontline planners (Clifford & Tewdwr-Jones, 2014).

Considering public demonstrations and lobbying undertaken by Environmental NGOs (ENGOS) in Malta, these have elicited mixed reactions by successive governments. Boissevain and Gatt (2000) have noted that demonstrations held in November 1985 to lobby against rampant beach concessions resulted in demonstrators being physically assaulted by activists of the party in Government at the time. Environmental lobbying continued nonetheless over the years and have become increasingly sophisticated through betterment of personal skills, more effective organisational networks and by lobbying both at a national and at a European level.

A periodic review report of Malta’s ratification of the Aarhus Convention is periodically submitted to the UNECE, entitled the ‘Aarhus Convention Implementation Report Certification Sheet’ (Environment and Resources Authority, 2017). The Report details the administrative procedures for public representation as ratified by law and makes mention of the presence of an ENGO representative on the Environment and Resources Authority Board and on the Planning Authority Board. In addition, it is mentioned that ENGOS have free access to environmental information as well as to documentation regarding applications for development permits, upon which basis they are invited to use the statutory channels through which to submit representations.

Repeated emphasis is made in the latest Report (Environment and Resources Authority, 2017) of the advantages brought about by the access to information through online portals, which information is made available in a timely manner and including all information required for the public to be able to submit representations and to attend hearings in cases when these are to be held. It seems therefore that in Malta, participation in line with the Aarhus Convention is endorsed to a certain extent by numerous efforts at information dissemination to the public but lacks the

implementation of its more strategic goals, those relating to the possibility of more legitimate participatory planning that different processes can bring about.

The emphasis on information dissemination however tallies with a widespread mentality that this level of inclusion constitutes an adequate extent of public participation, though often promoted with an “attitude of condescending ‘communication’ and ‘keeping the channels open,’” (Goodman, 1972, p. 56). The means in which public consultation is undertaken in Malta are therefore symptomatic of superficial pluralist mechanisms (Goodman, 1972), without the sincere backing by the power relations required to successfully integrate participatory processes into the spatial planning system (Arnstein, 1969).

5.3. Conclusion: Analysis of participation towards actionable policy

The current system of statutory stakeholder representation in Malta has been the focus of the third subsidiary research question. Starting from a critical realisation that the current system can be bettered in favour of increased inclusion, the question ‘how can alternative participatory planning procedures lead to actionable policies?’ has been asked in the light of the knowledge gained from the above research on Malta’s socio-political determinants.

Stakeholder representation currently allows for written submissions within a predetermined timeframe. In certain planning contexts such as the discussion of planning control applications²⁹ by the Executive Council, representation is also allowed by means of interested persons attending specially allocated sittings of the Executive Council as outlined in the 1st Schedule (Clause 3f) of the Development Planning Act. The format of both the written submissions and the public meetings promotes the impression however of a strict divide between the stakeholders and the

²⁹ A planning control application refers to the application to the Planning Authority for permission to change the planning parameters of a site from those ratified in the Local Plans; and is usually related to a change in land-use zoning and building height parameters.

decision-makers. Should one consider the members of the Executive Council and the Planning Board as the decision-makers and the attending public as the stakeholders, the planners often find themselves between two opposing factions, neither of which are consistently supportive of their technical recommendations.

Much scope for dialogue as realised through the review of the literature is therefore lost, in a multitude of instances. Firstly, dialogue between the planners and the decision-makers is formalised into a meeting whereby the planners address a panel of decision-makers to present their proposals, who then impart the direction in which the planners are to proceed following deliberation amongst themselves. The second session, during which stakeholders are invited, is held in a similar manner. Stakeholders are also often at a disadvantage due to the lack of technical knowledge or the financial resources required to recruit professionals with such skills.

Finally, the planners present their proposal based on the results of the first two sessions, again awaiting deliberation by the decision-makers on the Executive Council or the Planning Board. It is evident that the system allows for the voicing of concerns but not for inclusive dialogue between the parties involved. Furthermore, there is a perceived lack of accountability with regard to the decision-makers since it is not procedurally required that they clarify the reasons for voting one way or another in planning matters (P. Caruana Dingli, personal communication, November 29, 2017).

The system is clearly an inherited paternalistic manner of policy-making harking back to times when land was managed by feudal overlords and later imperial colonisers. Real symptoms of this can be observed in the successful ability for stakeholders to vociferously make their concerns known to decision-makers but seem unable to pro-actively elucidate upon practical means of bettering the situation being dealt with. That is up to the planners to solve. The lack of opportunity for dialogue only exacerbates the situation and promotes the status quo; in Bourdieu's (1980) words:

This inevitable transformation is inscribed in the fact that agents can adequately master the *modus operandi* that enables them to generate correctly formed ritual

practices, only by making it work practically, in a real situation, in relation to practical functions. (p. 90)

One may note with a critical mind that though Malta's accession to the European Union has given interest groups a broader platform from which to operate, the local systems of representation have not altered significantly following accession. The yearly 'Aarhus Convention Implementation Report Certification Sheet' (Environment and Resources Authority, 2017) submitted in line with the requirements of the Aarhus Convention, refers to the full use of the means for stakeholder representation as set out by law, but crucially does not report upon the representations made to the European Union and their outcome. Caruana Dingli (personal communication, November 29, 2017), speaking of a representation made regarding a case of procedural bad practice with regard to a planning policy, states that the Government of Malta was able to successfully argue that the procedures were followed and that no breach of rights had occurred. The nuance between following procedures and following them in good faith was therefore not a consideration.

Referring therefore to the research question set out above, although there is scope for the translation of stakeholder interests into actionable policies, this is currently not carried out through dialogue, whether mediated by planners or otherwise. It is a unilateral transmission of information to a rather aloof panel of decision-makers. Nevertheless, one can argue that pressure on decision-makers is effectively applied by an electorate inured to clientelist practices. Though this by no means forms legitimate means of stakeholder participation, one cannot ignore that through devious means, stakeholders nonetheless influence spatial planning policy.

The time may be ripe for more inclusive practices to be introduced into statutory systems of stakeholder representation. Ubiquitous technologies based on GIS have transformed into viable platforms for participation through the development of PGIS. This is the subject of the following chapter: a discussion of the potential use of such technologies in the light of the theoretical background to spatial planning processes and the role of decision-makers, planners and stakeholders outlined in the preceding chapters.

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GIS ...helps us integrate these specialisations, bringing information together – not just data but our organisations and people to help put the world's pieces back together again
(Dangermond, 2002)

6. GIS AND CHANGING SOCIAL GEOGRAPHIES

Having delved into socio-spatial dynamics, the public interest, participatory planning and the application of these themes in the Maltese context, a tool with the potential of addressing the concerns raised in the previous chapters will now be presented. GIS is particularly well-suited as a means of attempting to positively disrupt current spatial planning practices in order to ameliorate them. Being a spatial data gathering, analysis and visualisation tool with the capability of gathering both quantitative and qualitative information, GIS and its offshoot, PGIS have been studied and used in a test-case study to better understand the phenomena being observed in the field of participatory planning.

The widespread use of the World-Wide-Web towards the end of the twentieth century was one of the leaps that every so often bring about great changes in economic, social and cultural history. The ensuing technological revolution characterised the era and set it apart from the time before the Digital Age. Two traits characterise the Digital Age, information and globalisation, based on the premise that the product of technology is the generation of knowledge-based information, and that this takes place on a planetary scale (Castells, 1996). Furthermore, there was the utopian prospect of 'uncoerced discourse' which promised a time of unrestricted dialogue (Pickles, 1995).

Indeed, the increased probability of human connection was seen by some as the counteraction of the individualism characterising neoliberalism. The ideal being put forward in the mid-1990s was that with human networks at its core, the Digital Age will be one of unprecedented social cohesiveness through the integration of previously marginalised communities which would now be able to find their place in virtual worlds. Despite this, Castells (2002) later writes of increasing individualism in all spheres of social life, be it in family relations, patterns of consumption, modes of communication, methods of employment or the use of public space. He does not reject the notion of social life but redefines it as networked individualism.

Online social networking has promoted the notion that information literacy fosters social interaction (Cavanagh, 2013). Foremost, is the premise that information has become a primary good, a source of 'technical capital' (Savage, 2013). Access to information is therefore yet another means of generating inequalities, since the means of acquisition and retention of the information is based on traditional power relationships related to capital and resources. This affirms the view that social and digital inequality increase in proportion to each other (van Dijk, 2013).

The concept of information as a source of skills is yet another indicator of digital inequality since the ability to use ICT skills to better one's position is a characteristic of the Digital Age. In this sense, inequality is not based simply on access to technologies, as one might initially infer; but on variation in the proficiency of the use of such technologies, in the variety of technologies which one can use and in the extent to which they are used. Indeed, illiteracy relative to information creates inherent exclusion (van Dijk, 2013).

GIS have developed in tandem with the technological revolution into a science concerned with the gathering, analysis and visualisation of cross-sectoral issues related to spatial data. Increasingly, spatial data is being understood in the context of people's experiences and consequently, GIS has been developing to better assimilate people's local traditional knowledge of a place. Cross-disciplinary by its very nature, GIS integrates specialisations whilst allowing experts to focus on their own fields of

specialisation within the team (Paskins, Bell, Croxford, & Haklay, 2012; Dangermond, 2002).

GIS is a useful tool for spatial planning due to its spatial data handling capabilities. The analysis and visualisation of data leads to important pattern discoveries, with the opportunity for a two-way communication process between both planners and the public in the interpretation of the patterns (Ghose & Huxhold, 2002) which “contributes to more inclusive spatial decision-making” (Craig, Harris, & Weiner, 2002, p. 4). An issue of using GIS for spatial planning decisions is determining which data to retain and which data to abandon, to compile a database of information of the desired complexity and scale. Questions arise as to what new information is integrated into the GIS, how it is used, how representative it is, and whether any advantages arise from its use (Ventura, Niemann, Sutphin, & Chenoweth, 2002).

GIS applications in participatory spatial planning settings were originally top-down processes using data generated by statutory organisations. Talen (1999) argues that community-generated data which can be produced through PGIS must however be “constructed *by* rather than *for* neighbourhood residents” (p. 534). PGIS has epistemological roots in Participatory Action Research (PAR), using tools related to collective research and information dissemination, such as participatory mapping and modelling, particularly amongst disadvantaged groups. Having been conceived in the 1970s by social anthropologists in university settings and used by aid agencies, the tool was further developed and used by both NGOs and state agencies in later decades (Chambers, 1994). The benefits of such an approach are the richer data gained through heightened spatial familiarity; a successful PGIS initiative will aid in the overall understanding of the neighbourhood, which will, in turn aid participatory decision-making (Talen, 1999).

Ghose (2001) promotes the use of PGIS in spatial planning as a means of giving a voice to resource-poor stakeholder groups who do not usually participate in planning processes. PGIS is however inherently complex as it deals with politics of scale and networks of association; the latter not implying conformity across the entire

spectrum of stakeholder groups but distinct relationships being formed within participating communities. The fluctuations in power relations cause complexity, unevenness in representation and possible lacunae in data collected (Brown & Kytä, 2014). Nonetheless, it has been shown that PGIS projects provide participants with a heightened awareness of the wider processes of local governance, thus increasing their social capital (Ghose, 2001).

6.1. Participatory GIS

PGIS has been developed to promote “democratic principles of self-determination, improving individual lives through greater power and understanding” (Sawicki & Burke, 2002, p. 98). Put more concisely by Haklay (2006), PGIS is “GIS for group problem solving” (p.25). The emphasis in PGIS is on the empowerment of stakeholders through meaningful interaction with geographic information, whereby the stakeholders have a direct say in which data are collected and are assisted by GIS experts as to how that data is collected. This is because PGIS, in its use as a participatory planning tool is inherently context based and therefore directly influenced by socio-political factors (Kar, Sieber, Haklay, & Ghose, 2016). In this manner, Elwood & Ghose (2001) define PGIS production “as the processes of acquisition and application of hardware, software, and spatial data for GIS analysis, but also the social and political contexts in which GIS is being employed, which influence its use and impacts” (p.19). Despite the ability to foster the interactions of people across geographical boundaries, any PGIS project remains determined by the cultural boundaries of the place it is based in (Sieber, 2006).

In line with the socio-spatial character of PGIS, ‘multiplicity’ is considered the defining requirement in the use of PGIS, based on the requirement for “multiple stakeholders, multiple criteria, multiple objectives and multiple scales, together with differential levels of access, training and finance to differentials in spatial cognition, education and cultural background” (Carver, 2003, p. 68). PGIS can thereby take advantage of economies of scale in relation to data input and data access, issues

which have been transformed through the widespread use of Internet geographic applications – the GeoWeb (Haklay, Singleton, & Parke, 2008) and interactive Web 2.0 applications (Sawicki & Burke, 2002).

Internet mapping featured in the early days of World-Wide-Web usage but was restricted to simple queries and browsing different areas of the map at varying scales. There was little in terms of user contribution to the map especially since interoperability standards for the distribution of geospatial information had not yet come into force (Haklay, Singleton, & Parke, 2008). The development of Web 2.0 fostered interaction on two scales. On the one hand, there is a minority of users who form long-standing and committed online communities, whilst on the other hand there is a mass of users who move between communities according to a specific interest of the time, without ever forming an integral part of any established community³⁰. In Castells' (1996) words, "We are not living in a global village, but in customised cottages, globally produced and locally distributed" (p.431).

Web 2.0 interaction has given some people access to means which allow them to voice their opinion on issues of interest to them. Despite this, dialogue can be restricted and unbalanced, with little opportunity for users to interact with decision-making processes and easily limited to visibility of a sphere of influence (Carver, 2003; Elwood, Goodchild, & Sui, 2012). Thus, PGIS has indeed been changed by the widespread use of the GeoWeb, but it may not be as inclusive as is required for the socially transformative purposes of such community-based participatory mapping initiatives (Kar, Sieber, Haklay, & Ghose, 2016).

In addition, PGIS has inherent challenges related to accuracy and correctness of representation of data, linked dialectically to the use of technology by non-expert

³⁰ Ethnographic studies distinguish between strong and weak ties in a community. It is found that the weak ties that make up a large percentage of community interactions are strengthened online and that when people meet in person following the attainment of an online relationship, there is the sense of already being familiar with the person, which led to weak online ties being transformed into strengthened, more personal ties (Hampton, 2003).

users and to users with interests to forward (Sieber, 2006). It is also held that the PGIS process may have the tendency to homogenise group ideologies to create a unified vision, inevitably causing some marginalisation of participants who do not confirm to the dominant ideology (Craig, Harris, & Weiner, 2002). Armstrong, Nyerges, Wang, & Wright's (2011) and Haklay's (2013) hierarchies of participation in GIS show how PGIS processes can be directly related to power hierarchies, as depicted in Arnstein's (1969) 'ladder of participation' shown in Figure 6 below.

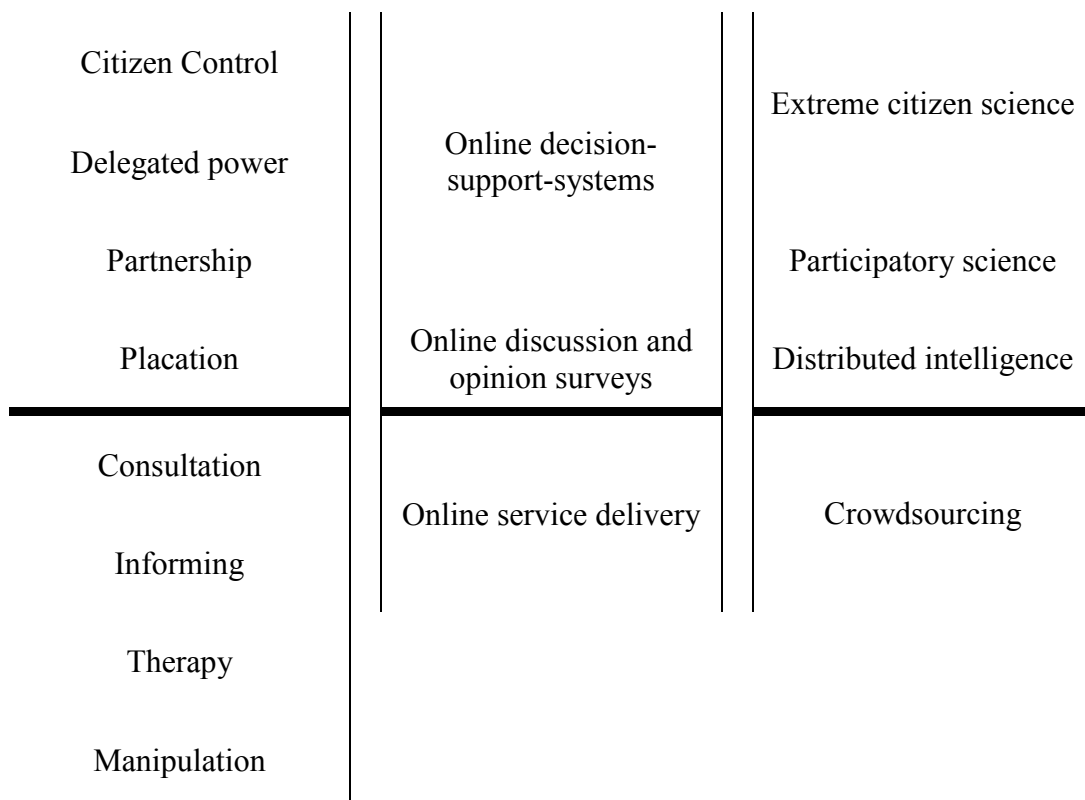


Figure 6 Three 'ladders of participation', that of Arnstein (1969) to the left, and Armstrong, Nyerges, Wang, & Wright (2011) in the centre, and Haklay (2013) to the right.

The lower rung of the GIS-related hierarchies of participation refers to the gathering of data by many participants who then pass on the information to an analyst for further processing, allowing the analyst greater control but losing the opportunity for cognitive engagement on the part of the participant. Once cognitive participation is allowed, 'distributed intelligence' as defined by Haklay (2013) supports the simple interpretation of data, this being relative to the participation in online discussions and surveys as set out by Armstrong, Nyerges, Wang, & Wright's (2011). As participants become sufficiently experienced and increasingly knowledgeable, they move up the hierarchy to the 'participatory science' rung of Haklay's hierarchy. In this situation, the participant can propose research questions and is therefore invited to discuss the problem definition with the professional scientist, before continuing to gather and perform basic interpretation of the data (Haklay, 2013).

The topmost rung is an integrated scientific enquiry which can be termed 'extreme citizen science' whereby the expert assumes both a facilitative and analytical role, and the participant can choose the level of interaction knowing that all opportunities are available, even the most analytical of them (Haklay, 2013). At this level, the role of the expert and the non-expert participant become somewhat indistinct as both can contribute to decision-making (Armstrong, Nyerges, Wang, & Wright, 2011).

Like the concurrent planning processes described above, PGIS should not be considered the end goal of a project; it is a dynamic tool through which one can attain a series of objectives, in manners which foster the understanding, legitimacy and longevity of decision-making. It is a tool that can produce both material outcomes such as maps, and discursive outcomes such as increased dialogue between stakeholders, depending on the goals of the project (Sieber, 2006). One may keep in mind also that it is as difficult to define when the goals of a PGIS project have been sufficiently clarified, as it is to define when to evaluate the success of the project overall (Steinmann, Krek, & Blaschke, 2004).

6.1.1. Ethical considerations of PGIS

PGIS builds upon the public's right to information and allows people to interact with the same body of information by contributing their views and extracting multiple meanings from it - "GIS could no longer be (responsibly) viewed as a series of tools developed and implemented in a vacuum. Instead, this specific interplay of science and technology was recognised as 'socially implicated'" (Elwood, Schuurman, & Wilson, 2011, p. 87). It is now widely acknowledged that non-expert, lay people have a role in the development and use of geographical applications, specifically through their intimate relationship with the spaces they themselves inhabit (Elwood, Goodchild, & Sui, 2012; Brown, 2012). Indeed, a main strength of GIS is its ability to incorporate local traditional knowledge, which can lead to deeper discussions underlying decision-making (Carroll & Rosson, 2003).

This heuristic nature of PGIS makes the matter of trust critical to the discipline due to the depth of information being gathered from participants (Rambaldi, Chambers, McCall, & Fox, 2006; Jamieson, 2013). A PGIS initiative therefore requires much investment in the relationships with the participants, and thus, will require significant lengths of time to be carried out. The element of building trust can sometimes lead to the involvement of PGIS experts within power relations of the stakeholders they are working with. One must keep in mind that stakeholders have pre-established power relations which may often not be founded on mutually sincere dialogue between themselves and the authorities in power.

In such cases that sensitive information is imparted by individuals, matters of the ownership and confidentiality of the data and metadata are accentuated (Verplanke, McCall, Uberhuaga, Rambaldi, & Haklay, 2016). Participants must be reassured that the information imparted in confidence during the PGIS project will be treated as such. To this end, gaining the trust of community leaders may be essential even to the very legitimacy of the PGIS project (Rambaldi, Chambers, McCall, & Fox, 2006; McCall, Martinez, & Verplanke, 2015). Access is yet another challenge of PGIS that can raise ethical considerations, referring primarily to physical and/or legal access to

technology and to data (Carver, 2003). From a usability point of view, there is an ethical obligation to making web-based products accessible and user-friendly to a wide spectrum of people (Haklay & Tobón, 2003; Haklay, 2006).

It must be noted that PGIS initiatives often exhibit the phenomenon of participation inequality, this referring to the fact that a large proportion of geographic data in participatory projects is contributed by a very small proportion of participants in a project (Nielsen, 2006).³¹ The skew in participant proportions can highlight the challenge encountered by the organisers of projects with a small participant catchment pool. When the pool is already small, the 1% proportion of meaningful contributions may not be sufficient to render the results of the project viable. This may explain the reason behind the lack of long-term contributions in these more restricted projects, which when combined with other limiting factors, results in the lack of longevity of data gathering. Interestingly, the phenomenon does not seem to be related only to online projects, since offline projects exhibit similar participant proportions (Haklay, 2016).

6.1.2. Factors of inclusion in PGIS

Accessibility is a primary consideration in PGIS (Kingston, Carver, Evans, & Turton, 2000; Craig, Harris, & Weiner, 2002; Leitner, McMaster, Elwood, McMaster, & Sheppard, 2002; Carver, 2003; Elwood, 2008). It is enshrined in what is considered the first definition of PGIS, following the National Centre for Geographic Information and Analysis (NCGIA) Workshop, Orono, Maine, July 10-13, 1996, stating that PGIS is “a variety of approaches to make GIS and other spatial decision-making tools available and accessible to all those with a stake in official

³¹ It has been shown that of the entire cohort of participants who register to participate in a project, around 90% of them do not actually contribute data to the project. Furthermore, 9% of those who do contribute only do so infrequently; with the remaining 1% of registered participants contributing in a meaningful way to the project.

decisions” (Schroeder, 1996). By extension, accessibility is considered to impact “the legitimacy that is offered by technological approaches to the analysis of spatial data and their attendant visualisation techniques” (Aitken, 2002, p. 359).

Accessibility directly influences legitimacy in the extent to which the data is representative. The issue of representativeness often arises in local contexts, where certain sectors of society do not have access to the information required, or to the ability to participate in PGIS initiatives. Web-based PGIS has to some extent removed barriers of physical access, time constraints and a possible atmosphere of physical confrontation, thereby being said to achieve higher relevancy of results; but without eliminating inequality arising from the digital divide (Bugs, Granell, Fonts, Huerta, & Painho, 2010).

A converse situation is when the data are freely available such as in a formal consultation, but the public are sceptical of voicing their opinions, often questioning the completeness or correctness of the data being presented (Tulloch & Shapiro, 2003). PGIS has indeed been criticised by interest groups to be a tool in supporting existing power relations. Restricted data sets, selective access to expensive technology, lack of funding for start-ups and the high technical ability required are a few of the challenges encountered by ordinary users (Carver, 2003; Elwood, 2006). At an organisational level, access to data is often related to access policies, data integration and interoperability barriers, compounded with reluctance on behalf of governmental organisations to share data and if at all, at a high price (Sieber, 2006; Elwood, 2008).

These challenges relate also to issues of accountability found during PGIS projects during which participants, who are themselves not value-neutral, experience a lack of legitimate democratic principles. Others may feel that the project lacks relevance to the context in consideration (Kingston, Carver, Evans, & Turton, 2000; Leitner, McMaster, Elwood, McMaster, & Sheppard, 2002; Craig, Harris, & Weiner, 2002). It is also often the case that PGIS users are dependent on the PGIS developer to perform the analysis of the data (McCall, 2003) and it has been suggested that to

increase legitimacy, the stakeholders must participate also in the interpretation of the results of the data analysis (Merrick, 2003).

The stakeholders can then decide to further explore the topics that they care about most, in a manner they see fit. This method necessitates widespread capacity building among the stakeholders and the installation of the required technology. It is therefore recommended that the PGIS is integrated into existing systems, if present, used by the same group (Merrick, 2003). The legacy of the project can be the continued use of the system, dependent however on the strength of the stakeholder partnership formed initially to run the PGIS (Rattray, 2006). In view of the above considerations, it is increasingly the case that PGIS projects are being developed in a manner that makes the technology freely available via online applications, these designed to cater for most technical abilities and to allow users to participate actively not only in terms of information dissemination, but also in the interpretation of the results of the data analysis (Elwood, 2008).

Three aspects which affect usability of PGIS applications are (Sidlar & Rinner, 2007):

1. Learnability;
2. Memorability; and
3. Satisfaction.

The learnability aspect refers to the requirement for users to overcome their fear of the unfamiliar, and the time required by users with different technical abilities to use the tool for the purpose it was designed for. Memorability relates to the ability of the user to retain their ability to use the tools after a length of time. User satisfaction is often used as a control, to test the extent to which the users believe the tools are useful and to highlight the aspects which need to be revised (Sidlar & Rinner, 2007).

Issues which have been identified as posing the greatest challenge to learnability, memorability and satisfaction are the extent of spatial awareness, IT literacy and compatibility with older hardware (Haklay, 2006; Ellul, Haklay, & Francis, 2008). On an organisational scale, challenges include management support, funding, staff

availability, technical competence, hardware requirements and data management, with funding and technical competence cited as the main reasons, though both are directly related to the commitment of top management to the project. It is also observed that the availability of spatial awareness, high IT literacy and updated hardware in an organisation may not necessarily reflect an understanding of the system architecture requirements for a PGIS, leading to misconceptions that pose a threat to the practical deployment of applications within the organisation (Göçmen & Ventura, 2010).

Increased usability of GIS has been brought about by developments in the representation of data at different scales, the increasingly participatory character of GIS and the expansion of the online network (Longley, 2004). In part, these developments have been catalysed by the widespread use of smart handheld mobile devices, increasing the opportunities for large scale data sourcing and interactive data analysis. In this regard, web-based PGIS is considered to have the ability to break down barriers to public participation. It has been suggested however that web-based PGIS initiatives that do not meet usability standards serve to further highlight the divide between experts and non-experts by causing frustration that conversely to people being discouraged from participating (Ratray, 2006; Meng & Malczewski, 2010).

To overcome issues of usability Haklay & Tobón (2003) suggest an “iterative development cycle” for PGIS application development. Underlying this development cycle must be a philosophy of User-Centred Design (UCD) in the inception and development phases, to ensure that communication from the user to the system is seamless. This will enable easy and undistorted views whilst retaining enough flexibility to adapt to the requirements of the project as it progresses, thereby increasing the potential for high usability once the application has been deployed (Geertman, 2002).

6.1.3. Grassroots democracy through PGIS

The concept of social justice ascertains that all people must have basic liberties and that equal opportunities must be available despite inherent inequalities in society. Grassroots democracy is based upon this principle and advocates the delegation of decision-making to the all tiers of the socio-political hierarchy, including to those on the lower levels. Social justice in the Digital Age has however undergone somewhat of a reinterpretation. Classical ideas about social inequality centre upon concepts of income, education, employment, age, sex and ethnicity; these in turn reflecting ideologies of possessions, professions, power and social capital. Van Dijk (2013) argues that these categories are still relevant in the Digital Age but that further explanations may be required, in that digital inequality serves to reinforce trajectories of social inequality and that immaterial types of inequality become of critical importance, particularly when related to assets associated with information.

PGIS initiatives often have a remit to achieve inclusion of marginalised communities, though it has been found that the discipline has had to battle inherent exclusionary structures in decision-making to put forward less heard voices. Participants may however perceive that though it is in their interest to participate, they will not be able to alter power relations in a meaningful manner; and as such, will remain as yet marginalised (Cochrane, Corbett, Evans, & Gill, 2016). Radil & Anderson (2016) suggest that for PGIS to become more genuinely politicised and therefore integrated into decision-making structures, PGIS researchers must become scholar-activists and use available resources to champion marginalised voices.

Some hold that the professionalization of community organisations has created a valid environment for the creation of social capital amongst marginalised groups (Innes, 1996; Sager, 2017). Others are not as convinced, stating that “the current heightened research interest in participatory approaches to decision-making may well be a waste of time or, at best, misplaced confidence” (Carver, 2003, p. 61). It has indeed been observed that in some cases grassroots democracy only functions

where local representatives are most successful at obtaining favours related to local issues, regardless of the wider strategic goals for the area³².

PGIS can overcome this situation somewhat, through its use in implementing participatory processes in relation to local, context-based issues whilst allowing users to appreciate the overall strategic goals. It has been found however that a common pitfall is the inability to provide long-term GIS training, usually due to funding deficits that result in a lack of trained staff and organisational capabilities (Merrick, 2003). An offshoot of this difficulty is that the representation of the stakeholders' views through the PGIS may be distorted or at least not fully representational, either through the choice of methods which are not ideal for the representation of the issue at hand, or by the inability of the users to correctly represent the situation on a map-based model (Carroll & Rosson, 2003).

Secondly, interest groups may have inadequate support both technically, in terms of spatial data infrastructures, and communitarian, in terms of public support for proposed policy-making (Merrick, 2003). Correspondingly, Elwood & Ghose (2001) identify stability and relationships as two critical organisational factors that often lead interest groups to garner the support of power-structures to have an organisational platform from which to operate. This support may however not be available to interest groups with a mandate differing from that of the power-structures, leading to the conclusion that support is mostly available to those who seek to support the status quo or are supported in their objectives by decision-makers (Meng & Malczewski, 2010).

³² Meyerson & Banfield (1955) describe a situation whereby local citizens were satisfied with obtaining favours through their local representatives which only directly impact their everyday lives, such as parking fines reversal and street repairs, without asking to participate in planning in issues at a city-wide level, preferring to trust the local representative to protect their interests at this higher level of governance. Carver (2003) too seems to indicate that some people are happy to sit on the side-lines and allow planning to be done for them. They are not interested in becoming part of the planning process. Furthermore, a planner may encounter a group of people who will only engage on their terms only, and possibly on a specific topic only, regardless of the issue at hand.

6.1.4. PGIS as an aid to participatory planning

GIS can form the basis of a centralised resource for spatial planning, and when integrated in a PGIS system will form a platform for collaboration benefitting from centralised hardware and software (Sawicki & Burke, 2002). As Brown & Kyttä, (2014) state, “land use planning is not a single problem to be solved, but rather an ongoing set of social trade-offs” (p.126), thereby requiring that the continuation of the process beyond a single set of one-time project deliverables. PGIS can fulfil the objectives of this dynamic process, whether it is utilised for organisational processes of interest groups, participation in policy-making or the ongoing management of decision-making structures (Sieber, 2006).

PGIS has also been used successfully in cities to overcome concerns relating to the legitimacy of statutory representation processes (Kahila-Tani, Broberg, Kyttä, & Tyger, 2016). Planning authorities have traditionally used participatory means such as public hearings and written statements to invite representation; sometimes branching out to include methods such as workshops and public meetings. These methods have however gained a reputation for paying only lip-service to participation and have therefore degenerated into fora for voicing complaints, rather than for two-way dialogue towards finding solutions to issues of interest.

Amongst the multitude of applications, PGIS has been successfully used in urban areas as a participatory platform for compiling cadastre maps, option appraisals for infrastructure improvement, land-use site selection exercises, urban regeneration, assessing the quality of the urban environment, mapping and monitoring of environmental hazards and health risks, crime hotspot identification, real-time policy monitoring and transport impact assessments (Kingston, Babicki, & Ravetz, 2005; Bugs, 2012; McCall & Dunn, 2012). In rural contexts, PGIS has been applied to environmental monitoring, conservation management, agricultural census, land valuation, land consolidation and reallocation and risk mitigation (Demetriou, Stillwell, & See, 2011; McCall & Dunn, 2012). Coastal applications have included coastal zoning plans, coastal resource protection and the management of sustainable

tourism in coastal areas (Campagna). Economic feasibility too is a consideration, whereby PGIS has proven to achieve improved results in bids for funding based on participatory data gathering approaches, better understanding of investment patterns and more efficient resource targeting (Kingston, Babicki, & Ravetz, 2005).

The social benefits arising from integrating PGIS in spatial planning are also many. Among those that are most mentioned one finds conflict mapping in contested places, mapping of gender-related aspects of place, stakeholder suggestion mapping, facilitating dialogue on complex spatial planning issues, gathering of place-based experiential knowledge, liveability assessments and change management. Positive applications arising from the participatory aspect of PGIS alone include an increased sense of inclusion in spatial planning matters, better understanding of scenarios through the generation of cognitive maps, futures visioning, the promotion of minority concerns, the creation of social capital and community revitalisation. PGIS has also been proven as an aid to good governance, accountability and increased legitimacy in spatial planning by virtue of both through the participatory aspect as well as through the rigour in method brought about by the use of GIS data gathering, analysis and visualisation techniques (Kingston, Babicki, & Ravetz, 2005; Sieber, 2006; Simao, Densham, & Haklay, 2009; Kytä & Kahila, 2011; McCall & Dunn, 2012; Karimi & Brown, 2017).

6.2. GIS and PGIS applications in Malta

In Malta, the introduction of baseline data-capture was initiated by the setting up of the National Mapping Agency in 1988, with the first digital base maps for the Maltese Islands being produced in 1998. During the following decade, work was carried out to populate these base-maps with thematic spatial data and the first thematic web-map of the Maltese Islands was disseminated in 2000. This was created from data based on the latest Census of Population and Housing data. Spatial

analysis tools were subsequently introduced, following which, a geo-server was introduced by MEPA in 2001.

During the process of accession to the EU, efforts were made for Malta to honour the transposition requirements. Legislation which had particular requirements in this regard are the Aarhus Convention, the Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community (INSPIRE) Directive, the Freedom of Information Act (Cap. 496), the Freedom of Access to Information on the Environment Regulations and the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) (Conchin, Agius, Formosa, & Rizzo Naudi, 2010; Formosa, Magri, Neuschmid, & Schrenk, 2011; Formosa, 2014).

In line with these requirements to increase access to spatial data, the Maltese Planning Authority invested in a geo-server³³ whereby external users can access and conduct basic spatial queries for Malta from several different concurrent data-sets. From an external user perspective, the geo-server allows the user to toggle layers to visualise different data-sets superimposed on a base-map chosen by the user. These layers represent data-sets related to the urban, rural and coastal environments; and include datasets relating also to planning policy, planning constraints, applications for development permission, environmental conservation, topography, surveying and 3D cloud data of the extents of the Maltese Islands.

The available data are inputted by a separate user with administrator rights, within the Planning Authority. Those with administrator rights, generally planners within the Planning Authority, use GIS tools extensively to visualise 2D and 3D phenomena, to assess trends in development data and to monitor the efficacy of policy measures. It has however been noted that there is a time lag between the use of the available data by planners on one hand and its use by members of the public on the other hand (Conchin, Agius, Formosa, & Rizzo Naudi, 2010; Formosa, Magri,

³³ The geo-server portal can be accessed via: <http://geoserver.pa.org.mt/publicgeoserver>

Neuschmid, & Schrenk, 2011; Formosa, 2014). This could possibly be attributed to the efficacy with which the availability of such data is made widely known and the rate at which it is then integrated into common practice.

Relatively recent developments in GIS education in Malta have seen the introduction of the science in taught programmes at the University of Malta, both at undergraduate and post-graduate levels. It was recognised that GIS is a useful tool in several professions, and thus the GIS training was not limited to a specific course, but was taught in a multi-disciplinary manner, with students being encouraged to research further into their own line of specialisation (Attard M. , 2008).

6.2.1. GIS decision-support-systems

Decision-support-systems designed for spatial planning purposes are mostly GIS-based, since such platforms allow for discussions on various related topics to be context-based (Pelzer, Geertman, van der Heijden, & Rouwette, 2014). Advances in the development of GIS-based spatial planning decision-support-systems must be followed-up with due consideration for the users of the tools and the planning contexts for which they are being designed. This is because for the decision-support-system to act as a tool which facilitates dialogue, it must be designed in a manner which appeals to the users and which is relevant to the spatial planning context to which it is being applied (Pelzer & Geertman, 2014).

GIS applications in the professional sector in Malta have included the testing of the use of 3D virtual models for spatial planning. 3D aerial surveys were gathered using LiDAR, completed in 2012 under the aegis of an EU-funded project, and integrated into a web-based shared environmental information system towards the aim of creating a 3D immersive virtual environment for the Maltese Islands. Initial results of the ensuing environment have already been used by planners whilst drafting the SPED (Government of Malta, 2015), Malta's strategic spatial planning policy instrument (Formosa, 2014).

Feedback on the system resulted in the information that the models were considered particularly useful in visualising the impact of proposed projects, especially on proposals related to tall buildings, land reclamation and new buildings within historic areas. Further benefits could also include the visualisation of the cumulative impact of long-term policies such as Local Plans, making the planimetric more understandable through the three-dimensional (P. Caruana Dingli, personal communication, November 29, 2017). Again, it was noted however that amongst these users there was lack of awareness regarding the benefits to be gained from analytical tools, as opposed to their use as solely visualisation tools (Conchin, Agius, Formosa, & Rizzo Naudi, 2010).

In line with Brown & Kyatta's (2014) belief that the marriage of the ability for GIS "to inform and influence land planning and management decisions" (p.131) with that of PGIS "to engage people in planning processes leading to decisions that will directly affect their lives" (p.132); studies were carried out to assess the possibility of public interaction with these 3D virtual models of the Maltese Islands (Conchin, Agius, Formosa, & Rizzo Naudi, 2010). 3D LiDAR data pertaining to the extents of the Maltese Islands has since been made freely available online through a collaborative project between the University of Malta and the Planning Authority (University of Malta, 2017; Planning Authority, 2017).

6.2.2. Stakeholder inclusion in statutory mapping applications

Should a PGIS be implemented by policy-makers in Malta, stakeholders can be allowed to experiment with the data, to achieve outputs that best reflect their world-view, and to increase dialogue through exploration of the issue in a participatory manner. Statutory organisations can make use of the greatest advantage of PGIS - its ability to foster dialogue during the exploratory phase of decision-making.

Carver (2003) states that PGIS

gives rise to the idea of ‘territory as interface’ where the map (and derivatives of it) is central to stakeholder interaction and dialogue – an environment that can be explored, an ethereal space in which ideas can be tested and decisions formulated. (p. 67)

A planning-oriented project which has attempted to implement a GIS platform and integrate participatory functions within it is the Cultural Heritage Inventory Management System (CHIMS) project by the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage. CHIMS is a data management system for the cultural heritage sector in Malta, with the aim to provide a centralised online location for the agglomeration of information on heritage sites and artefacts (Buhagiar, Bailey , & Gove, 2003). The CHIMS platform has however been somewhat stunted, with little stakeholder participation having been recorded during its period of operation. Possible causes of the lack of participation are the failure to successfully organise outreach programmes and therefore fail to create the desired participation through which the platform was to be populated.

Formosa (2014) has acknowledged further difficulties related to the integration of PGIS into statutory processes in Malta, citing amongst other matters the comprehension of spatial data by different stakeholder groups. He asserts nonetheless that an interactive platform is an ideal means of encouraging the public to interact with geo-spatial data, fostering familiarity towards the aim of promoting the achievement of more robust methods of participatory spatial planning. The process of experimentation can intrinsically promote the sharing and development of views within the stakeholder community, ultimately leading to the formulation of a decision-support system within which planners are encouraged to work collaboratively (Carroll & Rosson, 2003).

In line with these emergent ideas on stakeholder participation, several participatory mapping initiatives have been organised in Malta to date. Most notably are those by the Valletta 2018 Foundation under the Design 4D City project³⁴ in the run-up to the development of the sites of cultural infrastructure in Valletta. Amongst these is the participatory mapping session held in the early phases of the Valletta Design Cluster project. Further afield, the ‘Subjective Maps’ initiative has been held to produce cognitive maps of Malta’s towns and villages by those who live and work there (Valletta 2018 Foundation, 2017).

Participatory mapping projects have also been organised by the University of Malta, an example being the Mare Nostrum project held in Marsaxlokk, which brought about a design liaison between students from the Faculty of the Built Environment and residents of this fishing village in the south of Malta (Chiesi & Costa, 2015). A more recent initiative was organised by Transport Malta during a stakeholder consultation conference to discuss Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning, during which several statutory stakeholders were asked to pin-point places on a map where they believed most intervention was required.

PGIS initiatives have been fewer, but two such projects have nevertheless been organised on the Islands. One can mention the project organised to map the green and blue open spaces around Malta’s Grand Harbour, wherein the public were invited to sign up to a Community Charter the information for which had been based on a series of participatory web maps (Spiteri & De Ketelaere, 2015). A noteworthy project is that organised by the Institute for Climate Change and Sustainable Development within the University of Malta, in collaboration with the Valletta 2018 Foundation³⁵ (Attard & Azzopardi, 2015). The objective was twofold; to map

³⁴ Design 4D City is an initiative undertaken by the Valletta Design Cluster and the Valletta 2018 Foundation with the remit to foster inclusion between future users of the Design Cluster and the current residents of the area, both at planning and project implementation stage.

³⁵ The project can be accessed via: <https://www.culturemapmalta.com>

cultural places over the extent of the Maltese Islands and in doing so, to inspire debate on these spaces through bringing stakeholders together during the participatory mapping exercise. This was the first PGIS project of its remit, scale and scope in Malta, highlighting challenges of participatory initiatives specific to the Maltese context and setting a benchmark for the organisation of future projects.

Furthermore, there have been several dissertations by students of the University of Malta which have explored the use of PGIS in different applications. Johann Attard carried out participatory mapping in Gozo for his MSc dissertation entitled 'Assessing Participatory Geographic Information Systems for the ecoGozo Initiative' (Attard J. , 2014). Other examples include 'Analysing Active Mobility through Participatory Urbanism: Understanding Bicycle Users' Concerns through Practical Citizen Science in Malta' (Cassar, 2017) and 'Gender Classification in the Built Environment - Using Participatory Mapping Tools towards a Critical Analysis of Community Spaces related to the Maltese festa' (Azzopardi M.-K. , 2018).

Gaining inspiration from such participatory mapping projects, a tri-partite PGIS initiative was organised as a test-case study for the concepts discussed in the preceding chapters of this thesis. Socio-spatial dynamics, fostering dialogue between stakeholders, applying PGIS methods and achieving this in the light of Malta's socio-political environment all converge into a proposal of potential improvements to current spatial planning procedures. To this end, the challenge to carry out this test project as part of an actual nationwide endeavour was resolved by collaborating with the Valletta 2018 Foundation over the entire course of this research, as will be elucidated in the next chapter.

*what is special about place is
...the unavoidable challenge of negotiating a here-and-now;
and a negotiation which must take place within and between both human and nonhuman*

(Massey, 2005)

7. MAPPING THE CITY

During this study, the three strands of ethnography most associated with planning research were implemented: participant observation, interviewing and participatory mapping. Participant observation was carried out by forming part of a group of professionals engaged in planning practice in Malta over the course of the research, and interviews were conducted with people who were able to provide further insights into the socio-political context being observed. The knowledge gathered during these processes was then tested by means of a tri-partite PGIS initiative in the context of a Maltese test-case study.

The PGIS initiative was based on Mapping for Change, a participatory mapping platform developed by a team of researchers at University College London. A short description of Mapping for Change is presented below, to provide the reader with the conceptual background to the tri-partite PGIS initiative which formed an essential part of the empirical element of this study. Brown & Kyttä's (2014) suggestions for analysing such initiatives have been followed, delving into the conceptual background of the platform, the approach to participation which was followed and the way the results of the participatory mapping can be projected towards decision-support-systems for planning policy.

Mapping for Change is a social enterprise, a model originating in the early 1990s to fund programmes that were not attractive to the private or public sectors in the belief that they were too risky. Indeed, a strong identifier of social enterprises is their relationships with a wider range of stakeholders and therefore more meaningful identification with these communities (Defourny, 2001; Nyssens, 2006). The approach used by Mapping for Change is a six-stage process which is however flexible and allows for each application of the platform to explore avenues that are best suited to the scenario. The interrelated stages are:

- Introduction to existing public information;
- Discussion and initial priorities setting;
- General perception mapping;
- Data gathering;
- Digitisation, visualisation and discussion; and
- Website and online map.

The six-stage process is based upon the mandate to juxtapose local traditional knowledge with the ability to visualise this knowledge and extract correlations through a map-based analytic interface. It is based on the premise that so-called foot-soldiers are the most knowledgeable with regard to matters of local interest within their environment. Once provided with the organisational support and the technical structure within which to put forward their concerns and ideas, members of the local community or stakeholder group are given the opportunity to ameliorate a situation of interest to them.

Mapping for Change uses data gathered voluntarily from communities to illustrate specific issues within localities. Such initiatives include campaigns relating to affordable housing provision, air quality and noise pollution amongst many others. In all projects, stakeholders and other affected members of the community get together to participate in mapping the indicators of interest to them, using simple technologies that are intuitive to use by non-experts (Haklay & Francis, 2018). Once the data gathered are mapped on a dedicated participatory mapping platform,

members of the community themselves can assess hot-spots of pollution, for example; an initial step in lobbying to improve their situation.

Of particular noteworthiness is the personal collaboration of the initiative organisers with the stakeholder or community group willing to embark upon the initiative. From discussing the objectives of the initiative, to the mapping phase and later discussion, central to the process is the inclusion of those involved. This brings to the fore issues such as the amount of resources required to mobilise the community and the relationship between the organising agency and the community or stakeholder group. Resources and expertise are also required in the actual preparation of the materials required to gather data and in the design on the digital platform, should such a system be used (Haklay & Francis, 2018).

Once the perceptions of the community or stakeholder group are mapped and analysed, the results can either form the basis of community-led action or of further lobbying. It is important to note however that regardless of the direct impact of the community maps produced, an advantage of participating in such PGIS initiatives is often the spill-off effects produced. Significantly, the participants would have been able to experience being part of an organised group of lobbyists with a clear set of goals. This organisational strength is a factor in the success to which the local knowledge can be used as decision-support in statutory spatial planning situations (Wilson, Tewdwr-Jones, & Comber, 2017). In this manner, Mapping for Change not only provides a method and a platform for participatory mapping, but crucially can provide communities with the social capital required to make their voices heard in a meaningful manner.

7.1. Cultural Infrastructure Sites

The development of four major cultural infrastructure projects in Valletta, Malta's capital city (Figure 7), was used to illustrate a PGIS test-case study in a local context. These projects form the cohort of cultural infrastructure projects developed within the remit of the Valletta 2018 European Capital of Culture and comprise the

- Valletta Design Cluster at il-Biċċerija (translated as the Old Civil Abattoir);
- Strait Street Art, Culture and Entertainment Hub;
- National Museum of Art (known as MUŻA, an acronym for *MUŻew nazzjonali tal-Arti*); and
- Valletta Indoor Market (known locally as *Is-Suq tal-Belt*).



Figure 7 The location of the four sites of cultural infrastructure within Valletta

Though all located within Valletta, they aim to attract people from the entire extents of the Islands and internationally. At the time of writing, these projects are in various stages of development and have undergone very different trajectories to be actuated. One can observe commercial impetus in some that is not present in others; whilst the resolution of issues of land-use and resource allocation permeate each project to different degrees. All projects, by their very nature as relatively major undertakings in the hyper-local context of Valletta, have a 'controversy' to unearth. It is this which makes them interesting subjects for this research. The controversies have been deconstructed from a socio-political perspective, an analysis which is followed up with observations gained from the participatory mapping initiatives held through the medium of PGIS.

Yaneva (2013) aptly deconstructs controversies in architecture into three categories. Firstly, are issues of elitism, emphasising that class divisions are present in society and that they can manifest themselves in the debate on whether to allocate funds to one project or another. In cases where funds are allocated to projects which are seen to represent 'high culture', these debates are amplified. Secondly, design is often a matter of contention, especially when proposed projects are very distinct from the physical context within which they are found. This is often the case when designing contemporary architecture in historic cities and examples abound. Thirdly, the influence of politics. Architecture has the potential to incite debates on identity that can bring to light deep fissures in national thought.

All four sites of cultural infrastructure have had to deal with debates on elitism, to one extent or another. Located as they are within residential areas or on their outskirts, it has been questioned whether they are responsive to the requirements of the residents of Valletta. This is especially the case in the Valletta Design Cluster at il-Biċċerija, situated in the midst of a run-down residential area composed of a mix of private and social housing. In the case of the Strait Street Art, Culture and Entertainment Hub, the residential zoning designation has been rescinded in favour of commercial and office uses. The National Museum of Art and the Valletta Indoor Market are situated within Valletta's commercial centre and are therefore less

controversial in this respect. They have however been the centre of debates on whether the use allocated to these historic buildings is one which people from all walks of life will be able to enjoy and in the case of the Valletta Indoor Market, whether residents in nearby properties are able to sustain the quality of life they enjoyed before the project brought about intensification of use.

Being in historic properties and having a remit to implement the change of use within an overall restoration project, the four sites have not been challenged in terms of contemporary design. Despite this, stakeholders have questioned the introduction of elements which may change the urban context within which they are situated. Such a situation has arisen in the proposed extension to the building to house the Valletta Design Hub at il-Bicċerija; to the transformation of the street environment along the Strait Street Art, Culture and Entertainment Hub and to the extra floorspace gained by the extensions to the Valletta Indoor Market.

The third aspect of controversies, politics, pervades most aspects of life and is therefore not expected to be absent from debates on projects of national significance such as the sites of cultural infrastructure. Much debate ensued regarding the programme of the Valletta 2018 Foundation; especially since just before the award of the European Capital of Culture 2018 title, that is when the vision had been clearly stated during the bid process, a change in administration was affected when the Partit Laburista (Labour Party) was elected to government following the 2013 General Election, after having been in opposition for 24 out of the previous 26 years³⁶. This caused an expected degree of administrative upheaval which however did not significantly alter the vision for the sites of cultural infrastructure. Numerous discussions between the existing project planners and new personnel in decision-making positions were however held to re-establish relationships and to continue with the cultural infrastructure programme that had been set out.

³⁶ The dates relating to electoral periods in Malta can be accessed via: <https://www.um.edu.mt/projects/maltaelections/elections/parliamentary>

Going through the history of Valletta's recent regeneration projects with a critical mind, one cannot help but notice that although the public has been involved through one means or another, there was never a structure to stakeholder participation rigorous enough to stand up to scrutiny. This is an omission that has guided the thought process of this thesis and which has formed the basis of the way the tripartite PGIS initiative was carried out. The desire to find out whether more inclusive forms of participation such as the integration of PGIS can lead to more legitimate actionable spatial planning policies has been central to both the theoretical and empirical research in this thesis.

Planning policy context

The National Spatial Strategy in the SPED (Government of Malta, 2015) defines a regional zone delineating the Principal Urban Area (PUA), within which Valletta is the fulcrum of the region and therefore of the city-state: the Maltese Islands (Figure 8). Subsidiary to the SPED, the Grand Harbour Local Plan (Government of Malta, 2002) sets out spatial planning policy for the Grand Harbour, which is a sub-region of the PUA. The main thrusts of the plan, as quoted, are:

- Maintaining and improving access to the City, but seeking to minimise growth in peak hour traffic flows;
- Enlivening Valletta in the evening;
- Encouragement of residential use;
- Strengthening Valletta's role as a primary town centre;
- Emphasising the tourism potential;
- Conservation and restoration of the positive features of Valletta's townscape;
- Seeking appropriate community facilities.

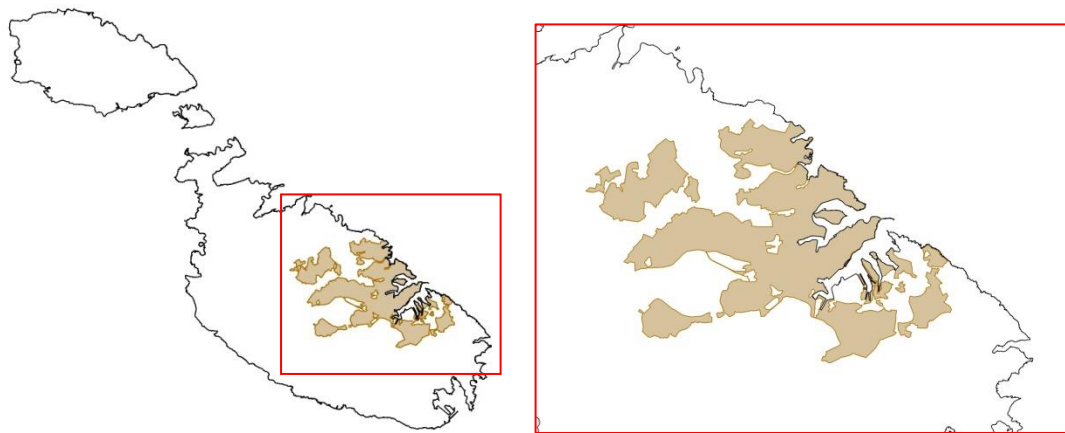


Figure 8 The Principal Urban Area as delineated in the SPED

The above policy objectives were accompanied by a zoning layout which clearly outlined a planimetric strategy for the city based on a commercial central zone with the delineation of Primary and Secondary Retail Frontage, and residential peripheral zones with the delineation of Housing Improvement Action Areas. Since 2002, many of the policies outlined in the Grand Harbour Local Plan have been implemented and Valletta has since evidenced the pedestrianisation of the central zone of the city and the development of a Park and Ride system to limit the impact of vehicular traffic and parking in the city. Initiatives such as the introduction of further tourist accommodation or the intensification of existing provision are mentioned in a favourable light in the Plan, but development in this regard remained somewhat hindered by the strict zoning considerations of the same Plan until a more flexible interpretation was embarked upon in the run-up to Valletta 2018 Capital of Culture.

In this regard, a Partial Local Plan Review (Government of Malta, 2015) was carried out in 2015 to reflect the new government objectives for Strait Street and the Old Civil Abattoir in line with the Valletta 2018 European Capital of Culture requirements. It was the change in direction put forward by the Local Plan Review, the objective for which was

to facilitate the rehabilitation and revitalization of this unique site and quarter of Valletta, in line with Government's Vision 2018 for Valletta, by enabling the establishment of a creativity and multi-cultural hub which enriches their cultural value both through new activities and physical interventions. (p. 3)

The policy outlines the criteria for a 'Creativity and Cultural Hub in Triq id-Dejqa and il-Biççerija', mentioning both areas' transformation into places in which the promotion, teaching and practice of cultural activities will be supported. The designation is limited in Strait Street to the frontages abutting the street; and to the actual building of the Old Civil Abattoir. A distinction was also made between higher and lower intensity uses. The higher intensity uses, such as bars and noise-generating late-night venues were limited to the stretch of Strait Street between St Christopher Street and St Dominic Street, which is gradually becoming less residential and more commercial in nature. Lower intensity uses such as boutique hotels are permitted in parts of the street which are yet more residential in character.

An ongoing albeit controversial initiative towards a more integrated approach to spatial planning in Valletta is the UNESCO World Heritage Valletta Management Plan. Though having been in the offing since the early 2000s, the Plan has not yet been ratified as such. Being by necessity obliged to define a protection strategy for the city that delineated a zone of added planning constraints around and in sight of it, reluctance was encountered in the adoption of such further impacts on development control in the Grand Harbour area. The critical matters of contention in this Plan are indeed those related to the consideration of Valletta in its wider regional context. A draft of the Plan has been re-written as the Strategy for Valletta (Government of Malta, 2017), without having delved into the more controversial aspects of such a comprehensive plan and instead focussing on project-led implementation goals towards Valletta's continued regeneration.

7.1.1. Valletta Design Cluster at il-Biċċerija

The Valletta Design Cluster has its centre in a building known as the Old Civil Abattoir, or *il-Biċċerija l-Antika*, in Maltese. Though the building ceased being used as an abattoir in the late 17th century, the name has nonetheless persisted through time. Since then, the building was converted into housing units, stables and even a bakery. Lately however, it had fallen into disrepair, with serious structural issues that threaten to irrevocably ruin it. In 2011, work started on obtaining the necessary permits for the restoration of this Grade 1 scheduled building, and its conversion into a series of workshops and spaces for the design industries to flourish, having also an element of artists' residency in part of the block.

The Old Civil Abattoir is the only site of cultural infrastructure to be located entirely within a residential area of Valletta, albeit one of the most run-down in the city. It is projected that its re-use would attract further investment in the area, though issues of gentrification are feared. To sustain the social capital of the residents in the area, and thus hoping to stem the possible evacuation of the existing resident community, various inclusive initiatives have been organised so as not to 'design out' current users of the urban environment, but to invite them to use the space in a manner which, though changed, is still conducive to their quality of life. Concern has been raised repeatedly on how the residents of the area are being included in the design of the project and whether they do in fact respond to such invitations (MaltaToday, 2015).

Of note is a recorded rant by a resident interrupting the Valletta 2018 Foundation Chairman in the middle of a press conference on the project; the incident highlighting the tensions present when large scale regeneration is in the offing. Comments pertaining to the same article within which the incident was recorded centred upon issues of clientelism, reference being repeatedly made to a recent scandal concerning shady business dealings in the purchase of a nearby building and questioning whether the mind-set behind the project was yet another such case (Times of Malta, 2015).

One should however not fall into the trap of placing all stakeholders under the same umbrella. Organised participatory events held in the streets surrounding the project were the successful ‘UnConferences’³⁷ constituting informal discussion sessions and participatory mapping sessions. These were well-attended and yielded both valuable information on people’s aspirations for the project and long-term relationships between the residents and the project leaders. Based on such discussions, operational agreements are being drawn up at the time of writing, through the aegis of a community executive appointed by the Valletta 2018 Foundation to guide the project.

³⁷ The ‘UnConferences’ were a series of four sessions organised by the Valletta 2018 Foundation with the aim of fostering community dialogue both amongst members of the community and also with the people working on the cultural and research programmes for the Foundation. Overall, the outcome of the ‘UnConferences’ was a better understanding of the issues relating to quality of life in Valletta, as experienced by the residents and other stakeholders who participated in the initiative. The emergent issues were gathered thematically under broad headings namely: services and public spaces, the future of the site, cleanliness and quality of life, the surrounding area, the historical aspect and accessibility. The last two themes proved ancillary to the first four during the community discussions, possibly due to their cross-cutting nature. It was nevertheless decided that all six themes would be included separately in the Mapping for Change participatory platform.

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Figure 9 The building that will host the Valletta Design Cluster at il-Biċċerija

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7.1.2. National Museum of Art (MUŻA)

The National Museum of Art is housed within the former residence of the Italian cohort of the Knights of St John, a sixteenth century building which is subsequently colloquially known as Auberge d'Italie. The former Auberge has been put to many a use since 1798, when the Knights left the Maltese Islands, including being used as one of the first museums of archaeology, a post office and a government ministry. It was scheduled as a Grade 1 property on the Malta Scheduled Property Register in 2008 in recognition of its architectural value. The current project aims to showcase the many layers of time and to reincarnate the building as a museum, keeping in mind its illustrious history.

The layout of the building was used as inspiration for the concept of a 'community museum', with its various spaces being allocated to specific themes and the central ground floor courtyard being left permanently accessible to the public as a gesture of invitation to interact with the exhibits presented in this area (Debono, 2014). In line with New Museology teachings, a critical approach to the definition of 'community' and 'values' was required, liberated from traditional concepts of these terms and engaging in practical means of encouraging inclusion. Be they residents of Valletta, Maltese nationals, minority communities, artists or foreign visitors, methods of engagement may vary for each sector of society and the participatory agenda of the museum requires a responsive attitude to be honoured (Grech J. , 2015).

It was noticed however that the community has been defined mostly by the cultural sector rather than the residential community; and that the nature of the project together with the lack of residential community in the immediate vicinity of the Museum may have contributed to the project being viewed as a national cultural infrastructural project rather than as a community project as such. Despite this, ongoing efforts aimed at the inclusion of Valletta-based stakeholders have been made, particularly at replicating the inherent social elements of city life in Valletta, such as chance meetings with acquaintances and a sense of familiarity with identifying elements of the city on display.

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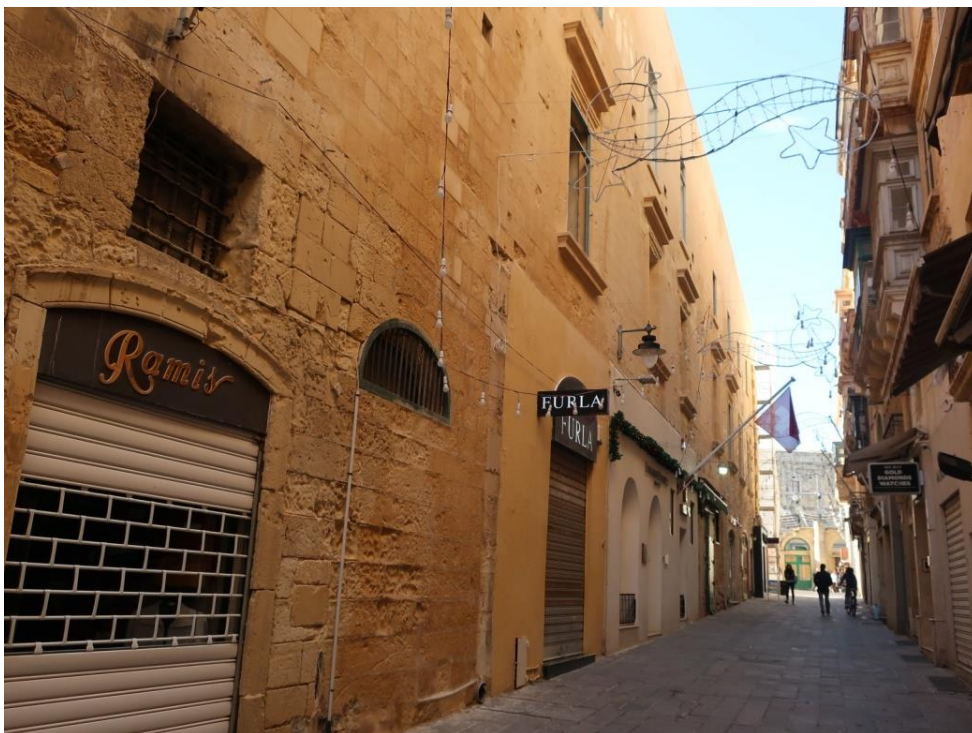


Figure 10 The front (above) and back (below) facades of MUŽA

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7.1.3. Strait Street Art, Culture and Entertainment Hub

The Partial Local Plan Review (Government of Malta, 2015) described above was indeed the catalyst for Strait Street to be revitalised. In a matter of months, the street was transformed from a mixed-use residential area peppered with the service entrances of restaurants, to one of Valletta's most popular entertainment areas. The transformation was much discussed in local media, an example being an article published by the Valletta Alive Foundation, a voluntary organisation composed of long-time residents, business owners and other interested people (Times of Malta, 2015). In the article, they strongly objected to the then much promoted idea that parts of Strait Street become a '24-hour destination'.

This was prompted by comments in favour of the intensive commercialisation of Strait Street from the Valletta 2018 Foundation Chairman, immediately upon which a public outcry ensued. Though some welcomed the scheme as an injection of vitality into Valletta, others feared for the fate of the residents who would probably be bought out by business owners. In addition, others said that the designation of the street as an Art, Culture and Entertainment Hub was simply a pretext for a homogenous commercial area with little regard to the remit of European Capital of Culture. The more balanced views advocated that Strait Street is indeed given the policy backing to allow for investment through commercialisation but argued for the necessary operational permits to be issued and enforced for the area to achieve a sustainable mix of uses. Though some remained adamantly opposed to any commercialisation, it is clear from other comments that a mixed-use scheme which referenced the differing character of the street along its length from one end of Valletta to the other would offer opportunities for the adaptive re-use of the many dilapidated properties (Times of Malta, 2015)³⁸.

³⁸ For an in-depth discussion of the proposed regeneration of Strait Street see: Caruana, J. (2014). Social Sustainability, Urban Regeneration and Postmodern Development approaches for Strait Street, Valletta (Postgraduate). University of Malta.

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Figure 11 Views of the Strait Street Art, Culture and Entertainment Hub

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7.1.4. Valletta Indoor Market

Built in the 1860s on the site of a former market building of the Knights' period, the building standing today was a flagship Victorian project for Malta in its heyday. It was modelled on the Covent Garden Market in London and was a pioneer of the use of cast iron elements in Malta. The design achieved an expanse of open space, allowing light into the building and having a large atrium at its centre. The building underwent several changes in the last decades, most significantly the installation of escalators at its centre which altered the original concept to its detriment. It was scheduled as a Grade 1 property on the Malta Scheduled Property Register in 2008 in recognition of its historic architectural value (Government of Malta, 2008). Recently, the building was leased to a contractor for 65 years, as a commercial space for food-related activities. The basement is a retail area, the ground floor a food arcade and the first floor is to be a catering establishment with the aim of attracting high-end customers to a variety of commercial typologies on offer within the newly refurbished building.

Inevitably, the spectre of gentrification has been introduced into the debate, with many questioning the fate of previously established small business owners and their long-time customers (Ebejer, 2016). Without disregarding the fact that the indoor market was indeed in need of dire refurbishment and suffered from under-use, the way the project was implemented left little room for participatory debate and even less room for this debate to focus on matters of culture related to the project. Also, with an estimated €8M budget, the restoration project undertaken is a private-public partnership and though commercial in concept, was to reserve 15% of the overall floor-space for cultural activities (Times of Malta, 2015). Much of the cultural element of the project was projected to be allocated to outdoor floor-space, though public outcry has ensued over the reversal of this decision and the subsequent designation of the space allocated to culture now designated also to outdoor catering.

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Figure 12 The newly redeveloped Valletta Indoor Market

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7.2. Tri-partite PGIS test-case study

For the purposes of this study, it was of interest to understand the determinants of motivation, or lack thereof, of stakeholders to participate in spatial planning. The scenario chosen was the development of the above-mentioned Valletta 2018 European Capital of Culture projects in relation to the development of cultural infrastructure. To this end, the test-case study of this thesis forms part of a wider research project under the aegis of the Valletta 2018 Foundation delving into the perception of quality of the built environment in the precincts of four proposed cultural infrastructure projects. The wider research project aims to assess correlations between authoritative and lay perceptions of the built environment through a series of both top-down and bottom-up analytical techniques to understand aspects related to the quality of space.

The requirement for a participatory aspect within this wider research project was considered essential to assess the perception of quality from a user perspective; with the aim of comparing this perspective with the technical views of urban designers. In this manner, the wider research project can provide insights on the inclusion of multiple points of view during the data gathering process and reflect upon the way these views can materially influence policy outcomes in relation to the sites of cultural infrastructure.

Considering the remit of the current research, the participatory mapping initiatives for the sites of cultural infrastructure have informed a better understanding of the potential for participatory planning in Malta and how this is influenced using technology through PGIS. Elements of interest arising from the four cultural infrastructure projects are the role of professional planners in cases of piecemeal redevelopment in urban centres, the influence of political turbulence, the relationships between the client-developer and the planner-regulator, and the mitigation measures developed by planners in large scale projects. These are only a few of the emergent issues, though all require mediation on the part of the planner

and all stand to benefit from more inclusive discourse between the stakeholders and the planners in each case.

A PGIS system was chosen since it allowed the researchers to intimately follow a bottom-up process of participation, while simultaneously allowing spatial geo-referencing of both qualitative and quantitative inputs from participants. The participatory mapping platform was chosen due to the scientific way in which it was developed, whereby the system was tested thoroughly for usability in terms of its use through multiple digital media and other technical requirements. In addition, the platform had already been widely applied to multiple scenarios, including participatory projects dealing with spatial planning matters on an international scale.

In collaboration with the developers of Mapping for Change, a version of the platform was adapted to the Maltese context. Of note is the acquisition of a licence by the University of Malta enabling all students registered with the University to apply to make use of the platform, thereby offering them the opportunity to develop their own PGIS project. It is hoped that this long-term outcome of the current research will develop into channels for interdisciplinary research and that it will foster collaboration; which is a central theme of this thesis after all. To this end, a customised landing page for projects undertaken with the University of Malta licence was procured³⁹, this being branded specifically for such projects and featuring the University of Malta logo and a personalised title.

Another way the platform was developed for the Maltese context is that a user can experience the platform entirely in Maltese. The translation offered several challenges in the way of terminology related to digital and online technologies but has been reviewed by professionals in the field of the Maltese language and is now fully integrated into the platform. It remains up to an interested researcher to develop

³⁹ The online mapping platform can be accessed via: <https://uom.communitymaps.org.uk/welcome>

a project in a field of interest, with support from collaborators at Mapping for Change.

Much invaluable information on the way the platform could be developed to meet local project requirements was gained during a Short Term Scientific Mission (STSM) undertaken in October 2016 by the author and sponsored by the COST ENERGIC Action. During the STSM, the author was able to draft a development brief for the local project and to discuss ancillary requirements with the platform developers. Above all, daily meetings were held with Mapping for Change organisers who were concurrently running other initiatives under the same programme and who were willing to allow the author to attend related events during the STSM.

The experience set the standard for the PGIS programme to be initiated in Malta for the Valletta 2018 European Capital of Culture wider research project and allowed the development of the 'Design 4D City' series of initiatives to ensue, as a tri-partite PGIS programme. As mentioned, this consisted of a participatory mapping workshop, followed by an online mapping campaign and finally concluding with a participatory mapping walkabout; all dealing with the four sites of cultural infrastructure.

Platform development

The Mapping for Change platform used to program the ‘Design 4D City’ PGIS initiative was developed to enable people to contribute their thoughts and observations in as unrestricted a manner as possible. Taking inspiration from the ‘UnConferences’ organised by the Valletta 2018 Foundation, as well as striving to continue upon the valuable work carried out amongst members of the community; it was decided that the themes which emerged from these informal fora would be integrated into the ‘Design 4D City’ project platform.

These themes therefore formed the categories of the platform, through which participants could contribute data as follows:

- The surrounding area;
- Services and public spaces;
- The future of the site;
- Cleanliness and quality of life;
- Accessibility; and
- The historical aspect.

The categories were designed to reflect the non-restrictive nature of the data gathering approach. Therefore, each of the six categories allow the participant to map either a line, a polygon or a point and include a textual description with the option to upload media files related to the contribution. This approach contrasted with earlier versions of the software, while still in the learning process, whereby a more restricted approach was taken. This former approach consisted of allowing participants to choose a range within a classification related to various factors of quality in the built environment. It was realised that this would not allow for a full range of thoughts to be contributed and was therefore changed to include only broad categorisations within which participants could contribute information and comment upon it. In this manner, the subjective was prioritised over the objective, bringing the design of the project more in line with the requirements of perception mapping.

The geographic extents of the project were set to a small zone in Valletta during the first PGIS initiative, that is the participatory mapping workshop phase. Feedback from participants and observation during the workshop however resulted in this being revised to include the entire extents of the city. Once again, increased flexibility in the approach towards the project was considered beneficial. Nevertheless, the platform allows the user to zoom to any area on the globe while using the programme; it is only the landing page that is restricted to the geographic extents defined by the developer. In the case of this study, the extents were altered to project to the user the opportunity of contributing thoughts on any part of the city, although the wider research project is concerned primarily with the four sites of cultural infrastructure.

Having described the background to the platform, details relating to the user experience will now be delved into. When using Mapping for Change, users can be either administrators or contributors. Considering the contributors, these are composed of the people who have participated in the project by adding a mapped contribution during the time in which the project was in operation. The timeframe of the 'Design 4D City' PGIS was for a year, from November 2016 to November 2017. It is to be noted that the platform has not been developed with the functionality of gathering the demographic details of the participants. The platform can be programmed in two ways with respect to data moderation. The developer has the option either to enable the immediate acceptance of all contributions from all authenticated users or the moderate the contributions following individual or group submissions. For the purposes of this project, it was decided that all contributions will be accepted, and moderation would take place only in exceptional circumstances where a contribution has no relevance to the project underway.

Considering the design of the 'Design 4D City' project platform, a two-step approach was ultimately embarked upon. A test project was designed by the author during the afore-mentioned STSM, for any teething issues to be identified and dealt with in collaboration with experienced developers of the program. This was an essential step in the process since it brought to light several ameliorations related to

how to develop the project platform that was then used for the PGIS initiative. Foremost amongst these was the mental leap that had to be made from the use of technical terminology and categorisation, to one that was more colloquial. The first draft of the project was indeed understandable by planners but had terms that may have been unfamiliar to members of the public. In addition, it included categories that were overly spatial, in that they reflected an urban design code more than a means of inciting interest in potential contributors. Ultimately, a set of open-ended questions was decided upon and this is reflected in the version used in the PGIS initiative.

Other less evident changes that were made to the first version of the program following feedback during the STSM were ameliorations to the number of categories within which contributions could be made; and to the colour scheme used for the visualisation of the contributed data on the map interface. In the first case, it was advised that the number of categories is limited to seven, since it had been proven during usability testing that this was the maximum number of categories that contributors felt easiest to assimilate and that the platform was best designed to visualise on various media screens. This feedback was taken on board, and the categories were re-designed to form a list of less than seven topics, which fortunately tallied with the number of categories identified by the communities in the 'UnConferences'. The matter of colour was resolved by using an online colour aid for digital media which is specifically targeted at generating appropriate colour charts to be used in GIS projects (ColorBrewer: Color Advice for Maps, 2019).

Finally, the participatory mapping platform has an integrated display key whereby contributions are displayed in list format in addition to being displayed spatially through the map interface. This display was set to reflect each comment submitted by contributors whilst mapping their data, having been prompted to do so for the mapped data to have a qualitative element to each contribution. This led to the display of an interesting ever-changing list of user considerations regarding the subject of the project, in this case the quality of the built environment.

7.2.1. Part 1 - Participatory Mapping Workshop

The workshop was the first in the series of participatory mapping initiatives and was therefore the pilot project for the participatory mapping platform in Malta. Having developed the project platform in collaboration with the platform developers at Mapping for Change, the author tested the project with persons of differing technical capabilities whilst as yet offline. This was done to assess the usability of the project and to provide feedback to the developers, who immediately amended the platform accordingly.

In tandem, discussions were ongoing with the organisational team from the Valletta 2018 Foundation. Since the PGIS was part of a wider project under their aegis, they were brought on board from the earliest stages of the organisation of the workshop. During the series of meetings, it became clear that the original desire to base the workshop on a set of three separate events was not favourably looked upon by the Valletta 2018 Foundation, who cited administrative burdens and stakeholder interest in longer-term commitment as the reasons for this reluctance. In addition, it was difficult for the organisers to commit the resources required for the three workshops, whereas the resources required for one were readily offered. Following in depth discussion it was decided to pragmatically organise the workshop as a single event and organise further initiatives at a later date.

The workshop took place on the 6th December 2016 at the St Elmo Primary School in Valletta, located in direct proximity to the spatial context being discussed by the participants. The hall within the school where the workshop was held was equipped with a Wi-Fi modem from a local internet service provider and set up with tables and chairs. Other resources used during the setup included a screen and a laptop. Since the workshop was to include both a paper participatory mapping session and a digital participatory mapping session, large scale paper maps of the places to be discussed were also provided, in addition to writing materials as required.

The participants of the workshop were invited from a cohort of people who had previously taken part in the ‘UnConferences’ organised as part of ‘Design 4D City’ by the Valletta 2018 Foundation. Those who attended the workshop were composed of a set of six Valletta residents who ranged in age from early adulthood to the elderly. They came from different walks of life and had different professional backgrounds, which led to their main commonality being the fact they all lived in Valletta. This resulted in the participants being intimately acquainted with the places being discussed and as such, they were able to provide insights on the quality of the built environment as per the remit of the wider project.

The organisers of the initiative too participated in the mapping sessions, themselves being directly interested in the topics being discussed. These were two people who are directly involved in the stakeholder outreach of ‘Design 4D City’ and Dr Zammit, who headed the wider research project. The author retained a more administrative role, ascertaining that the project platform was working smoothly, that the participants had access to the digital map and aiding the participants in familiarising themselves with the technology, whilst closely observing the processes that was unfolding during the workshop.

The programme for the first part of the workshop was as follows:

- A short welcome address by the ‘Design 4D City’ coordinator Caldon Mercieca⁴⁰ and the leader of the wider research project Dr Zammit;
- An introduction to the participatory mapping platform and the remit of the PGIS initiative by the author; and
- A digital mapping session using the participatory mapping platform.

⁴⁰ Caldon Mercieca is currently manager at the Culture Directorate within the Ministry responsible for Culture and a consultant for the Valletta 2018 Foundation. He holds a Masters Degree in Philosophy from the University of Malta and is one of the drafters of Malta’s National Culture Policy. Caldon was also involved in the drafting of a creative economy strategy for Malta, with a focus on education, financing mechanisms, internationalisation, and governance for the cultural and creative sector.

The digital mapping session started with the participants signing up to the platform and familiarising themselves with the mapping technique. This was carried out concurrently with the explanation by the author on how to use the functions offered by the platform. An observation on the use of the platform is that the participants were very eager to use their own technology to immediately start mapping aspects of the built environment. Most of the participants used a laptop, others used their mobile phones. It is noteworthy that the contributions that were directly mapped onto the online platform by the participants amounted to 35% of the contributions for the event; a relatively high percentage when considering the lack of prior usage of the application.

Once the initial period of familiarisation with the platform was over, a discussion was held on the aspects of quality in the built environment, focussing upon matters loosely related to the categories available for mapping. Again, flexibility on the part of the organisers was necessary in order not to stem the flow of the discussion or to prejudice the aspects that were being mapped by the participants. The ethos of the workshop was such that the participants were to be allowed a free rein with regard to the aspects they would like to map and the way they would like to map them. The organisers prompted the discussion only when necessary and the author offered technical assistance without attempting to impose constraints on the person carrying out the mapping.

Following the digital mapping session, the second part of the workshop consisted of a paper participatory mapping session to generate a discussion in the hope that participants would use it as a basis upon which to continue using the online platform to map the issues discussed once the workshop was over. The 'MAP-it' technique, developed by the Faculty of Arts and Architecture within the University of Leuven (Huybrechts & Laureyssens, 2012), was used to guide this part of the session, having

been trailed successfully in Malta prior to the workshop⁴¹. Having engaged in lively discussion for around an hour⁴², the workshop was ended, again requesting the participants to promote the initiative and to continue to map the matters being discussed. After the conclusion of the workshop, the results of the paper mapping session were digitised onto the participatory mapping platform by the author, using non-personal log-in details set up purposely for the project to be identifiable as such.

⁴¹ MAP-it is a participatory mapping toolkit designed for collective problem-solving using paper maps to foster dialogue. The method involves a selection of value-keyword, person, tool and spaces stickers being placed on a paper map of the area under discussion. Each sticker can be marked as 'locked', signifying that the issue is not negotiable. The group is split in two and changes table after the first round of stickers is placed. During the second round, the groups place additional stickers denoting conflict, opportunities and threats on the previously identified contributions. The map is then explained by a presented from each group, who would have overseen the entire process at either of the two tables. Further information can be found at <http://www.map-it.be/>

⁴² Refer to Appendix C for a copy of the maps produced during the 'MAP-it' workshop.

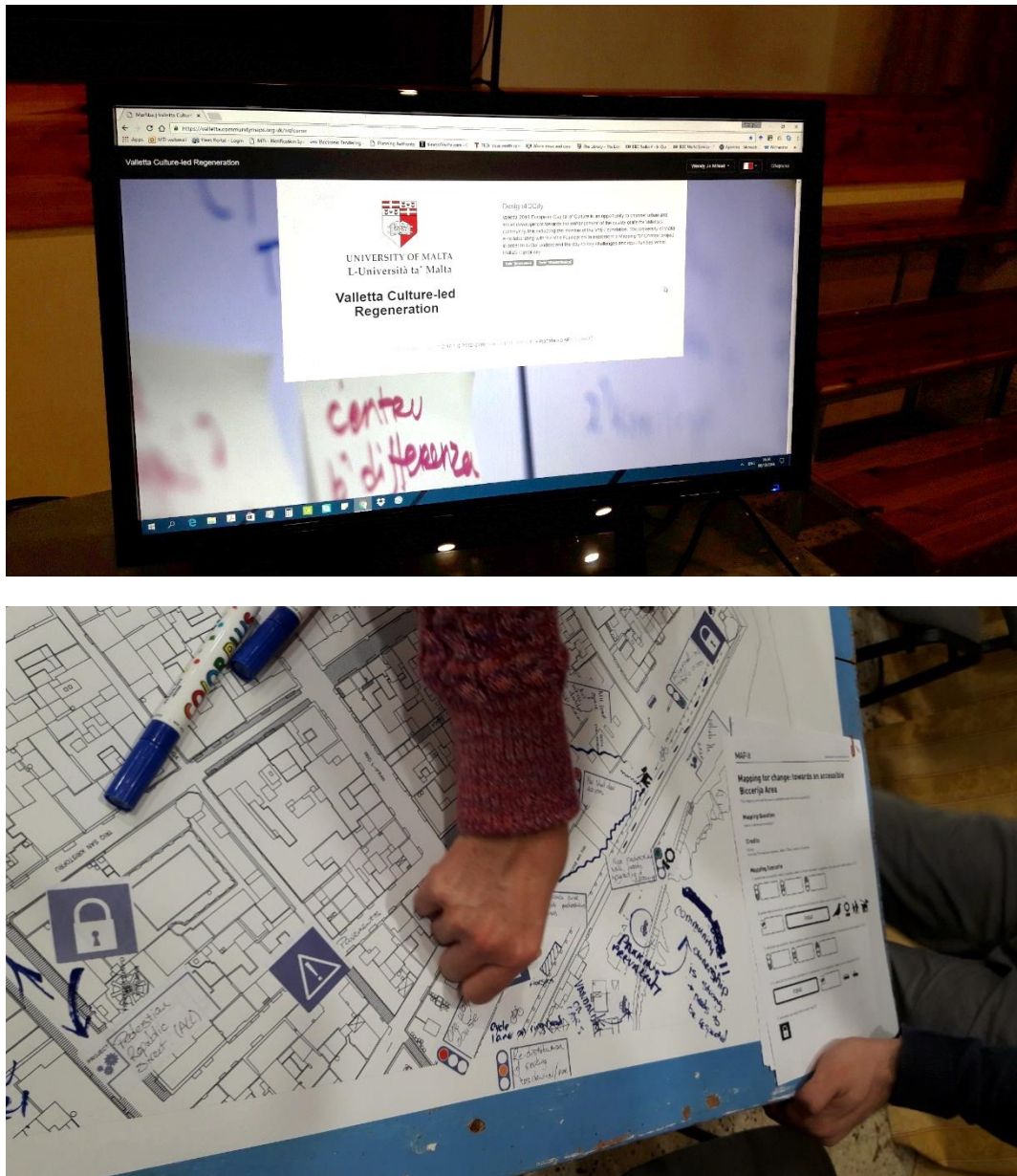


Figure 13 The landing screen from the digital mapping (above) and MAP-it paper mapping (below) parts of the PGIS workshop

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In all, 53 contributions were made, subdivided into 23 contributions mapped during the workshop and 30 contributions mapped by the author after the workshop, based on the paper map. It is to be noted that the paper mapping session too generated a wealth of information, which was organised to deal with the mapping category 'accessibility' since this was deemed a cross-cutting theme following the results of the 'UnConferences'. It was observed that despite digital contributions being screened in real-time, the discussion during the digital mapping session through the medium of personal digital technology had more individuality than that prompted by the paper mapping technique. This resulted in a more inclusive discussion whilst participants marked the same sheet of paper, rather than when replying to each other's contributions online.

A further observation from the workshop was that the participants did not take up the proposition to continue using the platform over the following days. Though the participants were eager during the workshop, there seems to have been a shortcoming with regard to the follow-up of the session in terms of sustaining the enthusiasm of the same participants. This was significant in terms of assessing the determinants of participation within the remit of this thesis but required further analysis in the light of the implications to the potential for participatory mapping initiatives in future and diverse contexts.

7.2.2. Part 2 - Design4DCity Online Campaign

A three-month online participatory mapping campaign was held between September 2017 and November 2017, as the second stage of the tri-partite PGIS initiative. The participatory mapping platform which had been used in the previously held workshop was promoted as the participatory mapping tool of choice, thereby containing all the previous contributions from the earlier initiative. This was done purposely, for the map to bring together a collection of contributions and to allow participants to engage in discussion about each other's contributions.

Prior to the start of the online campaign, a set of promotional material was developed purposely for use on social media. Several versions of this promotional material were produced and trialled offline to assess which of them is most effective, even when viewing on mobile phones. The rate at which the message could be grasped by the viewer was a factor in the design, as was the extent to which the post would be attractive to a casual viewer scrolling through a social media feed. The final design featured a set of three GIFs (Graphics Interchange Format), each in a monochromatic bright colour with a concise message inviting viewers to collaborate. The promotional material referred to the Valletta 2018 Foundation and posed a question in each GIF related to cultural infrastructure and the built environment (Figure 14).

The promotional material was uploaded at intervals by the author, using each post to attach the URL (Uniform Resource Locator) of the Design 4D City platform within the University of Malta version of the participatory mapping platform. Viewers were also invited to share the post with their online contacts. Each of the three GIFs were uploaded in turn to introduce an element of variety, albeit within an overall recognisable scheme. Since early in the campaign, it was realised that though the online posts were viewed numerous times, this did not translate into a significant number of mapped contributions. The regularity of the posts only served to reduce the number of times people made a 'like' statement on the post, possibly due to the relatively fixed number of contacts and limited amount of further sharing of the post.

It is to be noted that neither professional social media managers nor online social media posting tools were employed to further enhance the outreach of the posts. Initially, it was of interest to note the success rate of simple online posts by individuals; later it was not deemed that investment in such social media management tools was crucial to the success of the wider research project in view of the other PGIS initiatives being undertaken. In addition to the online posts however, the author approached several interested parties on an informal basis and promoted the online campaign. This did not however alter the success rate, and contributions were lacking when compared to the other PGIS initiatives.



Figure 14 The three GIFs created to promote the PGIS online campaign on social media websites

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7.2.3. Part 3 - Participatory Mapping Walkabout

The tri-partite PGIS programme was concluded with the organisation of a Participatory Mapping Walkabout in Valletta, held during an annual Valletta 2018 Capital of Culture conference entitled ‘Liveable Cities – Liveable Spaces’, from 22nd November to 24th November 2017⁴³. Once again, the platform developed for the preceding initiatives was used and further augmented with the contributions being made by participants. This last phase of the PGIS was therefore also undertaken within the remit of the previously mentioned wider research project. Indeed, it concluded the public participatory aspect of the study on the four sites of cultural infrastructure being undertaken prior to the official start of the cultural programme for 2018.

From an organisational perspective, the walkabout was a joint effort led by the author in collaboration with Louise Francis, Managing Director of Mapping for Change, with Dr Zammit, and with the research team of the Valletta 2018 Foundation. Much insight was gained from these collaborators, each contributing respectively on participatory mapping in practice, on built environment indicators and on cultural programming. Meetings were held prior to the event, during which the programme was thoroughly discussed, tasks distributed, and back-up plans put into place. These meetings were held both with the organisers of the event and with those people who were assigned to help in staging the event during its implementation.

The walkabout took place over the course of two days, with a short introductory speech on the first day and the main event on the second day. The introduction delved into the remit of Mapping for Change to explain the participatory ethos of the initiative. A brief overview of the work being carried out in other countries and

⁴³ Refer to Appendix D for a copy of the Conference Programme.

contexts was also given to inform the conference participants of the milieu within which their contributions will take place. Following this, an explanation of the remit of the wider research project was also given to explain that contributions will deal with the four sites of cultural infrastructure in Valletta and more particularly, will be considered in the light of lay contributions compared with authoritative views about quality in the built environment.

On the second day of the initiative, two hours were dedicated to the walkabout whereby participants were first subdivided into groups according to the site of cultural infrastructure to which they were assigned. Having prepared mapping-packs consisting of a colour-coded folder containing a paper map of the allocated site, a couple of paper clips and a pencil; these were distributed accordingly amongst the participants who then headed off to each of the sites. The paper map was designed to facilitate participants to map their contributions within the same parameters as those using the digital map, designed from an A3 sheet folded in A4 format⁴⁴. To this end, a front page displayed the map. Overleaf, a visual explanation of the mapping process was given on one page. On the other page, participants were given space where to jot down written notes relating to each of the mapped contributions. A back page consisted of space for further written comments, contact details of the organisers of the event and the URL and QR code of the online platform.

It must be noted that although the 93 registered participants were subdivided and informed of their assigned group prior to the event, a significant proportion of participants had to be allocated to groups during the first part of the session itself. Also, several registered participants failed to turn up for the event, with the final number of participants being 60, distributed amongst four groups. Each group of participants was led by two coordinators from the organising team and a volunteer from the Valletta 2018 Foundation. Since mapping was to take place both physically

⁴⁴ Refer to Appendix E for an example of the paper maps distributed to the participants.

on a paper map, and digitally through the participatory mapping platform, it was planned that one coordinator per site would have the capability of a specially acquired SIM card to set up a Wi-Fi hotspot around that person. An unexpected drawback was that the internet service provider was not able to supply the necessary connection on the day of the event, with the result that coordinators used their personal internet provision to enable participants to connect to a Wi-Fi hotspot.

Since the weather on the day was fine and permitted the walkabout to take place on site, each group made their way to their allocated site where each participant was free to map contributions either on the paper map or through the online platform. Statistically, 88% of the contributions were physically mapped and only 12% of the contributions were digitally mapped directly onto the online platform during the event. Of the 60 distributed paper maps, 54 were used, concluding that six participants used the online platform exclusively on the day while most participants used either both means of mapping or the paper map exclusively.

After an hour of walking around the allocated site, mapping their contributions and often engaging in discussion with other participants and occasionally with people frequenting the places being mapped; each group made its way back to the conference venue. Being near the venue, the entire operation outdoors took around an hour and a half. Once back at the venue, the paper maps were diligently gathered and a mediated discussion of the observations on site ensued. This related both to the aspects of the built environment being mapped as well as to the participatory mapping process which the participants had just been involved in.

Essentially, the participatory mapping walkabout showed that even rigorous planning prior to the event results in unforeseen last-minute issues to be solved on the go. Flexibility and alternative options are essential as was highlighted during the unexpectedly ad hoc assignment of the groups and the difficulty with the provision of Wi-Fi for the participants. In this case, the prior experience of the organisers in participatory initiatives and their familiarity with the Maltese organisational modus operandi proved useful. In addition, organisers cannot expect that all participants are

prepared in advance. Despite strongly suggesting that each participant signs up to the online platform prior to the event and bookmarks the URL on the mobile phone to be used, most did not. The lack of prior sign-up was mitigated by removing the requirement for registration during the event but the lack of prior familiarisation with the platform resulted in some finding difficulty with accessing the required web-page.

Once on site, it was noticed that many of the participants, regardless of age or digital literacy, seemed to be more habitually used to using pencil and paper for the tasks constituting the mapping exercise. The use of the online platform required an amount of familiarisation; an effort which was not made by many. Another possible explanation for the preference to paper mapping could be the lack of spatial awareness experienced when interacting with a mobile phone; one being absorbed in the digital interface in a manner which was not experienced when using pencil and paper.

In addition, it was observed that a few participants did not have the required geographical awareness to understand the orientation of the map, whether physical or digital. It must be stressed also that the use of the online platform was not mandatory, and participants were allowed the freedom to use either the paper or the digital map at will. Consequently however, several participants initially chose to simply list their contributions in text format without feeling the need to map them. The coordinators of the group subsequently guided the mapping process since this aspect of the event was essential to the completeness of the required data.



Figure 15 Participants at the PGIS walkabout using Mapping for Change and paper mapping technique

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7.3. Conclusion: Analysis of the potential for PGIS in Malta

Attempting to answer the fourth subsidiary research question requires keeping in mind the previous analytical considerations to ask: ‘How can participatory mapping through PGIS be used in statutory representation processes in Malta?’ This question also brings to the fore the dialectic between the processes followed in undertaking this thesis and the products that have ensued. Particularly, the processes have made use of participatory digital media as a tool in the research methodology; and indeed, the products, or results, that have thrown light on the use of such media in participatory spatial planning on the Islands. As has been elaborated upon earlier, the use of the participatory mapping platform has been central in this regard and the research has been able to further the development of the platform through the in-depth assessment of its application to the Maltese context.

A *raison d’être* of PGIS is the fostering of social cohesion through the creation of a common spatially grounded narrative. The social background to the data is therefore a key matter in the creation of spatial data, and PGIS therefore tends to relate to local situations with self-contained data-sets. The direct relationship between the data and a community or stakeholder group makes PGIS particularly relevant to understanding the local identity of participants and the web of power relations within which they operate (Verplanke, McCall, Uberhuaga, Rambaldi, & Haklay, 2016; Kar, Sieber, Haklay, & Ghose, 2016).

This is precisely the reason why PGIS has been of such relevance to this study. It has enabled a more nuanced understanding of Maltese stakeholder groups and the relationships being formed when faced with spatial planning situations. Critically, it has been realised that participation of stakeholder groups in digitally mediated participatory mapping initiatives does not presuppose the consequent generation of social capital. On the contrary, social capital requires a longer-term approach to its generation. Should the case of the Valletta Design Cluster at il-Biċċerija be taken as a hyper-local example in the Maltese context, social capital has been promoted over

several years through the direct involvement of several community champions in collaboration with the Valletta 2018 Foundation.

The tri-partite PGIS initiative that was organised as part of this study were part of this ongoing collaboration but was clearly not the only effort at building social capital in the area. The different community and other stakeholder groups invited recurrently to participate in events organised by the Valletta 2018 Foundation did however give members of the community the opportunity to become involved in the PGIS project from the initial stages of its organisation. It has been shown that though PGIS is a valuable tool on its own merits, it can be more successfully used in tandem with other methods of fostering participation and will thus have increased chances of leaving a viable legacy (Katz & Gonzalez, 2016).

Another observation that has been corroborated by the organisation of the participatory mapping initiatives is that social geographies are in a constant state of flux (Massey, 2005). The researcher cannot consider the community as a fixed entity that will remain unchanged throughout the course of the research. Communities change both through the impact of external influences on their socio-spatial context, as well as by their collaboration in projects as described above. Citing examples from this research, the community in the area around the Valletta Design Cluster at il-Biċċerija was transformed due to properties in the area now attracting buyers who are interested in the cultural remit assigned to the area. Similarly, those who lived in the Strait Street Art, Culture and Entertainment Hub prior to its regeneration have now moved elsewhere. Without going into the merits or otherwise of gentrification, the social character of this zone has therefore changed drastically; the new users of the space can nevertheless be considered its 'community'.

The pervasiveness of the personal use of digital technologies has been another factor in bringing about changing social geographies. Those who can successfully use the technologies benefit from exponentially increased chances of higher social capital, this leading to the ability to bring about positive change. Social and technical capital and therefore intimately linked in societies which have embraced the Digital Age

(Savage, 2013). The notion of the pervasiveness of the use of digital technologies has however been challenged by many (DiMaggio, Hargittai, Celeste, & Shafer, 2004; Mariën & Prodnik, 2014; Park, 2017).

Considering the causes of digital inequality outlined by Park (2017) in the light of the PGIS initiative, several observations can be made. Starting with the first and second causes, namely access to basic infrastructure and the quality of connection, these were issues encountered during the participatory mapping walkabout. Having organised a series of Wi-Fi hotspots through purpose-bought SIM cards inserted into the coordinator's mobile phones, these failed to operate successfully in Valletta. Assessing this issue in the light of Valletta aspiring to becoming a Smart City, that is "a living environment enriched by ubiquitous technology" (Staffans & Horelli, 2014, p. 1) the matter seems incongruous; service providers offering apologies but not solutions.

Park's (2017) third and fourth causes of digital inequality, those of adoption and uptake, and different skill and engagement levels, were however not encountered in a significant manner. It may be the case that the intimate nature of the workshop fostered a helping-hand mentality between members of the groups undertaking the participatory mapping, with the more technically savvy members of the group assisting those who took longer to learn to use the platform. The more individualistic nature of the walkabout did however dissuade some participants from making rather more effort to learn to use the platform, though this was mitigated somewhat by the assistance and encouragement of the coordinators.

The tri-partite PGIS initiative also showed a dearth of contributions made during the online campaign, this forming only 3% of the total contributions. A clue as to the lack of interest in this form of PGIS initiative lies in Terranova's (2012) assertion on the attention economy, that "the labour of attention enables social cooperation and is thus the real source of the production of value" (p. 10). The small but enthusiastic group of people who attended the workshop had a personal interest in the outcome of the project and thus contributed in a meaningful manner. The online community that

was able to be targeted through the author's personal contacts and those made throughout the course of the empirical research was not engaged in the process, leading to the observation that these people did not perceive value in contributing, their interests being elsewhere.

An important factor to consider when analysing the difference in contribution and participation rates for the three initiatives is the choice of PGIS as the methodology for the wider study on stakeholder perceptions. Since the strength of PGIS lies in its ability to increase a community's social capital by prompting direct involvement and active stakeholder dialogue (Kar, Sieber, Haklay, & Ghose, 2016), the lack of personal interaction between stakeholders characterised by the online campaign was somewhat opposed to the ethos of the project overall. When considering that the rate of contribution per participant, it is immediately clear that PGIS remains most successful at fostering dialogue in a group discussion setting such as a workshop. Table 1 shows that the workshop registered a rate of nine contributions per person, as compared to five contributions per person for the walkabout and three contributions per person for the online campaign. The amount of contributions per participant is proportional to the level of personal interaction during each of the PGIS initiatives (Figure 16), therefore confirming Kar, Sieber, Haklay and Ghose's (2016) assertion.

When analysing the participant and contribution rates shown in Table 1, the figures for the workshop and the online campaign are low compared to those for the walkabout. In fact, 86% of the participants contributed during the participatory mapping walkabout, leading one to surmise that when the PGIS initiative was framed within the context of a conference for which participants registered, interest was engaged by the thematic link to one's sphere of interest. Thus, the perception of value did indeed play a significant role in participant motivation.

	Participatory mapping walkabout	Participatory mapping workshop	Online campaign
Percentage of participants	86%	8%	6%
Percentage of contributions	82%	15%	3%
Average contribution per participant	5	9	3

Table 1 Participant and contribution statistics for each of the PGIS initiatives

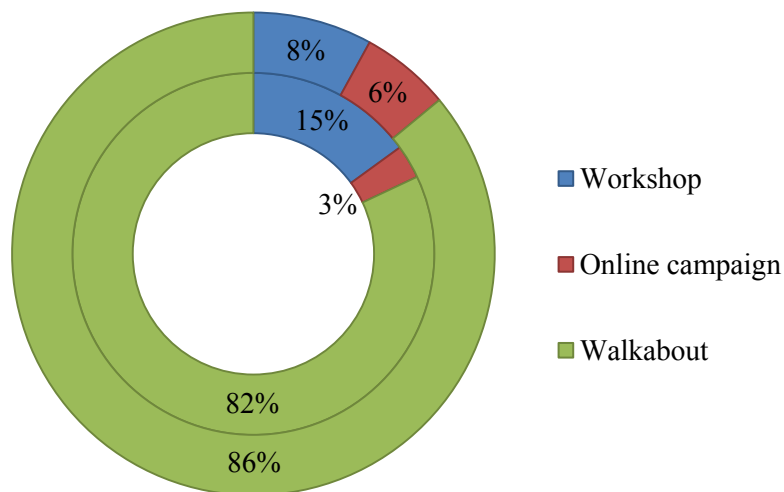


Figure 16 Visualisation of the percentage participants (outer ring) and percentage contributions (inner ring) shown in Table 1

	Participatory mapping walkabout	Participatory mapping workshop	Online campaign
Digitally mapped contributions	12%	35%	100%
Physically mapped contributions	88%	65%	0%

Table 2 Type of contribution for each of the PGIS initiatives

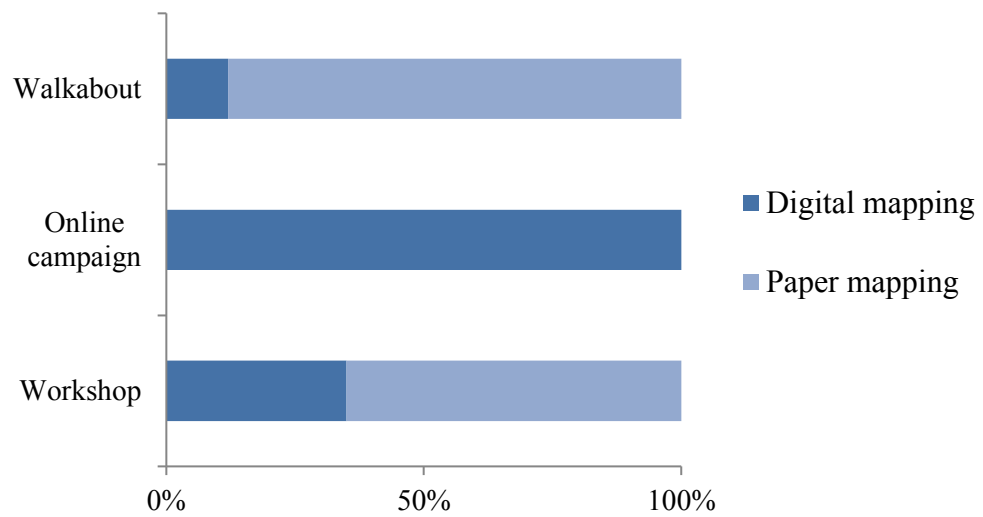


Figure 17 Visualisation of the digital and paper mapping rates shown in Table 2

The PGIS initiatives also exhibited different rates of use of the online platform by participants. Table 2 shows that the ratio of those choosing to digitally map their contributions to those who preferred paper maps correlated with the dialogue-led nature of PGIS. Whereas the more intimate environment of the stakeholder workshop prompted a 35% digital mapping rate, the walkabout only prompted 12% of the contributions to be digitally mapped by the participants themselves (Figure 17). As has been outlined previously, this may have been due to external considerations such as ease of outdoor digital mapping and access to Wi-Fi, but it is nonetheless significant.

These observations have led to the conclusion that the stumbling block to the motivation to participate in such initiatives is not the lack of opportunities or the lack of technical ability. Several projects are organised even should one consider participatory mapping initiatives in the Maltese Islands alone. The required level of technical expertise is also often present amongst the participants especially since the platforms, Mapping for Change as an example, are designed with high usability specifications in mind (Haklay, 2006; Haklay & Francis, 2018).

The stumbling block seems to be the lack of a proactive mentality, of a will to put oneself forward and contribute positively to matters which seem peripheral to the individual; such as the incremental change that characterises urban environments such as Valletta. Evidently, this phenomenon is not reserved solely to the Maltese context. Wilson, Tewdwr-Jones, & Comber (2017) state that “[t]he app was effective at simplifying methods of participation but, sometimes, this over-simplification led to people simply reporting issues, rather than presenting a vision of the future” (p.13).

The afore-mentioned cynicism towards the spatial planning process and the use of ulterior means of making one’s voice heard are factors which do not encourage a proactive mentality to be fostered. It can be said that the size and insularity of the Maltese population that leads to close affinity with local politicians may have obviated the need for the engagement in innovative ways of participating in decision-

making (S. Farrugia, personal communication, November 30, 2017). To this end, though GIS is used in numerous spatial planning applications in Malta, it is not yet considered a viable tool by stakeholder groups in lobbying local Maltese politicians. This factor was further highlighted in the follow-up to the PGIS initiative during this study. Though voluntarily attending the events, the lack of proactivity of the participants was coupled with the difficulty in retaining their interest in the use of the online platform after each initiative, with little further contributions to the data once the events were concluded. This may be attributed to the currently-held conviction that no actionable outcome can arise of such initiatives.



Figure 18 Screen captures of the participatory mapping platform at varying scales

7.3.1. Comparing contributions from PGIS and statutory representations

Having undertaken the three participatory mapping initiatives to varying degrees of engagement from the stakeholders of Valletta's cultural infrastructure, several observations can be made on the content of the contributions, as compared to the content of submissions to the Planning Authority in the form of statutory representations. It has been enlightening to realise the significant variance in the results obtained simply through the different methods under consideration, which were initially not expected to highlight such widely divergent attitudes⁴⁵.

To start with, one can consider the statutory representations that were submitted to the Planning Authority in relation to the applications for development permission for the four sites of cultural infrastructure. Whereas the development of the Valletta Design Cluster at il-Biċċerija and the National Museum of Art are subject to one application for development permission each, the Valletta Indoor Market is subject primarily to two applications. In the case of the more fragmented typology of development within the Strait Street Art, Culture and Entertainment Hub, fourteen applications for permission to change the use of a building to a catering establishment were assessed, these with a frontage on Strait Street within the distance of one urban block from the centre of the hub, that is, the junction between Strait Street and Old Theatre Street. All the assessed applications for development permission were submitted during or after 2012, following the announcement of Malta's bid to host the European Capital of Culture 2018.

⁴⁵ A note of caution when analysing such differences is required in that the stakeholders who participated in the PGIS initiatives were motivated to do so by different pretexts than those who formally submit representations to the Planning Authority during development control processes.

The entire cohort of representations for the four sites consists of 19 representations from stakeholders including private individuals, stakeholder groups and governmental entities which are not statutory consultees in the development control process. The bulk of the representations ensuing from those applications related to Strait Street, these amounting to ten representations from six of the 14 relevant applications. This reflects the interest in the changes being brought about in the locality, shown on local media channels. The Valletta Indoor Market attracted seven representations from the two applications, whilst the Valletta Design Cluster at il-Biċċerija and the National Museum of Art attracted two representations and none respectively⁴⁶.

It is be noted that since statutory representations often cite a number of issues, each of the issues cited was considered separately so as to better correlate with PGIS contributions, which are usually made as an individual contribution for each issue mentioned. The 19 representations can thus be translated into 33 contributions mentioning a total of 14 different themes. The themes mentioned are shown in Figure 19, the best represented themes being noise generation and concerns about the take-up of public land for outdoor catering use.

⁴⁶ The relevant applications for development permission assessed in relation to the Strait Street Art, Culture and Entertainment Hub are PA2945/12, PA2760/13, PA1745/14, PA2222/15, PA2382/15, PA921/16, PA1636/16, PA6246/16, PA941/17, PA947/17, PA948/17, PA6935/17, PA7307/17 and PA9299/17. Those assessed in relation to the Valletta Indoor Market are PA370/15 and PA3215/16; that related to the Valletta Design Cluster at il-Biċċerija is PA137/13 and that related to the National Museum of Art is PA1399/15.

Note that representations made only to register interest on behalf of the representee towards an application for development permission, without any thematic considerations being cited, were excluded from the list of representations considered.

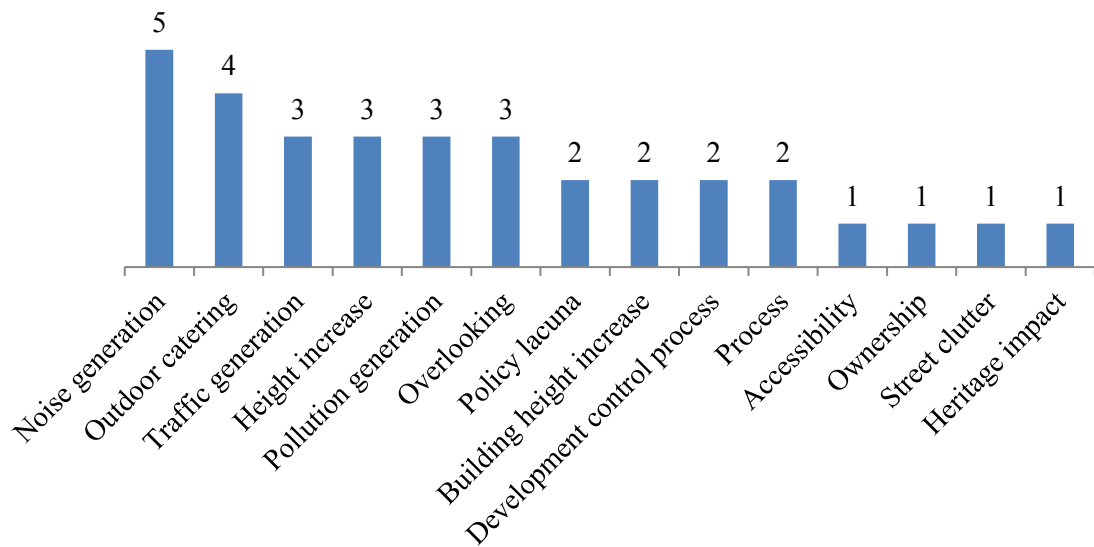


Figure 19 The issues mentioned in the statutory representations, organised by count

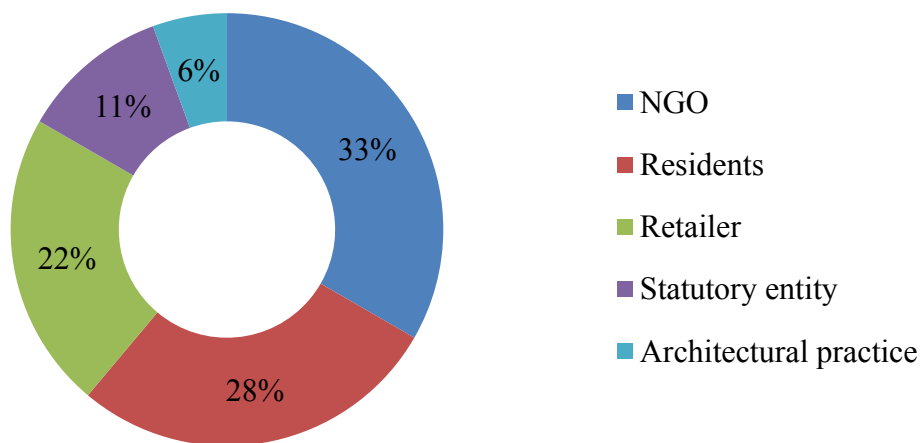


Figure 20 The percentage proportion of statutory representees

The authors of the representations are composed of six NGOs; four representations from residents of Valletta; four from retailers; two from statutory entities; one from an architectural company on their own behalf and one from an anonymous representee (Figure 20). This shows that the largest sector of representees is NGOs followed by stakeholders directly affected by the proposed development who are either residents or retailer depending on the cultural infrastructure project being considered. Statutory entities and members from professional fields on their own behalf are rather under-represented.

This data contrasts sharply with the profile of the participants of the PGIS initiative, regardless of which initiative is considered. During the participatory mapping sessions, NGOs were conspicuous by their absence though it may be the case that participants who volunteer with NGOs signed up to the platform on their personal remit. Only one participant from a foreign NGO was present as a representative of the same NGO during the walkabout; and none directly represented Maltese NGOs during any of the initiatives. The ratio of participants of the PGIS walkabout from different fields constituting those in academia to those in fields related mostly to the built environment to those directly related to culture and the arts is 10:3:1. It is to be noted however that these figures reflect the registered participants and that registration was waived for ease of use of the online platform during the walkabout.

Should the number of contributions be considered, it is immediately obvious that the 22 representations submitted over the course of five years in relation to the four sites of cultural infrastructure is far less than the 385 contributions submitted over the course of one year throughout the timeframe of the tri-partite PGIS initiative. The nature of the statutory submissions also varies significantly when compared to that of the participatory contributions. Whereby the former includes 12 objections to the proposed development and six representations within which the development control process is questioned, there was only one suggestion as to the mitigation of externalities relative to the project. Table 3 shows that the percentage of negative reactions is therefore around 95% of the valid contributions made, as shown also in Figure 21.

	Statutory representation	PGIS initiatives
Proactive contributions	5%	30%
Positive contributions	nil	30%
Negative contributions	95%	40%

Table 3 Comparative table of the type of contributions gathered

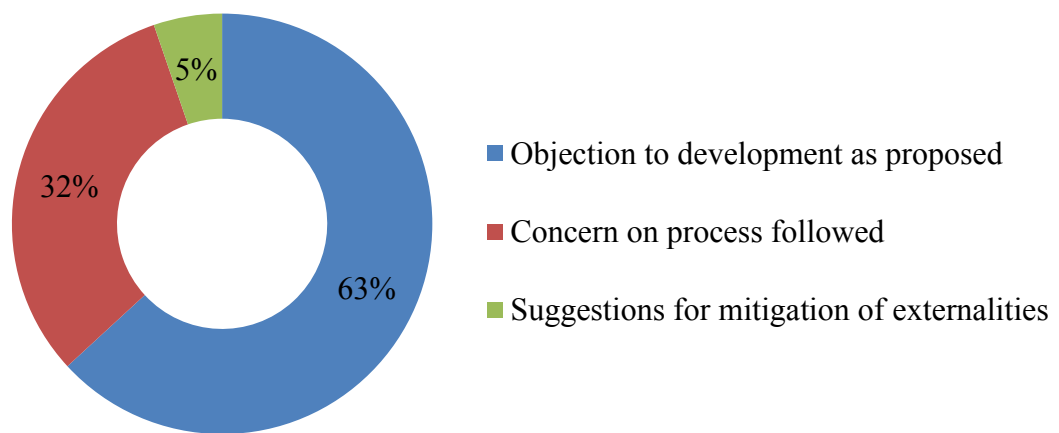


Figure 21 The percentage proportion of the type of statutory representation

An analysis of the results from the PGIS initiative however shows a very different pattern, as shown in Figure 22. It is noticeable that a few participants chose to state a known fact or to simply tag a building. The remaining contributions are positive or negative observations about the sites in question, and proactive suggestions as to their betterment. In the case of the PGIS, negative reactions only constitute 40% of the total number of contributions while positive and proactive reactions constitute 30% each, overturning the overall negativity evidenced in the statutory representations.

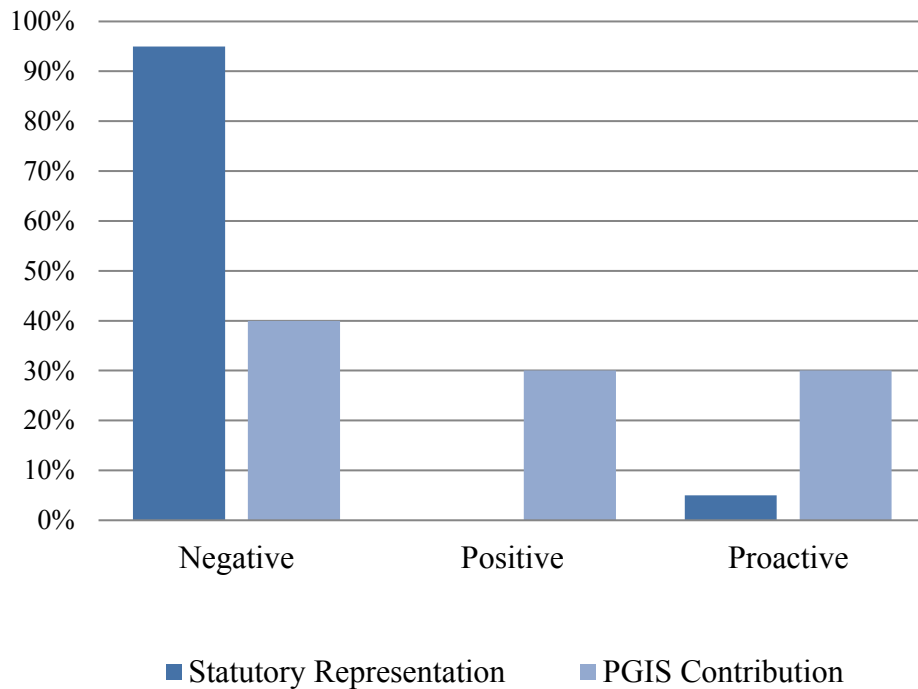


Figure 22 Comparison of the contribution type as visualised from Table 3

The above correlations show that there is a significant difference in the percentage of objections to the proposed development or negative observations of the site to positive and proactive suggestions from participants. The current statutory process seems to attract far more negative representations whilst the PGIS initiative aided in prompting participants to suggest far more solutions to the perceived problems. These results can be interpreted in the light of the potential for stakeholders to dialogue with planners; highlighting the possibility that when presented with a participatory method which actively prompts proactive contributions, then these are forthcoming.

There are therefore high expectations that further PGIS initiatives will increase the method's attractiveness to its future integration into the statutory stakeholder representation processes. The potential for proactive dialogue as opposed to the negativity presently encountered by planners may provide the impetus necessary to introduce such participatory mapping methods in Malta's spatial planning system. Change management and risk management practices are however essential to mitigate the above-mentioned socio-political issues such as the lack of social capital and pervasive clientelism (G. Cordina, personal communication, November 30, 2017). Considering the use of PGIS by NGOs and other stakeholders, it has yet to be seen whether these groups will sometime voluntarily request the use of such platforms to aid them in lobbying a cause. Once again however, increased awareness of the potential for dialogue achieved through PGIS coupled with the availability of such platforms in the Maltese context may provide the opportunity for a resulting change in mentality.

7.3.2. Topics for future analysis

Having outlined the key analytical trends that have emerged from the research, it is felt that those that have not yet been followed up should be briefly summarised. The forthcoming topics have been compiled throughout the course of the research, when the opportunity for an interesting side-strand to the analysis was identified but considered to be outside the scope of the current study. This section is therefore an inspiration for further studies about participatory spatial planning and the use of PGIS within this realm.

This study has considered the application of PGIS initiatives in differing formats, applied to the hyper-local scale of Valletta and within the defined remit of four sites of cultural infrastructure. An understanding of Malta's socio-political milieu has been gained and applied to the realm of spatial planning, therefore providing a basis upon which to continue researching means of achieving increased stakeholder participation. The goal remains that of enabling planning policies that reflect the value-led approach outlined in this thesis and the context-led approach that is set out in the SPED, Malta's highest strategic planning document.

Much literature and numerous projects are currently being undertaken to assess the potential of the use of Social Media Geographic Information (SMGI) in spatial planning. These projects use the core concepts of VGI (Volunteered Geographic Information) as their basis, such as those of crowdsourcing, human sensors and open information flows (McCall, Martinez, & Verplanke, 2015). The information gathered through SMGI applications can be fed into an operational system for the governance of cities, but the process varies significantly from the PGIS methods analysed in this thesis. Known as Smart Cities, these have been defined as places utilising fully integrated Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to enable citizen collaboration towards the betterment of their overall quality of life (Staffans & Horelli, 2014).

SMGI can be used in spatial planning situations to analyse stakeholder interests, preferences and behaviour from the information people post on social media applications. Content analysis of these applications can extract information on the value assigned to places, the way they are used and the overall satisfaction with spatial planning interventions, as only a few examples. The information extracted is also inherently georeferenced and temporal; and can be composed of a combination of text, visual and auditory media (Campagna, Massa, & Floris, 2016). Considering the use of such SMGI by interest groups to increase their ability to lobby particular causes, the opportunities for using collective intelligence are significant (Castells, 2006; Grech A. , 2012; Attard, Haklay, & Capineri, 2016). Though social media have been used successfully by Maltese interest groups to increase their visibility and garner support for local causes, there is yet no evidence of their using ‘big data’ in an analytical manner.

Despite the prevalence of the use of SMGI, PGIS has yet a role to play. Use of VGI via the GeoWeb has indeed changed the face of GIS-based stakeholder participation (Sieber, Robinson, Johnson, & Corbett, 2016), but the features of PGIS which enable inclusiveness and context-based decision-making have nonetheless retained their relevance in the drive towards more legitimate spatial planning. The ‘local’ may even be more important to spatial planners than the generalisation brought about by ‘big data’ processing. On a more human scale, dialogue and meaningful interaction are essential if marginalised groups are to be included in the decisions that affect them and if a shift in power relations is consequently to be achieved (Verplanke, McCall, Uberhuaga, Rambaldi, & Haklay, 2016). To this end, further research is required to scale-up participatory processes to include ‘big data’ capture without losing the information on contextuality; and to integrate the information into urban governance systems which are participatory by their very nature.

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Recognizing the proper balance between cognition and emotion requires reframing our ideas about planning in a way that includes both logical and emotional aspects in the same account.

(Nussbaum, 2003)

8. CONCLUSION

This study has embarked upon a route to discover an aspect of Maltese culture which pervades life on this small archipelago of islands in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea. Living in a densely populated country with an economy heavily reliant on the construction industry, many Maltese at some time or another encounter issues related to spatial planning. Whether actively engaged in the development of property or affected by a neighbouring intervention in the urban landscape; or whether, on a more strategic scale, one lives in a town where the multitude of competing land-uses are balanced with each other, it is almost inevitable that spatial planning policy moulds every-day life on the Islands.

On a personal note, in undertaking this study, the choice to analyse one's own context was an intentional one. To those trained in anthropology, this may seem misguided. Nevertheless, this has resulted in an enlightening six-year process in understanding the different spatial planning milieus that are currently being played out on the Maltese stage. The additional flavour which a study of stakeholder participation has brought about has allowed for an ever-increasing appreciation of the challenges which spatial planning in Malta is currently facing.

As a practicing planner, it has been of interest to realise that planners are much vilified; being easy targets for stakeholders perceiving a negative impact on their property assets through the application of spatial planning policy. The consequent political backlash from vote-hungry politicians who are often themselves the instigators of the same planning policy does not mitigate the problem, but rather exacerbates it. Being thus maligned in both a bottom-up and top-down manner, it really does take verve to persist in practicing the spatial planning profession. One must also remember that planners themselves are not “rational, unbiased creatures” (Clifford & Tewdwr-Jones, 2014, p. 197), but human beings with their own reflections on the environment.

Our understanding of the contexts within which we live is often shaped by an incremental build-up of knowledge sharpened by chance encounters; the odd meeting, an unexpected chat in the middle of the street. Spatial planning is much affected by these chance encounters since its application is striking in its diversity and requires in-depth understanding of many contexts, be they social, economic or physical. When coupled with the complexity of stakeholder issues, it is not surprising that some may hesitate to imbue the spatial planning system in Malta with more participatory modes of stakeholder representation. Nevertheless, neither is it acceptable that this challenge is not taken on board. It is becoming increasingly obvious that stakeholders are becoming more adept at themselves demanding legitimate participation, using the means at their disposal to overcome statutory barriers by opening the floodgates of increasingly digital interaction.

Stakeholder participation in spatial planning can be messy, unruly and unchartered. Stakeholder groups are very often not defined entities awaiting calls for participation. They may themselves hold diverse views on a situation or a process that is affecting them. The extent of their cohesion may vary, and planners who either by will or by necessity engage in participation, must navigate through these unchartered waters. Case studies and personal planning experience provide valuable references as to how to navigate through these waters, but it can remain nonetheless a matter of personal judgement on the part of the planner; as well as a matter of political will and institutional backing.

Having understood that participatory planning is not a binary matter, either to be undertaken or rejected entirely, the planner is requested to have an increased sensitivity to the workings of participatory structures to correctly gauge both opportunities for participation and potential pitfalls. It is the ability to discern within which situation participation is to be applied and to which degree it is to be applied that is crucial; it is this ability that the spatial planning system in Malta currently lacks. This study has shown that it may be time to rise to the challenge of dealing with the unknown often encountered in participation; an unknown that though challenging, might just be the spark that lights up a new and potentially better way forward for spatial planning in this country.

8.1. Deconstructing binaries in spatial planning

Ridding oneself of a mind-set fixed at one end of a scale or another is liberating. In spatial planning, binaries are prevalent, and planners run the risk of finding themselves having to negotiate between two opposing positions. In planning literature, one encounters comparisons between positivism and post-positivism, substantive and procedural planning. Other binaries have their roots in the theory-practice gap, some in the inclusive or exclusive nature of certain planning practices. Having run the gamut of these scales with no appreciable middle-ground being encountered, this thesis presents such an option: occupying that indeterminate zone between one end of the scale and the other.

Planning therefore has no right or wrong solution to complex questions; it is a value-based endeavour within a socio-spatial context. Innes (1995) places emphasis on planning as more of a “qualitative, interpretive inquiry than on logical deductive analysis” (p. 184), with the planner taking part in the process not as an observer but as an actor who follows the process in an effort to understand the unique context within which the planning action is taking place. The planner, in this role, must be aware of socio-political differences, whilst attempting to aid understanding amongst the parties. Hoch (2002) too argues that this pragmatic attitude to planning is inherently value-based: “The pragmatists cannot prove that ideas remain inescapably

tied to historical and geographic context. They simply re-describe beliefs and claims about the meaning and value of plans in ways that show how these foster or frustrate specific purposes” (p. 55).

Proponents of the post-positivist paradigm have tended to criticise rational planning as a technical endeavour which has lost sight of its original vision of bettering the built environment. Rational planning has been maligned for purportedly acting in the public interest without having devised an adequate methodology for justifying planning action in this regard; that is without having considered the augmentation of the process with stakeholder-led initiatives. There is however as yet much evidence that outcome-oriented planning practices of land-use zoning, master-planning and environmental regulations are very much in use today, despite the emphasis of planning theory on the promotion of value-led practices in spatial planning. It therefore follows that planning is neither solely procedural nor substantive but indeed an iterative dichotomy of both.

The balance between positivist and post-positivist thought has indeed enabled the development of qualitative GIS; moving away from the use of GIS solely as a tool capable of dealing with modelling quantitative information, towards integrating other forms of data within this functionality. This revolution in thought has been brought about by the realisation that for GIS to accurately represent reality, it also must consider both the spatial and its socio-cultural manifestations. Characterised as such, planning is a context-dependent endeavour undertaken by individuals who manoeuvre through complex scenarios to interpret the planning context in question.

In yet another dichotomy, stakeholder participation is often critiqued upon the basis of whether it is allowed or not. This mentality disregards the different scales at which participation can occur over the lifetime of a project and that different phases may demand tailor-made approaches to stakeholder engagement over their course. Especially when participation is governed by statutory terms of representation, there seems to be little scope for attempting to achieve more legitimate representation by scaling Arnstein’s (1969) metaphorical ladder. Achieving participation that is responsive to a planning context will remain a distant vision unless statutory processes allow for adjustments to the participatory process as and when required.

8.1.1. Socio-political relations in Malta

Having analysed the potential of an alternative value-rational approach to spatial planning in Malta, but acknowledging an entrenched top-down milieu, one is constantly faced with the challenge of attempting to achieve “what is desirable according to diverse sets of values and interests” (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p. 167). The geographic specificities of the Maltese Islands are rooted in their location, inherent insularity, and topography. Though this may seem rather obvious, there is much to deconstruct in the definition of an island; and much to correlate with the spatial planning system consequently adopted.

Islands are not isolated entities existing solely within their own sphere of reference. They too are situated within wider socio-political and spatial contexts and contribute to the richness of those contexts. Should one consider the situation of the Maltese Islands within the European Union, it is no longer the case that Malta is viewed as an economically dependent periphery, but as a real participant in the challenges faced by the larger block of mainland countries; those of migration, tourism and finance amongst others.

Despite the redefinition of Malta’s role in the European milieu, this thesis has shown that elements of the colonial mentality of former times persist in making themselves felt. The local political scene is to this day characterised by factions, relics of a fledgling political system which was beguiled into ‘taking-sides’ because of rather successful divide and conquer tactics that ensured Malta remained a fortress colony throughout the 19th century and for much of the 21st century too. Though achieving the status of an independent republic, political maturity has yet to achieve the realisation that “[i]t serves no purpose ...to talk of democracy and freedom and at the same time act with the arrogance of a know-all” (Freire, 1998, p. 61).

The notion of factions that persists in dominating Maltese socio-political relations subscribes to a rather structuralist explanation of society; a society which this thesis has argued can be better explained in a contemporary setting by the application of the Social Theory of Associations. In the latter, one can use Latour’s (2005) work to

acknowledge the existence of factions, however placing personal relationships not only within one social sphere but within many simultaneous 'socials'. As an example, one can define the distinction between a shelf of related items in a supermarket, and the supermarket itself; the former being a group of similar entities, the latter being the 'social'. A pitfall of considering only the metaphorical shelf in one's analysis is consequently the reduced importance given to social inequalities in the wider context.

Considering the web of associations in the context of Maltese socio-political relations, the very analogy of a spider's web begins to make much sense. Here, factions brought about by systems of patronage are juxtaposed with the opportunism evident in clientelist practices. Though the Maltese are aware of the extent to which clientelism pervades all aspects of governance on the Islands, and are sometimes publicly critical of it, many find it inevitable that they are drawn into the web. One does however come across frustrations with the current system in newspaper articles and the subsequent comments they generate. Such an example is an article on the regeneration of Valletta, happening to deal with the re-siting of the open-air market but delving also into the allegedly underhand motives behind certain of the efforts at revitalisation of the city. In the article, it is noted that "[t]he problem with clientelism is that things which work to get politicians elected might not work for the country. Rash promises can swing back like a boomerang" (Times of Malta, 2015).

The moral dilemma posed by clientelist practices was emphasised in the relatively recent debate on Malta's accession to the European Union. The Maltese were divided in their desire to achieve increased Europeanisation through bureaucratic rigour, to many this implying the control of clientelist practices; but are faced with moral dilemmas related to their participation in these practices as daily occurrences of Maltese politics. Time has shown that clientelism continues to play a central role in party politics and features strongly in the rhetoric of election campaigns especially in the light of the power of incumbency. Zammit's (1984) suggestion as to "whether the Government will simply succeed in establishing itself as a new paternalist figure, given the strength of the traditionally dominant value system" (p.123) has yet to be denied.

It has been argued throughout the research that spatial planning has much to gain from a more participatory approach to policy-making. Planners' interventions need not be reduced to the correct spatial interpretation of government objectives; but starting from such objectives, the planner can participate in a process that includes social wellbeing and economic feasibility in relation to the spatial matters being considered. Direct participation in a wider socio-spatial remit to planning policy can give the planner a means of inspiration through observing the life-worlds of those who will ultimately transform the plan from a textual product into an operational device.

The participant observation which has formed a central aspect of this thesis as well the many conversations that have been held over its course show however that the role of the individual decision-maker is crucial to the outcome of a policy. When dealing especially with strategic policies, their interpretation depends to a large extent on the outlook of the interpreter and less so on the procedures in place. Quoting Flyvbjerg (2001), a proponent of imbuing the planning system with experiences garnered by the direct involvement of spatial planners in varied situations,

[p]hronetic social science explores historic circumstances and current practices to find avenues to praxis. The task of phronetic social science is to clarify and deliberate about the problems and risks we face and to outline how things may be done differently, in full knowledge that we cannot find ultimate answers to these questions. (p. 140)

The quotation is directly pertinent to this thesis, during which an alternative manner of undertaking policy-making in Malta has been identified, the associated issues delved into and overall, it has been recognised that there is no one correct solution to planning. Rather, the planner is invited to embark upon a journey to find the solution best suited to the socio-spatial context at hand.

8.1.2. The potential of PGIS in spatial planning

The above-mentioned tri-partite PGIS initiative was carried out towards the aim of testing a decision-support-system that has the potential to improve stakeholder representation in Malta. This was supported by further empirical research inspired by Seymour & Haklay's (2017) lament upon the lack of qualitative research, particularly using observational studies and interviews. The research presented above has aimed to address this gap by combining the results from the PGIS initiative with ongoing participant observation and a series of informal and semi-structured interviews. The test-case study chosen to illustrate the results, comprised of four cultural infrastructure sites related to the Valletta 2018 European Capital of Culture, is indeed within the remit of a wider research project which had issues of stakeholder perceptions of the built environment at its core.

Taking this remit a step further, one may ask whether participation in the development of cultural infrastructure contributes to the success of such projects, the measure of which is the legacy of the European Capital of Culture. It is a matter which was much discussed in the run-up to 2018 and indeed during the year itself. A few years hence, one may be able to carry out an assessment of whether this goal has succeeded through the intervention of the various participatory mapping projects, and whether, as in other spatial planning situations, there are other more influential matters at play.

Having had optimistic notions that digital technologies hold the key to the door to participatory spatial planning practices in Malta, upon closer inspection it was soon apparent that there is not only one door and indeed not only one key. The determinants of participatory practices are many, and critically, they are contextual. Even in the hyper-local spatial planning situations encountered in Malta, there is scope for bespoke solutions to spatial planning issues. Maltese communities, though sharing commonalities based upon the circumstances of the Islands, nonetheless retain a healthy variance which will consequently influence the propensity to participate and the methods chosen to do so.

It has been shown that there is scope for “integrating multiple forms of evidence or ways of knowing, in order to explain how spatial knowledge, patterns, relationships, and interactions are produced, and with what sorts of social and political impacts” (Elwood & Cope, 2009, p. 4). The thesis has also shown that the integration of PGIS into mainstream participatory planning processes must focus on getting ‘community champions’ on board as well as people who have the power to change governmental methodologies and integrate them into the planning system. These champions must however overcome the fear persistent within power structures that may be caused by large numbers of participants congregating and agreeing, potentially challenging their role and promoting a new authorised discourse.

A key challenge is exactly this; that to integrate PGIS into spatial planning practices in Malta, the status quo must be changed. Inertia to participation must be overcome and new meanings found within the familiar places of the Islands’ towns and villages. The fossilisation of the spatial planning process can only lead to rigid categorisations being applied to policy-making, and ultimately a rejection of the dynamic identity of place. It is no longer a matter of whether the tools to achieve participatory planning are available, but a choice as to which of the tools are to be used to best convey the values of place in specific spatial planning situations with the group of stakeholders involved.

In the light of ubiquitous digital technologies, it is the tools that are being used with which to carry out the basic functions of our societies that have changed, not the material circumstances of society. The requirement to communicate with each other and to organise our societies remains yet. This thesis has shown that the choice of method can however influence the outcome of a process. When provided with tailor-made systems that foster proactive dialogue, there is indeed a greater chance that this occurs, despite the persistent difficulties in motivating stakeholder and community groups to participate.

Should these more successful PGIS methods be integrated into statutory processes of stakeholder representation, there is the potential therefore of spatial planning helping in the formation of a better society; one which fosters the development of social capital across all scales and which promotes the use of this capital in governance

structures. Through these participatory methods, it can be acknowledged that planners alone do not know the answer to what constitutes a successful community and their role therefore becomes “to create, sustain, and participate in a public, democratic discourse that enables them (and others) to argue persuasively and coherently about contestable views of what is good, right and feasible” (Throgmorton, 1996, p. 54).

8.1.3. Balancing the scales

Having made the case for the use of PGIS towards improved stakeholder participation in spatial planning, let us conclude with a call for balance. The rebuttal of stark binaries outlined at the beginning of this chapter comes once again into play. In countries where the inclusion of local traditional knowledge in spatial planning processes has been accepted as the norm, there seems to be the risk of transforming spatial planning into a unilateral client-oriented product accountable only to a capricious public. The element of creativity by planners engaging in policy-making comes under threat from bottom-up considerations, once again shifting the scales towards an unbalanced endeavour.

Referring to the overarching research question posed at the beginning of this thesis: “Will integrating PGIS in spatial planning procedures motivate reciprocal stakeholder engagement in Malta?”, there is evidence of planning becoming entirely client-oriented without ever having properly delved into the opportunities offered by participatory practices and therefore forgoing improved chances of positive dividends being reaped from planning activities. There is opportunity however in the application of interdisciplinary practices to address spatial planning matters; finding solutions to wicked problems often calls for the combined effort of environmental, social and economic stakeholders.

This is not to say that integrated knowledge leads to undisputed resolutions, rather that different value-judgements are considered during the process of forming policy. Succinctly put, “[t]here is also value in more detailed analysis of how people at different levels of contribution add to the project and whether there are ways to

encourage people to move between contribution groups” (Haklay, 2016, p. 42). Spatial planning, a product of the socio-economic, the physical and the temporal, has much to benefit from inclusive processes of decision-making since the successful interpretation of spatial matters over time requires creative visioning from stakeholders with diverse life-worlds. It has been argued however that increased stakeholder participation can be harder to achieve in an increasingly consumer-oriented planning environment. The planner, in attempting to practice participatory planning often feels the pressure of negativity when dealing with contradictory demands from stakeholders, the private sector and higher tiers of power. Despite this, when denied legitimate participation, stakeholders develop a vicious cycle of criticism and cynicism evolves ultimately leading to the sustained defamation of the planning profession. This criticism stems from the communities who feel rejected, from stakeholders who view spatial planning as overly bureaucratic, and the political class who use planning as an electoral pawn.

A critical question that emerged over the course of the research has been one regarding the real extent to which PGIS can lead directly to actionable policy-making, or at the least, to effective decision-support. Though initiatives such as Mapping for Change have been proven to have been effective in planning contexts abroad, this has not yet been the case for Malta. Through the contribution that this thesis has made by introducing Mapping for Change locally under the aegis of the University of Malta, and through the continued collaboration being fostered by researchers and practitioners who are proponents of this means of stakeholder participation, it is nonetheless anticipated that similar methods can eventually make a foothold in statutory planning practices. Additionally, there is a seemingly inevitable movement to increase digital means of interaction between the stakeholders and statutory institutions. Should this be welcomed and bolstered with the means to achieve increased cohesion between stakeholders themselves, there is a chance of achieving that crucial balance required in spatial planning; neither tipping the scales towards consumerism nor towards technocracy. This research is being concluded on a positive note; with hope that time will offer further opportunities for practicing the spatial planning profession in Malta in an increasingly participatory manner.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Consent forms and interview transcripts

Appendix B

History of the Constitution of the Maltese Islands

Appendix C

Maps produced during the Participatory Mapping Workshop

Appendix D

Living Cities Liveable Spaces programme

Appendix E

Mapping sheets distributed to participants of the walkabout

Appendix A

CONSENT FORMS AND CODED INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Wendy Jo Mifsud
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A study of Participatory Planning using Participatory GIS in the Maltese context

Consent Form for Interviews

Wendy Jo Mifsud (248384M) is currently undertaking research related to the use of Participatory GIS in the Maltese spatial planning context. The research focuses on an understanding of the issues related to participants' motivation to engage in spatial planning and to the manner in which participatory methodologies such as cultural mapping can aid in achieving increased inclusion in planning systems.

You are being invited to take part in an interview which will explore the above topics in relation to your area of expertise. If you are happy to participate then please initialise and sign the form below.

I confirm that I have understood the remit of the interview as stated above

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time and to decline to answer particular questions

I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential and that I will not be identifiable in the reports that result from the research

I agree for this interview to be tape-recorded and understand that the audio recording made of this interview will be used only for analysis

I agree that my anonymised data will be kept for future research purposes such as publications related to this study after the completion of the study

I agree to take part in this interview

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Personal communication

Peter Cawana Dingle 29/11/2017 Peter Dingle

Name of participant

Date

Signature

Dr Paul Gauci

11/10/2017

Paul Gauci

Principal tutor

Date

Signature

Open Codes	Interview with Dr Petra Caruana Dingli	Focused Codes
<i>Question</i>	WJM: Let us start off with the question ‘Are interest groups being effective at the moment through the way that represented in the planning process?’	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effectiveness of representations - Objections to permits - Weighting of reasons - Consultation period 	<p>PCD: I think they are not being all that effective in the sense that from my experience with one particular non-governmental organisation (NGO) quite a lot of the representations, and there are a lot of representations being sent in, are not being effective in terms of changing the parameters of the application, details of the application. So while objections to permits are being put in, mostly they're not successful. This could either be because the reasons aren't valid and it could also be because the reasons are not given enough weighting. I would imagine, having seen a lot of these objections or representations, very often the reasons are quite valid and they are not taken on board. One thing that I feel is very difficult for NGOs to keep up with is that if you just send in your representation during the consultation period so its official and you're cited within the case officer's report, unless the NGO also sends a representative off to attend the hearing, in other words have a personal influence which goes beyond putting in an objection, it is often ignored. Even if your objection has valid planning grounds, you actually have to push your case with some sort of pressure in the sense that you have to bring it to the attention of the Board in addition to just writing it down.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Validity of representation process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resources of NGOs - Attendance at hearings - Written representations 	<p>Very often actually the objections or comments, because I wouldn't like to call them all objections, sometimes they are comments; in other words sometimes it is a question of amending or arranging. Now I'm not saying that they never get amended but even when it's out-rihtly objectionable as a principle of permit unless you actually go and make your case, very often it is ignored. So that is already a problem in the process because the resources of NGOs to actually attend those meetings are extremely limited because it's one thing to say I'm going to go and look at the applications once a month on my own when I have</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation in statutory processes

time on the weekend and send in representations and confer with my colleagues via email and everyone concurs via email and those get sent in. It's another thing to say I'm going to dedicate a day a week or two mornings a week to actually go and make that representation. Plus you have to have the skill to do it because not everybody who is involved with NGO has the personal ability to go and make those representations. It's not so easy because you have to go and make your case because very often you're challenged by the Board so there has to be a level of confidence to do it.

- Lack of willing technical representees
- Personal involvement

Secondly it is also a question of you have to put yourself forward individually to do it, so for example if you have an architect helping you with your representations that architect may not be willing to go and challenge the Board and very often that's the case because architects basically feel that they are put into a bad light by the Board when they come to their own cases and other cases. Finding architects that actually help on this and put their name and face to this is extremely difficult; much more difficult than one might imagine so unless you find someone who is not practicing.

- Participation in statutory processes

Question

WJM: So it's not only that the issue has to be of interest but also that you have to find somebody who is willing to stick their neck out and take a stand, a personal stand.

- Lack of technical background
- Confidence of representee
- Investment of time

PCD: And very often within the NGOs a lot of the background or let's say the drive of people who join NGOs in order to somehow lobby for better environmental legislation or in terms of perhaps insensitive development, there isn't necessarily a huge amount of technical background. That doesn't mean they cannot see what's right or what's wrong and have a valid opinion but to actually argue the technical grounds of the plan you do need to have a level of knowledge on that; you need a level of education or knowledge which you either find is not there or perhaps it is there but there isn't the confidence with it. You get challenged because you are not an architect and because you don't have some degree in planning or because you are new to the scene and you are not sure about the parameters of these Board meetings. So there is a level of confidence to attend those meetings and present a

- Participation in statutory processes

case especially if you're on your own not even in a group which within NGOs isn't that easy to find. Plus time; there's a lot of time spent, then in the end you're doing it for the greater good; you're not doing it out of any personal interest in that case. It is definitely not the case that the NGO individual is always some neighbour or somebody who has a personal interest. You do it because you have some sort of ideal in your mind; you want to lobby for something. To spend week after week sitting at the Planning Authority (PA); the time factor is very difficult.

- Written representations ignored
- Hearing resembles a court of law

So with the process as it is, knowing that with just sending in representations it's very easy for the PA to ignore them, and they do get ignored; in fact so that additionally one needs to go and make their presentation is definitely something within the system which keeps back valid comments from actually being taken on board. Now you can ask the next question: 'Why aren't they taken on board?', 'Why don't they just read them, look at them, and value them?' But the truth of the situation is not that, because in front of the Board you have the architect who's arguing a strong case, you might even have a lawyer who's arguing a strong case, you have applicant and if you don't have the person who is arguing the objection or representation; it's like being in a court of law very often in the sense that you have to argue to the judge. And obviously you are expected to influence the judge because otherwise there would be no case of lobbying anything. If that other side is not there you lose out and the resources factor there is huge so that's definitely one thing.

- Validity of representation process

Question

WJM: So we're saying that there's a problem whereby one is not able to be anonymous if you attend the Board meeting due to which one is not able to be efficient with one's resources and thirdly that one requires technical expertise.

- Representee at a disadvantage
- People on the Board include expert lawyers and architects

PCG: At least of the level that one has enough confidence to be able to go and stand in front of a Board and an architect and a lawyer and actually argue against them; it's not easy. I mean I've sat at all sides of this fence and if you're on the Board and you're listening; and the cases are being argued by expert lawyers who have been in the field for a

- Participation in statutory processes

while, expert architects who possibly really know how to push the right buttons with the Board and then you get an individual who might be some person who doesn't have the expertise or the experience and ability to argue; it's training after all. A person is definitely at a disadvantage. Now whether you are the person there or whether you are on the Board or whether you are the lawyer who knows how to argue it's clear that person is at a disadvantage. So the way the planning system is where a Board gives a hearing, because of the lack of resources of NGOs, that hearing is already skewed. Definitely.

- Representees being 'slammed' following hearing

Because it's based on verbal representations; there's written representation and there's the verbal. In the verbal definitely unless you have particular NGO members who are very passionately keen to go and make cases and don't mind being slammed afterwards by everybody as you walk out of the room and don't mind their name being slammed; and eventually you get all sorts of political implications and everything else. If they're willing to do that, fine. Otherwise it's very difficult. You're just seen as a negative and are torn to pieces. Really this is how it works. So, verbal representations: very difficult in terms of experience, confidence, resource, everything. Written is a bit easier in the sense that you can do the written case in your own time, you can get technical expertise which can remain anonymous as well and can feed in. So written representations are easier to put in from this angle. They're not easy in the sense that you also need some background but you can also get advice.

- Participation in statutory processes

- Timeframe of written representations
- Lack of adequate feedback to written representation

There you have the restriction of the timeframe, which I do understand that there is process and a process has to have time because otherwise you can never get to a point if you're processing the application that you can actually present it; because you're supposed to take on the feedback and you can't keep getting feedback until the last second. There has to be some sort of timeframe. I think there should be perhaps; well the timeframes I respect there needs to be; whether they should perhaps be lengthened is a question that should be discussed. Possibly also how the representations

- Validity of representation process

<i>Question</i>	WJM: This is during the consultation meeting for a particular application or is it with regards to the EIA process and strategic projects?	
- Consultation period	PCD: Large projects, but I'm also referring to consultation periods on plans and policies because it's the same system there really. Where again you need to understand that your feedback has been taken on Board adequately, because this is a wider remit.	- Validity of representation process
<i>Question</i>	WJM: Is what you are saying that it's one thing to have a simple development on one hand and on the other hand a masterplan?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of due diligence in process - Ministerial intervention - Flawed consultation process - Material consideration 	<p>PCD: Yes, or policy, like the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) policy for example because in the end those permits are going to go through that policy so really that's a very important stage. I mean there I could give you a concrete example if you like of something where the planning process was really not handled well at all; with the FAR policy. I think that was a really serious issue and it's had very serious implications; and the way it was handled was not adequate for sure because even if you say 'OK, there has been a process, we need to stick to this process', here the process was bypassed as well quite blatantly. That was a whole case study example of how difficult it can be for an NGO to get its point of view listened to even when it's a very valid point of view. There was a draft policy and there was a consultation process on the scoping and general points of the document. There was an initial feedback document with some proposals and then there was the actual draft policy which was put out to the public. There were comments on that and on the areas that were included, in particular for example Pembroke. There was feedback on that and people had issues with various things. An entire area which was the area of Mriehel was not included in this draft; the final draft in other words. Not the actual final document but the last draft which went out to the public for consultation. A whole entire area was not included. Now, this was about defining areas; it's very major if you're defining areas. Then the actual final document came out and had this area in, which was not there previously.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good governance in the implementation of current procedures

So, *Din l-Art Helwa* (DLH) and other NGOs had made quite a fuss about this and it turned out that the area was included right at the end, after the consultation period had closed upon recommendation of a person with a political background, the Minister I believe; who had recommended to the Board that it got included; and it was there. Now that is a consultation process which is flawed because then there was a demand by NGOs to say 'Listen if you're going to include the area, this is not a minor point because you're should clearly take on board all the feedback, then you adjust and you publish the policy.' But this wasn't a small adjustment; this was something major where it should have been put out for public consultation. It was a material consideration beyond any doubt whatsoever.

As you can see now, the high-rise going up there is blocking the vista between Mdina and Valletta and there are all sorts of problems with infrastructure and other issues. It was a very material consideration. And after that, now forgetting even whether it was a good decision or a bad one, because maybe for this you're thinking about process; the fact that then the general public, the NGOs, as representatives of the public requested that that is halted as a process and that it should go back out to consultation so that the Government should not take any decision to grant any permits there before this has gone back out is relevant because there has been a discussion process on it; that was ignored.

<i>Question</i>	WJM: So was the re-consultation that was requested ignored?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loss of confidence in the system - Recourse to the EU - Lack of support from EU 	<p>PCD: Well, that area was material enough that it would have been considered on its own. Plus, it should have been considered in the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), but the SEA did not address it either. So that is an example of where you lose confidence in a process because firstly, you weren't consulted; secondly, the process isn't even followed anymore. Now there we had gone to the European Union, to the Commission, requesting help but with a policy you don't really have much to stand on. What you have there is that the SEA has to be carried out and it has to be</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good governance in the implementation of current procedures

carried out properly. The actual material considerations aren't really important to the Commission. They're just looking that you follow the procedural steps. The Commission had concluded that because the steps were carried out, the Government had argued that the steps were carried out; they had let it go.

So over there you end up with the EU that if the Government is able to argue that procedural steps were followed, even if those procedural steps were really only given lip service and not followed properly at all; then you have no ground there either. So in terms of procedure you only have a real point with the EU if something is blatantly wrong. In this case I think that they were wrong but still their focus then is always on that. So you do have to depend on the good governance, which is very relevant here, of the local regulatory authorities to make sure that the steps are not just carried out in order to tick the boxes but that they are carried out properly. In other words, taking into account the important considerations of issues like this and not just one sided, but on all sides; and including the environmental considerations, because I think those were ignored.

Question

WJM: Therefore it's not just that you carry out the process but the way in which you carry out even the statutory process. Although in the research I'm looking at introducing new processes it seems that even the current processes can be undermined by lack of rigour.

- Good governance
- Right values
- Lack of adherence to mission statement
- Interests and education of Board members
- Political influence

PCD: I think that what we have is, if you want me to give it a broader view rather than the details; I think that when you look at steps on paper the different processes and procedures; there are a lot of elements in place which could work very well. Really, there is a consultation, there is feedback that is published, there are SEAs, there are EIs, there's all this. But unless you carry them out with the right intentions and with the right values and with the right forms of governance, anything can be skewed. Even forgetting now the environment; if you go on any kind of institution; if your institution isn't interested in pursuing probably its mission statement and having the right values it doesn't really matter what you have on paper. So it's really

- Good governance in the implementation of current procedures

- How to implement procedure
- Issue is not process

about the approach, it has to do with the education, the interests, the background and the objectives of the people who sit on the Board; equally of the staff who are processing these things. The culture of the staff is very important and in general of the situation, also maybe of political influence and all these other things come into it.

So it's not just about having procedure in place but it's really how to use it. You can take the same tool, which is an EIA for example, and use it in all different ways; you can take the permit planning process and use it in all different ways. You can argue it backwards and forwards and in the end it matters who is at the opposite end of the table and what they're aiming to do. That's all. On paper it's there but it isn't actually there. Plus you can actually have it there like a policy and ignore it also if it's convenient to you. So really it isn't so much about the process I think.

Question

WJM: So you can use the current process in a rigorous manner or with more legitimacy?

- Right objectives
- Policy application
- Aim of decision-maker
- Interpretation of Board member

PCD: I'm not sure if rigorous is the word; I think it is about having the right objectives and aims. For example, if your aim is to protect the environment and genuinely so, because you're seeing that there is too much development going on in the countryside and that it is piecemeal development, that is really destroying the countryside and you can see it; when you come to process applications which are borderline; you have to use some judgement. Always in applications as well there are policies but it also depends on how you are going to apply the policy. If your aim and your understanding of what is good for the country is that development is reined in, you are more likely to apply the policy in a way that will ensure that aim. If your aim on the other hand is to please developers or to, not please them, but actually that you think that the development isn't such a bad thing but that it's good for our economy and you have a completely different standpoint, you are going to be looking at the policy in a completely different way.

- Good governance in the implementation of current procedures

The policy itself might be ok; planning policies tend to be broad anyway because they have to take on board a lot of different situations; you can't be

too rigorous in this sense. The word for this is good governance. There is no other word for it. It is good governance. If you're going to govern well, if you're going to use the same planning tools, it all depends on how you're going to apply them. I've seen this many times and that's why you get this situation where some people feel sometimes that issues are treated differently or maybe different administrations or different members of staff or different people will be treating the same thing, same policy, similar application, but you get a different outcome. It's the people involved.

Isn't it the people that are interpreting it in a different way, isn't it the Board which is interpreting it in a different way? So if you get a Board which is divided, half are seeing it through one lens and half are seeing it through the other. So depending on who's there and how they interpret that policy, you're going to get a different outcome. So in terms of NGO representation and participation, it isn't just about 'Can they speak?' If I say something to one person they might be interested in hearing it; if I say it to another they might say, I'm really not interested in anything to do with eco-systems and all I care about is keeping the construction industry happy, to take it to extremes. It's always about interpretation.

Question

WJM: The fact that you're saying that the procedures are in place but that it's a matter of interpretation and of values and objectives is instructive.

- Development and Planning Act, 2016
- Representations on Act not taken on board
- Major authorities solely as consultees

PCD: For example, now we have this situation where the Environment and Resources Authority (ERA) is one of many consultees and also so is the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage (SCH). When that was implemented in the last Development and Planning Act in 2016, I think the negative results now are clear for all to see. We had said this before and it was ignored. The NGOs gave their views and were not taken on board. We said you cannot have this list of consultees with major authorities such as ERA and the SCH, because really it is about two big threats - heritage and environment in general terms; and for the planners it is also what's happening in the limited open space available that is very important.

- Validity of representation process

Environmental issues are a major concern in planning so they are major stakeholders - equal stakeholders they have always been and also should be. To take them away from being a joint Directorate to becoming one of many consultees was such a change. Now that representation went it in repeatedly; it was ignored. It was made at the Parliamentary Committee, it was not just a written consultation; again it was ignored. Again, it is a matter of good governance. If the environmental authority is standing up and telling you this is a no-no, this is beyond, this is a red light and you decide to ignore that, it's basically because you don't see those environmental issues as important enough; you're seeing something else as more important. Now what is that something else?

Question

WJM: Is it a question of governmental priorities?

- Repeated environmental concerns
- Weighting of consultees
- Procedural issue
- Appeals procedure as confrontational
- ERA, an authority but with little real authority in planning

PCD: Everybody has priorities; you might get the extremist who is only seeing one type of environmental issue. We've got to balance it, but when it is a repeated scenario as it is now it's worrying. It's repeated, it's not a one off; because one off decisions, well we all have our own point of view and maybe we're going to say that perhaps it was not even the right decision, or it was. But when you see a repeated pattern of the environmental aspect being ignored and of decisions which are definitely not sustainable and the whole pattern going on then you say there's something wrong with the system. So you're saying that the environmental authority can speak, they are consulted, they came back with their feedback and you ignored them. So, why did you ignore them repeatedly? That's something to do with good governance and not with the system, but in that can I would say that even the procedure is ignored because their voice is so important that you shouldn't be able to ignore it just like you can ignore some tiny NGO, some other authority which is perhaps less significant.

- Validity of representation process

So there I would say that it's a procedural issue. You do need to have in the procedure that that voice has more weight than it has now for sure. Including on the Board, that the environment chairman sits there and votes in one way and then you get somebody else on the Board who's

cancelling out his vote is not right. This is again about the weighting; and that's procedure and has to be in the legislation. And that's what I would say for the heritage as well. The other procedure which is completely flawed, which is actually part of this is that when this argument was put forward that the weighting over there was not right, the argument put forward by those promoting that a new type of legislation, including the Minister at the time, said no it's fine because if the Board doesn't agree and overrules, there is the appeals process in which government entities can take part in. We had said straight way that this is absolutely not the way to handle environmental issues. You don't let it get to the last resort and then have a confrontational episode between the PA and ERA or the heritage authority or whoever.

If you are an authority then your voice counts and is a final word to a large extent. You are the authority on roads, you are the authority on disability; and if I tell you that disability you cannot have it like this because you need to create access for the disabled: I'm the final word on it. You have to do that. So that's a question of having the right people who know how to do a job. The authority has the say otherwise you're not an authority; you're just an advisory committee or something. Even the word authority gives the idea that you have a say!

Question

WJM: Is it a matter of acknowledging the technical expertise present in the authority?

- Authorities being overruled by PA
- Appeals court reduced issues to legal matters
- Specialisation of people on Appeals Board is not technical

PCD: Within the country, you represent that issue so if you get an authority overruled it is not the way forward to say 'No problem, you can now go to a legal forum'; a forum where the two authorities are going to lock horns, because the two authorities first of all should have found the way forward in a responsible manner with dialogue beforehand and not one overrules the other so that other goes and fights in court; it's a ridiculous situation. They should be able to talk to each other and have the right values and priorities to take the best decision in the interests not only of that individual person on the application but also in the interest of the community and of the environment and everything else. So there should be dialogue and everybody's weighting should be properly valued. At the moment, PA decides and the other one has no say whatsoever. That's wrong.

- Strategic planning and decision making

The other thing is that when you get to that confrontations issue in the appeals court the type of arguments that you can make are also very legalistic and limited so the actual merits of the case are already a bit skewed because there are only certain arguments you can make. Plus the expertise of the Appeals Board isn't right because why should I as the environmental or heritage authority have to argue my heritage case to some lawyer who knows nothing about heritage. This is not the right expertise to judge my case. You cannot judge my case; you haven't got the expertise to judge it because it isn't just a legal issue. There may be other issues which are just not featuring within this process because the process doesn't allow it. There I think the process is very wrong with all these. I would say some authorities can be consultative when there are very specific issues maybe but overall the main authorities who should have given feedback into planning issues should have a very if not the final, possibly the final, but at least a very strong presence; it should not be easy to overrule them. At the moment it is very easy and happens all the time. It shouldn't be like that.

Question

WJM: I have a final question which maybe a bit separate to what we've been discussing. My thesis deals a lot with how we can use GIS in participatory planning. What I am seeing from our

discussion is that there might not be enough opportunity for two-way dialogue in these processes. How do you feel that this better dialogue can be achieved before one submits a representation? And would you feel that mapping an issue will help?

- Information aids dialogue
- Visualisation helps understanding
- Procedural issues with current methods of visualisation

PCD: Providing more information is basically what we're saying. Look, taking it from the bigger principles I would say that the more information is available, the more dialogue one can have; always better. So let's start from there. What are usually the problems with that? Resources is one and another may be the forum, the platform, in order to be able to do it; because while the PA has its own limits on resources which I respect, there has to be some sort of structure to it, equally on the other side of the fence there are limited resource to how many dialogues / conversations can occur. But at the same time I think the visual helps. It helps a lot and there are a lot of people who are unable to visualise a plan.

- GIS-based tools in spatial planning

You are obviously at a disadvantage if you are unable to visualise it so you say 'Oh I think it's OK' whereas actually it isn't and the reason you thought it was is because you didn't have enough ability to do it. You couldn't read the plan; you couldn't visualise it, whatever. So definitely there is a disadvantage to those who cannot use current available information enough. So, it's easier to understand visual imaging of something and I think there are two things there which maybe could help. One is when photomontages of big projects are put out; this is not digital necessarily although they are created digitally. I have a really big question marks about some of them and even the way they are presented. That's one thing and even the way the viewpoints are chosen. There a la lot of issues there and the issues are procedural.

Question

WJM: So once again, is it about how you apply an existing procedure?

- 3D imagery for high-rise proposals
- Visualisation of impact of

PCD: But the other thing is that I think with some types of applications, for example with the high-rise, just to go back to the one issue, that's very visual. So for actual visual imagery that's been available for the public to understand; there have

- GIS-based tools in spatial planning

- Local Plans
over 20 year
remit
- Building
density
 - Plans are not
always the best
visualisation
tool

been some photomontages that have been disputed. I don't know who's right or wrong; I'm certainly not an expert in creating photomontages. But I'd say that the visual impact of development as it's going forward; if it is possible through 3D imagery to make the public more able to go onto a system where they actually see the outcome even if not in detail but in terms of shapes and forms of what is being proposed in their area for example. I think that would most definitely be helpful for people to understand the impact of things happening around them. You see the size, dimensions, and the space if that is possible. That's one thing.

And the other that has always concerned me is that when making Local Plans for example I think if people just see maps they will not understand the volume of the proposed development. So I think that in that kind of thing when you're creating a new policy like FAR, GIS and 3D imaging can make people understand the volume of development that is being proposed. Also, the development is not going to happen over a year or two, it will be over a timeframe. So in terms of that, to see for example an area and say 'OK, if the proposal of this plan for this area is all implemented within 20 or 30 years, this is what it is going to look like.' I think that type of information is valid; it's real information and it's very important because it would give a perspective on things differently to when it's just a flat plan. We've got to a point where there's such a density of buildings that if people are going to agree now to increase this through new Local Plans; where it's actually going to be more volume than already the huge volume that there is in these.... If we're saying everyone can go up further, what it's going to look like? So if it is possible to provide more 3D visual information to people when they are commenting I think it would definitely help.

The principle of providing further information I would say is always a good one and I think it's also an obligation. The more information that can be made available should be made available. If you're asking the public to comment on something, they should have as much information as you can possibly have. They're taking a decision as whether to comment or not. So the more information that

can be technically made available, it should be. Everything should be online, everything should be available including all the case histories which I know are already on eApps. So whether that will lead to more dialogue isn't automatic. They are two separate things; provision of information and dialogue are two separate things.

I think resources are a big issue on both sides; and the other is governance; because I've been to meetings where in the end it's just a ticking of boxes. Even though you're ticking a box to say we've had dialogue you haven't actually had it. So in the end it's that you haven't really had any form of dialogue whatsoever and it's not just at the PA. So not just process but how you actually chose the people who are going to implement that process; the values and training of those people who are in charge of the process and that those people who will implement that process are held accountable for the way in which they implement that process; that is probably the most important thing. The accountability of whoever is handling the process, because in the end it's how you handle it not just what's on paper. They have to be accountable, they have to have the right capabilities to do it, which is a mixture of things. It is partly to have the right knowledge, the education, the technical ability, but you also have to be upholding the values with which you're supposed to implement it and you have to be transparent about that as well. So the accountability of whom is implementing that process is very important as well.

Question

WJM: I'm very interested to see that although we started off by discussing process we have ended by speaking of good governance and how the process is implemented.

- Accountability
- Responsible for decisions
- Clarity of reasons for votes
- Monitoring of decisions
- Scrutiny of decisions vis-à-vis policy
- Alignment to SPED objectives
- Dialogue in monitoring policy outcomes

PCD: This is in no way saying that everyone who is implementing the process is doing it badly, but if you're looking for the flaws and the ways to improve those are the areas. When those decisions are eventually taken by big or small Boards, the people who take them need to be responsible for those decisions. In other words their votes need to be clear and the reasons for those also. We are also expected as the general public to give valid planning reasons when we give a representation and the case officer also has to argue his case based on planning reasons and everything else. When you eventually come to take a decision as a Board member you can't just sit there and say yes or no. You don't even know in the end whether that Board member took that decision, which is disastrous or very good or whatever it is, on reasons which solid. How can I have been spending an hour going blue in the face explaining this thing to you... did you understand or did you disagree, why did you disagree?

- Good governance in the implementation of current procedures

Maybe what one could have is that the PA, which is taking certain decisions for example on the protected areas, on policies such as FAR, petrol policy and so on; you could perhaps one a year have the PA draw up a list with some statistics on what has been decided. For example you could consider the applications which have some sensitivity to planning or you group them by policy; and one should be scrutinised on them for accountability. It could be some person who's entrusted to do this but it must be somebody with authority, somebody who's accountable not someone who can say 'It wasn't me.'

Now I know that it's a Board decision but one also has to understand that an authority is taking direction on things. For example if you are generally allowing all these Outside Development Zone (ODZ) applications to go through, this is a clear direction and you have to be able to explain it. You have to explain with facts, with the actual applications; you have to be ready to defend the actual decisions which were taken. In other words, how did you take this decision? How did the case officer recommend? You have to be able to have this dialogue; if you're happy with your decisions

you will defend them.

For example you have to say, 'If we as a government have got a policy we're pleased with where we're saying we're going to protect ODZ.' We're saying this is our thing, we're doing this, so why not actually have the workings of this which are actually happening on the ground scrutinised and say 'Are we protecting ODZ?' If this is your objective and now I'm looking at the planning applications but actually I'm seeing all this going on, I will perhaps as an MP or as an NGO say 'I don't think that you're actually upholding your objectives.' There should be a dialogue there. Not to give people a hard time, but when you know you're taking your decision you realise that you're accountable not just taking it just as a yes or no vote. You have to take responsibility for your decision.

You have to be accountable in the sense that you have to be always taking your decisions responsibly. You may be wrong sometimes, we all are, but you have to be able to justify and to defend it, to say 'In the end I took it for that reason. It was a hard decision, I can see that there are two sides but I decided that this weighed more.' But what's happening at the moment is that decisions are being taken and we don't know why. All this planning process and then in the end you don't really know why a decision was taken in the end.

For example, in the SPED there are objectives in there approved by Parliament. Can we see if these are happening or not or are we going to wait ten years and draw up another one. The Structure Plan had its issues but that's not justification; can we see if they are actually happening. Where can we actually see this? So you are talking about process and dialogue; perhaps someone can build this in. So once a year we're going to have a forum where the PA is going to stand up and justify itself and say 'This was my aim and I'm achieving it' or 'I'm not'.

You need dialogue, you need a debate to see if we're all in agreement with the way we're going for example. I mean there are objectives in that document of ODZ protection for example, heritage protection, sustainability etc. There are all sorts of

things in there; there are even questions there about high rise. So I think that dialogue in the procedure for monitoring overall achievement wouldn't be a bad thing.

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A study of Participatory Planning using Participatory GIS in the Maltese context
Consent Form for Interviews

Wendy Jo Mifsud (248384M) is currently undertaking research related to the use of Participatory GIS in the Maltese spatial planning context. The research focuses on an understanding of the issues related to participants' motivation to engage in spatial planning and to the manner in which participatory methodologies such as cultural mapping can aid in achieving increased inclusion in planning systems.

You are being invited to take part in an interview which will explore the above topics in relation to your area of expertise. If you are happy to participate then please initialise and sign the form below.

I confirm that I have understood the remit of the interview as stated above

H

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time and to decline to answer particular questions

H

I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential and that I will not be identifiable in the reports that result from the research

PC

I agree for this interview to be tape-recorded and understand that the audio recording made of this interview will be used only for analysis

r

I agree that my anonymised data will be kept for future research purposes such as publications related to this study after the completion of the study

H

I agree to take part in this interview

H

STEPHANIA FARINA

20/11/2017

[Signature]

Name of participant

Date

Signature

Dr Paul Gauci

11/10/2017

[Signature]

Principal tutor

Date

Signature

Open Codes	Interview with Perit Stephen Farrugia	Focused Codes
<i>Question</i>	WJM: We can start off with a query on the relationship between strategic planning and development control, that is, how they relate to each other and your experience in both these planning practices.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relationship between strategic planning & development control - Political interference - Major projects - Town centres 	SF: My experience with the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA) ends in 2004 but I must say that the relationship between strategic planning and development control was always a tenuous one. I was in both situations; I started in the Planning Area Permits Board (PAPB) and then went to development control, to Local Plans and back to Development Control; so I saw the cycle and could feel the tensions on both sides. Strategic planning was considered a higher planning form than development control and to make the link extremely difficult, the element of politics was also a factor; especially when politicians do not see the longer term and when you have major projects e.g. the Hilton project, the White Rocks project, large retail projects which were shifting the town centres which was totally against the strategy to strengthen the town centres but were politically driven. So the tension was there and bridging them was never actually solved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic planning and decision making
<i>Question</i>	WJM: So it seems that the process was government-led through a series of government objectives. Is this correct?	

- Alignment of market-led and government-led planning
- Lack of statistics to support policy-making
- Practical approach to strategic planning
- Working within governmental parameters

SF: It's not really the way it should be done but having said that, the market determines government objectives because, especially since today's administration is pro-business, the planner is constrained in a way to provide practical solutions in the situation one finds oneself from a strategic point of view. I believe that the data we were working with in 2004, based on the Structure Plan of 1992, was outdated. There was no process of updating of information to present a solid argument for and against an issue with a politician. There was this problem and therefore, through the project, we had to look at unrealistic national figures and so there was this vacuum. So there was a real problem to convince people that a project was really good or bad because of this lack of updated information. And I think this is the role of strategic planning: that information is regularly updated so that the section is at the forefront of data provision; such as social trends and retail, which gives you a lot of strengths. That information lies somewhere else but I think the information from the NSO is not easily digestible from a planning point of view and has to be somehow interpreted and so, there is this dichotomy.

Having said that, from a planning point of view, you have to move forward. I admire practical people who offer solutions, who say yes; because at the end of the day it really boils down to the people giving you the advice. At the end of the day you can have many written policies but if the person is either ultra-negative or ultra-positive you have a problem; you need balanced people who know how to reason things and who are rational. One may challenge the political view because you have a role to challenge and to open the politician's eyes and mind but at the end you have an objective and you must work with it. I think that was always the way we looked at it and I was in that role as Director and Assistant Director of Planning. I had the role of shielding the impact of the politician on my planning staff; but it is a political role. When you're up there it is a political role: 'This makes sense, this doesn't', 'Let me get back to you' etc.

- Strategic planning and decision making

<i>Question</i>	WJM: It seems often the case that the PA is consistently criticised; does it seem to you that this should happen?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manner of publication of strategic plans - Lack of consultation 	<p>SF: The PA must be accountable for the methods being used. A classic case of how not to do it is the Paceville Action Plan. It was a textbook case of how not to do it. The bottom-up or top-down approach, and the way it was transmitted down here and the infiltration of the interest of a few people and the politicians backing them. Then the PA published the plan and it was planning suicide; which is set to happen again. The cry of the residents of the area, which was also to some extent politically driven I think is correct but I think it's skewed and one has to be careful. But I do think that this is an opportunity for going to the people with a blank sheet of paper and we need to respect that.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic planning and decision making
<i>Question</i>	WJM: What about the presence of government objectives in the case?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity for political party to intervene on behalf of community 	<p>SF: I don't think there was any government objective apart from the fact that the situation had to be arranged. That's the objective if you want to call that an objective. I think that's how far the Paceville masterplan should go now in the current situation because the agenda that has been produced now has skewed everything. So you must know the general objective; now how and why is a different matter which one can speak to the people about. I do think that this is a situation where a political party can take a positive stand and come up with a proposal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Validity of representation process
<i>Question</i>	WJM: How would you consider the role of major stakeholders such as the development lobby in the planning process?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access of political party to people - Lack of interest in masterplan by developers - Stalling of 	<p>SF: I think it's a very difficult case but you have to go to the people regardless and listen to them; a political party might be able to do that. The Malta Developers Associations (MDA) and the developers however tend not to show interest in coming up with their own masterplan; and it seems that neither do other stakeholders. It is a fear of something bad. One can however notice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation in statutory processes

- planning process
- Lack of proactive ideas by interest groups
 - Lack of power and resources of Local Councils
- that a group of people has indeed stalled the process in the Paceville masterplan. You might have people or organisations such as *Din l-Art Helwa* (DLH) which may be interested in coming up with a masterplan but let's face it, they're not really planning-led. They are objectors, they are pressure groups with objectives rather than giving solid ideas. The legislation doesn't however exclude that one puts forward a proposal; but it may be the case that the objectives of a plan must be already published. You can have a group of people, such as Local Councils... These are however way back because they have no money and are not helped by central government except in cases where there is a project of national importance which is government-led and therefore, there is help from that aspect. Otherwise the ideas of the Council, especially when these are politically against the government are difficult to be taken on board. It's not bottom-up, it's top down.

Question

WJM: What do you think can be done procedurally in terms of participatory planning under the aegis of a Local Council?

- Residents' Associations
 - Relationship with technical professionals
 - Top-down vs. bottom-up
 - Starting with a blank sheet rather than with pre-set objectives
- SF:** Let us speak of Residents' Associations. In fact, there is a Paceville Residents' Associations. It is small and practically ineffective; that is the problem. You need to latch a number of technical people onto such an association and allow them to drive them. I have studied urban design and we dealt a lot with participation, whereby you have a group of people around a table and it is they who decide on the objectives, not the government. In my experience here in Malta, there is no participatory planning in the bottom-up sense; it is all top-down. My lecturers were in the process of publishing the revised 'Responsive Environments' and their strong points were small workshops with residents to make changes, small as they might be, which takes some thinking to do. But still; you are presenting a black sheet of paper and people feel that they are part of the process. Here in Malta, to the best of my knowledge, this has not yet been done.

- Strategic planning and decision making

Question

WJM: Don't you feel that any planning project however has a client, whether government or land-

owner; and that therefore the objectives are set nonetheless?

- Lack of culture of participation
- Resistance to change
- Cynicism towards planning system
- Changing threats into opportunities

SF: This is different I think. Apart from the fact that one can interpret anything as having a fixed agenda. I would have liked to have been part of active participation in the real world but there isn't the opportunity to do so in Malta. We don't have the culture to do it. I was involved in drawing up the Paceville Action Plan and spent three weeks in a caravan; waiting for people to come and talk to me about the Paceville Action Plan, which then was followed with a full presentation for which around 500 people attended, actively trying to kill me! So that was my baptism of fire in participatory planning. Well, maybe it was not participatory; we had the solution and tried to lump it down. The culture however is that the status quo is what we want and the moment you change it, we're going to be worse off. So, that is the culture and I don't see what one can do to change it. Maybe you can change it but there is no trust. There is a lot of cynicism from the Council, the developers etc. and the rate of development is now even worse. So I don't think you have fertile ground. Or you might; you might because people congregate when there is a personal threat. But they must know how to change that threat into an opportunity, which is what I think you are looking for.

- Participation in statutory processes

Question

WJM: So do you feel that the technical expertise of the planner can be bypassed?

- Bypassing planners to go directly to politicians

SF: Today the mentality is worse because you can go behind the planner and solve the problem; you're totally not relevant. Your focus is the politician. I think that the situation is very complex and it is not limited only to Malta, for e.g. in the UK, but not to this degree and not to this sharpness. The problem is that in Malta we have not started to establish some sort of history towards participation in planning.

- Validity of representation process

Question

WJM: Do you however see some sort of change in the system of representation in planning?

- Probability of representation

SF: I don't see the process changing in a real way. I'm not positive about it though having said that,

- Validity of representation

<p>process remaining unchanged</p> <p>- Discouragement in the community</p>	<p>you cannot lose hope. I did try however, even when I was a student, but the first thing one tells you is 'But why am I here? I can change nothing.' So empowering the people is one aspect of it.</p>	<p>process</p>
<p><i>Question</i></p>	<p>WJM: Do you think interest groups have made a difference in this regard?</p>	
<p>- Objectors as official extortion</p>	<p>SF: I don't see that we have evolved and have not made any progress in this field except that we have obviously refined the art of objecting. It has now become official extortion and I believe it because I've seen it. It's not nice but it happens. It would be very nice to have a spark somewhere, so that we can say that this is truly participation. Paceville is and I believe can be something that can really be done as a positive step in this regard.</p>	<p>- Participation in statutory processes</p>
<p><i>Question</i></p>	<p>WJM: Moving on to discuss GIS, I am currently studying a participatory mapping method developed by Mapping for Change under the aegis of University College London. An example of the work being carried out is that in Southward Borough Council, whereby the Local Council contracted Mapping for Change in order to assess where to place new affordable housing, using participatory methods. This can be done from their homes, by attending workshops or by going on site; and it seems to have worked. In this regard, do you think that technology can help to have better means of representation in Malta?</p>	
<p>- Online tools as supporting rationality and equality</p>	<p>SF: Using the online aspect is growing; we are the best in the EU in using governmental online services. I think there is a lot to be said about that and I think it possibly can cater for... Because you always have people who will speak to be seen, they tend to be larger than life; and text you know will provide a more rational approach because people can write what they're thinking. I think this has relevance especially since I used to work a lot with Local Councils. What led me out was the fee structure which is hopelessly inadequate; but it is there where there is a breeding ground for participation, not at central government. Despite this, Local Councils are also becoming very top-</p>	<p>- GIS-based tools in spatial planning</p>

down possibly due to lack of funds.

Question

WJM: Do you see Local Councils as the fulcrum of participation therefore?

- Local Councils as the leaders of participatory initiatives
- Lack of training and resources
- Lack of long term remit of Local Councilors
- Difference between individualistic projects and locality-scale projects

SF: Yes, I even wanted to form part of the Local Council because I wanted to lobby for projects at the local scene, but that has however not been realised. I do feel however that I engage better with public projects; I see opportunity in the public realm. So, planning in the public realm is another issue and we are still backward in that regard, especially with regards to participation in these projects. Should one speak of political interference, the crux of the problem is that they don't have training; they have a five year period basically and obviously what they care about is whether they are elected or not. They have people demanding things like better lighting, pavement rehabilitation and parking spaces which may go against projects with a community interest. So you end up in these issues. I was recently involved in the tender of the Mosta car park. Ultimately it didn't make financial sense because the brief was inadequate. And that's another issue; should the government want to promote participation you cannot issue a brief that is not feasible. Possibly again, that was guided, or misguided, by the Church Authorities, who were concerned that the dome would collapse. Yes, they were concerned but in this day and age, there are things that one can do to safeguard the structure.

- Strategic planning and decision making

Question

WJM: Was there dialogue to discuss these matters?

- Lack of consultation of residents on town centre project
- Challenging development brief

SF: There was informal dialogue, there was. There was a fixed brief with the client being Malta Enterprise; based upon the premise that traffic in Mosta was becoming problematic. As far as I know however, the project has died a natural death. Procedurally however, what I am most interested in is that the residents were not consulted. Other stakeholders were there, but not the residents. There was this Church-inspired attack and that was it. It is a pity that the project has been shelved because parking can be part of the solution to reinforce the town centre, which in Mosta is unfortunately in decline, especially since

- Strategic planning and decision making

I challenged the brief and said that the parking should be situated next to the employment nodes like the Mosta Techno-Park. We really need to reinforce the town centre, but no one is talking about this. But if this issue had been tackled before: 'Where is the best location for a car park', you might have avoided the issue of the Church opposing the project.

Question

WJM: If I have understood you correctly, the pre-set brief caused the problem that the discussion started after the decision. Is this the case?

- Suspicion towards project leaders
- Hidden agendas
- Lack of support for urban improvement projects

SF: Exactly, but how one can carry out that type of participation in Malta is the million dollar question; because the Maltese are suspicious and ready to accuse you of having an ulterior agenda; which breaks down the dialogue. Going back to my dissertation, I studied a Housing Opportunity Scheme in order to upgrade a public space within it. After having designed and presented the scheme I even found the funds for the project to materialise. There were however people who stopped speaking to me following this; so it's about trust. Despite this, once the project was implemented, these same people used the area, having seen its success. But it's very, very difficult to get their trust because their interests are very local, very particular, not community based; very personal.

- Participation in statutory processes

Question

WJM: Do you feel that dialogue is expected to lead to one getting what one wants in this regard, rather than moving forward towards a decision?

- Customer-oriented planning
- Policy tools to improve customer relations e.g. DC15

SF: This leads us to planner as being customer-oriented. We are giving too much power to the customer. It's the flip side which can be very disheartening even from the point of view of the private sector; and the Maltese know how to make use of this mentality. For example, the objection process has become a refined profession with big bucks being involved and often highlighting piqué between neighbours since one can remain anonymous. Planning however does have to be customer based and I don't think anyone can object to that; 'Development Control Design Policy, Guidance and Standards 2015' (DC15) has

- Strategic planning and decision making

made big steps in that direction. From a technical point of view, I think that it is in the right direction: it hit where it should have hit and the approach is admirable though it's taking a bit of time to be understood. People are using it to the full. It is also putting more onus on us to find solutions, which I think is what we are supposed to be doing anyway. From the point of view of the customer, one uses it to gain as much as one can get. So, the extent to which the customer is getting more from his site is unquestionable but the impact on the profession requires more thought.

Question

WJM: What do you think about DC15 having been criticised from promoting a numerical approach to planning rather than one based on material considerations? Is there any truth in this?

- Context-driven approach to planning
- Interpretation of proposal by case officers

SF: No, I don't; though the man in the street may view it from that perspective, I think it's an urban design approach and I feel very comfortable in it and it makes me come up with good solutions even for the client. Incidentally, you may end up with one or two storeys extra. But still it's context driven which I like because that's the way it should be. There may be a mechanism to reassess DC15 but there is much more responsibility on the professional coming up with the proposal to put his thinking hat on rather than the usual checklist. The issue remains the capability of the case officers to interpret it as we interpret it, as a design-led approach. Possibly there is a mismatch. It is obvious that there is a checklist on behalf of the case officer because he is not paid to put his thinking cap on. The Development Permit Application Reports (DPAR) don't speak of design.

- Strategic planning and decision making

Question

WJM: This may be an interesting point to finish upon: how to train planners and other technical staff within the PA.

- Scrutiny by technical colleagues
- Attitude of reviewers is

SF: There was a proposal to introduce those Design Review Panels. The way in which these will be introduced is the issue. To have a design is all well and good; but I will be faced with *periti* who are my colleagues and competitors in the private sector; looking at my proposal. It's a

- Strategic planning and decision making

crucial
- Process is
ultimately
people-based

voluntary thing; I go only if I want to go, but the understanding is that if they give me a good recommendation I can fly. Fair enough, you have scrutiny; but the people who are going to be there are important; how they engage with the situation etc. It's the method and the attitude of the people which is so crucial; so that you then get a better result. The manner in which it can be done is still unclear though we were pushing it with the Chamber of Architects. Then it fell down because the Minister responsible was not interested.

Looking at it from any which angle you look at it, it's the person who is important. The personage involved. It shouldn't be like that but that's the reality. I am speaking of my experience prior to 2004 at MEPA and post that in the Local Councils and at Chamber of Architects; but from afar I can say that things may not have changed much since then.

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A study of Participatory Planning using Participatory GIS in the Maltese context
Consent Form for Interviews

Wendy Jo Mifsud (248384M) is currently undertaking research related to the use of Participatory GIS in the Maltese spatial planning context. The research focuses on an understanding of the issues related to participants' motivation to engage in spatial planning and to the manner in which participatory methodologies such as cultural mapping can aid in achieving increased inclusion in planning systems.

You are being invited to take part in an interview which will explore the above topics in relation to your area of expertise. If you are happy to participate then please initialise and sign the form below.

I confirm that I have understood the remit of the interview as stated above

WJ

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time and to decline to answer particular questions

WJ

I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential and that I will not be identifiable in the reports that result from the research

WJ

I agree for this interview to be tape-recorded and understand that the audio recording made of this interview will be used only for analysis

WJ

I agree that my anonymised data will be kept for future research purposes such as publications related to this study after the completion of the study

WJ

I agree to take part in this interview


WJ

GORDON CORDINA

Name of participant

30/11/2017

Date



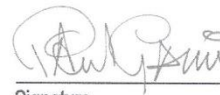
Signature

Dr Paul Gauci

Principal tutor

11/10/2017

Date



Signature

Open Codes	Interview with Dr Gordon Cordina	Focused Codes
<i>Question</i>	<p>WJM: I would like to speak to you on your views on how representation can be affected by the supply-demand chain. Also, we can speak of whether planning is a political endeavor and to which extent; the impact of good governance on planning and finally, we can delve into the role of GIS and whether new methods of representation are in the future of spatial planning.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Context prone to market failure - Demand more abundant than resources - Higher negative implications - Positive dividends to be priorities over negative externalities - Monitoring as a planning tool - Distribution of dividends - Role of participation in ensuring fair distribution of dividends - Political interference 	<p>GC: I think that we have to start off with the general context of a situation which is very prone to market failure where we cannot afford significant mistakes in planning and allow the market to correct for them and create something which is better. This is because resources, special-end resources, are so very limited and the competing demands for those resources are so very much in abundance. So the incidence of market failure would likely to be higher and would likely to have even more negative implications. Therefore the role of planning would ideally be not one where development is limited so that it does not produce negative externalities but where planning is there to make sure that the positive dividends from activity are actually reaped. Economic dividends, social dividends, cultural and so on. Planning must be a far more intrusive process but also an enabling process so as to ensure that these dividends actually come to fruition and can be sustained over the future time horizon. There is also this dimension where planning is also monitoring for results and making corrective actions as may be necessary.</p> <p>So the question arises, how to establish what these dividends should be, how to put more weight on the economic perspective as opposed to the social, environmental and cultural aspects, how to ensure that those dividends are distributed among all stakeholders as intended and how to ensure that they continue over time? And that is where there is possibly the need for a much more participatory effort in the planning mechanism so that planning is done by those who effectively are going to benefit from it and participate in its future implementation. In terms of the actual implementation of this issue for Malta, this is a very new concept; it's not the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation in statutory processes

way in which we usually work and it may well be that being such a new thing it will be also resisted by those who are likely to most benefit from it ironically. As we say, there is a lot of political interference for example in the planning process but maybe that is the way that society wants things to be.

Question

WJM: Do you feel that the aspect of political interference in planning can ever be negated? What role do you think new methods of representation can play?

- Political parties as centres of attraction
- Pilot GIS-based project
- Replication of positive results
- Increasingly participatory population
- Reticence to trust new methods

GC: No, that's the way that society may want to live, at least for the next generation or so. This may change with future generations as the centres of attraction shift away from politics and political parties to other issues with more of an individualistic nature; but it is very true that political parties in Malta constitute major poles of attraction for social behaviour. There will always be that kind of impact. The way in which possibly one can implement new tools such as those which are GIS based can be through a pilot project to test an approach in a particular area which may give some low hanging fruits and through further refinement of the method one can then replicate whatever successes can be achieved into other areas of the country. So one would set a pilot test for a specific development area, zone or territory and then take it off from there. As far as participation is concerned, I think that the Maltese population is getting increasingly participatory; it does participate in meetings, it tends to make its voice heard, Local Councils, Band Clubs. There are all these avenues where social participation can be fostered and developed. I am not too sure of new methods being introduced before people are actually aware what they are, how they work and whether they can be trusted or whether they are at all used.

- Participation in statutory processes

Question

WJM: Do you mean that a culture of participation must be fostered before new methods are introduced; but possibly that you need new methods to foster this new culture? The premise is that one can dialogue rather than submit a one-time representation, as is being done through the current statutory system. Is what you are saying that

dialogue is needed to foster long term change?

- Lack of dialogue
- Role of technology in bettering dialogue

GC: Unfortunately, the culture is to issue a document, get feedback on it and then do whatever you have to do without there being element of discussion and debate. There are stages in the planning process which might enable an element of revision and review. So perhaps what you are suggesting is to introduce new technologies or methods so that this kind of dialogue is better understood, better communicated and can take place in a more meaningful manner at the end of the day. Once again, I would suggest a pilot test in a low hanging fruit scenario where you have a society where people can more easily relate to this kind of approach so possibly you would need an area where higher educated people reside, with some kind of strong interest in the planning process which is going on.

- GIS-based tools in spatial planning

Question

WJM: An area which seems to fit in with this suggestion is Paceville. That was a scenario where people got engaged and it was really an important issue which stalled the planning process. What do you think about such a scenario?

- Self-contained project as a pilot
- Pilot integrated with existing system of representation
- Older system phased out naturally

GC: I think it's too big to act as a pilot; that is the real show. For a pilot I would think a more appropriate project would be the car park in Mosta. It is important for the affected stakeholders and it is also relatively localised. It is reasonably self-contained and small without too many ramifications coming out of it.

- GIS-based tools in spatial planning

And to the extent possible, this pilot would also feature the usual approach going on as well so that people don't really feel constrained to use a new system as opposed to the usual one; but hopefully people would self-select into the new system rather than the original one. Their integration wouldn't mean that you have necessarily to go through them. You still have the normal pen and paper approach which is still available fully to you as an alternative. I think it's always important when trying to use new methods and technologies that you simply switch off what you had before but you keep what you had going on before and you hopefully let it die its natural death. That would then be the test of the new technology.

<i>Question</i>	WJM: And who do you feel is prepared at this point in time to lead a process of integrating new methods, whether they are technological or otherwise? Is there a group of stakeholders which you feel would be best suited to start off the process?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PA as leader of new means of representation - Lack of leadership maturity in communities - Institutional leadership preferred 	<p>GC: Shouldn't it be the Planning Authority (PA) itself? I mean, they are at the end of the day responsible. Local Councils for example would participate in the new system but not lead it. It would be led by the PA. Am I understanding correctly that this process is ultimately to inform and determine the kind of planning outcomes? If so, unless the PA really owns this...</p> <p>I see it as led by the authorities in a way that enables communities. I am not sure of the extent to which communities are mature enough to actually lead. They don't want to take the lead, they typically look at political authorities and institutions to lead; but they want to be heard and they want their voices to have an impact. At least this is my perception of the current generation. Maybe a future generation would be more inclined to lead but I still think that we defer a lot to authorities and politicians.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GIS-based tools in spatial planning
<i>Question</i>	WJM: How willing do you think politicians will be to change the system in favour of a more representative approach; or something which is more legitimate as a representation? Possibly, the word legitimate is incorrect; but a system that is based increasingly on dialogue. Do you think that they will be open to this kind of concept?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional legitimization of decisions taken - Better reflection of voter intentions - Welcomed by politicians - Realisation of 	<p>GC: To the political class, it may provide an opportunity, a platform to justify whatever decisions are finally taken because when decisions are taken, many might benefit, some will be hurt, those who are hurt will be more vociferous than those who be benefitting. So at the end of the day you may have a system here which will provide additional legitimisation of whatever decisions are taken because there was a greater effective tool of participation leading to the final process. So from that sense I think it should be a welcome approach. It would also be an approach whereby decisions are likely to also reflect most of the preferences of the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GIS-based tools in spatial planning

the role of technology in the increasing demand for participation

- Role of technology in reflecting the needs of wider segments of the population

voters. So there again, politicians will be reflecting voter intentions through whatever decision are being taken.

At the end of the day, I think there is also a growing realisation of the need for better development, for improved lifestyles and quality of life overall in Malta. We can expect that greater participation would also be conducive to development. So at the end of the day politicians might also find that there would be better solutions which can be derived through a win-win approach which otherwise wouldn't have possibly happened unless there were these kind of tools. Through the use of Information Technology (IT) you will have better educated youths who would participate in the planning process who otherwise might not be bothered to take any notice of what is going on; and that might also lead to better outcomes which reflects the needs of wider segments of the population. So as long as it is introduced as an additional tool to what we already have which will improve and extend facilities which are already available, I think it should be a win-win for everyone.

Question

WJM: What you say is interesting in the light of findings that higher technical capital fosters a high social capital; so this technology has been found to increase up to a certain extent a level of social cohesion which translates into a greater willingness to participate in already existing processes.

You had spoken some time ago of urban attractiveness; a concept I had found very interesting. How can we enhance urban attractiveness? A theory is that with greater participation there is a better change of urban attractiveness being targeted towards the actual community that we are planning for. What do you think?

- GIS-based system as a policy monitoring tool

GC: Yes, and hopefully the ownership by the community of the environment in which it is living. If the community itself had shaped that urban environment chances are that it will also take a more effective role in its presentation and future sustainability. Also these kinds of platform could also serve to monitor the system since they are not one time scenarios but are involved in a process of

- GIS-based tools in spatial planning

sustainability.

- Question* **WJM:** With digital mapping and PGIS platforms, this is one of the main benefits because they are based online and can be used over a span of time.
- Change management **GC:** So your dissertation is almost moving to a discussion about change management. The benefits I think are obvious for everyone, for all stakeholders; there is hardly any stakeholder who may be perceived to be at the losing end of this process; at least hardly any bona fide stakeholder who genuinely wants to discuss planning matters. So then again, it's a question of change management. How to convince hearts and minds that this is an approach worth pursuing; and nothing works better than example as we were saying earlier. So the pilot has to be somehow undertaken. - GIS-based tools in spatial planning
- Question* **WJM:** When the topic is discussed with people such as those coming from interest groups, or *periti* for example; they mention that there is a problem with our institutions. So the problem of institutional rigour, the problem of good governance. Do you feel that this will impact the more bona fide stakeholders who will want to participate genuinely in the planning process?
- Governance and risk management system **GC:** You're going to have a new tool and just like any other tool it may be used to do good or to do bad things. So I suppose that around this tool there will also need to be a governance and risk management system as such, so as to ensure that the kind of inputs that go into it are the inputs that are desired and the kind of outputs are those that are desired, because it might be also an avenue where abuse can take place; possibly. You could have a case of organised disturbance; people having motives which are not in the public interest. So the governance and the risk management around the system itself will also have to be carefully designed and implemented. - GIS-based tools in spatial planning
- Organised disturbance negatively influencing process
- Question* **WJM:** And from a change management point of view, how can you deal with these issues when pitting the good with the bad around a table? I still haven't understood in a practical sense how you can extract genuine participation because of the problem of cynicism whereby people will not

believe that you are using the information they give you for purposes which are truly participatory. What happens in our planning system is that the government sets out objectives, the planner drafts a plan and then the public is asked to submit representations on something that is perceived as set in stone. So what triggers the change management? If one feels that one cannot change we are starting on a back foot with respect to participation.

- Example as a pre-requirement to change culture
- Educational campaign prior to introducing change

GC: Very much so, that is why we need a pilot approach to start convincing people that things can become effectively more participatory so as to generate a positive outcome. So that is why you need the buy-in of the PA to implement this system in a way which will lead to genuine improvements. Once that these examples are set, then cultures might begin to change. But at the end of the day this is possibly a conclusion which is the initial starting point we had. Unless the culture is genuinely interested in providing good quality participation towards a final common good objective, then this system will fail as well because it will be a tool to perpetuate what is fundamentally a wrong approach to participatory planning. So I guess we are moving towards a situation where: introduce the system, yes; but make sure that the proper education and culture are also in line with it. Otherwise we risk blaming the system for something which really was the failure in society.

- GIS-based tools in spatial planning

Question

WJM: One thing I've realised whilst working within the PA is that some planners are hesitant to engage in participatory planning because of the perceived 'attacks' by stakeholders. So there is this perception that representation is there so that people attack you and if you change the system you are simply opening up the floodgates for further attack. There seems to be a lack of realisation that people might need to vent but that after this 'attack' one might arrive at a dialogue with certain members of the community; possibly not with all members of the community. But there is a very big reticence on the side of the institution to implement new technologies.

- Misuse of

GC: There might be truth in there in the sense that sometimes one gets the feeling that lobbies exist

- GIS-based tools in spatial

lobbying
- Truth and post-truth discernment
- Pilot project as a learning platform

simply to exist rather than to generate some common good. But still, they are a necessary and essential part of any democracy and the misuse of lobbying and of public participation can only be counteracted through a society and a general public which can discern between truth and post-truth. One may argue that it is too early to discern this but somewhere we do need to start and that is where I would like to identify this pilot project where stakeholders can participate in a meaningful manner to give an example of what a correct planning process should be. I'm still after this case study. If we can do that, and create a platform where we can all learn from, that would be very useful to what you're trying to achieve.

planning

Question

WJM: I have tested the platform with regards to the cultural infrastructure of the Valletta 2018 European Capital of Culture. What I did was I organised a sit-down workshop, an online campaign and a walkabout around different sites all under the aegis of the Valletta 2018 Foundation as part of a wider research project assessing the quality of the built environment. The three different approaches using the same platform – Mapping for Change, which has been tested for its usability following its development by University College London (UCL) and has been implemented by different countries around the UK, Europe and Africa. One of the major case studies was the issue with the noise pollution from overhead airplanes affecting the community living close to Heathrow Airport. It was a successful participatory project. As we know, the runway was developed but there was this input by the community; and that is what we are arriving at.

When tested in Malta, we had different degrees of results whereby the workshop garnered some interest, the online campaign didn't garner any interest at all. When we organised the workshop as part of a conference, so people were already engaged in the conference, and as part of that they participated in the workshop; there we had a lot of interest. But when we analysed who the interest was from you realise that it was much less from the community around sites of cultural infrastructure; and I mean it in a broad sense, that is the resident community, the culture community, the tourists etc.

and was much more interesting to people who were simply interested in the concept of culture. This I think is an issue. As technocrats we are able to attract people like us but we might not be able to attract the people for whom we are planning.

- Networked society

GC: I think that possibly you might also consider that we are living in a highly networked society where we all know each other and we basically can express our opinion by going to talk directly to a person. Because in London it's one thing, with a large population; in Africa you have huge distances to traverse in order to get a message across; whereas here we rely on our informal networks. I think what you need is more experiments such as this one but that might take two or three more PhDs to try to come to some kind of determination of what could apply best in what circumstance. But at least you are raising the right questions where we are coming to express doubts and hypothesis which should hopefully further refine the approach.

- GIS-based tools in spatial planning

Question

WJM: Through my personal experience however it seems hard to convince the community that these large developments, which are happening on their doorstep, are of interest. Now is it that or is it that they don't feel that should actually represent themselves; because that is the other side of the coin.

One particularly hot issue was the 'Pacevilleisation' of Strait Street, and people were up in arms. Strait Street is one of the four sites of cultural infrastructure but people have now got used to that site being as it is. Also, what we would call 'the residents' have since then moved out; they were bought out.

This was also the case in the area of the *Biccerija l-Antika*. When the project for the Design Cluster was announced the properties started being bought up like hot cakes. But in that scenario of market-led regeneration and government-led regeneration respectively; two very different projects had the same response with respect to participation. That is lack of response from the residents, meaning that they saw it as a non-issue: we do not need it. We either weren't asked; but when asked, we did not feel that we need to participate.

- Externalities of cultural infrastructure projects
 - Property values
- GC:** I think they were not wise to resist it; they made money through the interest of these companies in their properties.
- Were they residents who were cut off from social inclusion? Maybe they were not used to being consulted? Then they may have made their sums and reasoned that property values were going to rise...
- Question*
- WJM:** So what we are saying is that they did not see the project as detrimental to themselves. Should they have seen the project as detrimental to their status quo then there may have been more interest in participation.
- Apathy towards participation
 - Lack of social inclusion
- GC:** Possibly, but they may have still been apathetic because they are not the kind of people who are consulted or cared for in society. I mean the residents there aren't really involved in decision making; it's a low education area. They are not used to participate. They are not part of the system of representation.
- Question*
- WJM:** So it's not a question of simply asking them to participate but one of culture whereby if one feels that the representation is going to have weight enough to overcome a certain cynicism then one will participate.
- One last point is, how do you see the digital economy having an impact on planning in the future?
- Digital transition of spatial planning requires community preparation
 - Phasing is essential
- GC:** Hopefully we will avoid the digital tax which the EU seems intent on introducing; possibly it won't be on planning issues. Yes, when it comes to digital it's the usual things where we have a new and more effective tool which however can lead to greater inequalities possibly. So once again you've got to prepare your population to adequately take on this new approach. Phase it in gradually, leave old methods to run in parallel without any kind of discrimination between the two approaches; but just as the world is advancing, just as banking is going digital, just as shopping is going digital, planning should be going digital as well I suppose.
- Participation in statutory processes
 - Participation in statutory processes
 - GIS-based tools in spatial planning

Appendix B

HISTORY OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE MALTESE ISLANDS

The rise of Maltese national consciousness can be attributed to the events of 1798, when many Maltese were prompted into public demonstrations in the national interest. Commencing within the psyche of a small, educated group of locals, the issues at hand were such that prompted the mobilisation of the masses. This is not to say however that national consciousness was inexistent before this date. Records dating to the reign of Grandmaster Jean de Valette show that public demonstrations were held against his authoritarian regime and the threats to the rights afforded to the indigenous Maltese. Neither was Malta unaffected by the aura of Enlightenment that characterised the 18th century, being already closely affiliated with European states through the Order of St John. Indeed, the Maltese were signatory to a Declaration of Rights in 1802 (Mallia Milanes, 1988).

Early 18th century thinkers in the Age of Enlightenment were however already espousing their views at a time when Malta was very much under the strict administration of the Catholic Church and its institutions. Censorship by the Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition was the rule of the day, lecturers at the University had to profess allegiance to the Church and the clergy were omnipresent in the local population's daily life. Despite this despotic rule, some people from the middle classes of Malta in the 18th century travelled to Europe and studied at its top universities. They met and corresponded with liberal thinkers of the Age; and contrived to read texts that proposed a new societal order, these having been procured both with and often without the licence of the Inquisition (Ciappara, 2006).

The Maltese were somewhat supported in the pursuance of liberal literature by the mind-set of a series of Grand Masters in the 18th century who openly vied with the Holy See for sovereignty over Malta, most notably Grand Master Pinto (1741-1773). For all his enlightened ideals, Grand Master Pinto, though implementing social reform in Malta, was an absolutist ruler who demanded unflinching obedience from

his subjects. In his belief in ‘Enlightened Absolutism’, he ruled in a paternalistic manner based on patronage with titles and rewards being given to those who were of service to him, this overthrowing the old order of entitlement being a birth-right to the few.

In addition, there was a lack of understanding amongst much of the local population of the laws that governed them. These laws were not often abolished or renewed and led to an ineffectual legal code set aside opportunistically to make way for arbitrary legal interpretation. It was Grand Master de Rohan (1775-1797) who instigated legal reform in Malta but found formidable opposition from members of the legal profession of the day who had an interest in retaining the current state of play. This was a situation that was somewhat similarly replicated during proposed legal reforms by the British authorities during the period of British colonisation of Malta from 1800 to 1964 (Ciappara, 2006).

The struggle between Malta’s fledging political class and the British authorities during the early 19th century witnessed a drive by the Maltese to administer and control aspects of Malta’s governance, departing from allowing foreign rulers full rein of government. In contrast to the initial welcome of the British as deliverers, a difficult struggle ensued, with the degree of self-governance fluctuating during British rule and culminating in Malta gaining Independence in 1964 (Portelli, 2011; Frendo, 2012). Pirotta (2011, p. 33) sums up the situation succinctly when he states that “[t]he Maltese had sought and thought that they had secured the blessings of a benevolent paternalism only to discover that they had entrusted themselves to a form of benign despotism.”

The 1813 Constitution was signed in the light of Malta being considered little more than a strategic military fortress by the British, the Islands having become a Crown Colony in 1813; then confirmed as such by the Treaty of Paris in 1814 (Frendo, 2012). Government was in the hands of Malta’s Governor, Sir Thomas Maitland, though under the direction of a semblance of local governance. The Maltese however demanded an elected representative Council composed of Maltese business owners, professionals and land-owners (Portelli, 2011). The demand was based on the premises that Malta had had a *Consiglio Popolare* and quoted the provisions of the

Declaration of Rights of the Inhabitants of the Islands of Malta and Gozo which enshrined Maltese self-government under British rule and which had been signed in 1802. This was nevertheless not set up at this time (Cremona, 1994).

A consultative council was only set up after the 1835 Constitution was granted, albeit composed of nominated Maltese members and a British-born merchant sitting on the council. Though ineffectual in terms of elected representation, the setting up of the council gave credence to a growing following of political activism by the Maltese since it was due to two petitions in 1832 that the wheels had been set in motion to set up the council. A significant achievement by the council was the establishment of free press, which gave voice to the fledgling Maltese political factions (Portelli, 2011).

Political activism continued unabated, the clarion call of the flag-bearers being the issues of popular representation, in the belief that it was the only way for the interests of the Maltese to be safeguarded and promoted. The 1849 constitution saw the appointment of an eighteen-member Council of Government, composed of five British and five Maltese permanent members, with another eight elected local representatives (Portelli, 2011). This secured a permanent majority for the Council of Government and member majority for the Maltese and enshrined the principle of unanimity among the elected members in matters of local interest (Cremona, 1994). The outcome was greater local influence on the administration of civil affairs and an increasingly politically aware society across its entire spectrum; indeed, Malta was the first colony with elected representation. Even since these early forays into political activism, factions were formed, and animosities set in stone. The elected Maltese representatives were prone to bow down to personal piques, individual interests and factional rivalries, thereby failing to present a common front to the Council on matters of public interest (Portelli, 2011).

Not only did the British authorities had no interest in bettering the lives of the Maltese, either through economic gain or through education. Malta was a fortress and had to be treated solely as such, whilst ensuring the promotion of various British officials in the process. This state of affairs was regarded by adherents to the Anti-

Reform Party as abhorrent and looked towards Italy as a model for liberating forces; but others believed there was more to gain by the further Anglicisation of Malta, amongst them supporters of the Reform Party (Ganado A. , 2011).

The resulting 1887 Constitution was the most liberal so far, with the administration of local affairs and local revenue being governed by a majority of elected members; and matters related to security being excluded from this authority. The first general election was held in February-March 1888 and was a leap forward in the drive towards self-government (Ganado A. , 2011).

The drive towards self-government of the early 20th century had to overcome entrenched cultural beliefs of a population whose majority did not consider Malta to have the resources necessary to exist as a nation, without foreign colonial powers. Frendo (2012) holds that there was indeed a significant class division in Maltese society, this manifesting itself on the one hand in a set of people interested in political and economic matters, thereby participating actively in constitutional reform; and on the other hand in people who accepted the political situation within which they found themselves without believing that they were able to influence any change for the better. It seems that one's political affiliation and alliance to either the pro-British or pro-Italian faction was based upon the "complicated network of parochial, familiar and personal ties, occupations, interests, rivalries and jealousies" of "a substantially illiterate, fanatically religious and staunchly partisan electorate", this ultimately resulting in a colonial trajectory of ingrained patronage (Frendo, 2013, p. 195).

It is documented that not only did the British consider the local population ignorant of what is best for them, but that even a number of local politicians considered this to be the case, stating that the Maltese tended to accept the *status quo* with compliance. Noteworthy is the role of the political agitator who, when faced with people suffering unemployment and poverty, found it particularly easy to convince them that they can implicitly trust in his leadership to leave their present morass. The political manoeuvring at the time however did little to endear the electorate to the local political class; constant back and forth tactics having ushered in widespread

voter apathy, mistrust of politicians and ultimately no local representatives to whom to address their grievances. (Frendo, 2013).

The constitutional progress gained prior to 1921 is termed by Pirotta (2011, p. 34) as “minor constitutional concessions”; periodically granting the minimum possible to prevent open revolt in the overarching interest of the security of the fortress. The Maltese elite felt that they were an enlightened people and expected to be respected as such, but were in reality treated no different from a barely suppressed colonised people by their Imperial rulers. The ability to decide upon matters of local interest was a right to be forfeited at will, indeed as it was with the outbreak of the First World War (Pirotta J. M., 2011).

The 1921 Constitution set out a bi-governmental system, with the so-named Maltese Government to deal with matters of local interest and the British-led Maltese Imperial Government to deal with reserved matters such as security (Cremona, 1994). This constitution had been in discussion for some time when the 7th June 1919 riots took place; though the revolt did spur on the process and in some way instigate the wider political representation and electorate eligibility criteria that were achieved. The crux of the matter remained nonetheless that Britain was in no way ready to jeopardise its military position in the Mediterranean to grant greater autonomy to the Maltese (Frendo, 2012).

Pirotta (2011) holds nevertheless that the short lived 1921 Constitution (1921 – 1933) had important repercussions since it set the stage for the later development of Malta’s political party system, the secular divide and the matter of the language question. Ultimately, it was an exercise in political and administrative experience for a country which was as yet finding its feet in that respect. The suspension of the 1921 Constitution in 1933 heralded a time of keenly felt political regression for Malta, the press being limited, political meetings prohibited and a lack of self-government. This last measure, formally declared in 1936, sparked nationwide protest and marked a significant victory by the British to subdue the remaining manifestation of Italian presence in Malta, spurred undoubtedly by rising tensions in the run-up to the 2nd World War (Frendo, 2012). In fact, it was the 1921 Constitution

that the 1947 Constitution was based upon, this aiming to reverse the political regression which culminated during the war (Cremona, 1994).

It is to be noted that amongst the premises of this latter constitution was extension of suffrage to women (Cremona, 1994). In fact, the early-20th century was a time of increased awareness of social rights in Malta. Matters such as workers' compensation, trade unionism, emigration and investment in public institutions were hotly debated (Frendo, 2012). All this was happening in an aura of determined Anglicisation by the Maltese Imperial Government, targeting a rather homogenous Maltese society which was inured to the Italian-Maltese dichotomy in everyday life and to an inherent Mediterranean culture. As can be inferred, the pro-Italian nationalism that had to be overcome in favour of Anglicisation was a tough nut to crack. Fissures were evident only when the working class was assimilated into British-led industry, this constituting much of the meagre economic output of the Islands and centred upon the Dockyards. It was advisable to be pro-British and was indeed considered a sign of gratitude to one's bread-giver to be so (Frendo, 2012).

The late 1950s were characterised by the matter of Integration with Britain or Independence from Britain, resulting in riots and ultimately in the unanimous 1957 "break with Britain" resolution (Cremona, 1994). Speaking of political tactics in the mid-1950s, Pirotta writes that mobilising the masses by convincing them of their oppression was considered an effective means of achieving social change and that holding violent demonstrations was in the interest of social reform when political aims cannot be achieved by other means (Pirotta J. M., 1987). The role of a politician was that of a social reformer, using the means at his disposal. There were also cases of Maltese politicians boycotting initiatives made by the Maltese Imperial Government towards placating workers. A case in point is the question and answer information sessions posed as democratic fora on issues of significant socio-economic importance, such as the sale of the Dockyard in 1958. The Maltese felt that the fora were not a legitimate form of dialogue and that they were nevertheless excluded from decision-making (Pirotta J. M., 1987).

The Maltese Imperial Government, on the other hand, used belittling tactics towards Maltese legislators. Quoting the case of the long-awaited development plan, efforts

in this respect went unrecognised whilst much needed development projects were nevertheless carried out in the absence of a plan, with the sole authority of the Maltese Imperial Government. These projects included continued post-war reconstruction, a civil harbour, industrial estates, housing estates and tourism infrastructure (Pirota J. M., 1987). It is to be noted that the impact of these projects on the quality of life of the Maltese and on the overall economic development of the Islands was extensive and may have therefore been justifiably considered to be matters for dialogue with the Maltese Government.

Frendo (2012) states that cultural nationalism can be a more turbulent force than economic unrest. In Malta however, both the cultural and the economic spheres were undergoing seismic shifts, thereby resulting in a force which was difficult for the Maltese Imperial Government to control and subdue. The 1964 Constitution, which granted Malta independence from Britain, was therefore a result of a long-standing and heated political debate between one faction which favoured integration with Britain and another which favoured the development of Malta as an independent sovereign state. This constitution was in part a reaction to the stringent 1961 Constitution based on a state of public emergency on the Islands, but which was seen as regressive for Malta and therefore unacceptable to the Maltese (Cremona, 2011).

Britain having accepted the proposal for independence made by Malta in 1962, a draft Independence Constitution was drafted by J.J. Cremona, a local jurist, and endorsed by the Maltese public through a referendum. It is noted that approval for the move towards Independence was only achieved following much political manoeuvring with the Labour Opposition and the other three parties represented in Parliament. Indeed, the Constitution was only approved with a slim margin at the Parliament at Westminster as well as within the Maltese Parliament and in the local referendum. Nevertheless, sovereignty was granted on the 21st September 1964 (Mifsud Bonnici, 2011). Free elections were enshrined in the constitution under the 'one person, one vote, one value' principle based on freedom of expression, secret ballot and equality (Cremona, 1994).

Following Independence, Malta's political parties soon embarked upon discussions characterising the political history of the early 1970s, during which time the Labour

Party was elected into Government and immediately sought to revoke the 1964 Constitution. Ongoing negotiations centred upon matters of concern between the Nationalist Party who had ushered in Independence and the Labour Party with its reservations regarding the new constitution. They however also brought to the fore an important matter of consensus, doubtless due to the skilled Maltese negotiators on both sides of the debate; that is, that Malta should become a Republic headed by a President. This was indeed ratified in 13th December 1974, upon which Malta was created and henceforth known as the Republic of Malta (Mifsud Bonnici, 2011).

Appendix C

MAPS PRODUCED DURING THE PARTICIPATORY MAPPING WORKSHOP





Appendix D

LIVING CITIES LIVEABLE SPACES PROGRAMME



Living Cities, Liveable Spaces: Placemaking & Identity

**Valletta 2018 Fourth International Conference
22 – 24 November 2017 Valletta, Malta**

Programme

WEDNESDAY 22ND NOVEMBER 2017

16:00 Registration

Opening session - Hope and the City

Moderator: Jonas Büchel, hosted by the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany

Rapporteur: Dr Ann Laenen

16:30 Introductions

16:40 Opening address by Jason Micallef, Valletta 2018 Foundation Chairman

16:50 Address by Hon. Dr Deo Debattista, Parliamentary Secretary for Consumer Protection and Valletta 2018

17:00 Serendipity and the Future of the City
Prof. Dr Sebastian Olma

17:30 Quality of Life in Malta - Some reflections on the impact of the ECoC in 2018
Dr Marie Briguglio

18:00 Q&A

18:20 Presentation of Valletta 2018 Cultural Programme
Joanne Attard Mallia, Valletta 2018 Programme Coordinator, and Mario Philip Azzopardi, Artistic Director Special Events

19:00 Conference way forward & end of day 1

20:30 Welcome dinner at the Grandmaster's Palace

THURSDAY 23RD NOVEMBER 2017

08:30 Registration (continued)

Plenary session - The Other City

Moderator: Caldon Mercieca

Rapporteur: Dr Ann Laenen

- 09:00 Placemaking Events & Urban Renewal
Prof. Franco Bianchini
- 09:30 Sports Accessible for All
Bjorn Vassallo
- 10:00 Urban renewal through Mucem
Mikael Mohamed
- 10:30 Q&A
- 10:50 Coffee break
- 11:20 New participatory urban culture - a case study of Helsinki
Jaakko Blomberg
- 11:50 Ġewwa Barra: creatively relating inside and outside
Dr Victor Jacono
- 12:20 Bar Europa
Dr Michele Gerace
- 12:50 Q&A
- 13:10 Introduction to Mapping for Change workshop
- 13:30 Lunch
La Valette Band Club

15:00 Parallel sessions

Future Cities:

- Mario Balzan – *Ecology for the city: analysing the role of green infrastructure in creating liveable cities in the future*
- Ido Shelem & Erica Dyson – *Branding peripheral communities from the inside-out*
- Tugce Karatas – *The spirit of utopian optimism for critical urbanism*
- Reuben Grima – *Commoditising Valletta: private profit & public impoverishment*
- Asma Mehan - *Urban Branding Politics in Post-Fordist Cities: the case of Turin, Italy*
- Nicola Mullenger – *Co-making the city*

Moderator: Caldon Mercieca

Rapporteur: Carole Pietrzak

Branding a Liveable City:

- Maria Cerreta & Simona Panaro – *Cliento Labscape: a living lab approach for local innovation networks*
- Michele Trimarchi, Federica Antonucci & Valeria Morea – *Invisible art: redrawing the map of contemporary art in Milan*
- Su Fern Hoe – *City as canvas: the policy and practice of creative placemaking in Singapore*
- Tim Steiner & Ricardo Baptista – *Creative orchestras and cultural identity*
- Anna Formosa – *Darba Wahda...the beginning of a story*

Moderator: Guna Garokalna
Rapporteur: Michael Deguara

Creative Diplomacy:

- Alex Vella Gregory – *City narratives in music*
- Georgios Papaioannou & Sofia Poulimenou – *EU-funded programmes, cultural diplomacy and sustainable international cultural relations; the case of Corfu*
- Nicholas Bertrand – *Chóros*
- Marta Sant – *Knitted communities and soft power*
- Sandra Hall – *Creative, ethical ways of working and engaging grassroots communities in place-making challenges*

Moderator: Prof. Franco Bianchini
Rapporteur: Adrian Debattista

17:00 End of day 2

20:30 Networking activity - bar-hopping in Valletta

FRIDAY 24TH NOVEMBER 2017

09:00 Parallel sessions

Future Cities:

- Yassine Bada & Ismail Chaib – *Syntactic study of the impact of enclosure on spatial use and social life in in-between spaces; a case study from Bejaia, Algeria*
- Wendy-Jo Mifsud – *Public participation GIS in Valletta*
- Steve Cassar Montebello – *Analysing active mobility through participatory urbanism: understanding bicycle users' concerns through practical citizen science in Malta*
- Meltem Şentürk Asildeveci – *Re-reading the image of cities through ICTs*
- Giovanni Campus – *The soft power of street theatre: local events, rites, rhythms and synchronization of communities*

Moderator: Caldon Mercieca
Rapporteur: Adrian Debattista

Branding a Liveable City:

- Rita Orlando – *Open Design School, Matera 2019*
- Ruth Bianco – *MICAS: a mechanism to connect worlds, empower art relations and expression in nation branding*
- Alissia Razziano – *From the industrial to the post-industrial society: Charleroi and Liège, the conversion of two cities through cultural means*
- Maureen Cole & Daniel Mercieca – *"Fil-Beraħ" (In the Open): towards a methodology for children's involvement in the management of public space*
- Oleg Koefoed – *Wiring and wilding in Copenhagen – commonizing for urban nature and place-branding with "NaTur I Byen"*

Moderator: Guna Garokalna
Rapporteur: Michael Deguara

Challenging Times:

- Pamela Baldacchino, Benna Chase & Ann Laenen – *The evolution journey: living with illness and death within society*
- JosAnn Cutajar & John Vella – *Tensions and relations on the use and exchange of place*
- David Mountain & Valmira Istrefi – *The intercultural legacy of privatisation and decentralisation: civil society organisations in Struga and southwest Macedonia*
- Anna Arvanitaki – *Reading Hatto's diary of Malta with an eye on cities, cultural capitals, challenging times*

Moderator: Prof. Franco Bianchini
Rapporteur: Carole Pietrzak

11:00 Coffee break
11:30 Mapping for Change workshop
13:30 Lunch
La Valette Band Club

15:00 **Closing session**

Moderator: Jonas Büchel, hosted by the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany
Rapporteur: Dr Ann Laenen

15:00 Design & place-branding
Dr Tricia Austin
15:30 Closing workshop
16:40 Closing remarks by Catherine Tabone, Valletta 2018 Foundation Executive Director
16:50 Conclusions
17:00 Tour of the National Museum of Archaeology
20:30 Networking activity - brass band concert

Appendix E

MAPPING SHEETS DISTRIBUTED TO PARTICIPANTS OF THE WALKABOUT

Appendix F

ANALYSIS OF STATUTORY REPRESENTATIONS

Case reference	Representee	Type of Submission	Thematic codes	Focussed codes
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Valletta Design Cluster at il-Biccerija

PA/0137/13	Flimkien ghal Ambjent Ahjar (NGO)	Objection to development as proposed	Lack of adequate spatial plans for Valletta Generation of traffic Building heights of new developments	Policy lacuna Traffic generation Height increase
PA/0137/13	Miriam Cremona (NGO – copy of above submission)	Objection to development as proposed	Lack of adequate spatial plans for Valletta Generation of traffic Building heights of new developments	Policy lacuna Traffic generation Building height increase

Valletta Indoor Market

PA/3215/16	hlantun@gmail.com (Resident)	Objection to development as proposed	Proximity of pollution-generating uses to residential frontages	Pollution generation
PA/3215/16	D. Mulholland (Resident)	Objection to development as proposed	Proximity of noise-generating uses to residential frontages Overlooking into residential rooms	Noise generation Overlooking

PA/3215/16	Perit M. Sullivan obo D. Barbara; I. Barbara (Architect obo residents)	Objection to development as proposed	Proximity of noise-generating uses to residential frontages Overlooking into residential rooms	Noise generation Overlooking
PA/3215/16	M. Sullivan (Resident)	Concern on process followed	Lack of consideration of certain issues by Superintendence of Cultural Heritage	Development control process
PA/3215/16	Din l-Art Helwa (NGO)	Objection to development as proposed; Concern on process followed	Change in building profile of Grade 1 Scheduled Property Proximity of noise-generating uses to residential frontages Overlooking into residential rooms Major changes to proposal after expiry of statutory representation period Proposed reduction in permeability of the site	Building height increase Noise generation Overlooking Development control process
PA/2370/15	P. Buttigieg obo P&J Co. Ltd. (Retailer)	Objection to development as proposed	Loss of shop currently in operation	Ownership

PA/2370/15	E. Aquilina, D. Aquilina, M. Aquilina, L. Mangion (Residents)	Suggestions for mitigation of externalities	Noise pollution Traffic generation Construction nuisance	Noise generation Traffic generation Pollution generation
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Strait Street Art, Culture & Entertainment Hub

PA/1946/17	Ministry for Competitiveness and Digital, Maritime and Services Economy (Statutory entity)	Request for information	Proposed provision of area for outdoor catering	Outdoor catering
PA/0948/17	Architecture Project obo Quadron Establishments Ltd. (Architect obo retailer)	Concern on process followed	Proposed provision of area for outdoor catering	Outdoor catering
PA/0941/17	Perit J. Mugliett obo J. Falzon (Architect obo retailer)	Concern on process followed	Proposed provision of area for outdoor catering	Outdoor catering
PA/2382/15	Anonymous	Objection to development as proposed	Proposed provision of area for outdoor catering	Outdoor catering
PA/2382/15	Rehabilitation Projects Office (Statutory entity)	Objection to development as proposed	Visibility of proposed signage, flue, timber screen and canopies	Street clutter

PA/1745/14	Din l-Art Helwa (NGO)	Objection to development as proposed	Proposed loss of historic fabric through redevelopment	Heritage impact
PA/1745/14	Flimkien ghal Ambjent Ahjar (NGO)	Objection to development as proposed	Resultant fumes through proposed change of use Proximity of noise-generating uses to residential frontages	Pollution generation Noise generation
PA/1745/14	Perit P. Camilleri obo J. Azzopardi (Architect obo retailer)	Concern on process followed	Lack of consistency in recommended decision Increase in height due to proposed redevelopment	Process Height increase
PA/1745/14	Architecture Project (Architect)	Concern on process followed	Failure to inform registered stakeholder of publication of DPAR and date of hearing	Process
PA/2945/12	Flimkien ghal Ambjent Ahjar (NGO)	Objection to development as proposed	Increase in height due to proposed redevelopment	Height increase