

# FUTOURISTIC

THE ITS JOURNAL ON HOSPITALITY, TRAVEL, TOURISM AND CULTURE



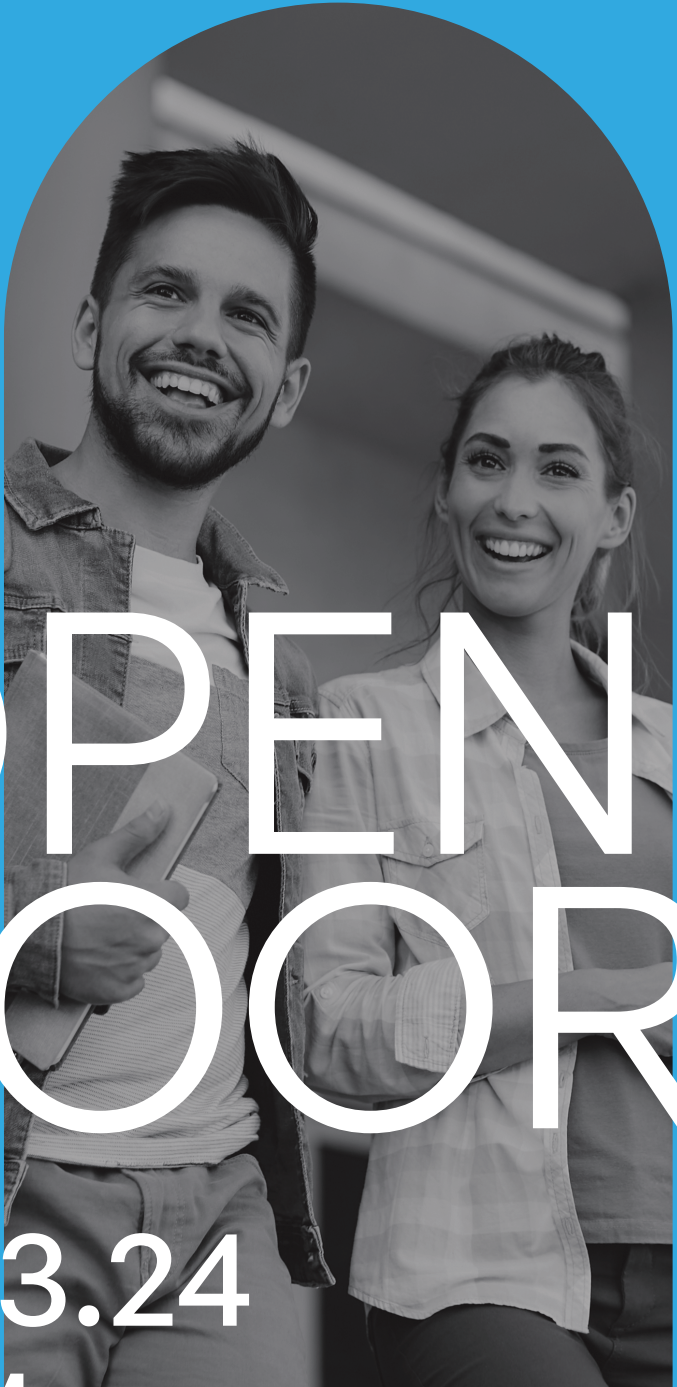
KNIGHT, PIRATE OR GENTLEMAN | **THE ART OF BUTCHERY** | ENGAGEMENT AND RETENTION OF GENERATION Z | **EVALUATING ENTOMOPHAGY** | MILITARY DIORAMAS | **EMPLOYEE JOB SATISFACTION** | GENDER EQUALITY WITHIN LEADERSHIP ROLES | **EVALUATING EQUITY** | ITS EVENTS | **MALTA'S FIRST RAINS** | DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY | **THE FIRST WORLD WAR** | CURRENT AND PREFERRED LEADERSHIP STYLES | **ERASMUS VINCI PROJECT** | CARNIVAL'S SOCIO-CULTURAL EFFECT | **THE POLITICS OF VALLETTA**



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A black and white photograph of a young man and woman, likely students, smiling and looking towards the camera. The man is on the left, wearing a denim jacket over a light-colored shirt, and the woman is on the right, wearing a light-colored button-down shirt. They are standing in front of a building with large windows. The photo is framed within a circular cutout on a blue background.

# OPEN DOORS

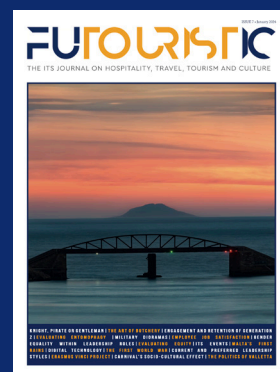
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**On the Cover**  
A rare view of Mount Etna in Sicily, observed behind the Fort St Elmo breakwater bridge. The photograph was taken from the parade ground of Fort St Angelo on the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2021, at dawn. Photograph by Daniel Cilia.



## *A message from the Editor-in-Chief*

**A**s *Futouristic* enters its' fourth year of publication, it continues to push the boundaries of the fledgling research culture by showcasing the extensive work that is being performed by the Institute of Tourism Studies, especially by its students and academics.

This issue, number 7, is no exception. It reports on a number of important milestones for the Institute, including the opening of a satellite campus in China, the creation and delivery of specialised courses to Third Country Nationals working in Maltese tourism and hospitality, and the positive Programme Audit Report for ITS from the Malta Further & Higher Education Authority (MFHEA) that should pave the way for Institute to become a fully-fledged self-accrediting institution up to MQF/EQF Level 7 (Master's).

As attested by our past issues, *Futouristic* will continue to publish research and informative articles that highlight the invaluable work being done in the Institute by the staff and students in the annals of vocational tourism studies. In fact, this issue opens with Martin Debattista, the executive editor of this publication, interviewing Jeremy Grech, a tourist guiding alumnus who has developed his own brand of guiding experiences based on a theatrical and historical approach to the subject-matter he presents to the audience. Grech

is particularly adept in re-enacting specific areas and marketing such using effective social media campaigns that showcase the importance of innovative approaches to tourism that can attract quality tourists who are interested in particular niches.

A number of abstracts are also presented in this issue that were showcased during the Institute's Academic Excellence Symposium that took place on the 21st of November 2023. The aim of the symposium is highlighting students' achievements in research and discussing their most important findings and conclusions.

One of the Master's dissertations highlighted examined "The Art of Butchery and its effect on the Sustainability of Meat Production in Malta" by ITS Food & Beverage lecturer Emie Briffa who focused on the dearth of butchers in the local market and the lack of a personalised service in this area, as a lot of meat and meat products are being bought prepacked from supermarkets.

In a time, where hospitality employment is making the news with the introduction of a new skills card for third country nationals in Malta, the research by BA in International Hospitality Management student Olivia Galea Bugeja was both timely and relevant and continues to show the important of research that is being produced ITS.

Equally relevant is Dorika-Marie Busuttil's Culinary Arts BA dissertation "Evaluating

Entomophagy as a future food in Malta"; entomophagy being 'the practice of eating insects'. Although, many Maltese are fond of eating shrimp and snails, insects are not regarded as part of a locally culturally accepted menu; and yet, insects are being touted as the 'food of the future' being protein rich, quite easy to keep and prepare, and can replace polluting cattle farming.

There have been a number of interesting Masters in Heritage Interpretation theses and Ivan Cocker's 'History in Scale: Military Dioramas as an Interpretation Device within a Museum', provides innovative storytelling by combining craftsmanship, scale models and creative digital technologies to present a unique interpretative experience that appeals to a wide variety of museum visitors.

Britney Bugeja, a BA in International Hospitality Management analysed employee job satisfaction *vis-a-vis* quality management in a local 5-star hotel and found that some of her hypothesis such as 'Training and Education is positively related to employee job satisfaction' and 'Teamwork is positively related to employee job satisfaction' were actually rejected by her research, an observation that may have serious repercussions on the industry.

During the last ten years, strides have been made regarding Gender Equality locally, but what about the hospitality industry, specifically in operation and human resources management? Have leadership



roles embraced gender equality? This question (and a host of others) was discussed by Sephora Dasha Cole in her International Hospitality Management degree thesis and the data collected suggests that discrimination still occurs in both types of managerial posts.

In the environmental field, tourism sustainability lecturer, David Pace presents something different in his article, 'The First Rains' which shows how the Maltese countryside transforms after the first downpour of the season and provides an intriguing environment for the touristic shoulder months.

Vanessa Delia Naudi researched how virtual reality technology tools can recreate interest and appreciation in Maltese wayside chapels and she presented her findings in her Masters of Arts in Heritage Interpretation thesis. Ms. Delia Naudi rightly concludes that they should be included in tourism activities particularly during the Autumn and Spring seasons.

Another Masters in Interpretation thesis by Kevin Cassar focused on 'Malta during the first World War: Beyond the nurse of the Mediterranean' which was discussed and analysed by perusing first and secondary sources and presents an attempt at a remembrance and interpretation of the Maltese during the Great War.

In 'The Politics of Valletta', ITS visiting lecturer Raymond J. Vassallo takes us on a journey around the capital city of Valletta and shows how politics influenced the construction of specific buildings throughout different times.

Finally, this issue is presenting an article detailing the final meeting of the EU co-funded VINCI Project of which ITS is a partner. ITS has a good track-record working on EU projects that target sustainability. In the past, it has worked on the Interreg PRISMA Project regarding relational and community tourism, the SATIS Project regarding eco-tourism in Albania and North Macedonia, and the current VINCI Project under the Erasmus+ Programme detailing the use of low-carbon tourism which is particularly relevant during these times of climate change and global warming

*Futouristic* has come a long way these last three years and will continue to account for the invaluable work of the Institute of Tourism Studies regarding tourism, tour guiding, hospitality, sustainability and the culinary arts. The articles presented in this issue are a testimony towards the research which is being performed by the students and academics and should help to improve many sectors in an industry which is still quite important to our country's economy.

*Glen Farrugia*  
**Editor-in-Chief &  
 ITS Chief Operating Officer -  
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Futouristic is the official journal of the Institute of Tourism Studies (Malta). The aim of this publication is to promote academic research and innovation at ITS, not just to the partners and stakeholders in the tourism industry but also to society at large. Therefore, ITS fulfills its mission to be at the forefront of this vital industry with its contribution that goes beyond the training of the workforce.

Futouristic is free of charge and is distributed to all stakeholders in the Maltese travel, tourism, hospitality, and higher educational sectors.

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# Knight, pirate or gentleman? No, a tourist guide!

BY MARTIN DEBATTISTA  
SENIOR LECTURER AT ITS AND EXECUTIVE EDITOR OF FUTOURISTIC

**J**eremy Grech has quickly established himself as one of the most colourful tourist guides in Malta, thanks to his theatrical but historically accurate approach to one of the most sought after services by tourists in Malta. He is an ITS alumnus and spoke to Martin Debattista, executive editor of Futouristic, about his experience at ITS and his role as a ground-breaking tourist guide.

## **WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO DO THE TOURIST GUIDING COURSE AT ITS?**

When it came to choosing a school that offers tourist guiding as a subject, I did some background checks and all fingers were pointing towards one institution and that's ITS. Apart from that, I remember my friend

telling me all about when she did the course and how much she had enjoyed her time at the institute!

## **WHAT WERE THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS YOU ENJOYED AND LEARNED DURING THE COURSE?**

I remember quite well how the course kicked off during the pandemic. One thing that struck me the most is the number of times professionals from the institute checked in on us to see how we are coping with the online lessons and how we were getting along with our classmates since everything was virtual! What I really loved however were the field visits, it felt like a school outing as we used to experience when we were kids. Every time we went to a

site it was an adventure, some unexpected things would sometimes pop up which made it more fun, and obviously this was the only time I could meet my friends outside.

## **YOUR STYLE OF TOURIST GUIDING IS QUITE PECULIAR, AS IT TAKES THE FORM OF A RE-ENACTMENT AND IN COSTUME. WHY DO YOU DO IT? HOW DID THIS STYLE START/EVOLVE?**

First and foremost, apart from being a guide, I am an actor. This has been my craft for almost 10 years now. The style started out when I realised that there are so many guides out in the industry. My biggest flaw is languages, but what do I have to offer that stands out? That is theatre and the fact that I



Jeremy in action as a tourist guide in a period costume.

“ Out there in the streets of Malta we are performing, every guide is a storyteller, a bard if you wish. ”

don't feel shy if I have to guide in a costume. Therefore, I started working on developing this idea of 'theatourism' where the guide is going that extra mile to entertain his audience with smart anecdotes, an enhanced street performance and possibly clad in authentic period costume.

#### **WHAT IS THE FEEDBACK FROM VISITORS/ TOURISTS/ PARTICIPANTS TO YOUR STYLE? WHAT DO THEY LIKE MOST?**

When I proposed this subject of 'theatourism' for my long essay I needed to conduct a survey. One of my questions was whether or not the participants would mind having a guide in costume while visiting the island. The response was a solid 50/50. The reason being, some guests are here on a holiday, they want to be away from the public eye, and obviously having a guide wearing early 17th century garments while carrying a sword through Valletta does attract some attention! But others also loved the idea as it's an innovative concept

and those curious enough would also ask about the process of making it, material and sources. Hence, it does add more value to the tour itself.

#### **YOU ARE ALSO INVOLVED IN THEATRE. HOW DOES THEATRE INFLUENCE YOUR TOURIST GUIDING AND VICE-VERSA?**

As cheesy as it sounds 'All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players.' and I have to agree with this. Out there in the streets of Malta we are performing, every guide is a storyteller, a bard if you wish. Theatre has aided me in improving my public speaking, posture and audience engagement. My favourite style of theatre is street theatre, and being a tour guide is exactly like that!

#### **WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE MALTESE HISTORICAL PERIOD? WHY?**

Oh...this is a rather tricky question. I don't really have a favourite period, it mostly depends on the mood. My history tends to be seasonal. I know it sounds strange

but for example during summer I love the Pre-Historic, Phoenician and Roman side of Malta, come autumn I'm all about WWII! However, a subject that keeps on fascinating me is the Knights of St. John in the 18th Century. The way these people lived, the politics and the episodes that occurred during their rule is something right out of the movies. It's just too entertaining!

#### **WHO IS YOUR FAVOURITE HISTORICAL CHARACTER? WHY?**

My favourite character is surely Grandmaster Pinto! The controversy, the flamboyance, the baroque, the episodes and obviously his character. The man was legendary. Plus, I'm from *Citta Pinto* (Qormi) so that has definitely influenced me greatly.

#### **YOU MAKE HEAVY USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA TO PROMOTE YOUR WORK. HOW DO YOU EXPLOIT IT? HOW IMPORTANT IS IT IN YOUR WORK?**

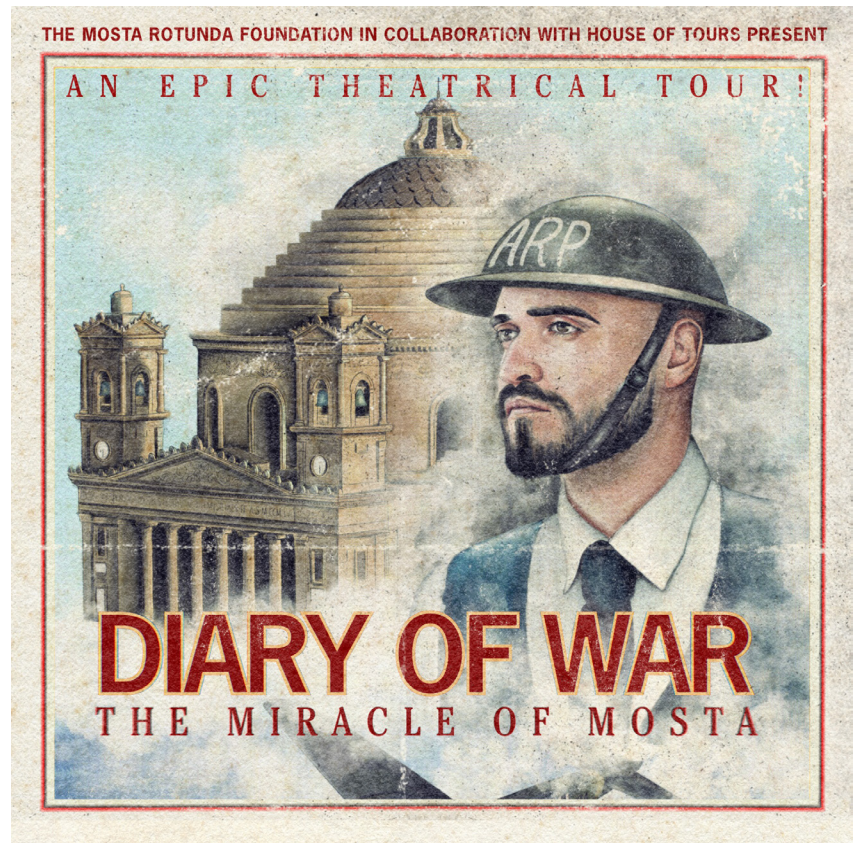
Social media is a 'free' market, without it you won't really get far. Word of mouth however



is still quite strong to be honest, but the web has a wider reach. I feel that social media sets a clear image. The way the posts come across with the photos and edits I create fuses into the product which I wish to sell to my clients. I think that sometimes it's an even trickier thing than research, the need to always be ahead of the game and create a campaign for your marketing does tend to get overwhelming, but it is always rewarding when you see people reacting to it. It's not an easy thing, and it is definitely not linear especially with all the algorithms out there along with the number of platforms we have. Yet, it is another adventure that comes with the job.

#### WHAT IS THE PRESENT STATUS AND FUTURE OF TOURIST GUIDING IN MALTA?

The industry is always looking for new professionals. The present status looks quite promising, the industry is booming and ever-growing with the number of visitors increasing yearly. However, I do believe there are ways to improve the situation of mass tourism. I understand that the 'more the merrier' and this will add to the capital of the company/guide, yet having a large group sometimes causes issues. Certain museums here in Malta are not equipped to handle a large group of 50. The narrow corridors and hot climate make the experience unbearable. A smaller group will create a more intimate experience, the participants would feel freer to ask, wonder around and it also makes the guide's job easier! Some might say that a small group won't make the cut when it comes to payments, but in that case we can afford to increase our prices. It might be controversial, true, but our history affords it! We have sites that attract many different types of tourists, we have stories that literally put us on the map, we should treat them with respect. And our guides deserve it as well, managing a large group is possible, but being out in the heat with so many people can be challenging. Our story tellers deserve better!



The promotion of an event at the Mosta Dome remembering the bombing of April 1942.



An event at the Roman Domus, Rabat.



**DO YOU HAVE A MESSAGE TO ANYONE WHO IS INTERESTED  
IN BECOMING A TOURIST GUIDE OR FOLLOW OUR MASTER'S  
COURSE ABOUT HERITAGE INTERPRETATION AT ITS?**

Go for it! The institute will definitely give you opportunities, both locally and abroad. I loved my time at ITS, and definitely recommend it. I remember the catch phrase of the school was 'Spread your Wings' and the tutors have helped me in this aspect, but they actually do more than that. The tutors make sure that no matter how much you spread your wings, you don't follow in Icarus's footsteps. They keep you grounded, they keep you aware of your surroundings. As for the Master of Arts in Heritage Interpretation, I guess I might see you there quite soon!



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**”**



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Photo by Madic Hamilton on Unsplash

# The Art of Butchery and its effect on the Sustainability of Meat Production in Malta

BY EMIE BRIFFA  
LECTURER AT ITS

## ABSTRACT

**T**he art of butchery is a highly specialised profession that involves the slicing, trimming, and preparation of meat products for human consumption. The way meat is processed can have a significant impact on the viability of meat production. Reducing waste is one of the major ways in which butchery can contribute to sustainability. Even less-desirable parts, such as offal, can be utilised by a competent and skilled butcher. This may lead to less waste and guarantees that every consumable section of the animal is utilised.

Another important aspect of sustainable butchery is the origin of the meat. In Malta, there is a developing trend towards sustainably produced and locally sourced livestock products. By partnering with local farmers and producers, butchers can ensure that the meat they offer is of high quality and sustainably produced. Additionally, butchers can play a vital role in educating consumers about sustainable livestock production. By

disseminating the benefits of locally sourced and sustainable meat products, butchers can encourage consumers to eat in a more responsible manner.

The art of butchery could have a significant effect on the sustainability of livestock production in Malta. Butchers can contribute to the long-term environmental and economic viability of the nation's meat industry by reducing waste, procuring meat responsibly, and encouraging sustainable consumption patterns.

This research demonstrates how important education and training are to the sustainability of the Maltese butchery industry. The administration of livestock remains in an environmentally responsible manner. Meat waste can be reduced through careful menu planning, portion control, ensuring that those involved in meat production adhere to food safety guidelines, and ensuring that they are skilled and trained. A number of recommendations delineating the need for the training, education, and guidance

of prospective and current butchers is also made. The requirement that all butchers possess a professional certificate and the need for a specialised programme pertaining to the butchery profession. In pursuit of a sustainable livestock industry in Malta, it is predominantly the responsibility of the butchers to overcome certain challenges and obstacles.

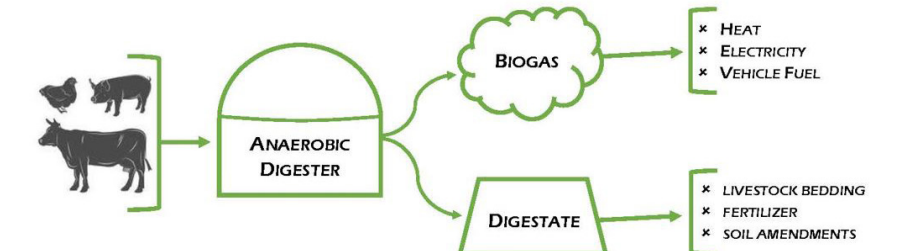
This study aimed to determine whether the art of butchery is still viable in Malta. Whether the butchery industry is aware of what is required to become sustainable and if there is a need for well-trained human resources in the local industry. The creation of certified training programmes to advance the career of workers in the industry would certainly improve the sustainability of the butchery industry in Malta. This study confirms that butchers, meat processors, and producers believe that there is a need for a qualified module or course of studies in butchery, particularly at ITS (Institute of Tourism Studies), the major culinary institute in Malta and Gozo.



The interviewees stated that the course should be taught as part of the Food Preparation and Production Programme, beginning at a certificate level, and continuing up to the degree level. This would help to attract more students to the butchery industry. This study concludes that training and education are essential for implementing good practises of food waste management and for achieving a more sustainable butchery industry in Malta. These findings are consistent with those of Mark C. Mifsud et al. (2017) study, where he emphasised the need for training and education not just to attract new students to the field, but to enhance the skills and knowledge of meat producers, meat processors, and consumers. In his study, Neus Gonzalez (2020) also emphasised the significance of training and education.

Regarding waste management of meat products, the introduction of meat digesters is recommended. These are biological reactors that utilise the process of anaerobic digestion to convert meat waste and other organic materials into usable compost and/or biogas. The organic material is placed in a sealed vessel or chamber allowing bacteria to decompose the content over time. The resulting material can be utilised as fertiliser or fuel. In addition, digesters reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prevent the discharge of harmful

compounds. This correlates with studies by Katarina Arvidsson Segerkvist (2021) and Assefa Balda (2019) that both indicate the importance of such a system in reducing greenhouse emissions and waste in the meat industry. Such meat digesters should be deployed in slaughterhouses, meat processors, and meat production facilities, possibly with the assistance of government and EU funds.



Agriculture, D. o., 2022. *Manure Digesters*.

Diagram of a farm anaerobic digester that can convert meat byproducts.

As this is the very first research project carried out in this sector, I strongly suggest that any further studies in the area make use of this study and the acquired data to build upon the results of this thesis.

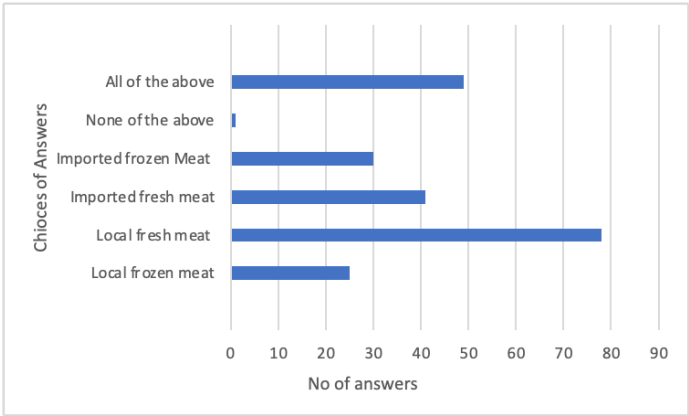
The main conclusion of the study is that a greater awareness of this subject is required. Increasing such an awareness of the butchery craft will lead to more human resources being attracted to the industry. From the client's perspective, the more local

meat products are introduced and the more knowledge customers and butchers acquire, the more the butchery market will change and evolve to properly and sufficiently service the client's needs. This will help the butchery industry in Malta become more sustainable. As consumer awareness rises, sales will increase and wasteful byproducts will decline.

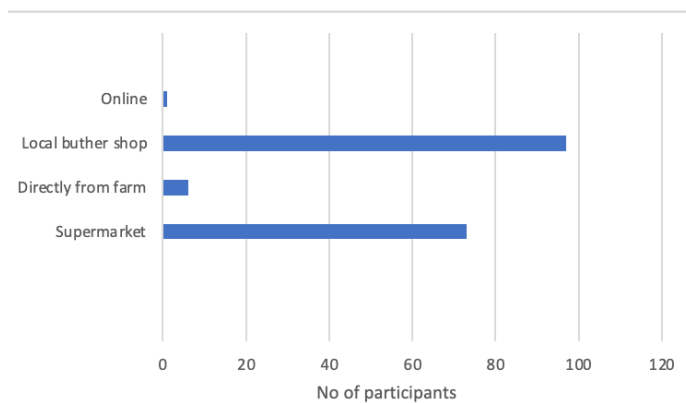
If the market is not improved and there are no new market ideas, customer relations and customer confidence in the butcher will continue to wane, and customers will continue to purchase only familiar meat products. This is amply demonstrated by the data gathered from the questionnaire directed at the general public as well as the interviews with local producers, processors, and butchers. Further confirmation is provided by the studies quoted in the literature review and conducted by Neus Gonzalez (2020) and Mark C Mifsud.et al (2017), in which training and education are deemed as essential towards the sustainability of the meat industry.



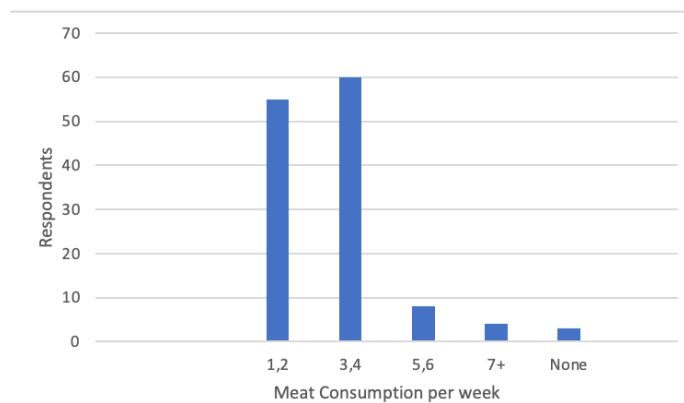
**Table 5.** Question 6. Why do you think the local butchery profession is not popular anymore?



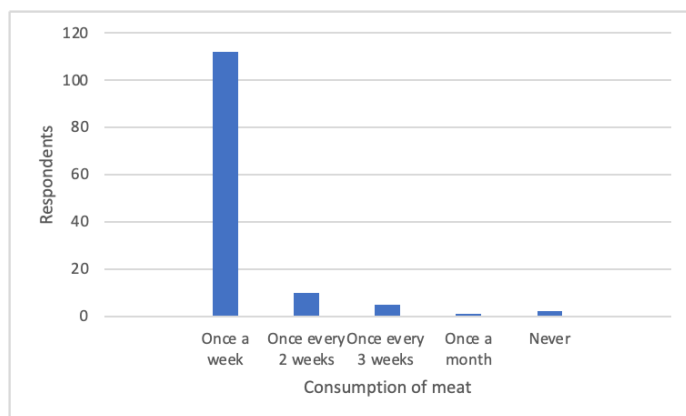
**Table 9.** Question 12. If you purchase meat, which of the following do you purchase? You can answer more than one.



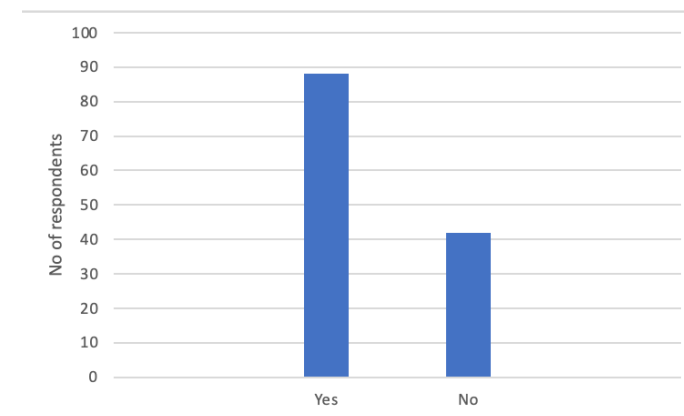
**Table 8.** Question 11. Where do you purchase your meat?



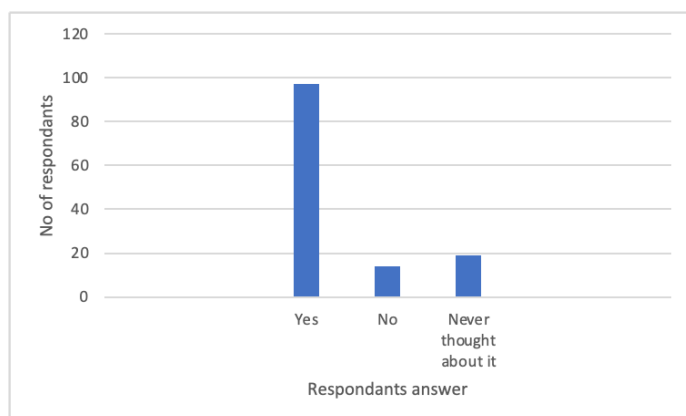
**Table 11.** Question 14. How many times a week do you consume meat?



**Table 12.** Question 15. What was your meat consumption level ten years ago?



**Table 13.** Question 16. Do you think local meat is better than imported meat?



**Table 16.** Question 19. Are you aware of the health consequences of excessive meat consumption?

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# Understanding employment expectations of the tourism and hospitality workforce - Engagement and retention of generation Z

BY OILIVIA GALEA BUGEJA  
BACHELOR OF ARTS (HONS.) IN INTERNATIONAL HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT

The diversity of employment in the hospitality industry adds considerable economic value across the globe, indeed, it is considered the most dynamic and prospering industry across the Maltese islands that supports the country's economy. For Malta, this sector is a significant source of employment, government revenue, and foreign exchange earnings (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development [UNCTAD], 2020), representing one of the highest shares in the Mediterranean. This registered tourism growth rate doubled the volume, making it a year-round economic activity (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2020) whilst pressuring the labour market to supply the demand, leading the sector to seek expatriate employees (Bartolo, 2021).

In March 2020, the spread of a pandemic brought travel and tourism to a complete stop resulting in laid-off and unemployed personnel leading talented employees to move on to other sectors, while expatriates moved back to their country of origin. Following the global industry downturn, the industry appears to be facing an employment crisis that cannot be easily solved. The manpower shortage in this sector was always a problem for the industry. Therefore, it is essential that the industry attracts, maintains and engages qualified people due to the intangible nature of hospitality services, attitudes, and behaviours that contribute to the client experience (Bartolo, 2021).

To address the turnover gap while also improving the synergy between the industry and education, nurturing future talent whilst comprehending the potential

elements that could affect the expectations of the tourism and hospitality students, the latter must be treated as key components to securing the skills required by the industry in the future. In relation to this, perspectives have changed over the years, as generations' attitudes evolved due to social, environmental, and technological experiences that occurred during the formative years (Sakdiyakorn, Golubovskaya, & Solnet, 2021). In fact, Cismaru and Lunius (2019) stated that younger generations are demonstrating lower commitment when compared to older generations and that HR management is imperative in bridging the present generation gaps within the industry.

## METHODOLOGY

The younger generation, represented by Generation Z is coming of age and stepping into careers. In Malta, Generation Z represents over 20% of the population, and in the coming years, it will constitute a considerable portion of the workforce (Times of Malta, 2019). Thus, to address job turnover, HR management requires significant information on the motivational needs and engagement drivers to determine the best approach for the newest generation cohort to invest themselves in their role and the organisation (Hardin, 2020). The purpose of this research is to uncover potential barriers that could increase turnover as well as the traits, attitudes, and beliefs of the upcoming Generation Z towards their potential careers in the tourism and hospitality sectors. The aim is to analyse Generation Z's perceptions, motivational needs, and engagement drivers. Therefore, the following research questions were developed:

1. What are the perceptions and expectations that drive the motivation of undergraduate students in tourism and hospitality management that must be retained and engaged in the industries?
2. What are the conceptions behind the Malta tourism strategies when the term "engagement" is used to retain the new emerging workforce?
3. What recommendations can be made to the Maltese tourism and hospitality industries regarding engaging and retaining Generation Z?

The research was conducted through the implementation of two qualitative data collection methods - an electronic survey among undergraduate students in two specific higher education institutions in Malta and an interview with the Maltese Minister for Tourism. The main goal of this research was to understand the employment expectations of the emerging tourism and hospitality workforce by identifying perceptions, motivational drivers, and practical engagement drivers to critically evaluate and provide suggestions to improve the attractiveness of hospitality and tourism employment.

## ANALYSIS

The data analysis revealed that Generation Z demonstrated a positive attitude towards the industries, as the participants understood the nature of the work due to their academic qualifications and work experiences while acknowledging that both industries offer interesting and fulfilling careers. In accordance with such attitudes, the participants classified the industries as



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being people-centric and offering career development, travel opportunities, and interesting and exciting jobs.

However, the results of the participants' perceptions gained through years of employment within the industries exhibited challenges, leading undergraduate students to feel dissatisfied with the time left for a social life outside of work, wellness programs, and remuneration. Indeed, 27% of the students who intend to leave the industry after graduation stated that the main reasons behind this are work-life balance and low pay.

To understand what motivates undergraduate students when choosing a career, apart from the exhibited challenges, responsibility (63%), growth development and good reputation (63%), and opportunities to travel abroad and experience different cultures (53%) were the most dominant drivers to motivate the participants. This indicated that intrinsic motivational factors that correspond to achievement, responsibility, advancement, and growth are perceived as motivational.

According to Generation Z, commitment, empowerment, involvement, and the work environment together with resources, wellness and work-life balance, recognition, personal growth, compensation, and benefits are mainly the engagement drivers expected by the students to help them engage in careers according to their values. Additionally, work plays an important role for this generation, and they are not afraid

of their job responsibilities. Generation Z is ready to put in the hard work at their place of employment while also seeking happiness.

In relation to these findings, retention, career development and opportunities, work-life balance, wellness programs, remuneration, and employment policies were discussed with the Minister of Tourism where platforms were noted on how to reduce the negative connotations to increase job retention in the hospitality and tourism industries whilst also suggesting how to retain the positive drivers among the new emerging workforce regarding career opportunities, growth, and development.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis uncovered different themes suggesting that a framework for job design that demonstrates effective line management, two-way communication, internal cooperation, development, and a focus on employee well-being, along with HR rules and practices that are clear and understandable, could establish that working in hospitality and tourism is a viable option.

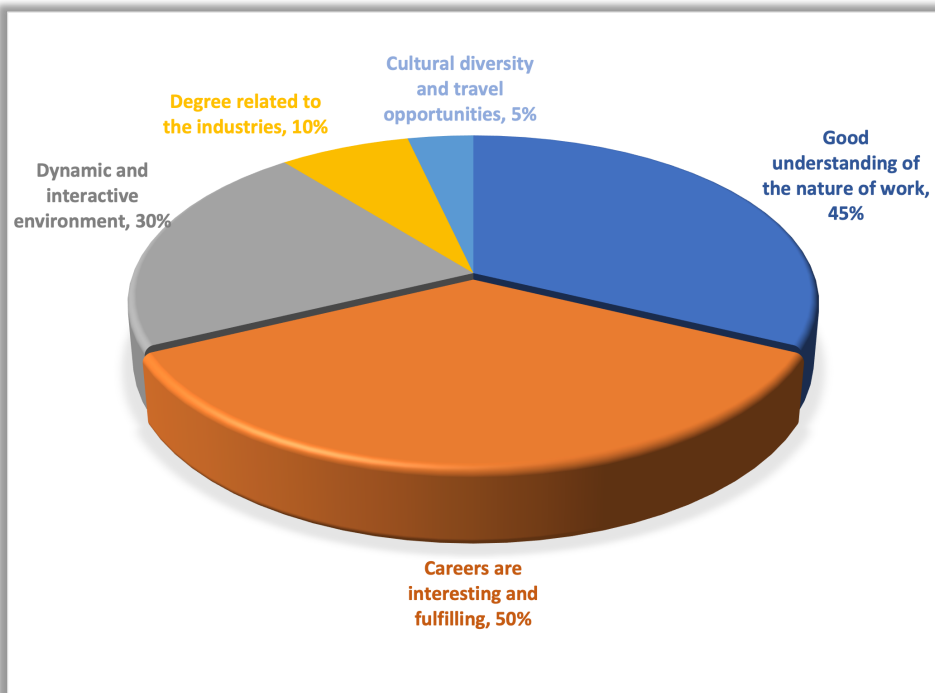
Engagement and retention are two-way propositions between all the industries' stakeholders. It is a mutual contract between the government, organisations, and employees to build a meaningful workplace by engaging the careers for the industries' success. To enable engagement and increase retention, everyone involved needs to understand perceptions,

expectations, and motivations, all of which were considered important drivers in this study.

The industries need to seek the views of employees and employers to address the demographical shift and understand the perfect storm of Generation Z who will be the hospitality and tourism leaders of tomorrow.

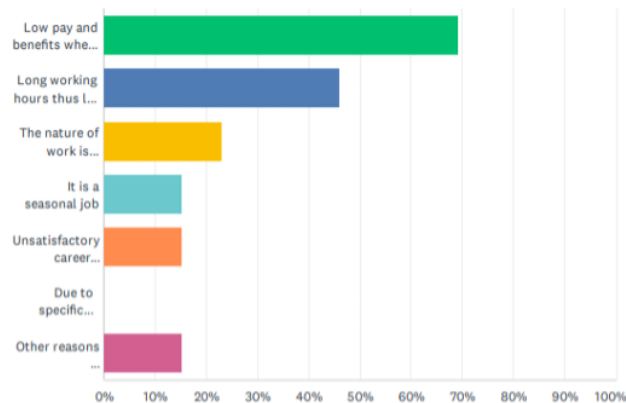
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#### Q6 What is the main reason why you intend to leave the industry?

Answered: 13 Skipped: 9



| ANSWER CHOICES                                         | RESPONSES |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Low pay and benefits when compared to other industries | 69.23%    |
| Long working hours thus lack of work life balance      | 46.15%    |
| The nature of work is demanding and exhausting         | 23.08%    |
| It is a seasonal job                                   | 15.38%    |
| Unsatisfactory career development                      | 15.38%    |
| Due to specific personality traits and abilities       | 0.00%     |
| Other reasons ...                                      | 15.38%    |

q=understanding+generation+z+through+collective+consciousness&btnG=.

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# Evaluating entomophagy as a future food in Malta

BY DORIKA-MARIE BUSUTILL  
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## INTRODUCTION

Entomophagy, the practise of eating insects, has recently gained popularity due to its positive effects on health, the ecosystem, and the economy (Lange & Nakamura, 2021). Entomophagy is practised in most regions of the world. According to the The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, insects are a mainstay of diets in parts of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, but are notably prevalent in the tropics, where over 2,000 different species of insects have been identified as being consumable and are consumed for their taste.

Mopane caterpillars, for example, are regarded a delicacy in southern Africa,

whereas weaver ant eggs are popular in Southeast Asia (Armas, 2023). Most insect species eaten by humans are classified as Coleoptera (beetles), Lepidoptera (moths and butterflies), Hymenoptera (wasps, bees, and ants), Orthoptera (crickets, grasshoppers, and locusts), Hemiptera (also known as Heteroptera; true bugs), Isoptera (termites), Odonata (dragonflies), and Diptera (flies). Because beetles are the most abundant of all documented insect species, it stands to reason that they are widely represented (Huis, 2016).

Entomophagy has attracted attention as a potential solution to several health, environmental, and agricultural concerns. Here's a breakdown of the benefits and

consideration of entomophagy in various areas:

## HEALTH

With the world's population predicted to reach 9.8 billion by 2050, eating insects can help address serious food security challenges, according to the United Nations (2022).

Animal-based foods have traditionally been seen as dietary mainstays because they contain many vital elements; yet, due to their nutrient content, edible insects offer the potential to serve as healthy, environmentally friendly alternatives to these. Because of their high quantities of vitamin B12, iron, zinc, fibre, vital amino

acids, omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids, and antioxidants, edible insects may provide exceptional health advantages. Edible insects, such as crickets, could provide numerous environmental and nutritional benefits to humans (Nowakowski et al., 2021). From a health perspective, a suggested serving of insects has less than 5 grams of fat per serving and more than 25% protein.

Although insects might be the future of food, there are still some concerns when it comes to allergens. The proteins tropomyosin and arginine kinase have been identified as the principal allergens found in insects that might cause allergy reactions in people who are sensitive to them. These two proteins have been linked to shellfish (e.g., crustaceans and molluscs) and house dust mite allergies (Gier & Verhoeckx, 2018).

Microbial contamination: insects are frequently considered to be pathogen vectors. As a result, the potential of food pathogen contamination (e.g., with *Salmonella* spp. or Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli*) should be considered, particularly in the edible insect's 'raw' stage (Elliott, 2022).

#### ENVIRONMENT

Climate change is an issue of global concern. According to the United Nation (2019) food production aggregate to 35 per cent of all man-made greenhouse gases emissions, with 60 per cent of these emissions are generated through the production of meat. There need to be a shift to more sustainable sources of commodities and eating culture which is far less detrimental to the environment (Busuttil, 2022). There is a strong case to be made that mass breeding insects for food is less environmentally destructive than other forms of protein production as they require less room than animals and produce less greenhouse gases and nitrates. Clearing tropical rain forests and raising cattle for meat, for instance, are both extremely

harmful (UC Riverside, 2022). Insects have a phenomenal feed conversion rate: a single kilogramme of feed provides 12 times more edible cricket protein versus cattle protein. Some bug species are drought tolerant and may need less fluids than cattle, pigs, or poultry which addresses both the problem of CO<sub>2</sub> emission and water scarcity issues (Anthes, 2022).

#### AGRICULTURE

Some insects can be employed to control agricultural pests as natural predators, decreasing the need for harmful chemical pesticides to be used. Specific insects, such as black soldier flies, are capable of

**The Maltese eating culture is mostly centred on a carnivorous diet. However, this phenomenon is increasingly transitioning toward a plant-based diet**

effectively transforming organic matter into protein-rich insect feedstock.

Insect agriculture may also offer employment and generate economic growth, particularly in impoverished nations and can create new revenue streams for farmers and entrepreneurs, particularly in areas in the world where insect consumption is regarded as normal and culturally acceptable. Certain insects, such as bees, play an important part in crop pollination. However, this feature distinguishes them from the insects

commonly fed by humans (Gahukar, 2016). The UN estimates, food supply would need to increase by 70 per cent by 2050. A tropical entomologist at Wageningen University, stated, "It is clear to everybody that we urgently need less demanding protein alternatives" (Van Huis et al., 2022). In a study conducted by the 'Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' and 'Wageningen University & Research' (2013) concluded that one of the largest worldwide issues today is ensuring food supply in a way that is environmentally sustainable. For thousands of years, people have harvested some insect species' eggs, larvae, pupae, and adults from forests and other suitable environments for food.

Entomophagy is not popular in Western countries, since there is no strong cultural or historical culinary links associated with insect eating. Europeans, and settlers in North America had no tradition of eating bugs. Indeed, insects are perceived to be filthy and attracted to rot and putrefaction, as well as being vectors and repositories of disease; the main reason why they are called pests, a word whose Latin base means plague (Mishan, 2018).

According to the European Commission Insects are a 'Novel Food' [The Novel Food Regulation is a system that helps businesses bring in innovative foods to the EU

Market which guarantees they are safe consumables] and allowed the sale of these insects in powder and other dried forms for human consumption in January of 2023. This Novel Food can be presented as frozen, paste, dried and powder form, of the *Acheta domestica*, the common name is House Crickets which are most likely native to South-western Asia. Food in the European Union countries that contains this ingredient must clearly label their products with the contents and allergens that carry these insects infused food (European Commission, 2023).





Photo by Andy Melton on Flickr.

## METHODOLOGY

An evaluation on the possibility towards changing the western attitude will also be shown in this study proposed. The data collected supports the research in depiction of profiling the Maltese Identity on this matter. The data is collected by surveys, interviews and qualitative methods.

## MALTA

The Maltese eating culture is mostly centred on a carnivorous diet. However, this phenomenon is increasingly transitioning toward a plant-based diet (Busuttil,

2022). This is due to the fact that this it is both healthier for the human body and also for the environment. Therefore, the transitioning towards a different diet is happening. But will the Maltese population change their diet to one that that incorporates insects which is considered as the “future of food”.

## CONCLUSION

The results of a poll made by a group of Maltese researchers in 2022 shows that people in Malta are more stringent when it comes to the consumption of insects.

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**The Maltese eating culture is mostly centred on a carnivorous diet. However, this phenomenon is increasingly transitioning toward a plant-based diet**

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# History in Scale: Military Dioramas as an Interpretation Device within a Museum

BY IVAN COCKER  
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Since the nineteenth century, dioramas have been a crucial component of museums' exhibitions, initially as life-size displays of exotic natural history specimens. As visitors became more curious, dioramas evolved into a visitor-centric component of museums' interpretation strategies.

Dioramas, as a traditional art form, have been studied for their history, function, and engagement in museum settings. However, their interpretation value is often overlooked. This research aims to explore the feasibility of creating guidelines for narrative dioramas for museums, comparing them to modern digital experiences and assessing their ability to foster relationships with visitors. The project also explores if dioramas can still serve as a valuable tool.

## THE ROLE OF THE MUSEUM

One must comprehend the function of the modern museum in order to appreciate the significance of a diorama inside a museum. The traditional museum has shifted its attention to the visitor's experiences, and this change includes deeper attention to exhibitions and display tools. Knell (2019) highlights the shift in focus from traditional museums to contemporary museums, which focus on visitor experiences and exhibitions.

Traditional museums are often seen as artefact-filled structures, while

contemporary museums focus on history, art, science, technology, and society. Museums suggests that museums must understand their audience beyond the one-size-fits-all definition of a typical museumgoer, as instructors, researchers, internal consultants, and exhibit designers may have conflicting expectations for the

Museums are also considered as the ideal setting for discussing military history and exposing sensitive material. War and the topic of collective memory are related. Dioramas, particularly those found in military museums, are essential museum exhibits that accurately represent history and adapt to changing fashions and public

perceptions. However, diorama artists face challenges in portraying complex events, condensing timelines, and producing generic battle representations. Scale also plays a role, as depicting a single battle may not accurately convey the unique human experience of conflict, as modern war is increasingly seen as a destructive force (Kerby et al., 2017a).

This thesis explores the impact of military diorama on museum visitors, focusing on their cultural, gender, age, and political beliefs. Falk (2013) and Tilden (1957)'s studies reveal that each visitor's expectations influence their perception of the conflict.

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outcomes within the museum. Museums are representations of historical events that may also have a significant impact on the present (Keene, 2004). This study also explores the role of interpretation in situations where reproduction is required to communicate a subject such as military history, but there are no artefacts to display.

## METHODOLOGY

A qualitative study was conducted to explore perceptions and concepts of museum dioramas, utilizing an exploratory approach to understand how individuals appreciate their role within the museum. Methodological congruence was employed to ensure comprehensive responses. Various methods to collect data and explore

the interpretation possibilities of a museum diorama where used.

### INTERPRETATION OF THE FRENCH BLOCKADE OF 1798-1800

The Malta Maritime Museum was chosen for its extensive scale models collection and its focus on visitor-oriented exhibitions. To explore the effectiveness of a miniature historical diorama in a museum the topic of the French Blockade of 1798-1800 was chosen. The museum aims to make discoveries that encourage visitors to reflect on the Maltese collective memory and explore the diorama's interpretation possibilities.

A thematic diorama representing a particular topic that is influenced by collective memory was created as practice-led research by the author using Paine's (1980) storytelling techniques. A miniature interpretation of a gun battery operated by the Maltese insurgents against the French in Ghargħar (Malta) was chosen. Regretfully, this battery was dismantled after the Blockade, but we have no specific date for when this happened, and no archaeological evidence has ever been recovered to date.

This diorama interpretation was based from contemporary artworks, literary references and from data collected from surveys of similar military architecture. The topic

was a great choice for a narrative diorama because the architecture itself told a story in addition to the accounts that were collected to make more models.

The difficulty in conducting historical research was analyzing the discrepancies in the sources that were available, which was done in cooperation with museum curators and experts on the topic. It was not the intention of this diorama to clear up any misunderstandings that existed in the public's memory, but rather, to emulate what Tilden (1957)'s principles amplify that is, to utilise interpretation that reveals and provokes further interest about the role of the Maltese insurgents.



The Ghargħar Gun Battery diorama built by ITS alumnus and Heritage Malta model-maker Ivan Cocker.



## DATA COLLECTION

The research combines practice-led and triangle research strategies to explore the Blockade diorama. Three groups of participants were selected for data collection, with semi-structured interviews conducted with technical and interpretation experts.

Seven local heritage museum professionals were interviewed to explore the significance of dioramas in museums and their role as interpretation devices. The interviewees included curators, collections officers, tour guides, and marketing specialists. The aim was to understand how different professionals from different sectors of heritage institutions approached the topic. The value of dioramas in the contemporary museum was also discussed in comparison to other more modern digital installations. Their viewpoint on using a diorama in the absence of original artefacts was also delved into.

A study involving eleven master modellers from internationally renowned model makers aimed to understand the technical aspects of creating dioramas. The interviews focused on selecting the subject, choosing techniques for storytelling, and evaluating research versus artistic license. The study also sought to understand if the techniques used in storytelling dioramas followed any principles, and if their work was suitable for museum exhibitions. The investigation focused on modellers' artistic style, storytelling potential, and scale in dioramas, without technical abilities.

The third point of the triangular analysis involved a qualitative survey to investigate viewers' perceptions of dioramas. The study focused on the Malta Maritime Museum's proposed exhibit, the diorama, and the French Blockade era. The museum was temporarily closed for the public due to works in progress, a representative sample of fifty participants was chosen from other Heritage Malta events. The survey sought to comprehend how the general public perceived dioramas and determine whether extra explanation was required by displaying photos of this diorama. Open-



Maybe the first interpretation of the Gharghar Gun Battery, unknown artist (Heritage Malta)



Another interpretation of the "Gharghar" Gun Battery c.1800, unknown artist ([www.wikiwand.com](http://www.wikiwand.com))

ended questions were used to generate responses and identify themes.

This study utilized triangulation to provide a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon, enhancing its validity and reliability. Data from questionnaires,

interviews, and surveys was combined to examine related findings, strengthen convergent evidence, and investigate novel discoveries. The goal was to evaluate and categorize information for museum visitor interpretation, aligning with Falk's



(2008) studies. The analysis also suggested additional materials like printed media or digital assets for better interpretation.

### THE ANALYSIS

The research analysis used a methodologically sound procedure, focusing

on design and construction of dioramas to convey a story. The triangular data collecting technique was based on viewpoints from model makers, museum professionals, and visitors. Balancing the needs of experts and model makers was crucial. Dioramas were found to be an ideal tool for storytelling, especially when covering subjects like warfare, and inspiring unique experiences for the audience.

The study reveals that dioramas can engage diverse audiences and age groups without explanation, forming their identity. They can enlighten themes not widely recognized or have different perspectives due to collective memory. The potential of visual communication emerged particularly to describe things and situations not in situ. Dioramas can include educational labels or interactive features, and modern technology can significantly increase the ability to deliver appropriate messages. The study confirms the effectiveness of practice-led research methodology and suggests modifications to improve interpretation of static dioramas.

### GUIDELINES

The study suggests creating an optimal storytelling diorama for a museum, requiring thorough research and careful selection of components. The diorama captures a moment in time, requiring careful consideration of the narrative, characters, and scenario, like theatre and motion picture. A diorama captures a split second, requiring a balance between science, scale, and aesthetics. Using multisensory technologies enhances interpretation without detracting from the experience. The goal is to balance scale, storyline, and creative techniques to appeal to visitors, while providing additional information for further exploration without distracting from the main point.

It was concluded that a historical diorama with an interpretative narrative based on combining research and artistic values will appeal to viewers of many age groups if it integrates Tilden's (1957) principles of interpretation and Falk's (2013) approach of identifying museum visitors. If the right

scale of a miniature diorama is planned in accordance with a balanced set of research and creative standards, it can engage museum visitors. A well-designed diorama is still an effective museum installation and can benefit from the application of additional digital interpretive tools such as virtual reality. A physical miniature diorama designed using criteria that balance scale, art, and history, can effectively engage with a wide spectrum of viewers and can communicate a variety of narrative themes.

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# Quality Management towards Employee Job Satisfaction: A Case Study of 5-star hotels in Malta

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Quality management (QM) is a strategy focusing on meeting or surpassing customers' expectations by emphasizing on employee engagement and continuous quality improvement (Pereira-Moliner, et al., 2016). It is crucial as it ensures customers receive consistent and high-quality service. By implementing Quality Management Practices (QMPs), hotels are able to identify and resolve any potential problems and will continuously strengthen their operations. Quality management (QM) is implemented in several industries and service firms, such as those in the hospitality industry, with the aim at improving effectiveness and performance (Boulter, et al., 2013).

A study by Anil and Satish (2016), showed that quality management practices (QMP) have a considerably beneficial influence on organizational performance throughout the years by enhancing organizational effectiveness and improving operational efficiency. Quality management practices are a collection of strategies and approaches used to avoid differences throughout the process for production or service delivery

process to increase efficiency, quality, and consistency (Liu & Liu, 2014). The underlying assumption is that quality management decreases overall costs, increases the satisfaction of customers, increases revenue, and ultimately increases profits (Al-Fawaeer & Khairuddin, 2020). However, the influence of quality management on employee well-being is still a key research question, more so, if it is related to employee work satisfaction (De Menezes, 2012). Employee job satisfaction is an important factor for employees' well-being, and it relates to an individual's positive emotional response to their job (Liu & Liu, 2014).

The research study discussed all the important aspects of quality management towards employees' job satisfaction focused through the lens of two Maltese 5-star hotels, with such studies focussing on Malta being almost null. In addition, this study aimed to investigate and provide a substantial contribution to hospitality management literature by explaining how quality management practices may be used as predictor of employee satisfaction.

Furthermore, researchers (Bari, et al., 2016; Kaur, et al., 2019) concluded that the five most crucial elements for the overall success of quality management towards employee job satisfaction (EJS) are: top management commitment (TMC), training & education (TE), teamwork (TW), Participation of employees (PE) and continuous improvement (CI). Therefore, this research analysed the following alternative hypothesis:

- H1:** Top management commitment is positively related to employee job satisfaction.
- H2:** Training and education are positively related to employee job satisfaction.
- H3:** Teamwork is positively related to employee job satisfaction.
- H4:** Participation of Employees is positively related to employee job satisfaction.
- H5:** Continuous Improvement is positively related to employee job satisfaction.





Photo by engin akyurt on  
Unsplash

## METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research was to explore the most important aspects of quality management towards employees' job satisfaction within two selected five-star hotels in Malta.

The researcher felt that the best method for investigation was to utilize a mixed methodological approach. Initially, a quantitative method was employed in the form of a survey questionnaire to analyse the variables of quality management which includes top management commitment, participation of employees, teamwork, continuous improvement, and training and education towards employee job satisfaction. Additionally, qualitative method in the form of interviews was undertaken to do an in-depth investigation on how QM practices are being implemented within selected organizations from the management point of view.

The population for this research were all of the employees including hotel managers working in the two selected local five-star hotels. The sample size was calculated from a standard formula as a total of 111 random respondents out of 198 participated for interviews involving two participants. The quantitative data was collected from the questionnaires, following submissions these were statistically analysed using SPSS software. The questionnaire had a total of 51 structured questions and was categorized into three sections: section A relates to demographics, section B was based on the quality management practices, whereas section C measured employee job satisfaction. Qualitative data was obtained via interviews, included 10 semi-structured questions, which were first transcribed and then examined through thematic analysis.

## RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

A few limitations were identified. Since the questionnaires were distributed in the peak business season for the hotels, it was difficult for employees to participate and concentrate, due to limited free time. Therefore, the target for the sampling size was not reached as only 56% respondents participated.

The second limitation was identified as the questionnaire which had a limited number of questions which were closed ended, thus it may have been difficult for employees to express other opinions.

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

According to statistical analysis when the five predictors are together as a group, they predict job employment satisfaction increased significantly. Thus, the alternative hypothesis resulted as follows:

| Alternative Hypothesis | Hypothesis Statement                                                         | Rejected /Not Rejected |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| H <sub>1</sub>         | Top Management Commitment is positively related to employee job satisfaction | Not Rejected           |
| H <sub>2</sub>         | Training and Education is positively related to employee job satisfaction    | Rejected               |
| H <sub>3</sub>         | Teamwork is positively related to employee job satisfaction                  | Rejected               |
| H <sub>4</sub>         | Participation of Employee is positively related to employee job satisfaction | Not Rejected           |
| H <sub>5</sub>         | Continuous Improvement is positively related to employee job satisfaction    | Not Rejected           |

**This study findings are significant because it has been confirmed that QM practices are the determining factor in improving employee job satisfaction within organizations.**

Top management commitment, participation of employees, and continuous improvement were not rejected, hence it was revealed to have positive and significant correlation with employee job satisfaction. During one of the interviews, it was emphasized that top management acknowledges the theory that quality is as essential as costs, allocates sufficient resources to quality improvement initiatives, and during meetings managers emphasise the significance of quality as a factor in their job satisfaction. It was indicated that employees are involved in day-to-day meetings with their managers in order to speak their minds and think of new ways to better serve the customer. Additionally, it was emphasized that those individuals who continuously improve, provide new innovative ideas, and are eager to learn are promoted whenever there is an opportunity.

On the other hand, teamwork, training and education were rejected. It was analysed that they have no significant effect on employee job satisfaction. One of the HR executives mentioned that as a business on a yearly basis, training analysis is conducted whereby managers discuss their teams' development requirements, which will eventually get addressed. However, one possible conclusion is that employees are not addressing the issue of unsatisfactory training provided with their managers, therefore problem cannot be solved, that could be a possibility for training and education to be rejected. Additionally, according to analysed data it was found that employees working within selected hotels, are more comfortable working individually

rather than in teams as some of them do not work well together.

Furthermore, to measure job satisfaction, the researcher followed the JS Survey by Spector (1985) where 12 items were listed to determine satisfaction including; wages, bonuses compensation, job security, interesting job, flexible hours, working environment, co-workers, advancement, training, empowerment, teamwork, and loyalty to employees. All the factors mentioned above were crucial for all participants from both hotels. However, flexible hours and bonuses were determined to be less important than the rest of the factors. Overall, it resulted that hotel B (58.3%) has a higher level of satisfied employees than hotel A (57.8%).

#### CONCLUSION

This study findings are significant because it has been confirmed that QM practices are the determining factor in improving employee job satisfaction within organizations. The present research analysed and identified the correlation via the multiple regression model between numerous independent variables that are the quality management practises and employee job satisfaction, which is the dependant variable.

The results show that TMC, CI and PE may increase job satisfaction (JS) to a significant degree, thus it is essential for hotels to put these practices into action. However, this research found that TE and TW have a negative and irrelevant effect towards JS. Top management should make sure that TE and TW practices are also significant



towards their employees, in order to increase job satisfaction. To conclude, this research serves as a benefit to help hotel managers in focusing on employee satisfaction. Organisations must keep in mind that competition within local industries has become more rigid, so management must keep their employees holistically happy to have good retention and thus service will always improve.

### RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

For future studies it is recommended that additional studies are conducted with 3-star, 4-star and 5-star hotels in Malta. Focusing on the relationship between quality management practices, employee job satisfaction, employee performance, organizational commitment, which can be used to evaluate its effect on employee turnover.

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# Gender Equality Within Leadership Roles in Five-Star Hotels in Malta: A Comparison Study Between Operation Managers and Human Resources Managers

BY SEPHORA DASHA COLE  
BACHELOR OF ARTS (HONS.) INTERNATIONAL HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT

**G**ender-related equality may represent forms of controversy if not discrimination. Nowadays, employees seek to reach their maximum potential to fulfill their employment expectations and climb the career ladder. Many people in the hospitality industry struggle to achieve certain goals and roles solely because of their gender. Some even struggle with motivation and commitment issues due to an impenetrable barrier that prevents them from progressing in their career path (Dashper, 2019). According to UNWTO (2011), females are twice as likely to be hospitality and tourism employees compared to other industries. However, work in the various sectors remains segregated by gender stereotypes, with the majority of females being employed in lower-status positions that attract lower pay and opportunities for career progression (Mooney & Ryan, 2009). This can also be applied to males applying for jobs in the hotel industry. Due to such discrimination, the industry is missing out on the abilities, visions, and passions of many different people of all genders who could make successful leaders. Moreover, no gender should suffer from entrenched obstacles or discrimination in a workplace, and every employee should be assessed according to their ability.

## GENDER ISSUES

Gender stereotypes persist in the business sector, as evidenced by the disproportionate representation of

women in HR manager roles and men in operations manager roles. The findings of the study suggest that gender bias could impede the career progression of novice workers toward managerial roles. As per the report, the implementation of human resource management strategies is necessary to tackle gender inequality and foster professional development among employees. The dissertation's aim was to increase awareness regarding gender discrimination and foster gender equality within the hospitality industry in Malta.

Gender can be defined in many ways; however, Connell (2009) explains that gender describes the characteristics of women, men, girls, and boys that have been socially constructed. This includes roles, behaviours, conventions, and interpersonal interactions that are related to being a man, woman, boy, or girl. Gender as a social construct varies according to society and may evolve and change over time. Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin (1999) assert that gender systems involve processes that define both men and women as socially meaningful differences and they justify gender-based inequalities. The fact that men and women interact extensively within families and households and other role relationships makes gender different from any other instances of social inequality (Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, 1999).

Croft, Atkinson and May (2021) state that advancement toward gender parity has stagnated in recent years owing mostly



to the fact that gender preconceptions and roles change faster for women than for men. The phrase “glass ceiling phenomenon” was coined by a woman who was a columnist at the Wall Street Journal in 1986 to figuratively describe a series of unnoticed yet impossible barriers that have hampered women’s progression to leading roles in the professional world, despite their abilities, academic background, and other achievements. Eisend (2019) denotes that the evaluation and prevalence of gender roles, the effectiveness of gender roles in

advertising, and the social repercussions of gender roles on society are the three primary areas of research on gender roles in advertising. Each topic’s state of knowledge currently shows multiple gaps. Eisend (2019) continues to construct knowledge and emphasizes that future studies should focus on several issues to close these gaps and broaden knowledge about gender roles. Although more women are working in the hospitality industry than ever before, horizontal and vertical inequality persist together with salary disparity, resulting

in missed opportunities for this sector (Segovia-Pérez, Figueroa-Domecq, Fuentes-Moraleda & Muñoz-Mazón, 2019).

Aziz et. al (2021) conducted a study in Iraq which examined the kind and extent of gender discrimination in open job positions across the major economic sectors, divisions, and levels of power. It also represents an attempt to investigate the relationship between the wording of job postings and the degree of gender discrimination included therein. The





majority of them subtly support male candidates. The kind of positions for which women are desired differs from those that are geared toward men. Aziz et al. (2021) found that job advertisements tend to stereotype women into administrative roles.

## MALTA

Malta's Equality for Men and Women Act (Chapter 456) prohibits sex-based references in job postings, ensuring equal opportunities. This legislation also safeguards both genders from discrimination due to sex, family obligations, or other related factors, promoting fairness. Furthermore, Malta's Protection of the Whistleblower Act (Chapter 527) ensures protection against negative consequences for whistleblowers, signaling progress in combating workplace discrimination. Dashper (2020) underscores the hospitality sector's challenges in employee engagement, motivation, and retention, along with gender-based career limitations. Mentoring plays a crucial role in assisting women in overcoming these barriers. While job opportunities and working conditions have improved, there's still a notable gender disparity in authoritative positions, with 8% female ministers and 14.9% female members of parliament (EIGE Europe, n.d.). This study aims to discern gender discrimination in recruitment and progression to managerial roles within the hospitality industry. It centers around six key concepts: gender, equality, leadership, stereotypes, opportunities, and awareness. The study encompasses four human resources managers and four operations managers currently employed in five-star hotels in Malta. Additionally, surveys were distributed to sixteen novice employees in the hospitality sector, with participation open to those interested. The research investigates gender considerations in managerial positions, sheds light on the decision-making processes during recruitment and advancement, assesses potential constraints on novice employees' path to leadership roles, and gauges awareness of gender equality and inequality in Malta.

During the examination of employment-related issues, participants disclosed various constraints and concerns. One participant alluded to the "glass ceiling," reflecting limited advancement opportunities causing reduced motivation. Additional concerns included budget limitations and inadequate training opportunities. Foreign participants also highlighted a bias in favour of Maltese citizens in promotion decisions, while wage disparities were noted by some, although others saw no such restrictions. Although most participants denied gender's influence, a few acknowledged its potential role.

The research is designed to address two fundamental research questions concerning gender equality in Malta. The level of awareness and comprehension of the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) varies across different criteria. Tailored programs to enhance understanding of NCPE's role among hotel sector managers might be essential. Collaborative efforts between NCPE and industry stakeholders should be explored to heighten awareness and promote best practices. In essence, both employers and employees must recognize NCPE's role and the importance of fostering gender equality in the workplace. This promotes a fair and equitable working environment while benefiting businesses through enhanced diversity, inclusion, and overall performance.

## DISCRIMINATION PERSISTS

Final participant comments highlight the significance of gender equality, emphasizing that gender should not impede career progression; skills are the key factor. The primary goal of this research was to assess the extent to which gender equality is taken into consideration during the recruitment process for operations managers and human resources managers in five-star hotels located in Malta. The study's findings indicate that gender discrimination and inequality persist in the hotel industry, specifically in managerial roles. The mixed-methods approach employed in this study facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the perceptions and experiences of both

seasoned professionals and entry-level workers in the hospitality sector regarding gender-based discrimination in managerial roles.

The research emphasized the necessity of eradicating gender bias and promoting gender parity in the recruitment procedures of managerial positions within the hotel sector. Gender equality can be attained through the implementation of actions such as training and development programmes as well as diversity and inclusion legislation. It is important to acknowledge the limitations of the study, despite the implementation of a mixed-methods approach and a rigorous data analysis methodology, which ultimately enhanced the credibility and reliability of the results. In general, this research contributes to the growing corpus of literature on gender bias and parity in the workplace. The aim of this study is to facilitate gender equality and diminish gender discrimination in hotel management roles. The anticipated outcome is to encourage further research and initiatives in this domain.

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# Evaluating Equity in the tourism and hospitality workplace: An analysis of the type and frequency of discrimination experienced by ITS students in their off-site workplace

BY EMILY SCIBERRAS  
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**T**he tourism and hospitality sector is a crucial contributor to the Maltese economy, playing a significant role in generating income, employment, and foreign exchange earnings.

Discrimination represents a transgression of fundamental human rights and can result in significant adverse effects for both individuals and the broader community

Although there are rules and regulations in place to prevent prejudice, it's important to note that their application and the degree to which they influence lowering discrimination in the hospitality sector can vary. It's critical to continuously assess how well these rules and regulations are being put into practise (Lewis, 2020).

The thesis' results are a valuable contribution to scholarly investigations into discrimination within the tourism and hospitality sector, with a particular focus on Malta. Policymakers and industry professionals seeking to establish a fairer work environment will find the findings of this study to be of great interest.

Defining discrimination poses a challenging task (Kohler-Hausmann, 2020). Discrimination is a term that is crucial to comprehending issues related to diversity (Mouchet, et al., 2010). The act of selecting among various definitions of discrimination carries both theoretical and methodological ramifications. The selection of a definition is a crucial factor in determining the scope of empirical inquiry and the appropriate methodologies for the identification and analysis of the phenomenon in question. Therefore, it's beneficial to utilize the definition as stipulated by the Maltese legal system (Allport, 2002).

The research examined the sector and identified just three types of discrimination: individual, institutional, and structural. Other forms of discrimination include indirect, direct, objective, and subjective. Regardless of the degree of simplicity of the circumstance, the fact remains that there exist numerous forms of discrimination due to its prevalent nature in the social context.

#### RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. What are the most common types of discrimination experienced by ITS students at their off-site workplace in Malta?
2. What are the after-effects of discrimination experienced by ITS students in their off-site workplace in Malta?

#### METHODOLOGY

To answer the research questions, surveys were distributed via email to ITS students. Qualitative data was obtained via the questionnaires which were first transcribed and then examined through thematic and content analysis. The questionnaire is comprised of 18 questions per participant, following their selection of the specific tourism sector they belong to.

#### RESULTS

The results cast light on the consequences of discrimination in the hospitality industry. This is consistent with research (Bonaccio, et al., 2020) that states the impact of discrimination on the operational and

reputational facets of businesses can be significant, as it can generate negative publicity, reduce customer satisfaction, and result in financial setbacks.

The findings indicate that, sexism was the most frequently experienced discrimination with a (63.6%) and Ageism in second with (40.9%). Beyond the frequently reported types of discrimination such as gender, age, nationality, sexual orientation, and race, the qualitative data uncovered three supplementary themes. Mockery based on physical appearance, discrimination based on height, and political discrimination.

#### CONCLUSION

Based on the results it can be seen that gender discrimination is the most commonly experienced form of discrimination. Ageism was the second most common kind of discrimination. Participants who encountered ageism reported feeling alienated, frustrated, low self-confidence, passed over for promotions, and age-based skill assumptions. Work became less inspiring and disengaged. Participants who experienced sexism expressed demoralisation, job dissatisfaction, feeling neglected, limited career advancement opportunities, and a negative impact on their well-being. Participants who encountered ageism reported feeling alienated, frustrated with low self-confidence, passed over for promotions, and age-based skill assumptions. Work became less inspiring and disengaged.

Although not all the responses match traditional definitions of discrimination, they all entail negative treatment, exclusion, or unjust treatment based on particular characteristics or traits.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Education regarding discrimination and equity:** Although we have some understanding of equality and discrimination, we still need to fully grasp their broader scope. We must educate students and employees about discrimination and embracing diversity to promote equality.

2. **Tools on a daily basis:** The NCPE (National Commission for the Promotion of Equality) has already developed tools for the tourism industry, so businesses can utilise what is already available from the government and tailor them to their organisation.
3. **Create a safe reporting culture:** Establish a workplace environment that fosters a culture of support and encourages employees to feel at ease and empowered to report incidents of discrimination.
4. **Systems for Supporting Employees:** There has already been a significant amount of study conducted on what the government, employers, and organizations can do; but, what about the employees? These recommendations will likely have a favourable effect on employee well-being, as well as on rates of employee retention and prospects for career progression.

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# ITS Events Timeline

The following timeline contains significant events at our Institute, spanning from the previous issue to the current one. From new partnerships and academic inaugurations to international expansions, these milestones reflect our commitment to excellence, growth, and innovation in the field of tourism and hospitality education.

## 20 JUN

### ITS & MSAA sign a Partnership

The Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) and Mediterranean Screen Arts Academy (MSAA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a filmmaking education department. Filmmaker Roland Joffé supports the partnership, aiming to make Malta an international film education hub. MSAA, backed by Stargate Studios Malta and Rupture, offers a comprehensive curriculum preparing students for the film industry.



## 27 OCT

### Gateway to Better Quality Employment in the Hospitality Industry

The Ministry for Tourism launched an initiative to enhance service quality in Malta's tourism and hospitality sector. The project mandates training and assessments for Third Country Nationals seeking work permits, gradually extending to renewals and Maltese/EU employees.



## 02 OCT

### ITS New Academic Year 2023-2024

ITS commenced the academic year with Freshers' festivities, emphasising connection and career development. Over 600 students enrolled, with an increased interest in Foundation Level and specialised programmes like MBA in International Hospitality Management. The year promises academic excellence, personal growth, and networking opportunities.



## 11 NOV

### ITS Students Triumph at AEHT Competition

ITS students excelled at the AEHT Annual Conference in Lithuania, securing Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals in Wine, Culinary Decathlon, and Front Office categories. The victories showcase ITS's commitment to excellence in hospitality and tourism education, aligning with AEHT's European perspective in hotel and tourism schools.



22 NOV

### ITS Opens Satellite Campus in Shanghai, China

ITS expanded its global footprint by partnering with Shanghai Industrial and Commercial Polytechnic, establishing a satellite campus in China. Students can enroll in Higher National Diploma programs with curriculum provided by ITS. The collaboration promotes internationalisation, marking a significant milestone in the institution's strategic plan.



01 DEC

### ITS Inaugurates Shanghai Satellite Campus

The Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) officially launched its satellite campus in Shanghai, China. Ms. Claire Briffa, COO - Corporate Services, and Ms. Can Feng, International Department Assistant Manager, led the inaugural ceremony in Shanghai.



30 NOV

### ITS Achieves Positive MFHEA Audit Reports

The Malta Further & Higher Education Authority (MFHEA) released positive Program Audit Reports for ITS, acknowledging improvements since 2015. ITS met several standards, with an Action Plan addressing identified areas. The audit reflects ITS's continuous efforts, including the launch of higher-level study programmes and international collaborations.



04 DEC

### ITS Graduation Ceremony 2023

The graduation ceremony marked a milestone for approximately 300 students, including the first cohort of Bachelor of Science in Diving Safety Management graduates. The programme, unique globally, equips students with diving safety, management, and scientific diving knowledge. Distinguished guests highlighted the graduates' significance in shaping the tourism and hospitality industry's future.







Spectacular Rural Valley in Gozo

# Malta's First Rains

BY DAVID PACE  
SENIOR LECTURER AT ITS

Countryside walking and hiking have always been a favourite pastime of both locals and tourists, but during the COVID years they became even more popular as countries closed their borders and many locals turned inwards, deciding to explore Malta's beautiful countryside, coastline and valleys.

The increase in importance of countryside and nature walks across the Maltese islands presents an added attraction to tourists particularly during the Spring Season when the countryside is in full bloom with an amazing variety of flowers and abuzz with all kind of fauna. If properly marketed, it could be used to entice tourists to visit Malta during the shoulder months.

But the Autumn season can also be very enjoyable and a walk during September and October may be a discouraging experience

if the day is a hot one, but once the rains fall, the Maltese countryside undergoes an astonishing transformation that can be enjoyed by all revealing a completely different facet of our islands.

The best time for a walk is just after the early rains of September or October which help cool down the Maltese countryside and change it from a rocky semi-desert to a verdant carpet. Unfortunately, this year it did not rain until late November probably delaying the growing season by a month or two. But the change is a dramatic one and hills, garigue and valleys transform into stretches of grass and vegetation that are a wake-up call to the local flora and fauna.

In many places, the verdant turf blends beautifully with the long stalks of sea squill poking above the awakening garigue and steppe areas. The white, handsome multi-flowered stalks are one of the few

plants that flowers in summer and their appearance spells the end of the hot, dry season.

The first rains also fuel the growth of many animals particularly wild rabbits who thrive on thick fast-growing vegetation. Wild rabbits reproduce in summer and young ones can still be seen in places such as Nigred, Żurrieq, the Għadira Nature Reserve and Buskett. The secret is to find a quiet secluded place during the week and wait for things to happen. If you're lucky you may even catch a glimpse of the weasel (*ballotra*), Malta's largest carnivorous mammal which although small is capable of preying upon larger animals such as rabbits and a variety of lizards, snakes and emerging frogs.

The rich reptilian life found on garigue, steppe-land and forested areas benefits greatly from an early cloudburst. Garigue vegetation provides a valuable food source

to many insects and arachnids on which reptiles like young wall-lizards (*Gremxul*) and geckoes (*Wiżgħat*) that hatch in the summer months feast. The young of the Ocellated Skink (*Xaħmet l-Art*) which are born alive, also partake of this abundance. All grow quickly because of the profusion of invertebrate life including worms, ants, flies, spiders, grasshoppers, earwigs, millipedes and woodlice.

The explosion of life marks the beginning of Autumn which is a particularly interesting season to explore. You don't need to embark upon lengthy walks to glimpse the beauty of nature. In forested areas (parts of Pembroke and the *Foresta* 2000 site at Għadira), newly hatched chameleons can be seen eyeing the plentiful insect life and several bird species will be following suit.

The easiest place to observe insect-eating birds in early Autumn are the short cliffs below the Għar il-Kbir garigue overlooking Buskett and the internal cliffs at *Il-Fawwara* near Slġġiewi. You can reach the place in Buskett by climbing up the side of White Poplar valley (*Wied il-Luq*) where the trees end and the garigue begins. It's an ideal spot to watch birds soaring on thermals over the valley catching butterflies and insects on the wing; particularly the beautifully coloured bee-eaters which tend to flock together and visit Malta as early as September.

Here, colonies of swallows swoop off the garigue's edge and glide over the trees in search of flies and mosquitoes. It is one of the few places where you can sit down in the fields and watch a splendid cannonade of birds fly over you!

A little patience may lead to the spotting an odd flycatcher among the high tree branches where it builds its nest and waits patiently to snare the oblivious butterfly or moth. A small binoculars and a bit of patience can be very rewarding in such places and go a long way in proving that our country is far from the desolate rock many people think it is.

The internal cliffs of *Fawwara* are particularly attractive to birds of prey which take



Painted frogs

advantage of thermals formed over the short internal cliffs due to the winds coming from over the sea. These thermals allow birds of prey such as Black Kites, Eleonora's Falcons and Hobbies to lazily soar about until they detect a reptile, insect or small mammal on which they prey. Then, they plunge down like a living attack airplane to catch their prey on the fly until they leave again on a long journey to warmer climes.

#### PUDDLES AND PONDS

The first rains fill the heavily eroded limestone surfaces of most garigues with freshwater pools that attract a great deal of animals and insects. It is still early for water-loving plants, but the dragonflies will be having a field day.

The Red-veined and Scarlet darters (*Mazzarel Aħmar u Skarlat*) are the commonest dragonfly species found around freshwater ponds. The Scarlet variety is thinner, but both are almost completely red and have very fragile looking wings. Unlike the Emperor Dragonfly, they like to rest on the tips of water-logged plants that have been partially submerged by the recent rains.

Another frequent visitor is the Emperor Dragonfly (*Mazzarel Sultan*) which can reach a length of 7 cms. At this time of the year, you will see several mating pairs copulating in mid-air or resting on plants in a characteristic M-shape of courtship.

Dragonflies prefer stagnant pools with lots of debris and decaying vegetation where they can lay their eggs; while another group of invertebrates, the freshwater shrimps prefer cleaner waters.

Most garigue ponds have colonies of the fairy shrimp (*Gamblu tal-Għadajjar*); while the much rarer clam shrimp (*Gamblu tal-Qoxra*) can be found sporadically in ponds at Nadur and Dwejra, Malta.

Many insects are dependent on water. But if you sit still by a pond with a pair of binoculars you can observe many interesting sights including wasps drinking (*Żnażan*), and hovering mayflies (*Ninfi*) and damselflies (*Dammigelli*) mating over the water.

You do not need to travel far to find a freshwater pond. Many abandoned fields, garigue and steppe-land areas lie just a few metres away from main roads and become waterlogged during the rainy season. Two excellent locations are Tal-Wej in Santa Margerita, Mosta and Wied id-Dis, Għargħur.

Tal-Wej is particularly interesting having large semi-permanent freshwater pools that provide for a variety of aquatic animals and plants, the most important of which is the Tadpole Shrimp. This is the largest freshwater shrimp found on the island and can reach 5cms in length. It is also living





The squill flower



Rare permanent pool

fossil, practically indistinguishable from fossils found 220 million years ago. Like all freshwater fauna, it's numbers are falling due to a decrease in freshwater sources on the island and the contamination of the few remaining permanent pools by fertilisers and pesticides.

These are truly enchanting places that offer spectacular views of nearby valleys (Wied il-Għasel at Santa Margerita and Wied id-Dis opposite Għargħur) coupled with easy access by bus or by bicycle from Mosta centre.

The secret lies in patient and meticulous observation. You may stare at a freshwater pool for an hour without seeing a single fairy shrimp. Then, along comes a friend and spies a colony. It's just the way you look at the pond. Remember: many creatures blend

well with nature to escape the greedy jaws of predators and you may be fooled as well. Fairy shrimps are much smaller than tadpole shrimps being about a centimetre long with many legs that help it swim around. The tadpole shrimp is five times larger and more robust, and looks like an armoured tadpole. Most of these shrimps eat tiny single-celled animals called protozoa or algae.

The Painted Frog is another animal that starts appearing with the first rains. Many people are surprised that frogs show up in places where there does not seem to be any water. But the frog aestivates (sleeps) during summer in a protective cocoon of saliva and mud that keeps it moist and alive. As soon as the rain percolates through, the frog emerges ravenous with hunger and starts to feast on the rich insect life available.

In a few areas, another tough customer starts to emerge with the advent of the rainy season. In Baħrija and a few scattered valleys in Malta and Gozo, the endemic freshwater crab (*Il-Qabru*) comes out from its moist burrows to search for food and a mate. Unfortunately, this unique crustacean is becoming rarer and rarer due to the increase in pesticides and fertilizers added to water during crop irrigation, and the general decrease in flowing freshwater due to increasingly dry winter seasons.

The Freshwater crab is an aggressive animal with very strong chelae (pincers) that help it hunt frogs, tadpoles, worms and beetles on which it feeds. Large specimens can reach 10 cm. in diameter and may be unafraid of human beings; another reason why their numbers are decreasing as they are easily



caught; and although they are protected by law, conservation of the species is very poor.

It is truly incredible what a bit of acute observation can unravel. Even a seemingly stretch of rubble-filled, abandoned land will reveal an amazing variety of animals and insects.

Water breathes life into the most barren places, and I have discovered some of the most interesting animal, plant and fungi species in the least places expected including an abandoned field used as a dump and under empty oil-drums, cardboard boxes and fridges and in dripping water collected in a shallow depression that revealed a colony of a scarce primitive plant called the Branched Horsetail (*Equisetum ramosissimum*). This is actually a living fossil and the only living genus of the *Equisetidae* subclass whose ancestors dominated the Paleozoic forests of a 100 million years ago reaching heights of 30m. These fed giant plant-eating dinosaurs such as brachiosaurus and diplodocus.

So, although the environment maybe strewn with alien objects (and debris), sometimes gems can be found because life adapts and colonizes every part of the environment. Unfortunately, until the authorities decide to embark upon a massive educational

campaign and clean-up job, the uninformed public will keep on dumping litter into the countryside, adding the sort of dubious character that unfortunately characterises parts of the more frequented Maltese countryside areas.

#### BOTANICAL GEMS

Walks during Autumn can be very rewarding botanically as the plant-life also starts germinating and some bulbs actually flower. The Autumn Narcissus (*Narċiż Imwaħħar*),

**I have discovered  
some of the most  
interesting animal,  
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species in the least  
places expected**

the Autumn Buttercup (*Ċfolloq tal-Ħarifa*), the Mediterranean Meadow-Saffron (*Busieq*), the Yellow Throated Crocus (*Zaghfran Selvaġġ*) and the early orchid, Autumn Lady's Tresses (*Ħajja u Mejta tal-Ħarifa*) can all be

found flowering in garigue areas during this time.

The smell of rain and greenery, *petrichor* fills the air during Autumn and has an uplifting effect on the human psyche assaulting the brain with the aromas of nature based on a mixture of ozone, geosmin and plant oils. The latter two will have been concentrating in the soil throughout summer, while early storms will have ionized the oxygen in the air creating a higher concentration of ozone. The mixture of all these chemicals produces the characteristic smell of humid nature and prepares us for the onset of winter.

The Carob Tree is also preparing to flower and after the first rains, I really enjoy the sweet earthy smell of water soaked carob which elicits feelings of the beginning of the most fecund months on the Maltese Islands and signals a transformation that is magical and invites everywhere to partake of it's short-lived beauty.

This is facet of Malta should be marketed if we really want to attract higher quality tourists to Malta's rural areas and diversify the tourism product by introducing more sustainable forms that incorporate protecting and conserving the Maltese countryside which is filled with spectacular scenery and rich biodiversity that once lost will vanish forever.





# Digital Technology as an Interpretative Tool to Recreate Interest in and Appreciation of the Maltese Chapels

BY VANESSA DELIA NAUDI  
MASTER OF ARTS IN HERITAGE INTERPRETATION

**T**he Maltese Islands are home to numerous churches and chapels scattered in both rural and urban areas. While large churches and parishes tend to be more attractive to locals and tourists alike, chapels still have their stories to tell and deserve to be treasured and appreciated as part of the Islands' heritage.

The Maltese chapels are characterized by a richness of detail, in both art and architecture and are often enhanced with detailed patterns of human habitation (Borg, M., 2014). These architectural jewels gradually left their mark on the Maltese rural areas as wayside chapels, while, through the years, more chapels were built in a more urban environment.

Although most tourists usually seek relaxation, there is a minority interested in visiting places that are not just unique for their historical value, but also have religious significance (Sledge, 2017). These so-called "religious" tourists are not pilgrims, but enthusiastic people who visit churches and

other buildings and sites that have great historical significance (Jackowski, 2000).

The Maltese Islands have a lot to offer in terms of religious tourism. Besides the Neolithic structures and hypogeum, the catacombs, churches and cathedrals, the Islands also host several chapels each with its unique heritage and intriguing stories. In the tourism industry, cultural heritage plays an important role in promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth while fostering innovation and providing benefits for all.

Over the years, the interpretation of cultural heritage has evolved exponentially; from the traditional and static to a more diverse and interactive approach, in which digital technologies are increasingly being used in the interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage sites (Liu, 2020). Digital experiences are gradually becoming an important part of the heritage experience for visitors, enabling new and interactive connections between heritage and the public. However, very often there is a

general fear that digital technology could, one day, replace the role of tourist guides or staff-led tours (De La Harpe & Sevenhuysen, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has proved that making tourism and culture inclusive and virtually accessible for all is vital. Therefore, the use of technology can play an essential role in enabling cultural experiences and accessibility of heritage, and in offering additional opportunities for better utilization, management and accessibility of heritage sites.

Even though Maltese chapels are an important part of Malta's cultural and architectural heritage, these chapels face numerous challenges, including neglect, vandalism, lack of awareness and lack of financing. Such factors have led to a decline in interest and appreciation for the chapels, particularly among younger generations. This study explored the potential of digital technology as an interpretative tool to recreate interest in and appreciation of the Maltese chapels. The research involved a comprehensive study of the Maltese chapels' history, architecture, and cultural





Our Lady of Hodegitria Chapel in Bingemma. Photographer: Joseph Amodio (Wiki Loves Monuments 2023)

significance. It also explored the various forms of digital technology that can be used as interpretative tools, including virtual reality, augmented reality and smartphone applications, and an evaluation of the effectiveness of these technologies in engaging and educating visitors and consequently creating a more immersive experience.

The study revealed a variety of opinions on the most useful methods for enhancing visitors' experience at heritage sites. While a combination of traditional and digital interpretation methods is best to provide a well-rounded and memorable experience for visitors, traditional interpretation methods, such as monolithic panels, can be effective because they are straightforward to understand. The importance of human interaction and the limitations of digital technology were also emphasized, suggesting that the most effective approach for enhancing visitors' experience at heritage sites depends on a variety of factors, including the type of site, the target audience, the budget and the available technology.

There is no one-size-fits-all answer to the most effective digital tool for enhancing visitors' experiences at heritage sites and

museums. The choice of digital tools should depend on the nature and character of the site, the target audience and the available technology. However, audio guides, interactive displays, AR and VR, and apps are cited as effective in providing immersive and engaging experiences to visitors. Additionally, interactivity can prolong visitors' tolerance for viewing digital content online, suggesting that interactive tools may be more effective in keeping visitors engaged than passive tools.

Overall, this research suggests that a personalized and engaging experience that is tailored to the interests and backgrounds of visitors can enhance engagement and improve the visitor experience. Using technology and multimedia elements, as well as effective storytelling and feedback mechanisms, can help to achieve this goal.

Findings from the study suggest that to ensure that the interpretation adopted does not become outdated, regular updates and maintenance of the digital interpretation tools and infrastructure are necessary. It is also important to focus on methodology, collaborate with different disciplines, and future-proof digital interpretation tools. Furthermore, market research and gathering feedback are crucial in

improving and keeping up to date with new technology. Staying abreast of new technology is also essential to ensure that the presentation does not become obsolete.

Moreover, regular revisiting of interpretation methods is necessary to ensure that they are relevant and effective, especially for digital interpretation. The future of heritage interpretation in Malta is likely to be influenced by advancements in digital technology, changing visitor expectations, and a new visitor-centred approach. Continuous user statistics are important to ensure the effectiveness of digital interpretation, and it is necessary to monitor and evaluate the objectives of digital interpretation regularly. The future of heritage interpretation in Malta may focus on personalization and accessibility, providing visitors with personalized and interactive experiences tailored to their specific interests and needs.

Clear, accurate and engaging interpretations can attract more visitors interested in religious tourism in Malta. A complete revamp in the approach of engaging with visitors and presenting religious tourism needs to be implemented. Positive word-of-mouth communication is a significant factor in influencing the decision of tourists to visit





**According to this study, it can be concluded that chapels are an integral part of the Maltese identity and have religious implications in Maltese society.**



religious sites. Interpretation methods need to be tailored to the specific interests of different types of religious tourists who have different motivations for visiting religious sites, including spiritual, cultural and educational interests. Therefore, a visitor-centred approach is essential in enhancing tourists' experiences and increasing their satisfaction levels.

Digital interpretation can enhance accessibility, engagement and knowledge gain for visitors to heritage sites, including chapels in the Maltese Islands. However, it is important to note that digital tools alone may not be enough to attract visitors, and the accessibility and content of the sites themselves need to be considered. The digital interpretation needs to balance entertainment and education, and it must be clear and engaging to increase visitors' interest. Additionally, physical accessibility remains an issue that needs to be addressed.

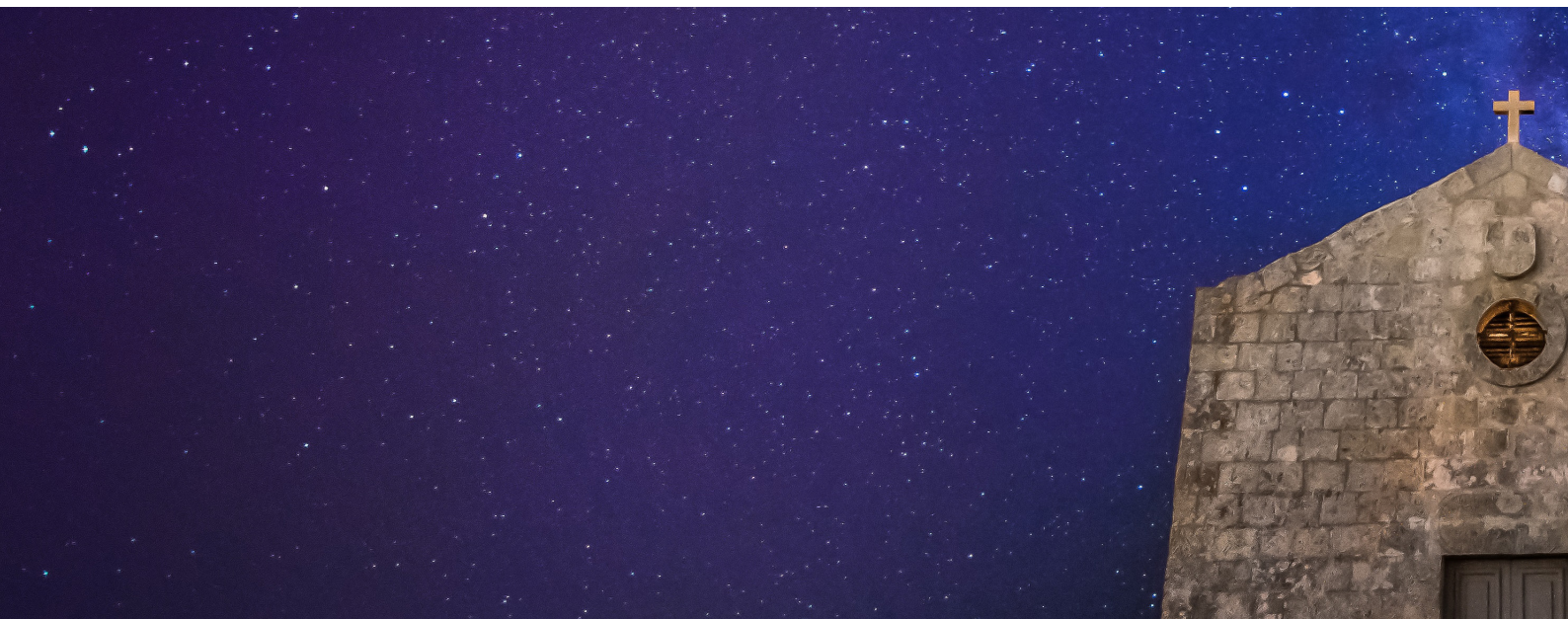
The respondents of this study viewed the idea of an app to interpret chapels across the Maltese Islands positively, suggesting that it should include descriptions of the chapels and their works of art, information on how rituals were held in these sites, and specific stories, legends and traditions associated with the sites. The feasibility of such an app was questioned, but it is generally considered possible if the resources are available. Furthermore, the respondents' suggestions regarding the content of the chapels' interpretation app emphasized the importance of providing informative, engaging and interactive content that meets the needs and interests of a diverse audience.

Digital tools can play a crucial role in conserving and protecting cultural heritage sites such as the Maltese chapels. Digital records and monitoring can help preserve the physical condition of the sites over time. Moreover, digital tools can also offer a balance between visitors' needs and the

protection of historical and religious artefacts by minimizing the physical impact of visitors and promoting sustainable tourism. Nonetheless, it is important to carefully consider the unique circumstances of each site and ensure that the use of technology does not compromise the preservation of cultural heritage.

According to this study, it can be concluded that chapels are an integral part of the Maltese identity and have religious implications in Maltese society. They also hold historical, scientific and architectural significance, providing lessons for people to learn from. Chapels continue to elicit various feelings and interests from both locals and tourists and are actively used for spiritual and social needs. The significance of chapels varies depending on their historical, cultural, scientific, and architectural aspects, and they are often seen as an expression of religious feeling, sentiment and belief. Chapels have different meanings and values for different people, and some are less used than others. Restoration of chapels is a growing trend, and some are seen as significant landmarks in their respective area.

It appears that there is a consensus on the importance of striking a balance between traditional and modern forms of interpretation to make the chapels accessible to all. The traditional forms, such as signs, labels, guided tours and brochures, should be available for those who prefer a more traditional approach, while digital forms such as audio guides, VR/AR, and websites should also be available for those who prefer them.





While modern technology can be used to engage the younger generation and increase their desire to visit the site in person, it cannot fully replace the physical experience of visiting a site. Moreover, making the chapels marketable and attractive to investors to fund their restoration and upkeep raised the question of what information should be available when, and what the investors get out of it.

Updating the information and using various means to market the chapels to the public is to be done in the best way possible and with the available resources. Social media, especially Facebook, are considered a useful tool for sharing visual presentations of chapels and increasing their visibility. However, the high maintenance costs of virtual reality cannot be ignored. The possibility of funding through the European Regional Development Fund, or simply promoting chapels during their feasts to showcase their cultural significance and value were also discussed in this study.

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations for future research and practice can be made. Firstly, future research could explore how digital technology can be integrated into the preservation and management strategies of Maltese chapels, and how it can contribute to their sustainability and resilience.

Secondly, future studies could examine how different types of digital technology, such as 3D scanning and printing, interactive displays, and gamification, can be used to

enhance the interpretation and promotion of the Maltese chapels.

Thirdly, practitioners and stakeholders involved in the preservation and management of the Maltese chapels could collaborate with digital technology experts to develop innovative and user-friendly digital tools and platforms that cater to different visitor segments and preferences.

However, the use of digital technology must be approached with caution. It is important to ensure that the use of technology does not compromise the integrity and authenticity of the chapels. The development of digital experiences must be done in collaboration with local communities and stakeholders to ensure that they are respectful and accurate representations of the chapels and their history are portrayed.

The use of digital technology as an interpretative tool to recreate interest in and appreciation of the Maltese chapels has significant potential. Through the use of augmented reality, virtual reality and 3D modelling, it is possible to showcase the beauty and historical significance of the chapels and attract a wider audience. However, it is important to ensure that the use of digital technology is done responsibly and respectfully to preserve the integrity and authenticity of the chapels. By implementing the recommendations presented, it is hoped that the Maltese chapels will continue to be appreciated and valued for their cultural and historical significance. Digital technology can play a

crucial role in preserving and promoting these important landmarks for future generations to enjoy.

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# Malta During the First World War: Beyond the Nurse of the Mediterranean

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**Keywords:** First World War, Malta, Nurse of the Mediterranean, *Sette Giugno*, Heritage Interpretation

**T**he interpretation of Malta during the First World War is a subject which has attracted very little academic study. The island, then a British fortress, was on the fringes of the European conflict, and escaped fighting and bombing. In the Maltese collective memory this war is subdued by the Second World War during which the Maltese endured prolonged aerial bombardment which caused much destruction, suffering and death.

Malta's role during the First World War is generally discussed in terms of its function as a hospital base, labelled as the "Nurse of the Mediterranean". This has endured as a myth and became the principal interpretation of Malta during the First World War. From here arise the questions which this study sought to answer:

1. Does the discourse of the "Nurse of The Mediterranean" limit the understanding and interpretation of Malta's contribution to the Allied war effort during the First World War?
2. Beyond the discourse of the "Nurse of The Mediterranean", which other themes could inform our understanding and interpretation of Malta during the First World War?

Literature shows that the theme of the "Nurse of the Mediterranean" dominates the current interpretation of the story of Malta during the First World War. This is further accentuated through the line of interpretation favoured by

the National War Museum in Valletta, which in its representation of the First World War perpetrates the "Nurse of the Mediterranean" myth and makes very little reference to other contexts.

Today, the major representation of the First World War in Malta is that presented by the National War Museum in Valletta. However, within this museum's overall exhibition area, the space dedicated to the First World War is very small and is dwarfed by that dedicated to the Second World War. This infers that the First World War is considered as just another episode in Malta's long history, which was marked by two 'great' sieges, that of 1565 and that of 1940-1943. It also reflects the fact that in Malta the First World War is not sellable as a tourism product because it lacks major tangible heritage. Even in cases where tangible heritage does exist, its connection with the First World War is often lost or regarded as being of secondary importance.

Therefore, the "Nurse of the Mediterranean" emerges as the predominant theme about Malta during the First World War. Other, lesser-known aspects are also mentioned sometimes but, these remain underdeveloped, possibly because of scant research and the limited literature available. This tends to give an unbalanced view of Malta during the First World War, which in effect limits a truly comprehensive understanding. The exclusionary effect of the "Nurse of the Mediterranean" permeates the way that the First World War is generally recounted, presented, interpreted and ultimately understood.

## METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach was adopted for this study, and historical research methods were used for collecting data. The primary data was derived from documentary sources held at the National Archives of Malta, primarily from the CSG 01 and CSG 02 collections which cover a wide breadth of correspondence pertaining to the Lt Governor's office, which was the highest civil authority in Malta. Other primary sources used were period newspapers, which provide a wealth of information on various aspects of life in Malta and the topical issues at the time.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The research based on primary and secondary sources showed that there are other aspects, besides the hospital role, to Malta's participation in the First World War. The primary source material presented in this study is used to explore five thematic approaches, which discuss the opening stages of the war; disruptions and restrictions brought about as a result of war conditions; living conditions in Malta where the high cost of living, food supply, misery and hardship are the principal themes; Maltese participation in the war and imperial solidarity; and the political situation on the island which was characterised by partisan politics, the Maltese claims for a new constitution and opposition to the imposition of new taxes.

This study presents a synthesis of themes in the form of a framework upon which a holistic approach to the interpretation of the First World War in Malta may be made. This framework suggests four overarching thematic interpretative approaches: (1) Military, (2) Civilian, (3) the War's



A postcard promoting Malta as the Nurse of the Mediterranean

Aftermath, and (4) Collective Memory and Remembrance. It also suggests ways for delivering interpretation. Any interpretation of Malta during the First World War has to consider that Malta was both a British fortress and a colony. In the heritage interpretation framework presented in this study, these two aspects are represented by the 'Military' pillar and the 'Civilian' pillar. However, these are not two separate worlds and in a small island like Malta the two spheres at times overlapped. The military pillar comprises seven themes: Malta as a naval base and arsenal, Malta as a hospital base, Malta as an aerial base, Malta as a source of manpower, Malta as a Prisoner of War camp, the Malta Prize Court and finally British War Strategy which provides the background and puts into a wider perspective all the other themes.

The civilian pillar comprises four principal themes and two cross-cutting themes. The principal themes comprise local government

politics, Imperial solidarity, living conditions in wartime Malta, wartime disruption and restrictions. The cross-cutting themes are Maltese loyalty to Britain, and divisions within Maltese society.

The third pillar of the interpretation framework, 'Aftermath', refers to the period following the Armistice of November 1918. In the wake of the Armistice, a Maltese political assembly was called to formulate a formal request for a new constitution. The post-Armistice period in Malta was characterised by unemployment, misery and hardship and it is generally held that these were a cause of the *Sette Giugno* Riots of June 1919. However, as this study shows, the troubles which led to the *Sette Giugno* Riots, did not start after the Armistice but a few days after the start of the war in August 1914. Hence the roots of the riots are in the war and its impact on the Maltese. Similarly, Maltese claims for a new constitution did not 'start' with the National Assembly after a

hiatus during the war years. The constitution question remained very much an integral part of Maltese political debate during the war. The Maltese post-Armistice scenario is also framed within the "Greater War", a term which scholars use to refer to the conflicts that continued to rage in Eastern Europe, the Balkans and the eastern Mediterranean. Malta was affected by the Greater War with, among other things, the influx of refugees from Russia and Smyrna.

Collective Memory and Remembrance is the theme of the fourth pillar of the interpretation framework. This is concerned with military and Imperial aspects as well as Maltese aspects. The military and Imperial theme encapsulates the acts of remembrance associated with British and Imperial war dead in Malta, and the expansion of military cemeteries in Malta. In Malta, acts of remembrance associated with the First World War started during the war itself with the marking of Anzac Day in



| MALTA DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR<br>A HERITAGE INTERPRETATION FRAMEWORK |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MAIN THEMES                                                             | SUB-THEMES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | RECOMMENDED INTERPRETATION                                                                                  |
| <b>MILITARY</b>                                                         | <b>Naval base and Arsenal</b><br><i>The Malta dockyard; The British naval squadron and the French Fleet</i><br><br><b>Hospital base</b><br><i>The role of Malta as the "Nurse of the Mediterranean"</i><br><br><b>Aerial base</b><br><i>Seaplane facilities at Kalafrana and Mistra; Anti-submarine patrols and aircraft operating from Malta Aircraft construction at Malta Dockyard</i><br><br><b>Source of manpower</b><br><i>Maltese in the Royal Navy; Maltese units relieved British on garrison duties in Malta; The Maltese Labour Battalions in Gallipoli, Salonica and elsewhere</i><br><br><b>Prisoner of War Camp</b><br><i>Camp Infrastructure - Fort Salvatore, Verdala, St Clement's Camp; Prisoners arrested in Malta Prisoners arrested in Egypt and elsewhere transferred to Malta; Prisoners' life in camp</i><br><br><b>The Malta Prize Court</b><br><br><b>British War Strategy</b><br><i>Malta within Imperial /Mediterranean strategy; Fortress Malta - fortresses, guns and garrison; the 1912 Malta Conference and its implications on the island's defence, the 1912 Malta Defence Scheme</i> | <b>Site visits, Storytelling, Digital technologies, Re-enactment, Heritage trails, Publications</b>         |
| <b>CIVILIAN</b>                                                         | <div> <b>Local government Politics</b><br/> <i>Partisan Politics; Demands for a new Constitution, Opposition to taxes</i><br/><br/> <b>Imperial Solidarity</b><br/> <i>Support for the War; Maltese participation in the war</i><br/><br/> <b>Living Conditions in Malta</b><br/> <i>Scarcity, Misery and Hardship</i><br/><br/> <b>Disruption and Restrictions</b> </div> <div> <b>CROSS-CUTTING THEMES</b><br/><br/> <b>Maltese Loyalty to Britain</b><br/><br/> <b>Social Divisions</b> </div>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>Storytelling, Digital technologies, Re-enactment, Publications</b>                                       |
| <b>AFTERMATH</b>                                                        | <b>The 'Greater War' and its effects on Malta</b><br><br><b>Malta's internal struggles</b><br><i>Misery and hardship after the Armistice; Unemployment; National Assembly calls for new constitution; The Sette Giugno Riots; The Self-Government constitution of 1921</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>National celebrations, Events, Storytelling, Digital technologies, Publications, Heritage trails</b>     |
| <b>COLLECTIVE MEMORY &amp; REMEMBRANCE</b>                              | <b>Military and Imperial aspect</b><br><i>war graves and war cemeteries in Malta; ANZAC commemoration in 1916 and after</i><br><br><b>Maltese aspect</b><br><i>memorialisation of Maltese dead in local newspapers, Church services for the Maltese dead, Postwar memorialisation and remembrance</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Events, Storytelling, Publications, Re-enactment, Site visits, Heritage trails, Digital technologies</b> |

The interpretation framework for Malta in the First World War (Kevin Cassar).

1916, an event which placed Malta within the Anzac myth.

The Maltese theme is concerned with the memorialisation of the Maltese war dead through mention in local newspapers, Church services and funerals. Both acts were important to bring closure to the relatives and friends of those men who died in distant lands or at sea. This study

places the mention of the war dead in local newspapers within a wider discourse referring to Maltese participation in the war and loyalty to Britain. First World War remembrance reached its apex with the building of the war memorial in Floriana. The First World War gradually ebbed away from Maltese collective memory as this was dominated by the more traumatic events of the Second World War.

The four over-arching themes of the heritage interpretation framework are further subdivided into sub-themes and associated events that could serve as anchor points in the interpretation. The fifth pillar of the framework suggests the means by the thematic approaches to the interpretation the First World War in Malta could be delivered. These include:



British and Commonwealth troops being treated in Malta during WWI

- Visits to historic sites associated with the First World War.
- Heritage trails following particular themes e.g. the places that served as military hospitals, and the First World War burial places.
- Storytelling, which could be nuanced to target different audiences.
- Re-enactment and living history could be used to interpret people's lives, places, and events.
- Digital technologies offer a wide range of interpretative possibilities, and could help libraries and archives to give wider access to 'hidden' collections related to the period of the First World War thereby opening up further avenues for research and heritage interpretation.
- Organised events, such as anniversary commemorations, exhibitions and national celebrations could help widen knowledge about Malta during the First World War.
- Publications such as guidebooks and specialised catalogues could help interpret sites, and artefacts and could stimulate further interest and research.

### CONCLUSION

The study shows that the "Nurse of the Mediterranean" myth dominates the interpretation of Malta during the First World War. Literature shows that there are other aspects even if these are not much explored and developed. This is further reinforced by the primary data presented in this study which shows that there are ample grounds for other interpretations of Malta during the First World War. A synthesis of themes is presented in the form of the "Malta During the First World War Heritage Interpretation Framework".

The research in this study adds to the knowledge about Malta during the First World War. The interpretation framework presented contributes to the local heritage interpretation field and can also be used as a framework by researchers to undertake further study into the various aspects presented.

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# Identifying which are the Current and Preferred Leadership Styles in the Hospitality Industry in Malta

BY AMBER GALEA  
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**T**his study deals with the identification of the current and preferred leadership styles in the Hospitality Industry in Malta. It attempts to investigate leadership styles in local 5-star hotels, aiming to identify key traits and define leadership.

Defining leadership is challenging, with diverse interpretations, but it fundamentally involves inspiring and guiding others

through a changing process of interactive influence towards common goals, where effectiveness is determined by the achieved results. It also encompasses various styles defined by John Kotler, focusing on their role in achieving business success and their impact on customer and employee satisfaction. The data collection involves interviews and questionnaires with hospitality professionals, HR, and front office staff in Malta and Gozo, as well as

insights from hotel managers and staff. This study enriches our comprehension of leadership styles and their impact on the job satisfaction of employees within these hotels. The study includes aims and objectives such as examining and identifying preferred leadership styles among employees and managers in esteemed five-star hotels situated in Malta. Addressing a research gap, particularly in the context of luxury hotels in Malta

is also an important part of the study, while analyzing and gaining insights into leadership preferences within the local hospitality industry.

Regarding the choice of the research design of this study, the researcher engaged in a mixed-method research design involving surveys and interviews to gather data from a diverse participant group, enhancing research validity and reliability. This approach, while comprehensive, can be resource-intensive. It combines quantitative and qualitative methods, including questionnaires and interviews, to examine leadership styles in the Maltese hospitality industry. Online surveys offer accessibility and larger sample sizes, while interviews delve into participants' subjective experiences and contextual insights, especially for complex social and cultural phenomena.

The collection of data will include a blend of quantitative and qualitative techniques, incorporating surveys to investigate hypotheses and uncover correlations and trends within participants' opinions, attitudes, ideas, and behaviour. This method will facilitate an exploration of both current and desired leadership styles within the Maltese hospitality industry. When sampling social media, this was chosen for participant recruitment because of its cost-effectiveness and rapid data collection capabilities. This involved utilizing convenience sampling, a method known for its simplicity and efficiency, often employed in exploratory research involving uncommon or sensitive populations. Furthermore, while convenience sampling may have its drawbacks, such as potential bias and limited statistical power, it can offer valuable initial insights and help generate hypotheses. Researchers should carefully evaluate its appropriateness for their research objectives and questions.

In terms of the procedure, a concise survey consisting of 14 questions, with one question allowing multiple responses, was distributed to participants. Research indicates that shorter surveys typically yield

higher response rates. The survey was shared on popular social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp for convenience and cost-effectiveness. Although online surveys provide fast real-time results, they may have limitations in terms of reach and susceptibility to technical issues. Additionally, a 22-question interview was conducted with human resources and front-office managers in five-star hotels in Malta to gain insights into their perspectives on leadership styles. These interviews can adopt either an open-ended or close-ended format, offering valuable in-depth information that must be thoughtfully tailored to align with the research objectives.

To conclude, the research methodology was well-established, paying careful attention to sample size and the sampling method to ensure the accuracy and relevance of the data. Ethical considerations were consistently taken into account, and any methodological limitations were acknowledged and effectively addressed. The integration of both quantitative and qualitative methods allowed for a holistic comprehension of the research subject, providing valuable insights that enhanced the existing body of knowledge.

The results and analysis section was structured into several segments, delving into the significance of leadership skills in the hospitality industry, the potential impact of gender on leadership styles, and participants' rationales for their survey responses.

The research findings indicate that the predominant leadership style in the workplace is transformational (43.3%), followed by democratic (40%), charismatic (26.7%), transactional (20%), laissez-faire (16.7%), and finally autocratic (13.3%). These various styles have discernible effects on both the work environment and the employees.

Participants were also asked to express their opinions on the most crucial qualities a leader should possess. Effective leadership was associated with qualities such as

**Defining leadership is challenging, with diverse interpretations, but it fundamentally involves inspiring and guiding others through a changing process of interactive influence towards common goals**

”



responsibility, transparent communication, mentorship, strategic thinking, time management, and creativity. Leaders are expected to make well-informed decisions, proficiently execute plans, consistently opt for optimal choices, and empower their team members while promoting personal growth. Moreover, emotional intelligence, adept communication with a diverse workforce, and the cultivation of strong team bonds were highlighted as vital attributes for a successful leader. The interview questions explored various aspects of leadership styles and leadership traits within the participants' respective companies. These interviews featured female employees and managers representing diverse national backgrounds, including Italian, Polish, Maltese, Sri Lankan, and French individuals. Their ages ranged from 22 to 36 years, and their educational backgrounds varied, with some holding bachelors and master's degrees in hospitality or management. Among the interviewees, five had progressed to managerial roles, while two had recently assumed their current positions. The discussions regarding leadership styles in five-star hotels revealed a range of approaches, including democratic, transformational, autocratic, and transactional styles.

The interviews also delved into the potential influence of gender on leadership styles, emphasizing the importance of leadership qualities such as communication, reliability, charisma, and emotional regulation. The significance of organizational culture was acknowledged, particularly within small teams, where a leader's impact is more pronounced. Transformational leadership emerged as the preferred style in Malta's five-star hotels. The research findings align consistently and suggest the need for further exploration in this area.

This research centred on the examination of leadership styles within the vibrant hospitality sector of Malta, with a specific focus on participative leadership practices within the context of five-star hotels. The results underscored the significance of participative leadership, emphasizing the pivotal role that selecting the right leadership style plays in this dynamic industry. To ensure the reliability of the data, the methodology was meticulous in its approach, paying close attention to research design, data collection, and analysis techniques.

Among the leadership styles, democratic, transformational, and transactional approaches were notably favoured by managers. Notably, the study unveiled a positive correlation between various

leadership styles, particularly democratic and laissez-faire, and job satisfaction among employees. In keeping with existing literature, the research underscored the paramount importance of open communication and transparency within the hospitality industry. This aligns with the efficacy of transformational leadership and leader-member exchange as effective approaches in fostering success within this sector.

In the researcher's opinion, the following should be recommended for future studies. Managers within the hospitality industry need to place a strong emphasis on comprehending how leadership styles can influence and enhance job satisfaction among their employees. It is vital for them to foster effective communication and develop a deep understanding of the leadership styles they employ.

Additionally, they should direct their attention towards improving various workplace practices that have a substantial impact on leadership, including co-worker relationships, employee benefits, the overall work environment, supervisory practices, and the recognition and rewards system.

Managers should concentrate their efforts on areas where they have a direct influence, such as the availability of promotion opportunities, the quality of communication

Photo by Kate Townsend on Unsplash



channels, and the nature of tasks assigned to their team members. To make informed decisions in these areas, it is imperative that they acquaint themselves with the nuances of different leadership styles, allowing them to select the most appropriate and effective approach for their specific context and team dynamics. This strategic understanding will ultimately contribute to higher job satisfaction and overall success in the hospitality industry.

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# ERASMUS VINCI Project Final Meeting held in Prague

BY DAVID PACE  
SENIOR LECTURER AT ITS

## THE VENUE

**T**he final partner meeting of the Erasmus Vinci Low Carbon Tourism project took place in Prague on Friday, 8th December 2023, very close to the unique Astronomical clock, the Orloj that adorns the spectacular Old Town Square full of traditional food stalls of the famous Christmas village.

The Orloj dates back to 1410 and was constructed by clockmaker Mikulas of Kadan, and Charles University professor of mathematics and astronomy, Jan Sindel. The clock mechanism consists of three main components: the astronomical dial that charts the positions of the Sun and the Moon in the sky and their path through the zodiac; statues of various Catholic saints standing by the side of the clock with "The Walk of the Apostles" being a highlight – an hourly display of moving Apostle figures and the famous statue of a skeleton that represents death; and a calendar dial with medallions representing the months.

Such a beautiful backdrop made the final meeting a special one that was characterised by an extensive programme that would lead to the conclusion of the VINCI Project. The partners discussed a host of issues, but the most important were the VINCI - Virtual & Augmented Reality Trainers Toolbox to Foster Low Carbon Tourism & Related Entrepreneurship and the Trainers Guidebook. ITS, as one of the partners, was involved in all the intellectual outputs but especially in the development of the Augmented Reality and the Virtual Reality experiences, and the development of the Trainers Guidebook.

## THE TOOLBOX

The Toolbox provides a host of resources to promote low carbon tourism, support entrepreneurship, improve capacity building and facilitate knowledge transfer in the tourism industry using Virtual and Augmented Reality (VR/AR).

It provides a repository of tools and resources for trainers and mentors to help in the promotion of sustainable practises, raise awareness and contribute

to the overall transition towards a more sustainable and low-carbon tourism sector.

This was done with the help of seven European institutions from six different EU Member States who shared their expertise to develop a novel set of digital training resources on Low Carbon Tourism and related entrepreneurship.

The virtual toolbox is a repository because it includes a considerable number of training resources such as Virtual and Augmented reality-based LCT case studies, country-specific LCT fact sheets and a novel e-learning course specifically designed to promote best practises for the low-carbon tourism sector.

The use of Virtual and Augmented Reality technologies provide an innovative educational experience for entrepreneurs and tourism professionals to implement sustainable initiatives in businesses and destinations to reduce the carbon footprint during different phases of tourism, i.e. the planning phase, the traveling (transport) phase and the destination phase.



The VINCI partners in Prague, December 2023.

| NO. | TOURISM PHASE | CASE STUDY DESCRIPTION                                                                                                                            | RELEVANCE TO LOW CARBON TOURISM                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | Planning      | Planning to use Greener Modes of Transportation.                                                                                                  | Plan ahead with regard to which modes of transport to use according to the holiday itinerary to engage in active travel and sustainable mobility.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 2   | Destination   | Accommodation (family hotel) CO <sub>2</sub> foot printing and emission reduction.                                                                | There are leaders in the accommodation sector who are creating solutions/ improvements in LCT Accommodation, that have model value and are easy to understand and implement. Moreover, learners often prefer practical examples that they can apply immediately.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 3   | Planning      | Low energy transport for short distances, particularly between islands including mediating attractions such as balloons, rowing and sailing boat. | Particularly useful in small islands such as Malta, Greek Islands, Ionian Islands, etc. to decrease the carbon footprint of such transitions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 4   | Planning      | Reducing carbon footprint by improving energy efficiency                                                                                          | When planning trips, opt for travel agencies, transport, restaurants, and hotels that have implemented solutions to reduce carbon emissions through energy efficiency. Energy efficiency means using less energy to achieve the same result. Travel agencies and transport companies, restaurants, hotels should use alternative energy sources (solar panels). Improving energy efficiency can reduce CO <sub>2</sub> emissions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 5   | Travel        | Travel with alternative fuel sources                                                                                                              | Alternative fuel, such as used cooking oil, synthetic fuel or even hydrogen, is gradually becoming the norm for aviation and car fuel.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 6   | Destination   | Waste management on holiday                                                                                                                       | About 60% of the total emissions are produced by waste. The waste resulting from tourism also contributes significantly to this percentage. Proper sorting and recycling of waste, using it as biomass, would reduce carbon emissions. Replacing plastic products with biodegradable materials is a viable solution to reducing pollution.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 7   | Destination   | Selecting hotels and promoting the local economy                                                                                                  | Selecting hotels and promoting the local economy.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 8   | Planning      | Procuring eco-conscious accommodation (Green Procurement)                                                                                         | The purpose of Green Procurement is to reduce the negative impact on the environment through public procurement of less environmentally burdensome services, to improve existing supply's environmental characteristics and promote environmental innovation and the circular economy. The introduction of GP could stimulate the demand for low-carbon tourism. It can support the development of an eco-conscious accommodation market, showing the tourism sector that there is a willingness to pay for the anticipated eco-friendly services. More and more public and private organisations consider eco-friendly travel essential when choosing accommodation and related services. Eco-labels and schemes such as the international eco-label Green Key and climate-neutral hotels are becoming the criteria for procuring/ choosing accommodation services. |
| 9   | Travel        | Choose buses or trains over planes and cars                                                                                                       | Bus and train transit notably reduces greenhouse gas emissions and decreases pollutants in the atmosphere, thus improving air quality. This is why buses or trains should be the first choice when it comes to travelling.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 10  | Travel        | Travelling Lighter to Reduce CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions by Tourists                                                                                | By travelling with lighter luggage transportation means such as buses, trains, planes, and ships will consume less energy and thus produce less CO <sub>2</sub> emissions. The aim of this case-study is to help stakeholders understand and apply this principle.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 11  | Travel        | Changing motorboats, yachts, and cabin cruiser motors to solar power deriving energy from battery and PV cells.                                   | Such boats have decreased drastically during the last few years and are wreaking havoc among Posidonia meadows and sensitive marine areas. They are also polluting bays which are one of the main Maltese attractions and competing for the coastal berthing on an island with limited land. Particularly dangerous are diesel and petrol leaks that are threatening the local sea which has been verified as Blue Flag areas.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |





The ITS representatives in Prague: David Pace (left, speaking) and James Mula (right).

|    |             |                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 12 | Destination | Technological measures and solutions to ensure energy efficiency in hotels - towards net-zero hotels             | One of the challenges facing tourism is that after transportation, particularly air travel, buildings, including hotels, are the most significant source of greenhouse gases. Many hotel chains/brands have committed to going carbon-neutral by 2050 or earlier. Still, the challenge is designing energy-efficient new buildings and retrofitting existing ones with green technology. That requires careful analysis and significant investments in energy efficiency from hotel owners, management companies and brands. |
| 13 | Destination | Sustainable tourism destinations                                                                                 | Visiting national parks or any other natural resource-based destination is a way of traveling that produces a minimal impact on the environment and on local communities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 14 | Planning    | Selecting low emission flights                                                                                   | Stakeholders: Organise travel packages that include LC flights. As stakeholders they can pressure airlines to opt for different types of fuel.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 15 | Travel      | Cruise ship air emissions                                                                                        | Cruise ships burn fuel that is much "dirtier" than comparable fuels used in terrestrial or air transport. Recent progress has been made in this area, but there is still great potential to "normalise" cruise ship emissions or bring them up to the level of pollution factors used on land.                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 16 | Destination | Selecting accommodation with roof-tops and necessitating the use of PV cells with the help of government grants. | There are still many accommodations that have ample roof space for PV cells which is left unused. A system whereby an accommodation invests in a PV system with the help of a government grants will lower the carbon footprint considerably.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 17 | Planning    | Eco-friendly accommodation                                                                                       | There are still many accommodations that have ample roof space for PV cells which is left unused. A system whereby an accommodation invests in a PV system with the help of a government grants will lower the carbon footprint considerably.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 18 | Planning    | Search for low-emission modes of transport                                                                       | Travel planning using low-carbon modes of transport. Travel planning using low-carbon modes of transport, especially for short and mid-range distances.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 19 | Destination | Supporting low-emission modes of transport                                                                       | It is important to promote low-carbon modes of transport in the destination, both in cities and in the countryside. Offering and promoting low-carbon means of transport such as bicycles, scooters or electric cars could help to do this. Promoting local public transport is also important to reduce emissions. Provide information to tourists about alternative transport options through online guides, social networks, information centres, etc.                                                                    |
| 20 | Planning    | Tackling Food Waste in Tourism                                                                                   | The issue of food waste in the tourism industry has been growing steadily, particularly with the proliferation of restaurant and hotel chains in tourist hotspots globally. This case study examines the scale of this problem and explores sustainable practices aimed at mitigating food waste's environmental impact, along with the associated waste of fuel, energy, and packaging materials.                                                                                                                           |



The AR content developed in the project.

Some Case Study examples regarding different tourism phases found in the guidebook

### THE TRAINING GUIDEBOOK

The Low Carbon Tourism training guidebook provides an comprehensive source of instructional training strategies for tourism professionals, entrepreneurs and local communities. It exhaustively explains all the eight modules of the course elucidating upon low-carbon tourism concepts, sustainable business models and the

effective use of virtual and augmented reality technologies within a tourism context.

The Guidebook also serves as a training manual for those who want to become trainers in a specific tourism context and provides a detailed compendium of examples, case studies and best practices for each module; a sustainability action plan, tools and templates and SDGs that are directly related to low carbon tourism.

A companion PPTx document provides a guide to specific areas of the Low Carbon Tourism guidebook, directing the user to specific areas and modules.

ITS was represented in the VINCI Project by David Pace, Martin Debattista, James Mula and Sharon Farrugia, under the direction of the COO Corporate Affairs Claire Briffa.

More information at <https://eumecb.com/vinci/>

## Developing A Course: Subject Matter

- Module 1: Introduction to Low Carbon Tourism
- Module 2: Policies Fostering Low Carbon Tourism
- Module 3: National Plans and Initiatives Relevant to Low Carbon Tourism
- Module 4: Principles & Tools Fostering Low Carbon Footprint Activities
- Module 5: Best Practices Fostering Low Carbon Tourism During The Travel Planning Phase
- Module 6: Best Practices Fostering Low Carbon Tourism During the Travel/Mobility Phase
- Module 7: Best Practices Fostering Low Carbon Tourism At The Destination Phase
- Module 8: Entrepreneurial Opportunities for Low Carbon Tourism Initiatives





# Carnival's Socio-Cultural Effect on Valletta Society Post 20<sup>th</sup> Century

BY RAPHAEL PSAILA  
HIGHER NATIONAL DIPLOMA IN TOURIST GUIDING

## ABSTRACT

**D**uring the British period, Malta was granted self-rule in 1921. Eventually, carnival became more organised and a committee was appointed to oversee festivities. Valletta became the epicentre of carnival, from float making to costumes, to dances and revelry, traditions handed down from father to son, implying that this had a lasting effect on Valletta's character and society.

Keywords: Carnival, Valletta, Culture, Psyche, Post-20<sup>th</sup> Century Malta

## INTRODUCTION

Carnival, rooted in pagan times and fun, is nonetheless a religious roman catholic feast, and can be traced back to the early 1400s in Malta (Coleiro, 1995). A plethora of merriment, costumes, masks, and revelry; a time when socially acceptable norms are relaxed and challenged. A spontaneous exuberance just before the religious forty days of Lent, an austere period associated with penance, abstinence and fasting (Coleiro, 1995). The Holy Order of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem (KOSJ) arrived in Malta in 1530 after having been given the Islands of Malta and Gozo to it as a tithe by King Charles V, then the Holy Roman Emperor. During their tenure (1530-1798), the 'Kukkanja', the 'Parata' and 'il-Qarcilla' were introduced to Malta by the KOSJ who embraced carnival festivities, which left a feel-good factor on the entire local society, a much sought-after celebration (Zammit, 2018). The British governors were quick to recognise this and although carnival was not a quintessentially British tradition, they made use of its relevance

(Cremona, 2018). After Malta was granted self-rule in 1921, Carnival became more organized and a specific committee was appointed to oversee festivities – a defile` of themed floats, carrying colourful costumed youth, wearing grotesque wigs and masks spreading cheer and throwing confetti at the crowds (Grech, 2015). Valletta is today the heart of carnival, an iconic part of Maltese culture, with traditions passed down from father to son (Cremona, 2004).

The author states that entertainment within Valletta has also experienced change from 1921 to date, some of which can be attributed to carnival. Although Valletta was and still is the epicentre of the festivities, carnival was also celebrated at other villages and venues. 1.2 Research Aim, Objectives and Hypothesis or Question This research aims to study the carnival celebrations in Malta, post 20th century, and analyse its effect on Valletta society. The link between carnival's contribution and the character of the city and its residents is also analysed, in association with modern carnival and other characteristically defining city activities, including theatre, feasts, football support, religion, gastronomy, craftsmanship, and inherited skills handed down from father to son.

Furthermore, the research aims to highlight and understand the plight of carnival as an immersive art, bringing together the community with all their diverse skills, creativity, energy, and self-expression. The joyous engagement of these tradesmen is studied in detail through semi-structured interviews with prominent figures within the carnival scene both past and present,

including academic individuals, carnival masters and float builders (Cremona, 2004, 2018). The research question being posed and tested in this study to ensure that the research aim is achieved is: **What Socio-Cultural influences does carnival have on Valletta's current society post 1921?**

## LITERATURE REVIEW

'Carne Vale' an Italian phrase derived from the Latin 'Carnelevamen' which literally means partaking of meat produce is permissible (Coleiro 1995). carnival was a light-hearted time, one of merriment, spontaneous jollification and fun, a precursor to the austere period that followed, by contrast, associated with penance, religious sermons and fasting, particularly abstinence from meat. The forty-day religious period of Lent, leading up to arguably the most important feast in the catholic calendar, Easter. Hence, carnival is part of religious culture, especially in countries where roman catholic belief is predominant.

John Coleiro (2016) argues that carnival became part of Maltese 'folk entertainment' enhancing our national and cultural traditions and identity. It was introduced to medieval Malta before the arrival of the Knights of St. John (KOSJ), but it was slightly after their arrival, in 1535, that we have the first ever record of it as an organised event, a manifestation by the KOSJ at the Vittoriosa Waterfront, in full armour duelling between themselves, much to the amusement of the gathered crowds and locals (Coleiro, 1995). In 1560, Grand Master (GM) De Valette allowed his Knights a few hours of enjoyment, where wigs could even be worn



The Maltese Carnival at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

by them, in preparation for the arduous task ahead of besieging the fortifications of Tripoli in Libya (Coleiro, 1995). Eventually 'il-Parata' evolved (Zammit, 2018), a full-scale sword dance after and in remembrance of the great siege of 1565. This event became much loved by the locals who would gather from hours before beneath the balcony of the GM's palace in Valletta, to hear the town crier announce the festivities open. Winners of the duel would then identify a fair maiden in the crowd, carry her shoulder high, representing the allegorical figure of Malta as the victor over the Turks. Carnival was used politically and strategically back then by the GM to re-affirm the order's mastery and remind of KOSJ's victory for the whole of Christendom and the Maltese Islands, to demonstrate their benevolence and generosity, and to ease the tension of the knights before they went into battle (Zammit, 2018).

A notorious incident forever tied with carnival and Valletta, occurred in 1639,

under the magistracy of GM Lascaris, when he forbade women from dressing as men, wearing masks and from exhibiting themselves at events in the various auberges in the capital city. Lascaris was needled and pushed in this direction by his Jesuit confessor Cassia, causing riots and distress between the GM and his young knights, with the GM having to relent, and the Jesuit order were suspended from Malta. During the KOSJ's tenure, there were many occasions during Carnival where young knights were chastised for improper behaviour and socially disruptive conduct, considered to have upset either the State or the Church, the two heavy-weight institutions that between them controlled all strata of society and continuously were at loggerheads for supremacy. In 1721, a popular GM, Zondadari, hailing from the Italian langue, introduced the 'Kukkanja' (Camilleri, 2021). As its Maltese name denotes, it was literally a kerfuffle between men who wrestled each other while shimmying up a greasy pole, fitted with

extended wooden beams, covered in animal fat, and camouflaged with tree branches and leaves, to acquire the meat produce and live poultry hanging on the branches. This was held in St. George's Square, the main square in Valletta, directly opposite the GM's palace. Carnival instilled a feel-good factor in the locals, generating at times much needed affection between the rulers and the people.

The KOSJ were also perceived to be generous and earned respect by distributing meat and other products, which were rare and expensive commodities at the time beyond the reach of commoners. The GM's musical and masked parade (used politically), masked balls and dances were organised in the KOSJ's auberges and the 'Teatro Pubblico' renamed the 'Manoel Theatre' by the British. These became known as 'il-Veljuni' (Coleiro, 2016) as they would start in the evening, and carry on till the early hours of the morning of the next day. These 'Veljuni' (Portelli, 1991) resumed in British times too, adding more venues;





A Maltese float in 21st century Malta (Photo by Agustina Gava, Wiki Loves Folklore 2023)

the Governor's Palace, the Royal Opera House, the British 'Malta Union Club', the Maltese 'Casino Maltese' and the Malta drydocks among others. 2.1.2 Enter the British (1815-1964)

The British as an empire and nation, with a disciplined military tradition, had no legacy with Carnival, and when they became Lord Protectors of Malta in 1800 and eventually Governors in 1815, King Carnival nearly lost his throne (Coleiro, 1995). It was a time when Malta was still reeling after the French blockade (1798-1800), was resisting the return of the KOSJ, and wrestling with bouts of the plague and other hardships, diluting the mood for jollification. Furthermore, on the 11th of February 1823, a carnival tradition saw the tragic death of over one hundred children who had gathered at the 'Ta' Ġiezu' convent in Valletta to be offered fruits, bread, and pastries (Coleiro, 2016). The electricity in the convent's corridors was mistakenly turned off and the exit doors shut, which led to alarm and panic with the

children trampling each other to death in their rush to find a way out of the building. In 1838, George Percy Badger an English author who travelled to and visited Malta, observed, 'Carnival is another source of popular amusement: this begins on Sunday preceding Lent and lasts for three days.

The afternoon is the principal time of the feast during which numerous persons wearing masks are seen walking about the streets endeavouring themselves and to be a source of amusement to others' (Cremona, 2018). In 1846, a puritanical British Governor, Sir Patrick Stuart, tried to eradicate Carnival completely evoking locally fierce revolts, and eventually Stuart's decision was rescinded. By 1910, organised carnival festivities evolved further and spread to non-urban localities outside Valletta and even to Gozo. These localities organised their own entertainment by hiring musical bands or small orchestras, dances in the street wearing costumes, wigs, confetti,

and small gastronomic delights which were both eaten and thrown in jest. This organisation and dances became known as 'il-Kumittiva' (Coleiro, 1995).

In 1926 the organisation of the national carnival festivities became the responsibility of a committee appointed by Government, to plan and control the full programme and running order of the days of silliness (Cremona, 2004). Carnival became synonymous with the way people loved to celebrate in Malta, with its character, culture, and the Island's anthropology; wherein, Malta inherited many cultural aspects from all its conquerors, becoming a melting pot of socio-cultural influences. Being a small, secluded Island in the heart of the Mediterranean, Malta managed to absorb them, make them its very own, enabling it to carve and hone its national identity.

#### **CARNIVAL'S INFLUENCES**

Carnival contributed to various colloquial phrases and proverbs that have crept

into the Maltese language. (Coleiro, 2016) Linguistic associations with moral rectitude, rooted in a mixture of religious belief and superstition. Carnival was associated with an indulgence of food and gastronomy. This notion was particularly intensified as periodically Malta passed through bouts of famine, and the locals looked forward to these celebrations as an opportunity to indulge in delicacies, win prizes of poultry, livestock, and foodstuffs. The 'Kukkanja' was synonymous with 'this abundance and generosity' (Coleiro, 2016). Italian idioms crept into the vernacular (Italian was the language practised by the upper echelons of Maltese society) concerning the practise of abstinence at the time (Coleiro, 1995).

The carnival balls were a symbol of colonial power, high politics and the complete mastery of the British empire and governors. Their organisation and revered guest list adhered to rigid protocols. Only people with a station were invited; possible visitors of the Royal Family, the most high-ranking British officers and civil service employees, the Maltese elite and poster boys, and wealthy businessmen (Cremona, 2018 pp112). The author further contends that the elevated power combination of games and relations, that were played out around this ball, place it in the realm of the 'political'. (Cremona, pp113) The 'us/them' relationship that persisted between the British and Maltese political/upper classes depended very much on the attitude and character of the British governor (and his beloved) of the time. Even permission to participate in the dances depended on a recommendation and signified that one was of a high social status. The choice of dances/routines were English country dances although in time Maltese traditional dances were integrated and encouraged (Cremona, 2004).

After WWII, from the late 1940s onwards, Britain was bankrupt and countries whose economies depended totally on Britain, like Malta, passed through very tough times, leading the Maltese to question their existential relationship with Britain, churning up differing views; complete assimilation and integration on the one

hand or total independence on the other. In these dynamic scenarios, carnival, which had been muzzled since 1935 where satire was not permitted (Cremona, pp210), became a means to oppose and instigate resentment, not only towards the British rulers, but also towards the Catholic Church. Carnival floats, costumes, parades, music, songs, and dances, all immersed in creative art and rebellious theatricality, contained political or religious themes. Carnival was used as a showcase for certain issues that were to have a telling effect on Maltese society. It was a spectacular stage of fantasy, and joyful exuberance on one-hand and the politically strategic messages, depending on the national issues prevalent at the time, on the other. This also held true for internal, national issues and local political bickering, when the Malta Labour Party (MLP) and the Church were constantly at loggerheads (the confrontations between Mr. Dom Mintoff, Leader of the MLP 1949-1984, and Archbishop Michael Gonzi, 1944-1976), (Boissevain, 1965). Carnival was a mass event and became a very powerful marketing medium to reach the masses. Themed Carnival floats were used to appeal to the desired social demographics, to whip up national sentiment versus the opponent, to foster a sense of national belonging in the locals, especially in hard economic times. It restored dignity. 'Carnival became the fulcrum of identity politics, an expression of empowerment that used theatricality' (Cremona, pp215). Satirical cartoons, caricatures and poems made their way to the national newspapers too.

#### VALLETTA'S CHARACTER

Valletta was a hive of activity during its preparations for carnival. A carnival village, which doubled up as an academy, was set up at lower Fort St. Elmo, and various carnival companies were formed from the 1960s onwards (Grech, 2015). These created a bond between Valletta communities and brought residents closer, enhancing inter-city solidarity, instilling a sense of belonging, affinity and pride with the city, and a camaraderie between rival factions and clubs, although the exhibitory, competitive nature between the participants was rife. A great percentage of citizens practically lived

with carnival all year long. It became an inherent part of the city and their character, becoming part of their blood. This in turn created and evoked a healthy artistic competitive nature, drive, and passion. An art that perfected the necessary skill sets, enabling proprietary knowledge and carnival management. Companies conceptualised themes for their floats, taught the art of float-making, choreographed theatrical displays, plays, puppet shows, dances and their communal routines. They produced wigs, 'maskaruni', costumes, gastronomic delights, and street decorations. The organisation did not dampen spontaneous jollification during the celebrations, which was encouraged. 'The carnival days were transformed into a mere holiday mood' (Kim, 2004).

The citizen became immersed and engaged with his city not only during carnival, but also during other popular city manifestations, football, religious feasts, band club marches, Easter processions, balls, dance ceremonies, national shows, and theatre. Its inhabitants refer sacredly to themselves as Beltin or tas-City (of the city) and wear this badge with pride even invoking the Almighty; 'ahna grazzi għall-Hanin Alla - mill-Belt' (we thank merciful God we are from Valletta). Citizens became known nationally for their colourful celebrations (Galea, 2022), with the whole nation wanting to witness them or be part of them, also admiring and excusing the citizens' renowned rascal nature. Even the official Valletta F.C. themed football floats and songs (Gregory, 2018), inspired by their carnival counterparts, rubber stamped by their creators, inspire fun, sporting red and white or sailor costumes (tfal tal-bahrin - sailors' children) and good-natured taunting (not always) for the opposing football teams, presidents, or coaches (Grech, 2015). Winning the league led to raucous celebrations at the football stadium, in the street parade back to the city and an all-night spontaneous party in the city upon arrival of the floats and the triumphant football team players. The musical talents of Valletta's sons are well known and are exhibited both at the stadium, on the float and in the city, before and after the





A Maltese dance group in Castille Square (Photo by Antonella Vella, Wiki Loves Folklore 2023)

match to encourage the players. 'All lyrics of famous songs or ballads are altered and recontextualised by these musical masters' (Grech, 2015).

Just like catholic funeral imagery was used in carnival themes, so is it used by citizens in football celebrations. Football, Valletta's other religion. Il-funeral (the funeral) a combination of religious and carnivalesque associations, delivers the final rites and burial of the sporting football enemies (Armstrong, 1999)(Mitchell, 1999). It is attended by many Valletta F.C. fans who hoist the staged coffin/s shoulder high, chanting and offering their condolences to their beaten opponents. It is accompanied by a band and normally led by two citizens impersonating a catholic bishop, and the late queen Elizabeth II respectively, reminiscent of Malta's colonial past. The cadaver is a real human body wearing

ecclesiastical robes. A procession of wailing women and individuals all dressed in black garments and dresses follow the coffin (Galea, 2022). A mingling of football pageantry and carnival grotesque at their very best. 2.5 Conclusion Carnival celebrations, theatre, art expos, soirees, feasts, pageants, elegant fashion shows, football, and other organised creative activities in Valletta, offer its citizens and those 'born and bred' (those who for personal reasons nowadays are unable to live in City they love) nostalgia, reinforcing a profound territorial bond with the city. 'The chance to experience authenticity: the performance of celebration becomes the real Valletta - a reclamation of urban space.' (Armstrong, 1999)(Mitchell, 1999). A well-known entertainment adage states, 'there is no business, like show business'. One hopes that the authenticity, creativity, art, and healthy competitive natures associated

with carnival have a lasting effect and remain genuine, frivolous, spontaneous and inclusive, not giving in to commercial exploitation and financial rewards (Coleiro, 1999).

## RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter presents the methodological approach to this research through varied semi-structured interviews across two different perceptions: the academic approach and the hands-on experiential approach. Research participants and interviewees, all hailing from the Capital, demonstrate or typify the influence of carnival on Valletta contemporary society; an emotional tie between their immersive artistic qualities and capabilities with the emotion of Carnival, post 1921 to date. A structural presentation of the study is encompassed through design and explanation of data collected, method

of analysis and data representation. The methodology used is complemented through existing literature, providing relevancy to the study and methods used in this research. Furthermore, the research design links the methodology to the data interpretation in the findings. This chapter demonstrates the credibility of the study together with ethical obligations towards participants, ensuring no moral harm, data confidentiality, fairness and overall safety to both data gathered and participants.

This study targets academically inclined individuals and skilled tradesmen, both groups providing participants that occupy or occupied key positions intrinsic to the carnival festivities. Whilst a larger sample is limited, the chosen individuals depict the contemporary and local Valletta community during Carnival in Valletta, post 1921. All the data collection techniques are based on probability sampling to ensure a generalised result.

Research limitations faced during the research include the difficulty in planning and setting up interviews due to either the professional position or age of the participants. Furthermore, the selection pool of participants meeting several criteria for the research to be valid were not extensive or difficult to reach. Further studies can broaden the spectrum of this research through changes in research background scope and participant pool.

## RESULTS

The aim of this research analysis is to answer the posed research question; What Socio-Cultural influences does carnival have on Valletta's current society since 1921? For the above research question to be met, a thematic analysis of the result was carried out to identify emerging themes. The results obtained are presented accordingly through a mixture of text and audio formats. A total of four interviews were conducted with different carnival experts; two academic individuals focused on Maltese folk and culture, and two seasoned carnival masters.

Results obtained through the four interviews served the purpose to fulfil the research requirements of this thesis: identifying and

measuring the effects of carnival over the years on modern Valletta society. Through the analysis of the results, it was deduced that carnival, through both an academic and operational perception, did indeed leave a lasting effect on Valletta's social-cultural identity. This conclusion to this thesis is further evidenced by two emerging themes.

- Carnival is an immersive art expressed through Valletta's unique thematic creativity of visual arts, theatrical and choregraphical expressions. Results obtained from the two carnival master interviews showcase not only the importance of carnival relevancy to Valletta's modern society, but the transfer of skills and knowledge to other festivities organised in Valletta, such as local feasts and football, a recurring theme embedded in Valletta society psyche.
- Carnival provided residents in Valletta, especially in the last century, specific qualities, which enabled both established individuals and commoners to learn and make use of these specialised skill sets outside of carnival. The results mentioned by the academic interviewees shed light on the importance of these acquired skills, in aiding Valletta society to transfer these skills to profitable business ventures. Furthermore, results identify the transfer of these skills within areas not necessarily associated with carnival, a confirmation of the skilful and societal evolution within Valletta.

The results obtained through the conducted interviews can be summarised into a compliant theme to this research. As proven in the analysis, a conclusion can be reached upon the objectives of this research. Results expose several themes showcasing the evolution of Valletta society, seen through different perspectives, an indication of the socio-cultural effect carnival left on Valletta's residents. The aspects mainly highlighted from the emerging themes revolve around the capability of carnival to transform into numerous expressions of immersive art, and its ability to provide skill sets still relevant to this day.

## FINAL ARGUMENTS

The primary objective of this research was to evaluate and measure the influence that Carnival had on the socio-cultural aspects of Valletta and its residents. The study further highlights the bridging of history and literature to modern culture, placing a spotlight on key roles, duties and knowledge bearers which have shaped the modern carnival. The final analysis of this research, which was deduced from the results obtained, clearly highlights the lasting effect carnival had on Valletta's society specifically as an enabler for transferable generational skills, necessary not only for carnivalistic purposes but to earn a livelihood with. The two research areas linked to the primary objective addressed in this research study:

- Carnival had a telling effect on Valletta residents in their entirety, on the carnival villagers, and communities, like LGBTIQ+. It was a twelve-month long affair in the city, year in year out bringing a certain affinity within Valletta. Moreover, various carnival villagers who practically all hailed from the lower parts of Valletta, the four major areas, also had family ties. To this day, Valletta residents stick together against any foreign threat. Carnival was and still is socially inclusive and multi-faceted.
- Carnival, mostly all self-taught initially, through its careful study, enabled the development and nurturing of several highly skilled craftsmen. The list of skills is interminable – welders, electrical and mechanical engineers, float builders, expos and film set builders, metal workers and carpenters, and expert commercial vehicle drivers to name a few.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

A few recommendations can be drawn and directed to those responsible for organising and the participating committees to facilitate, retain, and progress the elements of carnival to Maltese future generations. These recommendations include:

- One centralised carnival academy needs to be established to inspire and



teach future generations, a carnival hub and home.

- The national identity of Maltese carnival must be imprinted on all future carnival companies, products, and offerings, to ensure carnival authenticity.
- Augment political satire, to ensure that nationally, the country has reached a level of maturity wherein, it can afford to laugh at itself, at and with its politicians and at certain pressing issues, enabling the nation to develop and enhance itself culturally, through subtle communication.
- That carnival must not give in to commercialisation and be blinded by financial gain, but must retain spontaneous jollification and fun, never losing its original essence and concept.

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## PHYSICAL HALF DAY TOUR IN VALLETTA: CARNIVAL IN THE CITY ITINERARY

### 10.00 A.M.

- Group congregates outside Lower Fort St. Elmo, Valletta, just adjacent to the side entrance of the War Museum. Past open gates of Lower Fort St. Elmo, we proceed down to Fort's St. Elmo old central yard

### 10.00 – 10.30 A.M.

- Introduction of: Carnival and its significance to Valletta citizens and the entire Valletta Community
- Demonstrate and provide information about the carnival academy located here from the late 70s to circa 2010. Mention some old Valletta carnival legends and families
- Provide information on: Valletta carnival companies, how carnival themes were conceptualised, how floats were built, the warehouses, costumes, dance choreography, how floats were dismantled and re-assembled to deliver them from the company warehouse to outside the upper main entrance
- Discussion on the carnival and life skills that carnival participation provided to the Valletta community. Carnival's socio-cultural influences on Valletta society - what it meant/contributed to people born and bred especially in the lower parts of Valletta.

### 10.30 – 10.40 A.M.

- Leave Fort St. Elmo and stop near the main entrance. Demonstrate where the King of Carnival, *Pawlu L-Pampalun* and his family live and provide a brief history of his life. Describe his carnival blessing
- Provide more information of another Valletta Legend, Il-Walker
- Indicate the route taken by carnival companies and floats, from Lower Fort St. Elmo to St. George's Square, where the exhibits and competitions are held

### 10.40 – 10.55 A.M.

- Proceed to the Sacra Infermeria, Evans' Buildings, Magdalene Chapel, Government primary school and Due Bali area, within Merchants' street
- Provide information as to why this area is renowned for being a cradle of carnival activity. Explain where Due Bali (today Diju Balli) got its name and its potential to develop musicians and performers

### 10.55 – 11.05 A.M.

- Proceed up Merchant's Street to building formerly known as *Seychell it-Tapizzar* (the upholsterer). Explain his carnival significance, talk about carnival costumers and how they were made (mention seamstress Violetta Hill) and the link with the blockbuster 'Gladiator' movie

### 11.05 – 11.10 A.M.

- Move up one short block and talk about the Valletta F.C., football funeral and its roots mooted in grotesque, carnival celebrations

### 11.10 – 11.15 A.M.

- Stop next to main entrance of the Jesuits' Church and old university. Note their historical context with the carnival ban of 1639 under the magistracy of GM Lascaris

### 11.15 – 11.20 A.M.

- Stop at corner of Merchant's Street, corner with Archbishop Street and explain its relevance on the days leading to Carnival and more importantly during the actual celebrations. Discuss the carnival companies' last stops in Archbishop Street before competing in front of the adjudication panel in St. George's square, the culmination of the carnival defile`.

### 11.20 – 11.30 A.M.

- Proceed to conclude tour. March on to last destination, St. George's Square and explain:
- Gargoyle beneath the Palace balcony and its association with carnival
- Explain briefly what happened during the carnival competitions – the moment of truth
- Conclude with a comparison between the sacred and the profane and talk about high politics, how carnival was used to pass on political messages to the illiterate masses just as baroque painting was used by the Roman Catholic Church in the post-reformation period.



The Palace Square Valletta on the occasion of the three days visit of the the British Duke and Duchess of York on 25 Mar 1901.



# The Politics of Valletta

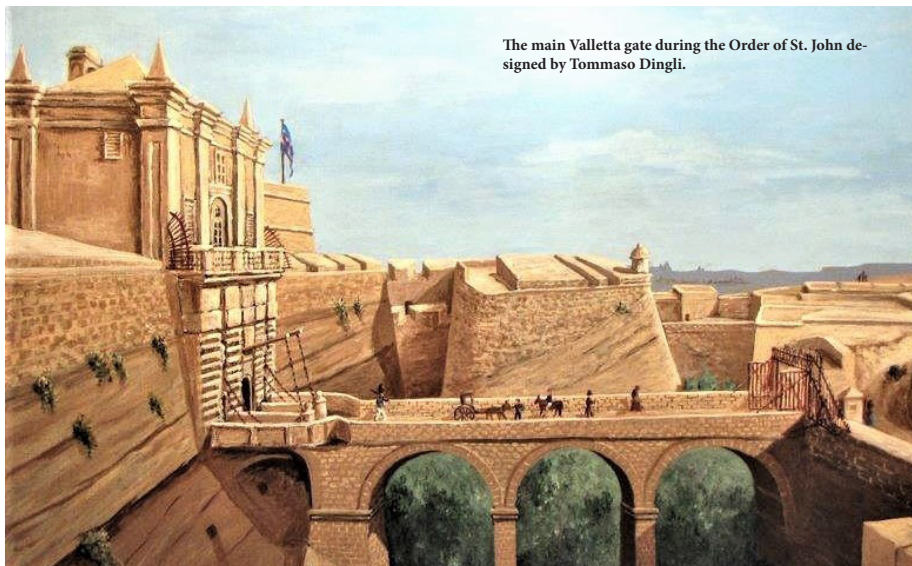
BY RAYMOND J. VASSALLO  
VISITING LECTURER AT ITS

When the Knights of the Order of St John arrived in Malta in 1530, their first seat of power was established at Vittoriosa, where they built their auberges according to their maritime strategic necessity. This area was increasingly lacking space for further construction including residences for the thousands of Rhodians and Greeks who arrived with the knights. Furthermore, Turkish ships were frequently prowling around the Maltese islands and a stronger defence for the Order's galleons was crucial. Eventually the Knights decided to construct a brand new city on Mount Sceberras, across the Grand Harbour. And thus the city of Valletta was born. Little did they imagine that 450 years later the city's architecture would become a blend of various styles from baroque to neo-classical to modern, and that the palaces they erected would be put to different use by future rulers of the island. As the city's origin lay in the strategic and military considerations of the Order, it is interesting to investigate the socio-political motives which provided stimuli to the temporal and spatial transformations it has undergone. (Vassallo, 2021)

The initial intention of the Order was to erect a fort at the tip of the Valletta peninsula for the security and defence of the natural harbours on both sides of the hill. Fort St Elmo was eventually constructed and plans for the city were laid out for its streets in a grid configuration. Street names were originally in Italian which was then the official language of the Order. The Italian version of the names persisted even during the British period but, following the rise of fascism in Italy, the streets were provided names in English. This renaming had happened before during the French occupation (1798-1800), with the streets acquiring Maltese denominations only after the island became a Republic. Thus: *Strada San Giorgio* > *Rue Nationale* > *Strada Reale* > *Kingsway* > *Triq ir-Repubblika*.

The entrance to Valletta has also seen changes to suit the requirements of progress as construed by the prevailing powers-that-be. The first one was Porta San Giorgio built in 1569, renamed Porta Reale. It was originally plain in design and was simply a small opening in the fortifications surrounding the city.

The second entrance was built in 1633 and survived until 1853, eventually making way for a third entrance providing better movement of carriages and horses with its two central arches and another smaller archway on each side. It was further enriched with two statues on either side of the gate representing Grandmasters L'Isle Adam and De La Valette. Again, the gate saw numerous name changes according to the in situ potentate: *Porte Nationale* during the French occupation and later *Kingsgate* during the British rule. Progress took precedence and the latter entrance was demolished for another, fourth, entrance built in 1965 foregoing ornamentation but with a large opening to allow monstrous carnival floats to penetrate the city's sanctums with impunity, resuscitating the customary rite. Of course this new design brought about considerable criticism by both *litterati* and *buon gustai*, which led to new plans for the current entrance, completed in 2014. In the belly of the city, the Order built its auberges, some of the finest buildings in Valletta. Each housed a *langue* of the Knights. There were eight nationalities in all but only seven were



The main Valletta gate during the Order of St. John designed by Tommaso Dingli.

actually situated in Valletta. Land for the *Auberge d'Angleterre* was originally allotted at the entrance of Valletta where the Royal Opera House once stood, but this was never built. The Langue of England was disbanded in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century following the English Reformation.

#### THE AUBERGES

Following the departure of the Knights of St John, the auberges changed hands during Colonial rule to finally become the property of the government of Malta. Only a few still stand to this present day. Two of them were destroyed by Axis bombs during WWII:

*Auberge de Castille*, originally the headquarters of the British Armed Forces in Malta, ironically became the Office of the Prime Minister when Malta became a republic in 1974, a reflection of the acrimony between the British and then Prime Minister Dom Mintoff. *Auberge d'Italie* had been used as the British officers' mess, but, following its takeover by the Maltese government, it housed the General Post Office, then the Malta Tourism Authority and finally the Museum of Fine Arts. *Auberge d'Aragon* became the residence of the Bishop of Gibraltar and Malta; now it is the Ministry for Justice. *Auberge de Provence* is now the Museum of Archaeology.

All the above movements retain an element of high political significance, reflecting the contemporary shift of power in the Maltese islands.

One other magnificent building at the entrance of Valletta is Palazzo Buttigieg Francia, better

known as *Palazzo Ferreria*. This was the former foundry of the Order where most of the Knights' armour was fabricated. The façade of the building is in the style of a Venetian palace with arched windows and oriental motifs in the open balconies. Presently it houses the Ministry for Social Policy.

The Knights also erected the Magisterial Palace, which became the Governor's Palace during British rule and later the Palace of the President. It was also the seat of the Maltese Parliament between 1921 and 2015.

The Main Guard opposite the palace in St George's square was originally the *Guardia della Piazza* housing the personal guards of the Grandmaster. The classical style portico with Doric columns as added later during the Colonial government in 1814 bears the British coat-of-arms and a large commemorative inscription in Latin proclaiming:

**"The love of the Maltese and the voice of Europe assigned these islands to great and unconquered Britain"**

The original coat-of-arms belonged to Queen Victoria but due to its eventual deterioration it was replaced in 1851 with a new insignia of King George III. Between 1974 and 1987, as a possible affront to the British Government following a bitter dispute over payment for the continuing presence of British Military bases on the island, the building was converted into the Libyan Cultural Centre during which time the British inscription was temporarily covered with an inscription in

Arabic. During this period Malta and Libya were on good political terms, with the latter providing considerable aid in sustaining the island's transformation from a fortress to a modern economy. Eventually this ostensible brotherly friendship started to fray, and the British coat-of-arms again saw the light of day. The building became an annex to the Office of the Attorney General, until its eventual transfer to Heritage Malta. It is interesting to note that the Italian Cultural Institute stands right next to this building. One has to note the major influence of Malta's closest neighbour, a neighbour which once harboured imperial interests on the island, giving rise to, initially, a cultural struggle over language and then actual armed conflict during the second world war.

Following the departure of the Knights from Malta, the French left a lasting legacy in governance, justice and education but did not leave any architectural reminder of their two-year occupation except for the defacement of coats-of-arms on the facades of buildings of the knights. One example is the coat-of-arms on the façade of the church dedicated to Our Lady of Victory, where the foundation stone of Valletta was laid. (Frendo, 1998)

#### THE BRITISH

The British found these palaces undamaged, adequately spacious and well-furnished to satisfy their requirements, but they had their own ideas with regards to new and innovative architectural designs in the city. The early 1800's saw a trend of artistic designs in architecture and monuments imitating the style of neo-classical Greece. This was a time which saw the British Empire at its peak: the Empire over which the sun never sets – and there was a concerted effort to juxtapose it with the glory of the Roman Empire and ancient Greek culture. (Victor, Mallia-Milanes, 1988) To commemorate the first ten years of their occupation, the British erected one of the first monuments dedicated to Sir Alexander Ball, the first British Commissioner. It was built in neo-classical style and strategically located at the Lower Barrakka Gardens, high on the bastion overlooking the entrance to the Grand Harbour so that it would be clearly visible from the Cottonera side. Incidentally, in 1839 Bigli Naval Hospital was also constructed in neo-classical style on the opposite hill to



enhance the entrance to the Grand Harbour. (Bugeja, 2015)

Another monument in neo-classical style erected in 1838 was a 70-ft memorial column dedicated to Major General Sir Frederik Cavendish Ponsonby, a former Governor of Malta. The column was destroyed by lightning in 1861 but its plinth survived and is now located in Hastings Gardens. This monument was strategically placed to be seen from the other side of Marsamxetto Harbour.

The British continued to challenge the achievements of the Knights, not only in respect of architecture but also in religion. In 1839 the Colonial government built an Anglican cathedral in contrast to the magnificent baroque St John's Co-Cathedral. The new cathedral in neo-classical style, was dedicated to St Paul and the site chosen was right opposite Auberge d'Aragon, previously occupied by the German auberge which was conveniently dismantled to make way for the temple. (The Anglo-Bavarian League was then instituted and housed in Palazzo Carniero, better known as *Auberge de Baviere*). The 70ft column erected in Hastings Gardens was not enough to be seen from across Marsamxetto Harbour as the new cathedral's bell tower also became notably visible. It was a unique landmark until the dome of the Basilica of Our Lady of Mount Carmel was built slightly higher than the bell tower, probably to confirm Catholicism's supremacy over the Church of England in the Maltese Islands.

In 1856, the British built St. Andrew's Scots Presbyterian Church in South Street, Valletta, in neo-Gothic style which, for the Maltese, was more acceptable than the neo-classical, presumably since Gothic architecture was considered to be more Christian. This was done to retain the best possible relations with the Roman Catholic Church. (Mallia-Milanes, Victor, 1988)

The British also sought to erect monuments in honour of their royalty. The surrounding fortifications of Valletta had three entrances, one of which was Porta del Monte built in 1569. In 1884, the British demolished it and rebuilt it in 1885 naming it Victoria Gate, after Queen Victoria. It bears this name to this day. The gate consists of a double arched

opening for traffic and two small entrances on either side for pedestrians. On top of the two arches one can see the coats-of-arms of Malta and Valletta, while the gate is crowned by the British coat-of-arms.

Queen Victoria was a long-reigning monarch much loved by her subjects in Great Britain and the colonies. In Malta, she was further honoured with a statue in Valletta, installed in 1891. It replaced a statue of Grandmaster Antonio Manoel de Vilhena which was re-located to Floriana. The pedestal holds the British coat-of-arms at the front with that of Malta at the back. The political implication here is quite obvious. The statue remains in the same square in Valletta, previously known as Queen's Square but re-named Republic Square in 1974. In recent years, there have been contradictory calls by some who want the statue removed and by others who are against removing it.

Another prominently situated building close to Auberge de Castille, is the Garrison Chapel. It was built in 1857 designed in plain architecture and used as a multi-denominational church until 1950. It was later used for entertainment purposes, as a post office and as a naval school before it was extensively renovated in 1992 to create the Malta Stock Exchange. There are other important buildings in Valletta that have been converted mainly for political reasons, such as the Sacra Infermeria (1574-1918) which became the Mediterranean Conference Centre in 1979, seen as a milestone of the Labour administration of that day, it signaled Malta's attempts to play a role in international affairs, a policy which reached its apex in Helsinki in 1975, as well as during the Bush-Gorbachev summit in Malta in 1989. Following Malta's membership of the European Union in 2004, the City of Valletta became a frequent host to numerous international activities, including those appertaining to the British Commonwealth in which Malta too is a member.

Castellana Palace in Merchants Street was inaugurated in 1720 by Grandmaster Zondadari as the Law Courts during the Order's rule. A plaque can be seen on top of the façade. This originally included angels, but these were removed by the British. The plaque was left there but the emblem of



Valletta seafront today (Photo by Martin Bonnici, ITS alumnus).

Zondadari was also removed and replaced by a British emblem. (Ellul, 1983)

The variety of architectural styles in Valletta create an aura of vibrancy in the city that is still sought after by visitors to the island till the present day. Valletta might be the smallest European capital but it is big on history and attractions which led to the city's nickname "*Superbissima*" (Latin for "proudest"). Valletta celebrated the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its foundation as European Culture Capital in 2018.

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