

Capturing Lived Experience in Locality

A Socio-spatial Characterisation of Floriana from an Older Residents' Perspective

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Dedicated to my grandmother and late grandfather,
for their endless love and our shared adventures in place

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I take full responsibility for any shortcomings in this dissertation.

Abstract

As our age demographics shift further towards an ageing population, exploring the possibilities to accommodate this shift becomes necessary. The dissertation focuses on the relationship between older residents in Floriana and their relationship with their neighbourhood, both physical and social and how this relationship is changing as they grow older. The research looks into the important role of ageing in place, and the benefits of allowing a population to do so, as well as the requirements for ageing in place to be possible. This is done through a review of literature as well as direct observation, and several sedentary and go-along interviews with older residents in Floriana to look into their perceptions and experiences in the locality, and how the locality is enabling them to age in place. The results of the research show that through a supportive and enabling environment, an older population is self-sufficient through inter-dependence with their immediate environment and other residents with whom they have had long-term relationships that have come about through shared past experiences in place. The residents expressed gratitude towards having had the opportunity to age in place due to the affordances that Floriana offers for them to do so. The research is presented as a case study as to how neighbourhoods should be adapted to ensure the long-term liveability of residents in place.

Keywords: Older adults, Ageing in Place, Memory, Familiarity, Public Space, Locality

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1.0 Introduction:

1.1 The Context

Like many other Western countries, our country is characterised by an ageing population, which brings several challenges for the individual and the welfare state (National Statistics Office, 2021). The modern neighbourhood segregates the residential from any public space. It privatises any open space left over, simply because for contemporary society the neighbourhood is no longer a pillar for social connectedness.

However, in the case of older individuals who might have a decreased mobility radius, the neighbourhood remains the centre for all social interactions, so if there are no places for these exchanges to occur then these people will become isolated from the rest of society (Holland, Clark, Katz and Peace, 2007). Due to a lack of planning for inclusive public spaces and built typologies within neighbourhoods, these people are confined to their homes, depleting their physical and social health (Alidoust and Bosman, 2015).

The study looks into how the neighbourhood case study Floriana can enable ageing in place and how in turn ageing in place can enable the neighbourhood residents through their own experiences in locality and shared experiences with other residents. Through a proper plan for active ageing in place, older residents can continue to live in a supportive and familiar environment which offers them comfort throughout the ageing process. However, to be able to do this existing neighbourhoods must be studied to extract the properties that promote or hinder ageing in place.

1.2 Rationale and Research Motivation

My interest in looking at ageing in place and the qualities that enable this process stemmed from my own grandparents' ability to age in place. Their attachment to their locality Floriana and their daily life experiences helped them to stay in touch with their surroundings both because they wanted to and because the environment was inclusive and enabling. For this reason, the research became an attempt to encapsulate the qualities a neighbourhood and its population require to enable its residents to age in place.

This was studied through informal sedentary and go-along interviews with several older residents in the locality and direct observations using photography. The methodology approach was

inductive in nature due to the subjective nature of the environmental perceptions of the individual. I acknowledge that no one ages in the same way, and the ability to age in place is based on the physical and social attributes associated with the neighbourhood by the particular individual. Still, because everyone ages differently there may be other factors that determine whether an individual can age in place such as chronic illnesses and financial burdens.

1.3 The Research Questions and Objectives

The purpose of the study is to capture the lived experiences of older residents, both past and present which have led to their attachment and ageing in place in Floriana. These lived experiences include interactions between residents and the surrounding neighbourhood and how these relationships affect their perception of the neighbourhood.

The research aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the requirements for a neighbourhood to allow ageing in place?
2. How can enabling neighbourhoods influence the lived experiences of older residents?

Based on the above research questions the study aims to tackle the following objectives:

1. Identify the physical and social factors in the neighbourhood that allow its population to age in place
2. Capture the lived experiences of older residents as a result of an enabling environment that allows ageing in place

1.4 Dissertation Structure

Chapter 2 consists of a review of literature which explores the temporality of the modern world and the importance of the neighbourhood in forming meaningful relationships in place. This is especially important for older residents whereby the neighbourhood might be the only platform for social interaction beyond the personal home.

Chapter 3 presents the methodology used to carry out the research to capture the lived experiences of older residents in Floriana in a manner that does not impede on their daily practices. It also describes the approach used to analyse the data recorded during the data collection phase.

Chapter 4 presents the results from the data collection, including the go-along interviews and sedentary interviews with relevant places mapped out to give a better understanding of the participants' lived experiences in place. These are accompanied by photos taken during the go-along interviews as well as photos taken during my own personal walks in the locality.

Chapter 5 discusses the results of the data gathered and extracts the key physical, social and economic qualities of the neighbourhood that allows ageing in place, as well as the lived experiences of residents that have resulted from these affordances.

Chapter 6 summarises the main findings of the research, explaining limitations that were encountered and future studies that can help take the research further.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Today's Day and Age: Blurred Faces and the Temporary Present

Modern society is an ironic society. We live in the most secure cities that have ever existed and yet we are more afraid of the world outside of our homes, which we have turned into our own personal fortresses. Our modern society has removed our tightly-knit communities whose security was based on the familiarity of the community participants themselves. Our social forms have moved from a solid to a liquid phase, unbound and unfamiliar due to their ever-changing nature (Bauman, 2007). The liquid modern is used to describe constant mobility and change seen in relationships, identities, and global economies in our contemporary societies (Mattiuzzi and Vila-Petroff, 2021). Liquid modernity creates a darkness, as described by Hewer (2022), where the importation of sociological imagination is emphasised, and personal troubles are being directly linked and understood as emerging public issues.

The present scenario of the city segregates the residential from public space and privatises any open space that is left over. This is the dream for the developer and the resident who has mixophobia¹ anxieties, but this segregation is what triggers these anxieties. Packard (1972) describes today's societies as nations of strangers, devoid of community identity. Technology and increased mobility have enabled us to be physically in place but not socially in place. Our proximity to others has now become less important as our scope of interest and activity expand to the metropolitan scale (Hawley, 1973). As our lives become more centred around consumption and individualisation, people become mere temporary connections with no solidity, relationships that are as frail and liquid as the lives we now inhabit (Hewer, 2022). Our world is a container for infinite possibilities that can bring joy or sorrow, adventures or horrors depending on the individual and his skills and ability to deal with risk (Bauman, 2000).

The importance of the neighbourhood rests on its role in the social involvement of its residents. Time living in our neighbourhood and surrounding public spaces are some of the most crucial factors influencing neighbourhood sociability (Link, Senoret and Venezuela, 2022). For most of us, our social spaces are beyond our neighbourhoods or in cyberspace, due to the wide availability of technology to connect us to the rest of the world. Public familiarity has replaced local social ties in the modern-day neighbourhood, negatively affecting our sense of belonging (Link et al., 2022).

¹Mixophobia refers to the fear of social exchange and strangers.

However, in the case of older individuals who are more likely to have a decreased mobility radius the neighbourhood remains the pillar of social connectedness. If then, there are no places for interaction these people are then bound to be isolated from the rest of society (Holland, Clark, Katz and Peace, 2007).

2.2 The Insiders and Outsiders of Locality and its Spaces and Places

Spatial planning is concerned with the bigger picture, and the power struggles can be on a global scale as well as on the scale of the city. The politics of planning are however often played out on a local scale, in that “contemporary cities are the stages for battlegrounds on which global powers and stubbornly local meanings and identities meet, clash, struggle and seek a satisfactory, or just bearable settlement” (Bauman, 2007, p.81). Here, Bauman (2007) brings to light the paradox that despite our global problems our task should be to find local solutions.

The people at the local level are the ones who fully understand the dynamics of the neighbourhood. These are the insiders of place, whose life interests lie within their neighbourhood, so their horizons of reach from home lie within the extent of the neighbourhood (Buttimer, 1980). Conversely, if a person’s interests (social areas and also workplace) lie beyond the neighbourhood they may be considered outsiders, due to them physically being in one place, but their horizons of reach beyond their city or neighbourhood. This relationship is illustrated below (Figure 1).

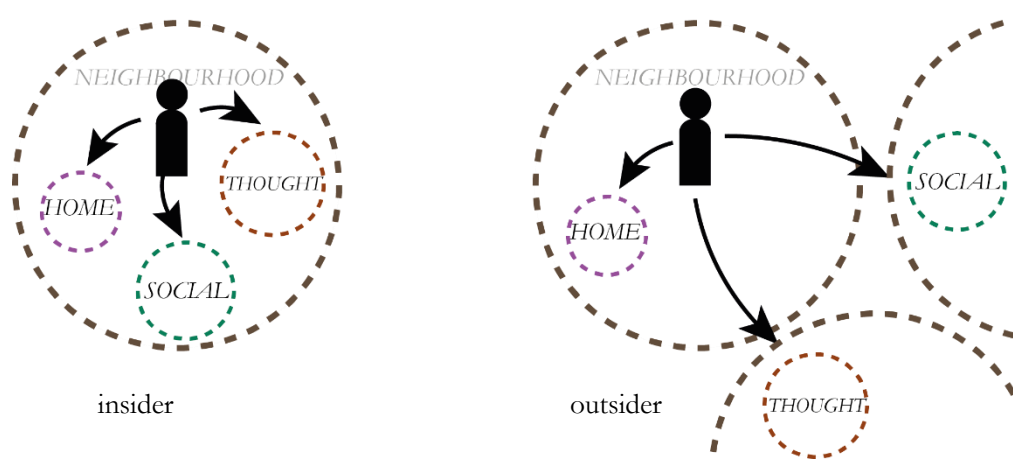


Figure 1: Diagram illustrating the insiders and outsiders of locality source: author

The question we need to ask then is what life processes cause the centralisation and decentralisation of neighbourhoods. Why would people want to become insiders or outsiders of place? Buttner (1980) points out that every user experience is subjective, but in order to understand and promote the centralisation of people in neighbourhoods, the planner must ensure the long-term efficacy of the plan by re-introducing the creative input of those which are at the local level.

Just as a conductor guides their orchestra, insiders of place guide and control their own lives as well as the social structures they form a part of (Dickens, 1990). Their presence within the community makes them active participants, with a developed understanding of the socio-spatial dynamics of their environment. Matoré (as cited in Relph, 1976, p.10) explains that space is not only grasped by our senses, but we also live in it, project our own personalities into it, and are tied to it by emotional ties. It is not only perceived but also lived. Place doesn't just tie people to the physical space, but also ties people together. Space can be explained through three components: the absolute (physical and material) aspect of space which represents the physical and measurable characteristics of space, and the stage on which social interaction takes place. The second component is the relative aspect, the relationship between any two things in space, which is immeasurable and based on the affordances that the space offers. The third criteria is the relational, which contradicts the relative by being immeasurable by objective criteria due to its subjective and dynamic nature (Lefebvre, 1991 and Pamporis and Micheli, 2021).

Lefebvre states that "space is never empty: it always embodies meaning", (1991, p.154). It enables people capable of being situated, through which they can then create situations among themselves as they co-exist together (Leibniz as cited in Low, 2017). The space becomes the place then, what a word becomes when it is spoken, it has a meaning and interpretation as it is uttered in the present (Merleau-Ponty as cited in Auge', 1995).

2.3 Place and Attachment

These common past experiences are what tie community members together, memories as a part of a collective social identity, resulting in a collective pride and sometimes a romanticised set of memories (Mitchell, 2002). This type of environment was seen in past communities in Malta such as that of slum areas in Valletta like the Arcipierku, where Mitchell (2002) explains that memory is linked to our social identities, stating that it “should be seen as an active process that works on data from the past, transforming it and shaping it to the needs of the present” (2002, p.39). In the case of slums in Valletta, there was a combination of personal and social memory, resulting in a collective memory which was shared by inhabitants. This shared memory is what allowed these communities to live on after the demolition of the slum areas. People’s social ties were no longer linked geographically but had to live on through collective memory and social events in Valletta which brought people back together. The slum residents had become outsiders, dispersed throughout the island (Mitchell, 2002).

Mitchell (2002) in his anthropological studies of Valletta, adopted the routine of the Maltese as his own with time, making him feel part of our community. The place started to become meaningful to him, giving him a form of “*inside-ness*”. This is because the terms “*insider*” and “*outsider*” are not blanket terms but can be used to describe the spectrum of experience intensity (Relph, 1976). An attachment to place can only come from meaning, and this meaning is derived from the routines of the everyday. Only then can memory and attachment between place and people be formed and nurtured (Relph, 1976).

Place attachment processes are collective, relational, and embodied, experienced through social memory and sensorial registers. It can be personal, and become part of the sense of self, or shared and part of a collective identity (Degnen, 2016). It is the shared memory that makes or breaks feelings of belonging and place attachment. What bonds people is time together and shared experiences which lead to collective memory. Place attachment is complex, and what is interesting is how older residents form behavioural and cognitive ties to their environments. Rowles describes this bond as an “insideness” which consists of physical, social, and autobiographical “insideness” (as cited in Degnen, 2016). The combination of these is what constitutes place attachment. The autobiographical type refers to the way a person narrates their connection to a place, building an identity through their life experiences in locales within their local environment. The symbolism people associate with space enables the imaginary space to exist, giving the possibility of seeing present spaces differently due to their personal or shared meaning. Pamporis and Micheli (2021)

explain the relationship between person and space further by viewing the person in space as the reader and the space itself as the information, free to be interpreted by the readers, hence rendering it as non-static.

2.4 Place Perceptions, Ageing and Memory

Spaces change with time, but so do we. Some of our abilities start to degrade with age and our radius of access grows smaller as the world progresses, leaving us behind (Phillips et al., 2013). Our reliance on our immediate surroundings grows, which makes us ask, what will happen then if there is no environment that supports ageing residents, all the while an ageing population continues to rise locally and in many developed countries? (National Statistics Office, 2021). The WHO lists lack of physical activity as a global risk factor, especially in older adults. This is the dilemma faced by many older adults who due to a lack of proper planning for inclusive spaces within neighbourhoods are confined to their own homes, depleting their physical and social health (World Health Organisation, 2010 and Alidoust and Bosman, 2015). Our mind changes as we age. Stereotypically, older adults are seen as having more wisdom and more knowledge in general but are slower at thinking things through (Stuart-Hamilton, 2012). Our fluid intelligence (reasoning capabilities) starts to decline during our thirties, while our crystallised intelligence, which is based on our intuition and gut feelings increases up until our seventies when it then starts to decline again, leading to an overall greater difficulty in decision-making. It is because of this that older adults get confused more easily and look for more straightforward solutions. Due to crystallised intelligence being more present in our later years of life our semantic memory remains intact and our brain is still resilient to remember facts and information. Due to our crystallised intelligence increasing with time studies have also shown that older adults are better than younger adults at recalling facts of data within our semantic memory (Stuart-Hamilton, 2012). It has also been shown that older individuals still have access to their fluid intelligence, but they choose to save it for important decisions (Hollingworth and Barker, 2015).

Ribot's hypothesis brings forward the notion that an older person's memory relating to recent events should be worse than for remote ones (Ribot as cited in Stuart-Hamilton, 2012). Stuart-Hamilton (2012) explains this hypothesis by comparing the brain to a deep tank, where water which represents memories is deposited. When the tank is full the water closest to the surface is lost first, while the more embedded memory remains (Stuart-Hamilton, 2012). There have been

experiments that disprove this theory, where older adults have shown to have better short-term memory than long-term memory (Stuart-Hamilton, 2012). However, these studies all relate to general life experiences that might not have been as meaningful and so less embedded into the brain. Memory does degrade with age in general, but some have suggested that producing a positive idea of ageing can deter memory loss and the negatives of growing old (Stuart-Hamilton, 2012).

A positive aspect of aging however is that older individuals tend to worry less and focus on the positive, stemming from their late stages in life. They don't have to reach goals and meet deadlines, enabling them to focus on the more positive aspects of their lives, and on their meaningful relationships due to an awareness of life being closer to its end than its beginning (Hollingworth and Barker, 2015).

The term social health entails both the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of interpersonal ties between people and the extent of their involvement in their communities. In order to sustain these relationships priority must be given to access, physical and perceived safety as well as walkability (Alidoust and Bosman, 2015). However, there must be places of significance to go to that create opportunities for interactions. Jacobs (1961) highlights that shorter blocks help create a greater perceived safety due to a greater chance of encountering people at intersections. Natural surveillance and well-kept spaces also help improve physical and perceived safety, while the ability to connect with people visually and through listening to people, specifically helps older people feel less alone (Alidoust and Bosman, 2015).

Older individuals, however, despite the changes in neighbourhood spaces have the choice to focus on the meaningful past that once was their lived experience in place. This is called "Socioemotional Selective Theory" which is the process or decision made by older individuals to focus on the positive experiences of place in their pasts to tolerate the negative and discriminating environments we are creating today (Hollingworth and Barker, 2015). Their experiences, personal or shared, created ownership through involvement in the creation of these daily lived experiences (Rowles, 1980). Their experiences are direct and present within their environment, making them part of it (Pamporis and Micheli, 2021).

The neighbourhood, to its residents, is more than physical space, but is a distinguished social space to those who care enough to form part of it. This social space is shaped by places known in high levels of detail that act as anchoring points within the neighbourhood (Rowles, 1980). These places generate shared feelings for space among its residents, reinforced by interactions that generate belonging and continuity within the community that shares a past.

This shared past is meaningful and becomes part of our collective memory in space, memories that are superimposed onto the composition of place. We can say that as we age, we will have a bigger attachment to places, those which were spaces in our lives and have become the places of our lives, a part of our life narrative (Rowles and Bernard, 2013). It is this feeling that offers solace for older individuals who are adjusting to environmental changes as a result of modernity. However, older adults can choose to relive their past experiences in place through memory. Studies have shown that these images of place become intertwined with a person's sense of self (Rowles, 1980). These people can go back in time to their lived experiences because they lived through the history of the place. Therefore, to understand the dynamics of place one must document these people's first-hand experience before the generation dies out. It is only through learning about a place's past that we can plan for a positive future, together with those who have experienced both the present and the past, the true experts (Rowles, 1980). As succinctly stated by Godkin (1980):

“Human behaviour and experience can only be understood by examining the interdependencies between an individual and his or her environment... As behavioural geographers and environmental psychologists begin to understand the nature and variations in place experiences for different groups of people, they can become integrally involved in the planning of human environments which reinforce experiences fostering a sense of wellbeing.”

(Godkin, 1980, p.84)

2.5 Spaces for Ageing, Better Spaces for Everyone

Gehl (2011) brings up the notion that public space is used for the necessary, optional, and social activities of day-to-day life. However, the quality of the outdoor space will determine how much time people will want to spend there and plays a key role in shaping whether people can live independently as they age. Older adults' cognitive abilities are harder for them to cope with as they age, and studies have shown that social activities and an active lifestyle in a familiar neighbourhood have positive influences on a person's cognitive abilities (Cassarino and Setti, 2016). Therefore, to include older individuals in the social scene the environment must be inclusive and attractive enough for them to want to be there (Verma and Huttunen, 2015).

Studies have shown that green spaces help strengthen neighbourhood ties, helping older residents feel less lonely and more socially supported. These spaces are termed “third places” (Oldenburg, 1999) because they are not our homes (first place) or school or work (second place), but a place

where any person can go to socialise, providing people with social experiences and interactions. These places must be close to home or work and be easy to access to become a springboard for social interaction, especially for older adults who may have a smaller mobility radius. Busier streets inhibit this access, isolating them from these spaces and others, once again limiting their opportunities for new social experiences (Alidoust and Bosman, 2015).

These connections help instil belonging in neighbourhood residents constituting a geographical/local community. This community can be either one of interest and or psychological. This is when people share an emotional connection, shared values, and interdependence (Roffey, 2013). A positive environment brings out the best in its users, fulfilling their psychological need to belong, providing opportunities for social connections and relatedness, and a sense of social security (Roffey, 2013).

Place attachment in later life has its benefits, including a better quality of life, an increased sense of belonging and a good reinforcement of personal identity (Peace, Holland, and Kellaheer, 2004). It is so crucial for self-identity and belonging that place becomes a key factor affecting our well-being, both physical and mental as we age (Rubinstein and Parmelee as cited in Degnen, 2016). Enabling people to age in place in a familiar environment, such as their hometown can mitigate for their depleting cognitive and physical abilities, increasing their confidence and engagement in their environment (Phillips et al., 2013). In this way, their environment is almost an extension of their homes, and they can still venture out into their neighbourhoods comfortably without getting lost. This type of ageing in place is recommended for older individuals who have dementia, due to their home environment being the most known to them (Mitchell, Burton, and Raman, 2004). Studies have shown that experiences of disorientation and getting lost with dementia patients ageing in place occur most frequently where there are several crossings or high levels of noise and large moving vehicles which cause overstimulation (Mitchell et al., 2004).

A familiar environment guides older adults' routine behaviours and reinforces their mind maps of the spaces around them, a behaviour which replaces their now depleting cognitive and sensory abilities (Kastenbaum, 1980; Norris-Baker and Scheidt, 1989 as cited in Rowles and Bernard, 2013). It has been proven that older people who age in their own homes with support from family and friends maintain increased independence and control over their lives, while also having greater self-respect and more positive effects on their overall health (Baysal, Aktas and Bakan, 2020).

This routine gives them an attachment to space, so much so that it becomes a part of them. It is for this reason that ageing in place helps create more resilient communities, people can support each other and engage in their environments, distracting them from the negatives of ageing and

enabling them to live as independently as possible for as long as they can in a familiar environment (Baysal, et al., 2020). In this way, people can age “successfully” in the sense that people feel less like their actual age due to positive physiological, social, and psychological factors brought about by good health, and support from their surrounding environment (Baysal et al., 2020).

In conclusion, the literature discussed in this chapter presents older individuals as a valuable age demographic and an increasingly common demographic in developed countries, putting forward the need to design better spaces that support ageing in place. Modernity has led to egoistic and consumeristic development, leaving those who struggle to keep up with the times behind. Ageing is inevitable, and we all stand a chance to benefit from spaces becoming less discriminatory against the older individuals.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 The Research Context

Floriana was selected as the research location due to its diversity of open spaces and an ageing community, making it an ideal locality to research how relationships with meaningful spaces change as we age. The locality also has a rich history and a unique morphology because of its role in being a defence system for the capital city, Valletta. Floriana came to exist first as a form of military defence to Valletta, with the construction of the Floriana Lines in 1650. This was its main purpose and because of it built forms were kept to a minimum so as not to obstruct sight lines from the land front. In 1724 Floriana was planned to become a residential town, with a grid-iron layout with restricted building heights (Thake, 2024).

The urban scheme is a reproduction of that of Valletta, whereby the blocks set into the street network are classified as neighbourhoods (Scaglione, 2024). These are shown in Figure 2 below, where these neighbourhoods are also separated by the multiple gardens in the locality including the “Maglio” garden which was previously used for recreation for the knights of Malta (Thake, 2024), as well as the Argotti Botanic Gardens and St. Phillip’s Garden which are set on the bastions of the Floriana lines (Buhagiar, 2024).

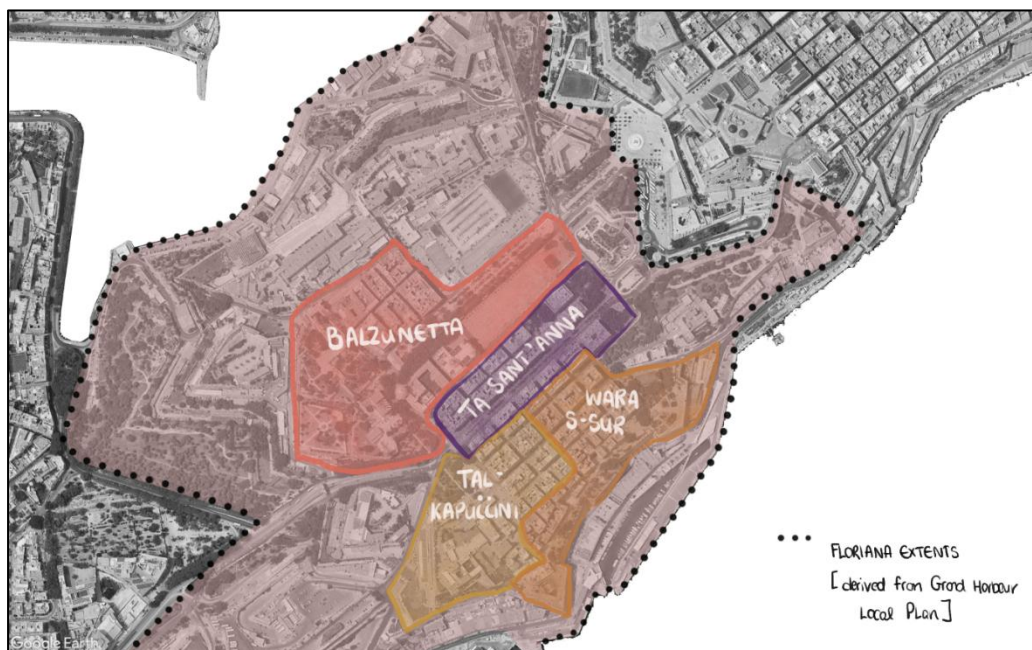


Figure 2: Floriana's extents and the locality's neighbourhoods.

Source: author

The built form of the town was shaped by wars throughout Malta's history, with its heyday being in the British period; by 1911 the Borgo Vilhena had over 7,400 inhabitants (National Statistics Office, 1912). The British became part of Floriana's community so much so that many British surnames are still present in the locality. The British also converted uses and particular streets into a form of red-light district, namely the Balzunetta area. The community of Balzunetta had a special relationship with the British, and their identity was shaped by the presence of British troops and the bars of the area.

The community behind the locality:

The term "furjaniz/a" refers to those born and raised in the locality, contributing to the community that many call iconic. It is described as:

"A closely-knit community, proud of its religious heritage and of its achievements in sports activities. The truly Floriana generations highly flattered themselves of being born and brought up in Floriana. The community was very appreciative of the many open spaces, gardens and magnificent views of the historical panoramas of the two harbours. The people were religiously united in worship of St. Publius, the patron saint of the district. They were also of one mind in the wholehearted support of the Floriana Football Teams."

(Bugeja, as cited in Xuereb, 2024).

The community of Floriana is attached to the artistic patrimony present in their churches, which include the church of Saint Publius which is listed as a Grade 1 monument and was reconstructed after the 1942 WW2 bombings, making it a crucial part of the locality's history (Xuereb, 2024). Some monuments such as the Granaries (il-Fosos) occupy pride of place even on a national level due to their adaptability for different events. Smaller locations such as Green Shutters Bar, The Maglio Gardens, Argotti Gardens and many other small shops have also survived the test of time, having become intertwined with the memories and collective identity of the Floriana community (Xuereb, 2024).

This hyper-local history which is associated with the physical attributes of the town represents the mythology of place which is woven into the identity of Floriana as the stories associated are told and carried on from generation to generation. However, the bombings of 28th April 1942 became a part of the collective memory of Floriana residents due to the severity of these bombs and the erasure of physical tokens of identity such as the Parish Church. This, as Xuereb (2024) explains is a reminder that the identities of communities do change with time and sometimes special

circumstances such as the one described; indeed no one can tell what this identity will look like in a hundred years.

The shaping of the identity of Floriana is specific because it was brought about by others, or rather an opposition of the identity of others (Xuereb, 2024). Kleinhofa brings about the notion that without another there is no me, so forming a more collective identity (us) will require the construction of a boundary that will differentiate one identity from another (as cited in Xuereb, 2024). In the case of Floriana, the other is the neighbouring capital Valletta. The proximity of the two has led to a competitive relationship between the two, which is also symbiotic since Floriana would have never existed if not to account for the needs of Valletta. The boundaries between the two territories can sometimes become ambiguous since many notable landmarks in Floriana are sometimes renamed or described to lie within the Valletta territory, such as the renaming of the Pinto Wharf to the Valletta Waterfront simply because Valletta is more notable in international circles (Bonello as cited in Xuereb, 2024).

The same argument is applied to the lion symbol of Floriana, obtained from Grandmaster Vilhena's coat of arms, which is at times contested by the people from Valletta. However, at present the competition between the two territories is felt most in sport, especially football which when the two are brought together roads in Floriana such as Saint Anne's Street are closed so that people supporting Valletta do not pass through. The friction sometimes even escalates up to a point where there are fights at the stadium, but more than that the stadium is where most of the people of Floriana, both those that live there and those that have moved away, come together once again.

Xuereb describes that there are more people from Floriana living outside the town than within the town itself (2024). Many people who were brought up on the streets of Floriana have moved away to live their adult life elsewhere, hence becoming 'furjanizi ta' barra'. However, these people choose to remain attached to the community in which they were brought up. Place here becomes more than a physical attribute, it has more to do with ideas, family and attachment (Xuereb, 2024). Attachment and association with place come from meaningful relationships, allowing for the immersion of a person into that particular context.

The resident population of Floriana has been declining since the 1930s. The WWII bombings left the locality in shambles, and many found refuge outside of the locality, prompting further migration out of the locality that has not stopped since then. The population was at just 2,014

people in 2011 with over 45% being over 45 years old. The trend continues, and the population now stands at 1,985 people (NSO, 2021).

Many buildings have been taken up by firms and public institutions. Many apartments are left empty because they require maintenance beyond the financial capabilities of young couples today, as well as being divided into several floors and unfit for modern-day living. The “Furjanizi with pedigree” that have lived there for most of their lives are growing older and dying out, and Xuereb (2024) describes the “Furjanizi ta’ Barra” as the only way for the locality to thrive in the next century. In fact, in the past 30 years or so it was these members of the community that have had a major role to play in keeping this identity, so perhaps there is hope in keeping this identity alive through the strong impression that this locality leaves on all those that have experienced or are yet to experience it.

3.2 The Research Approach

This study aims to investigate the relationship that the older residents in Floriana have with their surrounding environment, and what maintains the feeling of identity and belonging in place with age. The research looks to record the older individual’s lived experience in place and possibly become a tool for professionals in urban planning and policymaking as the world becomes increasingly populated with people from an ageing demographic. This is done by answering the research questions:

1. What are the requirements for a neighbourhood to allow ageing in place?
2. How can enabling neighbourhoods influence the lived experiences of older residents?

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the research methodology implemented in the study, as well as how the method is relevant to the study I have carried out. In choosing the research method it was important that the participants, in this case the older residents, were comfortable in the environment where I was doing the research to get the best insight into the subject matter.

The research is based on a fully inductive approach, through the use of go-along interviews, and sedentary interviews where a go-along interview was not possible. The approach is anthropological in nature, taking an explorative approach, which has the potential to investigate the relationship between the designed and lived place (Stender, 2017). This field’s qualitative methods such as walking interviews can then be combined with architectural methods such as photography and architectural drawings (Stender, 2017). In these types of studies, there is a deeper focus on limited amounts of people, studying their own experiences in depth rather than approaching them as a

social group (Stender, 2017). The combination of the fields of anthropology and architecture gives insight into present knowledge and has the potential to contribute to the in-depth understanding of places and spaces where these people live (Stender, 2017).

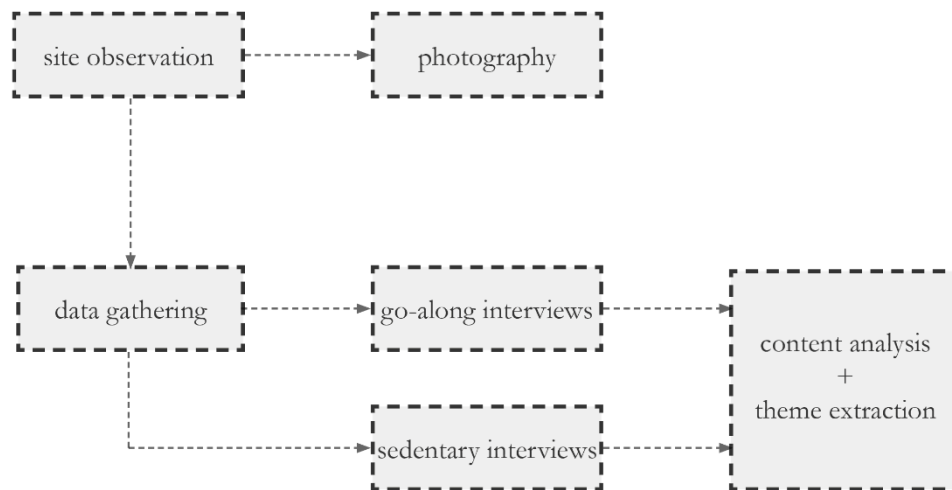


Figure 3: The Methodology Process

Key Authors Influencing methodology:

Silverman (2019)	Walking as a social tool for older people with dementia – sustaining social connections with people and surroundings in neighbourhoods – investigation through walking interviews and social network mapping
Odzakovic et al. (2020)	Investigation of the lived experience of older residents with dementia in their neighbourhoods using walking interviews – the importance of familiarity in encouraging freedom of movement in neighbourhoods for people living with dementia
Evans and Jones (2011)	Walking and sedentary interviews to capture people’s understanding of the place
Veitch et al. (2020)	Understanding the frequency of park visitation by older adults using walk-along interviews

Table 1: Key authors influencing methodology

3.3 The “Go-Along” Interview and the Older Age Demographic

Go-along interviews are informed by the environment where they occur, which shows how important an environment is in shaping a discussion. For this reason, the walking interview gives more profound data due to responses being prompted by meaning and connection to the surrounding spaces (Evans and Jones, 2011). During this type of interview, the participant can recall not only their memories of place but also describe their experience in the present day, incorporating their knowledge of the place and their emotional attachment which is stimulated by walking and talking at the same time (Amaya et al., 2024).

The researcher and interviewee are both immersed in the multi-sensory stimulation of the environment through the movement taking place and the differences in experience from one point to another (Evans and Jones, 2011). The researcher also gets insight into how places are created through the routes taken by people. The hybrid of interviewing and observing the participant can highlight different environmental perceptions and spatial practices. This is called a go-along interview, whereby the researcher almost shadows the participant while asking questions about the interviewee's daily routines and spatial perception (Kusenbauch, 2003).

The walking route can be set by the interviewer or interviewee. With a predetermined route the interviewer can focus on places that are specific goals of the research, which might be ideal if the research focuses on specific places and buildings. However, a predetermined route may interrupt the participants' daily routine in space (Evans and Jones, 2011). Kusenbauch (2003) explains that contrived go-along interviews would not aid in the researcher's understanding of the interviewee's authentic practices and perceptions of their surroundings. For this reason, Kusenbauch favours the natural go-along interview, which empowers the interviewee to take control of the walk. However, the level of control held by the interviewer and interviewee can vary, depending on the research being carried out (2003).

Despite possible limitations that come with age, walking is a regular activity and method of transportation that promotes good health and social interaction for all ages including older individuals, so accommodations to enable this activity for all ages and mobilities should be prioritised (Carder et al., 2023). Visiting parks offers multiple benefits, both physical, mental, and social, but studies have shown that park visitation by older adults is low. Veitch et al. (2020) studied this phenomenon using go-along interviews to better understand the relationship between the two and the factors that influence park visitation in older individuals. The walks varied in duration depending on the individual, ensuring that each of them was comfortable and considered the

expert who could speak freely. Participants were asked to describe the park, the features they liked and how the environment could improve, while the conversation was recorded to ensure the focus of the researcher was solely on the participant (Veitch et al., 2020).

This type of study using go-along methods can provide insightful data regarding factors that inhibit ageing in place, due to negative perceptions of neighbourhood environments. This data can then inspire policy to facilitate the design of more age-friendly and walkable neighbourhoods (Amaya et al., 2024). Through this type of research application, the neighbourhood can enable ageing in place, which is important due to the home becoming a locus for belonging which supports well-being in old age (Odzakovic et al., 2020). This is especially important for people who suffer from cognitive disorders such as dementia, and who experience a shrinking world. Through the act of walking in a familiar environment these people can sustain social relationships with people besides possible caregivers, and their connection with the neighbourhood can become a form of respite and an extension of home. As stated by Ingold and Vergunst “not only... do we walk because we are social beings, but we are also social beings because we walk” (as cited in Silverman, 2019).

A drawback of walking interviews, both pre-determined and natural, is that it will exclude people who are unable or unwilling to walk. This can be problematic for older residents and can lead to a loss of data. Evans and Jones (2011) bring to light how a sedentary interview, despite being in one place can be somewhat animated by using maps to help with place-based discussion. Both types of interviews can be structured, unstructured or semi-structured. The semi-structured type is most used for social research, where the researcher has an idea about the subject matter and can ask questions that are open-ended enough for the interviewee to add richness to the response given (Alsaawi, 2014). Also, older people, often speak confidently about their past experiences related to place, since they have become experts in their surroundings, having seen them change and develop.

3.4 The Research Method & Instrumentation

The research investigates the role of memory in our perception of space as we grow older, whether our relationships with our neighbourhood environments have changed, and what in our modern environments can instil comfort and belonging for older individuals in society to age in place. The research was conducted using a mix of sedentary and go-along interviews due to the age and different mobility radii of the participants involved. In this way, the research is not biased towards mobile participants, and older residents can also participate in the research, which becomes more diverse and inclusive.

An inductive approach was the preferred method for the research because every person's relationship with their surrounding environment is unique and subjective to the specific individual. This also applies to a person's ageing experience, which is also unique and dependent on several factors. For this reason, a qualitative and inductive approach ensures that the subjective nature of every participant's ageing experience in place is included in the study, ensuring that the data is rich and inclusive of all aspects of ageing in a specific context.

The go-along interview was the preferred way of collecting data due to the direct interaction with the neighbourhood, which can highlight environmental perceptions and spatial practices as they take place (Evans and Jones, 2011). The route taken was left up to the participants so that they could walk freely in spaces and streets where they felt the most comfortable and the duration was left up to them due to the age demographic being mostly people over the age of 60. In this way, the interviewees were more comfortable during the whole process due to the familiarity of the environment, where they are considered the experts, and the researcher is simply a guide to the conversation. The questions were semi-structured but free enough for them to broaden the conversation to topics which may be of interest to me but would have not been asked about due to being somewhat of an outsider.

Several participants preferred to have a sedentary interview due to other commitments or mobility issues. These interviews despite being longer focused less on the environment and more on the personal experience of the interviewee within the environment. Here, the lack of direct experience with the environment made the interview sometimes move away from the topic being discussed to locate the area being spoken about. The areas mentioned during both go-along and sedentary interviews were visited on multiple occasions to study the nature of the spaces and practices that

take place outside of the interview times with participants. In this way, a deeper understanding of the animation of space could be achieved.

An explorative approach was used for the study due to the sensitivity of the ageing process, and the different changes we undergo as we grow older. The methodology is flexible to be sensitive towards the older residents of the locality, such that they are always comfortable during the data collection process. In this way their real-life perceptions of ageing in place within a specific context can be captured as accurately as possible.

3.5 Participant Recruitment and Data Collection

The research participants included ten present residents of Floriana and one past resident who is still actively involved in the community today. The participants' ages varied between 59 and 88 to have a variety of age groups in the ageing demographic. People were recruited via personal networking and a gatekeeper to the community. Interested people got in touch by giving their contact numbers to the gatekeeper who passed them on to me. Once their eligibility was verified these people were then contacted, where I then explained the research and their participation requirements including signing a consent form.

Five out of the eleven participants were able to go on a go-along interview with me, while the remaining six were only available for a sedentary interview. These interviews were planned to take place at a time and place where they were most comfortable, with the sedentary interviews taking place either at the participant's home, at the senior citizen centre or done through the phone. Before starting any data collection each participant went through and signed a physical copy of the participant recruitment form and consent form (Appendix I and II) stating that the conversations would be audio recorded on my phone and that their identities would not be disclosed or traceable.

For the go-along interviews, besides the audio recording, photos of the spaces were also taken during the walks to show triggers in conversation as they appeared in the built environment. These walks lasted between 20 minutes to an hour depending on the participant's mobility and schedule availability. The walking route was also recorded using "Map My Tracks", an app that records the route taken as well as the pace of the walk and duration. In this way, my focus is solely on the participant and their behaviour in their surroundings.

These spaces visited during the walks and mentioned during sedentary interviews were also visited on different occasions (both before and after the interviews) to observe different spatial practices as they occur and the presence of older residents in these spaces. These practices were noted using photography and captioned.

3.6 Method of Analysis

Once all the interviews were completed, they were transcribed (Appendices III and IV) to be used in the data analysis process. Through the process of transcribing the interviews myself, I got better insight and understanding of the participant's perception of space and their relationship with it as they grew older.

The process of thematic analysis was then applied to draw out key themes that are then discussed in chapters 4 and 5, through the use of identifying patterns and coding of data to discuss emergent themes (Lochmiller, 2021) from the qualitative data from the interviews. This type of analysis is the most commonly used qualitative analytic method across different disciplines including anthropology, psychology, and sociology (Swain, 2018). Braun and Clarke (2013) emphasise the flexibility of this approach to analysis, due to the patterns in language not having to adhere to a particular theory of language, hence making it an adaptable framework for data analysis.

Braun and Clark (2006) highlight six phases of thematic analysis, which were applied to my analysis process. These include:

- Familiarisation with the data, in my case reading and transcribing the interviews
- The coding or labelling of specific elements of the data which are relevant to the research question that guides the analysis;
- The theme extraction from the pattern shown in the data;
- The review of the emergent themes by checking that the themes are relevant to the codes extracted and the data as a whole. From here the researcher can start linking the themes together;
- The final analysis of the data extracted and resulting themes are then written in the fourth and fifth chapters of this dissertation.

“Voyant Tools” was used to code the data by uploading the transcripts as one document and then using the Cirrus word diagram generated to look into the most common terms used during the interviews. This was done to make it easier to find patterns in the data. These terms could then be searched on the document uploaded to Voyant Tools to understand the context within which these patterns emerged. These are shown in Table 1 found in section 4.4. From there the emergent themes of the data could be identified and grouped and were discussed in depth in the next chapter.

Research Limitations

The introduction of the sedentary interview typology came about because despite giving the participants the freedom to choose their route and duration for a walk-along interview, some participants were still unable to walk due to recent health procedures and personal issues. Due to the walk-along interviews taking place outside, there were some issues with scheduling due to bad weather, especially on windy days during which the voice recordings would not have been audible after the interview.

With regard to direct observation of the places mentioned the direct presence of the researcher on site might have influenced behaviour on site, but to try and mitigate this I moved a lot instead of staying in place and used a small camera to make the exercise less obvious.

4.0 Capturing Lived Experiences Past and Present

The data gathered during walks and sedentary interviews was mapped out to illustrate the locations experienced during the walks and mentioned during the interviews. In this way the sedentary interviews can show the focus areas of the conversation, highlighting the user's meaningful past experiences in place. The go-along interviews were also illustrated through maps with nodes visited during the walk, highlighting the present lived experiences of residents during the walks. In this way places mentioned by participants during sedentary interviews are illustrated in the same way and are comparable to go-along interviews when presenting the results.

4.1 Walking Interviews

Participants who took part in the go-along interview were left to take any route they wished, so the walk duration was entirely up to them. These varied between twenty minutes and an hour depending on the participants' mobility and the physical characteristics of the spaces being experienced.

These walks are shown in Figure 4 below, showing the particular routes taken. Most of these walks started from the Balzunetta and parish church areas indicating that these are landmarks in the locality. P4 and P6 have lived in Balzunetta for their whole lives and chose to remain there in their older years. These participants are very familiar with the people in their environment, the physical environment, and its changes. In the case of P4, the walk included the Argotti botanic garden which she has been fond of ever since she was a child, as well as the primary school where both she and her husband attended, as well as their two children. She also described the window she used to leave open to see him in his classroom. These memories were brought up by the experience of the space physically in the present. The school is familiar to how it was experienced in the participant's past. The school remained mostly unchanged except for some removed Venetian blinds, which help residents link place-based memories to it. This was the case with P4 and P6 who have both lived in Balzunetta for their whole lives.

In the case of P4 the spaces varied in nature, due to some of them being buildings such as the school and others being open spaces. Particular reference was made to a statue at the intersection between Conservatory Street and Lion Street, which she recalls her grandfather saying saved his life when he was choking, and he knelt in front of it. However, the space mentioned most by P4 was the Argotti Botanic Garden which was in fact where most of the walk was carried out. Here the participant described in detail experiences from when she was a child including games

and festivals, as well as how she would bring her children there because the surface of the ground was not rough like that of the Mall garden at the time. The Argotti is still part of her daily lived experiences today when it's not too windy she said. She walks a lot there but not in the Saint Philip Garden below because of the many steep inclines and stairs. She explained that it's a nice garden from what she sees from the Argotti, but it's too challenging for herself and many other older people to go down there. Images of the environment experienced during the walk were captured and shown in Figures 5 and 6.

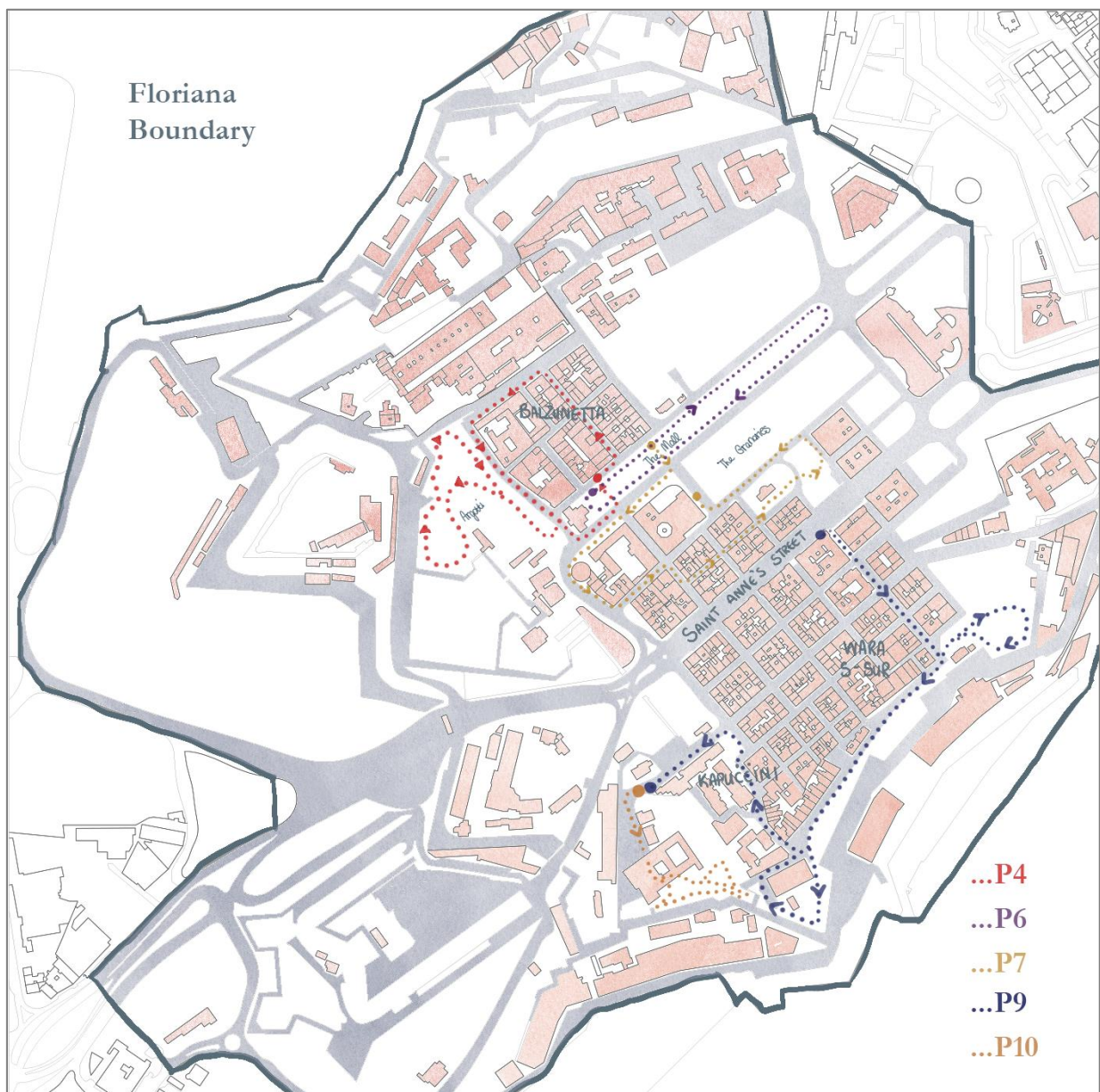


Figure 4: Routes taken during go-along interviews



Photo MC1 - previous location of water fountains



Photo MC2 - Statue on intersection between Conservatory and Lion Street



Photo MC3 - Lotto Office



Photo MC4 - Police Depot, previously a small scale hospital



Photo MC5 - Kurja and Seminary Studies Institute



Photo MC6 - Side entrance of Argotti Gardens



Photo MC7 - School which was then converted to Education building

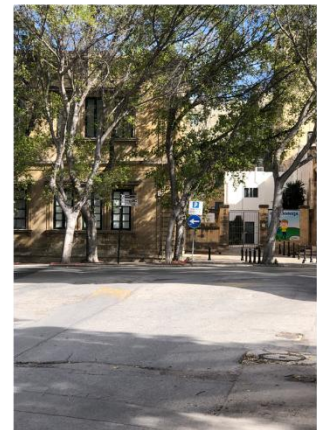


Photo MC8 - Childcare and Floriana Primary

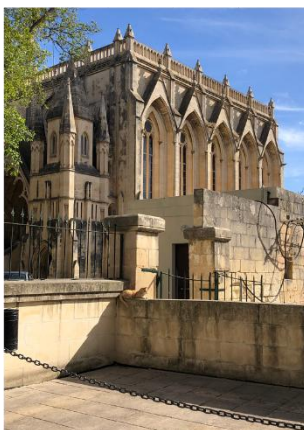


Photo MC9 - Argotti Entrance and entrance to Saint Phillip gardens

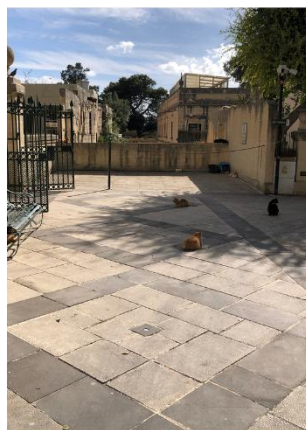


Photo MC10 - cats living at the argotti gathering to be fed by elderly



Photo MC11 - tallest tree in the garden could be seen from participant's home as a child

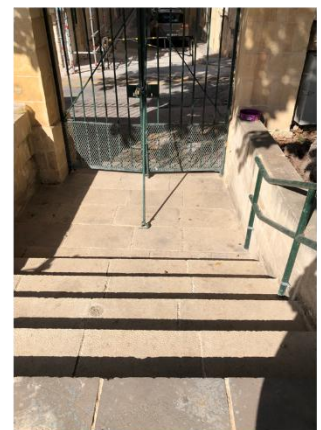


Photo MC12 - side entrance of Argotti

Figure 5: Photos captured during go-along walk with P4



Photo MC13 - large trunks of old tree next to side entrance



Photo MC14 - bonsai garden as seen from the Argotti



Photo MC15 -Sa Maison Hill and entrance to Sa Maison Garden (trees can be seen)



Photo MC16 - Main Square of Argotti Garden



Photo MC17 - Saint Phillip garden as seen from Argotti



Photo MC18 - Citrus trees



Photo MC19 - The Giraffe tree

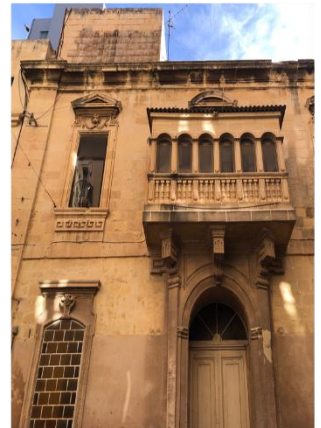


Photo MC20 - oldest house in the locality



Photo MC21 - unsold house



Photo MC22 - neighbours discussing ongoing football match from their balconies

Figure 6: Photos captured during go-along walk with P4

The walk with P6 was a specific part of her daily routine. The walk was solely in the Mall garden going back and forth for the entire interview. However, the space still changes in the sense that there is always someone passing through it; children going to school, people going to work in Valletta, and older people going for an early morning stroll like P6. The garden's transitory nature enables this, and for people who go there daily like P6, the regulars get to know each other through their regular interaction and animation of space, whether being a greeting or a conversation. These are illustrated in Figure 7.

P7 also started the go-along interview from Balzunetta, in the Mall garden where the route then moved to the "Sarria" area where she grew up. From there the participant insisted on passing through Triq M. Caruana, a narrow street because she enjoys walking through it. She explains that it is quiet and looks lived in and mentioned in detail many places that are all in this one street, such as the bakery and the centre for Catholicism studies. She explains that it looks lived in because of all the plants the residents leave out and the clothes hanging from the balconies like when she was a child.

The resident now lives on Saint Anne's street where she can look out onto the small granaries square where there is the monument of Manuel de Vilhena. This square is pleasant to the participant because she can look at the loggias of the street and see all the people moving through it. The street is special to her because it hosts so many activities, the feasts, carnival and any visits from the pope which she can see from her apartment window. These spaces were captured and shown in Figure 8.

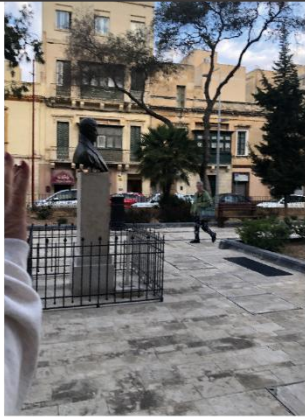


Photo SC1 - Mall as a meeting place



Photo SC2 - garden as a place of encounter

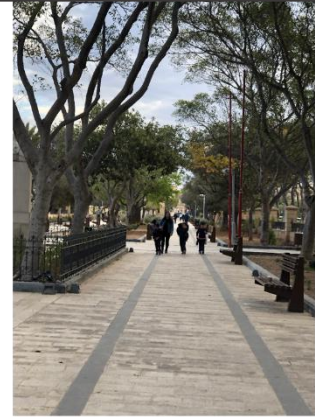


Photo SC3 - school children using the garden as a transition space



Photo SC4 - active elderly using garden to walk around



Photo SC5 - garden as a place of encounter

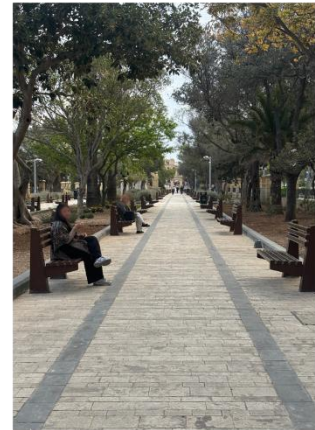


Photo SC6 - occupied benches



Photo SC7 - fragrant air coming from bakery



Photo SC8 - garden as a place of encounter

Figure 7: Photos captured during go-along walk with P6



Photo AA1 - water tower across the street from Sarria chapel



Photo AA2 - narrow streets with plants and bakery



Photo AA3 - Narrow streets of locality



Photo AA4 - lived in appearance of houses on narrow streets of Floriana



Photo AA5 - planting shows the lived in nature of the houses in the street



Photo AA6 - Square on Saint Anne's Street



Photo AA7 - Saint Anne's Street from Square



Photo AA8 - Potted plants added to square



Photo AA9 - Church and Granaries

Figure 8: Photos captured during go-along walk with P7

The remaining go-along interview participants P9 and P10 chose routes in the “wara s-sur” and “Kapuċċini” convent area. P9 set the meeting point for the interview in front of the BOV branch on Saint Anne’s street then moving towards the King George V Recreational Grounds through Vilhena street. This was problematic due to traffic and the width of the street which was stressful for both me and the participant. P9 is not originally from Floriana and is actually from Valletta. However, since marrying her husband from Floriana and moving here, she feels it’s her home. Most of the walk took place in the garden and then up a steep incline to go to the “Kapuċċini” convent area. The walk with P9 was fast-paced due to more vehicular movement in the area, so pedestrian movement had to be quicker. This is shown from the few images captured (Figure 9) during this walk when compared to those taken in other areas of the locality. The entire area however has views of the grand harbour which both P9 and P10 enjoy, but this also comes with the drawback of air and noise pollution from cruise ships.

The final walk with P10 was around the convent gardens, where both he and P9 volunteer. P10 had moved to the “Wara s-sur”, area before getting married. He explained that because he has many siblings his parents moved out of the Balzunetta area because their house was too small. He mentioned the influx of newcomers to the locality, which is not a bad thing entirely, but the locality’s identity is changing which he finds difficult. However, due to high property prices in the area, this was inevitable.

He also brought up the fact that older people in hospital which he would visit when volunteering tell him to pray that they would die because they have nothing left to live for. They don’t even have a window and P10 is appreciative of the life he has in his old age, especially when people tell him these things. P10 takes care of all the cats taken in by the convent and spends a lot of time there volunteering. He also expressed interest in photography when he saw me taking photos (shown in Figure 10) but explained that despite his interest, he is not fond of having to go up and down the 80 steps he has to get up to his apartment.

The walking interviews exhibited that the locality’s environment varies in the northern areas of the locality (Balzunetta and Parish areas), with the most lived experiences being captured there. There are more open spaces which are accessible in the northern areas, with the streets also being quieter due to many older residents being concentrated in those areas. The southern part has the best views but because of this property costs are high, and many businesses are being formed there, but the downsides of traffic and the noise associated, as well as the lack of ease of movement do not make it an enabling environment for the older individuals.



Photo CH1 - Entrance to Playground and Kiosk



Photo CH2 - People gathering to have lunch in the garden



Photo CH3 - house with local features in well kept state



Photo CH4 - offset building, ruining view of residents behind and creating amorphous space



Photo CH5 - Steep incline and traffic limiting freedom of movement



Photo CH6 - refurbished buildings



Photo CH7 - Refurbished buildings



Photo CH8 - vehicle infrastructure prioritised over pedestrian

Figure 9: Photos captured during go-along walk with P9



Photo DH1 - gardens belonging to the convent



Photo DH2 - residences in "wara sur" area



Photo DH3 - cats taken in my the convent



Photo DH4 - elderly are caretakers of the street cats taken in by the convent

Figure 10: Photos captured during go-along walk with P10

4.2 Sedentary Interviews

The sedentary interviews, due to mobility issues and other personal issues had to replace go-along interviews in some cases. Here, the focus of the interview was more personal since it is entirely based on the participant's past perception of space and not their present experience. All sedentary interviews were centred around the area between Saint Anne's Street and the Parish church with some having more reach outwards towards certain areas in the locality. These are presented in separate maps below (Figures 11 to 15) and then juxtaposed in Figure 16 showing the centre of lived experiences.

The first sedentary interview was with P11 who was the only participant who is no longer a resident in Floriana. However, despite this, he still has fond memories of his lived experiences in Floriana as a child. He explained living on "Triq il-Miratur" and the times he would go play near the "Kapuċċini" convent area. However, despite living in Balzan today, he still visits Floriana regularly because of family and friends and being a part of the Senior Citizen Centre of the locality where he volunteers. These nodes are indicated in Figure 11.

In the case of other participants who are all residents of Floriana, more importance is given to local shops, so their lived experiences focus on both past and present lived experiences in place from using the gardens to going shopping for daily needs. For this reason, there are more nodes mentioned during these interviews. However, it was noted that less mobile people have a place-based reach map which has less reach. This was the case for P1 and P2 which are shown in Figures 13 and 14, where nodes are closer together. These nodes include shops for daily needs such as the butcher, greengrocer and bakery, as well as specific uses such as the lotto office, parish church and football club. The diversity of uses within such a small area allows these residents who are the oldest out of all of the participants (80+) to still cater to most of their needs themselves despite having to use walking aides to support themselves while walking.

In the case of P8, the focus of the participant was almost entirely on her past experiences. The participant is somewhat detached from the environment today and so focuses on her past experiences in place (Figure 12). However, despite this P8 feels safe in her environment, stating that everyone knows everyone, but complained about being anxious about broken pavements which could make her knee pain worse if she falls. However, despite this she admits that she still keeps active at home, constantly experimenting in the kitchen. She expressed gratitude for my interest in the well-being of older residents and that I reached out despite not being able to go on

a walk with me. However, despite her anxieties she still wants to remain in Balzunetta because the community is caring and she knows it very well.

P5, like the rest of the participants of the sedentary interviews, is a part of the Senior Citizen Centre but was the only one to mention people from the neighbouring elderly care home (Figure 15) who would also come and join them at the centre, allowing them to be included with the rest of the older people who decided to age in place in their own home. P5 is perhaps the most socially involved of the residents who opted for the sedentary interviews due to being involved in the senior centre and its management as well as the feast of Saint Publius in making statues and organising events. Despite his active involvement today the participant still reminisces about his upbringing in the locality and the active street life there was, which at present is dying out he explains because it's only the older people that are left. However, he still feels that the locality should adapt to the needs of the older residents as it has been doing to allow them to age in place for as long as possible because a locality like Floriana should not be given up.

The culmination of these maps is shown in Figure 16, which indicates the centre for lived experiences. These areas were then investigated further through direct observation and captured using photography and are presented in Figure 17.



Figure 11: Place mentioned by P11 highlighting lived experiences

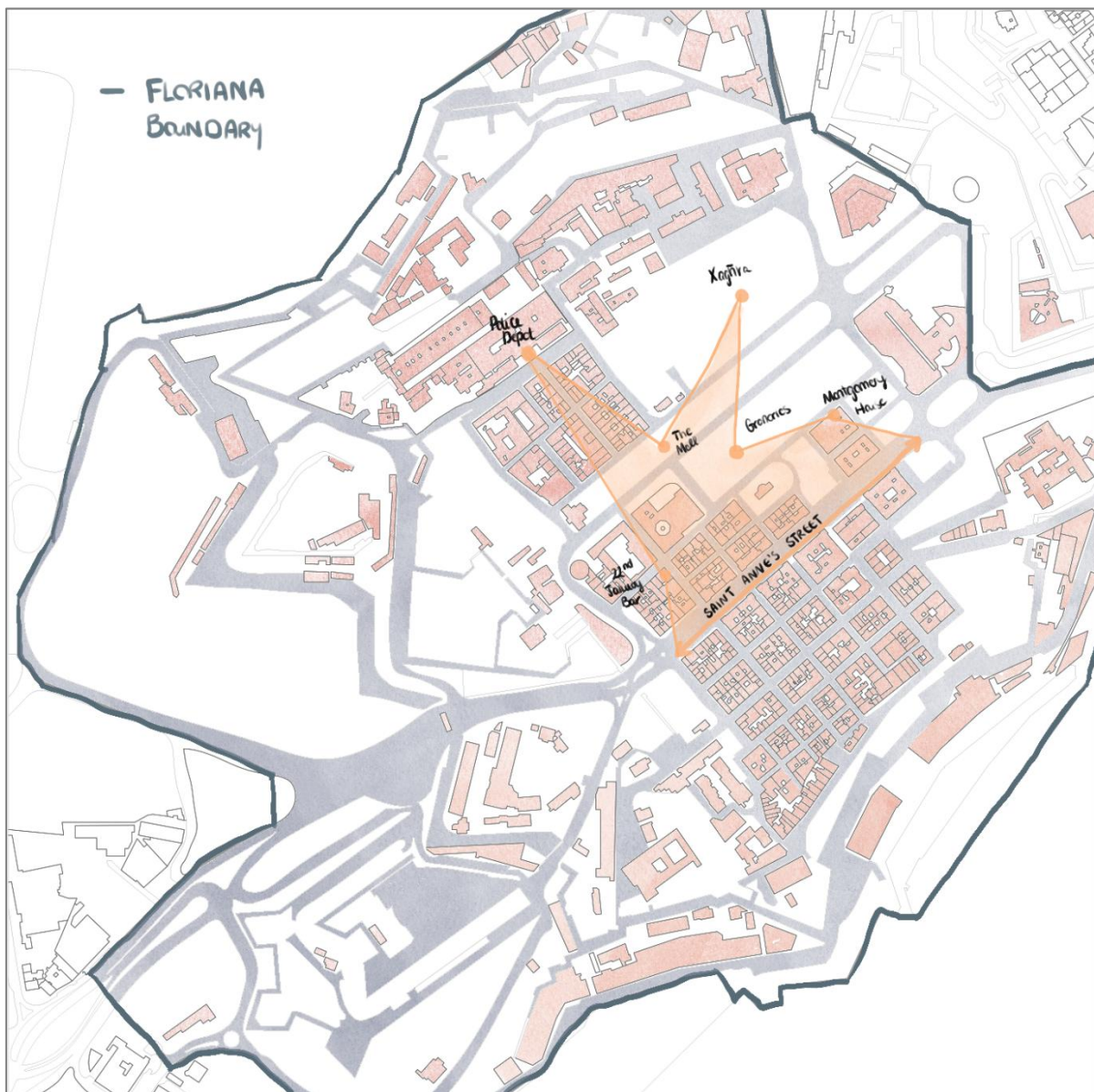


Figure 12: Places mentioned by P8 highlighting lived experiences

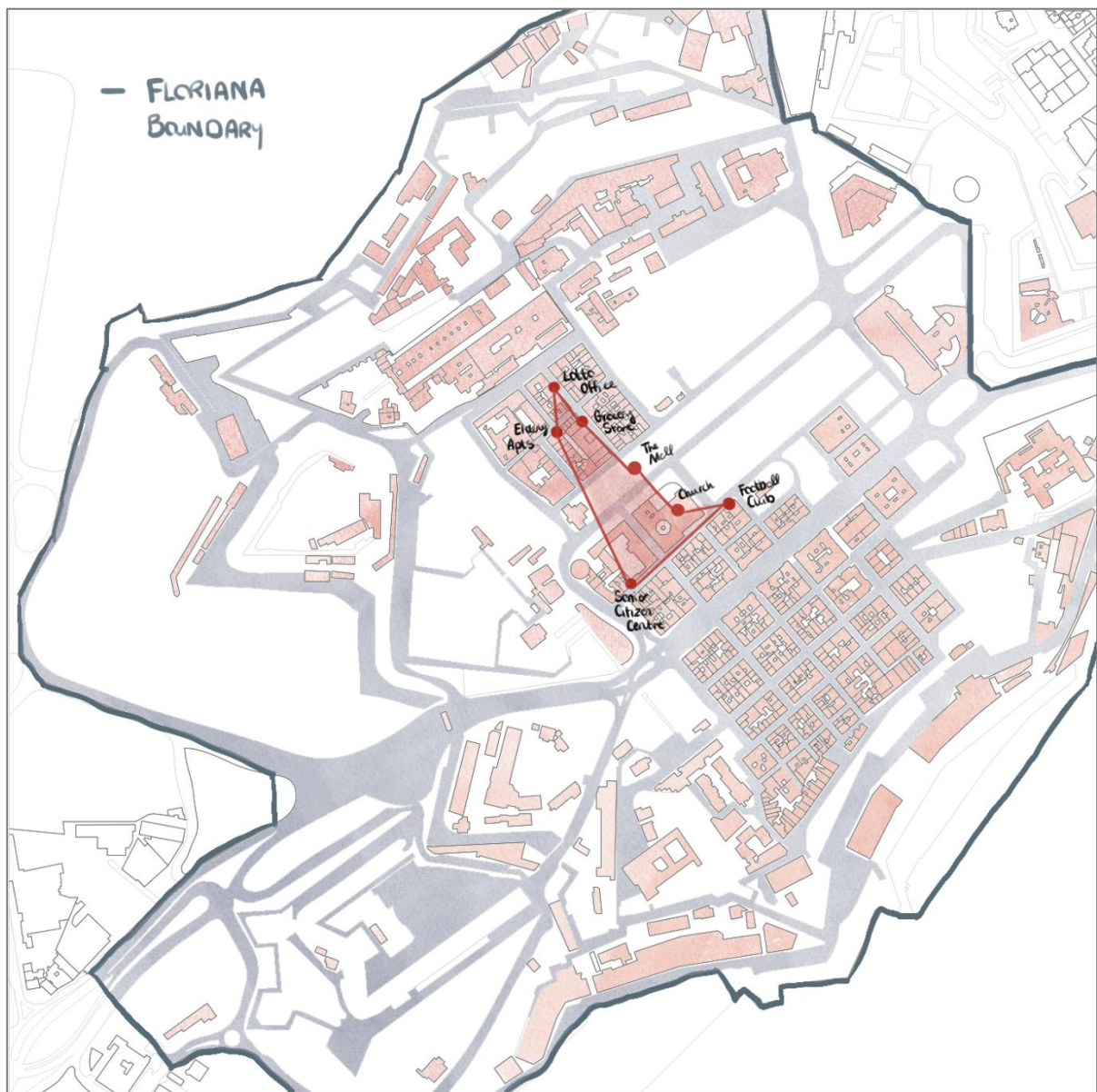


Figure 13: Places mentioned by P1 highlighting lived experiences

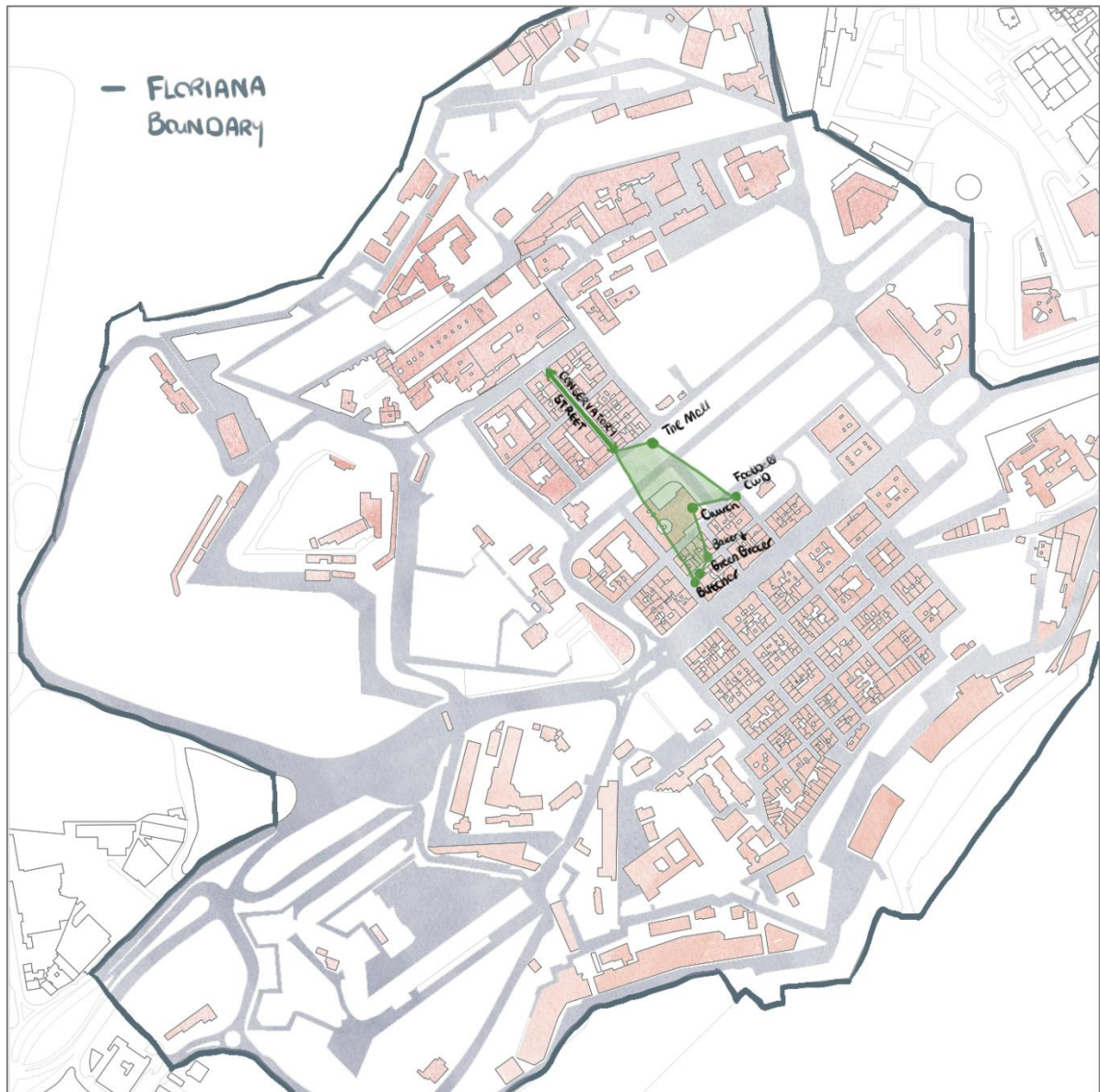


Figure 14: Places mentioned by P2 highlighting lived experiences

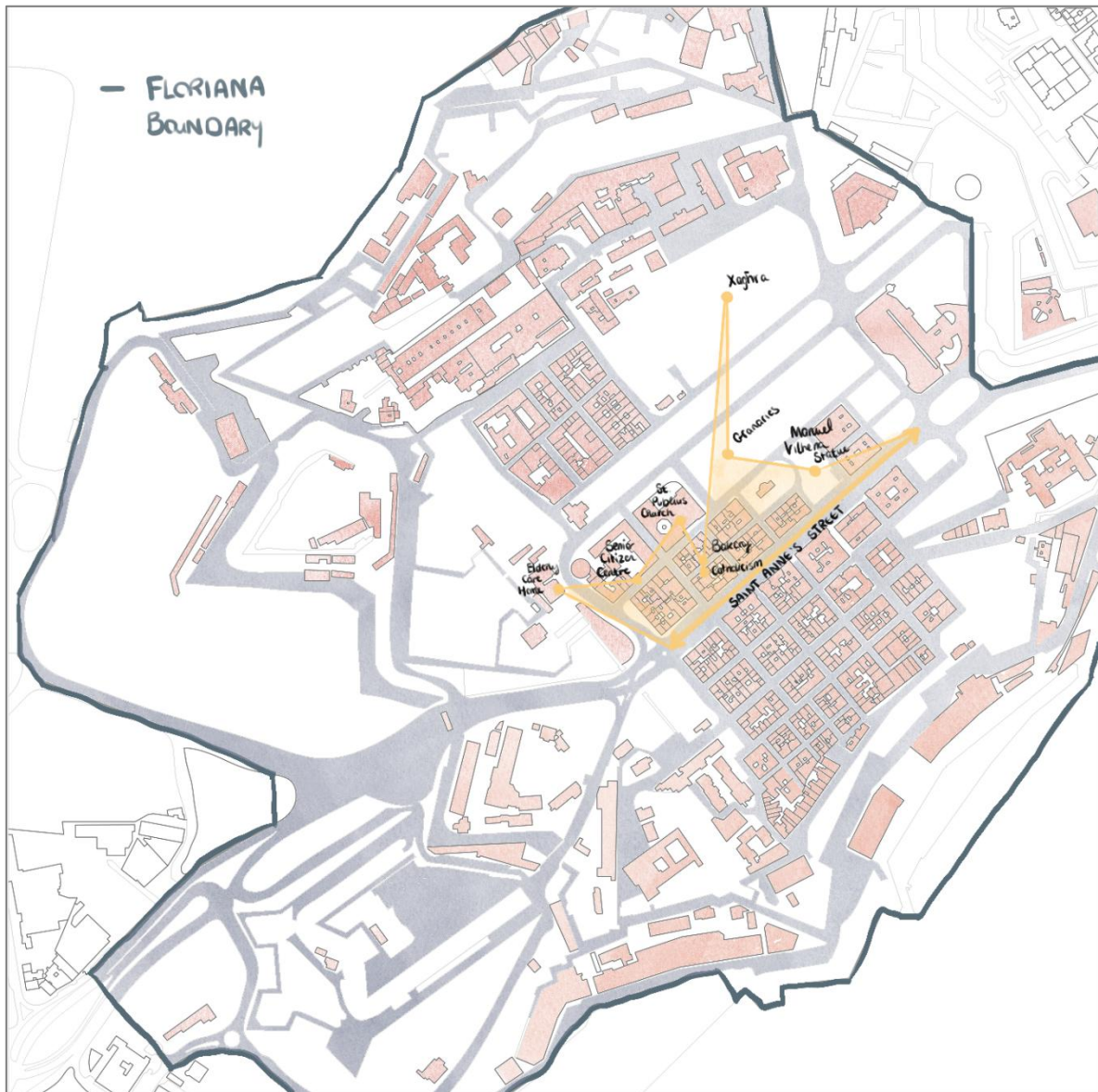


Figure 15: Places mentioned by P5 highlighting lived experiences

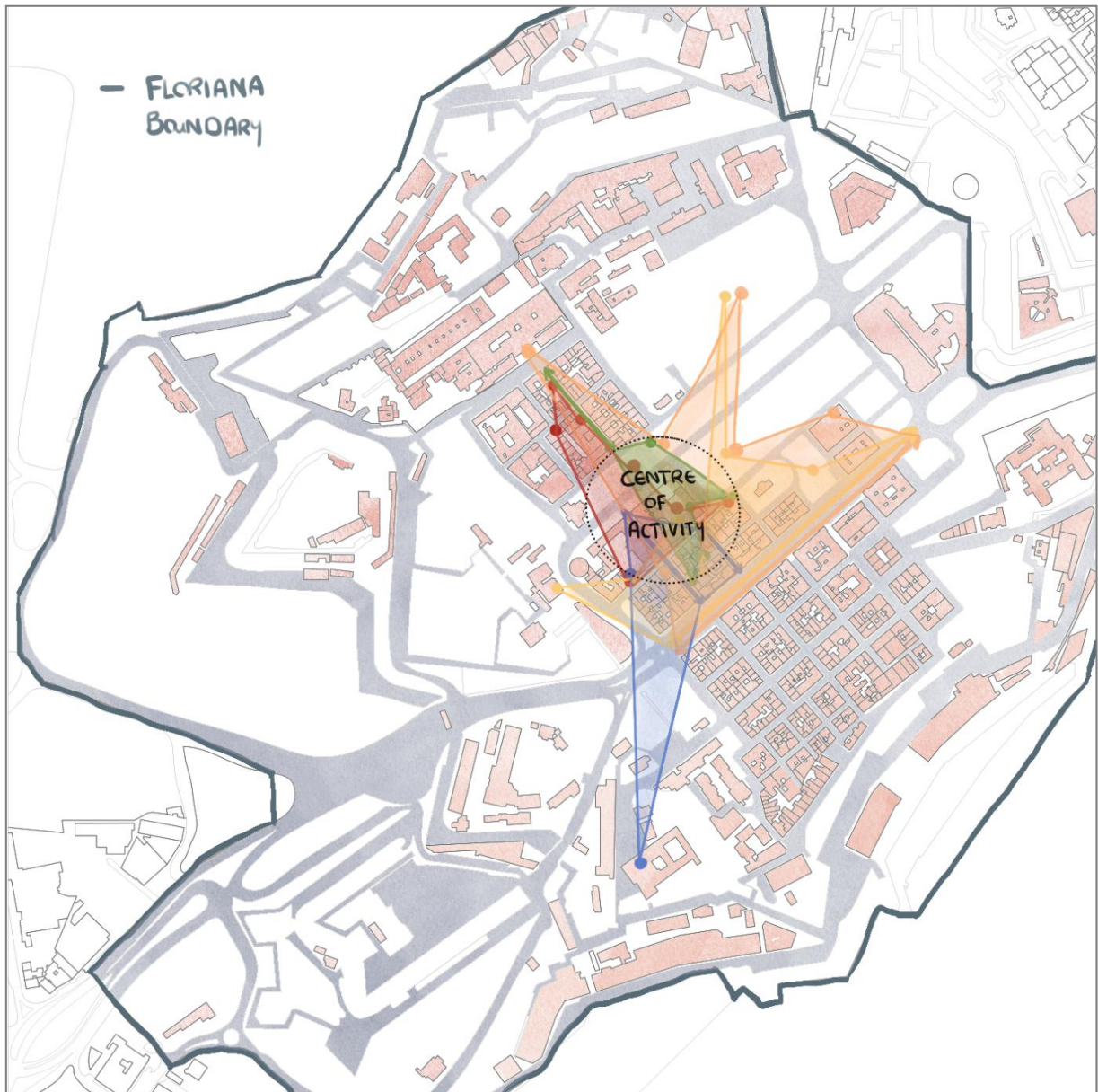


Figure 16: Juxtapositioning of places mentioned highlighting centre of experiences

4.3 Observation of Present-day Experience of the Neighbourhood through Photography

The locality was visited on multiple occasions to document older people's real-life experiences in the neighbourhood places mentioned, at times outside of that allocated to the interviews. The photos gathered are shown in the following map with their corresponding geo-location. The individual images can be found in Appendix V.

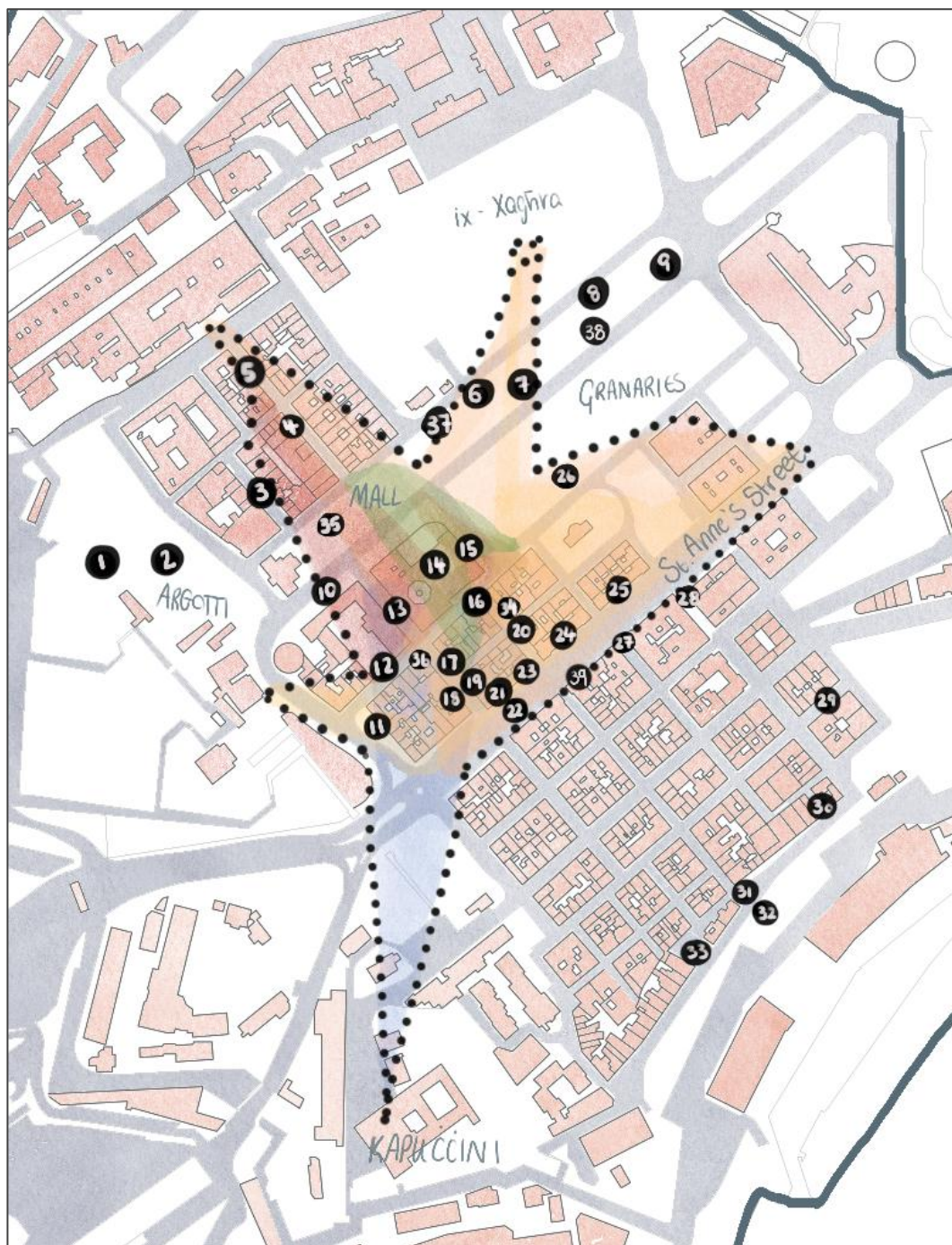


Figure 17: Map of Photo Locations

5.0 Enablers of Lived Experiences in the Ageing Process

This chapter looks into the conclusions drawn from the data and discusses the emergent themes of the study from the analysis carried out to answer the research questions:

1. What are the requirements for a neighbourhood to allow ageing in place?
2. How can enabling neighbourhoods influence the lived experiences of older residents?

The requirements for allowing a population to age in place are multifaceted and subjective to the individual and his or her requirements. However, the research aimed to reach people with different ageing experiences and mobilities to ensure that the results are as inclusive as possible within the limited number of participants. In this way, the research can guide how neighbourhoods can be adapted to allow residents to age in place. The results and discussions were subdivided into three main themes:

- Physical factors
- Social factors
- Economic factors

The research question can then be answered strategically through these themes derived from the codes emergent in the thematic analysis (Table 2) of the participatory research and the direct observation.

Table 2: Coding from Content Analysis using Voyant Tools

Term	Frequency	Context
People	84	• People leaving locality and depleting population of residents • Perceived safety (use of open spaces) • The “others” in Valletta • Tight knit population of Balzunetta • Familiarity of locals
Used	52	• Memories (past tense) – feast, family gatherings, football celebrations – triggered by familiarity of spaces and appreciation for the locality • Versatility of Spaces

Garden/s	44	• Viewpoints, characteristics and memories (childhood, activities, nostalgia) • Appreciation of greenery - Unique characteristic of locality • Garden typologies • Part of the older individual's routine • Gardens make up for small houses – an extension of the homes of Balzunetta
Street	42	• “Street Theatre” in the past because of the lived in nature of locality which is depleting today • Saint Anne's Street • Conservatory Street • Home
Older Residents	33	• Feeders of street cats • Users of multiple gardens • Lotto Office • Senior Citizen Centre – platform for social activities and empowering older residents to raise concerns and have shared experiences – talks held to raise awareness about illnesses that older individuals commonly experience. • Fears including strangers entering locality • Loggias of Saint Anne's Street offering shelter from elements for those who walk slowly, mixed land uses and safety from traffic • Mobile community of older individuals • Building typology adapted to older residents • Importance of social relationships between long term residents • Publication for older residents “il-bastun” • Diverse land uses within a walkable radius
Time	27	• All the time – frequency

		• Recreation • Past memories – The Mall, Argotti, Balzunetta • Time dedicated to help with citizen centre and neighbours • Occupancy duration (at least 45 years but predominantly lifetime)
Balzunetta	22	• Social Centre of the past • Quieted down because of its aged population • Familiar due to its unchanged built form and multiple gardens • More insiders in Balzunetta than any other part of the locality • Small scale buildings • Most memories stem from Balzunetta • Stigmatised community due to the presence of bars during the time of the British • Appreciated and cared for by the older residents, a community that looks after each other
Home	13	• Place of residence + Street • Surrounding space as an extension of home – feelings of attachment and belonging.. “feels like home” and “I want to die here” • Caring for those outside of personal home – street cats, people in the neighbourhood • “It’s my home now” – long term resident who came from somewhere else – locality and community grow on you • Elderly care home in Floriana – Ageing in Place

5.1 The Physical

All of the participants have a clear image of the locality, having mentioned specific buildings to help me understand their experiences in place. The place has remained almost a constant in terms of its materiality and morphology throughout most of their lives. Floriana's original development was purposeful to serve people in Valletta, (Thake, 2024) and act as a military defence for the capital, but this ultimately led to Floriana's vast open spaces and surrounding residential areas. People are grateful for these spaces because the town cannot change much and remains a constant as they grow older, offering them reminders of their experiences in place.

The named spaces include the King George V recreational grounds in the lower part of the locality. In the upper areas, the locality is full of open spaces including the Granaries as well as the garden spaces including the Argotti Botanic Garden and the Mall garden which are still very much part of the routine of the older residents. The relationship described with these spaces is continuous, having started from the participant as a child where they would play with the tree droppings (*ċippitati*) and other games, as well as have lunch during school breaks. As they grew up, they would take their children to these same gardens to do the same, and they would spend time with the other parents there while waiting for their children to come out from school. Now these gardens are still part of their routine in old age due to their accessibility (namely the Mall and the Argotti), proximity to the residential areas of Balzunetta and an attachment derived from meaning that comes from everyday routines (Relph, 1976). These Third Places are the ones where the "community is the most alive and people are the most themselves" (Oldenburg, 1999, p.20). The affordances of these Third Places are an aid to the creation of a geographical local community.



Figure 18: Older Adults in Third Places - The Mall (first and third images) and Argotti (second image) Source: Author

The Third Place is just space unless the right people animate it and give character and meaning to it. The space is then the enabler, and if a person has a third place, then that place also has him to animate it (Seamon as cited in Oldenburg, 1999). Once a person is missing in the animation of that place, other actors will notice it and if this happens more than once, they may act and check on the missing person in the animation of space. During a go-along interview with P6, a passerby commented to her about her not being with her nephew since he is usually with her during her walk through the Mall garden, to which she replied that he is with his mother today.

Go-along interview with P6	Passerby: <i>Isn't the sweetheart with you today?</i> P6: <i>He's with his mum today</i> Passerby: <i>I'll see him tomorrow then!</i>
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Table 3: Part of go-along interview with P6 Source: Author

It is these little things that people routinely notice and engage with that constitute the animation of space and constitute the Third Place. These interactions and use of space are what give it warmth (Seamon, 1979) through the sharing of experiences in routines. These spaces are neutral and offer social equality and freedom. Its character is solely determined by its regular users and a playful mood that is unlike other serious spaces that are more purposeful in nature. Though it is unlike

home in the sense that it is shared and public, the Third Place is similar to the home in the psychological comfort it offers its users (Oldenburg, 1999).

The locality becomes known to its residents in their routines, making it familiar and instilling a sense of security. This is the main reason that most of the participants have chosen to stay in Floriana, some deciding to stay in the home they were brought up in, others in houses that they bought with their significant other and some have chosen to relocate from a house to a smaller scale apartment within the same neighbourhood. Ageing in a familiar place also ensures the proximity of a person with other neighbourhood residents who care about the person (Kim, Lee and Kim, 2022). The only participant who had relocated chose to do so when getting married, and despite the decision, P11 stated that he regrets his decision to this day because no place can fill the shoes of his hometown Floriana.

The option to age in place gave the advantage of the security and safety of home. The diversity of Floriana in residential typologies also gives options for ageing in place. These include smaller-scale dwellings on the upper side including small townhouses and apartments, including those targeted towards older residents, as well as the elderly care home located near the Sarria chapel. However, familiarity is just part of the reason for people wanting to age in place in the case of Floriana. Consideration must also be given to transportation, recreational opportunities (third places) and opportunities for physical activity, engagement and ongoing education (Wahl and Weisman, 2003). P4 explained that the locality enables her to age actively, and independently in place. She can go to mass on her own because it is two minutes away from her home, and access any other services needed on foot because of the small scale of the locality, being just over one kilometre in diameter, and the proximity to Valletta and the bus terminus. This is particularly helpful for the older residents due to a possibly limited mobility radius. In combination with this, the locality has several quiet streets that allow people to walk more freely.

The spatial qualities of the locality are balanced, having a series of open spaces and diverse residential typologies for different phases in the ageing process. The diversity of land uses also contributes to residents' comfort, having services including multiple pharmacies, grocery shops, a butcher, baker, bars and cafes all accessible to the older generation and a part of their daily routines. These services are predominantly located in Saint Anne's Street and the areas above including Balzunetta, justifying the higher concentration of meaningful lived experiences for the older residents in these areas.

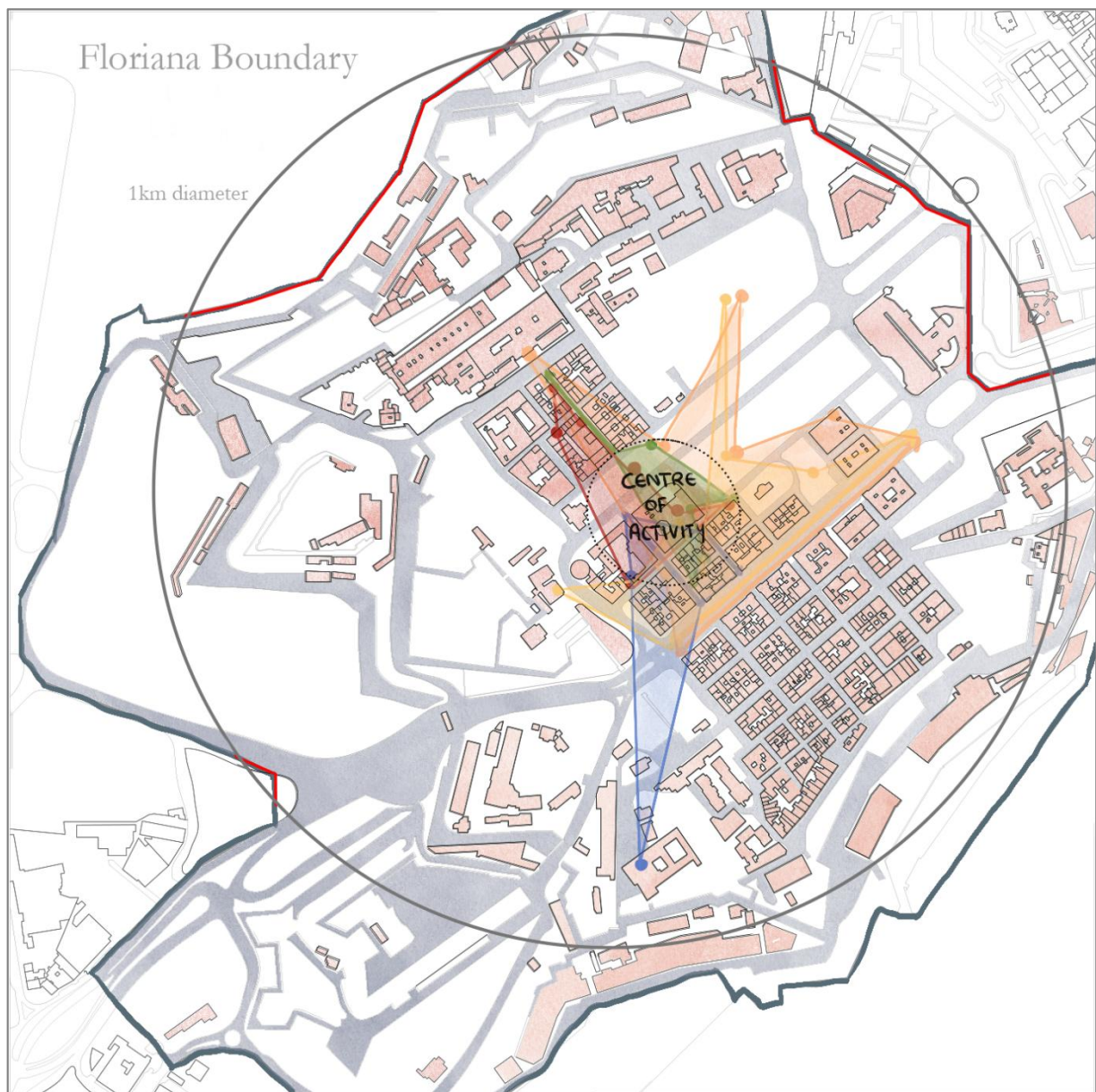


Figure 19: Map of Locality showing centre of lived experiences within the centre of the locality

Source: Author

Along with these necessary land uses to allow people to age independently the locality also has a Senior Citizen Centre located close to the church of Saint Publius where a lot of the older residents come together. Most of the participants have become part of this centre which has become a third place for older and ageing residents of the locality (50+). It has become a social centre and a platform for the older residents to speak freely to others in an environment which is tailored to their needs, both social and physical. Through the organisation of talks to educate residents about possible conditions that can develop because of old age, as well as different activities to engage the older residents in the environment both physically and socially, the senior centre provides support for older residents through having a space where they can all come together and engage. The centre also reaches people who are more confined in their homes by publishing a magazine targeted towards the older residents called “il-Bastun” which is published every month and coordinated by older members of the community and posted to the homes of ageing residents. This inclusivity and planning of land use is crucial for older residents to age actively and engage with their physical and social environments.

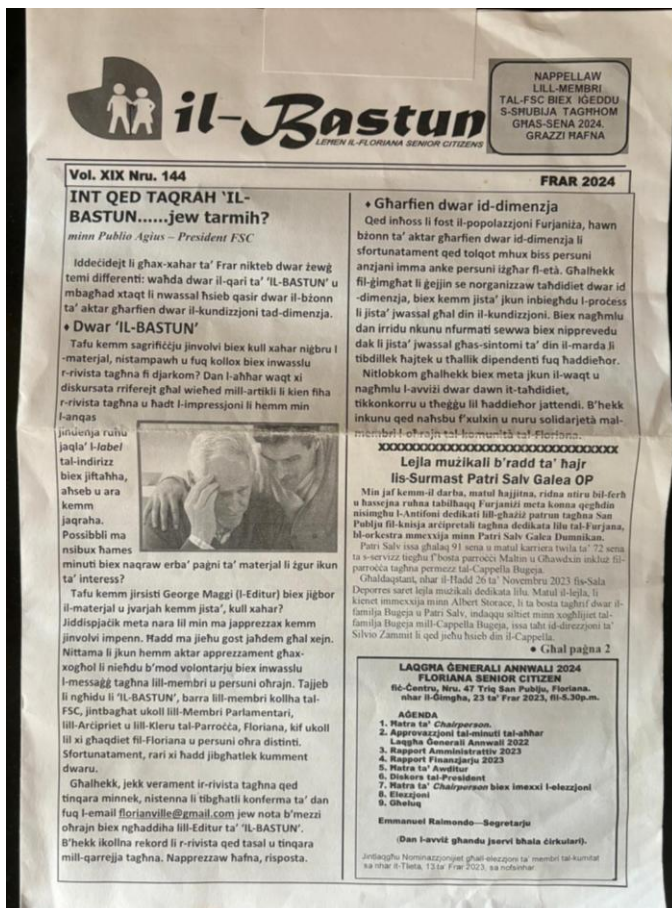


Figure 21: February Issue of "il-Bastun" newspaper for the older residents in Floriana



Figure 20: March Issue of "il-Bastun" newspaper for the older residents in Floriana

5.2 The Social

The physical aspects of the neighbourhood determine how ageing takes place in the present through physical interventions. However, as previously stated the Third Place comes about when it is animated by the right people. P5 called this animation “street theatre”, which came about from the long-term residents of the neighbourhood. The space becomes memorable when it is an enabler of lived experiences and through this, it can live on beyond its physical attributes, through those who have had meaningful experiences in that place.

During a sedentary interview, P8 pointed out that “the carnival used to take place at “ix-Xagħra”, and there would be so many parades for the navy at the time”. The Floriana parade ground, known by most as “*ix-Xagħra tal-Furjana*”, has been a car park since 2012. Once an enabler of lived experiences through its adaptable nature, the open space’s steps once erected as a grandstand for independence celebrations were removed to create a 200-car carpark (The Malta Independent, 2010). The older participants spoke fondly of the recreation grounds as a space for parades and carnival festivities, omitting their conversion of use into a car park to serve Valletta visitors. The parade grounds have now become an imaginary space that is seen differently by the older residents due to their shared meaning. Just as the person is the reader of space and the space is the information (Pamporis and Micheli, 2021) the older residents now store this known place in their imagination because it no longer exists in the way they had experienced it. It is no longer a physical third place of the present, but once was a Third Place in the past. Through socio-emotional selective theory (Hollingworth and Barker, 2015), participants focused on the past positive experiences of the Parade Grounds as a part of their life’s narrative (Rowles and Bernard, 2013).

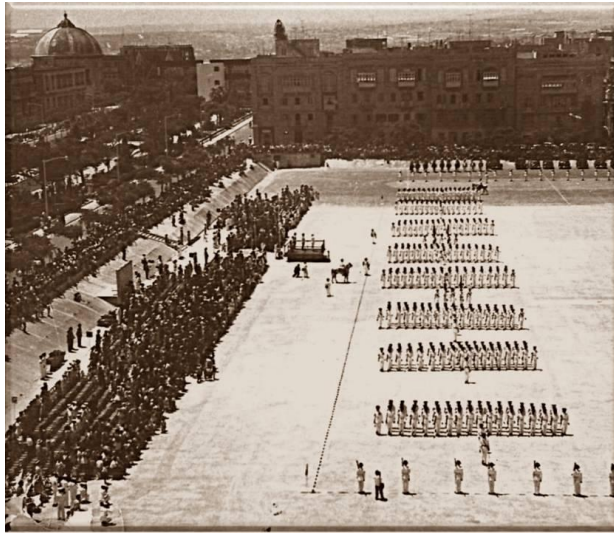


Figure 22: Floriana Parade Grounds: Queen's Birthday Parade 1957
Sourced from Facebook



Figure 23: Independence Day
Celebrations at Floriana Parade Grounds
sourced from Bay Retro



Figure 24: Floriana Parade Ground from 2012 till present day
sourced from Shutterstock

A neighbourhood that allows ageing in place must also be a neighbourhood whose residents want to age in that place. Residents must feel rooted in their neighbourhood. A former resident of Floriana mentioned that his “attachment to the locality is something unintentional, and it will never go away...Everyone that left still feels attached in some way. I feel that something is missing and have felt that ever since I left” (P11).

P11 is the only participant who moved away from Floriana, having had personal reasons that he did not wish to discuss. However, despite this, he still feels the need to visit the locality on a regular basis because of people in his life including family and friends, as well as the church and senior centre which he forms part of. Xuereb explains that communities become attached to locations in the neighbourhood they relate to, and these can become part of their identity (2024). Participants often mentioned places like the Institute for Catholicism Studies, the local feast and memories of playing games in the gardens and the granaries when they were children. The environment changes

with time however the stories linked to the places mentioned are then woven into the identity of the locality, as they are carried on from one generation to the next (Xuereb, 2024).



Figure 25: People throwing papers from balconies during the Feast's "Marè tas-siegha"

An identity can also be created by an opposition, and this applies to the locality of Floriana very well. The residential areas of the locality were created to alleviate the congestion of Valletta in 1724 (Thake, 2024), and in 2012 the locality's parade grounds were converted to a car park for the same reason (The Malta Independent, 2010). This shows that to this day Floriana still caters to the needs of the capital in some way or another. The proximity of the two has led to a competition of territories, and a collective identity has been formed through the interaction with the so-called other (Barth, 2010).

During a go-along walk through the Mall Garden, which directly faces the entrance to Valletta, P6 spoke out about two individuals from Valletta who have a stroll through the garden every day. She explained that one of them had told her that the Triton fountain was in Valletta, to which she disagreed and said that Valletta starts from the gate to the city. She stated that “**They** envy the gardens **we** have here, **we** can go out and walk around” . This us vs them mentality is often felt when Valletta claims landmarks in Floriana because the capital is more known in international circles, such as the renaming of Pinto Wharf to the Valletta Waterfront, but the competition between the two is also displayed in sports, namely football (Xuereb, 2024).



Figure 26: Sight lines from the Mall garden directly facing Triton Fountain and entrance to Valletta

Source: Author

Football is a sport enjoyed by many, and in the case of Floriana the club has had unequalled records, and upon the introduction of Valletta FC, the club only grew more competitive to disallow the rivals from surpassing their championship record which the people from the capital had in fact set out to do (Xuereb, 2024). During the go-along interview with P4, neighbours were heard talking from balcony to balcony about the ongoing match, discussing the scores and the time left for the match to be won.

Go-along interview with P4	P4: Did they say what the score is? Int: I think they said its 0-0 P4: I hope it's a win!
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Table 4: Part of go-along interview with P4 Source: Author

Football is one of the attributes where such a small locality makes itself feel grander and less inferior to larger and more known localities (Xuereb, 2024). This competition is part of the shared identity of residents and championship wins bring together everyone from Floriana, those who left (Furjanizi ta' barra) and those who stayed (Furjanizi ta' gewwa). However, without this shared mythology and competitive culture between Valletta and Floriana, which without Valletta would not have existed, the locality would not be the Floriana we know (Xuereb, 2024).



Figure 28: Football Celebrations 2020, Older Residents as part of celebrations

Source: Author



Figure 27: Coming together of Funtanizzi "ta' barra" and "ta' gewwa" for Football celebrations in Saint Anne's Street Source: Author



Figure 29: Decoration of Saint Anne's Street for Football Celebrations Source: Author

An older community encourages ageing in place. This may sound obvious, but ageing together with people you have known your whole life offers a supportive and understanding social environment. Participants expressed that most of the older residents are in Balzunetta and are comfortable living there. During a sedentary interview, a participant even explained that she felt safer in her apartment block because of how caring the residents are because they too were mostly older people and understood the challenges of ageing:

“In this block, we’re mostly older people. I feel safe in this block because people check in all the time. My next-door neighbour is always bringing me baked goods she makes at home. She really looks out for me. She takes out the rubbish for me. She’s in her early 70s so still young compared to me. We take care of each other in Balzunetta in general, that’s part of why we love it so much. We have everything we need.”

P1 during sedentary interview

These social structures are key to a healthy ageing process because people’s actions are socially determined (Santos, Paciencia and Ribeiro, 2022). The community is further supported by the Floriana Senior Citizen Centre, where older residents and those aged over 50 have their own community. Out of the 11 participants, 9 of them are part of this social organisation. Here, the older residents are educated about issues that they may encounter during their ageing journey including conditions like dementia and depression. This information allows the residents to look out for these indicators in other residents, providing support and comfort through their neighbourhood activities. Apart from this, this social cohesion benefits the mental and physical

health of participants (Kress et al., 2020), which according to P5 is around 60 residents. The centre also organises activities such as coffee mornings and tombola to give older residents activities to attend, encouraging them to leave their homes and engage in relationships with their peers. This offers solace to those who might feel alone and not leave their personal home as much. P7 also explains that there are a number of these residents who are confined in their homes for numerous reasons, which the centre would like to reach out to so that they too can engage with others through home visits by other residents who they feel comfortable with.

The other two participants (P9 and P10) are heavily involved in the upkeep of the Kapuččini convent through activities such as tending to the cats that live in the gardens, carrying out small repairs and participating during mass. Therefore, it can be said that all participants are part of additional social structures outside of those within their own home. These social structures give the older residents routines in their environments, allowing them to remain independent and have control over their lives while benefitting from positive effects on their social, mental and physical health.

5.3 The Economic

Change instils fear. This is true not just for older individuals, but for everyone. Familiarity is what gives us comfort in our neighbourhoods and enables us to treat them as an extension of the home, if we have our social structures within that same environment. Floriana, despite having a similar facade to what older residents have known all of their lives is still changing. The population is depleting (National Statistics Office, 2021) and as a result, many dwellings remain uninhabited and allowed to fall into disrepair.

P7 during the go-along interview passed through two narrow streets which to her are full of life and appear lived in because of all the plants in the balconies and on the streets as well as laundry hanging from the balconies. P7 also explained that residents want more people and life in the locality, but the costs to purchase and refurbish a dwelling in the locality are too high for a lot of young couples, so they either remain empty, are bought by companies, or are converted into governmental infrastructure.

These unknowns and unfamiliar people that are brought in because of these re-adaptations of built infrastructure result in fear among some older residents. However, this is felt most by those who have detracted from the environment outside of their home. To become familiar with the

environment that is changing the person must be willing to still be a part of that environment and co-exist.

A change brought up by P5 was the proposed conversion of Saint Anne's Street into another garden, which according to his recollection none of the residents want. Floriana already has several gardens, what it needs is more opportunities for small local businesses to bring more people to the locality. At present the street is described as a racetrack because of all the high-speed traffic, so pedestrianisation would be best, but P5 states that this space should be an opportunity for the tight-knit community of the locality to grow. He explains that it should be a square similar to those abroad, full of life and have small coffee shops, crafts areas and artist displays, to showcase the talents of the people in the locality. He stated "It should bring the animation of the streets back, like what I remember from when I was a child" (P5).

This, and governmental aid for people to return to Floriana will mitigate fears and add life to the streets of the locality, which through the creation of a third space will become part of the lived experience of place. There is no one direct route to create a neighbourhood to allow ageing in place because every person's ageing process is different. However, the use of accessible spaces which are enabling and inclusive to the older residents is necessary to generate this environment. In the case of Floriana, a number of these spaces exist, and serve to prove that when provided with such an environment the older residents can age actively. However, what is unique in Floriana besides the physical attributes of the locality is the tight-knit relationship between residents which has been built over a lifetime. This, besides a relatable and familiar environment, is crucial. The support that comes from ageing with peers makes the individual feel less alone, so one might ask how then would familiarity between strangers be created?

In this case, the physical attributes of ageing in place are even more important, as they have the potential to become third places. Through the people that animate these spaces, the feeling of familiarity is created. From here relationships between the animators of space can start to emerge and from that point, ageing in place can become a shared process between residents. The process of how Floriana enables its residents is indeed partially a result of its history, however, the attachment that these older residents feel to their neighbourhood and their memories serve to show how much our physical environment and social structures can shape how we age.



Figure 30: Saint Anne's Street Loggias (Taht il-Loġoġ) – Street Animation confined and segregated from other part of street due to vehicular traffic

Source: Author

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 Summary of Results

From this study, it was concluded that the older residents' experience of the ageing process is shaped by their social structures and physical attributes of place, which should be inclusive and enabling. In other words, not only should the environment allow the person to age in place but the person should want to age in place, and this comes from the familiarity and sense of belonging to the neighbourhood, which becomes part of the individual's identity.

The physical attributes of locality including streets and open spaces have to be fully **accessible** to people with mobility issues to ensure **inclusivity**, while also being **enabling** to users so that they are encouraged to include the space in their daily routines. These routines in space must be reinforced through a **familiar environment** which acts as a way-finding tool for navigating the locality. The neighbourhood should have a **diversity of land uses** within a **compact** area for the older residents to be able to navigate their lives independently for as long as possible.

The social attributes of Floriana also contributed heavily to its success as a neighbourhood for its older residents. These qualities include **social structures** which are intertwined with the neighbourhood, including the Senior Citizen Centre and churches which have their own communities which most residents form part of. These social structures along with enabling spaces allow for the creation of **third places**, animated by the daily lived experiences of residents and other visitors, instilling a sense of **familiarity** with others and **belonging**. With old age comes a series of lived experiences in locality, which are either **shared memories** between long-term residents or **personal memories** in place. These shared memories in place connect people together through these shared lived experiences, creating a **shared identity**.

The physical and social attributes can only come together if there are enabling spaces and people who animate them. Economic factors to incentivise long-term tenants to live in the locality will help **add life to the streets** of Floriana, and through long-term residents in place fears of the unknown can be eliminated. However, this can only be done if there are incentives for people to renovate the property of the locality and make use of the open spaces that the locality offers. In that way, older residents become familiar with newcomers through shared spaces and experiences in place, through their **co-existence**. The elimination of physical fears such as high-speed traffic can constitute the creation of new shared spaces that are shared between residents both old and

new, but these spaces must be designed through the **inclusion of the community in design decisions (participatory design)** to ensure their success in becoming third spaces. The combination of these factors allows the older residents to age in place and live independently for as long as they wish to do so. Floriana, despite having a depleting population still has most of the physical and social attributes required to allow ageing in place at present but requires attention to create cohesion between the existing community of older residents and the newcomers that are becoming part of the neighbourhood. Only then can the two co-exist together.

6.2 Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study are outlined to aid the reader in having a better understanding of the results. These are mostly related to time constraints and being a single researcher which led to certain aspects which would have been fruitful to the research being omitted.

Having studied Floriana and its allowances for its residents to age in place as the sole locality, the research is only representative of that context alone, possibly missing out on any other qualities that enable ageing in place in other local neighbourhoods and contexts. Therefore, the exploration of different localities with different demographic patterns and population densities could have resulted in the investigation of different qualities that can enable ageing in place.

The study could have also benefitted from a larger number of participants than the eleven involved, but due to time constraints, this was not possible. It should also be pointed out that factors such as the mood of the participant and time of day, as well as the weather all contribute to how the participant responds to the place being experienced.

6.3 Further Exploration

Due to the extensive nature of architecture and gerontology, the study presented is not exhaustive and each theme mentioned in the study can be expanded further. Possible ways of doing this could be to:

- Apply the same methodology to a different locality, to compare and contrast how the physical and social attributes of the neighbourhood dynamic affect the daily lived experiences of older residents there, compared to those in Floriana.
- Organising several focus groups with people from different localities to get a more diverse sample of how different neighbourhoods enable or disallow their older residents to age in place. These focus groups would tackle issues of open spaces and public infrastructure such as walkability of street networks and quality of life in the neighbourhood, which would help indicate what attributes the specific locality requires to enable its population to age in place.
- Shadowing older people in different localities during their day to look into what the neighbourhood offers its older residents, and how these people respond to the environment, all the while being excluded as the researcher from their personal lived experience. This is a more anthropological approach that could generate more data unaffected by the researcher's presence.

These studies can be supplemented further by exploring other studies carried out in the fields of ageing in place and gerontology both locally and abroad to understand what research methods are most applicable to study such a specific population demographic and why.

6.4 Concluding Thoughts

A person's experience in place is complex, intertwined with memories of past and present which shape our perceptions for the future. It is the juxtaposition of the physical environment with its social structures that influence our perception of it. As we grow older, we become less reliant on the self and rely on our surroundings, if they have the affordances to do so. These affordances can shape how we age and how independent we can remain in our surroundings.

I hope to see neighbourhoods such as Floriana be studied further, to in the future have a strategic plan for ageing in place for the Maltese islands. Old age can have negative connotations because of becoming limited and obsolete, but through proper planning of physical and social environments that can keep us active for as long as possible, old age can become an opportunity to engage, both with the environment and with the social structures it offers. Ageing is inevitable, but the ageing process can be shaped for better or worse depending on how well we plan for it.

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Appendices

Appendix I Participant Information & Recruitment Letter

Information about the study

My name is Dawn Briscoe, and I am a student at the University of Malta, reading for a Masters in Architecture and Urban Design. I am presently conducting research as part of my dissertation titled Capturing Lived Experience in Locality, A Socio-Spatial Characterisation of Floriana from an Older Residents' Perspective. My study aims to highlight the importance of memory and belonging to create place attachment and characterise locality based on its subjective qualities known by its residents, through their first-hand experience.

Your Participation

Any data collected from this research will be used solely for the purposes of this study.

Should you choose to participate, you will be asked to take part in a “go along interview” around the neighbourhood where you can describe your memories in Floriana and the changes that have occurred since then. The walk should take no longer than 30 minutes and will be done individually with each participant by myself.

Data will be collected through the use of voice recording and photography and the “go along interview” should take no 30 minutes.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary; in other words, you are free to accept or refuse to participate without needing to give a reason.

You are also free to withdraw from the study at any time, without needing to provide any explanation and without any negative repercussions to you. Should you choose to withdraw, any data collected from you will be erased as long as it is technically possible (for example before it is anonymised or published), unless the erasure of data would render impossible or impair the achievement of the research objectives, in which case it shall be retained in an anonymised form.

If you choose to participate, please note that you and the researcher would agree on a date and time which is convenient for the interview.

Your participation does not entail any known or anticipated risks.

Data Management

The data collected will be pseudonymised and stored on my personal computer where the only person who can access it is myself.

Please also note that, as a participant, you have the right under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and national legislation to access, rectify and where applicable ask for the data concerning you to be erased.

All data collected will be erased within one year of the completion of the study.

Your identity will be revealed/attributed only with your consent.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Should you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact me via email at dawn.briscoe.18@um.edu.mt or my supervisor, Dr Wendy Jo Mifsud, via email wendy-jo.mifsude@um.edu.mt .

Kind Regards,

Dawn Briscoe

Researcher

Appendix II Participant Consent Form

I, the undersigned give my consent to participate in the research conducted by Dawn Briscoe. The below conditions specify the terms of my participation in this study.

Con.1

I agree to participate in this study carried out by Dawn Briscoe in her dissertation “Capturing Lived Experience in Locality”.

Con.2

I understand that even if I give my consent to participate now, I can withdraw from the study at any time without having to give a reason.

Con.3

I understand that participation involves participating in a walk with the researcher, where I can refuse to answer any question without consequences.

Con.4

I understand that the individual walk with the researcher will take approximately 30 minutes and I might be asked about my memories and perception of place and experiences in the locality.

Con.5

I understand that the walk will be recorded and transcribed, and after a year since completion of the study erased.

Con.6

I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I may mention.

Con.7

I understand that quotations from transcripts can be used in the published work as long as the identity of myself and any party mentioned is disguised.

Con.8

I have been written and verbal information regarding the purpose of the research and all my queries have been answered.

Con.9

I understand that I can contact the researcher for further clarification about the research through the following contact details:

Researcher: Dawn Briscoe

E-Mail: dawn.briscoe.18@um.edu.mt

Participant's Name (in block letters)

Researcher's Name (in block letters)

Participant's signature

Researcher's signature

Date

Appendix III Sedentary Interviews

Sedentary interviews with P1, P2 and P3 at the residence of P1

Interview with P1:

Int: So, how long have you lived in Floriana?

P1: In this apartment 12 years now, but I've always lived in Balzunetta, thanks God! The people here are special and so welcoming, I never wanted to leave. In this block, we're mostly elderly people here, but there's a younger woman here in her 60's so still young compared to me.

Int: Do you form part of the senior citizens centre as well?

P1: Yes, we're all a little club there! We all go there, some are younger than others like your grandma she's still in her early 70's.

Int: Apart from the activities there, what else does your routine consist of?

P1: Well usually I get up in the morning turn on my radio, get started with the housework and start cooking something, then I go to the grocery store around the corner. Then we go to mass together and go get coffee together from the Granaries bar near the church, and if I'm in the mood I'll go buy a lotto ticket or two from the shop around the corner too. By noon then I'll come home and won't go out till the next day.

Int: You're comfortable in your environment then because it's familiar, right?

P1: Yes, I don't leave the door open obviously but I know the people living around me. In the afternoon though the streets are empty, especially after 2pm. The Mall is empty now as opposed to how it was when we were young. I remember we used to wait for the children there and then take them home for lunch and they would play there for a bit and they would go back in and we would stay and chat there. We would knit there and play bocci. The Mall was full of people. Now it's just cars parked around it, and people going in and out of Valletta in the afternoon.

Int: Would you say that there are things that would make you feel safer walking around in the late afternoon, like more lighting and more people living here?

P1: Not really, I feel safe in this block, people check in all the time. My next-door neighbour especially is always bringing me baked goods she makes at home. She really looks out for me. She takes out the rubbish for me. She's in her early 70's so still young compared to me. We take care of each other in Balzunetta in general, that's part of why we love it so much. We have everything we need.

P1: It used to have a reputation when we were younger because of all the bars, but we had very good-looking barmaids and people used to think that they were some kinds of prostitutes. They were there to simply serve drinks and socialise. There was always something going on in Balzunetta, always full of life at the time, during the day and all night!

Int: Is this stigma still present today?

P1: Yes, a while ago maybe a couple of months ago I ran into a friend and she asked me if I knew a particular family from around here, and I said yes they're our neighbours. She told me because our granddaughter is going out with one of their grandparents and since they're from Balzunetta I should check what kind of people they are. She made my blood boil, she was so rude. I told her I'm from Balzunetta as well and what can you say about me?! You don't have as many saints where you're from so you shouldn't be judging us of all people. She's from Floriana as well but she lives down in the "Wara s-sur" area, so she thinks that they're better off down there. The stigma is still there, and what they say is simply not true! Before when someone was marrying someone from Balzunetta the priests from the other localities would do background checks on the people from here by checking with the church. It's not that bad now at least.

Interview with P2:

P2: I now live in Conservatory Street, and before I was married, I still lived in the same street a couple of doors down. I was 19 when I married.

Int: I can't imagine being married that young!

P2: That's what my grandparents say! But look at how much time I got with them; my daughter is over 65 now too. What else?

Int: What's your routine like?

P2: I usually meet P1 and go to mass, and then we go to the bakery and the market to get fresh fruits and vegetables, and when we need to go, the butcher too. Then we go to the football club for a coffee and then I go home by around noon. I'm alone now that my husband passed but I had a very full life. My husband was in the British army, and we travelled so much, I have no regrets.

P2: I was born here and plan to die here. Everything I could ever need is here in Balzunetta. Now we only have one grocer in Balzunetta, but in the past, we had specific shops for different things like a bakery store here and a butcher. What else? There were so many shops selling chips in newspapers and then go eat in the Mall gardens. We used to leave the place clean, today people don't care. I was lucky that I lived when I lived, the locality has been supporting me throughout my life and I would never leave. My children married and left and I've never slept at their houses because here is where I want to live. I would never want to become dependent on them, I try and remain self-sufficient, and the environment and people help me here. We look out for each other.

Interview with P3:

P3: I'm from Sliema originally, but my work with the government and milk bottles brought me to Floriana and I met my husband here, and we stayed here and I never left, it's my home now. I've lived here since I was 16 so 72 years now!

Int: So, you've been here longer than in Sliema.

P3: Yes, and I would never leave.

...participant leaves to go pick up something

P2 about P3: She's become very forgetful now, but she loves it here and we try to look out for her and make her life easier by taking her out.

P3: The people here in Balzunetta take care of each other, even the people from other parts of Floriana know that. We were a tight-knit community and the elderly that still live here still are.

**Sedentary Interview with participant P5 who was unable to go on a go-along interview.
The meeting took place at the Floriana Senior Citizen Centre.**

Int: Tell me about what it's like growing up in Floriana.

P5: I was born here, and I've always lived here, except for a couple of years when our ceilings collapsed, and we went to live in Qawra. As a boy, I didn't go out much, but I enjoyed going to Catholicism lessons and looking out from our multiple balconies onto the street because we lived on a corner. You could see all the street theatrics from there ("teatrini tat-triq"). We could see all the children gathering and then playing after, there was so much life.

Int: This is the narrow street where there is the bakery then, I had some meetings there and remember going shopping with my grandma for fruits and vegetables in that street.

P5: Exactly, despite how narrow it was it just had everything. There was also Lalu's bar there at the corner, it was the centre of activity that's why I call it a theatre, there's always something going on.

P5: People would go there to buy a snack or something and people would sit on the Granaries, so much so you would never find a bench or a "fossa" to sit on. The baker would have people waiting with dishes on a Sunday so that they cook them with his oven, and it would smell amazing. There was also another baker near the depot. We would play at the Granaries all the time, the people of Balzunetta had the Xaghra and the gardens, and the people near the Saint Publius Church had the Granaries. Then the people who lived near the Kapuċċini Church and those of "wara s-sur" had the playground. Floriana was split into four, Balzunetta, Granaries (church area), Kapuċċini and Wara s-Sur.

Int: What kind of activity was there at the time in these spaces?

P5: After Catholicism, we would go out and play football mostly even in the Square behind the old orphanage, and then go home for dinner, but you don't see that nowadays. Our street emptied with time.

P5: After our roof collapsed and we left for a couple of years I came back and lived in Balzunetta, but that place had so many stairs it got too hard to climb up them, especially since I lived on the top floor, but the view was amazing. There was a lot of open space.

Int: Some of it was regenerated now I believe and I see more tourists there.

P5: Yes, there is a boutique hotel now on that street so it's a bit busier now and has more cars passing through it. It's become a problem. I had asked to have reserved parking spaces in each area of Floriana for doctors who are visiting the elderly in their own homes, but it was ignored. This is something that a couple of elderly at the senior citizens centre mention.

P5: During the seven years I spent in Balzunetta I bought a place in the same street I used to live in, and I now live there. It used to be the Nelson hotel, but it became a living quarters for the families of soldiers. However, now the street noise is caused by cars, not people. A lot of places are abandoned, but there are quite a few that were fixed up and rented, a lot of them to foreigners. They're very quiet but the Furjaniži population is dwindling due to their age.

Int: I see a lot of older people walking around very freely and comfortable in their environment. Do they make use of spaces like this often?

P5: With the elderly a lot of them don't have where to go, they go to mass and do their shopping maybe an outing with the church group. The senior citizens centre has helped bring a lot of elderly people who are lonely out of their homes.

Int: I see a lot of older people going to the 22nd of January bar to have a coffee after mass as well.

P5: There are a lot of services close by as well like all the shops in Saint Anne's Street, a lot of which are still run by people from Floriana. Here we sometimes have around 60 elderly residents for talks we organize and tombola. This is the first day centre in the locality and is also close to the elderly care home in Sarria which was the first to accommodate elderly from Floriana such that they can age in place. In this way, they can go out more and be close to family, so the experience isn't traumatic, they just eat and sleep there. A couple of them come here, there was one person who passed away a couple of months ago he would bring friends here from the elderly care home and they would play cards and drink coffee. They loved it here.

The neighbourhood offers a lot for the elderly with the centre here and how everyone knows everybody and it's still a closely knit community. Your family is spread throughout the locality as well, you look a lot like your mum. It's good that you are so interested in the locality.

Int: A lot of work goes into the things you do here, and you're very involved in general with the community.

P5: I like making statues as well, I don't want to deviate from the subject, but I like how the conversation isn't forced with questions.

Int: It's not deviating at all; I want to listen to all the aspects of your life as you grew older and the routine you have now.

P5: Right now, we're preparing for the Good Friday display at the small chapel, we're quite busy with the exhibition and then after there's the festa but I have to undergo surgery too, so quite a lot going on. My sister also works on the decor for the chapel as well. We like to keep busy, and we like bringing the elderly here and sometimes we bring food, and all eat together, so many widows live alone in their homes now and are lonely, so we try and help in any way we can.

What's great about this place as well is that it's completely accessible too. We have a lot of talks we had one a couple weeks ago about dementia as well and we should be organising one about depression as well. I love the locality, but a lot of people grew up and left. As people grow older though they want to come back because they want to return to their roots. However, prices have rocketed for property here.

Int: With the topic of the regeneration of Saint Anne's Street I think it can only increase, what do you think?

P5: Saint Anne's Street should be more pedestrian-oriented because it feels like a race track with all the traffic. That idea was floating around the council for a long time. Today with our technology it's possible. However, I don't think it should be another garden, we have enough gardens. We need businesses coming back here, uses where people can gather and reinforce the knit community of Floriana. We don't need another garden, the way it was shown in the papers gave the wrong impression. It should be a place for living like the squares you see abroad, always having life. It should have things like coffee shops, crafts areas, there are a few talented people here. It should bring the animation of the streets back, like what I remember from when I was a child.

P5: Is this, okay?

Int: Yes, thank you so much.

Sedentary interview with P8 who was unable to go on a go-along interview. The interview was conducted over the phone.

P8: Can you hear me well?

Int: Yes everything is clear.

P8: Would you like to ask me something first or should I just start? I have some notes written so I don't forget.

Int: I have some questions but you can start and I'll ask if you don't mention something.

P8: Okay then. I think the points are relevant. Here in Floriana the houses are small, especially in Balzunetta so when I was young, we would go out into the gardens, and the families were huge a lot of them having even seven children. We were always running around with bikes and skates. The carnival used to take place at the Xaghra, and there would be so many parades for the navy at the time and other services provided by the British.

P8: We would go to the Granaries where they would grow wheat too and try to get some wheat for the Christmas "gulgiena". We would play hopscotch and all sorts of games, but you don't see that anymore today. The Mall would be closed in the evening, it had high walls before unlike today. There would be so many street vendors with either a cart or van selling eggs, figs, bigilla, and ice cream.

Int: They would all come up to Balzunetta?

P8: Yes, they would yell when they arrive, some in the morning and some even in the afternoon there would always be something going on. The streets would be full of people, and the navy men sometimes used carriages to get to the waterfront when the lift was not in operation.

P8: There was also a healing tree in the Argotti, I don't know if you've heard of it. They would take children with coughs there. There were so many children in Floriana, even from outside the locality, like Pieta'. Today even children from Valletta come to school here. The War changed the locality and my family had moved to Żebbug, my brother was born there. However, after we moved back. We loved the locality and even today there is always something going on at the granaries, concerts, and feasts and what not.

Int: It can get a bit congested I think during mass events.

P8: Yes, parking is a huge problem nowadays, before not all families had a car. Today everyone has one. We used to get my Father's pension from Montgomery house, it was run by the British at the time.

Int: This is where there's now the Mapfre offices?

P8: Yes, exactly, what else can I tell you? Have you heard some of these things?

Int: Yes, my grandma grew up in Balzunetta as well so she knows a few things but she's a bit younger, so she doesn't remember as well. I was going to ask you about the healthcare services in the locality and how having so many services affected the people living here.

P8: The depot was a hospital at one point and then it became a clinic for optometry, and at some point for sexually transmitted diseases.

Int: This was all at the same time?

P8: I'm not sure if it was at the same time. My grandfather was a nurse there and I recall my mother telling me about the time it was used for that. What else?

Int: I was going to ask, since you told me that you would rather do the interview on the phone, whether there was a particular reason for that, like being uncomfortable with the environment or that you feel it is unsafe.

P8: Not really, it's just that I really don't enjoy walking and I am having some knee pains, and as we're talking I'm keeping an eye on the stove.

Int: You enjoy cooking?

P8: My sister and I love it. I would have come with you, but some pavements are not in a good state like the one in front of the 22nd January bar up until Saint Anne's Street. Apart from that the environment is nice I just like to keep busy at the house. It's nice that you're interested though in the elderly and in Floriana.

Int: My grandparents really got me interested with all the memories I have of this place growing up.

P8: I forgot to mention the rivalry in football, when I was younger with Sliema but now with Valletta. It brings together all the people from here now, even those who left Floriana.

Int: Would you say that you feel that you belong in Floriana, would you consider leaving?

P8: I was born in this very house, and I plan to die here. My sister and I are alone here so we don't have family but we have each other and the people in our street all know us really well so we look out for each other. Balzunetta was a blast when we were younger, full of life, our mum wouldn't let us go out at night because the navy men would be out drinking and looking to flirt with girls. It was a different time. Now, the Mall is empty but since they fixed it up with lights a lot of people pass through it but mostly tourists. We feel safe though, everyone knows everyone, which is something unique to here I think not modern neighbourhoods. Here there are a lot of elderly, and a lot of vacant property which is falling apart and they are too expensive for young couples to take up.

Int: Especially in the "Wara S-Sur" area. If I had to pick I'd rather live in the Balzunetta area, I know the people there.

P8: We're like a family here, It's one of the reasons I remain here and I feel safe. Everyone knows everyone. Today everyone wants to live up here, it's much better than down there, there are a lot of foreigners there and the people from here don't know them.

P8: I hope I was helpful.

Int: Very much thank you. I appreciate you going through the trouble of taking notes to tell me everything you thought of.

P8: No problem, I do it for everything otherwise I forget. If you need anything else just call, we're always here.

Int: Thank you so much, I appreciate it.

Sedentary interview with P11 done through the phone:

Int: Please describe where you lived or still live in Floriana:

P11: Unfortunately, I no longer live in Floriana. I used to live on Miratur Street below the church bells of Saint Publius.

Int: Why did you choose to leave Floriana?

P11: The population depleted from the 8,500 we were when I was younger. Like a lot of people I married outside of the locality and moved out for reasons I really regret now in my old age. There is no place like Floriana; 5 minutes away from the capital, government institutions are closeby, a bus every five minutes which can take you anywhere o the island. There are twelve gardens and access to the sea and could go swimming. Unfortunately like a lot of other things you only know the value of a place once you've lost it. A lot of people have now and the population is just 1,900 today I believe.

Int: From your time in Floriana and childhood, how do you feel the locality has changed?

P11: It changed a lot. There are no people standing on the corner and kids playing in the street, no more markets on Saint Thomas Street or street vendors going around yelling. The congestion of cars and parking is continuously increasing as the population continues to deplete. Its a shame there are so many abandoned houses, but their costs to renovate as well as rent or buy once this is done is too much for a lot of people.

Int: As an older resident, how do you think the locality can become a better place for the older residents to age in place, as well as for people of Floriana to encourage them to come back?

P11: There isn't much left to build in Floriana which is an advantage for our environment to remain the same locality that we know and loved ever since we were children. What can be done is putting in lifts and chair lifts in more buildings here so that the elderly can continue to live in their own homes. In terms of bringing in the "Furjaniži ta' barra", what needs to be done is demolish an abandoned plot and rebuild it with garages and modern amenities as well as made affordable so that people can live in a modern way and bring more life to the locality. This was done where I live now in Balzan.

Int: Could you describe your attachment to the locality if you still feel that you belong there?

P11: My attachment to the locality is something that is unintentional, and it will never go away. I continuously remember my childhood there but because of certain circumstances had to leave. Everyone that left still feels attached in some way. I feel that something is missing and have felt that ever since I left. I am still attached to the locality through my friends, relatives and through the church where I do a lot of voluntary work. I am also part of the senior citizens centre where I also help out in writing the leaflets “il-bastun” handed out every month, which is published for the elderly living in Floriana.

Int: Are there any particular memories that you still think about despite the time having gone by?

P11: A lot of memories of when I still went to school there, games and running in the streets, a lot of running in the Kappuccini convent. We used to make up games and play in the buildings being reconstructed at the time too. We used to help with the 3 churches we have here too, as well as go the Catholicism. We used to love playing in the gardens and watching the parades of English soldiers.

P11: I hope I gave you a picture of how Floriana used to be and wish to never forget! It's a shame that time has gone by!

Int: Thank you very much, you were very helpful!

Appendix IV Go-Along Interviews

Go-along interview with P4 starting from Triq il-Mall

P4: Let's start from where the "għajnijiet" were. There was one on this street, near Masu's shop here.

Int: Was it the kind of spring where horses would drink?

P4: No, it was used when there was no water service available in our homes, but when I was growing up here, we already had water, so people would use it to wash the street. Some children would use it to play on the street here and throw water everywhere. The water was also good for drinking like the fountains in Rome. There were a number of these in Floriana, in Balzunetta there was also one near the Police Depot. They removed these when everyone had water at home.

P4: Let's go where I was brought up round the corner. My dad always lived in Floriana, but my mum was from Valletta, she lived above "Puturjal". From there she could look out onto Floriana at the time because there weren't many buildings. The first house built in Floriana is a block away from where I live, we'll pass from that street later.

P4: Here, on Conservatory Street, I always remember this statue of The Virgin Mary, and people would come and look up to her when they were to undergo surgery and they would pray and light the lights. My grandfather said once that he was choking and he ran out and kneeled in front of the statue and he got better, he lived here as well.

P4: Here I would bring my children to Catholicism studies as well, and there's the lotto office here too.

P4: The depo is closed right now before it used to be further up where you would pick up the police conduct. On the other side of the street, it used to be the general hospital but when I was younger it was a hospital focused on optometry. This was all before Saint Luke's hospital was built. Now it looks like it's turned into a government building, maybe part of the depot.

P4: In the same block of the Kurja building there was a school for seminary studies here, and the boys would go to the "Xaghra" during their recreation time.

P4: On the other side where there now is the Education, used to be “the ordinanza” where my father used to work with the British. After it became a school for crafts.

P4: Let’s cross from here now in front of the Kurja and you can see the old hospital, there’s a police car there.

Int: You might need to shout a bit because of the traffic and wind.

P4: Down San Maison Hill then there used to be the Barracks for the British. From the “il-Gotti” (Argotti) gardens you would be able to see them, these would be for the families of the British. There were also some small villas for the families of more accomplished soldiers, you would hear them in the morning coming up saying good morning Mrs, this and that. My father was a messenger for them.

P4: Where else would you like to go?

Int: Wherever you want to take me, shall we pass from up here?

P4: Here there’s the “il-Gotti” (Argotti) Botanic Garden, its lovely. Have you written about it? It’s a garden that is always closed at night, now the times are extended till 11 pm in the summer and till 9 pm in winter. It used to close around 6 pm before.

Int: Was there always this wall surrounding it?

P4: Yes, yes, it’s always been there. The building next to it here is part of the Kurja, they sometimes stay out on the roof having a coffee and when my friend and I go out for a walk together we can hear them conversing up there.

Int: Stay close to the wall because of the traffic

P4: There’s also another garden below the “il-Gotti” (Argotti), its entrance is on the San Maison hill I forgot the name, but many people don’t go there as much because the hill is too steep and there are many cars. Many go for the Ġenna Ġonna event there to see the bonsais they cultivate there but there aren’t any benches so people don’t stay too long. We see it from the “il-Gotti” (Argotti) above it, people mostly walk through it when it’s open but there are also meetings there for people who are part of the Bonsai Association.

P4: This school here now, which used to be part of the education before used to be a “berġa”.

Int: What do you mean by “berġa”?

P4: A berġa is like a clinic, at the time that’s what we used to call them. When I fell and hit my head this was where my father brought me to get stitches (laughing).

Int: The poli-clinics didn’t exist at the time then?

P4: No, there weren’t poli-clinics in Malta back then when I was a young girl. There were only these “berġi”. There was one in Valletta in Straight Street too. The poli-clinics came later. Today, we have the poli-clinic, its convenient too. My friend goes there even when she feels some pains during the day because there is always a doctor available and it's convenient.

P4: They demolished it then and they rebuilt it as a school for children with disabilities like the blind. We got to know the children because there were very few children. Then they converted it to a regular school and my husband used to go there before he went to the technical school. I used to go to the school across the street, we would start from the classrooms next to the Sarria chapel and then as we grew older we would enter from the side door on the other street. Next to Sarria there is the childcare now, when I go for a walk with my friend in the morning she drops off her grandson there, after we walk through the Mall garden and sometimes the “il-Gotti” (Argotti). We mostly walk through the Mall right now because when it’s windy its uncomfortable to walk through the “il-Gotti” (Argotti).

P4: I used to be in the last classroom on the upper floor of the school when I was older and my husband was in the other building across the street and I would be in charge of opening and closing the window, so I would leave it open so I could see him (laughing). We had separate recreation areas for girls and boys but we could still see each other from the window during school. They used to be venetian blinds but now they removed most of them.

P4: Let’s go to “il- Gotti” (Argotti) now. There’s the entrance to the other garden around the corner.

Int: There are a lot of cats here, and they look well kept. The other garden has quite a few steps though.

P4: Some elderly come and feed them around this time, so they gather here. They’re quite friendly. The garden below is where my brother goes on walks everyday, but there are some steep inclines and a lot of steps, so I don’t go there. He tells me that if I don’t show up to send people looking for him down there. We can see it from the Argotti quite well, it was refurbished a couple of years back.

Int: The fountain there lights up at night now, I saw it when I came to the wine festival last year.

P4: Yes, that's one of the events here, but some people have their wedding at the Argotti. They don't use the garden below however because of accessibility issues. The trees are so old here they're huge. This tree is so tall we could see it from the loggia of our house from Conservatory Street, and we could tell how windy it was.

Int: Is it true people lived here too?

P4: My husband's great-aunt was supposedly born in this building. It's now used by the university but my husband's mother says he was born here. I don't know what they use it for now, but a neighbour helps out here when she has time.

Int: It's the botanical institute now, I believe.

P4: So, they study the plants here, there are so many in the garden. It's beautiful here. This part is only open to the public during the "Ġenna Ġonna" event in October and people and tourists come from all over Malta. There is no locality like Floriana with all these gardens. This side entrance is always closed now and when we were younger, we would come here and play with "ċippitati" (tree droppings) and we would get match sticks and make things out of them like small chairs. We would bring orange juice mix and sandwiches and have lunch together when we were little, our little picnic. Some parents would bring their children here when they had a fever because my mum used to say that there was one tree in this garden that could heal a fever.

Int: Was it true?

P4: I don't know but my mum used to say that people would bring sick kids quite often, so maybe it was.

P4: Here if you look down you can see the bonsai garden and the hill of Sa Maison. You could even see the Barracks of the British from here, it's now a government department now. You can see the garden of Sa Maison from here too, that's the entrance, and there there's also a lookout point where you can see Msida creek.

P4: In the Argotti in this open space when I was a teenager, I remember there would be a fair here and people would be playing music and there would be a small stage. I was so young I'd come running to see the musicians and dance.

P4: There was a passage here that would lead directly to the tree with the healing powers, I don't know if it's still here. The tree trunk was quite large, but I don't know if it's one of these.

P4: It's quite exposed here, the wind blows you away. Some foreigners come here and do yoga and exercise in this part of the garden. You can see Saint Phillip's Garden so well from here, it's great to walk but because of the inclines I can't go. It never looked this beautiful, it took years to refurbish.

P4: That's the Kapuċċini Church and the Lourdes Chapel from here too. The lower garden steps can be seen too from here and even the inclines. It's all a bit too much for me, I don't think it's good for the elderly. We know it as "ta' taht il-gotti" (the one beneath Argotti).

P4: Down here there used to be citrus trees, children would climb down and pick these but they weren't good for eating. They used to call it "tal-bakkaljaw". The citrus looks good now I don't think it's bad anymore. They're lemon trees now they look quite nice.

P4: The bougainvillea here, there used to be another one like it around the corner, I have a picture of my daughter as a baby next to it, I'll try and look for it and show you. It was purple though, not pink like this one. It was so beautiful.

P4: I loved bringing my children here, it was confined in the sense that there were no cars, but the children could play and if they fell, they wouldn't injure themselves. The Mall had a lot of rough surfaces so I would bring them to play here.

P4: This tree looks like a giraffe. The garden is enclosed and it's safe, I come here a lot. I think they cut parts of these trees I never noticed.

- exit Argotti-

Int: What kept you living in Floriana all these years?

P4: I'm old now, where would I go? I would never leave even though the house is too big for just me now. Let me tell you, I don't drive and I have everything close to me, I don't have to rely on anyone. The church is close, and Valletta is close. My daughter helps with errands outside the locality, but I do most of my errands here. I go out on walks with my friend every day and I enjoy my routine. I don't go the feast anymore, not since my husband passed. He used to love it and he used to carry the statue and then we would go and get drinks and go out again and celebrate with family and friends.

Int: It's comfortable and keeps you living independently.

P4: Yes exactly, let's now go see the first house that was the first to be built in Floriana. Look at how huge the doorway is and how ornate it is.

Int: Do they still use it?

P4: No, the husband passed away and the widow left the locality to live with her son now so it's vacant. They used to rent it at a low price, but they had to change the ceilings.

- Neighbours talking from their balconies about the Floriana football match -

Int: They're talking about the football match

P4: Did they say what the score is?

Int: I think they said it's still 0-0

P4: I hope that it's a win. This house here now, next door to me I thought it was converted into offices but they're boutique apartments now. They're increasing in Floriana as well. I hope they're not too noisy when it's in use.

P4: Is this okay?

Int: Yes, thank you it was very helpful.

Go-Along interview with P6 in the Mall garden where the she usually takes her great nephew for a stroll in the early morning before taking him to pre-school.

P6: I'm worried I won't be able to tell you much, my memory isn't as good as it should be. A clear memory I have is getting my tonsils removed at the hospital where there is now the Depot. I remember buying candy from the corner right by the school over there. Us children would line up and buy candy before school started. There were also so many vendors moving through the streets. We would play so much in the streets, God knows how many times I would run into people's "persjani" and break my glasses.

Int: Do you see these people walking here often?

P6: These people are from Valletta. They act like they're better than the people from here, and yet they come and walk around here not there. They're here everyday. He says that the Triton fountain is in Valletta, but people from Valletta have told us that Valletta starts from the gate. They envy the gardens we have here, we can go out and walk around.

- Fountain noises -

P6: The Mall would be full of people. At noon the children would come out from school for their break and we mothers would wait for them here and they would play in the garden and then have lunch at home. They would go back to the school at around 13:45 and we would stay there at the garden and talk. In the summer it used to be full of people, even the granaries, Neriku's shop would open, and we would get snacks while we wait. It's cold today, the sun can't be seen. I have to go to my daughter's house at 2, I hope it doesn't rain because the bus will be late.

Int: It's good you move around. What else do you do in the locality?

P6: We play the lotto, a lot of us elderly do. We never win anything though.

Passerby 1: Isn't the sweetheart with you today?

P6: He's with his mum today.

Passerby 1: I'll see him tomorrow then!

P6: Bye!

...

Passerby 2: Hi, have a good day!

P6: Good day!

P6: I hope he went to the hearing doctor; he's having so much trouble hearing, I need to ask him if he managed to go.

...

Int: The air smells like croissants.

P6: You're sweet! It's the Pastizzi shop and the confectionary probably preparing treats. This is right where I live, I start smelling it at 4 am sometimes. There are all kinds of these quirks here. A friend of mine can tell what direction the wind is coming from depending on how far she can hear the church bells ring she says.

Passerby: Good morning P6!

P6: Good morning! ... The smell is coming from the Pastizzeria.

P6: The Biskuttin garden here used to be full of people on those benches, that's also a part of Floriana. People would wait for the buses there before entering the Triton fountain area where the buses would be.

Int: Is there a reason why it's named "tal-Biskuttin"?

P6: I don't know honestly, it's more of a transitional area now, like a corridor. There are still benches now but it's mostly used by tourists who want to soak up the sun

- Fountain sounds -

Encounter with neighbour...

P6: I hope I was helpful, even though I remember mostly the memories involving food. I remember this corner shop here had the first TV and we had to buy ice cream to be able to watch! How the time has gone by! Look the children from Valletta are coming to school. I'm going to leave you here then! Thank you for walking with me and P4.

Int: No problem thanks for including me!

Go-Along Interview with P7 starting from Triq Sarria

P7: Where do you want to start?

Int: Tell me about your history here in the neighbourhood, like where you grew up.

P7: Let's start from the Sarria Chapel. We used to go to church there because we used to live right next to it, up until I was around 12 years old. Then we moved next to the Saint Publius Pharmacy. In terms of school, we were all here in Floriana.

P7: We used to have school till around 12:30 and then have a long break and we would go back around 2pm till around 3:45pm. We used to enjoy the gardens during this time it was really different than what it's like today.

Int: How so?

P7: There were a lot more children, there was a lot more community we used to play outside all the time, we were like a big family. The parents would meet up in the gardens and wait for the children and watch them play. Now you see people walking around the gardens but no one really playing.

P7: This is where we used to live, right next to the local council here. No one lives here now, there are so many places like this it's a shame that they remain in this state. Some are bought by the government and some are converted into rental investments.

Int: You chose to stay in the locality though instead of leaving like a lot of people did.

P7: Yes, I now live in Vilhena Street, I'm part of the Senior Citizen Centre and try to stay active and volunteer a lot here. So your dissertation is about regenerating the area?

Int: It's more about the daily lives of older residents here and capturing their lived experiences, and how the locality helps support the older residents here to age actively.

P7: At the senior citizen centre, we organise a lot of activities for the elderly like coffee mornings as well as talks about certain conditions that become common as we grow older. Conditions like

dementia and now we're organising one about depression, there are so many elderly who are alone here in the locality and don't leave their homes. I really would like to do something about that and go visit them but we need to get permission to get their addresses from the church. The poor things, all they need is someone to talk to.

Int: I'm starting to get that impression from some participants in the study since not all of them are willing to go out on this go-along walk.

P7: There are fears of foreigners by some elderly who do not know them because they do not leave their homes as much, but I feel that the locality is still safe. I'm not one to go out at 10pm at night but I would say it's still safe.

Int: Yes, my grandma still leaves the door open when she knows we're coming over, and then leaves the "antiporta" closed. It's something that my other grandma from Pieta' doesn't do because she doesn't know the people around her.

P7: All of Malta changed, but **somehow Floriana changed but is still familiar**. I love this narrow street here. It's really particular it's really narrow and the people leave plants out, there's the Catholicism centre here. It's still a street "l-antika". It looks so lived in with the clothes hanging and the plants.

P7: I used to live in this street in my childhood. There was the scouts' Parade yesterday, it's still very lived in. These small streets are charming and there is little to no traffic. Let me show you where I live now.

Int: Careful there's a car.

P7: Yes, be careful. We want to see more people living here. We're trying to get the attention of some ministers to see what can be done about all the vacant property there is. We don't want these buildings to be taken up as government institutions and private companies. We want more people and life here. I remember this building being completely lived in. Maybe the government can help new couples buy these places and fix them up. The population of Floriana is dwindling.

Int: It's such a problem with costs I would love to live here but the prices are too much for young people.

P7: My daughter tells me the exact same thing, she lives in Zabbar right now but really wants to move here.

Int: There's just something about it that feels like home, and the people are lovely and there are so many shops owned by the locals. The feast is the time where all the people that left really come together like my parents and the younger generations.

P7: This year it was lovely especially since they're doing so well in the Premier league. It's all anyone talks about, it really brings us together.

Int: When they won the trophy it was truly amazing I had never seen anything like it, the streets were full of people.

P7: I remember that, obviously I don't participate as much as I used to because I'm growing older now. I love this square here, there's the statue of Manuel de Vilhena. I notice a lot how the elderly walk along Saint Anne's Street loggias. They're safe from the elements and traffic there. I really see a lot of elderly walking there.

Int: The issue with that street is crossing it because of all the traffic, and the underpass really is unpleasant to use.

P7: We use the lights now, the underpass always smells like urine I don't know when it was last washed. It gets noisy, we invested in double glazing. However, you see everything, when the pope and the queen came to Malta, the feast, and the carnival. You can see everything from my apartment. You can see this square too and a lot of workers come have lunch here.

Int: Another participant mentioned the regeneration of Saint Anne's Street, to maybe have less cars and more people moving through it.

P7: Yes, there are a lot of projects mentioned to possibly take place but funding is always an issue. Right now, the Parish has been approved to receive funds for the restoration of the facade and new lighting.

Int: Yes, I had worked on some internal plans for a possible museum in the church, it's good they received the funds.

P7: It's great, we're very happy. All my siblings live here except one, and I want to die here I never want to leave. There's everything here. Let's go to the church now, it will be beautiful once they restore it.

Int: They're leaving the funeral I think now.

P7: Yes, it is finished I think. We're still a community where when we hear the "tre Passjoni" we ask who died. We all know each other quite well with all the family nicknames and everything.

Int: Yes, even my parents and grandparents all distinguish between people using nicknames.

P7: Yes, we're all like one family dispersed around the locality, but some businesses have closed now, because we're all growing old.

Int: Yes, I remember going to Linda's to buy ice cream after lunch or going to buy crisps and bitter lemon on a Saturday morning before Lunch at my grandma's.

P7: She brings the family together, she's always cooking. Having the family over is just the best thing. Look there's my friend there, is this okay?

Int: Yes thank you so much.

P7: Thank you for including me it was lovely meeting you!

Go-along interview with P9 starting from Saint Anne's Street

P9: Let's start from around here where I live now, we're on Kapuċċini Street. We've been here for 32 years.

Int: So you're not originally from Floriana?

P9: No, my husband is but I'm from Valletta.

Traffic sounds near Boffa hospital.

P9: So where should I take you?

Int: Wherever you like. You can show me the routes you take on your usual daily routine and your usual stopping places.

P9: So I'll take you where I live, but I mostly go from home to the Kapuċċini Church, so we can move that way.

Int: It's quite dangerous to cross here.

P9: Yes it is, in fact I continue along this road and cross from here because it's safer.

Int: It's much noisier here than in Balzunetta, but there are more offices and businesses I think.

P9: In the block where I live, there are only 32 families which is quite a few considering the size of the block. We rent here because the property could only be rented out and never bought, but since the owner died there are complications now and I'm afraid the rent will rise significantly, but maybe because there is no elevator it won't be too bad, I hope.

Int: The property down here is quite expensive.

P9: The scene from the roof is gorgeous though, there is nothing like it. I don't know if you'd like to go around the garden, we like walking around here my husband and me.

Int: Yes of course... There are quite a few vacant properties here.

P9: Yes, a lot are being converted to offices. That one there was sold for over 800,000 Euros. When I ran for council, I did a lot of house visits here so despite being from Valletta I know the people here quite well...

P9: The cruise liners are huge, they pollute so much here, that my husband had tried to raise awareness at some point.

Int: I believe they're working on a project where they can connect to the local grid, so they don't pollute the air at all now, but I don't know whether it has been fully implemented at the moment.

P9: When they're coming in at night, they almost look like jewellery boxes floating in the ocean. We would wave to our friends when they would go on a cruise from here. That's what's unique about the locality here, there are so many gardens. They take so much work though, controlling the waste and the irrigation of it all. There was once a telephone box with a library here, but they removed it now. There's the restaurant here now, this kiosk, we like it a lot.

Int: We like coming here too with my grandma and her siblings' families.

P9: We can go to the other side now. People are coming to have lunch now, they tend to take breaks here sometimes.

Int: Would you ever consider leaving the locality at some point?

P9: Even though I'm from Valletta, I love it here, even if I become bedridden, I'll become like Rapunzel and stay locked in my apartment. The view from there is enough for me. I love the apartment, it's large and everything is with me. I love decorating it, for the feast and easter. There's so much air up there. The ones that they're building here are half the size of my flat and they sell for around 750,000 Euros.

P9: That house there is so sweet. This building here was a joke. It was constructed around 20 years ago, and it touches the wall back there and it's so easy to break in, and it hinders the view from the top of the staircase. Everyone complained when it was being built, but they still constructed it.

P9: Some of the houses here are just out of this world. The people living in these houses are really wealthy.

Noise from cruise ships

P9: The buildings in this part don't get the view that we have because they overlook the Marsa drydocks. A lot of these people moved, and the entire population has declined in Floriana, but like you said there are more people in Balzunetta.

Traffic on an inclined street

P9: This building here is beautiful. It's an insurance company, but they restored it beautifully. The building next to it is beautiful, they have a massive garden, and you really wouldn't think that upon looking at it from the street. These small studios here were recently fixed up beautifully. They relate to the surroundings, look at those there then they're hideous and don't relate to the other buildings.

Int: Hopefully they fix up that one there too, but I agree that one there does not relate at all.

P9: There is a problem with a squatter in that building, because someone wanted to buy the property. They hid a criminal there at some point as well. It's almost like it's cursed, people don't look into it because they're afraid.

P9: The weather took a turn for the better thank god, when it's cloudy I get a headache.

Int: it's true I'm exactly the same.

P9: There are so many cars now near the church it's less like the church square and more like a parking area. I'll leave you to meet P10 now and he'll take you around the church gardens.

Int: Thank you

Go-along interview with P10 around the gardens of the Kapuċċini church

Int: The view here is amazing.

P10: I know, it's lovely. What should I talk to you about then?

Int: Mostly about your routine in the neighbourhood, the places you go to and how the locality changed as you grew older. You and your wife look much younger despite being well over 60.

P10: That's kind of you to say. We've been living in this part of Floriana for 40 years now. The locality changed not physically in its buildings, but through its people. There are a lot of outsiders now. The foreigners aren't a bad thing as such, but the identity of the locality is changing. The "Furjaniżi" are dying out. The property on this side of Floriana is becoming too expensive for locals. I'm originally from Balzunetta but we moved down here because the property is too small there.

P10: You're from the "tal-armiral" family?

Int: Yes, my grandad was his son.

P10: You look just like them! Your grandfathers were great people. Your dad's father used to work with my brother, he was a real riot, always making them laugh.

Int: I didn't know him at all but that's what everyone tells me.

P10: With old age becoming ill is inevitable. Here the elderly move around the neighbourhood a lot. What's the worst is not having terminal illness but giving up because of old age and becoming bedridden. We used to go do communions at the hospital and the elderly there would tell us to pray so that they die.

Int: They don't have a window to look out of sometimes.

P10: Exactly, they have nothing left there. Look the cats are playing.

Int: You take care of them?

P10: They belong to the convent per se' I don't take them home, but they all enjoy the gardens.

Int: The gardens aren't open to the public though, no?

P10: With permission, people can access it, a lot of couples take wedding pictures up here. The gardens however don't have paths but we use them for growing crops and things like that. They fixed it up a bit but all the money used comes from donations so you can't do as much.

P10: Even the priests here, you can interview all of them because they're all elderly.

Cat wanting attention

P10: This one here was left by her owners and she loves having attention. I don't know how they leave them. I love all of them and we try to neuter them and make sure they're in good health.

P10: I've always wanted to learn how to take photos, with a proper camera like that. I had the opportunity once but never did it.

Int: You can though there are so many courses now, and all you need is to go out with a camera.

P10: The problem is the 80 steps I need to go down and then up again in my building!

Cruise ship horn

Int: This would drive me insane.

P10: The fireworks are the same, but after work when I was still working it would be impossible to sleep at times.

- Inside the church building -

P10: The churches of the Kapuċċini aren't decorated too much because the priests live simply, and the house of God should be the same. I enjoy going around the churches when I travel. Can I offer you a tea or coffee?

Int: No thank you I just had breakfast at my grandma's

P10: I can imagine, knowing your grandma! Here women couldn't enter and the people who did couldn't talk. I'll leave you here then, If you ever want to come back I can get you permission to go to the upper levels.

Int: Thanks a lot.

Appendix V Capturing of Present-Day Experiences in Place through Photography



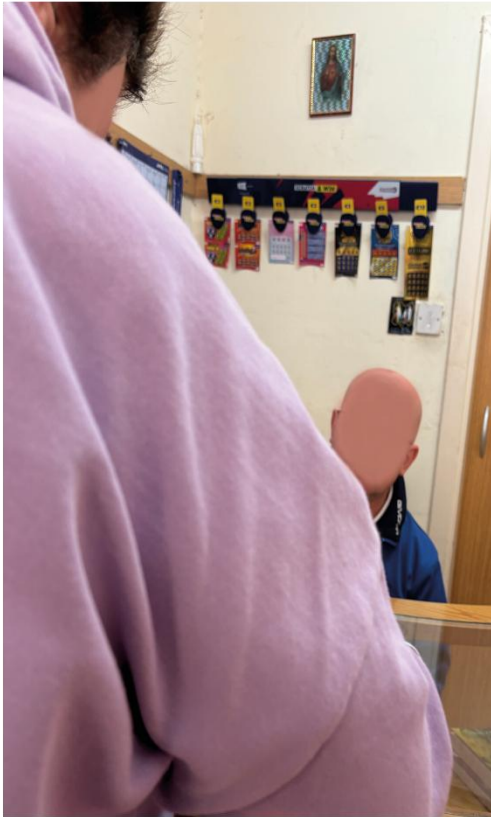
1 - Elderly visiting Argotti Botanic Garden



2 - Elderly visiting Argotti Botanic Garden



3 - Elderly couple walking dog



4 - Elderly visiting Maltco Lotteries Office



5 - Conservatory Street



6 - Elderly visiting The Mall Garden



7 - Elderly visiting The Mall Garden



8 - Elderly visiting The Mall Garden



9 - Pedestrians using the Mall garden as a transitory space



10 - Anglican Church near Sarria



11a - Wide Pavements in locality



11b - Street cat cared for by Local Council



12a - Elderly life on the street



12b - Floriana Senior Citizen Centre



13 - Elderly life on the street



14a - Saint Publius Feast gathering



14b - Saint Publius Feast gathering



15 - Saint Publius Church entrance after funeral



16a - Elderly in Triq il-Miratur and 22nd January Cafe'



16b - Elderly in Triq il-Miratur and 22nd January Cafe'



17 - Elderly overlooking street



18 - Local Shop on Triq San Tumas



19 - Local Shop on Triq San Tumas



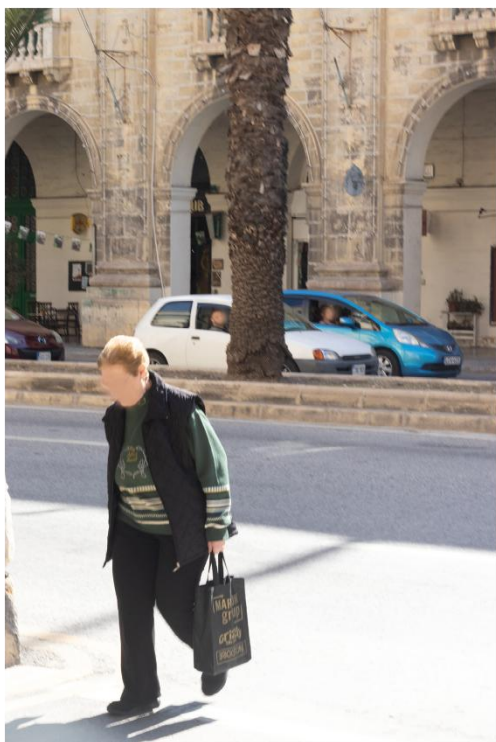
20 - Local Shop on triq il-Miratur



21a - Sheltered Public Corridor on Saint Anne's Street



21b - Local Shop on Saint Anne's Street



22 - Elderly life on the street



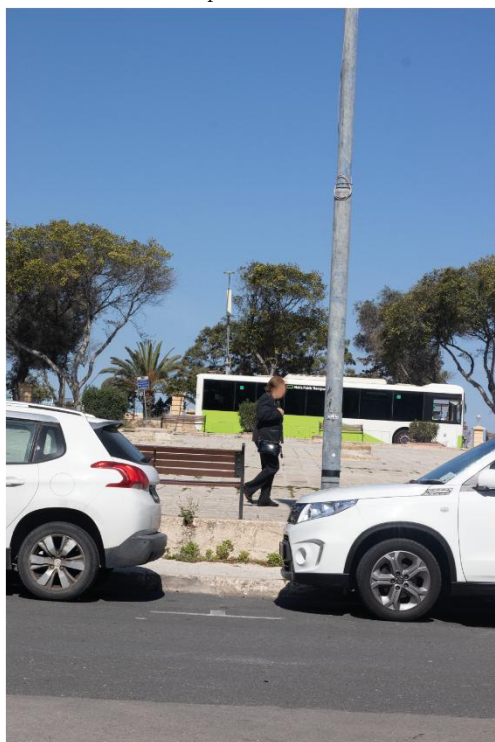
23 - Local Shops on Saint Anne's Street (taht il-logog)



24 - Local shop on Saint Anne's Street



25 - Subway access - Saint Anne's Street



26 - Granaries



27 - Elderly on Saint Anne's Street (taht il-logog)



29 - Roadworks on Triq Macerata



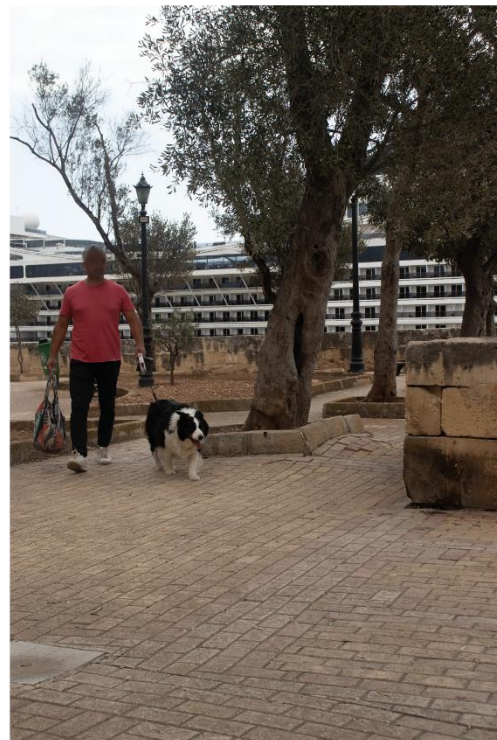
28 - Pedestrian Street - Triq Pietro Floriani



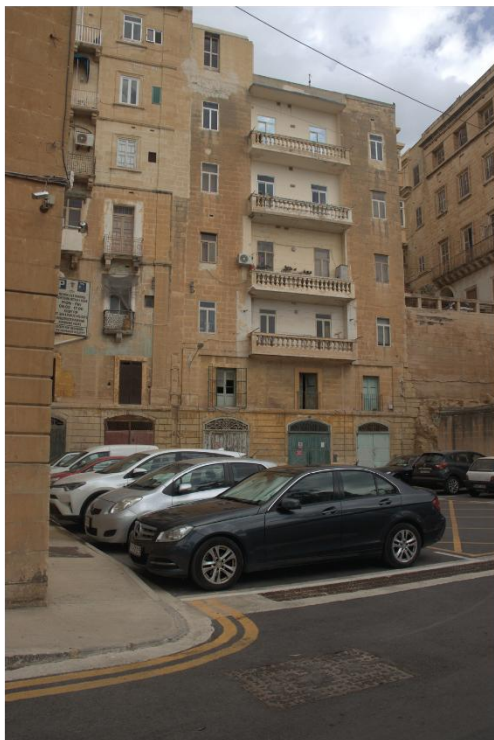
30 - Narrow streets in Locality



31 - Blank walls and squares used as parking areas



32 - King George V Recreational Grounds



33 - Blank walls and squares used as parking areas



34 - Personalisation of Balcony use



35b -Parade through The Mall gardens during Genna Gonna event



35a - Tina the Shihtzu on her daily walk with her elderly owner



36 - Residential typologies



37 - family gathering to go to Saint Publius Church
during the feast



38a - People gathering at the Mall gardens during the weekend



38b - People gathering at the Mall gardens during the weekend



38c - People gathering at the Mall gardens during the weekend



39 - People gathering in bars on Saint Anne's Street during the weekend