Assessing the relationship between community inclusion and space through Valletta 2018 cultural infrastructural projects

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This research is concerned with the assessment of the spatial and social impact of cultural infrastructure, in order to gauge the manner with which they may result in broader culture-led urban regeneration within specific Valletta neighbourhoods.

Methodology: Four areas are studied in depth: (i) The Biċċerija (upcoming Valletta Design Cluster) and its surrounding neighbourhood; (ii) the entire extent of Strait Street; (iii) Pjazza de Valette/MUŻA and its immediate surroundings; (iv) the area surrounding the covered market (Is-Suq tal-Belt), along both Merchants Street and St Paul's Street. Data is being collected through: (i) focus groups; (ii) urban design temporal analysis; (iii) key stakeholder interviews; and (iv) participant observation. Follow up will then be conducted through Participatory Planning Geographic Information Systems (PPGIS) workshops.

Results to date: An in-depth analysis of the sites has been carried out and an inventory of 347 relevant properties across the four sites has been created (121 properties in the Biċċerija area, 66 properties along Strait Street, 47 properties within the neighbourhood surrounding MUŻA and 113 properties in the area around the Covered Market). A series of 109 site visits has led to the identification of significant data patterns which are currently being collated and categorised.

The participant observation revealed that the MUŻA/Pjazza de Valette area mainly hosts people and users interaction, whereas the Biċċerija, is-Suq and Strait Street, mainly host sensoral and environmental influences. On the other hand, MUŻA/Pjazza de Valette, Biċċerija and is-Suq host less vehicular and pedestrian interface, whereas Strait Street hosts less people and users interaction.

Way forward: Continuation of ongoing data collection and analysis together with the urban design temporal analysis and key stakeholder interviews and focus groups.

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