

Democratic Construction?
An Exploration of Stakeholder Participation in Construction
Policy, Process and Outcome in Malta

Naomi Galea

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Conflict Analysis and Resolution, at George Mason University, and the degree of Master. Of Arts in Conflict Resolution Mediterranean Security at the University of Malta

September 2020

George Mason University
University of Malta



L-Università
ta' Malta

University of Malta Library – Electronic Thesis & Dissertations (ETD) Repository

The copyright of this thesis/dissertation belongs to the author. The author's rights in respect of this work are as defined by the Copyright Act (Chapter 415) of the Laws of Malta or as modified by any successive legislation.

Users may access this full-text thesis/dissertation and can make use of the information contained in accordance with the Copyright Act provided that the author must be properly acknowledged. Further distribution or reproduction in any format is prohibited without the prior permission of the copyright holder.

Table of Contents

<i>Legends of Figures</i>	5
<i>Abstract</i>	6
1. Introduction	7
2. Literature Review	10
2.1 Background	10
2.2 Public Participation.....	14
2.2.1 Participation Principle	14
2.3 Civil Participations Values and Principles	16
2.4 Models and Guidelines	17
2.5 Envisioned Framework	18
2.6 Policies	22
2.6.1 The Aarhus Convention	22
2.7 The European Landscape Convention (ELC)	24
2.8 Issues with Participation	28
2.9 Stakeholders	30
2.10 Governmental Institutions.....	32
2.10.1 Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA).....	32
2.11 The Planning Authority (PA).....	33
2.12 The Environment and Resources Authority (ERA).....	34
2.13 Local Councils.....	35
2.14 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)	37
2.15 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)	39
2.16 Community Based Organizations (CBOs).....	40
2.17 Other Stakeholders;.....	41
2.17.1 Landowners and Developers.....	41
2.18 Stakeholder Issues	42
2.19 Power/Knowledge Trap	44
2.20 Visioning and the power trap	46
2.21 Participation Techniques.....	47
2.22 High-level Panel.....	47
2.23 Fora	48
2.24 Consultation.....	51
2.25 Referenda.....	54
2.26 Petitions	56
2.27 Dialogue Matters	57
2.28 Information Processing.....	60

3. Methodology.....	61
3.1 Data Collection	62
3.1.1 Literature Review	62
3.1.2 The Manoel Island Case Study.....	62
3.1.3 Stakeholder Interviews	62
3.2 Online/In Print Newspapers	62
3.2 Participants	63
3.3 Design	64
3.4 Procedure	69
3.5 Analysis of Data.....	71
3.5.1 The Manoel Island Case Study from Newspapers	71
3.5.2 Stakeholder Interviews	71
4. Results.....	73
4.1 The Manoel Island Project Newspaper Study	73
4.1.1 Introduction	73
4.1.2 The Activation of the Manoel Island Masterplan	75
4.1.3 The Planning Authority Approval	76
4.1.4 Forming Organizations	79
4.1.5 Meeting.....	81
4.1.6 Protests	82
4.1.7 Petitioning	83
4.1.8 Appeals	85
4.1.9 Opinion Pieces	91
4.2 Results from Interviews.....	94
5. Discussion	135
5.1 The Media Articles	136
5.2 Process.....	136
5.3 Missing and Inadequate Information and Data	136
5.4 The Appeal	137
5.5 Interests	137
5.6 Creation of Organizations	138
5.7 Public Participatory Practices	139
5.7.1 Petitioning	139
5.7.2 Consultation	139
5.7.3 Surveys	140
5.7.4 Public Forum	140
5.7.5 Community Based Organizations	141
5.7.6. Referenda	141
5.7.7 Policies/Frameworks	142
5.8 Dialogue.....	143
5.9 Participation interest & involvement	144
5.10 Information.....	144
5.11 Moving Forward.....	145

5. 8 Limitations of the Study	149
5.9 Conclusion	150
<i>References</i>	<i>151</i>
<i>Appendix A</i>	<i>182</i>
<i>Appendix B (Interviews)</i>	<i>184</i>
Questions.....	184
Interview 1	188
Interview 2	199
Interview 3	204
Interview 4	219
Interview 5	226
Interview 6	237

Legends of Figures

		Page
Figure 2.1	An envisaged comprehensive public participation process for public infrastructural schemes in China	21
Figure 4.1	Manoel Island in 2020 (Google Maps)	74
Figure 4.2	Masterplan for Manoel Island 2019	74

Abstract

The land in Malta is at a premium and the planning process for development includes an application to the Planning Authority. Part of this process includes a public board meeting with participation of the public. Using the Manoel Island Development Project as a case this study investigated the democratic deficit during the participatory process of this project. Analysis of contemporary online and print newspapers and interviews with representatives of Planning Authority, the Environment and Resources Agency, the NGO, Flimkien għal Ambjent Aħjar, Inħobbu l-Gżira, the Malta Business Association and the Manoel Island Foundation resulted in substantial democratic deficit. This has been shown by a lack of proper and outdated environmental, social, health and archeological impact assessments, involvement of personnel with evident conflict of interest and the snubbing of an 8,500 strong petition. Political interference with PA decisions and uneducated public help maintain this democratic deficit. Having identified the possible origin of this democratic deficit in the participatory process in large development plans, I suggested mitigation of this deficit. These include: education of the public especially in planning and environmental issues, suggestion of impartial and independent planning authority board members, ratification of the ELC, enacting laws to protect the environment and making sure they are enforced and have a proper and sincere dialogue with stakeholders from the very beginning of the planning process. Also, it is important to give ERA some teeth, use of surveys to assess what the public wants and create a well thought consistent environment friendly long-term plans for development that would not be changed with every change of government.

1. Introduction

Malta is a small nation state in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea. Malta has been colonized from whoever was powerful in the Mediterranean from time immemorial. The Knights of St John made Malta their home in 1530 and ruled over the island archipelago for 270 years leaving behind them a rich baroque architecture and the fabric of statehood. After a short French interlude, the Islands pass on to the British and Malta remained a British Colony until independence in 1964. It joined the European Union in 2004. Malta is well-known for its heritage, culture and overall landscape whether historical or environmental. Since independence, over-population, mass tourism and materialism have brought about a never-ending building boom, which has affected the Maltese countryside and historical places.

The backbone of the Maltese economy comprises of the tourism and the construction industry. The islands are small, therefore land is at a premium. The construction boom is eating away from countryside. Rural and historical land are seen as a commercial resource by both sectors. Developers build holiday flats, hotels and restaurants for locals and tourists seizing agricultural land and transforming old beautiful neighbourhoods into flats of concrete. This is a prime example of the Marxian dictum 'geography tends to become annihilated as a way of increasing the temporal flow of commodities' (Hirsch, 1995). Maltese heritage icons are being damaged and desecrated.

Controversy and questions of corruption especially with regards to large-scale projects have been raised on the governing authorities that are meant to be safeguarding the land (EC, 2014). Studies have indicated a low levels of trust towards the Planning Authority and the

belief that there is corruption in its ranks (EC, 2014). The latter was proven by Paul and Matthew Caruana Galizia (2018) who saw a high level of political corruption within the land sector, indicating that the Planning Authority is not as independent as it should be and acts as an ‘extracting rent instrument’. A European Commission report (2014) noted that instead of ‘outright bribery of Planning Authority officials, corruption allegations tend to consist of other irregularities in the decision-making process’. Planning critics and academicians have been writing and saying that there is a democratic deficit in planning and it does not have a broad and integrated representation from a cross section of the society (Forester, 1999; Healey, 1997; Sandercock, 1998). Lowenthal (1996) argues that people tend to appreciate their heritage when it is most threatened and this risk spurs people to stewardship. This is very true because in Malta we are in that situation and people are trying to defend it against those who are exploiting the land which they consider a natural resource.

People’s frustrations in Malta has reached its peak and quite recently protests were held against the never-ending construction boom and its disastrous environmental consequences. In the last couple of years, buildings next to construction sites have fallen leaving people homeless and taking someone’s life.

The public’s involvement in decision-making is particularly important in environmental management and spatial planning, given the complex and multifaceted nature of the problems faced (Albrechts, 2001; 2004; Tippett et al, 2005). It is more likely to succeed if the community’s collective wisdom is incorporated in plans and solutions (CCSG, 2007).

Evidence is found that participation mechanisms in Malta fail to meet people’s expectations (Office of the Ombudsman, 2007) and are limited in extent and effectiveness (Conrad et al, 2010; 2011).

The way the public can interact to fight this building frenzy is to be more vocal during the planning process. Planning issues for building and reconstruction need to go through the planning authority for the issuing of permits to build. There are rules and regulations about where to build, how high the building can be and the style of building depending on the area and the neighbourhood the building is going to be. The PA has a public hearing so that the public can air their objections to the development. Big development projects in sensitive areas will draw more attention and the public participating process is scrutinized more.

This study will be investigating the planning process of big infrastructural projects by looking into the Manoel Island Project as a case study and the opinions of stakeholders involved in such projects. Specifically, this study is investigating if there is a democratic deficit in the public participatory processes and the stakeholders involved in these proceedings.

Using online and in-print newspapers, the Manoel Island Project planning processes were studied. To supplement this, stakeholder representatives of the project were interviewed through an email interview or a video interview.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Background

Malta is one of the smallest European countries. It is made up of an archipelago consisting of the main island (Malta), a smaller island (Gozo) and a yet smaller essentially uninhabited island (Comino). The archipelago has a total area of 316 km² and is the eight most densely populated area in the world with 1,514 persons/km² (World Bank, 2018). The islands are rich in history and heritage. Its attractions and Malta's strategic position have made the islands an attractive location for the attention of international developers and speculators. Since independence in 1964, over-population, mass tourism and materialism have brought about a building boom which has affected the Maltese countryside and historical places. Corporate bodies and individuals induce a high level of development pressure including financial imperatives to accelerate decision making and implementation. The land speculators perceive the conservation of the historic buildings and environments as an obstruction to new development and to what they call the 'improvement' of historic buildings.

For the last two years, tourism alone yielded 2 billion euro in revenue which has contributed substantially to the Maltese economy. Income from tourism alongside the construction industry make up the backbone of the Maltese economy. Through the admiring gaze of tourist masses the urban landscape has gained more importance in the eyes of the local inhabitants. Though, unfortunately, if a community bases its economy on the construction and tourism industries (which Malta appears to be increasingly doing), the commercialization of its heritage regardless if urban or rural is unavoidable. In turn, in the short-term there is a danger that the profit-driven attitude to landscape will continue to despoil it to such an extent

that tourists will stay away. Considering this and the fact that landscape can be viewed as heritage (Boissevain), one must safeguard the islands beauty and culture without damage.

The Planning Authority (PA) and the Environment Resource Authority (ERA) take care of such ideals though not without controversy and/or questions of corruption. In 2014 the EU Anti-Corruption report noted that in Malta the ‘granting of planning permits, particularly to developers for large-scale projects has given rise to contention and controversy’ (EC 2014). ‘We value our heritage most when it seems at risk; threats of loss spur owners to stewardship’ here Lowenthal’s (1996) argument rings true as some are defending it against those who are exploiting it as a natural resource. Non-governmental organizations have been set up to look into approved projects and have spoken against many of these.

Those involved with expanding tourist and building industries, including investors, view rural space and historical areas as a commercial resource. These people pursue quarrying and building to acquire greater profit. Tourism has transformed Malta’s landscape. This includes government property which is used as a commercial asset and is being sold or leased for modest sums of money to private business interest. One example of this is the upcoming Manoel Island Project. These different perspectives on the landscape being built on are diametrically opposed making the Maltese’s different heritage landscapes a deeply contested territory.

Developers commission amenities, like flats, hotels, restaurants, etc., for locals and tourists grabbing agricultural land and transforming old quaint neighbourhoods into boxes of concrete. What appears to be happening is a graphic illustration of the Marxian dictum ‘geography (space) tends to become annihilated as a way of increasing the temporal flow of

commodities' (Hirsch, 1995). Maltese heritage icons are being damaged and desecrated. Examples of this include fortifications that were destroyed and replaced by the new Hilton, the commercialisation of Mdina, the ravaging by quarries of Wied il-Ghasel and of the countryside behind Dingli cliffs, heritage reverts to a utilitarian space. This includes 'Outside Development Zone' (ODZ) land, where land development should and is supposed to be limited. Permits for this development to happen can only be granted by the Planning Authority (PA) which is supposed to be an independent regulator.

Most of the Maltese land, (79.3%) is labelled as being ODZ land (Malta Ministry for Sustainability, Development, the Environment and Climate Change (MSDECC), 2013). Plans were designed to 'channel urban development activity into existing and planned development areas ... resulting in higher density development than at present' (Malta Ministry for Development of Infrastructure (MDI), 1990). With time these boundaries have shrunk due to need, acceptance and/or influence from the hierarchal stakeholders. One of the aforementioned stakeholders, MEPA (before it was split into the PA and ERA), was charged with ensuring that the 'organisation's decision-making process is being faithfully translated into practice, as well as the ability to take remedial action against defaulters in an effective and exemplary manner' (MEPA, 2009).

This may not have been as effective as one would have hoped. The Planning Authority was set as an independent regulator free from the interference of governmental institutions. A study performed by Paul and Matthew Caruana Galizia (2018) has shown the contrary because a high level of political corruption within the land sector in Malta was highlighted. Through their investigation of the use and dispersal of ODZ land, they found a democratic deficit because an increase of land permits were being granted against the recommendations

of their own case workers during the times of upcoming elections. This is indicative that the governing bodies are not as independent from governmental institutions as they should be, especially in a culture of ingrained clientelism and political patronage and therefore it cannot objectively make land use policy. In their study they indicate that if the institutions were to be independent from the government there will be a rise of the 'shadow' price (application fee plus bribe) of development creating incentives for bribe taking within the authority. In turn if it is not independent the authority may act as an extracting rent instrument from the private sector. In the majority of cases this takes the form of bribes going directly to the central government via the authority. Whether MEPA is independent or not both situations reflect on Aids's (2003) distinction between 'corruption with a benevolent principal', where a benevolent government delegates decision-making power to a nonbenevolent agent, and 'corruption with a nonbenevolent principal', where government officials intentionally introduce inefficient policies to extract rents. In a European Commission report (2014) they note that instead of 'outright bribery of MEPA officials, corruption allegations tend to consist of other irregularities in the decision-making process'.

The public is not blind to this. A 2013 Eurobarometer survey showed that 53% of Maltese respondents believe that corruption is widespread amongst officials that issue building permits (EC, 2014). A recent small-scale study has also indicated this with the public having only 28.6% of trust felt for 'The Planning Authority', 29.6% trust in 'Construction Companies' whilst 'Environmental NGOs' had 62.4% of trust. When asked if the 'planning authority takes into consideration public opinion when granting permits', a staggering 85.4% against this was indicated (Marketing Advisory Services, 2020).

To try and combat this corruption deficit and rampant building of big projects we will be investigating a participation process that could be introduced to create red tape for this to happen. This could provide a safeguard of the interests of not only the ‘elite’ stakeholder subsection but the public too and in turn give a more democratic and informed end result.

2.2 Public Participation

2.2.1 Participation Principle

The concept of participation has a strong normative basis in human rights law where it stipulates that ‘every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity . . . to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives’ (Article 25).

Within the same scope the UN Declaration on the Right to Development states that ‘the human person is the central subject of development and should be the active participant and beneficiary of the right to development’ (Article 2).

Public participation could be used to notify, consult, include, collaborate or empower (IAP2, 2007); or it could lead to ‘manipulation, coercion and misinformation’ (Parkins and Mitchell, 2005). Depending on how participation is used within the decision-making process determines the benefits for specific land-use planning outcomes along with legitimacy and fairness of the process (Friedmann, 1973; Goulet, 1989; Healey, 1997; Illsley, 2003).

Public participation requires project initiators to recognize that ‘the public has a right to be informed early and to be pro-actively involved in a meaningful way in proposals which may affect their lives and livelihoods’ (Enserink & Koppenjan, 2007) and involve those ‘individuals and groups that are positively or negatively affected by a proposed intervention’ (André et al., 2006).

Creighton (2005) believes that in principle public participation includes every individual, although this may not be a possibility due to the inability to reach all individuals as well as some may not be interested in involvement. However, there is a necessity to make sure that participants involved represent those who can positively and negatively influence the project outcomes (Lizarralde, 2011). These include government/project initiators, lay people who are directly affected by or have an interest in the proposed project, private organizations such as construction companies, professional organisers and pressure groups like NGO's and the mass media.

If one involves the public effectively in the decision-making process the project's chances of success may increase due to the reduction of the project's time and cost (Creighton, 2005). The realisation of the project is also more likely to succeed if innovative plans and solutions are developed by incorporating the collective wisdom of the community (CCSG, 2007), by satisfying the needs and worries of a cross section of the society without foregoing the objectives of the project, goals (Woltjer, 2009) and by getting the approval of the community therefore increasing the legitimacy of the decisions (Moore & Warren, 2006). The effective involvement of the public will also achieve a sustainable management of the project life-cycle (Varol, Ercoskun, & Gurer, 2011), shows a desire by the project managers to protect minority and individual rights (Plummer & Taylor, 2004), promotes collaborative governance (Enserink & Koppenjan, 2007) and create an opportunity to promote mutual learning (Manowong & Ogunlana, 2008).

Despite its long list of accomplishments, public participation can be difficult to execute due to some authorities being left with a cynical attitude to its value and the concern that an overactive public may lead to social disorder and conflict (Shan & Yai, 2011). The success of

public participation is dependent not only on project organizers genuine attitudes in seeking public opinion but also keep in mind that every participatory activity requires careful planning and organization (IFC, 1998). The absence of appropriate methods and targeting of the right groups could do more harm than good by becoming costly and meaningless and the decisions will be open to criticisms and challenges (Creighton, 2005).

2.3 Civil Participations Values and Principles

The International Association for Public Participation (2007) has put forward a summary of important values in the promotion of the aims in the participatory process. These core values include the involvement of affected and interested parties in the decision-making process; finding out from the participants how they would like to participate and give them information so that they can contribute meaningfully, recognize and communicate the interests and needs of all participants including the decision makers, enable the contribution of the public to influence the decision and inform the participants how their feedback affected the decision

The Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the Decision-Making Process (Council of Europe, 2009) suggests five important principles for civil participation. They recommend that there is an honest interaction between the proposers and the affected sectors thus creating trust, the participating NGOs are clearly independent with respect to their aims, decisions and activities, everyone concerned including NGOs and public authorities are accountable and transparent and that there is full participation of NGO members and concerned citizens in terms of collection and channeling of views by the NGOs to contribute to the political decision-making process.

The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE-ODIHR) during a NGOs Forum in Vienna in 2015 issued the Recommendations on Enhancing the Participation of Associations in Public Decision-Making Processes. They recommended that there should be transparency which includes the timely access of all drafts, documents, opinions and decisions relevant to the participation process to the public and openness and accessibility to all on an agreed framework of participation. The Forum also advised that there is impartiality in the process especially by the NGOs which should have the right to act independently and propose different positions from the authorities without any obligation. The Forum also emphasized the need for accountability and efficiency whereby the participation is result-oriented, has a real impact on the objective and authorities are accountable to the public with regards to the consultation processes and result reporting. Finally they recommend non-discrimination, equality and inclusiveness with regards to the needs of the disadvantaged, the vulnerable, the marginalized and minority groups who wish to participate.

Other European organisations and institutions have emphasised other principles which should guide the process of civil participation. These include recognition of rights and responsibilities, commitment, allocation of resources and sufficient time, acknowledgement and feedback and proper evaluation (Nuredinoska & Hadzi-Miceva Evans, 2010).

2.4 Models and Guidelines

Several different institutions have called for a fight against the historic and systematic public exclusion and to enhance public participation in decision-making. One such organization, the U.S. EPA's National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC, 1996) created a

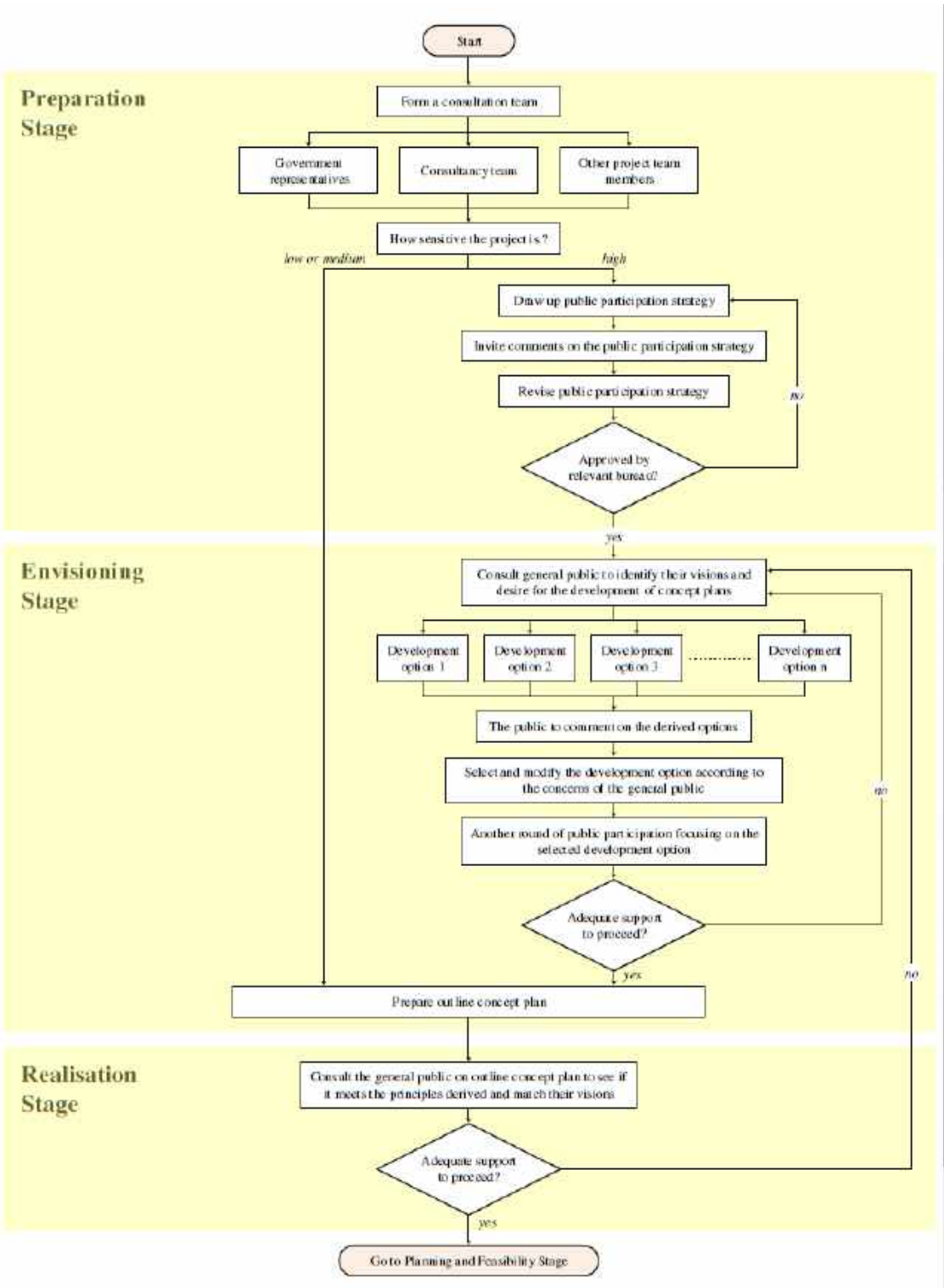
‘Model Plan for Public Participation’. This contained seven core values to nurture effective community involvement. According to this, the public participation process has to include; (1) allow people to have a say in what affects their lives, (2) include the promise that the public's contribution will influence the ultimate decision, (3) communicate the interests and meet the process needs of all participants, (4) seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected, (5) involve participants in defining the participation process, (6) communicate to participants how their input was, or was not, utilized and (7) provide participants with adequate information. This Model Plan is directed towards environmental justice and this can so be done when applied to infrastructural matters. It gives guiding principles for communities and all stakeholders to be seen as equal partners, sees interactions as having to encouraging active community participation, institutionalizing of public participation, recognizes community knowledge and utilizes cross-cultural formats and exchanges.

2.5 Envisioned Framework

Another guideline that was created was found in Li, Thomas Ng & Skitmore’ s (2012) study. This looks into how this process can be done systematically rather than what it must have within it. This was shown in an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) investigation where the interviewees brought out the idea that a public participation flowchart throughout the project’s lifecycle is needed for a guide to those responsible for the planning or organizing public participation activities to improve project efficiency. Interviewees from the governmental and private sectors suggested that a process flowchart (Figure 1) could be comprehensive enough and sufficiently flexible to be applied to different types of projects. Another recommendation was that the level of general public involvement should be defined

to reduce issues with targeting the proper participants and balance perceived tensions between representativeness of participants and the effectiveness of the whole project.

The study found that (Li, Thomas Ng & Skitmore, 2012) interviewees from the general population and pressure groups believe that different participatory models should be implemented simultaneously and compared with traditional one-way participatory methods, a two-way information exchange platform (e.g. public forums) is preferred to ensure an interactive process.



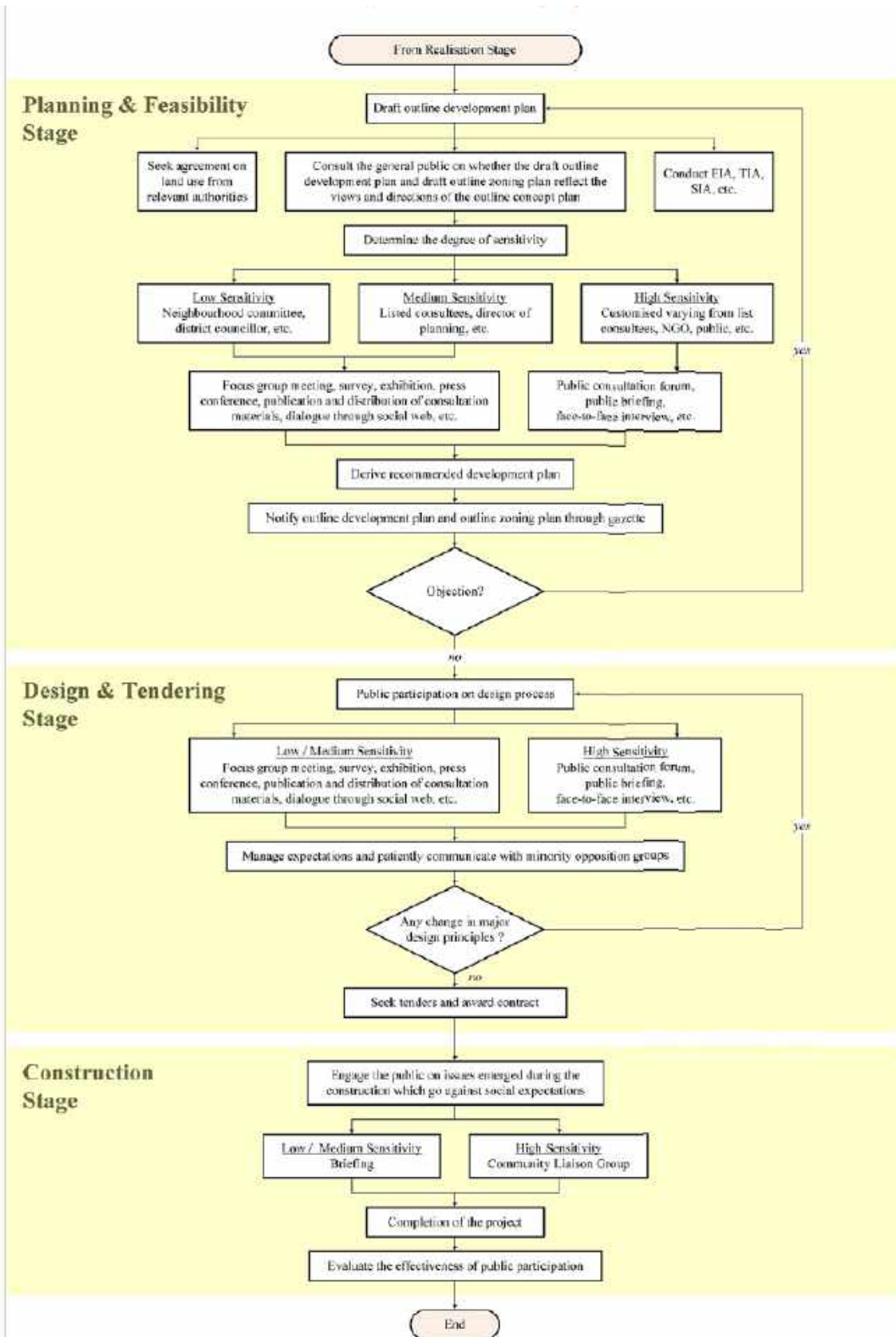


Fig. 2. (continued).

Figure 2.1. An envisaged comprehensive public participation process for public infrastructural schemes in China

This process illustrates public participation being conducted throughout the project lifecycle, through the preparation, envisioning, realisation, planning and feasibility, design and tendering, and construction stages. It corresponds with international practices like that of the International Association for Public Participation and Community Development Society (Enserink & Koppenjan, 2007). This is done to prevent public project personnel from dominating the ideas for planning, design or even construction.

2.6 Policies

2.6.1 The Aarhus Convention

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Commission on access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters was first adopted in 1998 and established in 2001. This Convention was ratified in Malta on the 23rd April 2002. This Convention establishes a number of public rights in regard to the environment. Signatories to the Convention are required to ensure provisions are in place so that the public authorities help making these rights effective.

The Convention provides for three rights has three pillars within it:

The first constitutes everyone's right to receive environmental information which is gathered by public authorities. This information includes; the state of the environment, policies or measures taken or on the state of the environments impact on human health and safety. This information could be obtained by applicants within one month of the request without needing a reason to say why. Additionally, public authorities are obliged to actively distribute information in their possession.

The second constitutes the right for public participation in environmental decision-making. The arrangements for this participation is to be made by public authorities where the public affected and environmental non-governmental organizations are to be enabled to comment on any project proposals affecting the environment, or plans and programmes concerning the environment. These comments are to be considered in decision-making, and the public should be informed about the final decision and the reasons why it was taken.

The third is the right to examine processes and contest public decisions that have been taken ignoring the two rights mentioned above or environmental rules in general which is referred to as access to justice.

The level to which public participation in environmental decision-making and the associated rights to access for information and justice are vital markers of public control over public values. Public participation is extremely important to legitimize and make effective environmental governance and decision-making. Relations between the public and private interests are affected by privatization, including the distribution of societal burdens and benefits, the promotion strategy for sustainable development and the effectiveness and legitimacy of public affairs and environmental policy. Conclusions and concerns that privatisation may negatively affect the level of openly accessible environmental information is in reference to when Aarhus Convention standards are fundamentally respected. This does not imply that public government and its provision of services are always genuine, transparent, more effective and less corrupt than those provided by private entities.

An article by Ebbesson (2011) using the Aarhus Convention as a reference, examines tensions between two developments of environmental governance: (i) the consolidation of the

rights of participation of the public in general in decision-making on the environment and (ii) the privatisation and subcontracting of assets, amenities and operations related to natural resources and the environment. Ebbesson (2011) observes that privatization may substantially affect participatory rights scope in environmental matters, which includes the right to access information. The Aarhus Convention's broad conception of 'public authority' implies the access of information right even when companies (as a result of privatisation) perform public administrative operations or have public responsibilities or functions related to the environment. The participation in decision-making rights is still there when privatization of resources and services occur. Furthermore, the Aarhus convention doesn't exclude possibilities of delegating responsibilities of the decision-making procedure to different bodies and private actors as long as they ensure they will remain impartial and guarantee correct behaviour during the procedure of public participation. The Aarhus Convention precludes all attempts from access to justice to be privatized.

2.7 The European Landscape Convention (ELC)

Another way this process can come to light is through the European Landscape Convention, which is the first international legal instrument to be concerned with the protection, management and planning of all landscapes in Europe. This convention provides appropriate strategies and measures that would be ascertained by different parties in accordance to their requirements and needs. It was created as a response to the nature and landscape change in Europe that has progressively resulted the loss of its distinctive local character (Phillips, 2000). The ELC's ideal is expressly democratic (Prieur, 2006) as it seeks to safeguard the quality of all landscapes, with the full and participatory involvement of the public (Council of Europe, 2000).

In Particular, the ELC does the following:

Article 1 – Sees landscape as being ‘an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors’.

Article 2 – Extends the scope of concern to ‘the entire territory of the parties and covers natural, rural, urban and peri-urban areas.it concerns landscapes that might be considered outstanding as well as everyday or degraded landscapes’.

Article 5a – Parties are required to legally view landscape as ‘an essential component of people’s surroundings, an expression of the diversity of their shared cultural and natural heritage, and a foundation of their identity’.

Article 5c – Compels parties to ‘establish procedures for the participation of the general public.in the definition and implementation of landscape policies’.

Article 6c - Requires parties to identify and analyze landscapes throughout their territory, analyzing their characteristics, forces and pressures transforming them, and taking note of changes, all ‘with the active participation of the interested parties’.

Article 6d - Requires parties to ‘define landscape quality objectives for the landscapes identified and assessed, after public consultation in accordance with Article 5c’

When looking into the ELC, Prieur and Durousseau (2006) emphasize three main points. The first is that they believe that the term ‘public’ should be understood as civil society in a broad sense. The second point is that the general public’s participation must be visible both through its definition and implementation of the landscape policy. Thirdly they suggest that the ‘consultation’ concept mentioned in Article 6d must not be interpreted as granting permission for minimal participation.

These elements provide a unique approach towards public involvement in landscape planning and its management (Dejeant-Pons, 2006), necessitating more and more the use of methods for public participation (Dramstad et. al, 2006). The ELC’s innovative nature in itself presents challenges towards its implementation due the pre-existing planning tools being predominantly state instruments focused on outstanding landscapes (De Montmollin, 2006). De Montmollin (2006) believes that participatory tools development should both facilitate community input and participation in the protection, management and planning of landscape as well as allow for work at local level helping communities to identify and understand the characteristics, value and vulnerability of the landscapes in which they live, and to express their aspirations.

However, there are few examples of research that investigates how an understanding of perception can usefully inform the work of policymakers, planners and managers (e.g. Brown, 2004; Brown & Raymond, 2007), and certainly much scope for further work in this area. In the light of the ELC, such an understanding of perception is necessary to manage landscapes as areas ‘as perceived by people’. A solid understanding of public views can enhance the effectiveness of policy-making given that ‘public perceptions are the basis of an

individual's commitments to an organization and its goals and they are major influences on the behaviour of both members and leaders' (Crowfoot & Wondolleck, 1990).

To this end a study (Conrad, Christie & Fazey, 2011) on the public perception of landscape in Gozo (Malta's sister island) was conducted to see the viability of such a policy. They found that the call for 'active participation' in analysing forces and pressures would be well answered within this respect. Clear issues of public concern were voiced notably about the spread and quality of urban development and the related decline of the islands rural character as well as an expressed dissatisfaction with the planning and political systems in place. Indicating that a certain amount of institutional reform is needed to positively manage landscape change with the participation of the public. It also showed that the public can offer solutions for limiting development activity in the future ex. Containment proposal of development within established zones immediate removal of all illegalities, as well as rehabilitation and restoration of degraded sites. This shows us how beneficial a policy like the ELC could be for Malta as it allows those in charge to see what is really going on from a grass-roots level.

They did bring up some challenging aspects to this policy. One of which was the 'reflect the aspirations of the public' (Conrad, Christie & Fazey, 2011) definition of landscape quality objective. This is when one considers the fact that different parties or and groups have different aspirations. Many of the proposals that were put forward were somewhat directed towards protecting the landscape character and reducing threats. This means there is a potential for public suggestions to feed into an integrated landscape strategy. Another challenge facing this policy is that if the ELC is going to be an effective democratic decision-making instrument, and it seeks to take into account all views, realistically, any policy with a

broad remit will have to compromise on what different members of the public would like (Zhen, 2006). Results indicated that the ELC's ideal of democratic policy making is not necessarily prohibitive if limitations of decisions made and views usually unrepresented are acknowledged.

2.8 Issues with Participation

There is still lack of knowledge and only a few studies published about how local actors' participation can effectually and positively affect public intervention in land use, particularly when referring to those in higher levels of government (Hibbard and Lurie, 2000; Puppim de Oliveira, 2005).

In a study (Li, Thomas Ng & Skitmore, 2012) investigating the use of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) processes in China it was found that interviewees attributed lack of participation to 3 issues: (i) uneven progress in the adoption of participatory mechanisms; (ii) risk of targets not being met; and (iii) lack of confidence in public competence. They found that interviewees from governmental departments and private sector organizations believed that suggestions from the population had questionable value and that public participation might not help facilitate the project proposed.

On the other hand, interviewed NGOs and members of the general public questioned the validity of this position and considered that there should be a channel where they could be heard. Several interviewees believed that the lack of value in comments were attributed to the poor quality of project information provided and the use of unsuitable participatory processes. To address these deficits, they proposed improvements to current participatory processes with better timing and more sophisticated ways of input and support. The majority

of interviewees advocated public participation in the entirety of the project and by doing so they believed that it would start and run smoothly and satisfactorily (Zhang & Jennings, 2009).

A key insight that came out in the ELC study (Conrad, Christie & Fazey, 2011) was that its effectiveness may be contingent on an effective institutional set-up for public participation. The public's feelings of powerlessness and indifference may impede 'active participation' (Article 6c) necessary for the ELC. Most of the respondents were cynical about public consultation with a respondent stating 'politicians make the decisions anyway, so why bother?' This perceived lack of influence on decisions seems to be a priority concern for employing the ELC in Malta. Considering this, they state that further research must be done to augment public involvement in decision-making which is a necessity for the ELC to be implemented. With this study their call has been answered because to do this all stakeholders need to be observed as well as participation techniques.

Prier (2006) believes that the participation within the ELC is not only in reference to the public but includes economic, social and cultural players, local elected representatives and specialists. The latter's role is explicitly acknowledged in the ELC by having a corresponding emphasis on professional training and public opinion should be seen as complementing the trained personnel role. De Montmollin (2006) mirrors this by pointing out the requirement for a 'cross-sectional' approach, suggesting that the reality of the problems in very complex modern world involves new and varied actors including NGOs, semi-governmental organizations, private organs and a plethora of spontaneous groups. Whilst he recognizes the new challenges present, he accepts the innovative and creative potential presented by the ideas and activities of the range of actors.

2.9 Stakeholders

Any development of major infrastructure and construction project from beginning to end can be controversial and may affect interests of the different stakeholders positively and negatively. Ultimately construction project management is a sector that focuses on the planning process and involves an array of activities. This necessitates the need that professionals will have to coordinate relationships with different stakeholders because they will try to influence the implementation of major projects in accordance to their concerns and needs (Atkin & Skitmore, 2008; Olander & Landin, 2008).

Freeman (1984) defines stakeholder members as being ‘any group or individual who can affect, or is affected by, the achievement of the organization’s objectives’. According to the Project Management Institute (2008) project stakeholders ‘are individuals and organisations that are actively involved in a project or whose interests may be affected as a result of project execution or completion.’

Big project attracts the interests of many stakeholder groups including the government, planning authorities, developers, construction companies, pressure groups and the general public. Takim (2009) and Winch (2002) split the stakeholders into two groups. The first group is made up from the internal stakeholders including those who are legally bound to the client and those who directly connected to the client on the supply side such as contractors, material suppliers, trade contractors, engineers and architects and the demand side which includes employees, end-users, customers and financiers. The second group is the external stakeholders and is further divided into 2 subgroups; the public actors (local and national government and regulatory agencies) and the private actors (environmentalists, archeologists, landowners and local residents).

The UK's Voluntary and Community Sector and the Government of Canada's experience indicates that participants representativeness and participatory techniques adopted aid in the determination of the success of public participation (CCSG, 2007). Therefore, it is not only crucial to have a balanced participatory composition in a variety of participatory stages, but also to ensure that the participatory activities meaningfully secure necessary opinions.

The representatives from professional institutions and the affected regions of development should be invited during the preparation and envisioning stages to identify the most critical technical and social concerns while a cross-section of participants, including the NGOs and watchdogs, would help result in a consensus at the planning and feasibility or the design and tendering stages. More importantly, the project initiators need to work together with the community to derive the most suitable methods for public participation by inviting participants to comment on the participatory activities for example. In this way, it is expected that a fair and transparent participation atmosphere can be created to promote mutual trust (DEC, 2011).

Arnstein (1969) defines participation as a conduit for 'the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens to be deliberately included in the future'. In principle, public participation involves all, though it is not always possible to reach all individuals as well as the fact that they may not want to be involved.

Several project failures are noted due to the insufficient addressing of concerns and expectations being met (e.g. Morris & Hough, 1993). Arnstien (1969) urges policy makers to seek public participation to induce the power of the citizens through partnership, power

delegation and citizen control rather than merely placating the community without involving them in the decision-making process. However, public participation isn't equivalent to having a mutually agreeable solution because stakeholder's interests often vary and diverge creating conflict (Atkin & Skitmore, 2008).

Conflict is inevitable because each stakeholder group has its own culture, character, values, gender, beliefs, behaviours and history which influence its actions and motivation (Randeree & Faramawy, 2011). Should there be no consensus reached by the stakeholders in the early stages of the participation process of a project, it is possibly not worthwhile to continue with the process because there will be an increase risk of failure or may even lead to conflict between the decision-makers and the local population (Lee & Chan, 2008).

The various concerns and needs must be analysed and properly managed as severe conflicts and controversies can be expected which in turn would cause cost and time overruns. (Olander, 2007; Olander & Landin, 2005).

Therefore, stakeholders need to be considered as important for the scope of this work. In the next section stakeholders are included separately.

2.10 Governmental Institutions

2.10.1 Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA)

As with the majority of environmental and planning authorities, MEPA has had a monopoly over the supply of the only natural and scarce resource the Maltese Archipelago has which is

the land. Permits for the development in ‘outside development zone’ land could only be allotted by this regulator, and now its successor, the Planning Authority (PA).

In April 2016, a law was put into effect by the Maltese Government that split MEPA into two autonomous and independent authorities; The Planning Authority (PA) and the Environment and Resources Authority (ERA), checking on the other’s activities. The relegation of environmental protection and increased power and presence of governmental appointees has broadened the scope for political corruption in the land sector (Caruana Galizia & Caruana Galizia, 2018)

2.11 The Planning Authority (PA)

The Planning Authority takes care of development planning in Malta. Only two out of seven of the Planning Authority’s executive council are claimed by the Authority the rest are made up of governmental appointees. This Council is the decision maker on land use policy whilst development permits are the planning boards’ remit.

They have a responsibility and duty for the promotion of a comprehensive, sustainable, land use planning system. It is the Planning Authorities duty to improve the quality of life for the current and future generations without compromising the generations future to meet their needs through comprehensive sustainable land use planning system and to do so:

- they must preserve, use and develop sea and land to this end and have full consideration to social, environmental and economic needs
- they must make sure that the national planning policies are clear, readily available and unambiguous to the public
- they must provide regular plans in accordance to the exigencies and needs

- they must identify shortcomings in regional planning and address the problems found
- for the effective promotion of development planning they must apply scientific and technical knowledge as well as resources and innovation
- public values, benefits, costs, risks and uncertainties must be considered by them when taking any respective decision

2.12 The Environment and Resources Authority (ERA)

The Environment and Resources Authority Board consists of ten persons; two public officers that represent the Government, one with experience or qualifications relating to the environment and another relating to environmental health or social policy; six independent members are chosen from persons of known integrity; one with knowledge of and experience within the Environmental Voluntary Organizations sector and who shall be nominated by the relevant Voluntary Organizations; and one member to be nominated by the Oppositions Leader.

Among other functions and responsibilities, the ERA Board oversees and ensures that the following functions are carried out in an efficient and professional manner:

- Policies related to the protection and management of the environment and sustainable management of natural resources are formulated and implemented
- Commissioning and creating surveys, studies, assessments, investigations, audits, monitoring and promoting research on anything related to the environment and natural resources

- Disseminating information and issuing guidelines to the public, commercial and other bodies on environment and natural resources related affairs
- Establishing measures for environment protection and the promotion of the natural resources' efficient use in regulation with the Environment Protection Act
- Ensuring that the regulations of the Environment Protection Act that are obliged nationally and internationally obligations are enforced and are accompanied with the permits, assessments, investigations, audits, monitors and act on, any activity, intervention, project, operation or land use that might have an environmental effect
- Advising the Minister of Environment on international legislation and on national policy formulation with accordance to matters regulated by the Environment Protection Act and on matters having a bearing on this
- Advising the Minister of Environment on any issue associated with its functions under the Environment Protection Act
- Carrying out, reviewing or requesting others to carry out environmental assessments, environmental audits and environmental monitoring of activities and works having an impact on the environment

2.13 Local Councils

Local Councils in Malta were introduced in 1993, to 'de-bureaucratize' and expand public participation in the democratic process by providing the public, through their elected representatives, a direct involvement method with their locality's administration (Vassallo, 1995). Now, in total, the Maltese islands hold 68 Local Councils, 14 in Gozo and 54 in Malta.

The constitution stipulates that ‘the State shall adopt a system of local government whereby the territory of Malta shall be divided into such number of localities as may by law be from time to time determined, each local authority to be administered by a local council elected by the residents of the locality and established and operating in terms of such laws as may from time to time be in force’ (2a, Article 115A). Local councillors’ term of office lasts five years. The local council’s office of mayor is employed by the elected councillor who had garnered the highest number of votes in the latest election.

The local councils are responsible for the maintenance of the wellbeing of their locals and locality and this is done through the care taken of pavements, road signs, playgrounds, gardens and leisure facilities. Amongst their responsibilities the national authorities must consult them on traffic schemes, upkeep, restoration, design or alterations of buildings facades and any other national initiatives that affect the localities.

The Local Councils Act (1993) requires that all council meetings are open to the public and facilitate the media’s engagement to report proceedings. Additionally, council meetings are to be live streamed online. The act also stipulates that if the council believes it appropriate or a petition is submitted by at least one-fifth of a council area holding more than 3,000 registered voters or one quarter if less, a public consultation must be held.

The interaction between the national government and local government is both informal and formal. Formally, the local government is consulted on key issues that affect them.

Informally, the Local Government Good Governance (LGGG) Working Group, holding representatives of all local government key stakeholders, meet regularly to discuss good governance matter such as improvement of local government functions and operations in the

light of the shortcomings delineated in the National Audit Office's report 24.7 on the workings of local councils

Councils also have a duty to the citizens to provide them with advice and information, such as information on consumer and welfare rights, transport and tourist facilities. Consultations with the public must be held on building schemes, plans and traffic schemes which may affect their area (Clgf, n.d.).

2.14 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

The public, in general, isn't an organized body able to have continuous responses and reactions. Therefore, NGOs and organized civic groups should be involved when planning of a project is considered because in this way the ideas and concerns can be channelled with collectively to safeguard the citizen's interest in planning matters and to form and develop a continuous public communication with the planning administration. Giddens (1998) views these groups as linked to the development of civic virtues and grassroot politics contributing to the 'democratization of democracy'. Their activity in the domain of planning is often cited as a promoter of the process of democratization.

'Citizens increasingly act politically by participating directly, through civil society mechanisms, in policy debates that particularly interest them. This constitutes a change from a representative to participatory democracy' (Fox & Stoett, 2016). Underlying this principle, a situation of grand complexity is seen reflecting the different forms taken by citizen participation within the public sphere. Consistently, CSOs are diverse, holding different constituencies, mandates and modus operandi. The World Bank (2007) defines 'civil society

organizations' as including; community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), foundations, labour unions, charitable organizations, professional organizations etc.

NGO activity is related to the right of state accountability and for the acknowledgement of unique values and identities. These provide the common citizen with the tools to fight 'for inclusiveness in democratic procedures, for transparency in governmental transactions, and... for the right of citizens to be heard in matters affecting their interests' (Douglass & Friedmann, 1998).

One must begin to think how CSOs can act as a channel for citizen participation in big infrastructural projects. The key question is one of public legitimacy as CSOs articulate their constituent's voices to varying degrees.

In Israel, public exclusion from official planning operations and restricted statutory options resulted in the development of public participation through voluntary channels created by citizens, private sector planners, academics, and non-governmental organizations (Alfasi, 2003).

In urban setting civil society is particularly seen as being active (Friedmann, 1998). This is due to the access of planning issues like public services, housing locations and infrastructures are of distinctive interest in these areas. Innes & Booher (2000) see collaborative groups becoming an influential source on planning decisions in the US and Europe.

2.15 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

When referring to NGOs, the Council of Europe (n.d) defines them as being ‘voluntary self-governing bodies or organisations established to pursue the essentially non-profit-making objectives of their founders or members.’ NGO’s are usually comprised of professionals which can communicate easily with local government officials and in turn can be very useful to CBOs as they provide advice as well as form links between organizations and the public.

A danger is noted that NGOs may supplant local governments and weaken an already tenuous trust between government and civil society.

Sabine Lang (2013) has demonstrated how NGOs can participate positively in motivating and representing citizens opinions but often encounter political and financial pressures to make institutional advocacy a priority at the expense of public engagement. Many CSOs have been affected by the triple tendencies of institutionalization, professionalization, and bureaucratization, collectively called ‘NGOization.’ These CSOs are often distant from their members and do not faithfully express their views, and therefore they lack democratic legitimacy. Lang (2013) also alludes to the phenomenon of ‘astroturf NGOs,’ which are tools of private business or other entities that are devised to hide their real purpose by ‘wrapping themselves in a cloak of public engagement’.

In Malta there are several non-governmental organizations aiming to safeguard the Maltese Islands. In 1965, the first environmental NGO titled ‘Din l-Art Helwa’ (This Sweet Land’) was founded and it promptly engaged in a successful campaign aiming to reduce the hotel height that was being built beneath the Valletta bastions. The reason the said organization

was created was for the protection of the country's monumental landscape. Its two declared roles are that it acts as a pressure group to restrain misguided speculation', and the second claims to have a National Trust function. Within its work it has tried to oppose historic fortifications being leased for commercial purposes and historic houses being destroyed to construct flats (Caruana Curran, 1993). It has aided in the restoration of important sites, such as the Birmiftuh Chapel near Malta's International Airport. Whilst this NGO is still active, since its inception many other NGOs have taken up their torches.

2.16 Community Based Organizations (CBOs)

Community Based Organizations are local non-profit groups which on a local level work together to generate improvements within a community. Usually they are locally formed, locally staffed and actions made are location-specific to the area they operate in. Most CBOs are volunteer organizations with limited paid positions as funds are delegated towards the completion of the groups' objectives. Their local status limits their access to resources, this depends on geographical location as well as the community it may serve.

In the past CBOs have shown themselves to be able to take on many of the roles usually undertaken by Local Governments; these include preparing socio-economic studies, contribution collection and repaying loans as well as researching land ownerships and negotiating with land owners. CBOs with appropriate training and authorization have undertaken on-site infrastructure through community contracts (Oakley, 2001; Tournee and van Esch, 2001), often at less cost than governmental negotiated contracts. Increased participation in the local project arena has been dubbed as community driven development (CDD).

The key advantages of CDD include; (1) solution being more responsive to local needs, (2) costs are lowered, (3) improvement of design and implementation due to ground-level knowledge, (4) sense of ownership leads to better use of facilities and O&M, (5) improved cost recovery from the community, (6) empowerment of the poor, (7) governance strengthening, (8) sensitization and capacity building of local government and community institutions and (9) democratization through participation (Viloria-Williams, 2006).

In Malta there is not the availability of such a structure, organizations like this one would have to apply to become an NGO. If they decide not to, no funds can be collected from the public or otherwise.

2.17 Other Stakeholders;

2.17.1 Landowners and Developers

Landowners can be both governmental agencies or private persons. They serve as a driving force in the tourist and economy sectors in Malta. Real estate developers often emerge as a major enemy to the conservation of land and heritage in Malta because whilst they aim to expand the tourist and building industries, rural land is seen as a commercial resource that can be made to yield great profit. Furthermore, Malta's clientalistic political culture allows for building permits to be given to political clients furthering rampant building and subversion of building regulation enforcement (Mallia, 1994).

High level of development pressure is exerted from both the corporate and individual level, and their financial imperatives for speedy decision making and implementation causes the historic buildings and environments conservation to be viewed as an obstruction to new

development and improvements. This is evident through the demolition of old houses and usage of ODZ land to create large-scale developments like hotels, plazas, sky-scraping blocks of flats and office spaces exerting further pressure on the islands historic fabric.

The Malta Developers Association (MDA) brings a majority of estate agents, private real estate developers and any other interested parties together to bring about development and growth of this sector in the Maltese economy. The association links private real estate developers to relevant state authorities and to customers. Furthermore, through several activities and initiatives they promote responsible development and ownership of real estate in Malta through legislative advocacy, educational programs and professional networking opportunities. Responsible and sustainable development is called upon by the MDA creating jobs and benefits the communities in which its members work and live.

2.18 Stakeholder Issues

Flyvbjerg (1998), brought forward issues of collaborative approaches to planning through the evaluation of an Aarlborg case in Denmark. By observing the different stakeholders' actions he demonstrated how inspite of efforts to achieve a collaborative approach to city centre planning, it was plundered. The analysis of strategies and tactics used by stakeholders emphasizes how power is not only based on the use of force and law, rather it is seen in the subtleties of 'real' life politics. He looks onto how power is exercised rather than on who or where the power lies in the planning process. The focus is 'on what rationalities are at work when those who govern, govern' (Flyvbjerg, 1998). The systematic power analysis suggests that political regimes like representative democracies safeguard power by using alliances and legal rights beyond the level of participation, management and debate. Through this lens, power is 'omnipresent', situated and relational, making it that planning and participation are

imbued with power, tactics, strategies and the 'micro-physics of power' (Ploger, 2001). Therefore, participatory processes relying on better decisions reached on sound arguments fail to address how participants strategy-tactics are embedded and reproduced in even apparent 'collaborative' forms of planning (Phelps and Tewdwr-Jones, 2000).

Theoretical perspectives on public participation and the planning process places planners as having a crucial role as planning is a matter of executing formal and informal power. Healey (1997), Innes (1995) and Renn et al. (2013), sees collaborative planning as needing to develop to extend the 'planners' responsibilities 'outwards' to the public and not just 'upwards' to elected representatives.' Blowers (2000) concurs with this and sees the planners' task, as not only an agent of power, but also as a part of societies reform. With this, ethical questions come about as well as the question of probity (Campbell and Marshall, 2000). Other researchers, however, point to the 'de-skilling' of professional planners that this approach seems to infer (Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger, 1998).

Assumptions about the public and their representation through the stakeholder groups are made when thinking about collaborative approaches to planning as seeking to determine better decisions through deliberative debate. The representative legitimacy of such approaches usually relies on appeals to the presence of members of a wide range of stakeholder groups. The political legitimacy of the said groups is still concerning because the sources of their authorisation and accountability are unclear (O'Neill, 2001) and therefore postulations that such groups express the opinion of the public at large are dubious.

Another assumption of collaborative approaches is that consensus will occur when dialogue is premised on cooperation and mutual respect (Bloomfield et al., 2001). It is unclear that

social cooperation comes from the plurality of reason which exists in modern society (Pellizzoni, 2001). Looking at what has been discussed, there is grounds for believing that it is unlikely that collaborative approaches bring about consensus. Stakeholder forums may generate outcomes that are mutually satisfactory to all participants as well as publicly legitimate if agreement is given by relevant institutions to take material account of the outcome of public consultations (Clark et al., 1998; 2001). However concerns remain about how more participative forms of democracy can work effectively and legitimately alongside traditional and representative forms.

2.19 Power/Knowledge Trap

The relationship between control, social structure and planning has been widely reviewed (Forester, 1989; Harvey, 1985, 1989). It has also been generally recognized that knowledge, both professional and official, can be utilized as a powerful tool in influencing planning. Fenster (2002) illustrates how knowledge manipulation in planning can lead to what is referred to as the 'misuse of knowledge'.

Fenster (2002) studied cases where important information during planning activities in Israel were disregarded; this was done to gain control over minorities, particularly women. In a 2001 conference, in Tel Aviv entitled 'Whose Power? Whose Knowledge?' connections between power relations and professional knowledge in planning were reviewed. As the misuse of professional knowledge is associated with power relations, the majority of conference attendees, planners as well as representatives of interest groups, reached an agreement that distortions of information could be minimized through public participation in planning processes and in turn lessen administrative control over fragile groups.

Sandercock (1998) brings out many questions upon the planner-community discussion. He suggested that the idea that planners are committed to the community is taken for granted but he is sceptical about what this commitment means in practice. He enquires how can the planner avoid the power/knowledge trap and if it is possible for the planner to 'crossover' by replacing his/her personal and professional identity, status and viewpoint with an absolute loyalty to the community.

'An optimal critical distance' may be needed amongst planner and community activities, giving space for professional expertise and considerations without impairing the essential mutual trust needed (Friedman, 1987). Forester (1999) believes that planners should neither be 'experts not judges nor bureaucrats' but rather be 'mediators as critical friends'. The public participation practice has been used quite extensively, involving itself in distinctions between 'crossing over', 'critical distance' or 'mediation-friendship'.

Planners employed need certain professional skills to fully do the public participatory part of the job. These include professionalism, mediating, personal ability, ethical behaviour, negotiation and group therapy skills and former experience. These should all be taken into consideration and regarded as extremely important. Considering the public inherent disorganized state mentioned before, the planner-mediator is seen as a main actor in public sessions and this might lead to dependency. This is identified within participatory activities for Bedouins in unrecognized villages (Dinero, 1998; Fenster, 1999, 2002), where planners are seen endorsing the public involvement but still maintain the expert status. These planners proclaim their commitment to the public but are equally invested to the organization they work for or/and their professional status.

2.20 Visioning and the power trap

Shiple & Newkirk (1998) examined the term 'vision' and they found that until the late 1980s it was utilized interchangeably with 'plan' or 'master plan'; later in the 1990s its meaning expanded representing 'a clear idea of the quality of life' (Hall, 1995), fair operational dimension, and, at times, other abstract concepts.

Shiple & Newkirk (1998) demonstrated that visioning is linked to public participation. Visioning practices are usually taken from the business management sector where they are considered as tools for establishing leadership and augmenting productivity. These types of processes may create illusions of real critical involvement, but in fact it obscures tensions that exist between the planners and community, concealing the magnitude of administrative control.

Additionally, certain doubts arose whether these said visions have legitimacy in using their influence on spatial legislation. As Shiple & Newkirk (1998) warn, planners are not elected representatives, therefore they should be careful to avoid the use of visions, even unintentionally, as a way of acquiring a leading position in society or as a means 'to avoid or manipulate the democratic process'.

By using visioning exercises, individuals are given the impression that they are being heard fully and are contributing to the future. Harvey (1985) suggests the idea of designing 'the ideology of planning concept'. He asserts that 'part of the planner's task is to spot both present and future dangers and to head off, if possible, an incipient crisis of the built environment'. Thus, Harvey continues to explain that unconsciously planners are trained to maintain the existing status quo and protect the built environment from any shocks. This

means that planners have a commitment to a social harmony ideology, placing them in the roles of ‘righters of wrongs,’ ‘correctors of imbalances,’ and ‘defenders of the public interest’.

2.21 Participation Techniques

There are different forms of public participation, the most common are those of traditional formal hearings and comment periods (Cox, 2006; Harrington, Curtis & Black, 2008), other alternatives modes of participation have emerged throughout the years, mainly, as dialogue-based forms of community collaboration (Daniels & Walker, 2001; Heath, 2007). Traditional forms have been criticized for being administrative (Walker, 2004) and lacking the needed space for informed dialogue (Senecah, 2004), alternative modes pledge to be genuinely inclusive and deliberative processes, where stakeholders come together to identify problems and find solutions (Depoe & Delicath, 2004; Fischer, 2000; Innes & Booher, 2004; Parkins & Mitchell, 2008).

2.22 High-level Panel

A high-level panel is a panel made up of a group of individuals who are high-up in their respective organisations. Each member of the panel will have expertise in an aspect of the subject matter for discussion. The panel will discuss the problems related to environmental and planning issues. They will hear the complaints and proposals and the attempt to find solutions.

High-level panels are created by national and international organisations such as the United Nations, European Union or governments of states. An example is a high-level panel set up in

India by the Indian Environment Ministry to propose and monitor air pollution. This seven-member committee, headed by the environment secretary, will look at short-term and long-term measures.

Such high-level panel may be used to discuss planning issues of a particular complex and large projects. The members of this panel will bring forth complaints and feedback originating from their respective organisations.

2.23 Fora

The most successful online discussion forums usually are well moderated, facilitated and clearly organized around specific issues; a clear connection to these is seen to policy formation and decision-making (Wright 2006; Ferguson 2008).

In the UK, the Labour Government, in 2000, hosted a large-scale discussion forum using the Downing Street Website. They set up a ‘Speaker’s Corner’ and ‘Policy Forum’, which were designed, it was said, to provide a ‘two-way link between government and people’. These forums saw great results from the public, drawing high level of participation and showed a great want from the public to discuss issues online. However, implementation problems were encountered. Wright’s (2006) evaluation of the forums documents found significant concerns about inappropriate and abusive postings and allegations of illegitimate censorship, stemming from the lack of a well-designed and well-advertised moderation policy. A failure of linking forums credibly to policy formation was noted. Whilst certain efforts were made to respond to discussions, only around 0.27% received official responses in the Speaker’s Corner – and

these were issues about the discussion board itself (Wright, 2006). This early initiative relative failure should not conclude that online deliberation is bound to fail.

Early literature on online discussions' capabilities to be of high quality have been pessimistic, studies indicated that the discussions in question were often impolite, inundated by a minority of frequent and in some cases aggressive contributors, and were limited and fragmented too, with 'existing views reinforced not renegotiated' (Hill and Hughes 1998; Davis 1999; Wilhelm 2000; Dahlgren 2005).

Recent literature has indicated the difference that design and context can make to its nature (Wright and Street 2007; Coleman and Moss 2012). When the design of forums is created while keeping in mind deliberation and by skilful moderators using balanced and transparent methods to manage and facilitate, an often-proven successful outcome can be seen using online deliberation. In fact, researchers on online deliberation have reported positive results of how online discussions 'can widen participants' repertoire of arguments, introduce them to new perspectives, and lead to some shifts in preferences' (Price and Cappella 2002; Janssen and Kies 2005; Coleman and Blumler 2009).

Smaller and more structured deliberative initiatives have been proved to be more successful than large-scale, all-purpose discussion forums. Examples include the Womenspeak consultation which was designed for female domestic abuse survivors to give testimony on to policy interested parliamentary matters (Coleman 2004). An average of 1,567 hits per day in one-month duration was recorded on the forum. Participant had a demographically typical spread of ages and ethnic backgrounds. Importantly the participants were not the 'usual suspects' like party members or lobbyists. Furthermore, the amount of genuine dialogue and

information exchange recorded on the forum was outstanding: recurrent posters didn't dominate the debate to the exclusion of others and rather than contributors ignoring preceding inputs, as can often be the case, 82% of the contributions posted were answers to a previous message.

Recent UK parliamentary and government forums have reported cautiously optimistic results, including The Defence Select Committee's forum looking into service families educational provision and the 2005 to 2007 Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to discuss various issues in relating to local government (Ferguson 2008). Ferguson's (2008) reports on the Defence Committee Forum saw an increase in involvement from committee members, remarking that 'the engagement that took place between the MPs and citizens in the Defence Committee forum was more genuine and purposeful than in previous parliamentary forums. User satisfaction levels were higher and more was made of the forum contributions when the Committee came to make its recommendations'.

Some political analysts have interrogated even these more structured deliberative initiatives because of the comparatively low levels of public participation they attract. They noted that 'lower-threshold' activities such as e-petitioning attract much higher participation rate than deliberative initiatives because the latter requires a higher level of activity and commitment (Chadwick, 2009).

Research in this area has indicated that higher status groups are more likely to participate and voice their opinions in online deliberation (Price and Cappella 2002; Price 2006). Mostly, citizens prefer to keep a spectator role in forums, rather than be active participants. Online deliberation needs substantial support, investment, and outreach work if it is going to offer a

meaningful, diverse and socially inclusive stage to those voices that would not usually be heard. Continuing efforts to guarantee participatory parity and the inclusion of diverse and common voices are vital to the development of e-democracy.

Social media, enables social interaction and political discussion and has the potential to operate as a public domain “a network for communicating information and points of view” (Habermas, 1989). It could also provide an chance for the common people in general to gather around specific issues and connect with them in depth (Chadwick, 2009).

2.24 Consultation

This method invites the public to give its opinion, comments, views and feedback on specific agenda and issues. There are different potential methods for consultation to be done but it should have a defined process, the inclusiveness of all affected and enough time for comments and feedback to be given. Consultation is a reactive way of participation because the people get involved when they are called upon by the public authority.

Its useful tools and mechanisms include:

- Online consultation such as web platforms or in person meetings such as focus group, panels, debates in public, seminars led by experts. There will be discussion on the preparation, execution and appraisal of the policy with the public
- Polls, online surveys or questionnaires to collect interests and submissions from stakeholders are the mechanisms used to follow progress
- The use of committee sessions and wider open plenary meetings to ensure debates during the decision-making process.

When organizing consultations on specific issues or plans all accompanying and related documents (ex. Relevant impact assessments, implementation studies, etc.) must be made available. Access to these documents would need to be given as early as possible to facilitate meaningful input. If specific documents are confidential then authorities could give summaries and address issues that will be included in the plan. This tactic would save time and decrease potential disagreements later on. Additionally, the public will be consulted on the subsequent draft as well. This explanation is targeted towards consultations on a draft law or regulation though it may still be applicable to infrastructural plans.

In Malta (Development Planning Act, 2016), when any development falls under Schedule 1 the applicant must request the Executive Chairperson to conduct screenings which in turn will be carried out in consultation by external consultees (Article 3.1). Within eight weeks of the request the screening process will be finalized (Article 3.4) and in turn the Executive Chairperson will notify the applicant and the responsible architect with a screening letter including ‘a reference to those major issues, policies and regulations with which the proposed development does not conform’ (Article 3.5a), ‘additional submissions, studies, assessments and documentation required’ (Article 3.5b) as well as other information pertinent to the application for development passing. If the requests brought out from the screening process are not complied with after the allotted time the applications will not be validated (Article 3.8). Furthermore, if any of the plans are revised the Executive Chairperson would have to notify the external consultees and any other consultee where applicable (Article 12.2) and their recommendations will follow (Article 12.3).

The external consultees consist of: the Superintendent of Cultural Heritage, the National Commission Persons with Disability (KNPD), the Environment and Resources Authority, the

Occupational Health and Safety Authority, Transport Malta, the Water Services Corporation, Enemalta Corporation, Local Councils within the location of the applications boundaries, the Civil Protection Department, the Malta Tourism Authority, the Environmental Health Directorate and any other external consultees with the Authorities representatives namely the National Commission Persons with Disability (KNPD) officer (Schedule 3).

The 'Plans and Programmes (Public Participation) Regulations' in Malta provide 'for public participation in respect of the drawing up of certain plans and programmes relating to the environment and amending, with regard to public participation and access to justice' (Article 1.2).

Article 3 stipulates that the Environment and Resources Authority shall ensure that:

- a) 'the public is informed.... about any proposals for such plans or programmes or for their modification or review and that relevant information about such proposals is made available to the public including *inter alia* information about the right to participate in decision making and about the competent authority to which comments or questions may be submitted'
- b) 'the public is entitled to express comments and opinions when all options are open before decisions on the plans and programmes are made'
- c) 'the public is entitled to express comments and opinions when all options are open before decisions on the plans and programmes are made'
- d) 'having examined the comments and opinions expressed by the public, the competent authority makes reasonable efforts to inform the public about the decisions taken and the reasons and considerations upon which those decisions are based, including information about the public participation process.'

The subsequent article talks about the Environment and Resource Authority needing to identify those from the public are entitled to participate in accordance to regulation 3(1). This includes relevant non-governmental organizations meeting any requirements enforced under national law like those advocating for environmental protection (Regulation 4.1). Public participation arrangements will be determined by the Environment and Resource Authority for the public to prepare and participate effectually (Regulation 4.2). This regulation also ensures that reasonable time-frames are to be provided for all public participatory stages required by the regulations listed (Regulation 4.3).

Furthermore, the exceptions to the rule include it not being applicable to plans and programmes that serve national defence or in the cases of civil emergencies (Regulation 5.1). Additionally, the regulations shouldn't apply when public participation procedures are carried out under the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations or the Water Policy Framework Regulations (Regulation 5.2).

2.25 Referenda

Referenda have changed minds, policy and governments, all citizens have the right to vote on issues that may affect them when a government calls for such measures to be placed. This form of direct democracy seeks to give each and every citizen a voice in the matters brought forward.

Direct democracy has been seen as useful in two of ways; Iris, Bohet and Frey (1994) have shown the positive political impact of direct democracy on policy outputs and results in particular through a higher intensity of discussion during the pre-referendum phase debates

amongst the public and between politicians and the electorate is made stronger, making an overall information level increase. During this time alternatives are put forward, evaluated and a subset of relevant options by the citizens are created. The communication process restricts the policy-relevant actors freedom of action and in turn limits free-riding and rent-seeking. Furthermore, the finding out of preferences through articulation enable bargaining processes with may seek mutual benefits.

Arguments have been made that referenda could work as an additional veto player (Moser, 1998) which in fast changing environments blocks necessary and significant changes from being enacted and reduces economic and institutional flexibility (Brunetti and Straubhaar 1996). Another point raised was that referenda might aid extremist parties to pass populist laws or gain political power (Luthardt and Waschkuhn, 1997; Henser, von Randow & Watermann, 1998). This concurs with Olson (1982) who believes that powerful interest groups might instrumentalize direct democracy institutions for their own ends, often making the economy and state more rigid initiating a ‘decline of nations’.

In Malta, a total of 7 referenda have taken place; these dealt with both social and political issues. The ‘Referenda Act’ (1973) shows the ins and outs of such a process, it stipulates that; five to ten people, the referendums proposers, must sign the declaration before all others for it to be applicable (Article 15.2), the proposers must indicate any personal interest they may have towards the said referendum (Article). These applications must be served on; the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, the proposers of the referendum and any other person creating an application in accordance with sub-article 1. Everybody mentioned have a right to reply in the registry of the Constitutional Court. The Constitutional Court will then decide if a hearing for the submissions is needed. Once they decide it is so, a date and time is decided for

the hearing to occur and it will be published in the Malta Government Gazette. Referenda are to be conducted, directed and supervised by the Electoral Commission (Article 7). The notice and date of the referendum writ by the President of Malta is to be published in the newspaper under The Chief Electoral Commissioner's request. The format of the question must be clear and understandable with a 'yes' or 'no' answer on the ballot paper.

2.26 Petitions

Petitions have been an age-old practice. In the United Kingdom, letters were sent to Kings and a certain number of the earliest legislation forms were initially petitions that were agreed upon by the sovereign, predating parliament. In fact, Parliament's origins stem from the King's Council meetings that had considered the said petitions. E-Petitions have transformed the platform making it accessible for all to participate.

In the United Kingdom, the House of Commons sees public petitions as praying 'for an alteration of the general law or the reconsideration of a general administrative decision, and they may also pray for redress of local or personal grievances' (May, 2004). E-Petitions have seen a great results as Chadwick (2009) argues, 'if judged in terms of the number of participants, the UK Prime Minister's E-Petitions website is one of the most successful e-democracy projects of all time'. Quickly becoming a 'part of the online repertoire of citizen groups in the UK'.

All through the UK, e-petitions are used as a significant part of their democratic communications ecology. They are seen in the Welsh Assembly, Scottish Parliament and at their local level. Locally, petitions are created on the UK Government and Parliament site. After meeting the criteria, the Petitions Committee would review and investigate the issue

raised, they have the power to press for action from government or Parliament. If the petition receives 10,000 signatures, it gets a response from the government whilst at 100,000 signatures it would be considered for a Parliamentary debate (UK Government and Parliament, n.d.). This form of people power mechanism broadens the scope for political agenda setting. The UK isn't the only country that has ratified such methods; countries like Australia have taken up the torch.

E-Petitioning contributes to realizing democratic outcomes by providing citizens the chance to raise new perspectives, place issues on the agenda and stimulates public engagement. The problem arises when we look into the value of such initiatives in isolation. Like referenda the democratic communication in petitions is restricted to individualistic inputs, based on 'yes' and 'no' replies with no room for citizens to contest, refine, or combine one another's ideas. Without inclusive public deliberation it is in peril of falling victim to unreflective groupthink.

In Malta, no such mechanism exists, the extent of petitioning lends only to the individual's mechanisms. There is a set time were one can appeal, the Planning Authority then reviews such requests and either declines such petitioning or seeks to amend plans. Though as mentioned earlier locals may petition through their local councils or their member of parliament.

2.27 Dialogue Matters

Participatory processes have different aims ranging from either being seen as an effective tool aiming keep citizens more informed or as a way of them having an influence on verdicts (Buchy & Hoverman, 2000; Forester, 1989; Parkins & Mitchell, 2008). In both cases,

researchers and practitioners need to know what goes on during participatory meetings so that they will be able to assess and develop processes towards a more deliberative direction.

Organizations recreate and transform social and political relations (Forester, 1989).

According to Hardy, Palmer & Philips (2000), this recreation happens through discourse, because through communication a social reality is created by generating ideas, relationships and theories that assist us to comprehend the world. Certain types of discourses within organizations are privileged, by being technical (Keränen, 2007), specialized in administrative efficiency (Grubbs, 2000) or politically correct (Kersten, 2000). This way of framing the world can act as a suppressant to other perspectives and the persistence these types of communicative practices can be explained by how the interests of the dominant actors are served (Martin, 2007).

Deetz (1992) believes that democracy within the participatory sense needs the capacity to be able to solve problems mutually by exploring different points of views. A democratic society is dependent on the encouragement of argumentation and debate where various power configurations have closed discussions down (Deetz, 1992). Deetz (1992) asserts that the norms within communication and democracy do not define the direction for how development should happen, rather it gives a way to promote conflict and discussion which in turn could provide meaningful change in everyday micro practices.

Habermas (1987) suggests an ideal speech situation where participants have equal chance to challenge the validity of the others statements and work together to develop their arguments through communicative rationality. In these situations, there is no better than a powerful force of a better argument. If the conditions of the ideal speech situation aren't upheld,

genuine conversation is precluded and communication distorted. As Habermas (1987) puts it, systematic distortion is the confusion between actions situated to reach an understanding (communicative action) and actions positioned for success (strategic action).

Deetz (1992) outlined eight key processes through which conflict and opposing ideals can be stifled, these are: disqualification, naturalization, neutralization, topical avoidance, subjectification of experience, plausible deniability, legitimization, and pacification. The process of disqualification sees individuals excluded and views disqualified by for example claims of expertise and non-expertise. This type of categorization is able to exclude an expressed view from further discussion and in turn prevents the development of mutual understanding. Within the naturalization process a single view of the subject matter is central, frozen, 'the way the thing is', the socially constructed is presented as given in nature. Examples of naturalization of events are that "males are more aggressive," "politicians are corrupt," or "environmentalists are too idealistic," so that the event as such is not further discussed or investigated. Neutralization's meaning is that a single system of valuing is the only possibility, the world being viewed as it 'really' is. Claims of objectivity here may conceal values and activities. In topical avoidance, potential conflict creating subjects are avoided during discussion. Here we see that if people avoid or are prevented from speaking about certain issues the problems cannot be then identified and held accountable for. Rather the interaction must be structured around such matters because power is often exerted by limiting the array of decision making to safe topics. Within the subjectification of experience meaning is personified, serving to prohibit questioning of routines and experience. Expressed viewpoints that don't stick to the status quo may be shut down as its 'just a matter of opinion', stopping discussions where they should begin. With plausible deniability exercise in control through ambiguous messages and deniability of messages is expressed. This form

prohibits critical examination and removes the speaker's responsibility, as he/she did not stand by what they said, or took it back. Legitimization happens by utilizing higher order explanatory concepts. For instance, ideals like the value of religion, hard work or expertise can aid to make sense of difficult situations, while concurrently concealing contradictions and preventing individuals from making their own choices. The last closure, pacification, occurs when apparent reasonable attempts to engage in conflictual discussion, diverts it. Discussions are found to have been often diverted when participants can act locally towards complex issues. Another way pacification can occur is through the implication that issue is trivial and not worth discussing. All in all, these eight closures shut down perspectives and block development for mutual understanding.

2.28 Information Processing

The assimilation of people's attitudes into the plans brings about another issue to the voluntary participation processes. However direct participation is an elusive business even when goodwill exists. How information gathered is analysed is in itself significant and meaningful (Forester, 1989; Innes, 1996, 1998), as well as problematic. This makes the interpretation of collected data another weakness for public participation. Information gathered from public comprises of various scales and types of images and ideas, some specific and others general and abstract. Raw data needs to be converted to explicit planning models ex. Blueprints and policy papers, which will consist of making 'minor' decisions, restraining biases and evaluating ideas.

In Israel they found that at points, discussions were detailed and concrete whilst in many other instances broad and general points were made. Therefore, the translating task of the public's wishes into specifics are seen as a huge task even for professionals.

3. Methodology

The objective of conducting research is to discover answers to questions through the use of scientific procedures. The objectives list for research includes; gaining familiarity with a phenomenon or to attain new insights, to accurately portray characteristics of individuals, situations or groups and to determine the frequency with which something occurs or to find out if there is an association with something else.

In order to evaluate the democratic deficit in the planning process of big projects in Malta, I shall be investigating the ‘Manoel Island Project’ as a case study and the main stakeholders who were involved in this process.

The aims of this study are as follows:

- To find out if there is a deficit in the (participatory) planning process using the Manoel Island Project as a main case study
- To explore different options of public participation with stakeholders to try and solve the democratic deficit (if there is one) by creating another layer of defence or framework that could help such a process

To achieve this, I shall be using a qualitative approach method by analyzing newspaper articles and other documents related to the ‘Manoel Island Project’ and e-mail interviews with key stakeholders.

3.1 Data Collection

3.1.1 Literature Review

Material related to infrastructural planning processes, participatory processes themselves and policies were gathered using articles, books and legislation. The literature provides the backbone for the argument set which we can then build upon.

3.1.2 The Manoel Island Case Study

Newspapers articles were scrutinized to investigate the happenings during the planning process of the project to find out if there is a democratic deficit in the participatory planning process. The parameters for information gathering were set between January 2017 to date. The Manoel Island Project started in late 2016 though its beginnings can be traced back to 1999 when the lease agreement was set.

3.1.3 Stakeholder Interviews

Following a literature review on the subject and keeping in mind the aims and solution-based end result an email interview was formulated to gather data. This was distributed to the main stakeholders in the infrastructural planning process.

3.2 Online/In Print Newspapers

The *Times of Malta* is a national daily newspaper in English and the print version has the widest circulation in the country. It has rather conservative views and is found both in

print and online form and reports on both national and international news. Its 'Facebook' page has an online following of around 212,220 people.

The *Malta Independent* is a national daily online and in print newspaper with liberal to conservative views. The online 'Facebook' page has a following of around 81,519 people. *MaltaToday* is an independent online liberal newspaper reporting on national affairs. It is out in print every Wednesday and Sunday. The 'Facebook' page has a following of around 170,226 people.

Lovin Malta is an online blog style news provider reporting on Maltese interests and news. It has an online 'Facebook' following of around 255,351 people.

Newspapers directly linked to political parties or their affiliations were excluded to avoid reporting bias. These included *Kulhadd*, *In-Nazzjon Tagħna*, *Il-Mument*, *L-Orizzont* and *it-Torċa*.

3.2 Participants

With regards to sampling, the participant selection strategy should be integrated into the overall logic of any study (Punch, 2004). In qualitative studies relatively small and purposively selected sample may be employed (Miles and Huberman, 1994) and its aim is to increase depth (rather than breath) of understanding (Palinkas et al., 2015).

To this end purposive sampling is 'used to select respondents that are most likely to yield appropriate and useful information' (Kelly, 2010: 317) and is a way of identifying and selecting cases that will use limited research resources effectively (Palinkas et al., 2015).

This sampling strategy moves away from random sampling techniques and are approaches

to make sure that specific kinds of cases of those that could possibly be included are part of the final sample in the research study. The reasoning behind taking on such a strategy is based on the supposition that, given the aims and objectives of the study, specific kinds of people may hold important and different views about the ideas and matters at question and therefore need to be included in the sample (Mason, 2002; Robinson, 2014; Trost, 1986). Using this sampling technique seven stakeholder groups in large-scale infrastructural planning process were identified, these were namely; The Planning Authority (PA), The Environment Resource Authority (ERA), The Developers Sector (The Developers Association and MIDI), Non-Governmental Organizations (Din l-Art Helwa, Friends of the Earth and Flimkien għal-Ambjent Aħjar), Local Councils (Gżira Local Council), Foundations (The Manoel Island Foundation) and Community Based Organizations (Inħobbu l-Gżira). Each stakeholder mentioned have had a part to play in the ‘Manoel Island Project’ planning process. It was hence determined that the above were the most suited persons to answer questions regarding this study’s aims and objectives. A representative from each stakeholder group mentioned was asked to answer the email interview. No other restrictions were found; the representative could have come from any age group, ethnicity, and sex. Furthermore, no incentive was given.

3.3 Design

The choice of method deployed depends on the research problems’ nature. Morgan and Smitch (1980), argue that the suitability of a research method comes from the social phenomena’s nature that is to be investigated. For this topic and aims of this study, qualitative analysis was decided upon as its goal is to unearth the emerging themes, concepts, patterns, understandings and insights (Patton, 2002). Qualitative studies use analytic frameworks which are networks of linked classifications and concepts in order to

understand the underlying process, which is a sequence of constructs or events and how they relate to one another. In the end, qualitative data analysis aims to establish a shared appreciation that forms a coherent structure, a unified whole. To do this, it is guided by the philosophical assumptions of qualitative inquiry: To understand a complex phenomenon, you must consider the multiple ‘realities’ experienced by the participants themselves—the ‘insider perspectives’. To this end the stakeholder’s opinion, expertise and past experience on the infrastructural planning process must be found. For these reasons a 40-question open-ended email interview was created.

Meho (2006) has indicated that previous literature has demonstrated that email interviews reduce if not eliminate issues associated with telephone or face-to-face interviews. The response quality through online research has also been shown to be similar if not better than responses gathered using traditional methods (Descombe 2003; as cited in Meho, 2006). However, the lack of face-to-face interaction in this medium may lead to misinterpretation and miscommunication. Considering this, questions had to be self-explanatory and as straightforward as possible. Attention to detail is required to reduce ambiguity and improve specificity without narrowing the participants’ interpretations and response constraint (Meho, 2006). Unlike traditional interviews, direct probing is not allowed in email-interviews though this could somewhat be done by using follow-up emails. This may possibly result in missing data as not all interviewees may want to respond. Although the lack of probing may increase chances of information loss it can also play a major role in the improvement of data quality. This occurs because the researcher is not being limited to probes coming to mind during face-to-face interviews and it also gives the participants time to think about the answers before hitting ‘send’ (Curasi, 2001; as cited in Meho, 2006).

The email interview opened up with a getting to know you question to ascertain their role within the organization.

Questions 2 to 8 were set to investigate the main participatory process in Malta, consultation, which is used in infrastructural planning in Malta. These questions were designed to find out what the interviewees think about consultation, how it can be improved, whether they believe in the process, if it lacked effectiveness, existed as a formality and if the public was involved enough in such a process. These questions will provide insight into what their beliefs and attitudes are with regards to the current consultation process in Malta.

Questions 9 to 13 were set to find out what levels of dialogue is believed to exist between the different entities. This is an important factor that was found to be crucial in the participatory process as illustrated in the literature review. ‘Why do you believe so?’ questions were added. In this way, whether they answer ‘yes’ or ‘no’ further discussion is stimulated. This also indicated what level of dialogue the others seem to have with each other as well as the general public.

Question 14 was set as a breaker question between the similarly structured questions. This involved asking the respondents if they believed that if a framework were to be introduced for participation processes in the lifecycle of big infrastructural projects, it would be effective. The reasoning behind such a question is to look into the outcome of such a study.

Questions 15 to 19 deals with the representation of interests aspect in relation to most organizations with the general public. This line of questioning is important to see if the interests are aligned with those who they are supposedly meant to serve as well as showing their opinion on the other organizations.

Questions 20 and 21 are meant to open a window into the democratic deficit which has been proposed in the literature review. The respondents were asked if they believe that there is a democratic deficit in the process as well as how they believe people could be given more of a say and make the process more inclusive. The responses of this could not only provide insight on the current process but also what can be done to improve the current and future processes.

Questions 22 to 29 are about different modes of public participation that may take place in infrastructural planning. Question 22 investigates petitioning in Malta. There have been many petitions signed relating to infrastructure due to this; questions on their consideration are pertinent to such an investigation. The following question asked how many people would have to sign a petition to prevent such a development. This was asked to see the future of petitioning as a mode of public participation in infrastructure. The next three questions considered public fora, community-based organizations and referenda as a possible form of the participation process in infrastructural planning. For each of these questions a 'please explain' notation was added to delve deeper into their answers.

Question 25 then asked which of these options or a multi-model they would prefer to be in our planning system or if they would rather leave as is and why. They were then asked if they believe the public would be interested in participating in these processes.

Furthermore, we inquired what concerns they may have with such an involved public

participatory approach. These questions all look into the future of our participatory processes in Malta.

Question 30 asks if an information campaign could provide the citizens with all the pros and cons of such projects to help with the uninformed element. This was one of the issues of participation that was encountered in the literature review and therefore it was pertinent to address it so that participants would be able to make the most of their democratic options.

Questions 31 and 32 deal with policy. Questions 31 asks if policies were to be set in place on these participatory processes would be effective. Question 32, is about the European Landscape Convention which necessitates public's participation on land use matters. The interviewees were asked about the fact that it had not yet been ratified by Malta.

In question 33, the respondents were asked whether they believe that the media depiction of events were truthful. This question ties in with the validity of the analysis of newspapers describing events. It must be noted that though the respondents' insight may be helpful in this regard their own histories with the media whether positive or negative should be taken into account.

In the literature review it was noted that the government influences the Planning Authority's decisions. Question 34 asks the interviewee if they believed the government influences PAs decisions. In question 35, they were asked if they believe that the participatory processes set in place control citizen initiatives. This was asked to find out if

these processes were used as a type of propagandic model which rather than heard the public it directed them towards the desired path.

Whilst till now all the questions have been centred more towards public participation in the planning process in infrastructure generally, questions 36 to 40 involve the ‘Manoel Island Project’ directly. Question 36 started by investigating the controversy surrounding this project. The next question inquires whether the Community based organization, ‘Inhobbu l-Gżira’ made up mainly of residents from the surrounding area of the project managed to get their message across. Question 28 asks if they believe that the public was appeased by the creation of ‘The Manoel Island Foundation’. This was a new layer made up of the main stakeholders in the project, therefore it is imperative for my study to find out if the responders believe the public was satisfied or placated by such a process. As was seen, different participatory processes have been used in the life cycle of the ‘Manoel Island Project’. Considering this, the respondents were asked which of these processes were most effective. This could teach us about what could possibly work for future projects. Finally, the respondents were asked what level of participation they have/had in this project. This was done to look into the respondents’ experience.

3.4 Procedure

The COVID 19 pandemic forced our interviews to be conducted online; whether it be through email interviews or video chats. Email addresses of nine designated stakeholder respondents were found online and they were contacted. Using ‘Gmail®’ they were informed of who I am and what will be investigated. A request for each to participate in the email interview was submitted and an answer awaited.

Consent forms modelled on the ‘University of Edinburgh’ and the ‘University of Malta’ interview consent forms (Ethics Committee - University of Edinburgh, 2013; University of Malta, n.d) were drafted. Those who accepted the request were acknowledged and given a two-week deadline from the date the return email with the interview questions was sent. The consent form and email interview were attached to the return email. Both documents were written up using ‘Word®’ and the consent form was converted into PDF format. The respondents were informed that the email interview would take around an hour to an hour and a half to answer.

Throughout the process difficulties occurred. Although 9 out of 10 responded that they would take part in the study, only 6 of them came through. ‘Din l-Art Ħelwa’, ‘Friends of the Earth’ (both non-governmental organizations) and a Gżira local council representative confirmed that they will be taking part in the study but they never got back after the first email. Reminders were sent to them but these remained unanswered. No reply was received from the 10th respondent (MIDI).

In the cases of the Planning Authority and the Environmental and Resources Authority representatives the emailing process was followed successfully by phone calls to the respective Customer Care sections. Another issue that I encountered was that in three cases (Planning Authority, Flimkien għal-Ambjent Aħjar and Inħobbu l-Gżira) the respondents thought it would be better to have video chat interviews using ‘Zoom’ and/or ‘Teams’ and they were accommodated. These interviews were conducted, recorded, written up and analysed. The transcript may be seen in Appendix B.

To give a fair chance, the three institutions that hadn't answered back were also offered the option for these interviews to be conducted via video chat at a later date but no reply was forthcoming.

The representatives of the 'Environmental Resource Authority', 'Malta Developers Association' and 'The Manoel Island Foundation' sent back their responses via email. These email interviews were collected and later analysed.

3.5 Analysis of Data

3.5.1 The Manoel Island Case Study from Newspapers

The different newspapers articles on similar events were gathered and differences and similarities were noted. Democratic deficits in the infrastructural planning process of the Manoel Island Project were drawn out and noted. This was done to see the full picture of events during the entirety of the 'Manoel Island Project'.

3.5.2 Stakeholder Interviews

The video chat interviews were transcribed and put together with the rest of the email interviews. The responses were split into sections as described in the design section above, compared and contrasted with one another and analysed. The questions that had not been answered were noted and put aside.

During this analysis the stakeholders' own agendas, interests and biases must be taken into account. Some of these may not easily be seen and some assumptions may need to be made.

4. Results

4.1 The Manoel Island Project Newspaper Study

4.1.1 Introduction

In June 2000, MIDI, a consortium of developers and business people were granted public land to develop Tigné Point with high rise top of the range apartments with the provision of to restore heritage sites at Tigné Points and Manoel island. These included Forts in both locations dating from the time of the knights, the Lazaretto on Manoel island built in 1643 and 19th century barracks and batteries at Tigné Point. Over the following 15 years Tigné Point was developed, and both forts, the batteries and barracks were restored. Once Tigné Point was developed, MIDI turned to the development of Manoel island as was originally intended in 2000. A master plan for Manoel Island was drawn by Foster and Partners for MIDI and was out for debate in 2016 and caused an uproar. In the meantime the developers were prohibiting people to venture into the island which led to protests and even breaking down of the fences led by the Gzira Mayor Mr Borg Manche. At this point environmentalists proposed that all of Manoel Island be transformed into a park. Amid all this debate, on 14th March 2018, the Manoel Island Foundation made up from Gzira local council representatives, an environmentalist and the MIDI CEO was formed to safeguard the agreements for right of access to the public and overseeing the development. Further changes to the masterplan with a reduction of 8,000 square metres of built areas and a restriction of height to 3 to 4 floors were agreed upon. The Planning Authority approved the amendments to the masterplan on 7th March 2019.

The following deals with newspaper reports about interactions between the public, the NGO's, local and national politicians, regulators and the developers.



Figure 4.1 Manoel Island in 2020 (Google Maps)



Figure 4.2 Masterplan for Manoel Island 2019

4.1.2 The Activation of the Manoel Island Masterplan

An article penned in the November 5, 2017 issue of The Times of Malta deals with the revised development plans for Manoel Island. It describes the masterplan with an investment of 400 million euro including 50 millions for restoration and the outcome of discussions with NGO's and Gżira Local council. The chairman of MIDI, Alec Mizzi stated that he 'is pleased that Midi has submitted its proposed masterplan, which, in line with its role of responsible developer, ensures the right balance between its obligations under the Deed of Emphyteusis granted by the Government of Malta to develop part of Manoel Island, with its obligations under the same Deed to restore and preserve the heritage buildings on Manoel Island and significant green park space, creating the right environment for both the whole community and residents.' He continues on to say that 'this masterplan goes well beyond what is prescribed by the Deed, in line with increased sensitivities over the years, and pursuant to discussions with the Gżira Local Council and environmental NGOs. We look forward to continuing to engage with the local and wider communities, working in partnership to deliver a wonderful high-quality residential development set in one of our most important and beautiful public spaces that will be carefully restored and enhanced.'

The Malta Independent's first article (Bonnici, 2018a) to be explored was written on the March 26, 2018 and describes the ins and outs of the MIDI's Manoel Island Project. It uses schematics of what the 'new' Manoel Island will look like to further illustrate their point. In this article they also mentioned that the Nationalist Party was in favour of the said project and that in fact they wanted to have an active role in carrying out the task. However the Nationalist councillors of the Gżira Council were not included in any way. They continued on to say that they were never aware/involved in any discussions/meetings and that when they tried to ask questions answers were unclear. This was immediately contradicted by the Gżira

Mayor Conrad Borg Manche who stated that everyone was aware of the happenings, and plans and that they have been as transparent as possible. One must also mention that within the same breath they spoke about Borg Manche as being one of the activists from ‘Kamp Emergenza Ambjent’ that had cut through a fence and opened a gate to give access to Manoel Island to the public.

An article in the Times of Malta by Leone Ganado (2018) explains what they are planning to do and warns the public of the issues that it may hold by using informed sources including an Environmental Impact Assessment. The report also referenced a positive outcome of a survey of 250 passers-by if they wanted this to happen.

4.1.3 The Planning Authority Approval

In an article put up by ‘The Independent’ on March 4, 2019 (Schembri Orland, 2019a) the author discussed the master plan being placed before the PA board by covering the application itself and other issues concerning the changes before its approval. The transparency mentioned before was yet again questioned this time by the board. It demanded that documents that weren’t found available to the public had to be uploaded for public viewing. The author also mentioned the widespread criticism of the masterplan and alluded at the petition and the formation of a group from the locality calling itself ‘Inħobbu l-Gżira’.

This article was followed up by another one by the same author on March 7, 2019 (Schembri Orland, 2019b) confirming the Planning Authority’s approval to the amendments to the Manoel Island plan, discussing criticisms and the increasing number of signatures critical of the plan. In this article the author quoted various informed citizens to criticise or promote the project. Nationalist Party MEP candidate Michael Briguglio stated that a social impact

assessment was not done and he believed that the needs of the residents were ignored. Also there were accusations that board members were speaking over objectors and stopping them from giving their opinion. The fishermen also had their take and this was reported by several news sources. Arnold Cassola an MEP candidate for the Green Party argued that everyone knew that the previous contract was not honoured by MIDI (closing off the foreshore for years) and that the government should have revoked the contract.

‘The Times’ version of the Planning Authority approval article (Leone Ganado, 2019) is comparable with some differences. Ganado specified what the plans featured briefly, what happened (how they voted and what changed) and reactions both for and against. Echoing the ‘The Independent’ they mentioned Michael Briguglio’s slam against the limited social impact assessment, concerns against the loss of open views and the discovery of archaeological remains that may be impacted. Here they also mentioned the progress of the petition (6,000 people). They also informed their readers that if the company decided to alter building heights they will be able to take them to court – creating a safeguard for the people. This article also stated that the Democratic Party condemned this favourable decision.

Lovin Malta, a web based news portal also reported on this on the 7th of March 2019. This article (Diacono, 2019) noted ‘the overwhelming approval by the Planning Authority board with 13 votes in favour and only the NGOs representative Annick Bonello voting against. This article included an interview with Gżira Local Council Mayor Conrad Borg Manche saying that he would like to see Manoel Island turned into a park but critics are spreading false hope as ‘it’s important to note that MIDI has a right to build and it’s false to state that the government can rescind the contract.’

Mayor Borg Manche continued on to say that when ‘I was interviewed in 2016, I said that I would like to turn Manoel Island into a park. Of course, I would. I live there, I used to go there every day as a kid and I know what value it has for the people of Gzira and all Malta. That was my opinion but obviously this is not about my opinion or anyone’s opinion and one has to see the facts.’

On this date, Malta Today also wrote about this permit being approved (Debono, 2019). Other than what was mentioned in other articles they included that the chairperson of the Alternative Democratic Party, Carmel Cacopardo disagreed on the grounds that outline permit amendments requires a planning control application to change the local plan, describing the process as incorrect. The PA Executive Chairman insisted that there was no need considering this because no zoning changes were made. The Labour MP Clayton Bartolo, who sits on the planning authority board, asked for a commitment that any addition in Tigné would require a development permit. Marthese Portelli, the PN representative saw it as an improvement on the 1999 plan due to the additional planned open space, but raised concerns on the mooring space loss. Also, PN MEP Michael Briguglio voiced concerns on a social impact assessment being conducted 20 years ago.

The article went on further to point out concerns from resident Michael Sciortino and suggestions to combat these same concerns from the architect of the project (plans to increase public space and being less visually taxing on views and a new slip way for fishing enthusiasts). There was also a mention of Archaeologist Reuben Grima being against the approval as it could impact important remains. He pointed out that no studies were conducted to this end and that the superintendence of cultural heritage still needed to weigh in. In

response both the MIDI architect and PA board member Timmy Gambin said that the superintendence had power to change plans even after approval.

Interestingly the article notes that the Gżira council was represented by its executive secretary rather than its mayor, Conrad Borg Manche, who is also a member of ‘The Manoel Island Foundation’.

4.1.4 Forming Organizations

On the 14th March 2018, the Independent reported that a Foundation was created to safeguard Manoel Island (Bonnici, 2018b). MIDI and the Gżira Local Council signed a Guardianship Deed which in its writ created a non-profit foundation (The Manoel Island Foundation) to ensure that the heritage buildings, green spaces and foreshore in Manoel Island are preserved and restored ‘for the whole community’. This non-profit organization’s Administrative Committee consisted of four members; Gżira Mayor Conrad Borg Manche (role of Chairman of the foundation), Lawyer Claire Bonello, Gżira Deputy Mayor Ralph Mangion, and MIDI CEO Mark Portelli. Dr. Bonello, a member of Flimkien għal-Ambjent Aħjar reportedly said that she fully endorsed the agreement as it safeguards the community’s interests whilst creating an environment for both residents and the public to enjoy.

It reported that then Prime Minister Joseph Muscat at the signing commented that the ‘project should serve as a model for the relationship between the community and the investor’ as ‘it is a balance between the natural, cultural, and historical environment which embraces sustainable commercial activity’ (Bonnici, 2018b). Through the deed, MIDI has bound itself to commitments ensuring public access to the Manoel Island Public Park, the Foreshore, Swimming Zones, Fort Manoel, as well as the building heights of the residential units that will be developed on the island.

On the 26th of March 2018, the Malta Independent (Bonnici, 2018a) reported that MIDI's CEO Mark Portelli said that 'the community will be placed at the centre of MIDI's Manoel Island Project'. The article reiterated all other information mentioned in the prior article about the signed Guardianship Deed and its responses. It added that Portelli emphasized the importance of creating the project to be as interactive as possible with the foundation ensuring that cultural activities will happen in the fort lending themselves to public access. Portelli explained that according to the deed once development is completed ownership of public spaces will go back to the government. He continued on saying that role of the Manoel Island Foundation is to continue to ensure that the aforementioned spaces will continue to be maintained. He even spoke on the selection process for the committee, saying that the deed stipulates that MIDI would have one representative whilst the three other members would be chosen by the council. Finally, when asked if the Foundation formula should be used as the standard model of future development, he replied that he would not comment on outside projects given each development's specific needs but it was his belief that it could be applied to other projects of similar size.

In a Malta Times article (2019a), the same CEO was asked how the guardianship deed signed was meant to safeguard MIDI's obligations. He replied that the foundation was created 'to serve as a watchdog', that ensures that they honour their deed obligations like guaranteeing access to public areas and abiding by conditions regulating use of the fort and building height. He added that this model restricts them from increasing more storeys for a few years. On 3rd January 2019, the Malta Independent reported the formation of a pressure group made up of Gżira residents called 'Inħobbu l-Gżira'. Their principle aim was reported to be 'bringing modifications to the proposed MIDI masterplan for Manoel Island'. A decision on proposed amendments to the Manoel Island master plan was deferred by the Planning Authority in December 2018 due to inadequate documentation presented, with concerns

about a lack of photo montages comparing the proposed amendments with the already approved plan. Furthermore, the PA board requested that documents that were found to be unavailable to the public are uploaded for public viewing. This article reported that ‘Inħobbu l-Gżira’ brought out a statement criticizing the plan as it requires a transformation of a large part of the seaside promenade namely its elimination, the loss of 40% of benches and its skyline. The European Convention was quoted by the group in saying that landscapes and views were particularly recognized as important, something which they say has been ‘ignored with the blessing of the Environment Resources Authority in a biased and unrepresentative report’. With the town not having ‘any squares or open spaces for people to enjoy except the seafront. Open spaces are recognized by law as essential for the well-being of residents’ (The Independent, 2019a). The group Inħobbu l-Gżira proposed modifications to the plan to preserve the popular promenade and the views.

4.1.5 Meeting

On the 29th of January 2019 ‘The Times’ (Times of Malta, 2019b) covered a heated townhall meeting organized by ‘Inħobbu l-Gżira’. At the end of it, 60 residents agreed about the contents of an open letter to be delivered to the government and the opposition. This letter included certain amendments, recommendations and requests to the plan. This article described what happened throughout the meeting. Using one of the group’s founders (Michael Sciortino) presentation, the article explained plans and concerns that were raised and the frustrations voiced. This can be seen as keeping the rest of the public in the loop. According to this article, the project over the recent years has been surrounded with controversy and public protests over foreshore access and a widely-slated first draft master plan. However, the Gżira local council and NGOs leading the opposition dropped their objections after the signing in March 2018 of a guardianship agreement with Midi,

guaranteeing protection and public access to the island's heritage buildings, foreshore and green areas.

Another article (Pace, 2019) written by Malta Today discussed in depth the event themed 'Manoel Island for the People, not Profit.' Unlike 'The Times' article, it said that the letter was approved by 70 Gzira residents rather than 60. Like the other article it spoke about what happened throughout the meeting.

Notably amongst all the recommendations Nħobbu l-Gżira asked if the island cannot be turned into a national park and would the government buy back the tip of the island where the two apartment blocks are being planned to be built. It also indicated that PN MEP candidate Michael Briguglio and AD leader and MEP candidate Carmel Cacopardo were both at the meeting.

4.1.6 Protests

On March 2nd 2019, The Times (2019c), iNews (Mallia, 2019), Malta Today (Vella, 2019) and the Independent (2019b) reported that the Pressure Group, Għaqda Sajjieda Dilettanti Gzira (the Gzira Fishermen Hobbyist Group) were protesting against the project. Whilst applauding plans set to preserve historical sites and deeming the plans 'more attractive' than the original designs put forward, the Association pointed out MIDI's lack of concern towards hobbyist fishermen and boat owners. The articles deal with the land reclamation and the bridge planned. These will remove the boat owners facility to launch and moor their vessels. Also the planned Lido along the shoreline and the harbour shore area reserved for yacht yard customers will further limit the space available. Over 100 mooring spots will be lost in the Gzira port. In their protests against the project, they said that 'Għaqda Sajjieda Dilettanti

Gżira represents common people who do not deserve to be treated with such disrespect by the wealthy and powerful.’. They claimed that ‘this is not the kind of treatment that is to be expected in a civilised democratic nation like ours’ (Mallia, 2019; Vella, 2019).

4.1.7 Petitioning

The 25th of February 2019 marks the first time the petitioning process launched by the grassroots group ‘Inħobbu l-Gżira’ was reported by both The Times of Malta (Carabott, 2019) and Lovin Malta (Bonnici, 2019). The Times and Lovin Malta reported that thousands had signed a petition to Parliament calling on the government to turn Manoel Island into a wooded park with heritage buildings and save the iconic views from Triq ix-Xatt. If MIDI Plc’s project goes ahead in Malta’s most densely developed and populated area, it will have a huge negative impact on the town of Gżira and neighbouring areas both during and after construction (Malta Independent, 2019). At this point almost 2,500 people had placed their name to the (online) petition which was set to close on the 16th of April. The petition was linked to both these articles and could be accessed and filled by the readers (Mercieca, 2019). The Times of Malta (Carabott, 2019) also reported that the NGO, Flimkien għal Ambjent Aħjar had asked to make donations to the cause calling on their values on health and heritage. The donations were to go to professional consultant fees and media costs to present their case. The article included a secure link as well as a mailing address for donations to be made. MaltaToday (Debono, 2019) reported that by the 6th of March 2019, over 6,000 people had signed the petition. This article described how during the previous PA Meeting, Michael Sciortino, a Gżira resident used the public hearing system to present objections and proposals to the Manoel Island project in a detailed 25-minute-long presentation. According to the article this meeting ‘led to a wave of civic activism by the group Inħobbu l-Gżira’, as it

culminated in the 6,000-strong petition calling for Manoel Island to be declared a national park.

On August 17th 2019, MaltaToday (Azzopardi, 2019), the Malta Independent (2019c) and Lovin Malta (Azzopardi, 2019) reported that the 7,571 petition signed was yet to be discussed in Parliament. It was noted that this was a record for the Parliamentary Petition Committee (Independent, 2019). The articles reported that the petition closed on the 16th of April, but still had not been brought up for discussed in Parliament. All three articles mentioned that a second petition with 916 hand-written signatures opposing the Manoel Island project was presented to the Speaker of the House of Parliament. This was driven by the grassroots group ‘Inħobbu l-Gżira’ who went door-to-door gathering signatures. This meant that a total of 8,487 signatures were made to save Manoel Island.

When Partit Demokratiku MP Godfrey Farrugia presented the signatures to the Parliamentary House Speaker Anglu Farrugia, he stated that: ‘I hope that the Parliamentary Petition Committee will, this summer, resolve its impasse and establish the long overdue disgrace – and indeed unjust – that the good number of petitions presented by civil society has not been discussed and adjudicated in a timely manner by the Petition Committee’ (Independent, 2019). He appealed to the Speaker to intervene and see to it that the Petition Committee functions as has been established by Parliament procedure so that the necessary measures are taken to process all pending petition applications.

Both MaltaToday and Lovin Malta made reference to the Flimkien għal Ambjent Aħjar’s appeal with the Environmental and Planning Review Tribunal. This confrontation also comes in light of an appeal with the Environment Planning Review Tribunal filed by Flimkien għal Ambjent Aħjar which was also ignored after Master Plans were approved on July 18th .

4.1.8 Appeals

On the 17th of April 2019, The Times of Malta (2019d) and the Independent (2019d) reported that the NGO – Flikkien għal-Ambjent Aħjar (FAA) was appealing the Planning Authority's decision on MIDI's Manoel Islands development. In this article they reported that they were asking for donations of €7,000 that would cover the costs for the appeal to the Environment and Planning Review Tribunal (ERPT) and for legal and architectural fees. The article reported that FAA listed a number of reasons of why the development shouldn't move forward such as ruining the views across Marsamxett Harbour to Valletta; losing a large area of the Gżira promenade and the sea channel being narrowed which would increase the chances of flooding and bring noise and pollution from yacht yard industrial activity closer to the residential area. Both articles included the FAA's PayPal account as well as a mailing address for donations to be made.

On the 15th of July 2019 the Malta Independent (2019e) reported that on the Thursday of that week the Planning Authority was to make a decision on an application for the excavation even though the outline permit master plan for the overall project is still under appeal. They wrote that the 'FAA is contesting the MIDI master plan on legal, procedural and planning issues as there are strong grounds to consider that the outline development permit is invalid at law. For this reason FAA maintains that it would be both irresponsible and unethical to take a decision on the excavation while the whole project is being appealed. A decision in favour of the excavation permit would reduce the whole appeal process to a travesty.'

They continued to say that 'FAA's serious doubts as to the validity of the outline permit are strengthened by the recent decision on the db Pembroke development by the Court of Appeal, which decreed that Matthew Pace, PA Board member, should have recused himself from that

PA vote, given that as the owner of a Remax real estate franchise, he stood to gain from the db project. Pace was similarly involved in the approval of the MIDI master plan. Under the principles set out by Judge Chetcuti, the involvement of the Gzira Local Council on the Planning Board as well as with MIDI on the Manoel Island Foundation should equally the approved outline permit.’ It concluded that due to these circumstances the Planning Authority shouldn’t consider any full development permit related to the outline permit that is being contested until ‘a final decision is made on the FAA appeal’ (The Malta Independent, 2019e).

Three days later, on the 18th July, the Malta Independent (2019f), the Times of Malta (2019e) and MaltaToday (Pace, 2019) reported that the excavation permit was approved despite that the development itself was under ongoing appeal by the FAA and Gzira residents. The FAA argues that by voting unanimously in favour and consequently approving the excavation the Planning Commission would be making out that the outcome of the appeal is a foregone conclusion, making a travesty of the whole appeal process. Both MaltaToday and the Independent reported that the FAA posed a rhetorical question; ‘What if the developers are made to alter their development plans after the site has been excavated?’

The FAA observed that in the past the Planning Authority would have ‘never processed a stand-alone permit for demolition or excavation that was not accompanied by a construction application, for fear that it would result in a hole in the ground as did in the Gzira Metropolis project’. Though ‘today [the day before the article was published], the Planning Authority is recommending for approval an excavation application for the MIDI project at Manoel Island while the very development is being challenged at appeal. Thus, the Planning Authority is giving the message that the appeal process is nothing but a worthless sham, as it knows that the appeal will be rejected’. Furthermore, the MaltaToday and the Malta Independent articles

recorded that the FAA went on to note that the authority was ignoring calls by the Superintendent for Cultural Heritage (SCH) for an underwater evaluation to assess the surrounding seabed's archaeology, adding that archaeologists had also warned that Roman remains dating back two millennia were also being threatened by the works. The Times of Malta recorded MIDI's reaction which was that the PA approved application related only to the excavation site and didn't extend to the proposed dredging works. They declared that 'the dredging works are the subject of a separate application for which an underwater survey has been commissioned by MIDI as required by the SCH.'

Both the Malta Independent (2019f) and Malta Today (Pace, 2019) reported that the FAA also noted a 2013 study by Stefano Forlani, 'but for some reason the paper was not included in the Planning Authority assessment of the permit in spite of the fact that one of the authors was Dr Timothy Gambin, the marine archaeologist who is a member of the PA Board, supposedly representing heritage.'

On the 18th of September 2019 the Malta Independent (2019g) and Lovin Malta (Hudson, 2019) reported that the Environmental and Planning Review Tribunal (EPRT) has accepted the FAAs request to stop excavations on Manoel Island for a three-month period (until 17th December 2019) whilst the Tribunal examines the appeal. In this article the FAA indicated that the 2000's original master plan had expired and never renewed. Furthermore, they insisted that the amended plan approved by the Planning Board earlier that year was invalid. The FAA said that 'among its numerous objections the FAA is very concerned about the lack an environment management system for the excavation works which had been promised by the developers. MIDI itself had admitted in its project development statement that its contractors' trucks fall far short of environmental standards, and that their diesel engines emit

toxic nitrogen oxides and carbon monoxides.’ FAA continued that ‘despite knowing all this, MIDI intends making 15,000 trips with such trucks through the narrow streets of Gzira with all the implications that brings for the health of residents. FAA highlights the fact that according to the World Health Organisation (WHO) vehicle emissions contribute to asthma, heart attacks, strokes and cancer’ (The Malta Independent, 2019g)

On the 23rd of October 2019, MaltaToday (Vella, 2019), the Times of Malta (2019f), the Malta Independent (2019h) and the online news portal Newsbook reported that the EPRT has accepted the FAA plea that the Manoel Islands master plan’s environmental impact assessment (EIA) architect Edward Said has a conflict of interest, as he is the son of one of the MIDI’s directors, Joe Said. Edward Said was engaged by Paul Gauci to conduct the EIA for the Manoel Island master plan. In the past Edward Said’s architectural firm ‘Architecture XV’ had been used repeatedly by MIDI as the responsible architect on various permits and projects forming part of the development of Manoel Island. FAA said in a statement that ‘as one of MIDI’s responsible architects he should be automatically precluded from participation in the EIA.’

FAA appealed planning decision PA 8605/18 for the excavation of Manoel Island and the Masterplan itself PA 9407/17. Both these decisions were based on the EIA in question. In view of this conflict of interest FAA argues that the assessment and permits should be nullified in terms of the Environment Impact Assessment Regulations,’ FAA said. The article continued to say that the ERPT acknowledged the validity of FAA’s plea and is allowing it to be considered as part of the NGO’s complaints against these two permits. The article concluded that the FAA’s statement included that MIDI did not dispute the veracity of any allegations placed forward in the appeal to the Environment Planning Review Tribunal by the

FAA. Malta Today repeated the FAA statement that it ‘will continue in its efforts to challenge the Manoel Island development which will have a huge negative impact on the residents of Gzira as well as on the traffic, air quality and landscape of Marsamxett Harbour, Sliema Creek, Ta’ Xbiex Creek and the area at large’.

Malta Today reported MIDI’s reaction too, where they accused the FAA of deliberately misleading the public over development facts. A spokesperson for MIDI stated that ‘as a low rise, largely pedestrianized development the Manoel Island project will certainly not leave the biggest negative impact on the local community or the surrounding area. Rather, once completed the Gzira residents and the public at large will have access to over 80,000 square metres of green public park, equivalent to the area occupied by sixteen football pitches, by far the largest public open space in the area,’ MIBI through their representative continued that ‘The Guardianship Deed entered with the Manoel Island Foundation and the Gzira local council ensures that Manoel Island Fort is mainly used for cultural and community uses which ensure that the general public will enjoy access to the fort.Over and above the public park, the revised masterplan includes 65,500sqm of car free open spaces, accessible to the general public at all times. The open spaces include a series of piazzas including a 9,000 sqm square at the entrance to Manoel Island.’

A year and month later, the appeal bore fruit as MaltaToday (Debono, 2020) and Lovin Malta (Vassallo, 2020) reported on the 17th of June 2020 that the Environmental and Planning Review Tribunal (ERPT) revoked the Manoel Island project permit and ordered a new EIA. Both articles recalled the October ERPT acceptance of the plea of conflict of interest lodged by the FAA which was reported on the day of the decision made. Furthermore, they reported that the appeal was crowd funded and fronted by the citizen group Inħobbu l-Gzira who earlier that year gathered the highest number of petition signatures (over 8,000) for an

environment-related clause. The article reported that in 2019 the construction permit for 610 apartments at Manoel Island was approved by the Planning Authority with only the NGO representative voting against. The new plans include more open spaces and another 100 apartments to those already approved. This approved permit was an amendment to a 1999 outlined permit, and approved despite challenges to the legality of the project on the basis that it required amendments to the local plan and the PA's duty to protect underwater remains that could possibly date back to the Roman period. The planning directorate insisted that though this outline permit had expired 15 years ago it was kept alive through reference in the local plan approved in 2006.

A couple of days later on the 24th of June 2020 the Malta Independent reported that MIDI denied that there was any bias in the EIA report. This was based on Architect Edward Said's call of character, professionalism, and history (both professionally and with those who oppose him seeking his expertise in the past). Furthermore, they pointed out that the Cultural Heritage report was the deciding factor as the PA did not rely on the report produced by the architect in question. In fact, the Development Permit Application Report refers exclusively to the assessment made by the Superintendent of Cultural Heritage, the statutory consultee on matters of Cultural Heritage.

The week before the article was written FAA and Inħobbu l-Gżira reportedly said that they welcomed the PA's decision and stated that due to the conflict interest noted, it 'reflects very poorly on MIDI'. MIDI refuted this claim pointing to their track record and work itself on the restoration and conservation work at Tigné Point and Manoel Island.

MIDI's last statement acknowledges the decision made and stated that in their coming EIA assessment any level of bias must be avoided as directed by the Tribunal. They concluded by saying that they remain 'fully committed to the development of Manoel Island and will

ensure that the decision of the Tribunal is implemented without delay' (The Malta Independent, 2020).

4.1.9 Opinion Pieces

The Malta Times article by Arnold Cassola (Cassola, 2018) is very significant because Dr Cassola is a founder member and politician of the Green Party (Democratic Alternative). He wrote a critical piece exposing 'the real, ugly implications' of the project. He explained how it will not only affect us ecologically but personally too. Cassola ended the article by saying that he 'believes that the people of Gżira deserve better. They themselves have to make their voice heard loud and clear in order to ensure that on December 20, the Planning Authority Board keeps in mind Article 3 of the law that 'the duty of the government is to enhance the quality of life for the benefit of the present and future generations... whilst having full regard to environmental, social and economic needs'.

On the 6th of January, Cassola wrote another article this time discussing the impact on landscape viewed from The Strand, Sliema and Gżira. He investigated this using the Visual Impact Assessment report. Cassola uses different images to show how the viewpoints will be affected by this development. The report itself concludes that 'the resultant change in the visual scene... is therefore substantial, with new elements occupying much of the view and with obstruction of present long-distance views. The magnitude of change is therefore considered high' (p85). Cassola goes on to point out other issues found in the report and concludes by saying how mind boggling it is that the PA's case officer and ERA recommended the design when the reports and studies on the landscape are so negative. Even the report recommends a 'substantial redesign of the project'. He goes on to say how Conrad did not take into consideration all impact factors too. Notably he said that the report was a vox

pop type study conducted in between the months of December 2017 to January 2018 where the writer interviewed passers-by by showing them photomontages and asking questions. In the report itself the writer emphasized that the ‘survey is not representative of the population of the area or of the Maltese population.’ He finishes the article using the Conrad report conclusion: ‘Given comments made during the course of survey administration, and given an evident strong degree of attachment to the locality by several respondents, particularly those resident in the area and/or with childhood memories linked to Manoel Island, it is also strongly recommended that dialogue with the local community is maintained throughout the planning process.’

In Cassola’s third article, written on the 27th of January 2019, he started by using article 3 of the Development Planning Act rhetorically as this stipulates that the government’s primary duty through the Planning Authority is to ‘enhance the quality of life for the benefit of the present and future generations’. But this was not what is happening in Gżira. He noted several industrialization cause and effect issues that have come up due to past developments and worries about future ones. He ended the article by joining Foster & Partners call to intervene and implement the ‘high quality urban and landscape design interventions’ to protect the wellbeing of the Gżira community and town.







The final opinion article found is also by Cassola on the 3rd of March 2019 where he discussed the height changes of buildings on Manoel Island throughout the years using images to further illustrate what he was talking about. Notably, at one point, he mentioned that the increase in building heights in September 2018 were carried out behind the Manoel Island Foundations back. They were not informed; rather they were ignored. He wrote that

the manoeuvring on MIDI's part is unfair on the 'guardianship' as MIDI continued to breach the 'canopy' as the building heights proposed will rise above the fort.

He finishes the article off by asking if there was anything that MIDI says 'that is not spin or manipulation to divert attention from the true facts of their plan? Can anything they say be believed?' Cassola continued on to assert that after 'the Tignè rip-off' how can one trust MIDI with Manoel Island. The answer to his own question was no.

4.2 Results from Interviews

This legend is to be followed where applicable in this section:

Symbols	Meanings
	Yes
	No
	Both Yes & No
	Can be improved
	Low amount
	Further discussion

The interviews consisted of 40 questions asked to stakeholders involved in the Manoel Island Development Project. The questions were fully or partly answered by Representatives of the Planning Authority (PA), Environmental Resource Agency (ERA), the Malta Developers Association (MDA), the National Environment NGO Flimkien Għall-Ambjent Aħjar (FAA) a

local pressure group Inħobbu l-Gżira (IG) and the Manoel Island Foundation (MIF). Three answered the questions by email (ERA, MDA and MIF) and the other three (PA, FAA and IG) preferred an online interview.

Question 1 – What is your role within the organization you represent?

The PA and ERA opted to speak up as an organization, not as individuals. Ms Astrid Vella is the coordinator of FAA and represented this NGO. The MIF respondent was Dr Claire Bonello who is the Secretary of the Foundation'. Jamie Mercieca, the IG respondent is onof the founders of this community-based organization where he works mainly on networking and communication aspects. The MDA respondent is Dr Marthese Portelli who is the Director General of MDA.

Question 2 - What do you think of the consultative process that we have in place?

The PA spoke about the processes that take place before and during a project. The spokesperson believes this process is 'more than sufficient' because they 'consult from the start of the project' with all different stakeholders and these responses and studies can be found online.

The ERA respondent explained their role; 'ERA is responsible to draft regulations, policies or plans in line with the provisions of the Environment Protection Act. During the drafting process, ERA strives to reach most relevant stakeholders and the general public to ensure that the public is given the opportunity to submit its opinion and recommendations. As an external consultee listed in the Development Planning Act, ERA is also consulted on all planning

applications. Large infrastructural projects are also generally subjected to environmental assessment procedures such as Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs).’

The FAA respondent believes that ‘we have a very poor system of consultation that barely satisfies the letter of the law and personally is very far from the spirit of the law’.

The MIF respondent said that ‘the consultation process by the Planning Authority and also by the Environment and Resources Authority are more often than not, a sham’. She illustrates this by saying that though ‘the public is allowed to voice its opinion and concerns; these are mostly ignored’.

The MDA director thinks that the consultative process is not as effective as it should be. More often than not, the current consultative processes (i) do not meet the scope they are intended for, (ii) are not spearheaded by the right people and (iii) more often than not, it is felt that consultations are conducted purely to tick the legal requirement of ‘consulting’. In fact one of the biggest issues that needs to be addressed is that there is a general perception across the board that (i) the consultative efforts put in by the stakeholders are usually ignored as the project would already be a *fait accompli* (albeit unofficial) at consultation stage, (ii) that minor changes are taken on board post consultation purely to give the impression that the authorities have ‘listened’ to the concerns of the stakeholders. Hence why there is the general perception that public consultations are by and large ineffective; sometimes public consultations have also been described as ‘shams’.

The IG respondent said that they see these processes ‘as a little too late and when you consider that we already have laws and regulatory frameworks in place like the SPED, the North Harbour Local Plan etc and these still get ignored by the planning authority making the NGOs sceptical of anything coming from the government.’ He comments that ‘NGOs or Citizens’

groups use a lot of energy and time to participate in these meetings, put forward some really good ideas which are actually workable but they get ignored. This can get demoralizing. We have hopes and it is good to be listened to and to be able to express our ideas and strategies but on the other hand unless the stuff is going to be implemented it would just be another blow to NGOs and to people's morale'.

Question 3 – How do you think we can improve it?

The MIF respondent believes that the PA and the ERA should give rational, substantiated reasons for ignoring representations made by the public and not simply ignore them.

The FAA respondent offered other suggestions of how this can be improved. The PA's outreach should follow the Aarhus Convention which requires 'residents to be notified of forthcoming projects with an early visible notification.' This is not being done, rather quite the opposite. The notification medium went from a widely read newspaper (The Times of Malta) to the Government Gazette 'which is extremely hard for the public to access and of course this gives the developers a better chance of getting away unnoticed'. She stated that the developer whether public or private is supposed to hold consultation with the affected public and this is either not happening or happening in a half-hearted manner. She recalled a case with a MIDI development that was so 'poorly publicized that only 3 people showed up'. Subsequently FAA took the initiative to publicize a public consultation on the same matter, and using only social media they garnered an attendance of 300 residents. The developer will organise meetings when they can be least attended such as Christmas time or the local festa time. She complained that it is 'all rigged in a way to minimize public participation' and that 'there is no attempt to teach and educate the public in order to give meaningful input'.

The IG respondent recommended a system that caters for evaluation during and after the project is done. This entails post development consultation to see how the project is being used, how much of it is being used and to what extent it is being used. Then somehow ‘feed that information back to the consultees as well as the general public’. He added that people and NGOs ‘need to see results and the process needs to prove beyond doubt that it is genuine and not just going through the motions to try to create an illusion of inclusivity.’

The PA respondent stated that improvement is ongoing. The PA ‘needs representations, not just receive them, but review and discuss them and understand the issues’. He believes that ‘we need to meet more the representatives, to understand their concerns better’. His final point was that ‘one of the main issues especially land use is that no one understands it.’

The MDA believes that the main scope of these consultations is to ensure that such projects are being done for the common good. Hence it is important to make sure that all stakeholders are given equal opportunities to understand the projects, evaluate the projects, discuss the projects and put forward their concerns/ideas/suggestions/improvements. Also, the opportunity must be given when the project is still at its very initial concept stage with further opportunities to discuss effectively again once the initial feedback has been taken into consideration. Consultations should be co-ordinated by bodies/individuals who are independent. Consultations co-ordinated by the entity spearheading the project will have an automatic bias in favour of the project. This independence is important to ensure (i) that the information disseminated is complete, accurate and gives a clear picture of all the facets of the projects and (ii) that all consultation feedback is analysed with an open and unbiased mind-set. It is also important to ensure that a proper forum is created where stakeholders can air different opinions (even if they are at opposite poles), and give them the opportunity to have a civil discussion

and agree between them on the best way forward. Having a different opinion should not make one the enemy of the other – to the contrary, it should be seen as an opportunity to come forward with the best solution for the common good. The timing and time-frames are also of crucial importance. More co-operation and better planning between authorities, even across different Ministries, is of paramount importance. It goes against the spirit of the public consultation process itself to have multiple public consultation going on at the same time. Organisations and stakeholders are being inundated with simultaneous consultative process on various projects which makes it impossible to participate effectively given the limited time-frames and the limited resources of those wishing to participate in the consultation process. ERA did not answer this question.

Question 4 – What do you think about using surveys for consultative purposes?

The ERA respondent stated they ‘prepare citizen surveys to gauge public perceptions and opinions on environmental matters. These are used to define public preference and plan accordingly’. The PA stated that they ‘do not do surveys on a specific project, but on strategic policies to get data and on certain issues such as population growth, quality of life and the economic aspect.’ The MIF respondent disagrees with this notion because she claims that the surveys she has seen and which have been used in the planning process are ‘subject to bias, full of leading questions and deliberately designed to produce the result desired by developers’.

The FAA respondent thinks it might not be a good option as ‘we do not have an educated public’. She said that the ‘NGO have tried to conduct courses in conjunction with the PA. However, after a very first successful course, it was never repeated because it was too effective to their liking’. There is lack of knowledge across the board and she recounted the

time she went to the Sliema Local Council asking for local survey plans and she was given a tourist brochure.

The IG respondent believes that this would have to be 'a combination of qualitative and quantitative'. He believes that issues will arise as 'a lot of the public are very susceptible to propaganda and to all sorts of misleading information; they form half ideas and they think that they have formed a theory or hypothesis'. He explained that 'it is very easy not to be direct, but to con people with your questions so they give you the answers that you want from them and this can be seen in practice'. He referred to the MIDI plc's social impact assessment that consisted of a vox pop style study where the whole sampling methodology was flawed and none of the studies were peer reviewed. He claimed effective surveys should be done with a combination of in-depth qualitative component and other elements such as focus groups and consultative meetings.

The MDA believes that 'surveys can give an indication', though 'their accuracy will depend on how the questions are drafted' as they can be misleading. It is difficult to know 'whether one is giving a passionate reply or an informed reply'. She believes that 'surveys are best used in fact-finding instances. Surveys should not be used to try and elicit an opinion'.

Questions 5 - 8 The Participatory Process

	PA	ERA	Developers Association	FAA	Inhobbu l-Gzira	Manoel Island Foundation
5. Do you believe the participatory processes set in place lack effectiveness?						
6. Do you believe the participatory processes set in place exist as a formality?						
7. Do you believe there is transparency in this participatory process?			 			
8. Do you think the public is involved enough?						

Question 5

Four respondents believe that the participatory processes set in place lack effectiveness. The PA disagrees and ERA offers no opinion. The MIF representative believes that this lack of

efficacy occurs because ‘the participatory process is a sham – a box-ticking exercise which is carried out merely so it can be said that there is a participatory process on the statute books’. The FAA believes that they are ‘designed with an inbuilt weakness on purpose’. The PA respondent doesn’t believe that this lacks effectiveness. Many projects are amended and redesigned because there was input from the public with regards of certain issues’. He said that they ‘only consider planning issues. There might be certain issues that there is no agreement on policy interpretation. The public consultation objective is not to have people objecting but to see how PA is going to approve the project by making it more environmentally friendly in that urban context’.

Question 6

Four out of five respondents believe that the participatory processes set in place exists as a formality. ERA does not have an opinion and the PA doesn’t believe this is the case ‘for example a development brief goes to the environmental committee in parliament and there is a public meeting where NGOs and the public can participate.’ The FAA respondent suggested that ‘it’s just a question of ticking boxes’. The IG representative also believes it’s a formality as he doesn’t ‘see that there is the good will to implement these things; but rather paying lip service to it.’

Question 7

The MIF opined that the participatory process is sufficiently transparent with respect to ‘representations and objections published by the PA in the run of the mill planning application processes. However, the situation is different when it comes to ERA applications where nature




























and environmental permits are concerned. In these, there is no publicity or transparency.’ The FAA respondent is very sceptical about this transparency in the participatory process: ‘Files were hidden from the public and after a year of FAA fighting, there were some changes but when we turn our backs they would revert back to the same illegalities. The general public didn’t know any better because they have been deprived of such knowledge and their rights’. The IG representative said he is sure ‘it could be much more transparent.’ The PA representative believes the process is transparent because the public is invited to the public hearing where every individual, NGO or any other stakeholder are given time to air their opinions. He believes the participatory process of the PA is the most transparent in the country. The MDA respondent is of the opinion that there is transparency but ‘that it can be improved’. She stated that ‘transparency and better holistic planning go hand in hand. One cannot have full transparency if one does not have the entire picture of what is being planned for the future. She wrote that ‘Malta needs a coherent and consistent long-term national strategy which would be binding on all successive governments and on civil society so as to ensure consistency in decision-making and decision-taking. We cannot continue working on short-sighted five-year plans. We really need to move forward and plan strategically, otherwise one can never have full transparency.’ There was no response recorded from ERA.

Question 8

The IG, MDA, MIF and FAA respondents assert that there isn’t enough public involvement. The MIF respondent gave several reasons why the public is not helped or facilitated to get its views across. She said that the PA was not sensitive to the digital divide and it undertakes the consultation process largely by means of an online system which is not be accessible to all and that there was not a sufficiently long period for all objections to take place. She added

that this happens especially ‘when site notices are set up in scarcely populated rural areas which may not be easily viewed by many persons’. The PA representative spoke of the different ways they involve/inform the public. He said that currently with the development planning application ‘we don’t only put a notice on the facade where the proposed development is planned but also notice the adjacent neighbours by putting a note in their letterboxes.’ There was no response given by ERA.

Questions 9 to 13 – Dialogue

		PA	ERA	MDA	FAA	Inhobbu l-Gzira	Manoel Island Foundation
9.	Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between organizations set in place and the Planning Authority? Why do you believe so?	 		 			
10.	Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between non-governmental organizations and the public? Why do you believe so?	 		 			
11.	Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between the Developers Association and the public? Why do you believe so?			 			
12	Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between the Planning Authority and the public? Why do you believe so?						
13.	Do you think that there is enough dialogue between all organizations? Why do you believe so?						

Question 9

The Planning Authority representative believes that there is a lot of dialogue happening between all stakeholders. However, this notion is not shared by the other stakeholders except that the MDA believes they have an exchange of ideas with the public and the national NGO representative suggested that they have interchange with the public. Also both the PA and MDA indicated that there is room for improvement in dialogue. The ERA representative remained silent. The MDA representative believes that ‘there needs to be better co-ordination, from the very start of the project, i.e. at the concept stage’. A big infrastructural project requires the input from various government entities and authorities – they all have their own project priorities. Better co-ordination will eliminate stumbling blocks and in particular ensure that all entities are working towards the same deliverables, the same delivery time-frames, and that every entity allocates its human resources to meet the delivery time-frames. Better co-ordination would also eliminate overstepping between one entity and another. The FAAs respondent complained that the dialogue provided by the PA is ‘lip service’ and that ‘sporadic meetings’ are used to ‘pretend that dialogue exists’. The respondent for Inħobbu l-Gżira stated that discussion with the PA during ongoing cases is ‘adversarial’ and that they show ‘little willingness or sympathy towards NGOs’. He also referred to the lack of communication between PA and other organizations such as Transport Malta. The Manoel Island Foundation representative said that ‘there is the dialogue of the deaf’. She explained that ‘NGOs make representations and suggestions which the PA ignores’.

Question 10

In question 10, half of the respondents believe that there is dialogue between NGOs and the public. The MDA representative said that the ‘level of dialogue could be improved significantly by involving them in the concept stage’. Whilst the Inħobbu l-Gżira representative said that this lack of communication is due to ‘insufficient resources to communicate with a broader audience’. Echoing them was the FAA respondent who stated that though there is an increasing amount of dialogue they do not have the resources to engage in all that dialogue’. Notably they said that the ‘PA is supposed to support NGOs also financially but that support has conditional strings attached.’ The PA said that NGOs do communicate but that they should ‘promote more their main objectives.’

Question 11

With regards to question 11, three out of five respondents believe that there isn’t enough dialogue between the Developers Association and the public. While the PA said that they think that communication is improving, there should be more input. The PA stated that they are starting to ‘initiate’ from their side. This was corroborated by the MDA which said that they ‘just launched the Safer Neighbourhood Scheme’ which aims to disseminate information on ‘legalities in simple terms and informing people of their rights and obligations’ and secondly ‘to offer support and to establish better neighbourhood practices.’ The FAA representative said that there is little hope of real dialogue because of the developer’s history of saying ‘one thing and doing another (like politicians)’. She reiterated that ‘there is very little faith in responsible development in Malta and the public is already very sceptical of the

PA, let alone something like the developers association'. Both the IG and MIF responses state that the association 'is more of a public relations exercise.'

Question 12






Question 12 indicates that 3 out of 4 responses believe that there isn't enough dialogue between the PA and the public. The PA representative is convinced there is dialogue between the public and themselves because they do 'programs on the media' to inform the public about any happenings. The MDA said that though there is a 'channel for dialogue' the information is not reaching the public. The FAA commented that 'there clearly isn't; there isn't between the PA and the interlocutors which are the NGOs let alone the general public. It's always brought down to the same thing, the general public do not know what to look for and what to ask for'. Finally, the IG respondent said that 'the PA spend a lot of money on Facebook® adverts, especially when they make a slightly environmentally friendly decision; they milk it so much, that they spend thousands on advertising.'

Question 13

The last question for dialogue section, informed us that 3 out of 4 respondents think that there isn't enough dialogue between all organizations. The IG stated that an answer could be extrapolated considering their earlier responses that a dialogue deficit is seen between all organizations. The MDA said that this lack of dialogue is understandable as 'every organization has its own mission' but that all 'associations should be working together towards a better future for all.' The FAA stated that there isn't enough communication between authorities and the other stakeholders pinpointed a dialogue deficit of the public with

the Chamber of Architects. They also feel that communication between NGOs has improved but the government wields a great deal of influence through financing. It pitches one NGO against the other as they compete for funds. This sometimes leads to NGOs remaining silent when dealing with government. When FAA was set up, ‘we immediately started to work with outreach and I am happy to say that both Graffiti and FOE took this up.’ The PA came up with the only positive response: ‘To achieve a good end result you need to have the situation where government agencies are continuously discussing and are in contact with all the organisations because it is important to have feedback from other stakeholders.’

Question 14

		PA	ERA	Developers Association	FAA	Inhobbu l-Gzira	Manoel Island Foundation
14	If the project is highly sensitive, do you believe that a framework for outlining the process for participation strategies for the lifecycle of the project could be more effective?	 					

The PA, MDA and IG believe that the project would be more effective if there is a framework outlining the process for participation strategies throughout the lifecycle. IG added that it is crucial and that it would ‘actually engage with the public in a manner that will improve their lifestyles’. The PA believes that this framework is already in place but there is room for improvement. The only negative response was from FAA as ‘we have light years from it being effective’, considering ‘that highly sensitive projects such as those ordered by

Transport Minister Ian Borg go ahead even before the project has a permit'. She continued that 'we are full of policies and regulations and frameworks; they are coming out of our ears, yet they are ignored.' There was no responses from ERA and the IMF.

Question 15 to 19 - Interests

		PA	ERA	MDA	FAA	IG	MIF
15	Do you believe that the Planning Authority represent the interests of the Maltese population in relation to big project plans?	✓		∞	✗	✗	✗
16	Do you believe that the Environment Resource Authority represent the interests of the Maltese population in relation to big project plans?	✗		∞	✗	=	✗
17	Do you believe that the Non-Governmental Organizations in Malta represent the interests of the Maltese population in relation to big project plans?	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
18	Do you believe local councils represent their local's interests?	✓		✓	✗	=	=
19	Do you believe that there is a balance for what the Developer (whether it be the government itself or not) wants and the public requests?	∞		∞	✗	∞	=

Question 15

Only the PA respondent believes that it represents the interest of the Maltese population because the plans ‘will be carried out through public consultation and the government will have its own direct consultations with all stakeholders’. In a way MDA concurs because the PA is the instrument through which ‘the government directs and sets the vision and policy and it is its role to ensure that the interests of the Maltese population are being properly represented and safeguarded’. The FAA believes that the PA represents the interests of the developers. The NGO stated that ‘developers are the masters of the politicians due to our system of elections; the developers pay for the politicians’ electoral campaigns’. The MIF respondent said that ‘the PA has consistently voted in favour of the development and business lobby’. The IG representative said that though there have been instances where the population’s interests weren’t neglected generally speaking it’s not the case. No response was recorded by ERA.

Question 16

The NGOs and MIF representative do not not believe that ERA represents the interest of the Maltese population. The NGOs claim that ERA ‘does not have enough clout to be able to change things’ (IG) and that ‘it has preferred to be as toothless as ever’ (FAA). MIF concurs and referred to ERA’s record with big projects as ‘always been timid in standing up for the environment and sustainability’. The PA representative thinks that ERA does not represent the population because ‘land use planning is within the PA’s remit’ and ERA gives its representation during policy making. MDA feels that ERA follows government policy and not necessarily what the population wants. ERA itself did not give an opinion about itself.

With regards to Environmental Impact Assessment, the FAA respondent stated that the developers ‘bring on board the best scientists which effectively silence ERA’s representations’.

Question 17

Everyone (except that ERA’s opinion in this matter is also not known) believe that NGOs represent the interests of the Maltese population. FAA affirmed this representation of interests. The MIF stated that ‘NGOs represent the interests of the wide membership and the common good’. The MDA concurs that they ‘have their own mission and represent’ their members from the Maltese population. She added that this is why ‘there is a need for more collaboration’. The PA’s response also corresponds with the others as ‘every agency is there to represent the general public from different points of view’. The IG representative mentions how different NGOs represent diverse interests. Inħobbu l-Gżira’s interest is Gżira the town, its culture, its heritage, and its people.

Question 18






The PA representative feels that local councils represent the interests of the local population and the MDA asserted that every local council represents its residents, however when it comes to national projects, ‘a tug of war is often witnessed between the local councils that would be effected by the project’. The MIF believes that they are meant to represent their locality’s interest and that ‘they generally do a good job of it’ though there are cases where ‘decisions are taken along partisan lines’. The FAA believes the local councils do not represent the local interests all the time because ‘of the politicization of local councils’. The

IG representative believes that ‘some local councils do represent the locals and some are really good at it, others fluctuate’. No response was recorded by ERA.

Question 19

When asked if there was a balance between what the developer wants and the population requests, the interviewees gave explanations with the FAA saying that there was a total imbalance in favour of the developer. The MIF believes that this depended on the application in question. The IG respondent said that the public in Malta only demands petty requests. The MDA representative stated that she ‘cannot speak on behalf of individual developers’. MDA’s vision is to ‘keep the industry growing in a new framework which respects people’s new way of living and in total respect to the environment which we need to protect and develop sustainably in order to keep our country attractive.’ MDA believes that ‘Malta needs a coherent and consistent long-term national strategy which would be binding on all successive governments and on civil society so as to ensure consistency in decision-making and decision-taking. We cannot continue working on short-sighted five-year electoral cycles. We really need to move forward and plan strategically. MDA would like to work jointly with NGOs and push the government authorities and regulators to adopt this sustainable strategic approach.’ The PA representative did not answer the question but he suggested that there should be a change in mentality of both people and developer. There should be more quality rather than quantity. Some developers do consider the environment. He added that it does not make sense to build a 5 star hotel when the surrounding area is 2 star. The people need to be in tune with the developer to get more green and efficient buildings. Some developers understand these issues while others find it difficult to change their mentality. No response was recorded for ERA.

Question 20

		PA	ERA	MDA	FAA	IG	MIF
20	Do you believe there is a democratic deficit within the structures placed in motion?						

The majority of the respondents, three out of five, believe that there is a democratic deficit in the structures in place. The MDA representative said that ‘there are various structures; some are functioning better than others.’ The FAA respondent claimed that there is an ‘intentional and inbuilt deficit’. The MIF representative believes that there is a democratic deficit due to the majority of decision-makers on the PA board are those of ‘government-appointees and industry representatives’. The IG representative affirmed that there is a deficit although there are ‘further institutions one can refer to such as the appeal process and the ombudsman.’ He states that ‘there are democratic structures of accountability and transparency but how they are implemented is another story’ and he is doubtful if they carry enough ‘official formal clout’. He believes that the democratic element could be improved substantially. The PA was the only representative that doesn’t believe that there is a deficit as ‘the planning process is open for public consultation with all entities and stakeholders. They are given the chance to express their opinions and contribute to decisions and they have the right to appeal’. He reiterated that the PA even helps NGOs with ‘fees of the appeal, so, they can appeal; they can go to court.’ No response was given by ERA.

Question 21 - How would you give people more of a say? How do you believe we can make the process more inclusive?

The MIF respondent believes that this could be achieved by having more representatives from NGOs on the PA Board. The PA representative agreed but he suggested meeting in person rather than ‘just receiving input’. The MDA representative referred to their ‘Safer Neighbourhood Scheme’, which is a vehicle opening MDA to the public. The public’s communication with MDA takes the form of them asking for ‘information including legal aspects’ whilst ‘others share their ideas and experiences with us.’ The FAA representative thinks that the most important issue is educating the public. The IG responder suggested that the PA should take objections seriously, read them and study them. ‘The consultative processes need to be designed and adapted for all respondents to be able to respond the best way they can.’ He also suggested that we need to give the public the tools to digest and understand what’s being said. No response came from ERA’s direction.

Question 22 - There have been petitions signed in Malta to not build or develop. Are these taken into consideration when building?

The MDA respondent said that this question would be better directed ‘to the boards issuing permits and to Government’. Though she continues ‘all investors would like to have good relations with the neighbours and the general public... it would make absolute sense to gauge petition sentiment and evaluate it against other determining factors.’ The MIF member doesn’t think they are taken into consideration when building because more than 4,500 persons objected to the DB City Centre application and they were ignored and that this ‘happens across the board’. The PA respondent said that petitions are used when it’s a new

development such as the AUM Zonqor Point development. ERA said that ‘all the comments received from public consultations as part of an EIA process are taken into consideration by ERA accordingly and referred to in ERA’s Assessment and Recommendations. These representations on the development applications are made to the PA and therefore fall under the PA’s remit’. The FAA thinks that ‘as part of the lack of knowledge the public imagines that a petition is effective whereas PA is under no obligation to take petitions into account, the only thing it is obliged to take into account is objections because that is its only legal obligation’. She continues on to say that the objection process is complicated and one needs to know their obligations which depend on ‘thorough knowledge of the planning process’ which people do not have enough knowledge on. ‘The public has been left bereft of the tools that it needs and this means that the PA feels very free to dismiss public objections as being fanciful and not based on regulation or NIMBY or as being ignorant of legislation and issue many excuses to ignore objections. So those objections and petitions are ignored unless these objections are couched in planning legalese so they feel very free to ignore them’, which is why it’s important that the NGOs are be taught to do so. The IG speaker said that they ‘almost 8,000 signatures against the Manoel Island project were collected and he would have been happy if parliament had just discussed it. This is what would have happened in many EU countries.’ There is no mechanism for consideration of petitions by parliament in Malta.

Question 23 - How many people would have to sign to stop something from being developed?

The MDA respondent stated that it should not be a matter of numbers, but a matter of balancing the rights of all involved, fairness, the country’s best interest and the common good. The FAA believes that it would take ‘as many people as would make a difference to a politician’s career.’

The MIF responder stated that ‘the PA routinely ignores petitions – no matter how many signatories’. The PA’s response is that ‘there is no definite number’ and the PA will consider even one objector. The IG respondent said that in their case it wasn’t about stopping the development. A few thousand citizens should be sufficient for a development to be seriously considered at the very least and given its day of debate in parliament’. There were no response from ERA.

Question 24 to 26

		PA	ERA	MDA	FAA	IG	MIF
24	Would you consider a public forum with representatives of all organizations as being something feasible? Please explain.	✓	✗	✓	✗	=	
25	Would you consider a Community Based Organization framework (like Inħobbu l-Gżira) which represents the town) for all projects? Please explain.	✓		∞	✓	=	
26	Would you consider a referendum on such large-scale projects? Please explain.	✗		✗	✓	✗	

Question 24

The IG representative believes that its equally yes and no because ‘NGOs have such limited resources and citizen groups like ours practically have no resources’. He would rather see a system and mechanism that would do the job properly and consultations taking place when major decisions and new policies are being drawn up and methods of implementation are being considered. ERA believes it ‘may not be practical considering the large number of organisations in Malta’ rather they suggest using ‘already existing frameworks, such as the Malta Council of Economic and Social Development (MCESD), which could serve as a catalyst in this regard.’ The FAA respondent said this would be feasible if there was political will. A public forum encompassing all involved organizations would have to include PA and ERA and if NGOs are having them attend just for appearance sake it will be just another waste of time. The MDA agreed with the idea of public fora ‘if it is led by the proper people and if all representatives adopt a mind shift and work towards one common goal’. The PA representative asserts that public fora are already carried out. He stated that these fora may be organized for major and minor developments. No response was given by the MIF.

Question 25

The PA representative thinks that it might be one of the issues, one can do. The FAA believes that this could work, so much so that they have tried to foster and set up such organizations in different towns and villages; unfortunately, these attempts are floundered on two counts. The first is that the public is not forthcoming when it comes to participation due to a mindset coming from an unbroken colonial past which consequently exalted a very strong sense of subservience and dependence and the second point is that the public doesn’t come forward to

participate due to the system of patronage and subsequently nepotism, preventing anyone from speaking out. She added that ‘there are various factors; the authorities discourage participation actively and passively, by not creating the structures and depriving people of the tools that they need (documents and training). The MDA believes that every organization has its own mission and that the policy maker and the decision maker must give everything and everyone due consideration. The IG representative questioned the level at which they represent the citizens of Gżira; ‘we believe that we are representing their better interests yes but ultimately we weren’t elected whereas the local council was elected’. He added that the local council may be better ‘situated and representative’ of them as IG ‘doesn’t have a mandate from the people’. No responses were recorded from ERA and the MIF.

Question 26

The IG representative believes that a referendum is only of any use if the people are well educated. He referenced the Hunting Referendum ‘which more or less backfired on the people who stood for it.’ However he suggested that ‘a methodology of polling the public rather than a referendum may be better in gauging the real will of the public if the method is well thought and resourced.’ The FAA sees this as an option but it is very hard to enact because of the sheer numbers involved and therefore one requires a very strong and active organization. She mentioned the Hunting Referendum too and how it was supported by ‘Bird life’ one of the biggest NGOs in Malta and that it suffered a large blow after. She also claimed that one would need to get 40,000 signatures for the 30,000 needed to go through because the governments do their very best to destroy referenda calls by claiming that many names and ID cards do not exist. Many people driven by fear of causing ripples and being victimized would not sign their name, or sign it with a false name or ID. The MDA believes that deciding on whether to go







ahead or not with a large-scale project is not only a matter of whether one likes it or not. It is a matter of proper planning, a proper vision, and a proper consultation. The PA doesn't think this would be a good option due to the legal framework of the planning process and he stated that there is public participation already and therefore no need for referenda for major developments. No responses were given from ERA and MIF.

Question 27

	PA	ERA	MDA	FAA	IG	MIF
Referendum				✓	✓	
Public Forum	✓				✓	
Community Based Organizations				✓	✓	
Multi-model					✓	
Leave as is						
Other			✓			

The PA representative said that public fora are already being done; he mentioned 3 instances when this was done with varying attendance rates. He said that he is not against it because he believes that the more information the public has the easier the planning process. He explained that the developer organizes the public processes and are checked independently. He also said that in the past a suggestion box was placed so people could anonymously contribute. The representative concluded that people need to participate although it was always the same people 'showing up'. However he still believes that these people are representing the general public interest'. The FAA stated that 'we definitely cannot be left as is. Referenda, if they were set up properly would be good tools as would Community Based Organizations be'. Consultations on their own do not work unless there is education and encouragement. The IG representative believes that a multi-model could be the answer 'were you combine the formats of a referendum, forum etc. This way one could provide a more objective picture, the forum leads to discussion, discussion leads to new perspectives being discovered and new stumbling blocks being exposed and community organization can contribute a lot.' The MDA said that consultation on various levels is always healthy. The MDA representative suggested that 'a coherent and consistent long-term national strategy is the foundation of success which would be binding on all successive governments and on civil society. She believes that this is the soundest way to ensure consistency in decision-making and decision-taking. ERA and MIF gave no responses to this.

Question 28

	PA	ERA	MDA	FAA	IG	MIF
28 Do you believe the public would be interested in participating with such queries?	 				 	

All four respondents believe that the public would be interested in participating with such queries. The MDA believes that ‘the public is interested in anything that effects him/her directly.’ Both the PA and the IG representatives believe that only a small portion of the public would be interested in participating. The IG representative believes that ‘if the forum were to be open armed, more people would start making their contributions. First you need to reach out to people’. No responses were given by ERA and MIF.

Question 29 - What would be your worries considering such an involved public participatory approach?






The MDA believes that it depends on the mechanism to be put in place but did not elaborate further. The FAA respondent said that the worry is that the public is not an informed public because the public has been deprived of information. The example given came from a public consultation in Gżira were ‘the majority, wanted higher buildings ignoring the implications to health’. The IG representative’s worries include rivalries, people coming up with frivolities, people thinking that only their point of view is merit worthy and subjectivity. He added that ‘we live a world of the subjective so the closest you can get to the objective is by looking at different perspectives and different viewpoints and try to collate them into a more realistic yet holistic picture of a situation.’ The PA representative said that he doesn’t worry about public

participation and he rather believes it is healthy. However he doesn't like that 'everyone has his/her own agenda and they act personally, raising issues which are not related to planning.' No opinion was given by ERA and MIF.

Question 30 - One of the issues that comes up is that people are unaware of all the pros and cons of such projects. Do you consider that an information campaign could help the uninformed element?

The FAA respondent agreed that it would. The IG representative believes that the educational campaign must 'come from an independent body' because the politicians and developers wouldn't 'undertake an independent study which will undermine their own ambitions.' He recalled that MIDI was meant to conduct an EIA. It picked its own consultants who had conflict of interest. ERA believes that a factual information campaign is considered as a positive step to inform and involve the public in a consultation process. The MDA respondent said that as long as the information campaign is fair, unbiased and comprehensive' it could help the uninformed. Her second point corroborates with the MIF respondent's concerns as 'most information campaigns are carried out by interested parties such as developers. These are selective and not really informative as to the cons of the project'. The PA representative said that in the planning process and in the EIAs the pros and cons and instigation measures are there. However he thinks that they could be explained more clearly so that everyone could understand them because the general public may not realise what technical words mean.

Question 31

		PA	ERA	MDA	FAA	IG	MIF
31	Do you believe that if policies on such matters were in place, they would be more effective?	 					

The PA said that the planning act and regulations are already there and what they need to do is improve them or make them clearer. The FAA asserted that policies are as good as the political will to enforce them. She mentions an instance where there were 10 policies against a project and one clause was latched onto. The IG respondent believes that they should be effective and integral. If there is the political will, communications carried out by the authorities will be of decent quality and reach a cross section of society. The MDA respondent said that it would work as long as the policies do not leave too much room for interpretation and as long as policies do not conflict one with the other. There were no responses put forwards from ERA and MIF.

Question 32 - Why do you think that the European Landscape Convention hasn't been ratified in Malta?

The MIF representative said that we would have to ask the government representatives who have consistently refused to ratify this convention and similarly the MDA respondent said that this question needs to be asked to the Government. The PA respondent said that ERA is the competitive authority on this directive. The ERA respondent was asked and they replied that

currently, Malta is reviewing the implications and benefits of it ratifying the Landscape Convention in order to ensure that any decision made is based on sound judgement. They continued to say that the ratification of International Conventions is complex and requires time and resources. The ratification process makes sure to identify and highlight overlaps with other Conventions, in order not to duplicate work and obligations, which would otherwise result in added administrative and financial burdens. The IG respondent said that ‘the government doesn’t want to ratify it because it’s not in its interest. If the ELC was to be ratified, Manoel Island would have been thrown out of the window’. He commented that the ‘ELC has been ratified by many countries and those who didn’t ratify it were those who wanted to get away with their stuff for longer. Then, when they have done the damage they’ll ratify the Convention’. He concluded that it was not ratified due to the lack of political will to do it. The FAA respondent believes that the reasons for not ratifying this process are that there is such a drive to build in the countryside that people want to be free to be able to build in ODZ and that even architects would be against ratifying it. ‘We can’t just put it on politicians only, the architects have a lot to answer for to,’ she concluded.






Question 33

		PA	ERA	MDA	FAA	IG	MIF
33	Do you believe the media’s depiction of projects is truthful in their assessment?	==		==	✓	✗	==

The PA believes that it depends because sometimes there is genuine representation in the media but sometimes they have their own agendas. Infact, the PA respondent said that he always insists that the PA replies to the media to make things clear. He added that ‘developers don’t






defend their projects, which reflects badly on them. If they believed in their project and in what they are doing they should defend it and explain it to the people. Sometimes we have this perception that the media is just negative but this is not true, because when we had good projects we had good media submissions.’ The FAA respondent believes that the media is usually truthful but some developers put paid media campaigns that maybe deceitful. The IG respondent believes that ‘the media doesn’t have the resources to assess the full extent of things’ as these issues are complex with a multitude of ‘layers and vested interests to consider.’ Another fact brought to attention is that due to the market being limited losing an advertiser is an issue and the companies that buy a lot of advertising space may be the same ones proposing development. The IG representative added ‘There is this whole complexity and our media aren’t independent enough, aren’t equipped enough and aren’t knowledgeable enough on the subject so they rely on people like us to explain things to them. They will go and verify with others and very often the more powerful will get their word put through. It makes our battle harder but it is a reality we are aware of and we don’t let it get to us.’ The MDA said that sometimes media is truthful but sometimes not. The MIF respondent said that the truthfulness depends on the media house in question and whether influenced by commercial and/or partisan interests. There were no response offered by ERA.

Question 34

		PA	ERA	MDA	FAA	IG	MIF
34	Do you believe that the Planning Authority is influenced by the government?						

The only respondent asserting that the PA is not influenced by government is the PA itself. The PA respondent said that the PA is a government agency and the policies and the direction of policies are given by the government. He said that their job is to put the policy into place. With regards to development and planning applications he does not believe the government has an input. MDA, FAA, MIF and IG believe there is direct influence by the government on the PA. The MIF representative stated that the majority of members of the PA Board are government appointees, the CEO is a person of trust of the Minister and that the PA is a government body pretending to be autonomous. MDA said that the government sets the vision and gives policy direction. The IG and FAA respondents believe that the appointed PA board are chosen to push the government's agenda and manifesto. ERA did not respond to this question.

Question 35

		PA	ERA	MDA	FAA	IG	MIF
35	Do you believe that the participatory processes set in place are used to control citizen initiatives?						

The MDA doesn't believe this is the case. The PA representative agreed saying that the process is in place, the public is involved from the beginning of the planning process at the stage of the development application and is invited to be present during the board decision. He continued saying that public concerns will be taken into consideration and there were certain developments that were recommended for approval but when the board heard the public they refused it. The IG respondent stated that the participatory processes set in place police them but he does not believe they control the outcome. He asserted that 'thus far I cannot say they are trying to control. That they are trying to reduce our influence yes, that their trying to police

us yes, that they occasionally try to create obstacles for us yes, but not control us'. Both FAA and MIF respondents suggest that there is control of citizen initiatives by the government. ERA entered no reply.

Question 36 – Why do you think there was so much controversy surrounding the ‘Manoel Island Project’?

The PA respondent said that the project was approved in the late 90s and the development floor space was part of that outline. He doesn't think that they really studied what was approved in principle and that now everyone wants Manoel Island to become a park. He explained that the applicant reduced floor space and was approved. He then mentioned the issues that came with this project; height, which can be discussed and improved, the slip ways and the commercial and residential issue and these have been taken to appeal. He claimed he cannot understand why there are these objections since the floorspace has been reduced, the open spaces have been made larger than those approved, the heritage buildings are being restored and during the site investigation they are increasing the area to be scheduled. The MIF's response saw the Maltese public in general and the Gżira community in particular having to put up with years of savage speculation and taking up of all public spaces. She added that despite the fact that the MI emphyteutical concession was granted 20 years before, the public was not really in the know about this and was concerned to see that development was intended to begin in earnest. The FAA respondent pointed out several issues that created this controversy. It had been public property and was given over for peanuts to a major developer under conditions which were not fulfilled. She believes that the setting up of the Manoel Island Foundation is a travesty set up by MIDI itself to approve abusive plans. In spite of it being touted as a watchdog, the MIF have no regulatory power.

Although it says in its statute that it can take MIDI to court for infringing its conditions, ‘who is going to pay for such a court case?’ asked the FAA representative. She continued that ‘the MIF doesn’t have an independent source of funding except for MIDI and has on its board the CEO of the Manoel Island Project. It’s also controversial because of its take over of government facilities like the fishermen’s slip way, with the fishermen having been bought off with promises that may not even materialize.’ The IG representative recounted the history of the protests, people/organizations and its development. Within this recount he said that ‘MIDI had made a real mess of Tigné and they kept taking advantage every step of the way so MIDI’s trust became eroded over the years from both the public and the authorities.’ The IG representative said that ‘the controversy arose when we started exposing the lies of the local council and the lies of MIDI. MIDI’s 3D visuals are completely misleading.’ The PA’s decision was based on conditions and data from 20 years earlier. They had expired permits, an EIA drafted by an architect with conflict of interest and studies on traffic access of the area done at the end of the other century. The current traffic is at least 4 times as much as it was then. There was no response given by ERA and MDA preferred not to comment.

Question 37 - Do you believe ‘Inhobbu l-Gżira’ (a Community Based Organization) managed to get their message across?

The PA respondent believes that their message came across, but their objective that Manoel Island is taken by the government and turned into a park is more difficult although everything is possible but there are implications that emanates from that. The FAA respondent doesn’t believe this to be the case due to its lack of resources to reach the public and that ‘it is dealing with a public that puts party loyalty before their own interests’ and that ‘they have been betrayed by a labour Major who puts his own ambitions before the wellbeing of its residents’.

The IG respondent said that to an extent they ‘performed well especially with sectors of the public who took the time to read, listen and understand what we were trying to say’. They also got their message across with the Environmental Planning and Review Tribunal because the first case was won and the material for this case was provided from Inħobbu l-Gżira to FAA. He feels that ‘during the campaign people became less complacent and more attentive to what happens around them and the cause continues to be propagated.’ There was no response from ERA, MDA and MIF.

Question 38 - Do you think the public was appeased with the creation of The Manoel Island Foundation?

The PA respondent’s answer was that the foundations main objective was to represent the local community interest or the general public interest. He sees this objective as something positive although others might not see it as such. He said that the master plan was improved since the day MIF was founded. He said that ‘you can’t have all stakeholders agreeing, which I understand. You cannot please everyone.’ The FAA respondent believes that in this case the public ‘swallowed the lie that the Manoel Island Foundation would act as a watchdog for the interests of the public and heritage values’. She added that ‘even the fact that they gave the impression that an NGO was involved in the first place was a very scheming and manipulative effort to give credibility to the foundation’. The IG respondent concurs with this and believes they were appeased ‘despite the fact that the Manoel Island Foundation in itself is just a toothless construct which can never be effective in carrying out its purported objectives’. No response was given by ERA, MIF and MDA.

Question 39 - Different participatory processes were undertaken in pursuit of ‘The Manoel Island Project’. Which do you believe was the most effective?

The FAA respondent believes that ‘the parliamentary petition was most effective in terms of public participation but not in terms of end result as our politicians betrayed this process’. MIF outlined the participatory processes: ‘there were the usual participatory processes – those during the preparation of the EIA and the PA’. Rather than pointing out the most effective process, the IG respondent pointed out MIDI’s conducted EIA’s deficits. He stated that there was never a proper health impact assessment. The PA gave an explanation of how ERA has legal frameworks based on the EU directives for EIAs on how it has to be carried out including public participation. This is a separate process from the planning process. ERA, MIF and MDA did not comment.

Question 40 – What level of participation do/did you have during the ‘Manoel Island Project’?

The PA respondent said that he was not involved in this particular application but he was involved in the application of 1995. He commented that as a planning directorate, all representatives were invited to the board hearing with public participation, and those who were interested to publicly say their representations in the board meeting were given their time. He illustrated the different organizations that attended the hearing from political parties to NGOs to the fishermen’s organization, and consequently concluded that during the process of the planning application there were all levels of public participation. The ERA respondent outlined their role within the EIA process during this project. They started by giving a code number and provided a link where all relevant information could be found. The respondent stated that as

per normal procedure under the EIA Regulations (S.L. 549.46) the public has been consulted for comments and feedback at various stages of the EIA process, scoping for terms of reference and review of the EIA report. Furthermore, a public hearing was held where the public could comment and enquire about the EIA report, the project and its impacts. The MDA respondent said that they look into issues on a national scale, and not individual projects *per se*'. The FAA respondent participated in the protest organized by Graffiti, 5 years ago as well as was instrumental into bringing FAA to take this on as a major campaign. The MIF respondent participated in the EIA and the PA's participatory processes. The IG respondent spoke of not only his organization's participation but that of the community too. A lot of Gżira residents helped; 'people would come to us and give us information and try to help guide us along the way, we had elderly residents lending us a hand, we reached out to people for signatures and we had people who came and gave out flyers'. He recalled how a lot of individuals 'chipped in and contributed, people sent in videos, photos, alerting us to things that were going on'. The respondent finished off the interview by saying that they are kept alive by the public. If they keep doing the right thing, the public will supported them.

5. Discussion

Malta is a member of the European Union and as such it should follow the rules of the Union that it had signed for at the accession in 2004 and since then. The European Union aims to take democracy to the people because it believes in subsidiarity where decision making is done as close to the people as possible respecting their rights, their culture and the environment they live in. Anything short of this leads to a democratic deficit.

In this work I attempted to study democratic deficit in people's participation in the planning process of large projects using the Manoel Island Project in this analysis. Having found the roots of this deficit I tried to suggest ways of how to mitigate this deficit.

The interviewees can be divided into Government Entities ie The PA and ERA, the developer representative (MDA) and the NGOs (FAA and IG). MIF is meant to be a bridge between the NGOs and the developer and has representatives from both sides but it funded by the developer. The PA representative answered all the questions through a video interview although he was presented with the questions prior to the interview and the ERA representative hardly answered any questions accept those related to policy or processes. No opinion was given because they said that the individual respondent might have an opinion which does not reflect exactly what ERAs views are. This proves the point of ERA's fears, reluctance and ineffectiveness.

The NGOs, MDA and MIF complain of a democratic deficit throughout the interviews. FAA does not believe this is by chance but by design. She said that there is an 'intentional and inbuilt deficit'. MIF agrees because the board members of the PA are government appointees and industry representatives. The Developers Association admits that 'some function better than others'. The PA representative not surprisingly was the only respondent that didn't feel that there was a democratic deficit because he stated the planning process is open for public

consultation with all entities and stakeholders, there are appeals boards and they support the NGOs financially. This financial support might in itself create a democratic deficit.

5.1 The Media Articles

The newspaper and online articles were very consistent in their reporting of the Manoel Island project processes and the reactions of the stakeholders. They kept the public informed with articles by concerned stakeholders with criticism and suggestions about the Manoel Island Masterplan. (Michael Sciortino, Arnold Cassola)

All the interview responders agreed that the independent media reporting was both accurate and had genuine representation. However developers put paid adverts that might be misleading and may confuse the issues. Media is financially dependent on advertising and many developers advertise on their pages. This might at least have some subliminal effect on the reporting.

5.2 Process

At the phase of the process, the developer showed good will towards the public. The developer and the Gzira local council decided to work together and engage the public to deliver a project acceptable to both. The two main political parties were on board but the third much smaller green party was against the Manoel Island masterplan.

5.3 Missing and Inadequate Information and Data

Later on in the process, cracks in the relationship between the public and the developer started to appear. The original plan was amended, documentation was lost, photomontages were incorrect and information was unavailable to the public. Michael Briguglio, a

sociologist questioned the absence of a proper and current social impact assessment including health impact on the locals. The archeological impact assessment, which included underwater evaluation, was also missing. FAA also objected about the lack of environmental management system, which had been promised by MIDI.

5.4 The Appeal

As a result, FAA used another participatory process and launched an appeal to the ERPT against the plan. The Court of Appeals found out that the architect drafting the EIA was the son of a MIDI director with clear conflict of interest and democratic deficit and decided to stop excavations for three months pending investigations (Giordimaina, 2019; Vella, 2019). A year and month later the ERPT revoked the Manoel Island project permit and ordered a new EIA. MIDI acknowledged the decision and said they will comply. The PA vetted the choice of personnel for the EIA and therefore it is responsible for allowing this conflict of interest to occur.

5.5 Interests

Both ERA and the PA are not perceived as representing the interests of the public, whilst the NGO's are seen to do so. Local Councils are political entities and therefore their loyalties tend to shift. The NGOs and MIF feel that PA's interests are in favour of more land development and susceptible to the business lobby. Our electoral system allows the developers the chance to buy political influence during electoral campaigns (Caruana Galizia study). The majority believe that the PA is influenced by the government, considering that the majority of members of the PA Board are government appointees and they are chosen to push the government's agenda and manifesto. The NGOs believe that ERA does not represent the

interests of the Maltese population largely because of its massive lack of influence and timidity to stand up for the environment and sustainability. On the other hand, NGOs are viewed as defenders of citizens' interests they fight 'for inclusiveness in democratic procedures, for transparency in governmental transactions, and... for the right of citizens to be heard in matters affecting their interests' (Douglass & Friedmann, 1998).

The balance between the developer's needs and the public requests seems to favour the former according to the NGOs and MIF. The PA suggested that a change in mentality by the developer and the public would address this perceived imbalance.

5.6 Creation of Organizations

As in similar situations of conflict involving the public, there was a creation of a group of persons (Inħobbu l-Gżira) with a common cause so that they will be able to speak in one voice in the participatory process. The participation through voluntary channels was seen to be effective in other similar situations (Alfasi, 2003). Inħobbu l-Gżira managed to mobilize the town's population to oppose the Manoel Island plan. They conducted several public participatory processes such as hosting public meetings, creating and carrying out petitions and one-on-one meetings. A public meeting they hosted gave way to 60/70 residents signing a letter to the government and its opposition *with* amendments, recommendations and requests to the plan. They mobilized the Gżira people and led a wave of civic activism the pinnacle of which was a petition signed by over 8,400 people to turn Manoel Island into a wooded park with heritage buildings. This was never discussed in parliament or even given a mention, however the message to the people of Gżira and beyond got through and people became less complacent, more attentive and aware of what was going on.

A second organization, the Manoel Island Foundation was formed to safeguard MIDI's obligations and be its watchdog both during the project and after. It comprised of a representative of the NGOs, two members from the Gzira local council and a representative of MIDI. At the signing of this guardianship deed the previous prime minister Joseph Muscat said that the 'project should serve as a model for the relationship between the community and the investor'. Notably, MIDI's CEO Mark Portelli when asked if the Foundation formula should be used as the standard model of future development, believed that it could be applied to other projects of similar size. The NGO interviewees were not impressed and they saw it as a way to placate the community without involving them in the decision making process. It even gave the wrong impression that the NGOs had a big say within the committee giving it credibility.

5.7 Public Participatory Practices

5.7.1 Petitioning

The NGOs suggest that the PA ignores petitioning because they only recognize objections. Objections are the legal instrument that one can use when he/she is in disagreement with a proposed planning application. In fact, over 8,000 petitioners against the Manoel Island project were ignored. The PA has ignored 8,000 petitioners but would have considered even one objector. The objector would only object on listed planning infringements and many of these are easier to reject on technicalities.

5.7.2 Consultation

This is the main participatory process used in Malta. The majority of the respondents believe that these processes lack effectiveness and acts as a formality. The FAA believes that they are

designed with an inbuilt weakness. The MDA, FAA and the IG respondents see this process as them ticking boxes, showing they've done it. This is not the first time the latter has been said, a study conducted nine years ago showed that participants felt as though this was the case (Conrad et al., 2011). Only PA and ERA believe that the consultation process is adequate. The MDA representative is also critical and thinks that they lack to meet the scope intended, they are not led by the right people and gives the idea it is done just to tick the boxes for compliance reasons. Also, the NGO, CBO, MIF and MDA all feel there is a problem of transparency in the planning process.

5.7.3 Surveys

MDA believes that surveys can give an indication, though their accuracy will depend on how the questions are drafted as they can be misleading. It is difficult to know whether one is giving a passionate reply or an informed reply. Surveys are best used for fact-finding and not to try and elicit an opinion. However, it all depends on how the survey is worded and at the education level of the surveyed persons. MIDI's social impact assessment survey on the Manoel Island Plan was performed on 250 passer-by who were randomly asked about the project for which they reacted positively (Leone Ganado, 2018). This is not a scientific way to do surveys and one can always extract the answers one wants to have by selecting the questions and the subjects.

5.7.4 Public Forum

The PA said that public fora were already in place for minor and major developments and that this form of public participation could provide more information to the public, which makes the planning process easier. There is not the political will to do it with actors like the PA and

ERA just attending for appearance sake. ERA suggested it may not be practical considering the large number of organisations in Malta and maybe an umbrella organisation would be able to cater for all.

5.7.5 Community Based Organizations

The FAA said that they have been trying to create such organizations though two issues were very visible. The public is not forthcoming because of a culture of subservience and dependence and people are afraid to come forward from fear of reprisals. Also, authorities do not provide the tools of education and information to the public.

5.7.6. Referenda

Respondents saw this option as only being viable if people are well educated. It is also not possible to do a referendum for less than exceptional reasons. Referenda are very expensive and they depend on the way a question is phrased and on the education of the people. The PA does not think this would be a good option due to the legal framework of the planning process and he stated that there is public participation already and therefore no need for referenda for major developments. A suggestion is made that a methodology of polling the public rather than referendum may be better in gauging the real will of the public if it is well thought and resourced

When asked which participatory approaches they would consider three out of four respondents picked more than one option. This indicates that the stakeholder representatives are open to new or partially used participatory approaches.

5.7.7 Policies/Frameworks

The ongoing framework for participation strategies throughout the lifecycle garnered a relatively positive reaction from respondents. Considering this, the flowchart created by Li, Thomas Ng & Skitmore (2012) could be used as a model. Through the interviews, this ongoing framework is seen as being crucial and that it would actually engage with the public in a manner that will improve their lifestyles. The PA believes that this framework is already in place but there is room for improvement. The NGO respondent suggested that policies are as good as the political will to enforce them because the huge amount of policies, regulations and frameworks were being ignored. Recommendations should be effective and integral and that these would work as long as the policies do not conflict with one another and aren't given much room for interpretation.

Another point of contention is the fact the Environment and Landscape Convention was not ratified. The ELC's ideal is expressly democratic (Prieur, 2006) as it seeks to safeguard the quality of all landscapes, with the full and participatory involvement of the public (Council of Europe, 2000). The non-ratification of ELC leads one to believe that the government wants to allow more plundering of our countries because the ratification will come in the way of land speculators. This is an important cogwheel in the democratic deficit machinery.

This is further reinforced by an FAA comment found in the Independent (2019a), where the European Convention was quoted as saying that landscapes and views were particularly recognized as important, something, which they say has been ignored with the blessing of the Environment Resources Authority in a biased and unrepresentative report

Furthermore, if the ELC is going to be an effective democratic decision-making instrument, and it seeks to take into account all views, realistically, any policy with a broad remit will have to compromise on what different members of the public would like (Zhen, 2006). Therefore, a challenge that they will be facing if this is implemented is the lack of knowledge from the public noted by several respondents.

5.8 Dialogue

The interviewees feel that dialogue between organization and the public as well as intra-communication between organizations is flawed. The best dialogue was found to be between NGOs and the public. Dialogue from the very start of the planning phase of a project and co-ordination between stakeholders is very lacking. Co-ordination would eliminate stumbling blocks and overstepping between entities. They would work together for the same deliverables and time-frames to meet those ends. The NGOs claim that the PA's dialogue towards other organizations is lip service and discussions adversarial with sporadic meetings being used to pretend that dialogue exists and what goes through is dialogue of the deaf. There is dialogue going on between the NGOs and the public but they complain of lack of resources to fulfil their role as informants to the public and to be able to reach out and communicate with a broader audience. The Developers Association noted that it has seen an improvement in their dialogue with the public by launching a scheme to disseminate information and educate the public. The NGOs believe this to be an exercise in PR because the developers have a history of saying one thing and doing another. All the stakeholders admit that there is a lack of communication and dialogue between them. Deetz (1992) believes that participation and dialogue in a democracy will help in problem resolution by presenting different points of view. A democratic society encourages debate when different forces had closed discussions down (Deetz, 1992).

5.9 Participation interest & involvement

All respondents believe that the public would be interested in participating with such queries because the public is interested in anything that affects him/her directly. This interest was verified when the public crowd-funded the 7,000 euros for the appeal costs and the signing of the petition itself which garnered the support of 8,497 people. The majority of the respondents feel that the public isn't involved enough. Also, one respondent observed that the public is not helped or facilitated to give its views across.

Another problem of participation may be notification. The aforementioned public fora saw varying attendance rates by the PA. The PA notification system was relegated from a widely read newspaper to the hardly ever read Government Gazette. Furthermore, the meetings are held when there is a low probable attendance rate. The NGO representatives claim that this is done on purpose to reduce public participation. This democratic deficit should be combatted with the FAA representative's suggestion that outreach should follow the Aarhus Conventions stipulations that residents need to be notified with early visible notification. Worries that came out of the interview of an involved public participatory approach are that the public is not an informed properly because the public has been deprived of information. Also, participation sometimes is farcical with people coming up with frivolities, local rivalries and personal agendas. The NGOs go far to suggest that this citizen initiatives are controlled by the government.

5.10 Information

In 2011, a study (Conrad et. al.) on public participation in Malta found a prevalent dissatisfaction with information provided as it was generally incomplete and selective,

heavily imbued with jargon and technical difficulty, making it inaccessible to the lay public, and difficult to find. In the subsequent nine years, not much has changed. In the past NGOs have tried to conduct courses in conjunction with the PA which after the first successful one, it was never repeated.

ERA believes that a factual information campaign is considered as a positive step to inform and involve the public in a consultation process because the general public may not realise what technical words mean. If this is to ensue, the educational campaign must come from an independent body and the information campaign is fair, unbiased and comprehensive. As politicians and developers wouldn't undertake an independent study which will undermine their own ambitions and that most information campaigns are carried out by interested parties such as developers the information relayed will be selective and not really informative as to the problems of the project. The FAA sees the public has been less bereft of the tools that it needs and this means that the PA feels very free to dismiss public objections as being fanciful and not based on regulation or as being ignorant of legislation a great many excuses to ignore objections. The MDA said that they have launched the Safer Neighbourhood Scheme, which aims to disseminate information on legalities in simple terms and informing them of their rights and obligations and secondly to offer support and to establish better neighbourhood practices.

5.11 Moving Forward

The above discussion has established that there is a democratic deficit in effective public participation in the planning of large projects at various levels. It is now our turn to find out how we can mitigate such deficit.

The most important issue is education of the public. The public should be able to understand with a clear mind and untainted by political allegiances the pros and cons of a particular

project. People need to know the processes of land development, the laws that regulate them and the safeguards that are in place. The public needs to learn to see clearly the benefits the project is going to give to the community and society and what price the environment has to pay for this. Deterioration of the environment has an effect on our mental and physical health and on the well-being of future generations. Education would be beneficial to both the public and the stakeholders involved as they would no longer receive objections, that are nonsensical and it would help to create better development projects.

The decision-making PA boards should be made up by persons who are not politically or financially motivated. There should be more public representation through NGOs and experts that are completely independent from the developer. The common people are allowed to voice their opinions and these opinions if relevant need to be heeded. To further garner trust with all, answers to why objections are dismissed should be followed up and substantiated. Most of the interviewees saw this process as 'fake participation' due to this ticking of boxes, where decision makers seek to conform to requirements of democratic legitimacy, without necessarily wanting to deal with the implications of public views (Snider, 2010). Throughout this process, Deetz's 8 key factors were noted where conflict and opposing ideas are stifled. How information gathered is analysed is in itself significant and meaningful (Forester, 1989; Innes, 1996, 1998), as well as problematic. This makes the interpretation of collected data another weakness for public participation. Information gathered from public comprises of various scales and types of images and ideas, some specific and others general and abstract

Ratification of the Environment and Landscape Convention by the government and the creation and implementation of local laws that protect the landscapes, seascapes and the natural environment and legislation against pollution and building irregularities. This should be supplemented by the political will to enforce these laws and educate the public about

them. Empowering ERA to have clout in the decision making and arm it with teeth to bite when it is necessary.

Laws and policies that have a vision for the future with industry growing in a new framework which respects people's new way of living and in total respect to the environment which we need to protect and develop sustainably in order to keep our country attractive. Also, there as the MDA representative suggested 'Malta needs a coherent and consistent long-term national strategy which would be binding on all successive governments and on civil society so as to ensure consistency in decision-making and decision-taking. We cannot continue working on short-sighted five-year electoral cycles. We really need to move forward and plan strategically. MDA would like to work jointly with NGOs and push the government authorities and regulators to adopt this sustainable strategic approach.'

Proper and sincere dialogue between stakeholders. Habermas (1987) advises an 'ideal dialogue situation where participants have equal chance to challenge the validity of the others statements and work together to develop their arguments through communicative rationality. In these situations, there is no better than a powerful force of a better argument. If the conditions of the ideal speech situation aren't upheld, genuine conversation is precluded and communication distorted'.

A structure for housing Community Based Organizations should be created, considering all the good that has come out of one this could safeguard the interests of residents and it would be easier for NGOs to do their job and communicate with the public. It would also reduce resource stress as the work would be split up. As we saw their residents were comfortable

with going to speak to them anonymously and bring out issues that otherwise might have not come to light.

Frameworks for public participation throughout the lifecycle of the project should be considered as this may keep the public involved every step of the way. Different participatory processes can be used even if consultation is stuck to. Though in whichever participatory process or processes chosen they must have the following; (i) dissemination of information must be complete and understood (maybe even placed in laymen terms) (ii) spearheaded by the right people (independent bodies/individuals) (iii) feedback is analysed with an open and unbiased mind set. This was the MDA's response for how consultations are to be taken over, this can be used for other processes and I feel as though she hit the nail on the head with bringing out the essence of what these participatory processes need. Furthermore, one must also keep in mind timing and time-frames the MDA respondent notes that there cannot be multiple consultations at the same time. On this point, there must also be early notification of projects where people will actually see the said notices. My suggestion would be to use social media as it would reach most of Malta's population.

Better vetting processes must be done on large projects as many criticisms came to light in relation to the Manoel Islands EIA process. A democratic deficit is not only seen through communication but through the applications and requirements being met, as they clearly weren't from the social impact assessment, the health impact assessment and the traffic impact assessment not to mention the conflict of interest. It is true that this has been appealed but as said before what if this had not been pointed out considering that the same architect has been on the project since the drawing up of plans.

The petitioning participative process should be completed and not be a lip-service function but if the signatures are there it must be seriously discussed. The refusal to discuss The Manoel Island petition in parliament was a democratic deficit, considering how many people signed the petition both online and in person. E-Petitioning contributes to realizing democratic outcomes by providing citizens the chance to raise new perspectives, place issues on the agenda and stimulates public engagement.

5. 8 Limitations of the Study

The number of respondents is small but this study is qualitative and not quantitative.

Half of the respondents were interviewed face to face therefore the questions could be delved into further and more information could be gathered. However, there was also room for the interviewee to be derailed and go out of point as the questions went on.

Another limitation seen was that though the respondents were chosen as representatives of their sector/organization their own views and bias must have interfered with their answers.

This means that their views do not necessarily reflect the views of the entire organization.

Furthermore, only one representative was chosen therefore we could not compare and contrast their responses.

ERA chose not to respond to the majority of the questions, due to this their responses could not be compared and contrasted with the rest.

The number of questions placed may have been a limitation in itself as it may have been tiring for respondents and they might have provided less accurate answers and decreased chances of answering questions.

The final limitation seen is that the Manoel Island project is still ongoing and that there has not been a conclusion to all the participatory processes.

5.9 Conclusion

Analysis of contemporary newspaper literature and evaluation of interview responses by stakeholders involved in the Manoel Island Masterplan yielded a substantial democratic deficit in the participatory process. This has been shown by a lack of proper and outdated environmental, social, health and archeological impact assessments, involvement of personnel with evident conflict of interest and the snubbing of an 8,500 strong petition. Political interference with PA decisions and uneducated public help maintain this democratic deficit.

Having identified the possible origin of this democratic deficit in the participatory process in large development plans, I suggested mitigation of this deficit. These include: education of the public especially in planning and environmental issues, suggestion of impartial and independent planning authority board members, ratification of the ELC, enacting laws to protect the environment and making sure they are enforced and have a proper and sincere dialogue with stakeholders from the very beginning of the planning process. Also, it is important to give ERA some teeth, use of surveys to assess what the public wants and create a well thought consistent environment friendly long-term plans for development that would not be changed with every change of government.

References

Aidt, T. (2003). Economic Analysis of Corruption: A Survey. *The Economic Journal*, 113(491), F632-F652. doi: 10.1046/j.0013-0133.2003.00171.x

Albrechts L, (2001). In pursuit of new approaches to strategic spatial planning: a European Perspective.. *International Planning Studies*, 6, 293-310

Albrechts L, (2004). Strategic (spatial) planning reexamined. *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*, 31, 743-758

Alfasi, N. (2003). Is Public Participation Making Urban Planning More Democratic? The Israeli Experience. *Planning Theory & Practice*, 4(2), 185-202. doi: 10.1080/14649350307979

André, P., Enserink, B., Connor, D., & Croal, P. (2006). *Public participation international best practice principles*. Fargo: IAIA. Special Publication Series No. 4.

Arnstein, S. (1969). A Ladder Of Citizen Participation. *Journal Of The American Institute Of Planners*, 35(4), 216-224. doi: 10.1080/01944366908977225

Atkin, B., & Skitmore, M. (2008). Editorial: stakeholder management in construction. *Construction Management And Economics*, 26(6), 549-552. doi: 10.1080/01446190802142405

Azzopardi, J. (2019). 'Parliament Still Silent!' Second Petition Filed Against Manoel Island Development After First Was Not Brought Up In Parliament. Retrieved 20 August 2020, from <https://lovinmalta.com/news/parliament-still-silent-second-petition-filed-against-manoel-island-development-after-first-was-not-brought-up-in-parliament/?fbclid=IwAR35FnNlluHWSrXDSOa4oQdO3i3DB7uvQzSGQDAQLZkYB5zmApPbBUqAobo>

Azzopardi, K. (2019). Gzira activists collect 916 signatures in second petition opposing Manoel Island development. *Maltatoday*. Retrieved from https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/96917/gzira_activists_collect_7500_signatures_in_second_petition_opposing_manoel_island_development#.X0OhhcgzZ3Q

Bloomfield, D., Collins, K., Fry, C., & Munton, R. (2001). Deliberation and Inclusion: Vehicles for Increasing Trust in UK Public Governance?. *Environment And Planning C: Government And Policy*, 19(4), 501-513. doi: 10.1068/c6s

Blowers, A. (2000). Ecological and political modernisation: the challenge for planning. *Town Planning Review*, 71(4), 371. doi: 10.3828/tpr.71.4.g1h1n51x037157t2

Bohnet, I., & Frey, B. (1994). Direct-Democratic Rules: The Role of Discussion. *Kyklos*, 47(3), 341-354. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-6435.1994.tb02742.x

Boissevain, J. (2001). Contesting Maltese Landscapes. *Journal Of Mediterranean Studies*, 11(2), 277-296.

Bonnici, J. (2018a). Community will be at the centre of Manoel Island Project - MIDI CEO. *The Independent*. Retrieved from <http://independent.com.mt/articles/2018-03-26/local-interviews/Community-will-be-at-the-centre-of-Manoel-Island-Project-MIDI-CEO-6736186959>

Bonnici, J. (2018b). Foundation set up to safeguard Manoel Island's green spaces, heritage buildings, and foreshore. *The Independent*. Retrieved from <https://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2018-03-14/local-news/MIDI-and-Manoel-Island-Foundation-to-sign-guardianship-agreement-today-6736186213>

Bonnici, J. (2019a). Over 2,500 People Sign Petition Calling For Manoel Island To Be Turned Into Heritage Park. Retrieved 20 August 2020, from <https://lovinmalta.com/lifestyle/environment/over-2-500-people-sign-petition-calling-for-manoel-island-to-turn-in-heritage-park/>

Bonnici, J. (2019b). Excavation Works On Manoel Island Stopped For Three Months Pending Appeal. *Lovin Malta*. Retrieved from <https://lovinmalta.com/news/excavation-works-on-manoel-island-stopped-for-three-months-pending-appeal/>

Brown, G. (2004). Mapping Spatial Attributes in Survey Research for Natural Resource Management: Methods and Applications. *Society & Natural Resources*, 18(1), 17-39. doi: 10.1080/08941920590881853

Brown, G., & Raymond, C. (2007). The relationship between place attachment and landscape values: Toward mapping place attachment. *Applied Geography*, 27(2), 89-111. doi: 10.1016/j.apgeog.2006.11.002

Buchy, M., & Hoverman, S. (2000). Understanding public participation in forest planning: A review. *Forest Policy and Economics*, 1(1), 15_25. doi:10.1016/S1389-9341(00)00006-X

Campbell, H., & Marshall, R. (2000). Moral Obligations, Planning, and the Public Interest: A Commentary on Current British Practice. *Environment And Planning B: Planning And Design*, 27(2), 297-312. doi: 10.1068/b2509

Carabott, S. (2019). Thousands petition for Manoel Island woodland. *Times Of Malta*. Retrieved from <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/thousands-petition-for-manoel-island-woodland.702956>

Caruana-Galizia, P., & Caruana-Galizia, M. (2018). Political land corruption: evidence from Malta – the European Union’s smallest member state. *Journal Of Public Policy*, 38(4), 419-453. doi: 10.1017/s0143814x17000174

Cassola, A. (2018). Manoel Island development: the real, ugly implications. *Times Of Malta*. Retrieved from <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/manoel-island-development-the-real-ugly-implications-arnold-cassola.696228>

Cassola, A. (2019). Elastic heights on Manoel Island. *Times Of Malta*. Retrieved from <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/elastic-heights-on-manoel-island-arnold-cassola.703453>

Cassola, A. (2019). Manoel Island: minimising the effects on Gżira. *Times Of Malta*. Retrieved from <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/manoel-island-minimising-the-effects-on-gzira-arnold-cassola.698494>

Cassola, A. (2019). Way to a livable Gżira. *Times Of Malta*. Retrieved from <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/way-to-a-livable-gzira-arnold-cassola.700302>

CCSG. (2007). *From consultation to civic engagement: The road to better policymaking and governance in Hong Kong*. Centre for Civil Society and Governance, HKU. Retrieved from http://www.bauhinia.org/assets/document/Full_report_cht_2007.pdf

Chadwick, A. (2009) 'Web 2.0: New challenges for the study of e-democracy in an era of informational exuberance', *I/S: A Journal of Law and Policy for the Information Society*, 5:1, 9–42.

Clark, J., Burgess, J., Battachary, D., Dando, N., Heppel, K., & Jones, P. et al. (1998). *Prioritising the Issues in Local Environment Agency Plans through Consensus Building with Stakeholder Groups*. Bristol: Environmental Agency.

Clark, J., Stirling, A., Studd, K., & Burgess, J. (2001). *Local Outreach*. Bristol: Environment Agency.

Clgf. The Local Government System in Malta. Retrieved 21 August 2020, from http://www.clgf.org.uk/default/assets/File/Country_profiles/Malta.pdf

Coleman, S. (2004). Connecting Parliament to the Public via the Internet. *Information, Communication & Society*, 7(1), 1-22. doi: 10.1080/1369118042000208870

Coleman, S. and Blumler, J. (2009). *The Internet and Democratic Citizenship: Theory, Practice & Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Coleman, S., & Moss, G. (2012). Under Construction: The Field of Online Deliberation Research. *Journal Of Information Technology & Politics*, 9(1), 1-15. doi: 10.1080/19331681.2011.635957

Conrad, E., Cassar, L., Christie, M., & Fazey, I. (2011). Hearing but Not Listening? A Participatory Assessment of Public Participation in Planning. *Environment And Planning C: Government And Policy*, 29(5), 761-782. doi: 10.1068/c10137

Conrad, E., Christie, M., & Fazey, I. (2011). Understanding public perceptions of landscape: A case study from Gozo, Malta. *Applied Geography*, 31(1), 159-170. doi: 10.1016/j.apgeog.2010.03.009

Council of Europe. Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)14 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the legal status of non-governmental organisations in Europe. Retrieved 22 September 2020, from https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805d534d

Council of Europe. (2000). European landscape convention. Retrieved from.

<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/176.htm>

Council of Europe. (2009). Committee of Ministers, Declaration on the *Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the Decision-Making Process* adopted on 21 October 2009 at the 1068th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies. Available at:

<https://wcd.CouncilofEurope.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1525009&Site=CM>

Cox, R. (2006). Environmental communication and the public sphere. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creighton, J. L. (2005). *The public participation handbook: Making better decisions through citizen involvement*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Crowfoot, J., & Wondolleck, J. (1990). *Citizen organizations and environmental conflict*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.

Curasi, C.F. (2001). A critical exploration of face-to-face interviewing vs. computer-mediated interviewing. *International Journal of Market Research*, 43(4).

Dahlgren, P. (2005). The Internet, Public Spheres, and Political Communication: Dispersion and Deliberation. *Political Communication*, 22(2), 147-162. doi: 10.1080/10584600590933160

Daniels, S. E., & Walker, G. B. (2001). *Working through environmental conflict: The collaborative learning approach*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Davis, R. (1999). *The Web of Politics: The Internet's Impact on the American Political System* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Debono, J. (2019). 6,000-strong petition weighs upon Manoel Island decision. *MaltaToday*.

Retrieved from

https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/93433/6000strong_petition_weighs_upon_manoel_island_decision#.X0OhicgzZ3Q

Debono, J. (2019). [WATCH] New Manoel Island outline permit approved. *MaltaToday*.

Retrieved from

https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/environment/townscapes/93457/new_manoel_island_outline_permit_approved#.X01VJHkzZ3S

Debono, J. (2020). Manoel Island project permit revoked, developers have to redo

EIA. *Maltatoday*. Retrieved from

https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/environment/environment/103038/manoel_island_project_permit_revoked_developers_have_to_redo_eia#.X1x-UWgzZ3Q

Diacono, T. (2019). Luxury Village Will Be Built On Manoel Island As Labour, PN And

Local Council All Vote In Favour. *Lovin Malta*. Retrieved from

<https://lovinmalta.com/news/luxury-village-will-be-built-on-manoel-island-as-labour-pn-and-mayor-all-vote-in-favour/>

De Montmollin, B. (2006). Landscape and innovative tools. In Council of Europe. (Ed.), *Landscape and sustainable development: Challenges of the European landscape convention* (pp. 83-96). Council of Europe Publishing.

DEC. (2011). *Principles for public participation*. Australia: Department of Environment and Conservation.

Deetz, S. A. (1992). *Democracy in an age of corporate colonization: Developments in communication and the politics of everyday life*. Albany: SUNY Press.

Déjeant-Pons, M. (2006). The European Landscape Convention. *Landscape Research*, 31(4), 363-384. doi: 10.1080/01426390601004343

Denscombe, M. (2003). *The good research guide*. Maidenhead: Open

Denscombe, M. (2003). *The good research guide*. Maidenhead: Open

Denscombe, M. (2003). *The good research guide*. Maidenhead: Open University Press

Depoe, S., & Delicath, J.W. (2004). Introduction. In S. P. Depoe, J.W. Delicath, & M-F. A. Elsenbeer (Eds.), *Communication and public participation in environmental decision making* (pp. 1-10). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Dinero, S. (1998). Planning in a post-nomadic Bedouin town: An update and follow-up assessment of development and change in Segev Shalom, Israel. *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 114(2), 66-75. doi: 10.1080/00369229818737034

Douglass, M. & Friedmann, J. (1998) *Cities for Citizens: Planning and the Rise of Civil Society in a Global Age*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

Dramstad, W., Tveit, M., Fjellstad, W., & Fry, G. (2006). Relationships between visual landscape preferences and map-based indicators of landscape structure. *Landscape And Urban Planning*, 78(4), 465-474. doi: 10.1016/j.landurbplan.2005.12.006

Ebbesson, J. (2011). Public Participation and Privatisation in Environmental Matters: An Assessment of the Aarhus Convention. *Erasmus Law Review*, 4(2), 71-89. doi: 10.5553/elr221026712011004002003

Enserink, B., & Koppenjan, J. (2007). Public participation in China: sustainable urbanization and governance. *Management Of Environmental Quality: An International Journal*, 18(4), 459-474. doi: 10.1108/14777830710753848

Environment ministry forms high-level panel. (2017, Nov 10). *Free Press Journal*, Retrieved from <https://search-proquest-com.ejournals.um.edu.mt/docview/2290768484?accountid=27934>

ERA. (2018). *Annual Report 2016*. Marsa, Malta: Environment and Resource Authority. Retrieved from https://era.org.mt/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/ERA-Annual-report-2016_for_web.pdf

Ethics Committee - University of Edinburgh. (2013). Retrieved from https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/imports/fileManager/Interview_Consent_Form.pdf

European Commission. Aarhus Convention - Environment - European Commission.
Retrieved 21 August 2020, from <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/aarhus/index.htm>

European Commission (EC) (2014) Annex Malta to the EU Anti-Corruption Report.

European

Commission, Brussels, Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/organizedcrime-and-human-trafficking/corruption/anti-corruption-report/docs/2014_acr_malta_chapter_en.pdf

Fenster, T. (1999). Space for Gender: Cultural Roles of the Forbidden and the Permitted. *Environment And Planning D: Society And Space*, 17(2), 227-246. doi: 10.1068/d170227

Fenster, T. (2002). Planning as control: cultural and gendered manipulation and mis-use of knowledge, *Hagar – International Social Science Review*, Vol.3 (1), pp. 67-84

Ferguson, R. (2008). Convergent Evolution: The Development of Online Engagement in Westminster and Whitehall Through the Use of Online Forums. *Parliamentary Affairs*, 61(1), 216-225. doi: 10.1093/pa/gsm049

Fischer, F. (2000). *Citizens, experts, and the environment: The politics of local knowledge*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Flyvbjerg, B. (1998). *Rationality and power*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Forester, J. (1989). *Planning in the face of power*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Forester, J. (1999). *The Deliberative Practitioner: Encouraging Participatory Planning Processes* (Cambridge, MA, The MIT Press).

Fox, O., & Stoett, P. (2016). Citizen Participation in the UN Sustainable Development Goals Consultation Process: Toward Global Democratic Governance?. *Global Governance: A Review Of Multilateralism And International Organizations*, 22(4), 555-573. doi: 10.1163/19426720-02204007

Freeman, R. E. (1984). *Strategic management: A stakeholder approach*. Boston: Pitman.

Friedmann, J. (1987). *Planning in the Public Domain: From Knowledge to Action*. Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press.

Friedmann, J. (1998) The new political economy of planning: the rise of civil society, in: M.

Douglass & J. Friedmann (Eds) *Cities for Citizens: Planning and the Rise of Civil Society in a Global Age*, pp. 19–35. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

Giddens, A. (1998) *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Giordimaina, J. (2019). Conflict of interest issued in Manoel Island development – FAA. *Newsbook*. Retrieved from <https://newsbook.com.mt/en/conflict-of-interest-issued-in-manoel-island-development-faa/>

Grubbs, J. W. (2000). Cultural imperialism: A critical theory of interorganizational change.

Journal of Organizational Change Management, 13(3), 221_234.

doi:10.1108/09534810010330878

Habermas, J. (1987). *Theory of communicative action. Part 2: Lifeworld and system: A critique of Functionalist Reason*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Habermas, J. (1989). *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

Hagar—International Social Science Review, 3(1), pp. 67–84.

Hall, D. (1995). A forward look for planning, *Town and Country Planning*, 64(5–6), pp. 144–147.

Hardy, C., Palmer, I., & Philips, N. (2000). Discourse as a strategic resource. *Human Relations*, 53, 1227_1248. doi:10.1177/0018726700539006

Harrington, C., Curtis, A., & Black, R. (2008). Locating communities in natural resource management. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*, 10(2), 199-215.

doi:10.1080/15239080801928469

Harvey, D. (1989). *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Healey, P. (1997). *Collaborative planning*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Heath, R. G. (2007). Rethinking community collaboration through a dialogic lens: Creativity, democracy, and diversity in community organizing. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 21, 145-171. doi:10.1177/0893318907306032

Hibbard, M., & Lurie, S. (2000). Saving Land but Losing Ground: Challenges to Community Planning in the Era of Participation. *Journal Of Planning Education And Research*, 20(2), 187-195. doi: 10.1177/0739456x0002000205

Hill, K. A. and Hughes, J. E. (1998). *Cyberpolitics: Citizen Activism in the Age of the Internet*. Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Hirsch, E. (1995) Introduction. Landscape: Between Place and Space. In *The Anthropology of Landscape. Perspectives on Place and Space*, (eds.) E. Hirsch and M. O'Hanlon, Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1-30.

Hudson, D. (2019). Manoel Island excavation works halted pending tribunal decision. *Maltatoday*. Retrieved from https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/environment/townscapes/97521/manoel_island_excavation_works_halted_pending_tribunal_decision#.X1x2VWgzZ3Q

IFC. (1998). *Doing better business through effective public consultation and disclosure*. Washington, DC: International Finance Corporation.

Innes, J.E. & Booher, D.E. (2000) *Public participation in planning: new strategies for the 21st century*. Paper prepared for the Annual Conference of the Association of collegiate Schools of Planning, 2–5 November

Innes, J. E., & Booher, D. E. (2004). *Reframing public participation: Strategies for the 21st Century*.

Innes, J. E., & Booher, D. E. (2004). *Reframing public participation: Strategies for the 21st Century*.

Planning Theory & Practice, 5(4), 419-436. doi:10.1080/1464935042000293170

Innes, J. (1995). Planning Theory's Emerging Paradigm: Communicative Action and Interactive Practice. *Journal Of Planning Education And Research*, 14(3), 183-189. doi: 10.1177/0739456x9501400307

Innes, J. (1996). Planning Through Consensus Building: A New View of the Comprehensive Planning Ideal. *Journal Of The American Planning Association*, 62(4), 460-472. doi: 10.1080/01944369608975712

Innes, J. (1998). Information in Communicative Planning. *Journal Of The American Planning Association*, 64(1), 52-63. doi: 10.1080/01944369808975956

International Association for Public Participation. (2007). Core Values of Public Participation.

Retrieved 21 August 2020, from <https://iap2.or.id/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/corevalues.pdf>

Janssen, D., & Kies, R. (2005). Online Forums and Deliberative Democracy. *Acta Politica*, 40(3), 317-335. doi: 10.1057/palgrave.ap.5500115

Kelly, S. (2010). Qualitative interviewing techniques and styles. In: Bourgeault I, Dingwall R and de Vries R (eds) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Methods in Health Research*.

Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Keränen, L. (2007). “Cause Someday We All Die”: Rhetoric, Agency, and the Case of the “Patient” Preferences Worksheet. *Quarterly Journal Of Speech*, 93(2), 179-210. doi:

10.1080/00335630701425100

Kersten, A. (2000). Diversity management: Dialogue, dialectics and diversion. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 13(3), 235_248. doi:10.1108/09534810010330887

Kothari, C. (2004). *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*. New Age International.

Lang, S. (2013) *NGOs, Civil Society and the Public Sphere*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Lee, G., & Chan, E. (2007). The Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) Approach for Assessment of Urban Renewal Proposals. *Social Indicators Research*, 89(1), 155-168. doi:

10.1007/s11205-007-9228-x

Leone Ganado, P. (2018). Manoel Island mega-project poised for approval. *The Times Of Malta*. Retrieved from <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/manoel-island-mega-project-poised-for-approval.695902>

Leone Ganado, P. (2019). Manoel Island development overwhelmingly approved by the Planning Authority. *Times Of Malta*. Retrieved from <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/manoel-island-development-approved.703783>

Li, T., Thomas Ng, S., & Skitmore, M. (2012). Public participation in infrastructure and construction projects in China: From an EIA-based to a whole-cycle process. *Habitat International*, 36(1), 47-56. doi: 10.1016/j.habitatint.2011.05.006

Lizarralde, G. (2011). Stakeholder participation and incremental housing in subsidized housing projects in Colombia and South Africa. *Habitat International*, 35(2), 175-187. doi: 10.1016/j.habitatint.2010.08.001

Lowenthal, D. (1998). *The heritage crusade and the spoils of history*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Mallia, E. A. (1994). Land Use. An Account of Environmental Stewardship. In *Maltese Society. A Sociological Enquiry*, (eds.) R.G. Sultana and G. Baldacchino, Malta: Mireva Publications. 685-705.

Mallia, M. (2019). Fishermen protest proposed Manoel Island development - Newsbook. Retrieved 20 August 2020, from <https://newsbook.com.mt/en/fishermen-protest-proposed-manoel-island-development/>

Maltese Government. (1973) *Referenda Act*.

Maltese Government. (1993). *Local Councils Act*.

Maltese Government. (1996). *Plans and Programmes (Public Participation) Regulations*.

Maltese Government. (2016). *Development Planning Act*.

Manowong, E., & Ogunlana, S. (2008). Critical Factors for Successful Public Hearing in Infrastructure Development Projects: A Case Study of the on Nuch Waste Disposal Plant Project. *International Journal Of Construction Management*, 8(1), 37-51. doi: 10.1080/15623599.2008.10773107

Marketing Advisory Services. (2020). All About Construction. Retrieved 21 August 2020, from <https://www.marketingadvisoryservices.com/all-about-construction/>

Martin, T. (2007). Muting the voice of the local in the age of the global: How communication practices compromised public participation in India's Allain Dunhangan Environmental Impact Assessment. *Environmental Communication*, 1(2), 171_193. doi:10.1080/17524030701642595

Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative researching*, 2nd ed. London: Sage

May, E. (2004). *Parliamentary Practice*, 23rd ed, pg 932.

MDI., (1990) *Structure Plan for the Maltese Islands – Draft Final Written Statement and Key Diagram, December 2009*. MDI, Malta.

Meho, L. (2006). E-mail interviewing in qualitative research: A methodological discussion. *Journal Of The American Society For Information Science And Technology*, 57(10). doi: 10.1002/asi.20416

MEPA., (2009) *Blueprint for MEPA's Reform, 9 July 2009*. Floriana: MEPA.

Mercieca, J. (2019). Petition No. 7. Retrieved 20 August 2020, from

<https://parlament.mt/en/petition/?id=41&page=1&numItems=10>

Miles, M. and Huberman, A. (1994). *An expanded sourcebook: Qualitative data analysis*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Moore, A., & Warren, A. (2006). Legal advocacy in environmental public participation in China: raising the stakes and strengthening stakeholders. *China Environment Series*, 8, 3-23.

Morgan, G., & Smircich, L. (1980). The Case for Qualitative Research. *The Academy Of Management Review*, 5(4), 491. doi: 10.2307/257453

Morgan, Gareth and Smircich, Linda (1980), "The Case of Qualitative Research," Academy of
of

Morris, P.W. G, & Hough, G. H. (1993). *The anatomy of major projects. A study of the reality of project management*. London: Wiley.

Moser, C. O. (1998). The asset vulnerability framework: reassessing urban poverty reduction strategies. *World development*, 26(1), 1-19.

MSDECC, (2013) *Rural Development Programme for Malta 2007-2013*. Valletta: MSDECC.

NEJAC, (1996) *The Model Plan for Public Participation*. Washington, D.C.: Environmental Protection Agency.

Nuredinoska E. and Hadzi-Miceva Evans K. (2010). *Transparency and Public Participation in Law Making Processes, Comparative overview and assessment of the situation in Macedonia*. Skopje, OSCE

Oakley, P. (2001). *Organization, Negotiation and Contracting in Development Programmes and Projects*. ILO.

Olander, S. (2007). Stakeholder impact analysis in construction project management. *Construction Management And Economics*, 25(3), 277-287. doi: 10.1080/01446190600879125

Olander, S., & Landin, A. (2005). Evaluation of stakeholder influence in the implementation of construction projects. *International Journal Of Project Management*, 23(4), 321-328. doi: 10.1016/j.ijproman.2005.02.002

Olander, S., & Landin, A. (2008). A comparative study of factors affecting the external stakeholder management process. *Construction Management And Economics*, 26(6), 553-561. doi: 10.1080/01446190701821810

Olson, M. (1982). *The Rise and Decline of Nations: Economic Growth, Stagflation, and Social Rigidities*. Yale: University Press

O'Neill, J. (2001). Representing People, Representing Nature, Representing the World. *Environment And Planning C: Government And Policy*, 19(4), 483-500. doi: 10.1068/c12s

OSCE-ODIHR, (2015). from the Participants to the Civil Society Forum Organized on the Margins of the 2015 Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Freedoms of Peaceful Assembly and Association, Recommendations on *Enhancing the Participation of Associations in Public Decision-Making Processes*,
<http://www.osce.org/odihr/185841?download=true>

Pace, Y. (2019). Gzira residents call on government to buy back part of Manoel island. Retrieved 20 August 2020, from
https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/92620/gzira_residents_call_on_government_to_buy_back_part_of_manoel_island#.X0zQTXkzZ3S

Pace, Y. (2019). Manoel Island excavation permit approved despite pending appeal. *Maltatoday*. Retrieved from

https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/96375/manoel_island_excavation_permit_approved_despite_pending_appeal#.X1x1Q2gzZ3Q

Palinkas, L.A., Horwitz, S.M., Green, C.A, et al. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research* 42(5): 533–544.

Parkins, J. R., & Mitchell, R. E. (2008). Public participation as public debate: A deliberative turn in natural resource management. *Society & Natural Resources*, 18(6), 529-540.

doi:10.1080/08941920590947977

Patton, M. Q. (2002). Two decades of developments in qualitative inquiry: A personal, experiential perspective. *Qualitative social work*, 1(3), 261-283.

Pellizzoni, L. (2001). The myth of the best argument: power, deliberation and reason. *British Journal Of Sociology*, 52(1), 59-86. doi: 10.1080/00071310020023037

Phelps, N., & Tewdwr-Jones, M. (2000). Scratching the Surface of Collaborative and Associative Governance: Identifying the Diversity of Social Action in Institutional Capacity Building. *Environment And Planning A: Economy And Space*, 32(1), 111-130. doi: 10.1068/a31175

Phillips, A. (2000). International policies and landscape protection. In J. Benson, & M. H.

Roe (Eds.), *Landscape and sustainability* (pp. 98e120). London: SponPress

Pløger, J. (2001). Public Participation and the Art of Governance. *Environment And Planning B: Planning And Design*, 28(2), 219-241. doi: 10.1068/b2669

Plummer, J., & Taylor, J. (2004). *participation in China: Issues and processes for capacity building*. London: Earthscan.

Price, V. (2006). 'Citizens deliberating online: Theory and some evidence', in T. Davies (ed.), *Online Deliberation: Design, Research and Practice*, 37–58.

Price, V. and Cappella, J. N. (2002). 'Online deliberation and its influence: The Electronic Dialogue project in campaign 2000', *IT & Society*, 1:1, 303–329.

Prieur, M. (2006). Landscape and social, economic, cultural and ecological approaches. In Council of Europe. (Ed.), *Landscape and sustainable development: Challenges of the European landscape convention* (pp. 11-28). Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

Prieur, M., & Durousseau, S. (2006). Landscape and public participation. In Council of Europe. (Ed.), *Landscape and sustainable development: Challenges of the European landscape convention* (pp. 165e207). Council of Europe Publishing.

Project Management Institute (PMI). (2008). *A guide to the project management body of knowledge* (4th ed.). Pennsylvania: PMI.

Punch, K. (2004). *Developing Effective Research Proposals*. London: Sage Publications.

Puppim de Oliveira, J. (2005). Enforcing Protected Area Guidelines in Brazil. *Journal Of Planning Education And Research*, 24(4), 420-436. doi: 10.1177/0739456x04270196

Randeree, K., & Faramawy, A. (2011). Islamic perspectives on conflict management within project managed environments. *International Journal Of Project Management*, 29(1), 26-32. doi: 10.1016/j.ijproman.2010.01.013

Renn, O., Webler, T., & Wiedemann, P. (2013). *Fairness and Competence in Citizen Participation*. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.

Robinson, O. C. (2014). Sampling in interview-based qualitative research: A theoretical and practical guide. *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 11(1): 25–41.

Rosenzweigova, I., Skoric, V., & Asipovich, H. (2016). *CIVIL PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES An Overview of Standards and Practices in Council of Europe Member States*. European Center for Not-for-profit Law.

Sandercock, L. (1998). *Towards Cosmopolis: Planning for Multicultural Cities* (Chichester, John Wiley & Sons).

Senecah, S. L. (2004). The trinity of voice: The role of practical theory in planning and evaluating the effectiveness of environmental participatory processes. In S. P. Depoe, J. W.

Delicath, & M. A. Elsenbeer (Eds.), *Communication and public participation in environmental decision making* (pp. 13-34). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Schembri Orland, K. (2019). Manoel Island master plan back before PA board this Thursday. *The Independent*. Retrieved from <https://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2019-03-04/local-news/Manoel-Island-master-plan-back-before-PA-board-this-Thursday-6736204479>

Schembri Orland, K. (2019). Planning Authority approves amendments to the Manoel Island master plan. *The Independent*. Retrieved from <https://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2019-03-07/local-news/Planning-Authority-approves-amendments-to-the-Manoel-Island-master-plan-6736204681>

Shan, C., & Yai, T. (2011). Public involvement requirements for infrastructure planning in China. *Habitat International*, 35(1), 158-166. doi: 10.1016/j.habitatint.2010.06.004

Shipley, R., & Newkirk, R. (1998). Visioning: Did Anybody See Where It Came from?. *Journal Of Planning Literature*, 12(4), 407-416. doi: 10.1177/088541229801200402

Snider J H, (2010). Deterring fake public participation. *International Journal of Public Participation*, 4, 89-103

Takim, R. (2009). The Management of Stakeholders' Needs and Expectations in the Development of Construction Project in Malaysia. *Modern Applied Science*, 3(5). doi: 10.5539/mas.v3n5p167

Tewdwr-Jones, M., & Allmendinger, P. (1998). Deconstructing Communicative Rationality: A Critique of Habermasian Collaborative Planning. *Environment And Planning A: Economy And Space*, 30(11), 1975-1989. doi: 10.1068/a301975

The Malta Independent. (2019a). Gzira residents form pressure group Inhobbu l-Gzira. *The Malta Independent*. Retrieved from <https://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2019-01-03/local-news/Gzira-residents-form-pressure-group-Inhobbu-l-Gzira-6736201545>

The Malta Independent. (2019b). Gzira fishermen concerned over Manoel Island plans. *The Malta Independent*. Retrieved from <https://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2019-03-02/local-news/Gzira-fishermen-concerned-over-Manoel-Island-plans-6736204434>

The Malta Independent. (2019c). 8,487 signatures on petition to save Manoel Island, Gzira group says. *The Malta Independent*. Retrieved from <https://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2019-08-17/local-news/8-487-signatures-on-petition-to-save-Manoel-Island-Gzira-group-says-6736212300>

The Malta Independent. (2019d). FAA appeals for donations to help cover appeal against Manoel Island development. *The Malta Independent*. Retrieved from <https://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2019-04-17/local-news/FAA-appeals-for-donations-to-help-cover-appeal-against-Manoel-Island-development-6736206829>

The Malta Independent. (2019e). Application to excavate part of Manoel island should be held off till after appeal - FAA. *The Malta Independent*. Retrieved from

<https://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2019-07-15/local-news/Application-to-excavate-part-of-Manoel-island-should-be-held-off-till-after-appeal-FAA-6736210905>

The Malta Independent. (2019f). Manoel Island excavation permit approved despite ongoing appeal. *The Malta Independent*. Retrieved from

<https://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2019-07-18/local-news/Manoel-Island-excavation-permit-approved-despite-ongoing-appeal-6736211084>

The Malta Independent. (2019g). Excavation on Manoel island to temporarily stop pending appeal - FAA. *The Malta Independent*. Retrieved from

<https://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2019-09-18/local-news/Excavation-on-Manoel-island-to-temporarily-stop-pending-appeal-6736213659>

The Malta Independent. (2019h). Manoel Island: Tribunal accepts FAA plea on conflict of interest. Retrieved from <https://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2019-10-23/local-news/Manoel-Island-Tribunal-accepts-FAA-plea-on-conflict-of-interest-6736215147>

The Malta Independent. (2020). Manoel Island EIA: MIDI denies architect 'bias' claims. *The Malta Independent*. Retrieved from <https://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2020-06-24/local-news/Manoel-Island-EIA-MIDI-denies-architect-bias-claims-6736224527>

Times of Malta. (2017). Revised Manoel Island masterplan submitted. *The Times Of Malta*. Retrieved from <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/Revised-Manoel-Island-masterplan-submitted.662292>

Times of Malta. (2019a). Public 'will be better served' with Manoel Island project - Midi CEO. Retrieved 22 September 2020, from <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/public-will-be-better-served-with-manoel-island-project-midi-ceo.740568>

Times of Malta. (2019b). Gzira residents want Manoel Island development scaled down. *Times Of Malta*. Retrieved from <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/gzira-residents-want-manoel-island-development-scaled-down.700628>

Times of Malta. (2019c). Gzira's amateur fishermen fear 'trauma and grief' if Manoel Island project goes ahead. *Times Of Malta*. Retrieved from <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/gzira-fishermen-manoel-island-midi-trauma-grief.703400>

Times of Malta. (2019d). FAA to appeal Manoel Island permit but needs €7,000 for costs. *Times Of Malta*. Retrieved from <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/faa-to-appeal-manoel-island-permit-but-needs-7000-for-costs.707597>

Times of Malta. (2019e). Environmentalists fume as PA approves Manoel Island excavation permit. *The Times Of Malta*. Retrieved from <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/environmentalists-fume-as-pa-approves-manoel-island-excavation-permit.722779>

Times of Malta. (2019f). Manoel Island: NGO's conflict of interest plea accepted by tribunal. *The Times Of Malta*. Retrieved from <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/manoel-island-ngos-conflict-of-interest-plea-accepted-by-tribunal.744153>

Tippett J, Searle B, Pahl-Wostl C, Rees Y, 2005, Social learning in public participation in river basin management: early findings from Harmoni COP European case studies.

Environmental Science and Policy, 8, 287-299

Tournee, J. and van Esch, W. (2001). *Community Contracts. – In urban infrastructure works. Practical lessons from experience.* ILO.

Trost, JA (1986). Statistically non-representative stratified sampling: A sampling technique for qualitative studies. *Qualitative Sociology* 9(1): 54–57.

UK Government and Parliament. How petitions work. Retrieved 21 August 2020, from <https://petition.parliament.uk/help>

University of Malta. Retrieved from

https://www.um.edu.mt/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/237919/Consent_Form_Interviews.pdf

University Press

University Press

Varol, C., Ercoskun, O., & Gurer, N. (2011). Local participatory mechanisms and collective actions for sustainable urban development in Turkey. *Habitat International*, 35(1), 9-16. doi: 10.1016/j.habitatint.2010.02.002

Vassallo, S. (2020). Manoel Island Luxury Village Project Has Permit Revoked Due To Architect's Conflict Of Interest. *Lovin Malta*. Retrieved from

<https://lovinmalta.com/news/manoel-island-luxury-village-project-has-permit-revoked-due-to-architects-conflict-of-interest/>

Vella, M. (2019a). Manoel Island project threatens Gzira fishers' moorings. *MaltaToday*.

Retrieved from

https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/environment/townscapes/93350/manoel_island_project_threatens_gzira_fishers_moorings#.X00TenkzZ3S

Vella, M. (2019b). MIDI's Manoel Island architect has conflict of interest, FAA tells appeals board. *MaltaToday*. Retrieved from

https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/environment/townscapes/98195/midis_manoel_island_architect_has_conflict_of_interest_faa_tells_appeals_board#.X1x3EmgzZ3Q

Viloria-Williams, J. (2006). *Urban Community Upgrading*. World Bank Institute.

Walker, G. B. (2004). The Roadless areas initiative as national policy: Is public participation and oxymoron? In S. P. Depoe, J. W. Delicath, & M. A. Elsenbeer (Eds.), *Communication and public participation in environmental decision making* (pp. 113-136). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Wilhelm, A. G. (2000). *Democracy in the Digital Age: Challenges to Political Life in Cyberspace* (London: Routledge).

Winch, G. M. (2002). *Managing construction projects: An information processing approach*. Oxford: Blackwell Science Ltd.

Woltjer, J. (2009). Concepts of participatory decision-making in Dutch infrastructure planning. In J. Woltjer (Ed.), *Public participation and better environmental decisions* (pp. 153-163). London: Springer.

World Bank. (2007). Consultations with Civil Society. Retrieved 21 August 2020, from https://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/Civil%20Society/cso_documents/ConsultationsSourcebook_Feb2007.pdf

World Bank. (2018). Population density (people per sq. km of land area). Retrieved 21 August 2020, from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.POP.DNST>

Wright, S. (2006). Government-run Online Discussion Fora: Moderation, Censorship and the Shadow of Control. *The British Journal Of Politics And International Relations*, 8(4), 550-568. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-856x.2006.00247.x

Wright, S., & Street, J. (2007). Democracy, deliberation and design: the case of online discussion forums. *New Media & Society*, 9(5), 849-869. doi: 10.1177/1461444807081230

Zhang, X., & Jennings, E. (2009). Public participation in environmental policy making in China: a case study. In Proceedings: *The annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association 67th Annual National Conference*. Chicago: MPSA.

Zhen, H. (2006). Democracy as a way to Social Compromise. *Frontiers Of Philosophy In China*, 1(1), 1-5. doi: 10.1007/s11466-005-

Appendix A

Consent Form – Email interview

Name of Researcher: Naomi Galea

Email Address: naomi.galea.15@um.edu.mt or naomigalea2297@gmail.com

Phone No: +356 79074595

Title of dissertation: ‘Democratic Construction? – an exploration of stakeholder participation in construction policy, process and outcome in Malta’

Statement of the purpose of the study: To evaluate the level of effective participation of different stakeholders and on what is currently being done with regards to big infrastructural projects and what potential participatory processes could be used in the future.

Research Participant’s name: _____

The interview will take between 45 minutes to an hour. I don’t anticipate that there are any risks associated with your participation, but you have the right to stop the interview or withdraw from the research at any time.

This consent form is necessary for me to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation. Would you therefore read the accompanying information sheet and then sign this form to certify that you approve the following:

- the interview’s responses will be analysed by **Naomi Galea** as research investigator
- access to the interview’s responses will be limited to **Naomi Galea** and academic colleagues and researchers with whom she might collaborate as part of the research process

I also understand that my words may be quoted directly. With regards to being quoted, please initial next to any of the statements that you agree with:

	I wish to review the notes, transcripts, or other data collected during the research pertaining to my participation.
	I agree to be quoted directly.
	I agree that the researchers may publish documents that contain quotations by me.
	I agree to the use of images taken from my Website

By signing this form I agree that;

1. I am voluntarily taking part in this project. I understand that I don’t have to take part, and I can stop the interview at any time;
2. The interviews or extracts from it may be used in the dissertation mentioned above;
3. I have read the Information sheet;
4. I don’t expect to receive any benefit or payment for my participation;
5. I can request a copy of the interview and may make edits I feel necessary to ensure the effectiveness of any agreement made about confidentiality;
6. I have been able to ask any questions I might have, and I understand that I am free to contact the researcher with any questions I may have in the future

I agree to the conditions:

Name of participant: _____ Signature: _____
Date: _____

I agree to the conditions:

Researcher's Name : _____ Researcher's Signature: _____
Date: _____

Appendix B (Interviews)

Questions

To whom it may concern,

I am a master's degree student and am currently conducting a study on the participation processes when big infrastructural projects in Malta are planned and executed. It seeks to identify if there is a democratic deficit within the system and if so how to amend it. To this end the study will evaluate the level of effective participation of different stakeholders and on what is currently being done and what potential participatory processes could be used in future.

I am looking forward to hearing your thoughts and would like to thank you in advance for your participation in this study. If possible, please do not provide one-word answers.

Naomi Galea B.Comms(Melit.)

Email Interview

1. What is your role within the organization you represent?
2. What do you think of the consultative process that we have in place?
3. How do you think we can improve it?
4. What do you think about using surveys for consultative purposes?
5. Do you believe the participatory processes set in place lack effectiveness?
6. Do you believe the participatory processes set in place exist as a formality?
7. Do you believe there is transparency in this participatory process?
8. Do you think the public is involved enough?
9. Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between organizations set in place and the Planning Authority? Why do you believe so?
10. Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between non-governmental organizations and the public? Why do you believe so?

11. Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between the Developers Association and the public? Why do you believe so?
12. Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between the Planning Authority and the public? Why do you believe so?
13. Do you think that there is enough dialogue between all organizations? Why do you believe so?
14. If the project is highly sensitive, do you believe that a framework for outlining the process for participation strategies for the lifecycle of the project could be more effective?
15. Do you believe that the Planning Authority represent the interests of the Maltese population in relation to big project plans?
16. Do you believe that the Environment Resource Authority represent the interests of the Maltese population in relation to big project plans?
17. Do you believe that the Non-Governmental Organizations in Malta represent the interests of the Maltese population in relation to big project plans?
18. Do you believe local councils represent their local's interests?
19. Do you believe that there is a balance for what the Developer (whether it be the government itself or not) wants and the public requests?
20. Do you believe there is a democratic deficit within the structures placed in motion?
21. How would you give people more of a say? How do you believe we can make the process more inclusive?
22. There have been petitions signed in Malta to not build or develop. Are these taken into consideration when building?
23. How many people would have to sign to stop something from being developed?

24. Would you consider a public forum with representatives of all organizations as being something feasible? Please explain.
25. Would you consider a Community Based Organization framework (like Inħobbu l-Gżira which represents the town) for all projects? Please explain.
26. Would you consider a referendum on such large-scale projects? Please explain.
27. Which of the following would you prefer to be in our planning system; Referendum, Public Forum, Community Based Organizations, a multi-model or leave as is? Why?
28. Do you believe the public would be interested in participating with such queries?
29. What would be your worries considering such an involved public participatory approach?
30. One of the issues that comes up is that people are unaware of all the pros and cons of such projects. Do you consider that an information campaign could help the uninformed element?
31. Do you believe that if policies on such matters were in place, they would be more effective?
32. Why do you think that the European Landscape Convention hasn't been ratified in Malta?
33. Do you believe the media's depiction of projects is truthful in their assessment?
34. Do you believe that the Planning Authority is influenced by the government?
35. Do you believe that the participatory processes set in place are used to control citizen initiatives?
36. Why do you think there was so much controversy surrounding the 'Manoel Island Project'?

37. Do you believe 'Inħobbu l-Gzira' (a Community Based Organization) managed to get their message across?
38. Do you think the public was appeased with the creation of The Manoel Island Foundation?
39. Different participatory processes were undertaken in pursuit of 'The Manoel Island Project'. Which do you believe was the most effective?
40. What level of participation do/did you have during the 'Manoel Island Project'?

Interview 1

To whom it may concern,

I am a master's degree student and am currently conducting a study on the participation processes when big infrastructural projects in Malta are planned and executed. It seeks to identify if there is a democratic deficit within the system and if so how to amend it. To this end the study will evaluate the level of effective participation of different stakeholders and on what is currently being done and what potential participatory processes could be used in future.

I am looking forward to hearing your thoughts and would like to thank you in advance for your participation in this study. If possible, please do not provide one-word answers.

Naomi Galea B.Comms(Melit.)

Email Interview

1. What is your role within the organization you represent?

I am coordinator of FAA

2. What do you think of the consultative process that we have in place?

We have a very poor system of consultation that barely satisfies the letter of the law and personally is very far from the spirit of the law

3. How do you think we can improve it?

We can improve it in several ways for example, its outreach of the public authority, im referring to mainly the planning authority has to be improved on may levels because there is the Aarhus Convention requires different things for example for residents to be notified of forthcoming projects so there the early notification is not being done, quite the opposite, notification is being pushed back and back as much as possible before notifications used to be done through notices in the newspapers, commercial ones, the most popular the Times of Malta then they moved to the Independent which has far far less circulation and now it has moved to the government gazette which is extremely hard for the public to access and of course this gives the **developers** a better chance of getting away unnoticed. Then in terms of feature development, the developer whether public or private developer is supposed to hold pressure with the public which is affected and this is either not happening or happening in such a half hearted manner by way of example there was a case a few years ago with a MIDI development where the pressure was so poorly publicised that only three people turned up subsequently FAA took the initiative to hold public consultation on the same thing, without any resources at all we publicized the meeting and had an attendance of 300 residents so what contact comparison is that and I'm telling you we used no resources other than social media and residents informing each other. Now that is one take we have other cases that go out down in consultation heresy in the case of a Marsaxlokk clearing the architect incharge that went through the file found hundreds of notes in the file saying make sure that the call for public representation is done at the time of the local festa so no one will notice it and this was found in the PA file, its not the first time when these meetings have been timed over

Christmas, also Christmas and Santa Maria is the favourite time to publish explosive applications on the MEPA website another one was the publication of the St John's Cathedral underground with was published on the eve of the national election, there is a track record. These are applications, what about public consultation on policy, one noticeable one was the public consultation over August now you do not expect people to turn up to such consultations in August because they simply aren't tuned in so then you have to take the initiative as an NGO advertising the social media pages of each district of where the meeting will be held to drum up attendance in the heat of Summer. NGO people having to sacrifice their time to attend such meetings all is rigged as a way to minimize public participation as much as possible. Unfortunately the attitude of MEPA that has now passed over to the PA is that why should we bother if the public doesn't understand in any case. There is no attempt to teach the public, to educate the public in order to give meaningful input.

4. What do you think about using surveys for consultative purposes?

Im not convinced in the sense that we do not have an educated public simply because the PA has purposely withheld any form of education to the public on such matters, we ourselves as an NGO have tried to conduct courses in conjunction with the PA which after the first successful one was never to be repeated because it was too successful and they didn't like the fact that laypeople were being given a little knowledge which is a dangerous thing so when I tell you this sad lack of knowledge of such things; once I had gone to the sliema local council in order to test the level of knowledge on such matters and when I asked to see 2 sliema local plans they gave me a copy of the tourist brochure. You can imagine when the mayors themselves have little literacy and these are the people who are meant to be setting the pace on protection of residents interests.

5. Do you believe the participatory processes set in place lack effectiveness?

They are actually designed with that built in weakness.

6. Do you believe the participatory processes set in place exist as a formality?

Oh yes totally its just a question of ticking boxed

7. Do you believe there is transparency in this participatory process?

Not at all as I mentioned in that attempt to hide things from the public and now first of all at the time when FAA was created we had a situation where things were being actively hidden from the public, people weren't even able to see their own file at MEPA you can imagine how much less they could see their own plans and files for development coming up from that area. We used to have to go to MEPA and literally have to bang on the desk telling them Aarhus Convention, you cannot withhold information from the public and it was only after we spent a year kicking u such a stink that they started allowing the public because at best they would allow us, then when our backs were turned they would revert back to the same illegality with the general public who didn't know any better because they have been deprived of such knowledge and their rights.

8. Do you think the public is involved enough?

No, definitely not.

9. Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between organizations set in place and the Planning Authority? Why do you believe so?

No, neither also because the dialogue is unfortunately lip service, very often its rather hollow dialogue, but not not true but not developing and built upon, so there would be sporadic meetings just to present (pretend) that dialogue exists.

10. Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between non-governmental organizations and the public? Why do you believe so?

There is an increasing amount of dialogue between NGOs and the public, however the fact is that NGOs do not have the resources that they need to increase that dialogue and though the PA is supposed to support NGOs also financially that support is very much conditional strings attached, so you will, find that certain NGOs who were very vocal in the past have fallen into complete silence when it comes to public consultation simply because they know very well that their support will be drawn if they become too vocal, this has happened very blatantly in the case of lil din lart helwa when in 2006 they had come on board with the National Protest that we, FAA and Rambles had organized, and within an hour of the protest they had been called back to Castille and were berated for having participating in view of government support of their heritage initiative.

But NGOs are meant to be independent of all that...

No, that's not how it seems, and what we have actually been told is you come begging us for money and then go criticize us in that way you think you can get away with it that's why FAA has in its statutes that its not allowed to own property so that there is less scope for it to be blackmailed.

11. Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between the Developers Association and the public? Why do you believe so?

No not at all but then im afraid there is little hope of real dialogue because the developers have shown time and time again that like politicians they say one thing and do another.

For example, when some years ago Xandro Chetcuti had claimed that they were against construction in ODZ and we told him are you ready to put your money where your mouth is and issues a press release and state this against members who propose outrageous projects in ODZ which shouldn't even be processed and wasting public funds on processing such thing and of course he bats away. There is very little faith in responsible development in Malta and the public is so jaded and skeptical of the PA let alone something like the developers association. Unfortunately the situation is what is and we cannot at the moment hope that there is going to be change any time soon.

One minister comes up after another and this current minister is hoping to convince people about his commitment with public consultation but we don't feel this is 100% genuine. Theres very little faith in the process.

12. Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between the Planning Authority and the public? Why do you believe so?

Well there clearly isn't, if there isn't even between the pa and the interlocutors which are the NGOs let alone the general public. Its always brought down to the same thing, the general public do not know what to look for, what to ask for and I think its very significant, and I think you might want to quote 'that in 2008 I believe the chair of the camra tal-periti which I believe was David Felice had confronted the PM Lawrence Gonzi, telling him how can the public ever hope to have a level playingfield with developers who have all that money to get the best legal and technical brains onboard when the public doesn't even have access to files and coming from the chairman is very telling. I have to say li il-kamra tal-periti as regards the committee has become very proactive in attempts to redress balances but again I don't think it has much outreach to the general public and its individual members are onboard with this process. The elephant in the room is that architects are behind these diabolical projects and much as they pretend to be saints they are unfortunately I would rate them no better than whores as the majority use their professional capabilities and expertise just to sell to the highest bidder, to projects which are damaging rather than occasionally saying no, no I refuse to do that, ive had some of the richest architects come up to me and tell me it broke my heart to do, that palazzo that there was instead of it and im like hello it broke your heart? Why in heavens sake did you do it. Its not like you needed the money. But if I wouldn't have done it another architect would have done it. Right but it wouldn't have been under your name. it all boils down to greed, both the architects and the developers.

13. Do you think that there is enough dialogue between all organizations? Why do you believe so?

No, there isn't enough communication between authorities and definitely there isn't enough in situations as we saw. Communication between NGOs is much better than it used to be but the government handling of them also has a great deal of influence as since the government ignores the speculations of the Aarhus Convention and keeps NGOs totally solved of funds the it puts us in a situation were we are all dogs chasing the same bone so you have the situation were some NGOs have had to go silent. Because of this, in the past, instead of cooperating there was a lot of competition between NGOs and backbiting. FAA has worked a lot with Ramblers, we have worked a lot with FOE and Graffiti but then other NGOs keep a distance so theres very little cooperation with those NGOS. Still the situation has improved greatly because in the past the government has used its position in a very much divide and conquer situation which was a very successful ploy for many many years. We when FAA set up, we immediately had started to work with outreach and I am happy to say that both Graffiti and FOE took this up but it hasn't always been the case.

Communication, cooperation could be better cos as I said we're all of when it comes to funding for a project or/and campaign things are not always done/handled ethically.

14. If the project is highly sensitive, do you believe that a framework for outlining the process for participation strategies for the lifecycle of the project could be more effective?

IT wouldn't, we are light years from it being effective, if you have such highly sensitive projects such as those of Ian Borg which go ahead even before the project has a permit. These proects are of a very highly sensitive nature where there is the take up of ODZ land, includes the demolition of dry stone walls and archaeological features, and they bulldoze it saying these things have to be done. Of course they need to be more sensitive and effective.

[restructuring of the question]

But that has to be respected, we are full of policies and regulations and frameworks it comes out of our ears and theyre ignored. Malta is an expert, you can see from EU statistics our

compliance to legislative framework is amongst the best but compliance in only having those laws transpose into our legal system but not implemented, it's the usual story in Malta.

15. Do you believe that the Planning Authority represent the interests of the Maltese population in relation to big project plans?

Not at all, the planning authority only represents the interests of the developers, period. And politicians with developers being the masters of the politicians due to our system of elections by which developers pay their political campaign. This is no secret, its being declared in newspaper articles, they don't even need to hide it.

16. Do you believe that the Environment Resource Authority represent the interests of the Maltese population in relation to big project plans?

Neither no. because when projects like the ITS go through and the PA chalk it up to error, and error was absolutely the last hope and it could have stopped, halted and called a rethink but it refused to do so. So no, ERA has preferred to be as toothless as ever and this is unfortunately apart of the symptom that I told you of being institutionalized, and this is ofcourse intentional and this is very true for EIAs were developers bring on board the best scientists so that they are effectively silenced. They get paid very well, and then they are not available for the public to chirn through when they need to rebatch the case/project.

17. Do you believe that the Non-Governmental Organizations in Malta represent the interests of the Maltese population in relation to big project plans?

Definitely

18. Do you believe local councils represent their local's interests?

No, ever since the politicization of local councils, these local councils represent their political masters interests. Were had cases were it was outright like the Marsascale local couceil that go on board and still is on the American University taking their ODZ land and then you have other counclis like the Sliema council and we ask them for support on our project and they tell us we're waiting for the go ahead, what go ahead? What you need to be doing is issuing a statement condemning this and that until Simon Busuttill gives you the go ahead? Le, le trid tkun ragenoveli Astrid

19. Do you believe that there is a balance for what the Developer (whether it be the government itself or not) wants and the public requests?

There is a total imbalance, there isn't an assemblance of balance

20. Do you believe there is a democratic deficit within the structures placed in motion?

There is an intention and inbuilt deficit

21. How would you give people more of a say? How do you believe we can make the process more inclusive?

First by educating the public more, it is a joint apparel principle of education and access

22. There have been petitions signed in Malta to not build or develop. Are these taken into consideration when building?

Well unfortunately as part of the lack of knowledge the public imagines that a petition is effective whereas MEPA is under no obligation to take petitions into account, the only thing it is obliged to take into account is objections so that is its only legal obligation. Now the objection process is so forth because obligations are a very complicated matter which depend on a thorough knowledge of the planning regulations, its not dependent on common sense, common good, its just planning regulation. The public doesn't realize this, the public doesn't appreciate this, they haven't been taught how to follow and this is why NGOs have been thought so important. Therefore the public has been less bereft of the tools that it needs and this means that the PA feels very free to dismiss public objections as being fanciful and not based on regulation or NIMBY or as being ignorant of legislation a great many excuses to ignore objections. So those objections and petitions are ignored unless these objections are couched in planning legalese they feel very free to ignore them.

23. How many people would have to sign to stop something from being developed?
As many people as would make a difference to a politicians career

24. Would you consider a public forum with representatives of all organizations as being something feasible? Please explain.

Well all these things are feasible according to political will, we are at the moment taking part in an intelligent planning forum, and its not about planning at all rather green walls and green roots which is an absolute travesty of what we were lead to believe.

A public forum encompassing all involved organizations would have to include PA and ERA and having them attend just for appearances sake, to put it simply is just another waste of time for us.

25. Would you consider a Community Based Organization framework (like Inħobbu l-Gżira) which represents the town) for all projects? Please explain.

Yes, very much so, we have tried to foster and set up such organizations in different towns and villages, unfortunately these attempts are floundered on two counts.

The issue of public participation is a two sided thing because its actually abit too easy to blame lack of participation on the authorities, the fault of the public also need to be recognized as (1) the public is not that forthcoming when it comes to participation, now, this is a historic thing coming from our unbroken colonial past, there is this mindset that comes with these prolonged occupations. Recently I read a study on slavery and it showed how it changed mind sets over generations and possibly the structure of the brain but they do have a long term effect on the mind that can reach down generations. Now in Malta's case both the British and the Knights worked on a hierarchical manner. The maltese learnt to attach themselves to a power and profit from him and not create trouble, carry on with your life without creating ripple, because if you do you are alienated from power and deprived from patronage. So since

1830 the Maltese have been in a system of patronage and subsequently nepotism, preventing anyone from speaking out, so in Malta active participation is seen as a controversial issue and anyone taking part is not seen as standing up for their rights but as being controversial, being an activist is a dirty word as we have seen ourselves countless times. People wanting to work with us then back out, people applying for jobs and their parents warn them that they will be killing off their future prospects of advancement by working with FAA.

So there are various factors, it starts with the Authorities discouraging participation actively and passively, both by not creating the structures and depriving people of the tools that they need (document and training). And 2 by the public not coming forward to participate. This is what I have been observed in the last 15 years and it has been proven countless times.

We had a very strong sense of subservience and dependence. If there's a problem its up to the imperial powers to sort it 'Ghid lil Re Gorg', when there was a bad harvest the Knights had to bring in wheat from Sicily, leave it up to them this is the mentality we have gone forward with. I am convinced that this is the reason we had the strongest vote for the EU because we want someone else to take responsibility for our affairs and problems. The maltese wer delighted with the EU forking out millions for projects and expenses now that that will change that will come as a shock. This all ties in with the issue of the low rate of public participation and this is not a recent thing. When we had first started our campaigns, we met a specialist from the American Embassy and he said that one of the things that had struck him was the low level of civil society.

We exchanged one ruler for another.

This lack of participation also came from the architect class as it was them who blocked the public from access to plans as they wanted to be in total control of their access. When you have NGOs allied with the establishment power against the public where does that leave the public.

“THE BIGGER PICTURE HAS BEEN MANAGED WITH BRUTAL EFFICIENCY”

Trees out of designated areas don't count, outside of Buskett and Ahrax. Pullicino had fought against it, trying to help with protection laws for trees, what happened, it was ignored. So what does that do to public participation, what message does it give. Why we haven't given up beats me but we do have the occasional victory, with Manoel Island, recently with St Julians.

I'm sorry to say that there are agendas within NGOs too, like Graffiti that they wont work on a case that they spearheaded, Manoel Island, because it goes against the interests of Claire Bonello a member of the Foundation. Of course NGOs have finite resources that they can offer to the public so that leaves people in many areas without support. FAA was stretched from Zurrieq to San Lawrenz in Gozo and we had to put breaks, because we do not have the resources.

26. Would you consider a referendum on such large-scale projects? Please explain.

Yes definitely but the referendum option has been made as hard as possible because the sheer numbers involved, one needs a very strong and active organization to pull it off look at the Hunting referendum, Birdlife is one of the biggest NGOs in Malta and yet it still didn't manage

to pull it off, I doubt that all NGOs put together have the power Birdlife had at the time, it suffered a blow after the referendum. The actual fieldwork, going out to collect all those signatures. Then again government those very best to destroy every referendum claiming that these names and ID cards do not exist moreover because of this fear of causing ripples of being victimized they would not sign their name, or sign it with a false name or ID. Rather than taking a representative sample the maltese government goes through 30,000 signature to pick out the false ones. You would need to get 40,000 to have 30,000 that would not be challenged so it is not easy and then again the threat of victimization is something the maltese love to hide behind, its true the Maltese love an excuse not to do anything on the activism front but it is also true that people have been victimized. I know one woman in Gozo that brought attention to us a multi-project in Ramla il-Hamra and this was supported by Giovana Debono, her husband lost her government job, she was threatened, and hidden away behind a desk, she wasn't given any work. This is a tool used by both the nationalists and laborites where the opposer is given a desk and a chair. It happened to other people I know. A year sitting behind a desk not given any work can you imagine what that does to your morale. God forbid they clock out early because any excuse to fire them they will.

27. Which of the following would you prefer to be in our planning system; Referendum, Public Forum, Community Based Organizations, a multi-model or leave as is? Why?

Definitely not leave as is. Referenda if they were set up workably would be a good tool and Community Based Organizations. Consultation on its own it doesn't work unless there is education and encouragement. Stand alone it would still be used as lip service unless there is promotion of consultation.

28. Do you believe the public would be interested in participating with such queries?

Yes

29. What would be your worries considering such an involved public participatory approach?

The worry that the public is not an informed public, the worry that the public has been deprived of information. For instance when we held a public consultation in Gzira, (privately held by the local council) the outcome was that an overwhelming number of people, the majority, wanted higher buildings so they could be allowed to knock down their houses and make more flats with no implications to health and these are the same people that complain about the amount of cars in Sliema and no place to park. It is greed that rules, that we've been told in the past 30 years to put money first.

30. One of the issues that comes up is that people are unaware of all the pros and cons of such projects. Do you consider that an information campaign could help the uninformed element?

Of course, it would

31. Do you believe that if policies on such matters were in place, they would be more effective?

Policies are only as good as the political will to enforce them. We had cases against the infamous Elizabeth Ellul where we had 10 policies against one project and one clause, not an

entire policy, a minor clause and she latches on to that minor clause. Its always a question of the bigger picture.

32. Why do you think that the European Landscape Convention hasn't been ratified in Malta?

Because there is such a drive to build in countryside. People want to be free to be able to build in ODZ. Even architects would be against the, we cant just put this on politicians, they have a lot to answer for. 'As if, we don't know how to manipulate photomontages' architect from this lart helwa REDACT

33. Do you believe the media's depiction of projects is truthful in their assessment?

Yes, relatively unless they are advertising pieces like DB has issued a series of advertorials on their ITS project.

34. Do you believe that the Planning Authority is influenced by the government?

Definitely

35. Do you believe that the participatory processes set in place are used to control citizen initiatives?

Definitely as we have already discussed

36. Why do you think there was so much controversy surrounding the 'Manoel Island Project'?

Because that had been public property, because it was given over for peanuts to a major developer under conditions which were not fulfilled because of the travesty of the setting up of the manoel island foundation which had to approve abusive plans after they were issued because the manoel island foundation was set up by midi itself. In spite of it being touted as a watchdog, the manoel island foundation have no regulatory power

37. Do you believe 'Inħobbu l-Gżira' (a Community Based Organization) managed to get their message across?

38. Do you think the public was appeased with the creation of The Manoel Island Foundation?

39. Different participatory processes were undertaken in pursuit of 'The Manoel Island Project'. Which do you believe was the most effective?

40. What level of participation do/did you have during the 'Manoel Island Project'?

We had to claw out way to get access to plans as until 2009 only architects could see plans online, we would have to go all the way to MEPA and hope that we would be allowed to see

them because the public was not allowed to see them unless they had an architect in tow, so how many people would pay the architect fee just to go and see the plans. Now that isn't just any petition that is a parliamentary petition and yet it's been sitting there ignored, and that's so serious, it was just another exercise in hypocrisy and just like another hull designed to get the public to give up.

The Manoel Island foundation is simply a front in order to give MIDI's actions a veneer of respectability as I'm sure you've been told. As when MIDI brought out new plans which completely contravened the conditions that were set to them, these plans were issued with no consultation with the Manoel Island Foundation and they had to scramble to get around them and they could do nothing, they just had to lump them because they were just launched and basically used as a front and they allow themselves to be used as a front and that's what I don't understand.

I wanted to get the record straight as newspapers reported that FAA was party to the MIDI Foundation which we had no part of, as part of these lies and hoodwinking to give this veneer of respectability. It was all the machination and scheming of MIDI and I'm afraid two people who were a part of FAA, when they got involved they confirmed to journalists that FAA was onboard which we adamantly were not, we were against the Foundation being set up in that manner, we were against them being involved with FAA because we considered it a huge conflict of interest and we were not aware of these declarations so when we came out with a very strongly worded press conference one year later, we had journalists telling us, oh hadn't you supported this and it was only then that this came out.

We had been invited to Brussels to go to the meeting on the Aarhus Convention and public participation, now when I read the report on Maltese public participation in 2007 and I was asked what I thought of it and the only thing I could say is that this is a fairytale it had absolutely no bearing on the reality in Malta. It is absolute pure work of fiction.

-Simone Borg lecturer, lawyer

I have had to conclude that everyone has their price, and a very few NGO people are among those tools who spend their energy and time dealing with this, through objections.

Using EIA's to authenticate, like the HONDOQ EIA which is 7 volumes long which you practically need a Mini Van to move it so this is done intentionally so NGOs don't have the resources to study these things in detail and prepare a proper objection. The legislation where point form - I'm not sure if this was legislated after this particular EIA was issued, it was historic, there was so much to go through.

These are the sort of things that we have been up against.

Going back to the 60s, before the independence there was this fear that Malta wouldn't be able to support themselves. The Nationalists came up with this idea of attracting British pensioners to live in Malta for a very cheap rate, they were offered a low rate of taxation, no central heating costs in winter and everything was dirt cheap they could have a better life style in Malta, and they came in droves. The buildings on the side of Marsasala. That tided the economy over. Since then every economic crisis in Malta was met with the same solution by politicians, governments etc. In the 1970 when there was the petrol crisis they turned to building, Mintoff created a very false building boom by giving out hundred of plots to young couples for cheap, they were encouraged to think big in their houses and this led them to end up in great debt. The social harm was great with them having access to easy loans that could not be paid back, many of them floundered, and there were a lot of social problems as a result. Though they were promised jobs at the time German and British factories closed down and from a two-income family they would become one this isn't even taking into consideration the recession were the person working would only be able to go in for a 4 day week.

Its what Joseph Muscat did now, he listened to the developers who said the sector needed a boost because the nationalist had put in too many spokes in the wheel. This stopped around 5 years ago of having this mantra L-Izvilupp idawwar ir-rota anyone going against it was seen as betraying the national interest. Anyone nationalist would not speak up for 25 years, further hindering public participation. We were seen as absolute enemies of the people when FAA had come up.

Interview 2

To whom it may concern,

I am a master's degree student and am currently conducting a study on the participation processes when big infrastructural projects in Malta are planned and executed. It seeks to identify if there is a democratic deficit within the system and if so how to amend it. To this end the study will evaluate the level of effective participation of different stakeholders and on what is currently being done and what potential participatory processes could be used in future.

I am looking forward to hearing your thoughts and would like to thank you in advance for your participation in this study. If possible, please do not provide one-word answers.

Naomi Galea B.Comms(Melit.)

Email Interview

1. What is your role within the organization you represent?
I am the Secretary of the Manoel Island Foundation.

2. What do you think of the consultative process that we have in place?
The consultation process held by the Planning Authority and also by the Environment and Resources Authority are – more often than not – a sham. Although the public is allowed to voice its opinion and concerns, these are mostly ignored.

3. How do you think we can improve it?
The PA and the ERA should give reasoned, substantiated reasons for ignoring representations made by the public and not simply ignore them.

4. What do you think about using surveys for consultative purposes?
I strongly disagree. Surveys – or the ones which I have seen and which have been used in the planning process are subject to bias, leading questions and deliberately designed to produce the result desired by developers.

5. Do you believe the participatory processes set in place lack effectiveness?
Yes – as explained above (in 2) the participatory process is a sham – a box-ticking exercise which is carried out merely so it can be said that there is a participatory process on the statute books.

6. Do you believe the participatory processes set in place exist as a formality?
Yes – See answer to 5.

7. Do you believe there is transparency in this participatory process?
Representations and objections are published on the PA system in the run of the mill planning application processes. Representations regarding the introduction of new plans and planning

policies is also published. So in that respect it is sufficient. The situation is different insofar as ERA applications (for nature permits) are concerned where there is no publicity or transparency about these sort of applications.

8. Do you think the public is involved enough?

The public is not helped or facilitated to put its views across. This is due to several reasons. In the first place the PA is not sensitive to the digital divide and undertakes the consultation process largely by means of an online system which may not be accessible to all. Moreover there is not a sufficiently long period for all objections to take place – especially when site notices are set up in scarcely populated rural areas which may not be easily viewed by many persons. There are then certain types of applications such as Development Notification Orders – which are not even subject to consultation, excluding the public entirely.

9. Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between organizations set in place and the Planning Authority? Why do you believe so?

There is the dialogue of the deaf – where NGOs make representations and suggestions which the PA ignores.

10. Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between non-governmental organizations and the public? Why do you believe so?

See answer to 9

11. Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between the Developers Association and the public? Why do you believe so?

The Malta Developers Association carries out a constant public relations exercise about its activities. This is not dialogue. I would suggest that it is not dialogue which is needed but action in adherence to the laws by MDA members.

12. Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between the Planning Authority and the public? Why do you believe so?

13. Do you think that there is enough dialogue between all organizations? Why do you believe so?

14. If the project is highly sensitive, do you believe that a framework for outlining the process for participation strategies for the lifecycle of the project could be more effective?

15. Do you believe that the Planning Authority represent the interests of the Maltese population in relation to big project plans?

Of course not. The Planning Authority has consistently voted in favour of the development and business lobby. It represents that sector of industry.

16. Do you believe that the Environment Resource Authority represent the interests of the Maltese population in relation to big project plans?
ERA's record is what it is. In big projects – whether public (government) or private it has always been timid in standing up for the environment and sustainability.
17. Do you believe that the Non-Governmental Organizations in Malta represent the interests of the Maltese population in relation to big project plans?
NGOs represent their wide membership and the common good – especially environmental NGOs who seek sustainable solutions and conservation measures.
18. Do you believe local councils represent their local's interests?
Local Councils are meant to represent their locality's interests and they generally do a good job of it. There may be cases however where decisions are taken along partisan lines rather than community interest.
19. Do you believe that there is a balance for what the Developer (whether it be the government itself or not) wants and the public requests?
It depends on the application in question.
20. Do you believe there is a democratic deficit within the structures placed in motion?
Yes there is a democratic deficit as the decision-makers on the PA Board are in the majority Government-appointedees and industry representatives.
21. How would you give people more of a say? How do you believe we can make the process more inclusive?
Have more representatives from ENGOS on the PA Board
22. There have been petitions signed in Malta to not build or develop. Are these taken into consideration when building?
23. Short answer – No.
More than 4,500 persons objected to the db City Centre application and they were ignored. The same thing happens across the board.
24. How many people would have to sign to stop something from being developed?
The PA routinely ignores petitions – no matter how many signatories.

25. Would you consider a public forum with representatives of all organizations as being something feasible? Please explain.
26. Would you consider a Community Based Organization framework (like Inħobbu l-Gżira which represents the town) for all projects? Please explain.
27. Would you consider a referendum on such large-scale projects? Please explain.
28. Which of the following would you prefer to be in our planning system; Referendum, Public Forum, Community Based Organizations, a multi-model or leave as is? Why?
29. Do you believe the public would be interested in participating with such queries?
30. What would be your worries considering such an involved public participatory approach?
31. One of the issues that comes up is that people are unaware of all the pros and cons of such projects. Do you consider that an information campaign could help the uninformed element? I am afraid that most “information campaigns” are carried out by interested parties such as developers – they are selective and not really informative as to the cons of the project.
32. Do you believe that if policies on such matters were in place, they would be more effective?
33. Why do you think that the European Landscape Convention hasn't been ratified in Malta? You would have to ask that question to the government representatives who have consistently refused to ratify the Convention.
34. Do you believe the media's depiction of projects is truthful in their assessment? It depends on the media house in question and whether influenced by commercial and/or partisan interests.
35. Do you believe that the Planning Authority is influenced by the government? Of course. The majority of members of the PA Board are government appointees. The CEO is a person of trust of the Minister. The PA is a government body pretending to be autonomous.

36. Do you believe that the participatory processes set in place are used to control citizen initiatives?
37. Yes – for reasons explained above
38. Why do you think there was so much controversy surrounding the ‘Manoel Island Project’?
The Maltese public in general and the Gzira community in particular has had to put up with years of savage speculation and take up of all public space. Despite the fact that the MI emphyteutical concession was granted 20 years ago, the public was not really in the know about this and was concerned to see that development was intended to begin in earnest (although it had been on the cards for such a long time).
39. Do you believe ‘Inħobbu l-Gzira’ (a Community Based Organization) managed to get their message across?
40. Do you think the public was appeased with the creation of The Manoel Island Foundation?
41. Different participatory processes were undertaken in pursuit of ‘The Manoel Island Project’. Which do you believe was the most effective?
There were the usual participatory processes – those during the preparation of the EIA and the PA.
42. What level of participation do/did you have during the ‘Manoel Island Project’?
I participated in the participatory processes mentioned above.

Interview 3

To whom it may concern,

I am a master's degree student and am currently conducting a study on the participation processes when big infrastructural projects in Malta are planned and executed. It seeks to identify if there is a democratic deficit within the system and if so how to amend it. To this end the study will evaluate the level of effective participation of different stakeholders and on what is currently being done and what potential participatory processes could be used in future.

I am looking forward to hearing your thoughts and would like to thank you in advance for your participation in this study. If possible, please do not provide one-word answers.

Naomi Galea B.Comms(Melit.)

Email Interview

1. What is your role within the organization you represent?

We don't have formal roles. I was one of the founders of Inhobbu l-Gzira and basically what I do in terms of a role is try to keep the team bound together, I try to keep up everyone's morale, I do a lot of the networking and communications aspects. I use to send out the arts, I started up the facebook page and I brought it up to 4,000 likes/followers. I did play a good role in communications. I tend to be the one banging on tables and stuff like that, its useful to have someone like that.

2. What do you think of the consultative process that we have in place?

On the side of inhobbu lgzira we see it more of as abit too little too late and when you consider that we already have laws and regulatory frameworks in place like the SPED, the North Harbour Local Plan etc etc and these still get ignored by the planning authority so when you take all that into consideration it makes you wonder what the point is. You can see paralales ... You end up becoming sceptical of anything coming from the government. Like all this lip service being payed ti distancing, masks etc, and then you go out and see there is no enforcement. So it like as an NGO or a Citizens group uses a lot of energy to participate in these things, put forward some really good ideas which are actually workable and they get ignored. Now, in this case the ongoing consultative processes I know that they are very time consuming because some of my colleagues have been participating as have I, so it can be a bit demoralizing for the NGO, we have hopes and it is good and to be listened to and to be able to express our ideas and strategies but on the other hand unless the stuff is going to be implemented it would just be another blow to NGOs, to peoples morale.

3. How do you think we can improve it?

I don't even. Well like with everything you do in life, when you say you are going to do something you have a system for evaluating for what youre doing both for when the process is taking place and afterwards. So if youre planning to test something or measure something unless you put in place a proper structure which you actually implement post consultation to see how it is being used, how much of it is being used and to what extent it is being used and then somehow feed that information back to the consultees as well as the general public.

Unless you do that its basically an exercise in futility. So people need to see results, Ngos need to see results and the process needs to prove beyond doubt that it is genuine and not that it is going through the motions and trying to create an illusion od inclusivity so on and so forth because we're not stupid people, most people involved in NGOs tend to be smart people who know their areas, know their subjects maybe not formally or academically but they would know them through an intimate hands on contact so I knew nothing about architecture or archaeology or these things, my qualifications are in the social sciences not in these areas but you learn and you become wise and you start to pick things up as time goes by and were also people who don't take, we accept it we know that we have to deal with it our intelligence being insulted and working against the currents but on the whole we're not easily fooled and I say this from my knowledge of a number of NGOs which I had contact with over the last few year. NGOs aren't easily fooled.

4. What do you think about using surveys for consultative purposes?

It has to a combination of qualitative and quantitative. Unfortunately when it comes to things like surveys you'll find that a lot of the public are very susceptible to propaganda and to all sorts of mistaken information, they form half ideas and they think that they have formed a theory or hypothesis. We have a lot of those thought processes so it is very easy not to just direct, but to con people with your questions so they give you the answers that you want and this is seen in practice; what we saw with MIDI plc was that they hired a social scientist to do a supposed social impact assessment it was wrong on so many levels to start with a social impact assessment and quantitative study is not a Vox pop you don't just walk along the pavement and ask random people, the whole sampling methodology can be flawed, these studies don't even get peer reviewed either, you know, are they just doing them to say that again they are going through the motions. I do agree with the survey element of it in combination with a more in-depth qualitative element things like focus groups and consultation meetings etc., a combination would be more effective on the whole.

When you're thinking of the whole society I don't think the environment should be treated in isolation because environment is what were in, its going to affect health, psychological wellbeing, people quality of life, etc. there are so many levels, culturally it is going to have anthropological impacts and we have experts in all these areas. Its not 30/40 years ago were we didn't have enough graduates to deal with this, that and the other. It is costly, to do such a thing but ultimately if you put the costs in the equation you will find that the long term costs of doing a cheap or inefficient or inaccurate study the long term costs are much greater than if having invested in an appropriate study in the first place so it's a matter of putting out more money now for a greater return of investment for everyone at a later stage and unfortunately were not in the habit of thinking this way. Father Chircop, I remember in one of his first lectures he was banging on about Maltas inability to plan and this was in the 90s its now 2020. We still don't know how to plan in this country you know after all these years we still don't know how to plan properly and we do all the ad hoc stuff, and everything seems haphazard and it still doesn't change, its still not engrained in our culture.

Gozo tunnel – political football and we only have one football team in this country and even if the other something cataclysmic were to happen and the nationalist party are in power they would still pursue the gozo tunnel as the vested interests in that project are still going to be

big and powerful and the government and politicians would be still beholdent to them. I really cant see them cancelling it or doing a referendum, a referendum is a referendum. You are asking Joe from Zurrieq who goes to Gozo once every few years, Jamie from Gzira who goes once every 2 years.

5. Do you believe the participatory processes set in place lack effectiveness?
I believe they do, I think it is safe to speculate that they do. [from what has been said]

6. Do you believe the participatory processes set in place exist as a formality?

Yeah, a formality and I don't see the good will to implement these things and I dare to hope that things are improving and changing but at the same time I don't want to be delusional and I think you will probably hear the same thing from a lot of the NGOS and then we will be accused of being cynical and all sorts of stuff but if we do not see an example of good will paying lip service to it, it means nothing as far as we are concerned. If they are not serious in studying and then possibly implementing, if they are not serious about this then they are basically wasting peoples time and energy.

7. Do you believe there is transparency in this participatory process?

I don't know enough about the methodology and dissemination of it and tbh I wanted to research it abit before to give you better answers but from what I know I cant see enough transparency from the little I know, it could be much much more transparent, having said that this is coming from someone who only had a cursory knowledge of the area. Because we as inobbu il-Gzira haven't been asked to be apart of the consultative process.

No, they only contacted recognized NGOs and we are not a recognized NGO, we chose not to be a recognized NGO, despite the threats that we cannot collect donations so on and so forth so we stopped collecting donations and now FAA collects the money to do with the campaign.

In Malta, it cannot be recognized as a community based organization anzi if we're seen to collecting funds then we are subject to fines. So you have to register as an NGO same as if you would be, not even traders because you can just get a VAT number in that case not even a company number to do voluntary work and activism type work you have to register as an NGO. One they can keep you under control, they fill you wth paper work that you need to do, you need to get an auditor and this that and the other which means you need to generate a certain amount of money annually just for administration rather than collecting doantions to appeal we barely manage to collect those. Most of inhobbu IGzira's funds came out of my pockets, my to colleagues pockets, donators here and there, we don't even have a bank account, we cant even open a bank account we do the accounting between us. You know once ive donated something I forget about it because I chose to do so.

Me – I though there were levels

No, there is no platform for CBOs, you can have an NGO, you can have a foundation which is a slightly different beast but non formal or informal organizations like us, were not recognized as anything, we are seen as a campaign in fact that's what I call us; Grupp inhobbu I-Gzira jew Campagnia Inhobbu I-Gzira.

8. Do you think the public is involved enough?

No

9. Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between organizations set in place and the Planning Authority? Why do you believe so?

No, because most discussion with the planning authority is adversarial and its during ongoing cases. The pa shows little willingness or sympathy towards NGOs they're basically there, the feeling I get is to rubber stamp projects and judging by the decisions they have been taking theyre not concerned about the environment and then what they did to continue draining the organization was they separated the planning authority from the environmental authority, they made the environmentally resources authority almost toothless so rather than the pa policing its own decisions now it has become another organization that is meant to police what the pa is doing but they have no teeth, like transport malta, for ex transport malta hasn't even given an opinion on the bridge that is meant to be built on manoel island because they are not even privy to the plans. So if youre building a bridge how can the transport not be privy to such plans and reports? Because there is a loophole in legislation which means that they only get to see the review in bullet point form that the PA would conduct and present to them.

They didn't know the height of the bridge, the figures of traffic flow, we pulled in their David Sutton. It is flawed, probably by design it is that way, but their participation is mainly ai or nay and they give comments, a review on what the pa like oh that's a wonderful review and that's how it seems to work.

10. Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between non-governmental organizations and the public? Why do you believe so?

No, one of the reasons the problem is we don't have enough resources to communicate with as broader range of the public and as many members of the public we wish to that is a limitation for all NGOs, some of us are more successful than others, social media have been a help but also a hindrance and again you need to know how to do social media and social media is time and energy consuming even maintaining a simple website takes a few hours a week. Faa for example employs me and in 20 hours a week I have to deal with all sorts of things, Inhobbu l-gzira is different because we don't have as many commitments, we don't have accounts to deal with, we don't have a membership database to deal with etc. so we are abit more free and adaptable but for NGOS generally communicating with the public is quite a task as I was saying some organiations like the cycling group and dag have been more successful at it and some kazini tal-banda as those are NGOs and some are less successful or feel they need to do it less. So if you have NGOs specializing in a very particular subject and a very specific group of members of society or stakeholders they might not need to reach out to the rest of society on the other hand the fact that an NGO exists there is an indication that there is a need for social participation and social dialogue about this topic.

11. Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between the Developers Association and the public? Why do you believe so?

No, the Developers Association is more of a PR exercise, so the developers aren't as bad as they really are. It's a combination between a smoke screen and a lobbying machine, for the

lobby government. You have seen from the recent incidents and etc etc. they put out statements but the incidents kept occurring and getting the Developers Association to police themselves, these aren't kids who learn in the process and improve, these are adults. Established adults with established businesses who have acted irresponsibly repeatedly and now suddenly telling them you can police yourselves, don't worry, we'll even give you money to do it and we'll see how this goes and see how this works. It's a neo-liberal concept and like much of neo liberal thought its flawed and propagandistic.

12. Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between the Planning Authority and the public? Why do you believe so?

They spend a lot of money on fb adverts, especially recently when they make a slightly positive decision they really milk it to the extent that they spend thousands on advertising but does the PA care about the public, no I don't think so, there are decisions and instances where they show that they care about the community so they're not all bad decisions but then those good decisions seem to be annihilated by some really big bad decisions. I think the planning authority is reading from the same book which is the whole business first agenda, which they should not be but again we have a government whose agenda, conversation which is posing as a quite far right off centre of the political spectrum so we have a very far right wing government in Malta. We have concentration camps at sea which for me is bordering on fascism, were prioritizing business we have this spartan survival of the fittest that is fascism. Looking at the books and all the texts the indications are all there. The fact that they can go to bed and sleep and wake up in the morning and say ghax jien labourist is delusional how many of these people have read about socialism to my knowledge, its news readers running the country.

13. Do you think that there is enough dialogue between all organizations? Why do you believe so?

You can extrapolate an answer for that

14. If the project is highly sensitive, do you believe that a framework for outlining the process for participation strategies for the lifecycle of the project could be more effective?

Yes its crucial if you want to treat you voters, your public, your citizens with a modicum of respect and actually engage with the public in a manner that will improve their life styles not just promising them money in their pockets but promising them the ability to breath, to relax, to go to a park, like we are demanding on Manoel island. If you're really genuinely willing to do things for the people and for the nation yes, that has to be the case.

15. Do you believe that the Planning Authority represent the interests of the Maltese population in relation to big project plans?

There have been instances where they haven't completely neglected the interests of the population but generally speaking I don't believe that it is the case.

16. Do you believe that the Environment Resource Authority represent the interests of the Maltese population in relation to big project plans?

Sometimes they try, and there are people with ERA as there are with the PA who are genuine and who try to improve things for the better. But I don't see ERA as having enough clout to be able to really change things and again they do really weird stuff based on my experience with Manoel Island, they sided with MIDI when it wasn't even required of them to do so, izattu jaqbzu ghal MIDI and that was abit of an eye opener for us, they didn't even need to, they weren't asked for an opinion and yet they decided to provide one and that opinion was a favourable one towards the developer who is being dishonest and disingenuous in their actions. It also depends on who the case officers are, there is a lot of subjectivity going on, but I have seen ERA really fighting for the interests of the environment, how successful they are is another story.

17. Do you believe that the Non-Governmental Organizations in Malta represent the interests of the Maltese population in relation to big project plans?

I think environmental NGOs, they vary, some are more specialized in more nature, the world isn't all about humans. FAA is more about people and society oriented, our priorities are cultural heritage and environment but Ambjent Ahjar means better environment for all to live in. inhobbu l-gzira our interest is Gzira the town, its culture, its heritage, its people, primarily people as the cultural heritage has gone most of it, but the people are treated as second class citizens, second priority after turismu, turizmu, zvilipaturi mbad jigu in-nies. Issa if in the process Gzira has become gentrified and the population has been pushed out it doesn't matter because they have been sacrificed on the alter of money and finance so that doesn't matter so that's where inhobbu l-gzira comes in as even the local council, they are so haphazard to what they object to that it makes one scratch ones head and wonder what are the criteria for complaining about a petrol station being placed in a garden vs the 50,000 capital gain so they can give their blessing for it, the capitanerie, the restaurants etc are okay but not the petrol station so what is going on here? Their standards are all confused and very often the local council does not work with the interests of people but the interests of business as that is how they are expected to work in towns like Gzira. Il-business lewwel mbad jekk tbatl il-konsegwenza they tell you, but the value of your property will go up, but I cant actually breath money and I cant eat money, but that doesn't matter, youre stupid if you don't prioritize money, rather than live in peace and enjoy living in your own town. Regardless if you've been there for 5 years, 10 years or generations.

Our focus is on the people but we have received a lot of hostility from the people, my car has been vandalized, you get to a point were you don't give a dudu about these things because you know that youre right and you've got a certain conviction and fighting spirit in you. It's a really ig ersonal sacrifice, many people have told me, why are you doing this to yourself. Ultimately were I live the price of my apartment will shoot up with the development of Manoel Island, maybe, maybe not, economically im not a complete fool I can understand these things. "WE ARE LIVING HERE BECAUSE WE DON'T WANT TO LOOSE WHAT WE HAVE"

18. Do you believe local councils represent their local's interests?

Some do and some are really good at it, and some fluctuate, in Gzira we had years were the local council was really good and effective currently again this could be subjective, you could go out in the street and they say that the council is wonderful but looking at it objectively as a person who understands whats going on as I have had no choice as my fellow activists

bombard me with information on a daily bases. I don't think that this local council is doing a good job, that is my take.

19. Do you believe that there is a balance for what the Developer (whether it be the government itself or not) wants and the public requests?

Public in Malta doesn't really request, public in Malta request petty things; isma hemm dik il-bozza fit-triq... ila xahrejn mitluqa jew ilbirah kien hemm xi studenti barranin li hamguli it-targa ta barra, but the Maltese don't, this is a post colonial thing perhaps, perhaps not, the Maltese are used to ask for petty things, for example there is an old lady that comes to clean the common areas of the apartment we talk, every week, her husband would go all the way to the PM to ask him for a job here, but people won't go to the PM and ask for a bloody park. Which other people can enjoy, they go for personal favors, but the clientelism is very alive and kicking albeit in some cases a bit more discrete than it used to be and no the public isn't asking for what it really needs. The public doesn't even realize maybe that they would be better served by a park, rather than a luxury village which they aren't able to go into, maybe they don't even realize. We are trying to educate them but there were 8,000 who signed the petition and believed in our vision but then you will find thousands more who will tell you u le ahjar jibnuh, ikun aw iktar xoghol etc. as this is what they think will result from the development.

20. Do you believe there is a democratic deficit within the structures placed in motion?

In general yes, but there are always further institutions which one can refer to for example were talking planning right, you talk to the PA and then you can appeal the appeal is costly but it can be done. Then if you lose the appeal you can go to court, there are cases where you can invoke the ombudsman as well, so there are democratic structures of accountability and transparency but how they are implemented is another story and whether they have enough clout, official formal clout is questionable. We generally do not believe that is the case to say democratically there is a surplus, it can be improved substantially.

21. How would you give people more of a say? How do you believe we can make the process more inclusive?

Well on a very fundamental level when people speak up and object, listen to those objections, read them, study them, okay, fair enough, the PA may complain and say most of the objections are emotional expressions based on feelings etc. then again so are many of their decisions. Consultative processes need to be designed and adapted for all respondents to be able to respond the best way they can and very often if you're talking to people from lower education levels and people who have no knowledge of a particular area that are going to be affected by changes you need to give them the tools to digest and understand what's being said and that is not the case, so apart from ads on FB and what not there's a need for forms of outreach for the public and methodologies in place for the public's feelings or opinions to be collected, analyzed and communicated in an effective manner and I think that thus far, though there has been some attempts haven't been too impressive.

22. There have been petitions signed in Malta to not build or develop. Are these taken into consideration when building?

We almost had 8,000 signatures. We were asking for it to be overturned but we would have been happy if parliament had just actually discussed it as an actual democratic country, Malta is not democratic, in a natural democratic country like the UK a 100,000 signatures of some 60million population triggers a parliamentary questioning, a million signatures triggers a parliamentary debate, sorry not a million, but proportionally we got in the UK, in Luxemburg in many EU countries a parliamentary debate would have had to be triggered. Before, no arguing, look you have this many signatures from your citizens, the citizens are demanding this thing lets debate it because we are a democracy, Malta is no longer a democracy, it ceased being a democracy a few years back it never actually grew into an actual democracy lets face it, we're still post colonial flawed democracy but then as time went by corruption rearing its head eventually corruption took over the whole system and this im talking previous to the current administration and what the current administration did is basically, said, well lets continue the tradition and show that we're actually better at being corrupt than the previous lot and they've really managed especially this latest attempt at social cleansing by our PM has really impressed me. And im being para.

ME – Its been a crazy year cycle

Yes and its becoming extremely difficult for me personally to retain my satiny and not blow up all over social media because some days I feel like doing it because it's the only medium I have at the moment otherwise I'd go and bang my head at the Castille door. We're living in pretty horrible times I cant see any end in sight so we have to deal with them and not do harm to oneself by letting them get to you too much.

Me – hopefully they start listening to people

They listen to people, they listen to the wealthy speculators, the people who donate to the party, the people who have financial dominance in the country, those are the people they will listen to. They are not going to listen to you or me unless we force them to.

Parliament has no mechanism for considering petitions in place. In 2013 or 2015 there was a parliamentary committee set up and this parliamentary committee met up a few times and they never came up with a mechanism and a procedure and a policy for consideration of petitions signed. So they have the web page, you can set up a petition over there etc etc. but once the petition is closed nothing happens.

23. How many people would have to sign to stop something from being developed?

In our case it wasn't about stopping the development, but there were so many anomalies in the way permits were granted, the land was granted etc etc and we instead of requesting a stop to development we requested a park and that would entail the government coming to some sort of agreement with the developers, maybe compensating them or maybe legally the government doesn't really need to compensate them as they haven't really used their application. Id say as a number a few thousand citizens should be sufficient for a development to be seriously considered at the very least and given its day of debate in parliament.

24. Would you consider a public forum with representatives of all organizations as being something feasible? Please explain.

Yes and no, because NGOs have such limited resources and citizen groups like ours practically have no resources, all we have is our time and energy. For setting up another public forum, we would rather see a system and mechanism that would do the job properly and consultations taking place when major decisions and new policies are being drawn up and methods of implementation are being considered, so the job is being done properly. We do get consulted there is the Malta Commission for the voluntary sector which have a committee of sorts with all different types of NGOs but you know something like this for example development has an impact on so many levels that it would have to involve everyone ex. Stakeholders from the Chambers of Commerce, all the way down to nature trust and the society for protection of bats and malta advocacy group because everyone of these NGOs potentially has a say in developments and these types of projects because everyone has something to contribute and forums of this type of magnitude and scale would be quite difficult to set up and maintain. Then again its not impossible but it's a big job and unless there is the political will to do it, its never going to happen.

25. Would you consider a Community Based Organization framework (like Inħobbu l-Gzira) which represents the town) for all projects? Please explain.

Yes and no, because if it is an organization and its set up with the same people involved Well do we represent the citizens of Gzira? We believe that we are representing their better interests yes but ultimately we weren't elected whereas the local council was elected. Son one could argue that the local council is the best situated and representative for the citizens of Gzira, however the citizens of Gzira it may not be that they are representing the interest of Gzira there definitely isn't a consensus, individuals may believe that the person elected may be behaving abominably, certain types of people tend to go for politics, and unfortunately it tends to attract the wrong type of people. So such a committee, we don't have a mandate from the people, all we say is that we love Gzira and that what we're doing is for Gzira especially in terms of environment, health and community etc. but you may find that not all people in Gzira hold us in high regard, or would accept that we make decisions on their behalf or consult on their behalf so it would have to be done on a case by case bases or something like they have in Swizerland with the cantons which is far from perfect but I wouldn't know how to answer that question in a convincing manner.

26. Would you consider a referendum on such large-scale projects? Please explain.

A referendum is only any use if the people are well educated, and even the British have managed to make a pigsear on that. In malta we've had referenda which have been a mess like the Hunting referenda which more or less backfired on the people who stood for it. But yes a methodology of polling the public, maybe not a referendum, that would be nice, it could potentially given the resources and commitment, it could potentially get great results from the public at large.

27. Which of the following would you prefer to be in our planning system; Referendum, Public Forum, Community Based Organizations, a multi-model or leave as is? Why?

A multi-model, were you combine the formats of a referendum, forum. Its could provide a more objective picture, the forum leads to discussion, discussion leads to new perspectives being discovered and new stumbling blocks being exposed and community organizations who are particularly dedicated like one of our members, does a lot of research, on his own and comes up with a lot of the flaws on his own and the loop holes etc. so it can contribute a lot and the with referenda type aspect would be informed with both formal and informal organizations. I think that could be a format that could work though it is time consuming to implement but when you think about the scale of a project like manoel island you need to study that. Its taken them 20 years to apply for the updated odp, in that time couldn't we have conducted a public forum, a referendum, consultations of a serious nature etc etc. but the ... was placed on the developers. The developers when they were ready to start developing because their permit runs out next year, they said ejja ha mmorru we'll get a few academics on board, we'll do a social impact assessment, everything is rolled into the environment impact assessment including heritage etc, and they rushed it through and we saw what the results were.

Like manoel island is going to affect, sliema, gzira, ta' xbiex, msida etc. It happens to fall under Gzira as a territory but ultimately all the neighbouring towns are going to be affected. We reached out to all the neighbouring towns, we found support from the citizens but not from the politicians.

28. Do you believe the public would be interested in participating with such queries?

Yes, I believe that it would be a relatively small proportion of the public but I have found through inhobbu l-gzira and my work with FAA that some citizens will take a particular approach to a particular little area of a village or town, a site of interest and they will give their input an example [confidential] had a call this morning from a chap in Zurrieq it's the second time and he basically cites the objections in a particular area of zurrieq, he does the writing himself, he does the research, the objections, the arguments and then FAA submits them on his behalf so he can keep his anonymity. In Inhobby l-Gzira we found participation, once to a planning meeting we ordered a bus, 15 people show up, which means that 15 people were willing to give their time during the day and listen to the board and try to contribute. So if the forum were to be open armed and more encouraging of feedback I believe that in time more people would start getting onboard and more people would start making their contributions. First you need to reach out to people.

29. What would be your worries considering such an involved public participatory approach?

Well worries would be, you know, maybe rivalries, local rivalries, people coming up with frivolities, people only coming with their point of view even if it may be an important point of view people in general we tend to see ours more merit worthy etc etc. which isn't always the case so local citizens you cant expect them to have that element of objectivity however we live a world of subjective so the closest you can get to objective is looking at different perspectives and different viewpoints and try to collegate into a more realistic yet holistic picture of a situation.

30. One of the issues that comes up is that people are unaware of all the pros and cons of such projects. Do you consider that an information campaign could help the uninformed element?

An educational campaign would have to come from an independent body which politician is going to be putting that feather in his cap. To undertake an independent study which will undermine their own ambitions. It is the same with MIDI plc they are meant to conduct an environmental impact assessment and the terms of reference allow them to pick their own consultants, so they picked consultants one of whom was the directors son, he is an expert in the field, one of the best on the island, but he is the directors son and he signed a no conflict of interest clause. There is no grey area to what a conflict of interest is. There's no arguing with it being a conflict of interest even if the father and son don't talk it's still a conflict of interest. There is no disputing it. Family members aren't disputable, the Tribunal threw out their study, after months of us fighting, and sent them back to the drawing board. They could no bull shit their way out of the fact that this was complete treachery and what have you.

A well crafted informational campaign by someone like yourself who is doing it from the point of view of a communicator, of course it would help.

31. Do you believe that if policies on such matters were in place, they would be more effective?

Yes, policies and also I worked for the European Commission indirectly, as I worked with Erasmus funding and one of the things I always collected from my meetings abroad were informational materials. The Estonians, the way they explain things, tell stories so again I think well crafted communications that are accessible to people, information.

There needs to be the right media mix the right channels things like radio and voice media. In Malta I have felt that we lack, discussion, discord, if you listen to something like NBC leading Britains discussion that is what it is all about conversation, current issues, and it's very interesting from the most unexpected people. Apart from that there are other mediums that can be used.

Yes absolutely and they have to be integral again we have people graduating on the island and we have a lot of smart people and these people are more than qualified to work together and come up with something that works for the Maltese public. So no 1 looking at it from the economy first perspective it would generate more useful and specialized work for people, and these people can ensure that the communications carried out by the authorities are of decent quality and that they are reaching the appropriate authorities and a cross section of society.

32. Why do you think that the European Landscape Convention hasn't been ratified in Malta?

Because they don't want to, they don't want to ratify it, it's not in their interest if the ELD was to be ratified Manoel Island would have been thrown out of the window because after what happened to Tigne point you wouldn't trust those people with anything. Let alone Manoel Island. Bertu Mizzi himself the godfather, had written an article where he said 'hang me, if I let them ruin Manoel Island like they did Tigne' the guy who implemented it, looked at his own project and the effects of his own project and he died remorseful of what happened. The article is still out there I believe it's on the independent and it goes to show ELC has been ratified by many countries, those who didn't ratify it were those who wanted to get away with

stuff for longer and they have done. Then when they have done the damage they'll ratify the Convention and that's the way I see it, FAA might give you another opinion.

The ELC hasn't been ratified because we've been allowed to get away with it, they're probably playing fines, and penalties like we do for hunting. There has not been the political will to do it and that's why it hasn't been ratified.

33. Do you believe the media's depiction of projects is truthful in their assessment?

No, as the media doesn't have the resources to assess the full extent of things. So even the good journalists, because these are really complex things digging into them the level of complexity is phenomenal and it has too many levels, layers and vested interests to consider. I am lucky that my co-, Michael is an auditor, he's on the verge of retiring and his entire career has been to find anomalies and find things, find what's wrong with this and that, he goes through permits, he's a socialist and thinks about the people rather than business.

A journalist is in a position where they need to find certain information, you can tell me look at the people at the Guardian and BBC manage but you need to look at their resources also you need to look at the fact that in Malta if you lose an advertiser you're in trouble because the market is much more limited and if you look at for example Manoel Island you have the owners of the Independent are shareholders, Alf Mizzi & Sons, Lombardi, are the biggest importers of goods in Malta from frozen goods, to ice cream to batteries, all these products are advertised in our media so obviously the media become somewhat beholden to them. There's this whole complexity there and our media aren't independent enough, aren't equipped enough and aren't knowledgeable enough on the subject so they rely on people like us to explain things to them and then what they do, they will go and verify with others and very often the more powerful will get their word put through than the cowboys like myself, and this is what happens over and over again. It makes our battle harder but it is a reality we are aware of and we don't let it get to us.

Some of the issues aren't big enough to cover, or they believe that it wouldn't generate enough editorial interest.

34. Do you believe that the Planning Authority is influenced by the government?

I think it is influenced by the government it is an appointed board so it's always been. Impartiality when it comes to appointments is very difficult, now in some cases you need to have people appointed as, if you are a so-called socialist government you appoint people with socialist leanings as to push your agenda and manifesto, there is an element of where it's acceptable, I'm not going to appoint a business person in charge of public well fare for example. I'm going to appoint someone who is from that sector with a deep understanding of that sector but that is not how things happen and this is why Malta is going to be in trouble about the judiciary because we keep appointing the judges. Now if the PM keeps appointing the judges, and a judge is almost untouchable, they can't be fired easily and they still can make your life difficult. The planning authority in the last 2 years since we've been working on Manoel Island I don't know how many people have changed due to conflict of interests, people have resigned, replaced so it's not a matter of believing, they are beholden to the government.

35. Do you believe that the participatory processes set in place are used to control citizen initiatives?

Police them for sure, control them is a different thing, having said that we haven't really picked on apart from that law that where they said that we cannot collect public donations unless you're an NGO, which is partly coming from the European Union and the money laundering regulations but in Malta we took it to the limit not because FAA etc are taking donations from money launderers but because Malta is a high risk country for many reasons. Malta is scrutinized and Malta tends to prioritize sticking to the rules over something else, they tend to be inflexible and a pain. Thus far I cannot say they are trying to control. That they are trying to reduce our influence yes, that they are trying to police us yes, that they occasionally try to create obstacles for us, yes but not control us. They haven't gone that far yet. Part of the reason is they know people like me, and other activists wouldn't just lie down and take it and they know that we do have clout so this creates a type of a balance.

My trust towards the pa has decreased despite this. It was more seeing what they have done on a day to day rather than this.

36. Why do you think there was so much controversy surrounding the 'Manoel Island Project'?

To start with the Nationalists and Parliament should have never signed it away in the 90s. Secondly

Historically Manoel Island was given away with Tigne Point under a nationalist administration however both PN and MLT had voted in favor in Parliament cos otherwise it wouldn't have gone ahead. They took their time, kept running out of money, they started building Tigne they made a real pig's ear of Tigne and they kept taking advantage every step of the way so MIDI's trust became eroded over the years from both the public and the authorities and then the local council got up in arms because Manoel Island was closed up from public access so the Mayor went on a campaign saying Manoel Island should become a park and they should open access to the shoreline and so on and so forth and that was a victory for Graffiti and the Mayor. But when it came to the newly developed ODP (outside development plan) then the Mayor ceded Graffiti stepped out of the way completely disappeared from the scene, Andre has never given me a straight answer as to why. The Mayor hitched a ride on that process he got them on board and what not and then suddenly changed, they came up with these new plans bellaw lil kulhadd li dawn il-pjanijiet godda huma hafna ahjar milgoddha whereas in fact someone like MIDI if they are going to give you 10c worth they are going to take a euro back and they were bamboozled and either they were too ashamed to say they were bamboozled as it was a political failure for the Mayor and for Graffiti. And they stepped back. The controversy arose when we started exposing the lies, the lies of the local council, the lies of MIDI, the fallacies, for example their 3D visuals are completely misleading, even the angles, the points of view from where they did the 3D imagery were false points like one was from the far end of Gzira, the other corner over there and everything in between we don't have a point of view, which is where the huge walls are running. They lied about their environmental impact assessment, the architect Edward who was a good friend of mine signed a false declaration of non-conflict of interest, their permits should have expired so they should have never been given the go ahead to apply for the ODP in the first place because it expired over a decade ago and obviously once we saw these things we started digging and digging and digging and we spoke to experts. Like today I was on the phone with a traffic expert a former very senior member at planning, I can't give his name, but he basically shed light on the whole traffic impact

assessment, imagine they calculated the traffic over here, the bridge based on a traffic impact assessment on tigne point which took place 20 years ago, is traffic the same here the same as then. So how can you say that this is the same, when it is based on of traffic coming from a different point, it happened 20 years ago. And they get away with it. The planning board are like yes well go for this one and we have to point these things out to them and this guy actually came and set up cameras and counted the cars and came up with a figure which is actually four times the traffic and he did this in winter. So they calculated on one car when I reality 4 cars come in the same time span.

37. Do you believe 'Inħobbu l-Gzira' (a Community Based Organization) managed to get their message across?

To an extent, we did very well with sectors of the public who took the time to read , listen and understand what we were trying to say. We got our message across with the Environmental Planning and Review Tribunal because we won our first case on our first point of the 7 a gravi it's a lament and that material was provided from Inħobbu l-Gzira to FAA to work with so we gave them the ammunition and the tools. We have been partially successful.

I believe a lot in the the butterfly effect and what we had was the butterfly affect a lot of people who may have been complacent etc etc have become less complacent, theyre abit more attentive, they ntice things that 6 months ago they wouldn't have. And it continues to propoogate the cause so we had some impact.

38. Do you think the public was appeased with the creation of The Manoel Island Foundation?

Yes, despite the fact that the Manoel Island Foundation in itself is just a toothless construct which can never be effective in carrying out its purported objectives. That is the best word for it, they were appeased.

39. Different participatory processes were undertaken in pursuit of 'The Manoel Island Project'. Which do you believe was the most effective?

The methodologies where well now the biggest so-called participatory process undertaken by MIDI was the EIA which in Malta encapsulates the social impact assessment, there was never a proper health impact assessment. They paid some lip service to it but it was a big lie, Godfrey Farrugia actually of his own free will and time did one himself and even though it is quite cursory and didn't engage in actual studies and measuring etc etc is enough to show what a farce the original one was.

The Hitchhikers Galaxy Richard Adams quote - I think it explains the consultative process in Malta

40. What level of participation do/did you have during the 'Manoel Island Project'?

As ive mentioned we had people come out of the wood work we even had people who work as top level advisors who have come to us and give us information and try to help guide us along the way, we've had eledery residents help us, we ourselves have reached out to people for signatures, we had people who came and gave out flyers even the kappillan even though hes not meant to help us. We had a lot of individuals who have chipped in and contributed,

people send in videos, photos, alerting us to things going on. We have participation not participation as you would have with Graffiti, people showing up for protests etc. and we are kept alive by the public, except for our drives to do the right thing the public has supported us.

Readily to believe in things it is ingrained in our culture

Tourism and development one is deterring the other. This is a project where the wealthier can enjoy what is left and the common citizen like you and I we are deprived of that which is ours.

People come to us and ask what, is this that and the other and we provide them with the data, and we brought out press releases in our own names, in fact this week we are planning to bombard the authorities with 3 letters

We have had a major hindrance which is the mayor of Gzira, he has gone out and opposed us every step of the way and he has done this with every means possible and his strategy has mainly been to mainly discover our plans and sully our reputations he has said stuff like 'Ghax Jamie Mercieca joqghod fuq ix-xatt'.

We're going to lose something maybe its not to everyones tastes but its something precious and something uniquely Gzira, uniquely Maltese and once that is gone and the town loses its character its just another Benidorm, its just another whatever and its gone forever.

Theres even a rift between the labour party followers in Gzira. The old school labour get our point on Manouel island whilst the new school labour have been indoctrinated to the economy first ideology. The old school have helped us anonymously believe it or not ax tant jibzaw mill-ohrajn jamlu laffarijiet anonimi so even though if you tell me bring together the whole of inhobbu l-gzira the 3 or 4 of us who show up in reality we get our intel, our information, our tips from locals. Like we never knew about the roman remains a local came up to us and approached Arnold under condition of anonymity, I want to talk to these inhobbu l-gzira people because I have these bits of porcelain which I poached form the seabeds and I would like to hand them in and talk to them and that is how we got to know about the roman parts which may even be a roman fort. Hass li seta jafdana ax ahna lesti namlu wiccna u niehdu ic chances ahna like the FAA is. We provide a cover and a shield to this guy from bullying, from ostrasization issa hallija li blajta jiena ghax my car has been vandalized so many times, with things written on it and I get yelled at in the street but you know some of us can deal with it better and we do.

Interview 4

To whom it may concern,

I am a master's degree student and am currently conducting a study on the participation processes when big infrastructural projects in Malta are planned and executed. It seeks to identify if there is a democratic deficit within the system and if so how to amend it. To this end the study will evaluate the level of effective participation of different stakeholders and on what is currently being done and what potential participatory processes could be used in future.

I am looking forward to hearing your thoughts and would like to thank you in advance for your participation in this study. If possible, please do not provide one-word answers.

Naomi Galea B.Comms(Melit.)

Email Interview

1. What is your role within the organization you represent?

Director General

2. What do you think of the consultative process that we have in place?

It is not as effective as it should be. More often than not, the current consultative processes (i) lack to meet the scope they are intended for, (ii) are not spearheaded by the right people and (iii) . More often than not, it is felt that consultations are conducted purely to tick the legal requirement of 'consulting'.

In fact one of the biggest issues that needs to be addressed is that there is a general perception across the board that (i) the consultative efforts put in by the stakeholders are usually ignored as the project would already be a fait accompli (albeit unofficial) at consultation stage, (ii) that minor changes are taken on board post consultation purely to give the impression that the authorities have 'listened' to the concerns of the stakeholders. Hence why there is the general perception that public consultations are by and large ineffective – sometimes public consultations have also been described as 'shams'.

3. How do you think we can improve it?

The main scope of these consultations is to ensure that such projects are being done for the common good. Hence it is important to:

- Make sure that all stakeholders are given equal opportunities to understand the projects, evaluate the projects, discuss the projects and put forward their concerns/ideas/suggestions/improvements.
- In conjunction with the above, the opportunity must be given when the project is still at its very initial concept stage with further opportunities to discuss effectively again once the initial feedback has been taken into consideration.
- Consultations should be co-ordinated by bodies/individuals who are independent. Consultations co-ordinated by the entity spearheading the project will have an automatic bias in favour of the project. This independence is important to ensure (i) that the information disseminated is complete, accurate and gives a clear picture of all the facets of the projects and (ii) that all consultation feedback is analysed with an open and unbiased mind-set.
- It is also important to ensure that a proper forum is created where stakeholders can air different opinions (even if they are at opposite poles), and give them the opportunity to have a civil discussion and agree between them on the best way forward. Having a different

opinion should not make one the enemy of the other – to the contrary, it should be seen as an opportunity to come forward with the best solution for the common good.

- The timing and time-frames are also of crucial importance. More co-operation and better planning between authorities, even across different Ministries, is of paramount importance. It goes against the spirit of the public consultation process itself to have multiple public consultation going on at the same time. Organisations and stakeholders are being inundated with simultaneous consultative process on various projects which makes it impossible to participate effectively given the limited time-frames and the limited resources of those wishing to participate in the consultation process.

4. What do you think about using surveys for consultative purposes?

Surveys can give an indication. However, their accuracy will depend on:

- on the way the questions are drafted – The way questions are drafted can mislead the person answering the survey.

- whether one is giving a passionate reply or an informed reply.

Surveys are best used in fact-finding instances. Surveys should not be used to try and elicit opinion.

5. Do you believe the participatory processes set in place lack effectiveness?

Yes. See comments made at point 3 above.

6. Do you believe the participatory processes set in place exist as a formality?

Yes. See comments made at point 2 and 3 above.

7. Do you believe there is transparency in this participatory process?

Yes. But it can be improved. Transparency and better holistic planning go hand in hand. One cannot have full transparency if one does not have the entire picture of what is being planned for the future (be it a couple of years or a longer period).

Malta needs a coherent and consistent long-term national strategy which would be binding on all successive governments and on civil society so as to ensure consistency in decision-making and decision-taking. We cannot continue working on short-sighted five-year plans. We really need to move forward and plan strategically, otherwise one can never have full transparency.

8. Do you think the public is involved enough?

No. See comments made at point 3 above.

9. Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between organizations set in place and the Planning Authority? Why do you believe so?

With respect to government entities and authorities, I believe there needs to be better co-ordination, from the very start of the project, ie at concept stage. A big infrastructural project requires the input from various government entities and authorities – they all have their own project priorities. Better co-ordination will eliminate stumbling blocks and in particular ensure that all entities are working towards the same deliverables, the same delivery time-frames, and that every entity allocates its human resources to meet the delivery time-frames. Better co-ordination would also eliminate overstepping between one entity and another – just to give an example: Roadworks are completed by IM and a couple of weeks/months down the line some other entity needs to carry out works which impinge directly on the state of the roads which have just been done.

10. Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between non-governmental organizations and the public? Why do you believe so?

With respect to NGOs and other non-governmental associations, I believe that the level of dialogue could be improved significantly by involving them at concept stage too.

11. Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between the Developers Association and the public? Why do you believe so?

There is no such thing as enough dialogue. Dialogue should be constant and continuous.

In fact MDA has just launched the Safer Neighbourhood Scheme. The idea of this scheme is primarily two-fold: (i) to disseminate information, in particular to the general public by explaining legalities in simple terms and informing them of the rights and obligations that they have at law as well as the rights and obligations of the industry players, (ii) to offer support and to establish better neighbourhood practices.

To date we have launched the first initiative and will be coming up with more initiatives over the next months to protect both our members and the public.

This first initiative is aimed to give all adjacent property owners a better opportunity for more peace of mind. Prior to the commencement of any project, third parties adjacent to a construction site would be able to have a professional report drawn up as requested by law on the method statement/condition report. The report is to be drawn up by a Perit independently chosen by the third party, and the MDA developer member will be obliged to refund all the Perit fee upon the presentation of a fiscal receipt. In those cases where a third party cannot afford to pay the Perit's fee, the developer will hand to the third party the amount to be paid to the Perit, upon the presentation of a fiscal invoice by the third party. MDA members or their companies who do not make payment upon the presentation of receipts or invoices by third parties will be inserted on a public blacklist by the MDA. We believe that this initiative should help significantly in putting neighbours' minds more at rest as now everyone can go to his Perit of choice irrespective of his/her financial standing. We are also urging non-MDA developer members to follow suit and adopt this initiative too.

This initiative, apart from alleviating the financial burdens on the part of third party neighbours, it will also help to establish a better relationship between the developer and the neighbours.

12. Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between the Planning Authority and the public? Why do you believe so?

There is a channel for dialogue. However, the information being disseminated is not reaching the public in the manner one would wish for.

13. Do you think that there is enough dialogue between all organizations? Why do you believe so?

No, there isn't. Whilst it is understandable that every organisation has its own mission, I believe that if we want to move forward as a nation we must all work together. All associations, the environmental NGOs, and civil society groups should be working together towards a better future together. We might have our differences of opinion, but this does not make us enemies. All together, the right balance can be found.

14. If the project is highly sensitive, do you believe that a framework for outlining the process for participation strategies for the lifecycle of the project could be more effective?

Definitely.

15. Do you believe that the Planning Authority represent the interests of the Maltese population in relation to big project plans?

Vision and policy is directed and set by Government. Therefore it is Government's role to ensure that the interests of the Maltese population is being properly represented and safeguarded.

16. Do you believe that the Environment Resource Authority represent the interests of the Maltese population in relation to big project plans?

See comment at point 15 above.

17. Do you believe that the Non-Governmental Organizations in Malta represent the interests of the Maltese population in relation to big project plans?

All NGOs have their own mission and therefore they will be representing that part of the Maltese population which is addressed in their mission. Hence why there is the need of more collaboration as pointed out at point 13 above.

18. Do you believe local councils represent their local's interests?

Every local council represents its residents. In fact when it comes to national projects, a tug-of-war is often witnessed between the local councils that would be effected by the project.

19. Do you believe that there is a balance for what the Developer (whether it be the government itself or not) wants and the public requests?

MDA cannot speak on behalf of individual developers. MDA can only speak on behalf of itself.

MDA's vision is to keep the industry growing in a new framework which respects people's new way of living and in total respect to the environment which we need to protect and develop sustainably in order to keep our country attractive.

MDA believes that Malta needs a coherent and consistent long-term national strategy which would be binding on all successive governments and on civil society so as to ensure consistency in decision-making and decision-taking. We cannot continue working on short-sighted five-year electoral cycles. We really need to move forward and plan strategically. MDA would like to work jointly with NGOs and push the government authorities and regulators to adopt this sustainable strategic approach.

20. Do you believe there is a democratic deficit within the structures placed in motion?

There are various structures. Some are functioning better than others.

21. How would you give people more of a say? How do you believe we can make the process more inclusive?

As MDA we have just launched the Safer Neighbourhood Scheme as described at point 11 above.

As MDA we are always open to what people have to say and in fact it is very positive to note that there are numerous instances when the general public communicates with MDA – some people communicate to ask for information including legal aspects; others share their ideas and experiences with us.

22. There have been petitions signed in Malta to not build or develop. Are these taken into consideration when building?

Petitions are mainly addressed to the boards issuing permits and to Government, and therefore this question is best directed to them.

However, all investors would like to have good relations with the neighbours and the general public and therefore it would make absolute sense to gauge petition sentiment and evaluate it against other determining factors.

23. How many people would have to sign to stop something from being developed?

It should not be a matter of numbers, but a matter of balancing the rights of all involved, fairness, the country's best interest and the common good.

24. Would you consider a public forum with representatives of all organizations as being something feasible? Please explain.

Yes, if it is led by the proper people and if all representatives adopt a mindshift and work towards one common goal.

25. Would you consider a Community Based Organization framework (like Inħobbu l-Gżira) which represents the town) for all projects? Please explain.

Every organisation has its own mission. The policy maker and the decision taker must give everything and everyone due consideration.

26. Would you consider a referendum on such large-scale projects? Please explain.

Deciding on whether to go ahead or not with a large-scale project is not only a matter of whether one likes it or not. It is a matter of proper planning, a proper vision, and a proper consultation.

27. Which of the following would you prefer to be in our planning system; Referendum, Public Forum, Community Based Organizations, a multi-model or leave as is? Why?

Consultation at various levels is always healthy. However, a coherent and consistent long-term national strategy is the foundation of success. Malta needs a coherent and consistent long-term national strategy which would be binding on all successive governments and on civil society – this is the soundest way to ensure consistency in decision-making and decision-taking.

28. Do you believe the public would be interested in participating with such queries?

The public is interested in anything that effects him/her directly.

29. What would be your worries considering such an involved public participatory approach?

It all depends on the mechanism to be put in place.

30. One of the issues that comes up is that people are unaware of all the pros and cons of such projects. Do you consider that an information campaign could help the uninformed element?

Provided that the information campaign is fair, unbiased and comprehensive.

31. Do you believe that if policies on such matters were in place, they would be more effective?

Yes, as long as the policies do not leave too much for interpretation and as long as policies do not conflict one with the other.

32. Why do you think that the European Landscape Convention hasn't been ratified in Malta?

That is a question that needs to be asked to Government.

33. Do you believe the media's depiction of projects is truthful in their assessment?

Sometimes yes. Sometimes no.

34. Do you believe that the Planning Authority is influenced by the government?

Yes. Government sets the vision and gives policy direction.

35. Do you believe that the participatory processes set in place are used to control citizen initiatives?

I don't think it is the case.

36. Why do you think there was so much controversy surrounding the 'Manoel Island Project'?

Keeping in mind that there were a number of controversial projects, MDA prefers not to comment on this individual case.

37. Do you believe 'Inħobbu l-Gżira' (a Community Based Organization) managed to get their message across?

See comment at point 36 above.

38. Do you think the public was appeased with the creation of The Manoel Island Foundation?

See comment at point 36 above.

Interview 5

To whom it may concern,

I am a master's degree student and am currently conducting a study on the participation processes when big infrastructural projects in Malta are planned and executed. It seeks to identify if there is a democratic deficit within the system and if so how to amend it. To this end the study will evaluate the level of effective participation of different stakeholders and on what is currently being done and what potential participatory processes could be used in future.

I am looking forward to hearing your thoughts and would like to thank you in advance for your participation in this study. If possible, please do not provide one-word answers.

Naomi Galea B.Comms(Melit.)

Email Interview

1. What is your role within the organization you represent?

2. What do you think of the consultative process that we have in place?

As you know the planning authority, actually there are two main processes, the formulating and the development planning process, which involves the developments planning applications. There is no difference between if the applicant is public or private. In our process there is no difference. The process started with the development brief, started in 1995. The procedure of a development brief, starts by the govt setting objects for the development of Manoel Island, the Chambre, Cambridge, and several others. It started with the government setting up objects, and issued for public consultation. After you will have the first draft of the brief, involving the comment of the public (ie incl all stakeholders) you can view this process online. You will also find the public comments online and the replies from our sides. I am just summarizing. Normally we will have the draft which is issued for public consultation again, then we will have the comments from all persons, and amend accordingly. It will then go to the planning board for endorsement and finally given to the government (the ministry of authority). In the case of Manoel Island there was a development brief.

Then we had the outline application on Tigne and Manoel Island. When the submissions are done... now the process changed before 2013. On the outline, obviously, the environment section, the TM and all planning authorities were consulted. At that time the env dept requested env studies to be carried out, land and marine. As they were proposing a marina. Which took two years to complete. Even from the transport point of view there was a traffic impact assessment. The EIA process has its own public procedure, the traffic impact assessment is available through the planning processes. Obviously as I said those relevant authorities were consulted for example Enemalta, waterservices and all utilities were consulted, to see the impact on infrastructure. Eventually the public was even noticed by the side notice, etc. any reps would be considered in the process of application and eventually the report would be compiled with a recommendation and would be sent to the board for a decision. Then the applicant will start putting a phased application in the case of Manoel Island – restoration of port, restoration and rehabilitation of Lazzaretto, im talking from memory, a distribution centre of Enemalta due cable links/ Those were the main approved applications, Lazzaretto they started, and as you know we had now the masterplan which we

had an outline of the masterplan, which from 1995 till today, time passed and what is to be permitted changes, and they made up a new masterplan in the consolidated floors of Manoel island. That was issued, obviously as you know.... Let me explain the process of Manoel Island of today. The process starts with a schedule 1 application, which is considered as major, schedule one goes through a screening process, which involves, the consultation with ERA, TM and SCH, as the process of ERA. As the cultural heritage will be studied in the EIA. The idea of doing these screening processes is, when the application is validated ... ok ... the public will have all the information of the studies carried out available ...ok ... before it was done that during the planning process so when the public see the project they will have no info on the studies. Now we changed that, when the application is being validated the environmental studies and any studies requested are available to the public once it is validated ... apart from So during the screening process the EIA is already public, because there was a public hearing etc. And all documents will be available to the public. So then the process is the same, we consult, amendments etc, the development process. Then the report is reconsolidated and referred to the board for a decision. And as you know it was approved and there was an appeal. Now we are at the stage that the appeal found an issue with regards to the EIA process, so they sent back the application to redo the EIA process.

3. So as a whole do you think the consultative submission is sufficient in Malta, keeping in mind all big projects?

Yes I think it's more than sufficient, because we consult from the start of the project and even from policy point of view. At the moment I think you are following up on the Għerfa development. Which is already been discussed from the objectives, etc. and in fact from the objectives from the first draft it's being amended in proof of public reps. That's the first stage of the policy, then you have another public consultation during the planning process.

4. How do you think we can improve it?

Do you think there could be some improvement?

Improvement is always there, for example, because now we are doing the system, the process is paperless, thus it's all done online. We had an issue on how the document is submitted, we had an issue with pdfs that are readable and others are not, so some were not available, and we were accused of hiding documents. The issue was that they were not reading the documents, but there is, but I believe in public participation, for example we need representations, not just we receive them, but review and discuss them and understand the issues. We are doing that but we need to improve it. We need to meet more the representatives, to understand their concerns better. One of the main issues especially land use, no one understands the land use in Malta, mainly was established in 1993 so that I understand people today, it used to be a field and now there is an application. I understand their rationale of thinking, but one of the main issues, this is now a legal issue, if in 1993, the field had a development permit, is it a right? Nowadays banks will take that field and Cause private sectors say it's a right etc. But I think we need to explain to them.

5. What do you think about using surveys for consultative purposes?

We do survey's not on a specific project, normally on strategic policies to get data, on certain main land use issues, for example, pop growth, quality of life , economic aspect etc. more on a strategic element. To do a project, the planning process and consultancy is there for example we increased even the information, for example on major developments we don't just stick a note nowadays, we do billboards, adverts etc.

6. Do you believe the participatory processes set in place lack effectiveness?

No I don't think it lacks effectiveness because ... and this is from the start of the planning authority, you can, I can mention projects that nobody knows how they started but most of the input of the public they were amended and redesigned because there was input from the public in regards of certain issues. So I think it is, ok, not on all of the projects, you need to see the representations if they are planning issues or other issues, we only consider planning issues. You will have certain issues are on policy interpretation we don't agree but in general the public consultation objectives, is not to have people objecting but we see how we are going to approve the project by making it more environmentally friendly in that urban context.

7. Do you believe the participatory processes set in place exist as a formality?

No, I think nowadays its not a formality... for example a development brief goes to the environmental committee in parliament, which there is another public committee, NGOS and public can participate there too. So you have the public process during the preparation of the brief then you have the public process during the environmental committee in the parliament, so a case in point is the Jerma project. Not everybody is happy with the amendment but the it's the result of the public participation.

8. Do you believe there is transparency in this participatory process?

For example the system and all representatives are public, they will be even considered in the report, in the planning directorate planning report, they are also invited for the public hearing and given time even during the board hearing for any individual, NGO or stakeholder, to present their concerns so in the planning process you have the written submissions taking into consideration during the process of application and even in the preparation of the planning development report and then they are even invited ... and then they are given the change to participate in the public hearing. So I think its transparent, I think nowadays the planning authorities is the one of the most authorities that have a transparent process even participation.

9. Do you think the public is involved enough?

Well in the development planning application the public, we improved that before we just had a side notice with the façade now we do this but also notice the adjacent neighbours by putting a note in their letterboxes. On a major development since there are environmental

studies, a public hearing etc. I don't know if you're going to have an interview with ERA, but for example they have another process which they invite the stakeholders etc.

10. Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between organizations set in place and the Planning Authority? Why do you believe so?

I think we need to improve on that, there is comm and hold meetings with NGOS etc but we need to improve on that.

11. Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between non-governmental organizations and the public? Why do you believe so?

With the public we also do programs on the media to inform the public to inform about changes, new policies and regulations, even with the local councils, to inform them on new regulation etc, so when we do new schemes, eg restawra darek, urban funds, we inform the public, so I think yes in general.

repeating question

I think the NGOs have communications but what I think that the NGOs should not only communicate on the main problem, they should promote more their main objective as an NGO. Because there is a learning curve, they are not their to represent the public, but to improve the quality of life in general. When you say Din l'art Helwa, people don't know what their objectives are etc, so they need to be more open to the general public, as sometimes, we keep the level up here and *****.

12. Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between the Developers Association and the public? Why do you believe so?

I think nowadays its improving but there shoulg be more input. In fact they are starting to initiate from their side, more proposals on building regulations and planning issues. It's a learning curve.

13. Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between the Planning Authority and the public? Why do you believe so?

Done above

14. Do you think that there is enough dialogue between all organizations? Why do you believe so?

To achieve a good end result you need to have that. Nowadays with the govt agencies we are always discussing and because you need to understand if for example TM has the transport

strategy 2025 , from the waste generation, if waste serve is doing the waste management strategy. So we are in contact with all the organisations, for example CNPD we are all accessing accessibility on major developments, with civil projection dept, OHSa regarding coma ... as you understand land use, when you are planning land use it will affect other authorities and vice versa. When an authority is planning a strategic plan for the next 10 years it will affect land use. If construction malta and TM are doing a major development for example a new bypass, obviously, like the bkara bypass, before it was designated for residential development, but because its now a bypass it was converted into commercial, that was an indirect effect of doing a bypass in that area. Its important to see how landuse will affect other agencies and vice versa. Obviously it is imp to have feedback from other stakeholders, the financial institutions etc. because certain measures and regulations even had input from financial institutions for example, the boom of rent, how we can cope with these.

15. If the project is highly sensitive, do you believe that a framework for outlining the process for participation strategies for the lifecycle of the project could be more effective?

The process is already there, its online etc. if we can improve on this? Maybe yes but its already there so anybody can go in and see it all.

ERA – does the environmental studies only *****

16. Do you believe that the Planning Authority represent the interests of the Maltese population in relation to big project plans?

As you are aware, major plans are mainly ... the govt will give the strategic objectives and the planning authority is there to start the process of implementing or preparing the draftst of those plans which will be carried out through public consultation. For example, the local plans took more than 6 years to finalise them, but the general plans (strategic plans) you will have the objectives of the govt at that time which the plan Yes because govt will have its own direct consultations with all stakeholders, for example, when we started the idea of the aviation parts ... the airport at that time it was what it was, but then we had the govt interest in having Lufthansa maintenance depot in malta, medavia The govt decided to enlarget the airport, it was not thought at that time, but it was in the interest of the general public vis a vis employment etc.

17. Do you believe that the Environment Resource Authority represent the interests of the Maltese population in relation to big project plans?

No, as I indicated, land use planning is within the planning authority. But ERA is one of the That's why ERA was separated from the planning process, as previously it was joined with the planning authority as MEPA, now the role of ERA is more distinctive and have their representations when we are doing a planning policy, we consult them , they submit, etc etc, for example at the moment we have the rural policy, which era is giving its feedback independeantly from the planning process.

18. Do you believe that the Non-Governmental Organizations in Malta represent the interests of the Maltese population in relation to big project plans?

I think, every agency is there to represent the general public from different visions. I believe that NGOs are there to represent the general public interests, obviously there are different visions and objectives, that is why it is healthy, as you have an authority with a vision and objective to implement something but you have NGOs which are representing even the general public with a different vision and I believe that is why it is healthy to have other agencies, stakeholders etc, to represent general public.

19. Do you believe local councils represent their local's interests?

Yes I think yes, but the purpose of the local council is there to represent the community.

20. Do you believe that there is a balance for what the Developer (whether it be the government itself or not) wants and the public requests?

Well, I think it depends on the individual, although mentality is changing but there is need for improvement from mentality point of view. I am one of those that we need to start more going for quality than numbers. That's a culture change from a developer point of view, and it depends on the individual, because we have developers that are going for good quality projects with environment in their context, even going for green operations, but it depends on individuals. But you can't get more developers, but need to work more on the mentality. The important thing is that when you're designing something don't design your site, consider the whole urban context, because it's useless having a five star development and the surrounding environment is two star. So you need to get the people with you and understand and see what the local council needs, the requirements etc. if need be let's go for more green, for more efficient buildings, some developers understand these issues, others that find it a difficult mentality to change. Once they see others, they will start changing and adapting too.

21. Do you believe there is a democratic deficit within the structures placed in motion?

No I don't think there is as I'm telling you the planning process is open for public consultation with all entities and stakeholders, they are given the chance to express their opinions and contribute to decisions, then they even have the right to appeal. Well even nowadays, that is another thing that NGOs and the planning authority helps them out in the fees of the appeal, so, they can appeal, they can go to court, etc. I understand that some of the public since they are in public hearing, they pretend that what they are saying needs to be decided. But I think public participation is there.

22. How would you give people more of a say? How do you believe we can make the process more inclusive?

We need to meet more the reps, and NGO's not just receiving their input but also meet in person.

There have been petitions signed in Malta to not build or develop. Are these taken into consideration when building?

Well mainly the petition when it's a new development for example AUM Zonqor point issue, I think it was effective. The most difficult thing is when you have a plan , a piece of land that was designated for develop in 1993, and now you have a petition to remove it or make it a green area. That would be difficult.

23. How many people would have to sign to stop something from being developed?

There is no number, in planning, even if there is one person objecting, if he has a consolidated issue which makes planning sense, it would be taken as if it was done by 40 000 people, in planning its not the numbers but the issue.

24. Would you consider a public forum with representatives of all organizations as being something feasible? Please explain.

I think public forum was already carried out, even when there was the idea of splitting ERA and environment, there was a public forum, the MTA was there ... no I believe that its healthy, and I believe in public forum.

There should be a subject not just a public forum. It can be on simple issues too, it can be on a solar panel, we focus on these big developments, but I think that one of the main planning issues is how we are going to improve the quality of life, and this can be done with simple things, because major develop, you have a consolidtated develop and you can control and manage that , this is something that people cant understand, in the process there are a lot of plans asked for. If this major development is split into plots and sold as plots we don't have any control of it. So we need to start discussing how.... For example, refuse collection on a major development is managed and controlled, on a piece meal development we have problems, for example, sliema front , we have blocks of 10 floors every plot is 10 units, 10 garbage bags a day on the pavement is a problem, we started, we introduced the garbage room, etc but if you don't have the contractor that is going to take of the area..... im just saying simple things, but who is going to manage it? The local council or the occupiers? So these forums may be on major developments and small issues too.

25. Would you consider a Community Based Organization framework (like Inħobbu l-Gżira) which represents the town) for all projects? Please explain.

It might be one of the issues, we can.

26. Would you consider a referendum on such large-scale projects? Please explain.

No I don't think so, because the legal framework of the planning process and public participation, I think is there so that you have all public participation so I don't think there is a need for a referendum for major developments.

27. Which of the following would you prefer to be in our planning system; Referendum, Public Forum, Community Based Organizations, a multi-model or leave as is? Why?

I think that public forum is already being done, so we should go for that. In fact even when we started, we tried even that on major developments we do a public information exercise, before the application is submitted, and we did it on the metropolis, and it will be organised by an indep person, the planning authority is there as an observer and not a participator , this is the applicant... like he is presenting the intention of the project before going for the planning process. So we did on Metropolis, villa prezjozi and hondoq ir rummien. Metropolis, if im not mistaken only 30 persons participated, in st pauls bay 7 persons and hondoq it was packed. So the issue was that it depends on which stakeholders are there, We triend it, im not against it because I believe that the more information that the public have the planning process would be much easier. Not because they object but because u will have all the picture. The planning process is there, we already have the public processes , it will be organised by the developer checked by an independent person, checked by the environmental coordinators before they start the studies etc. then we did even a suggestion box, if people want to anonymously contribute they may do it. Ok nowadays, we can do it differently, cause we have the online systems etc. But I believe the people need to participate, because unfortunately you always have the same people showing up, however, I believe that these people are representing the general public interest.

28. Do you believe the public would be interested in participating with such queries?

Answered before

29. What would be your worries considering such an involved public participatory approach?

I don't worry about it, ansi I believe that its healthy. What I don't like is that sometimes everyone has their own agenda and they act personally, raising issues which are not related to planning etc etc. but that is something that happens everywhere, so then it depends on us to consolidate the real planning issues.

30. One of the issues that comes up is that people are unaware of all the pros and cons of such projects. Do you consider that an information campaign could help the uninformed element?

In the planning process and in the EIA s the pros and con s and instigation measures are there, maybe, through explaining them more clearly so that everyone may understand could be an option, however they are already there. The common people may not realise what technical words mean.

31. Do you believe that if policies on such matters were in place, they would be more effective?

Mainly, the planning act and regulations are already there, so what we need to improve it or make it more clear.

32. Why do you think that the European Landscape Convention hasn't been ratified in Malta?

ERA is the competitive authority on this directive.

33. Do you believe the media's depiction of projects is truthful in their assessment?

well as im telling you, we have.... It depends, sometimes you have genuine representation in the media, and sometimes you have media with agendas, in fact I always insist from both our side as a planning authority, we do our replies to make things clear and even, we think that lacks, the developers don't defend their projects, which reflects badly, which I believe in a project and I believe in what im doing is, as a developer, is right defend it, and explain to the people, and if need be gather the people and have meetings etc. I understand the media, the media is there and you have to respect it and if the media is saying something, just write and explain and clear things out, the media is there.... And sometimes we have had media which said that some of our projects are good. Sometimes we have this perception that the media is just negative but this is not true, because when we had good projects we had good media submissions.

34. Do you believe that the Planning Authority is influenced by the government?

No, the planning authority, is a govt authority, so with regards to policies, the direction of policies are given by govt. we just study and put the policy into place. With regards development and planning applications no I do not think that the govt has an input.

35. Do you believe that the participatory processes set in place are used to control citizen initiatives?

No I think the process is there, the public is involved from the beginning of the planning process, development applications and he is invited to be presented during the board decision. So, No, I think the public concerns will be taken into consideration and there were certain developments where recommended for approval but when the board heard the public they refused it. Ok, those who object and the project is approved, they will say .. will not like it... but I think on the whole it is considered part of the planning process.

36. Why do you think there was so much controversy surrounding the 'Manoel Island Project'?

Well, im trying to understand that but, obviously, MIP was approved in the late 90s and the development floor space was part of that outline, and the design that it was, I don't think that they really studied what was approved in principal, so, actually now as I said years passed, everybody now, wants MI as a park, the applicant reduced the floor space, and that was approved via a contractual agreement at that time, and those floor spaces and land uses were part of the contractual agreement. Ok there is the issue of the height, but this can be discussed and improved, there is the issue of the local boat community on the *** which is an issue, then there is the issue of the commercial and residential because of the path, that's a discussion which is being taken in the appeal, but the main issue of the objection, I cant understand as the floorspace has been reduced, the open spaces have been larger than approved, the heritage buildings are being restored and during the site investigation, they are increasing the area to be scheduled, so actually I wasn't involved directly with the representatives,... public access will be there. So we will see, as we re started the process.

37. Do you believe 'Inħobbu l-Gżira' (a Community Based Organization) managed to get their message across?

I was not that involved in this particular application, more involved in the outline. Well I think they did but what they really or their objective, because ok, there were even who said that Manoel Island should be taken by govt and done into a park. Everything is possible but there are implications on that.

38. Do you think the public was appeased with the creation of The Manoel Island Foundation?

The main objective of the foundation was so that they represent the local community interest or the general public interest, so as an objective of that foundation I think its positive, now how it is foreseen, it might be not, because it ended up a group of NGOs which are not seeing the project as positive and the foundation which ... but I think the objective of the foundation is positive. They improved the master plan since the day it was founded because if you see, the masterplan originally submitted and the masterplan after the foundation was there and discussed, the public access and spaces were improved. So there was positive input, so that's why I'm telling you, but these.... You cant have all stakeholders agreeing, which I understand.

The PA is there to see everyone's concerns and try to find a compromise between all. The compromise doesn't mean that everyone is happy, you can't have everyone happy in planning, because planning in itself is ... 'jizvjantaga lil xi hadd u jizvjantagja lil haddiehor' ... planning is a difficult and complex procedure.

39. Different participatory processes were undertaken in pursuit of 'The Manoel Island Project'. Which do you believe was the most effective?

As I already mentioned there is the legal framework, ERA, they have their legal framework, which is based on the EU directive, with regards to environmental studies. And as I explained EIAs there is the legal framework, on how it has to be carried out, the public participation, which is a separate process from the planning process. Then the planning process has its own legal framework, on public participation and obviously the foundation can do public participation with its own.... The local council can do its own public participation, so I think Manoel Island for the process there was more than enough. I think all processes, the process of public participation for example ERA, their objective is that the environmental studies will have all public participation in it, WHY? Because EIA will study the cultural heritage, air quality, visual, impact on geology, archeology, etc. you have the specialised studies which are being dealt. Then you have the statement on seabase, because of protected species etc. so the public participation on studies were very important. Apart from those studies, ... were taken in the planning process from the validation days, so then you had another new participation, which some of them you had already participating in the environmental studies. Others were new in the planning process, which were carried out, over and above that the local council has a say in the board decision nowadays. So the Local council is now a board member when the application is discussed, so the Local Council has a direct input in the board discussion and decision, so the planning process, consolidates everything. Although the planning foundation did public hearings etc, obviously they put all the public participatory concerns at the board decision.

40. What level of participation do/did you have during the 'Manoel Island Project'?

Personally I was not involved in this particular application, I was involved in the application of 1995. But as a planning directorate, obviously all representors, if you go into the report, you will see there representatives listed, these reps were invited at the public participation at the board hearing, and those who were interested to publicly say their reps in the board meeting were given their time, cause some of them had NGOs rep them. For example, tas sajjeda, there was one person from a cooperative talking, but all NGO's.... there were also political parties at the hearing, so I think during the process of the planning application there were all levels of public participation.

Interview 6

To whom it may concern,

I am a master's degree student and am currently conducting a study on the participation processes when big infrastructural projects in Malta are planned and executed. It seeks to identify if there is a democratic deficit within the system and if so how to amend it. To this end the study will evaluate the level of effective participation of different stakeholders and on what is currently being done and what potential participatory processes could be used in future.

I am looking forward to hearing your thoughts and would like to thank you in advance for your participation in this study. If possible, please do not provide one-word answers.

Naomi Galea B.Comms(Melit.)

Email Interview

1. What is your role within the organization you represent?

2. What do you think of the consultative process that we have in place?
 - a. As a regulatory authority, ERA is responsible to draft regulations, policies or plans in line with the provisions of the Environment Protection Act. During the drafting process, ERA strives to reach most relevant stakeholders and the general public to ensure that the public is given the opportunity to submit its opinion and recommendations. As an external consultee listed in the Development Planning Act, ERA is also consulted on all planning applications. Large infrastructural projects are also generally subjected to environmental assessment procedures such as Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs).

3. How do you think we can improve it?

4. What do you think about using surveys for consultative purposes?
 - a. ERA prepares citizen surveys to gauge public perceptions and opinions on environmental matters. These are used to define public preference and plan accordingly.

5. Do you believe the participatory processes set in place lack effectiveness?

6. Do you believe the participatory processes set in place exist as a formality?

7. Do you believe there is transparency in this participatory process?

8. Do you think the public is involved enough?
9. Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between organizations set in place and the Planning Authority? Why do you believe so?
10. Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between non-governmental organizations and the public? Why do you believe so?
11. Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between the Developers Association and the public? Why do you believe so?
12. Do you believe that there is enough dialogue between the Planning Authority and the public? Why do you believe so?
13. Do you think that there is enough dialogue between all organizations? Why do you believe so?
14. If the project is highly sensitive, do you believe that a framework for outlining the process for participation strategies for the lifecycle of the project could be more effective?
15. Do you believe that the Planning Authority represent the interests of the Maltese population in relation to big project plans?
16. Do you believe that the Environment Resource Authority represent the interests of the Maltese population in relation to big project plans?
17. Do you believe that the Non-Governmental Organizations in Malta represent the interests of the Maltese population in relation to big project plans?
18. Do you believe local councils represent their local's interests?
19. Do you believe that there is a balance for what the Developer (whether it be the government itself or not) wants and the public requests?
20. Do you believe there is a democratic deficit within the structures placed in motion?

21. How would you give people more of a say? How do you believe we can make the process more inclusive?
22. There have been petitions signed in Malta to not build or develop. Are these taken into consideration when building?
 - a. All comments received during public consultations as part of an EIA process are taken into consideration by ERA accordingly and referred to in ERA's Assessment and Recommendations. Any representations by the public on the development applications are made to the Planning Authority and therefore fall under the Planning Authority's remit.
23. How many people would have to sign to stop something from being developed?
24. Would you consider a public forum with representatives of all organizations as being something feasible? Please explain.
 - a. This suggestion may not be practical considering the large amount of organisations in Malta. Instead, already existing frameworks, such a MCESD, could serve as catalyst in this regard.
25. Would you consider a Community Based Organization framework (like Inħobbu l-Gżira) which represents the town) for all projects? Please explain.
26. Would you consider a referendum on such large-scale projects? Please explain.
27. Which of the following would you prefer to be in our planning system; Referendum, Public Forum, Community Based Organizations, a multi-model or leave as is? Why?
28. Do you believe the public would be interested in participating with such queries?
29. What would be your worries considering such an involved public participatory approach?
30. One of the issues that comes up is that people are unaware of all the pros and cons of such projects. Do you consider that an information campaign could help the uninformed element?
 - a. A factual information campaign is considered as a positive step to inform and involve the public in a consultation process.
31. Do you believe that if policies on such matters were in place, they would be more effective?

32. Why do you think that the European Landscape Convention hasn't been ratified in Malta?
33. Currently, Malta is reviewing the implications and benefits of it ratifying the Landscape Convention (formerly known as the European Landscape Convention), in order to ensure that any decision made is based on sound judgement. In this regard, kindly note that ratification of International Conventions is complex, which requires time and resources. The ratification process makes sure to identify and highlight overlaps with other Conventions, in order not to duplicate work and obligations, which would otherwise result in added administrative and financial burdens.
34. Do you believe the media's depiction of projects is truthful in their assessment?
35. Do you believe that the Planning Authority is influenced by the government?
36. Do you believe that the participatory processes set in place are used to control citizen initiatives?
37. Why do you think there was so much controversy surrounding the 'Manoel Island Project'?
38. Do you believe 'Inħobbu l-Gżira' (a Community Based Organization) managed to get their message across?
39. Do you think the public was appeased with the creation of The Manoel Island Foundation?
40. Different participatory processes were undertaken in pursuit of 'The Manoel Island Project'. Which do you believe was the most effective?
41. What level of participation do/did you have during the 'Manoel Island Project'?
 - a. This project (PA/09407/17) has been subject to an EIA, for which all relevant information can be found on the following page: <https://era.org.mt/era-project/pa09407-17/>. As per normal procedure under the EIA Regulations (S.L. 549.46) the public has been consulted for comments and feedback at various stages of the EIA process, being scoping for terms of reference and review of the EIA report. Furthermore, a public hearing was held where the public could comment and enquire about the EIA report, the project and its impacts.