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Identifying landscape quality objectives for Gozo

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Identifying Landscape Quality Objectives for Gozo

A dissertation presented
in part fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in Sustainable Environmental
Resource Management

by

Stephanie Farrugia

October 2010

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ABSTRACT

The study of landscape quality has not been researched to a significant degree in Malta to date. This qualitative study explores different viewpoints in relation to perceptions of landscape quality, at present and in the future, on the island of Gozo, based on provisions of the European Landscape Convention. The latter, to which Malta is a signatory state, calls for the identification of landscape quality objectives, which should reflect public aspirations. Primary data collection methods, comprising community focus groups and key informant semi-structured interviews were used, together with an extensive document analysis, to understand a range of perceptions of present landscapes in Gozo, and to explore ways in which different stakeholders would like to see landscapes evolve in the future. Landscape quality targets were identified across three time-scales, namely 2, 10 and 30 years from the present.

The study found that many of the recent changes in landscape are closely tied to changes in the built environment. Results also demonstrated that landscapes play a key role in shaping people's identity. Several proposals for ways to avoid ecological and cultural degradation in Gozo and to ensure that landscapes provide for the health and well being of future generations were put forward by participants. Eight key landscape quality objectives were identified addressing: (i) village cores, (ii) traditional elements, (iii), economy, (iv) functionality (v) ecology (vi) greenery (vii) resources and (viii) tourism. The next step would be the integration of landscape considerations into regional policies so as to broaden the concept of land use planning. This will enhance the role of aesthetics and culture so as to achieve the status of an eco-island and improve the quality of life for its inhabitants.

KEY WORDS: GOZO; LANDSCAPE QUALITY OBJECTIVES; EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION; PUBLIC PARTICIPATION; SCENARIOS.

DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the written material of this dissertation presented to the University of Malta and James Madison University is the product of my own work, or fully and specifically acknowledged in accordance with the standards of referencing practices wherever adapted from other sources in fulfilment for the Degree of Master of Science in Sustainable Environmental Resource Management.

Stephanie Farrugia

October 2010

This dissertation is dedicated
To my loving parents Georgia and Ronnie
For all their love, support and understanding through
My many years of education.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ELC – European Landscape Convention
EH – English Heritage
GDP – Gross Domestic Product
GIS – Geographic Information Systems
ICOMOS – International council on monuments & sites UK
LQO – Landscape Quality Objectives
MEPA – Malta Environment and Planning Authority
NCSD – National Commission for Sustainable Development
NGO – Non-governmental Organization
NIMBY – Not in my backyard
ODZ – Outside Development Zone
OECD – Organization for economic co-operation and development
PEBLDS - Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy
RCO – Rural Conservation Areas
RDP – Rural Development Plan
SAC – Special Areas of Conservation
SOER – State of the Environment Report
SOSG – Strategic Open Space Gaps
SP – Structure Plan
SPA – Special Protected Areas
SWOT – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TP – Topic Paper
UCA – Urban Conservation Areas
UNECE – United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNEP – United Nations Environment Programme
WHS – World Heritage Site
UNESCO – United Nations Economic and Social Council

1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Understanding and Explaining Landscape

The descriptions for landscape are endless as are its interpretations. Descriptions have been articulated by many scholars from different disciplines including geographers, landscape architects, planners, anthropologists as well as psychologists and art historians. For many scholars such as Porteous (1990), landscape is mainly seen as a visual construct – eye of the beholder. Laurie (1975) attributes the charm of a landscape as mainly an outcome from two related sources: the object (objectivist) and the observer (subjectivist). In the former paradigm, landscape quality is an intrinsic physical attribute (Lothian, 1999). Macpherson (2006) draws out the problems that can arise if the material component of the landscape is disregarded where any type of connection with the landscape is removed. On the other hand, Lonzy (2006) states that definitions should not rest solely on the material components of landscape but should be founded on people's perceptions and experience on the environment when 'constructing' landscape. This is so because our relationship with the landscape is alive and dynamic as is the landscape itself as its face and significance change with time (Macpherson, 2006). Landscape, unlike the physical environment is interpreted and subjective as it is perceived or conditioned by the characteristics of the observer. Therefore each person sees a different landscape at the same place and their evaluation and appreciation of the physical attributes of the landscape will also vary (Antrop, 2000). These attributes are processed through the filters of memory, association and interpretation created psychologically and emotionally (Fairclough, 2002). It is this last assumption which is calling for action that is targeted at understanding the nature of landscapes and their connotations. Hence, given that landscape quality is a subjective quality, its assessment should be defined by community involvement reflecting their preferences (Lothian, 2000).

1.1.1 What is landscape?

Landscape encompasses the four pillars of sustainable development (social, economic, environmental and cultural) but ‘the environment’ component dominates in the most popular use of the term (Nurse 2006). However this notion of the natural value is considered by many authors as being too narrow as the approach to landscape is multi-dimensional touching upon many values and beliefs (Lonzy, 2006). In the past, landscape had a utilitarian value that benefited mankind in many ways as a source of nourishment, shelter and providing resources. The visual appearance of our surroundings was considered secondary to its function and so would have modifications to the landscape unless they affected its main services (Natural England, 2009). Buijs *et al.*, (2003) identified three different historical images of nature and landscape:

1. The Arcadian image,
2. The Wilderness image,
3. The Functional image

The Arcadian image mostly relates to the cultural aspect of landscape (Buijs *et al.*, 2003). This is the type of Romantic image that inspired several Dutch ‘landschap’ painters of the early 17th century to paint landscapes that mainly capture the harmony between nature and man (Johnston *et al.*, 2000). Likewise, the Wilderness image features nature in its wild state based on eco-centric values whereas anthropogenic values are inexistent. On the other hand, the Functional image concerns “anthropogenic values and intensive management of nature” (Buijs *et al.*, 2003).

The notion of beauty and aesthetics dominates the field of landscape assessment (Antrop, 2006). According to Bell (1999) landscape is the visual field as exercised by the senses. Beauty confers aesthetic pleasure, i.e. pleasure to the senses which Lowenthal (1997) calls ‘Materiality’. Landscape is also viewed as a permanent immovable experience in the biosphere (‘Stability’) which is the essential quality that makes it feel safe and dependable (Lowenthal, 1997). Landscapes are no longer regarded solely as individual spatial units but have assumed different meanings as ‘documents’ which record every single element and

artifact that has to do with humanity and land use and in this sense they form a 'huge archive' (Scazzosi, 2004). The same idea is expressed in a similar way by Lowenthal but he regards landscapes as 'Containers.' Together, the 'materiality', 'stability' and 'containers' expressed by Lowenthal are justifications for considering any landscape as patrimony.

Not only the term but also the actual physical fabric itself has been morphed substantially over time. Many authors such as Antrop (2003, 2005a&b), Buijis *et al.*, (2006), Pedroli *et al.*, (2007), Fairclough and Moller (2008) note that landscapes in Europe are being faced with a 'crisis' that is making them more homogenized rather than the diverse landscapes that occur naturally. The underlining reason is mainly change resulting from urbanization, intensive agriculture and the social fabric at large. Human needs and attitudes influence and shape the landscape (Tinney & Emanuel, 2008). This is shown in Fig. 1 which illustrates the application of the idea that "landscape reflects human needs". This is the cultural landscape as explained by Doukellis and Mendoni (2008) which is predominantly influenced by complex human actions that bear evidence to the historic relationship of civilization and its natural environment (palimpsest). Being human constructs, architecture and monuments are acknowledged by people as landscape elements testifying their cultural heritage. These structures are also a representation of human ideals such as religious beliefs, economic wealth and social values. Therefore historic elements should not be separated from their present context (Ruiz del Arbol & Orejas, 2008). This is one of the ultimate reasons why Malta should protect its landscapes. Malta's landscapes form an integral part of the natural and rich cultural heritage of the country which is precious and fragile. In addition, the adoption of globalized attitudes and rapid modernization are threatening the long-term survival of valuable elements of the past and no landscape can be recreated.

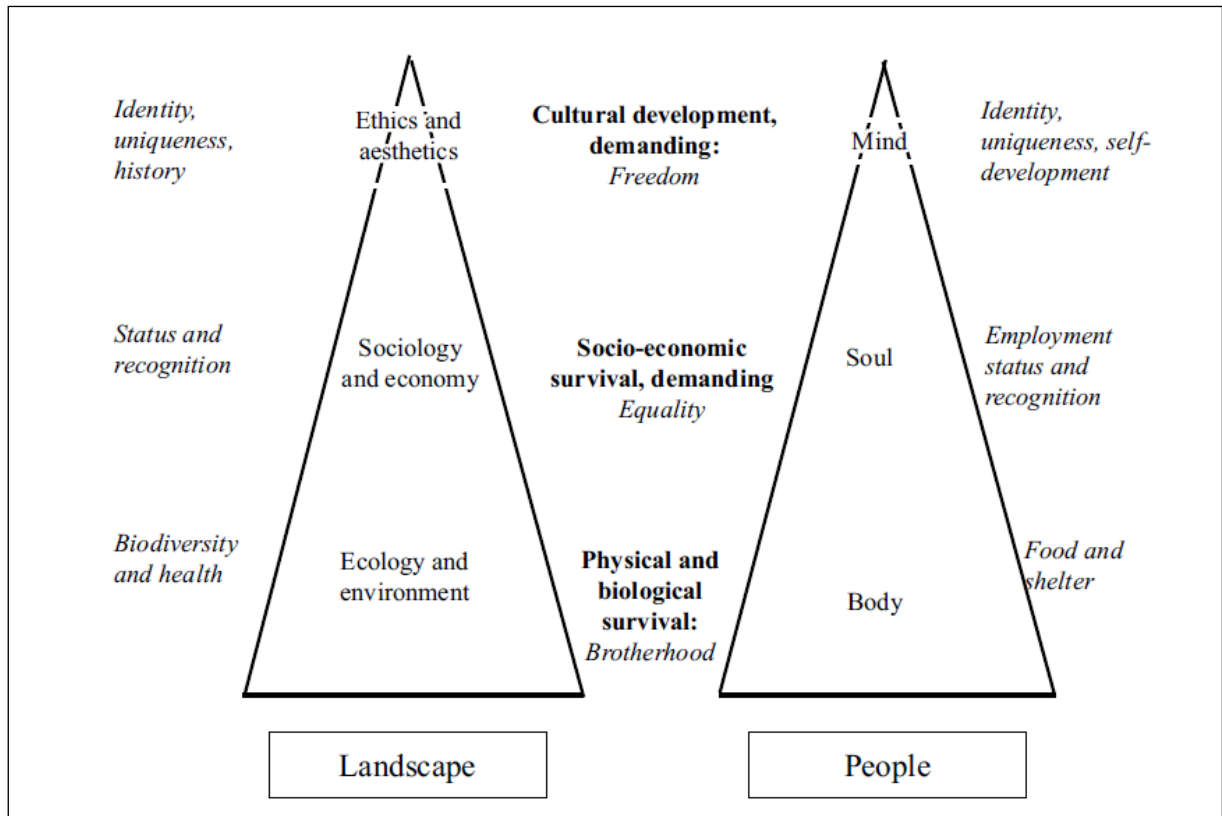


Figure 1: Links between the needs of landscape and people.
 Source: Van Mansvelt, 2001

1.1.2 Why should “Landscape” be protected?

A society can largely benefit from a healthy landscape. This however occurs only if development is sustainable. Evidence strongly suggests that health and stability of a community can be disrupted by emerging aspects and the creation of an artificial environment mainly as a result of urbanisation (Beriatos, 2008). Hence, nature in itself should not be considered a luxury as it provides a multitude of services. Hajkowicz *et al.*, (2003) underlines a list of generic values including abundant water, clean water, income, biodiversity, cultural values (aesthetic, recreational and spiritual) and resilience. These form part of a deeper set of value categories which allow for better social living.

Landscape itself is a resource and it can be enjoyed also from the economic side by creating direct and indirect employment especially in tourism related and green economic activities

(Nijnik *et al.*, 2008). Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries especially in small islands states like Malta which are heavily dependent upon it for their GDP (Blue Plan, 2002). Enhancing nature can provide new forms of 'alternative' tourism such as eco-tourism, agro-tourism, and cultural tourism which are conditioned by good landscape quality. It is thus considered as a high rentable product and several archaeological icons are used as prominent showcases in cultural tourism programmes, publicity and other areas (Ruiz del Arbol & Orejas, 2008). This indirectly contributes to the formation of cultures, the 'local character' which gives a unique sense of place and identity (*genius loci*) to a nation worth preserving (Antrop, 2000). Landscape has a major role in relieving the tensions of life contributing to the well being of the individual by inspiring relaxation (Groenewegen *et al.*, 2006). Recreational activities contribute to first-hand experience of nature. This personal connection builds a deeper knowledge and valorisation of the social relations that exist with cultural objects and heritage values handed down from generations past. Moreover it instils the need to conserve by creating obligations and responsibilities towards landscape change (Pedroli *et al.*, 2007). As it is a common good, the protection, management and planning of landscape ensure that our landscapes remain sustainable and that cultural heritage is safeguarded (Fig.2).

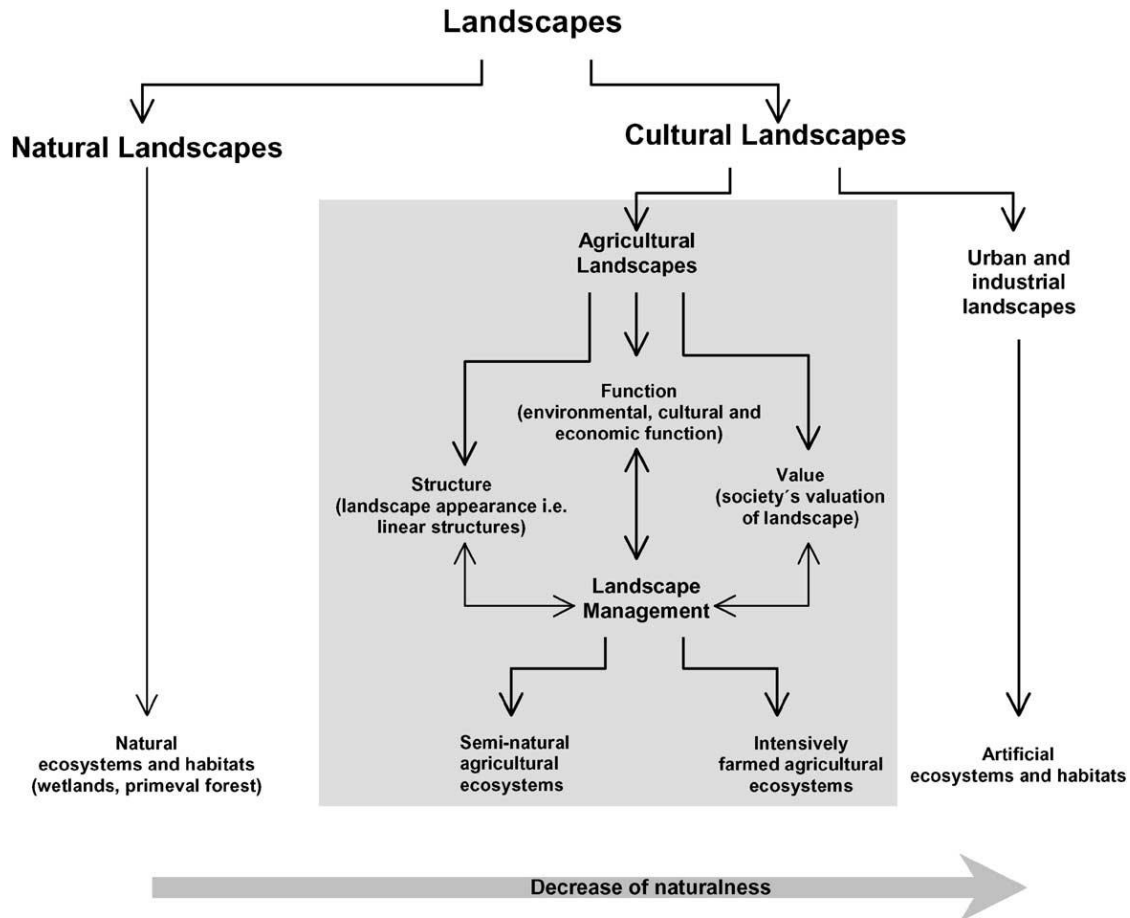


Figure 2: Natural and cultural landscapes in agricultural context (modified according to OECD and Piorr cited in OECD, 2001).

Source: Piorr 2003

1.2 Overview of Gozo's Landscapes

Gozo is considered as possessing high quality landscape character because it remains largely undisturbed by development (SOER, 2005). It can boast of unique landscapes and architectural and archaeological monuments several of which have been designated World Heritage Sites or Natura 2000 sites. It is inherently distinct from mainland Malta on different levels but its major asset is its rural qualities. Gozo's topographical features not only are different from those in Malta but from any other island in the world. Most of these topographical features are mainly related to hilly landforms which host several villages on the top and valleys meandering the detached countryside. These villages are concentrated

around the hub of village life which is the main church or village square ('pjazza') and are far less densely populated than Malta. The Mediterranean Sea which is visible from many parts of the island and is within a few kilometres reach, complements this description of the scenic beauty of Gozo (Bain & Wilson, 2010). This gives Gozo a competitive edge over Malta in terms of tranquility and ambience.

Although some of Gozo's countryside referents remain largely untouched, the Maltese Islands are considered as having a cultural landscape because there isn't a place which hasn't experienced human influence and modifications by human activities over the years (Saliba, 2010). Nonetheless, the habitats and biota of the island are rich and most of which are rare, specialised and endemic (Evelpidou *et al.*, 2010). However there is a general lack of knowledge and awareness about the Maltese natural environment by the public albeit positively diffused among researchers (Boissevain, 2006a). Considering the educational system, up to a few years ago, examination syllabi which were set by foreign examination boards, tackled foreign biota and habitats rather than local ones with the result that generations of students are more familiar with the former over the latter (Pace, 1999). This led to the popular misconception that owing to its small size, Malta is deficient in biodiversity. This attitude hampered biodiversity conservation efforts to be conducted effectively in Malta resulting in threatened wildlife habitats. Most of the habitats found in the Maltese islands are small and fragmented.

Many large-scale urban and tourism development projects are stationed in coastal landscapes which are the asset that attracts tourists and investment. These development pressures are making coastal areas increasingly vulnerable. In fact, Ian Masser (1969) who established 'A plan for Gozo' attributes most of Gozo's pressing problems to the expansion of tourism which has created huge demands on land-use and resources available. The sacrifices of these areas will eventually lead tourism to stagnation or unprofitability as the rural charm for which Gozo is renowned will be lost forever (Saliba, 2010). Coastal locations are an important target for development as these are most sought after by tourists. However, such areas are also important from the cultural aspect as they harbor a number of fortifications and military buildings found around the coast. These are heritage assets that

bear evidence to the rich history of the Maltese Islands (MEPA, 2002). Thus, there needs to be more co-ordination in coastal management to protect the fragile ecosystems from tourism and visitor pressure. A scenic evaluation study done by Ergin *et al.*, in 2008, established coastal scenic assessments of coastal sites in Gozo and their scenic evaluation. They came up with a Coastal Scenic Evaluation Index identified by analyzing the strength and weaknesses of sites. This produced five different classes similar to those already found in the Structure Plan for the Maltese Islands which ranges from class one being the most attractive natural sites with high landscape values to class five which are the least attractive urban sites with intensive development. Most of the coastal areas cited by Ergin *et al.*, (2008) range from class one to three with class one having San Blas Bay in Nadur still in relatively pristine conditions. On the other hand, Marsalforn and Xlendi are classified as class 5 as these coastal areas are heavily developed having been totally converted to tourist resorts.

1.3 Identifying Landscape Quality Objectives

1.3.1 Public participation

The purpose for enhancing public participation is twofold. Primarily public participation is a democratic process which empowers the individual and the group in getting involved in problem solving. It thus lessens social exclusion and alienation (NCSD, 2006). The second factor is the contribution in decision making. Decisions which are taken through participatory and consultative processes can increase government transparency because they enhance the capacity and knowledge base of the citizens. Hence an all-embracing social dialogue will lead to better policy implementation (Priscoli, 2003). The importance of rights of people to take part in issues that are related to planning and management of change are also acknowledged in the Brundtland Report (WED 1987). Additionally, the responsibility that humanity has towards the environment to ensure its protection for present and future generations is the principle of the Stockholm Declaration adopted in 1972 by the United Nations Conference on the Environment. Other declarations that followed, such as the World Conservation Strategy (1980) and the Rio Declaration on

Environment and Development (1992) recognize that people have to cooperate in environmental issues. Participation especially in landscape management is necessary because it “concerns us more directly” whereas nature conservation is not personally connecting to the people (Pedroli & Diek Van Mansvelt, 2006). This concept to formulate a dialogue between locals and planning experts started in the 1960s when social and environmental problems started to emerge (Jamison 2003).

Public consultation with all stakeholders in Malta has been slowly gaining ground but progress has been achieved in research concerning policy development and implementation of programmes (Fig.3). The Aarhus Convention, to which Malta is a signatory, emphasizes the importance of public participation and access to information. This has also triggered the enactment of the Freedom of Access to Information on the Environment Regulations, 2005 L.N. 116 of 2005 which came into force on 17th May 2005. The enactment of the Development Planning and Environmental Protection Act in 1992 and their supportive legislation signaled a positive advancement in public participation in decision and policy making. These Acts established the first formal procedures for public consultation in Malta to merge with various procedures such as Environmental Impact Assessments (NCSD, 2006). There is an urgent need to adopt a different approach to environmental management rather than the traditional, unidirectional style which has been customary over the past years (Role', 2007). This might not be overly restrictive as our knowledge of how landscapes operate, the underlying mechanisms that drive landscape change, and public outlook toward this change, has improved along the years. This places Malta in a stronger position to respond to landscape evolution more holistically by effectively defining future landscapes that will support both society and the environment.

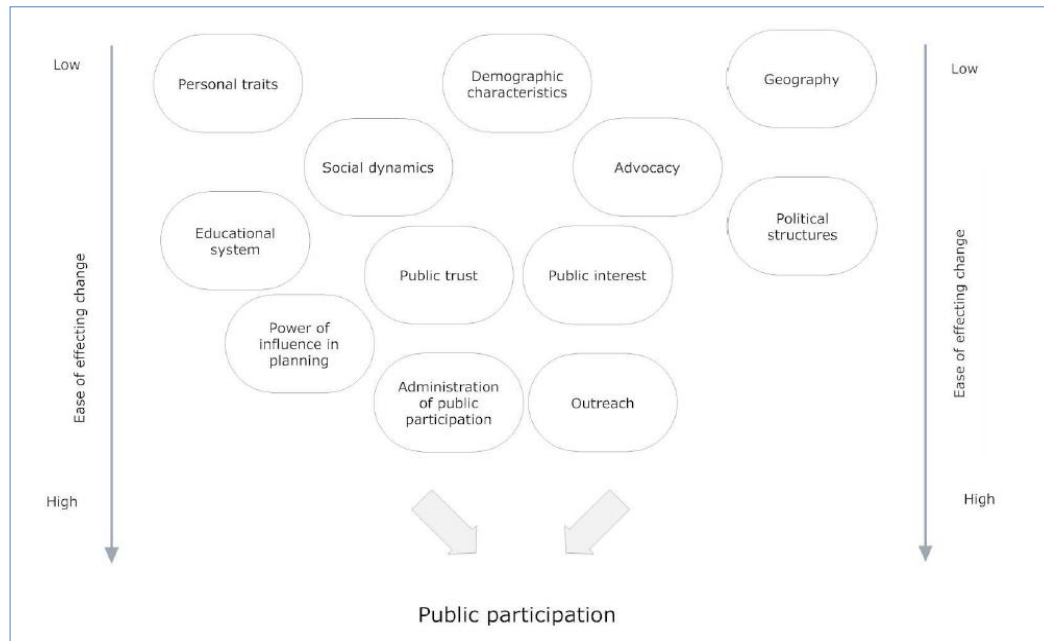


Figure 3: Key Factors influencing public participation in Malta. Factors listed at the top of the diagram are those which are not easily influenced by the planning system, whilst change in factors listed at the bottom can be effected with more ease in comparison.

Source: Conrad (2010a)

1.3.2 The European Landscape Convention on Public Participation

The European Landscape Convention urges member states of the Council of Europe to plan manage and protect their landscapes in a holistic and integrated way. This should be done through awareness raising and understanding of landscape amongst the public. The public should also be engaged in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes that impinge on their landscapes, their environment and well-being (Worthington, 2010). Even though saving one area is a positive contribution, this simply drives development into another area and unlike monuments and sites which are fixed and inert in space and time, “landscape has no edges or boundaries” (Fairclough 2006 pg. 61). The ELC requires a present day perspective of landscape that is a step from culture-history rooted in economics and politics and should be moving towards socializing landscape. The idea of change is embedded in the ELC’s definition of landscape by the words ‘action’ and ‘interaction’ (Fairclough, 2006b).

The ELC closely follows and expands upon the definition in the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information and Public Participation in Decision Making 1998. The importance of public and responsible legislators in the ambit of landscape protection, management and planning play a fundamental role in the successful implementation of the ELC and landscape policies at large. It regards public participation as a means for empowering society by assuming responsibility in managing and planning its landscape (Council of Europe, 2000). The convention insists that this process has to emanate from landscape characterization which is the basis of decision making. In Fairclough's (2006 after EH 2005) view, 'characterization is a shorthand for how to cope with large-scale change' (p. 61). Recognizing our own landscape with their old and new attributes and establishing consensus in an interdisciplinary way will facilitate this process (Council of Europe 2008). By involving citizens in landscape issues at an early stage, public accountability and sustainable governance is ensured as people develop more interest and awareness in something when they can give a direct contribution (UNESCO 2007). Jones (2007) aligns his study with the ELC which considers all landscapes even ordinary suburban areas and hence every single individual has to be considered as their attachment with the material environs can be significant in their life. In order for this to be successful, the people have to be aware of their rights which give them possibility to discuss different values and conflicts of interests rather than depend on political incumbency (Taylor, 1986).

Jones (2007) established 5 main arguments to justify public participation:

1. *Democratization* – consolidating human rights and liberties in expressing their views
2. *Legitimacy* – giving a say to civilians in decisions which affect them directly and indirectly increases credibility and ensures transparency
3. *Information Exchange* – local knowledge can contribute to the identification of priorities and lead to good practice
4. *Tackling of Conflicts* – engaging different stakeholders during different steps of the planning and decision making process should lead to more collaborative decision making

5. *Heterogeneity and Social Justice* – accepting a diversity of opinion and views without discriminating against race or class implies social justice.

Nevertheless, equity concerns relating to who attends the meetings, important viewpoints which are overlooked, who speaks and is heard, gender, ethnicity and exclusion of particular viewpoints can be quite challenging (Perkins 2005). Antrop (2007) conclusively states that competence is questionable when you have more than one player involved in the policy making process. In Antrop's view, public authorities possess spatial competences which deviate or stop any actions undertaken. On the other hand, landowners have territorial competence which allows them to physically alter the landscape. Hence, Ermischer (2003) suggests that the participation of scientific experts in resource and environmental management and policy implementation is optimized through productive communication and good governance. Success can only be achieved through simplicity which facilitates mutual and widespread understanding and effective communication from the beginning to the end of the process.

1.3.3 Landscape Quality Objectives for Gozo

The European Landscape Convention requires parties to shape Landscape quality objectives (Article 1 and Article 6, 2000) after public consultation and participation (this is our main interest in this case) for the improvement of the landscape (Council of Europe, 2003a). The purpose of setting up landscape quality objectives (LQO) is to enhance the characteristic features of the landscapes by moving from mobilizing knowledge to action (Suominen, 2007). These objectives therefore reflect the 'aspirations' of the general public for the improvement of the landscape which would reflect positively on their quality of lives presently and in the future. The ELC commits signatory states to set realistic quality objectives by establishing a dialogue with the public, local and regional authorities and other interested parties in matters concerning landscape such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Council of Europe, 2000). This implies broad consultation with all interested individuals organizations and administrative bodies at various levels with an

overall improved awareness (Fairclough, 2002). This will affirm the recognition of the LQO by all players and avoid inconsistencies despite the exercise being of a highly subjective nature (Misikova, 2009).

Being a cornerstone of the ELC, the Explanatory report explains: “landscape quality objective consists, for a specific landscape once it has been identified and assessed, in precisely listing the features which the local people concerned wish to see recognized for their living environment” (Dejeant Pons & Buergi, 2008 p. 102). Hence, “Landscape must become a mainstream political concern, since it plays an important role in the wellbeing of Europeans who are no longer prepared to tolerate the alteration of their surroundings by technical and economic developments in which they have had no say” (Council of Europe, 2000, II§ 23). The choice of the LQO should be made clear as to why are some features and qualities of landscapes preferred than others (Prieur, 2006). Once the landscape quality objectives have been identified on fixed criteria, the following step would entail developing a supportive legal framework in local and regional policies and management measures (Article 5.c. of the European Landscape Convention). This will only apply to “specific components” of the landscape (Council of Europe, 2003a). This is quite a complex challenging task as the perception of what is landscape quality varies considerably among stakeholders. Hence, given that landscape perception is an integral attribute of policy and planning, an understanding of the various factors conditioning perception is required (Table 1). This has to be accompanied by the guidance and harmonization of the sociological, environmental and cultural dynamics that interplay on landscape as these affect the LQO (Luginbühl, 2006). Such changes have to be monitored by constant vigilance of the sites as part of a sustainable management plan with the inclusion of locals in the methodological procedure.

Table 1: Factors affecting public perception

Factor
Biological origins
Cultural associations
Age/Life cycle
Naturalness
Familiarity
Perceived landscape value
Feelings evoked
Sound smell
Viewer's background

Source: Scott (2002)

The LQO are an important element in the Convention as they promote an outward looking planning and management approach in Gozo scrutinized by the interaction of society and participants that accede to it. Due to its small size, Gozo can offer a micro-representation of the European situation although on a much lesser scale given that it has not undergone extensive development as Malta. These landscape quality objectives will serve as a guidance and framework of reference both for the policy makers and regional authorities and also the 'civil society' as the latter will freely share its use of natural and cultural resources (Prieur, 2006). This will ensure that the landscape as a living component of the environment and not just an objective, guarantees the well-being of the local people.

1.3.4 Challenges of the Landscape Quality Objectives (LQO)

The definition of landscape quality objectives comes with many challenges. Primarily, Zoido (2006) notes that such quality objectives have not yet been adequately developed in European Countries. In such countries, there hasn't been any discussion on what the LQO for their territory should be. Malta is a case in point. As outlined above, the LQO should be formulated by technical experts in landscape planning and the respective authorities by working collaboratively with the public thus employing the principle of subsidiarity (Luginbühl, 2006). However, there are missing links on the guidelines that authorities should follow, the regulations which denote the authority in charge, and to what extent these LQO are endorsed (Zoido, 2006). Donadieu (2010) argues that the difficulty to reconcile indicators of landscape quality can be overcome by two possibilities. Primarily, the quantitative standards (ex. health and safety) which are equated with the landscape as

an environment have to be less judgmental. Secondly, the “elitists visions” (e.g. Landscape as national or global heritage) which are usually unrelated to “people aspirations” have to be observed. Donadieu (2010) adds that the dual sides of quality: the objective and the subjective have to be considered for the realization of the LQO. This means that quantified indicators (e.g. environmental and economical) should be used in conjunction with societal indicators to determine the evolution of the living environment. However Donadieu (2010) remarks that as yet such indicators have not been identified.

If one is to follow the meaning and endorsement of the LQO then it has to encompass the domains of empirical knowledge and experience on the area and the landscapes. However, Olwig (2007) notes that studying landscape as an assemblage of material objects, and studying people’s “aspirations” with regard to landscape are two different aspects. This has to be secured with a validation of LQO from all levels, social, scientific and legislative in order to equally corroborate its success in political implementation (Zoido, 2006). When it comes to the explanation of the LQO, Antrop (2006) considers it as “vague” and that it is prone to “linguistic confusion”. Taking “qualities” in the English context is directly related to characteristics and less to values. This is the reverse when translated in other languages which define it as ‘values’ in a positive or negative way. However Luginbühl (2006) states that “values are qualitative and non-quantifiable.” Antrop (2006) also notes that the significance of rating scales for qualities and values respectively is not always considered. What is considered vital and important is subject to different interpretations which will influence the value system (Luginbühl, 2006). Antrop (2006) gives an example of a tree which can be considered important to the locals but not necessarily deemed as having a ‘universal’ value. Luginbühl (2006) identifies four scale levels to assign landscape values which are the same values as those identified by Antrop (2006):

(i) the national level, (ii) the local level, (iii) the European level and (iv) the world level.

Without any doubt, the most controversial scales are the local and the European scale. The former is problem identification: How to ensure that locals have the capacity for integrated landscape-oriented thinking as specified in the ELC? This calls for the inclusion of the European scale so that scientists and authorities will consider these LQO in their actions. It

is therefore meaningful that scales are not preset but created according to the nature of the objectives. Antrop (2006) bases quality on different characteristics: (1) physical and ecological qualities, (2) cultural and historical qualities, (3) aesthetical qualities, (4) social qualities (5) structural and functional ones. Each landscape property is assessed on different indicators to define its quality. The problem lies in “combining and integrating quantitative and qualitative assessments and continuous and discrete ones” (Antrop, 2006 p. 26). When it comes to decision making, the end-result is reached by evaluating and combining different objectives using different case studies and plans built on prior reflection on landscape (Antrop, 2006).

Another challenge is ensuring that the LQO identified by the locals conform with the principles of sustainable development (Zoido, 2006). The LQO must revolve around management of human resources that provide goods and services, preservation of biodiversity, maintaining the long-term productive capacity of ecosystems and expanding our cultural identity (Pieur, 2006). Another controversial question concerns the meaning of ‘landscape quality’ itself based on whose opinion? Hence, there is still some ambiguity as to the characteristics of a significant landscape quality objective, and at what level (local, regional or national) they should be established to be successful.

1.4 Aim and Objectives of study

The aim of this study is to identify landscape quality objectives for Gozo based on both public and authorities views. These objectives are a response to the question “**What landscape do people wish to have?**” Specific objectives include:

1. To identify the ideal landscape which the public and different authorities envision over three time scales (2 years, 10 years, 30 years); the evaluation is based upon the *existing quality* of the landscape as observed during this study and on the *desired quality* of the landscape;

2. To provide a useful guide to the most appropriate strategy for *intervention* in the landscape, either to control damaging change by protection and management or to encourage positive enhancement using a “bottom up approach”. In this way, the public will also be given the opportunity to participate in landscape politics and values assigned to the landscape would be identified.
3. To explore consensus/conflict between different respondent groups (i.e. between public/authorities, between different public groups, between different authorities, between different age groups, etc.);
4. To identify the extent to which present plans and policies (namely the Structure Plan for the Maltese Islands, the Gozo and Comino Local Plan and the Eco Gozo) are contributing towards the ‘ideal’ landscape identified by the respondents;
5. To develop recommendations for achieving the landscape quality objectives identified by the respondents.

1.5 Synopsis of Dissertation chapters

This dissertation is divided into five sections. Chapter 2 follows the introductory chapter providing the theoretical framework and a review on the literature that concerns landscape in general and the planning policies, Local Plans and ‘subject plans’ exercised in Malta. Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology employed in this research. Various techniques that will be applied to identify the landscape quality objectives will be described in detail to set a clearer picture for the attainment of results. This chapter is followed by Chapter 4 which deals with the results and analysis obtained from the research. This chapter consists of the actual landscape quality objectives themselves specifically identified for the island of Gozo after public consultation and involvement. The concluding chapter (Chapter 5) summarizes the most significant contents of this dissertation and provides some possible recommendations for future research and better management of landscapes in Gozo.

CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will seek to provide an overview of international and national policies on landscape. Primarily, section 2.2 briefly identifies the processes and phenomena that gave importance to landscape research and landscape planning throughout history. The research on landscape considers the dynamic relationships between man and the environment whilst acknowledging the changes that can result from spatial and temporal interactions and value systems (Kienast *et al.*, 2009). More specifically, landscape planning seeks to address the problems and opportunities that concern such relationships and establish supporting goals to solve the problems (Steiner, 2008). This section includes a background on the European Landscape Convention as a successful achievement of the Council of Europe (Section 2.2.1) followed by an overview on the Maltese planning system to see whether these reflect the provisions of the ELC on the basis of a review of relevant documentation (Section 2.3). Further insights and a short overview of key findings of similar studies are found in the last sections (Section 2.4, Section 2.5).

2.2 International Instruments that affect landscape

Dr. Johnson's classic 1755 dictionary gives an explanation of 'landscape' by conveying the two intrinsic meanings of landscape:

1. A region; the prospect of a country;
2. A picture, representing an extent of space, with the various objects in it.

Landscape has always been at the heart of international interest but only recently has this attention been translated into action (Prieur, 2002). Despite this fact, only outstanding scenery as worthy of interest, are designated in existing conventions (Prieur, 2002). Back in 1940, 'the Washington Convention on Nature Protection and Wildlife Preservation in the Western Hemisphere' was developed to protect and preserve scenery of extraordinary beauty. The UNESCO Convention concerning 'the Protection of the World Cultural and

Natural Heritage' adopted in 1972 is also geared towards the preservation of the world's 'most outstanding' heritage sites that can be found in the built or natural environment. World Heritage Sites (WHS) prompt more public awareness and help the community to live in equilibrium with nature (Leask & Fyall, 2006). However, according to Kobylinski (2006) when managed in isolation, heritage sites are against the people and are only enjoyed by visitors. Article 1 of the Convention, relates to memorials and archeological artifacts observed with their scientific, historic and artistic value but man and nature are addressed in isolation opposing the historic concept of coexisting people and nature (Taylor 2009). The underlying ubiquitous factor is humanity suggesting that in practice the truly 'natural' environment can be rarely found (Philips, 2006). Phillips also says that this Convention did not address landscape which runs counter to many issues raised in the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. The Convention therefore had to adapt to modern requirements and acknowledge the tangible and intangible aspects as well. This materialized by the enactment of the 'new' UNESCO Conventions on Intangible Cultural Heritage and Diversity of Cultural Expressions (Bunning, 2007).

International texts hardly ever address landscape *per se* as 'the interface between people and place' (Fairclough, 2006a p.61). This is the case for the 'Benelux Convention on Nature Conservation and Landscape Protection' (1982), or the 'Salzburg Convention' (1991) on the Protection of the Alps, and its protocol on nature protection and landscape conservation (Prieur, 2002). On a European scale, the 'EU Biodiversity Strategy' was established in 1998 to deal with the problem of biodiversity loss as outlined in the Rio de Janeiro Convention on Biological Diversity. It fundamentally rests on the 1995 Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS) which saw co-operation from the parties to deliberate the landscape dimension (Prieur, 2002). The EU 2010 target served as a catalyst for the Biodiversity Action Plan published in 2006 and facilitated the full implementation of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives which, together, form the backbone of the EU nature conservation legislation (European Commission, 2010). However the European Union's governments have failed to meet their targets to combat biodiversity decline. Hence, as a response strategy post 2010, the European Commission has prolonged its biodiversity target to year 2020 (Environment Committee, 2010).

The Habitats Directive also known as Directive No 92-43 of May 1992 is the foundation of Europe's nature conservation policy which mainly rests on two pillars: the Natura 2000 which encompasses a network of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protected Areas (SPA) in the EU and robust protection of wild species of importance. The Natura 2000 network successfully covers 17 per cent of the EU's territory and worldwide is the largest network of protected areas (European Commission, 2010). However, whether a landscape is a protected or designated zone is only subsidiary to its character and does not wholly determine it (Fairclough, 2006a). McDonald (2007) states that threats could actually be greatest in areas not specifically protected as SAC's. Several member states have wrongly implemented the Habitats Directive and as a response two interpretation manuals had to be written (Maes & Neumann, 2004).

The need for the protection of all the natural and cultural landscapes that constitute the Mediterranean region was emphasized in the 1993 Mediterranean Landscape Charter which was the first document of the sort (Vogiazakis *et al.*, 2008). This landscape conservation and management policy for the Mediterranean was conceived in response to several environmental pressures in the area. This was succeeded by the launch of 'Parks for life: Actions for Protected areas' in Europe in 1994 by the World Conservation Union (IUCN), which together with the Dobris Assessment (Stanners & Bourdeau, 1995), the first pan-European state of the environment report, prepared a year later by the European Environment Agency Task Force (European Commission) in cooperation with other organizations such as the UNECE and UNEP served as a stimuli to the origin of the European Landscape Convention (Déjeant-Pons, 2002). This document shed light on several issues which were emerging at that time especially an increase in pollution levels and the inconsistency there exists between the diversity of European landscapes and the need for internationally coordinated and accepted means to distinguish and identify them (Benson & Roe, 2007). This was deemed necessary as the "diversity, distinctiveness and value of many landscapes in Europe are declining rapidly" (Stanners & Bourdeau, 1995 p.186).

2.2.1 The European Landscape Convention (ELC)

The first European legislative phase did not institutionalize landscape protection and planning landscape. This necessitated a specific law which recognizes and deals exclusively with landscape (Benson & Roe, 2007). The first draft text for the ELC was prepared in 1998 and successively reviewed by the Council of Europe. It was then adopted by the Committee of Ministries in July 2000 and the text of the convention came into force 1st March 2004 under the auspices of the Congress of Regional and Local authorities of the Council of Europe in Florence, Italy. Year 2010 marks the tenth anniversary since the inception of the Convention. Up till now, 32 out of the 47 Council of Europe member states have ratified the ELC whilst the remaining 6 signatory states have not yet ratified (Council of Europe, 2010). The ELC defines landscape as “*an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors*”. One of its key objectives is to improve the quality of the surroundings in which Europe’s populations live (Council of Europe, 2003b).

This Convention applies to all landscapes, whether they are natural, urban, cultural, unique or ordinary ‘everyday’ landscapes without remarkable features as deserving attention (Buergi, 2002) contrary to the objectives of the UNESCO Heritage Convention (Prieur, 2002). This is highly applicable to the island of Gozo as its landscape is a product of the interaction of natural and man induced activities (Cassar, 2010). However, this implies that the existing legislation in most of the countries that are parties to the Convention has to be adjusted (Jones, 2007). In fact, contrary to Maltese regulatory documents, the ELC is not subdivided by sector, but considers landscape in its entirety (Antonson, 2009). It tries to get away from designating special areas, by ensuring that everyplace is to be looked after (Scott & Shannon, 2007). Landscape, according to the ELC requires trans-disciplinary work through the integration of different unrelated disciplines to work on a common goal and in a transparent manner (Sevenant & Antrop, 2009). Some of the general national measures of the parties to the convention are the following (Jones *et al.*, 2007):

- to recognize landscapes in **law** as an essential component of people’s surroundings;
- to establish and implement landscape **policies**;
- to establish procedures for the **participation** of stakeholders;

- to **integrate** landscape into regional and town planning policies and in sectorial policies.

According to Jones (2007), these objectives will require laws that deal with broad potential conflicts and he mentions a whole range of possible conflicts amongst different stakeholder groups: conflicts between amenity interests and economic development interests, conflicts between different social classes, conflicts from changes in perceptions and conflicts over landscape values. This can be counterproductive owing to the leniency of the Convention itself where parties are not strictly bound by the level of obligations (Prieur, 2002). The idea of landscape enshrined in the ELC places landscape in the sphere of perception and hence subject to numerous interpretations (Jones *et al.*, 2007). Managing or protecting landscape needs to consider that landscape perception is dynamic (Fairclough, 2006a). This means that the different meanings of landscape in the Convention should be sorted out so that they can properly correspond to different landscape practices (Olwig, 2007). As expressed by Déjeant-Pons (2007), the target should be the capacity to deal with any emerging future challenges in such a manner that landscape integrity and diversity is preserved or better still improved. However putting this into practice will be burdened with practical and theoretical difficulties including to:

- prevent further deterioration
- correct the lack of integrated perception of landscapes
- raise awareness with public and policymakers (fig.4)
- establish more appropriate protection status (Fairclough & Moller, 2008)

making a reality of the European Landscape Convention

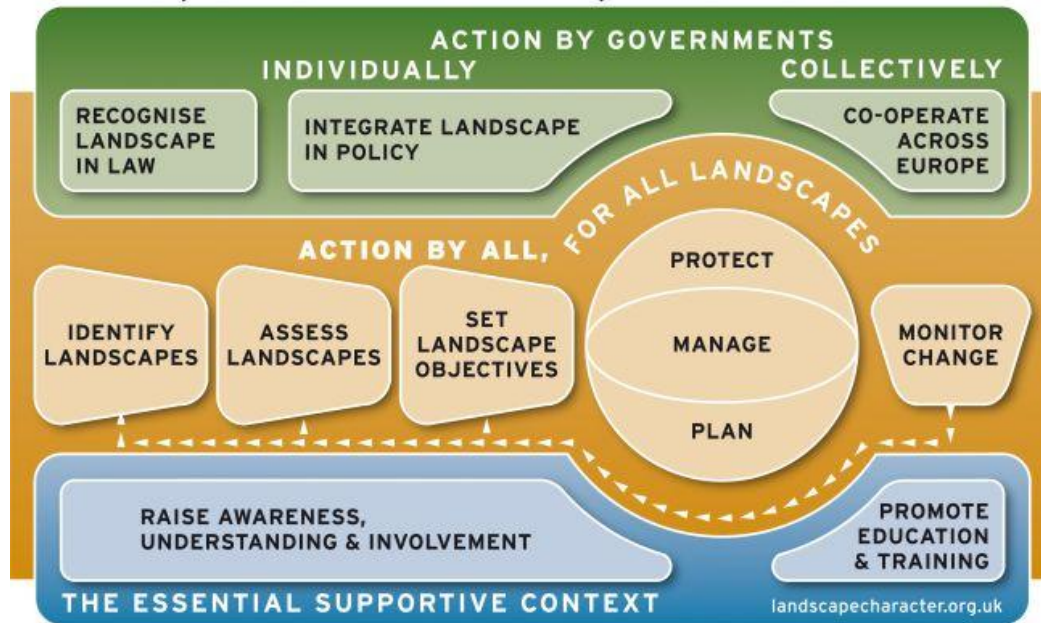


Figure 4: 'Making a reality of the ELC'. A diagram produced by: The Landscape Character Network and Natural England to raise awareness and understanding of the European Landscape Convention.

Source: Michael Dower and Adrian Phillips (2010)

The fact that parties to the ELC have to recognize all landscapes in law will help raise the level of protection. However, Fairclough (2006a) notes that resource management cannot be about preservation or protection only. He mentions landscape 'fossilization' that can result if too much of the landscape is kept or 'museumification' if too little of the landscape is preserved. Fairclough (2006a) calls for a 'more dynamic form of sustainable management' rather than 'traditional methods of protecting fabric' because landscape is 'philosophically different to those things'. Hence, the key here is 'managing change rather than managing things' (Fairclough, 2006a p.60). The Convention encourages the setting up of landscape inventories so as to monitor their condition and direct the changes (Antrop, 2005b). It contains a guiding framework to promote the development of Action plans, the integration of the ELC strategy into plans and policies and international co-operation that will help raise the profile of landscape (Article 5.b & Article 4). Article 1 of the European Landscape Convention requires that landscape management has to "harmonize changes which are brought about by social, economic and environmental processes." The process of

“harmonization” should drive effective and innovative legislation rather than maintaining a rigid system of laws (Olwig, 2007).

This legal instrument promotes democracy, human rights and the rule of law in that it requires the involvement of people in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes that directly or indirectly affects their landscape, their environment and their well-being (Déjeant-Pons, 2006). However, a major challenge in this regard would be to assimilate the views of ethnicity into the socially and culturally just landscape that it promotes. Otherwise “Europe cannot be *just* if it is *just* for the long established peoples of a narrowly defined Europe” (Olwig 2007, p.593). According to Fairclough (2002) a broader scale of understanding is the underlying aspect of the Convention which insists that its aspirations and ambitions towards landscape apply everywhere. It encourages dialogue between all stakeholders by means of subsidiarity and self governance in order to ensure coordination on autonomous subjects directed to improve the quality of the surrounding landscape and consequently the lifestyle quality of inhabitants (Chmielewski & Solinska, 2007).

In the text of the Convention, special attention is devoted to the exchange of information and multi-disciplinary approaches which should be met with better public awareness (ICOMOS, 2006). Hence, the ELC stresses the need for a ‘bottom-up’ approach and values the opinions and judgments of individuals and communities besides the ‘top-down’ approach judgments of experts that usually govern the decision making process (Dury, 2002). The requirement for the landscape quality objectives will be a catalyst for interdisciplinary work called for by the Convention in so doing advancing *res publica*. Olwig (2007) explains this concept as “a political community shaped through discourse and the core of its power is thus essentially invisible because it depends upon a process of agreement about things that comes about through deliberation” (Olwig 2007, p. 591). However, this idea is different from “the meeting between scientific and technocratic expertise and the subjective opinions of the public, as envisioned by the “committee of experts” who are responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Convention (Olwig 2007, p. 590). According to Olwig (2007) in the explanatory report of the ELC, the “public

enquiry” regards the term landscape as known by experts and infused into society with the help of informative campaigns before they can express their opinion on the issue. This is indicative of indoctrination where the dominant group transfers cultural ideas to the other groups in a uni-directional process (Howard, 2003).

The powerful link that exists between landscape and sustainability as advocated by the ELC has been employed differently by different researchers (see Antrop 2005a&b). Castiglioni & DeMarchi (2007) bring out this idea in an encompassing way as they note that landscape is being considered as a medium among people and their land which is helping to sustainably address the relationship between the social, environmental and spatial parameters. This factor is contributing to a better understanding of landscape through education (Castiglioni, 2007). What might be hindering countries to sign the ELC could be its association with the strain posed by the Natura 2000 directives from a financial and political standpoint and reluctance to implementation could lie within the “static” understanding of landscape by nature conservationists and planners (Bender & Schumacher, 2008).

2.3 Is Maltese policy and practice broadly in synch with the requirements of the ELC?

Heightened public awareness in environmental planning and enforcement in Malta was instigated by the deterioration of the Maltese natural landscape by the building boom of the post-independence period (Boissevain, 2001). This upturn was essential to preserve and maintain environmental integrity and imbue the concept of sustainability in land resources (Boissevain, 2001). The Ministry for the environment in 1992 and the Environmental Protection Act in 1991/2 were created as a response for development control. Concurrently, Section 19 of Chapter 356 of the Developing Planning Act, 1992 was responsible for the enactment of the Structure Plan to regulate land use which came into force in the same year. Moreover, landscape is the subject of Chapter II.9 Declaration of Principles where the state vouches to safeguard the landscape and the historic patrimony of the Nation (Constitution of Malta Act, 1964).

2.3.1 The Structure Plan for the Maltese Islands

The Structure Plan (SP) was the first document enacted in the Maltese Islands that deals with issues of land use and policy development over a period of 20 years starting from the year of its inception (1990) to the period when it is retained valid (2010). The SP was intended to stop the excess of inconsiderate development which had plagued Malta from the 1960s through to the 1980s (Camilleri, 1993). Given that the Structure Plan's format encompasses nationwide aspects of the Maltese environment, it was necessary to develop additional documents that focus specifically on particular districts of the Maltese Islands (MEPA, 2006b). The Gozo and Comino Local Plan is one such document out of seven approved local plans in 2006 which provides coverage of Gozo and Comino. Hence the SP at best provides rudimentary links between the state of the landscape and future scenarios. The policies contained in the SP are applied by the Local Plan at the local level and influence any development proposal especially since its recommended policies mostly concern the land-use. One positive factor of the SP is the involvement of the public in the process of planning so as to ensure understanding on all levels. Policy BEN 15 exposes this concept through the decentralization of all the copies of development applications by the Planning authority.

According to Doublet & Bond (2005), the SP policies can be stratified in two groups, those which undertake the planning application process and those which are considered to be more strategic in nature (Table 2).

Table 2: Structure Plan policies

Structure Plan Policies
First Group
delineate what is permissible and what is not especially in types of development applications Outside Development Zones
control certain type of development ODZ
acting as provisional during the making of the Local Plans
adopted where the natural environment is to be rehabilitated and improved
Second Group
relating to the scheduling of land and buildings
require the decisions that are set to be exercised to attain particular objectives

Source: Doublet & Bond 2005.

Most of the problems tackled in the SP prevalent a decade ago are still persistent (Doublet & Bond, 2005). The SP mentions the loss of agricultural land as a result of urban sprawling, fragmentation of holdings, the problem of irrigation and an ageing agricultural workforce. Of considerable importance is the state of the natural environment when compared to equivalent European standards. The notion of a fragile island ecosystem has long been known, however the appropriate measures and introductory schemes have only recently been adopted to safeguard this valuable resource and restore it back to European standards (Makhzoumi, 2000). Despite stating the need to implement firmer policies to control development in the country, considering that Malta is already over 20 per cent built up, the SP is not adequately geared towards development which is sustainable that is required to realize the desired landscape character for the Maltese Islands (Landscape Assessment Study, 2004). Therefore, it does not address modern societal challenges which have recently emerged and are forecast to be relevant in the coming decades. This should be catered by a review of the original SP which is presently underway. This review is part of the steps to the adoption of the ELC implying that this process will be deferred.

Rural Conservation Area Policy RC0 1 designates the following sub areas (Table 3) using World Conservation Union definitions and criteria where applicable (Planning Services Division, 1990).

Table 3: Categories of land designation within Rural Conservation Areas

Areas of Agricultural Value –AAV	Areas of high agricultural land both irrigated and partially irrigated land
Areas of Ecological Importance –AI	Protection of typical and rare habitats
Sites of Scientific Importance – SSI	Protection of individual species, groups of species and geological features
Areas of Archaeological Importance	Collection of valuable archaeological sites
Sites of Archaeological Importance – AAI	Archaeological sites which are individual and/or isolated
National Parks – NP	Relatively large areas of national significance, not considerably altered by human use, managed visitor access and amenities
Areas of High Landscape Value – AHLV	

Source: Structure Plan for the Maltese Islands 1990

The conservation of rural areas has been given top priority in the SP since a large number of policies are related to this field: out of 320 policies 42 refer directly to rural conservation (Camilleri, 1993). The SP has designated most of the countryside as Rural Conservation Areas so as to prohibit any urban development that takes place outside the development zone (MEPA, 2003). As of end 2008, the amount of land area that fell under protective designations was around 20.5 percent while the total area which was selected as having landscape value comprised 33 percent of the total land area (MEPA, 2008). These types of designated area management plans secure a sustainable future for countryside and their upkeep in terms of quality. The designation of National Parks to serve as conservation and recreational areas is delivered through policy RCO 14 listing the areas of Ta' Ċenċ and Qawra/Dwejra in Gozo. Whereas Qawra/Dwejra was designated as a Heritage Park in 2007 as referred to by Policies RCO 35, 36, 37, 38 based on the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, Ta' Ċenċ has not been acclaimed full protection. This was witnessed by the 2006 proposal for a project concerning a large scale development which includes a golf course. This projects runs counter to SP policy TOU 10 which specifically recognizes Ta' Ċenċ importance and seeks to protect it, while allowing some development adjacent to the existing hotel (Planning Services Division, 1990). The Golf Course development policy paper is the main reference to such type of development.

Policies relating to UCAs also emphasize the preservation of the external character of townscapes by assuring that the visual quality of traditional urban skyline is not obscured by tall buildings (Policy UCO 10 & Policy BEN 18). The role of Policy RCO 4 relating to Rural Conservation areas, provides direction and operational guidelines on the building of structures or the permitting of activities that are considered as intrusive in the area and would degrade the scenic value save for legitimate uses such as agricultural developments. Unfortunately, these policies have not been applied properly since some traditional landmarks in the rural landscape such as windmills, churches and urban skylines are now barely visible owing to haphazard developments (Bianchi, 2008). This also applies to agricultural areas which have their own specific policies which deal with the removal of visual intrusions in the landscape and the maintenance of traditional features such as

countryside rubble walls (Policy AHF 7 & 8). These have experienced a steady loss mainly due to land scheduled for development and the skill of building rubble walls itself is fading with the shrinking farming community. The Rural Topic paper deals in depth with this issue despite the existence of two rubble wall policies RCO 4 and LN 160 of 1997. More recently, the Planning Authority issued a new policy in 2006 which is a revision of the 1993 Development Control Policy and Design Guidance which concerns obsolete publicity elements (billboards) which have proliferated in recent years (MEPA, 2007). As stated in the Rural Topic Paper, these Rural Conservation areas cannot solely be protected through development control but also have to be directly addressed via management and contingency planning (MEPA, 2003). This is also the focal point of SP Policy RCO 20 and Local Plan Policy GZ-RECR-1 which work in favor of rehabilitating degraded areas and have the potential to encourage more walks and conservation of the countryside.

In part fulfilment of the Structure Plan review process, the Planning Authority drafted a series of Topic Papers in order to evaluate how fitting the SP policies are to today's emerging problems (DeBono, 2004). The Rural Topic paper, which mostly contains information relating to this study, mentions the SP framework in relation to rural development and ODZ areas. It explains that the SP does not differentiate between those settlements that occur 'Outside the Development Zone' and those settlements that are located in the open countryside (MEPA, 2003). Hence, the policies that are bound to the countryside are also applicable to settlements ODZ. However, there is a clear disparity between the characteristics of settlements ODZ and those of open countryside and therefore there is a requirement for more specific regulations. Likewise, this is also acknowledged in the Gozo and Comino Local Plan, having an entire section dedicated to Settlements ODZ (Section 4) with specific policies addressed to the three identified categories of ODZ settlements. Having most ODZ policies dispersed throughout different policy documents creates a difficult setup for the Boards or Commission to be able to implement consistently (Scicluna, 2008). However, Scicluna (2008) notes that "the procedures laid down by the European Commission have only been haltingly adopted" (p.13).

2.3.2 The Landscape Assessment Study (2004)

The Landscape Assessment study compiled in 2004 considers the concept of ‘cultural landscape’ as widely applicable to the Maltese Islands. The definition of cultural landscape as provided by the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA) pertains to “those areas of the landscape which have been significantly modified by human activity.” This definition is justified for the Maltese context as there aren’t any intact areas free from human encroachment and is also conformant with that of the ELC. Our interaction with the environment around us has changed the natural environment as subjected by a change in people’s perceptions of place.

This document represents the state of the Maltese cultural environment and outlines the criteria by looking at what has been done in the past and what should be done in future planning issues by reviewing the planning process of the SP. In line with the principles of the ELC, the Landscape Assessment for the Maltese Islands states that there should be a more encompassing and coherent approach so that all the landscape types in Malta are given considerate attention including those that are considered as degraded or sensitive so that these type of landscapes would be rehabilitated (MEPA, 2004). This is one of the tenets of the ELC which recognizes the value of all types of landscapes. Moreover, the deficiency of the Structure Plan in addressing the landscape in a holistic manner spurred the need for this Landscape Study (Mallia, 2004).

The aim of this report is to:

- Identify the different landscapes that make up the Maltese Islands within the framework of the ELC.
- Emphasize the main enhancing and detracting features of each character area.
- Explore the forces that have modified the Maltese Landscape during the first decade of the SP and how its policies have effected these changes.
- Elicit the various activities that have contributed to the changes in Maltese landscape.
- Propose policy recommendation to be implemented in the revised SP (MEPA 2004).

This study stresses the relationship between the natural aspect and the cultural aspect of the Maltese landscape and the fact that they are interrelated render this landscape a dynamic one. This is one of the underlying purposes of this Landscape Study in order to be able to address any emerging problems that could compound future interventions by means of proper strategic planning. It provides a summary of the major changes that have impacted the Maltese Landscape in the decade of 1990 and 2000 starting with the most visible factor – urban sprawl. However in this study, a subjective approach is adopted towards landscape. In fact it states that the report will focus on “the visual aesthetic component of ‘landscape’ and the term shall be used exclusively to address the influence of an area as perceived through the sense of sight” (MEPA, 2004).

The Landscape Study subdivides the landscape into several landscape units so as to determine the landscape character areas that make up the Maltese territory. These units were identified by several constituents which can be found throughout the selected areas. Malta has thus been divided into 61 landscape character units for assessment purposes. For Gozo in particular, 35 landscape character units have been delineated. This classification is based upon significant landscape elements in particular, topography and zone of visual influence (MEPA, 2004). First, generalization is encouraged by looking at the wider picture not just the details of the fabric of some elements thus bridging the gap between research and planning practice. Second, involvement is extensively applied; third, characterization is a means whereby the management of the cultural heritage is woven in social decision making (Fairclough, 2006). To this end, a Landscape Assessment Model has also been developed based on the interpretation of experts so as to provide a description, assessment and evaluation of the Maltese Landscape to guide and harmonize future strategic planning policies. The proposed model is a sensitivity model i.e., the liability of a particular area to change from its present state is evaluated. The main sensitivity determinant is the indivisibility between the site of the proposed intervention and the surrounding physiography (MEPA, 2004). In the Maltese context, the viewshed was judged as most significant to the sensitivity of an area together with additional parameters that influence on the landscape character such as proximity to the coast (MEPA, 2004). The Landscape Assessment Model is a useful tool in giving a representation of landscape quality,

sensitivity and distribution throughout the Maltese Islands (SOER, 2005). It also efficiently guides development with a sense of precautionary measure in areas with greater landscape sensitivity thereby defining a Strategic Landscape Policy Direction. Besides directing strategic planning, the model can also be used to estimate the impact of individual, large development on the quality of surrounding landscapes (MEPA, 2004).

Category 5 (Table 4) is perhaps the most related to the ELC as the ELC emphasizes the introduction of suitable ways of protection, and, where necessary, recovery of those landscapes that have been degraded in the past (Council of Europe, 2000). This might still be lacking as the Landscape Study notes that despite there being a decrease in the rate of agricultural land abandonment, greater accessibility has subjected more remote natural areas under human influences (MEPA, 2004). To this date, there has been no afforestation campaign designed specifically for Gozo to serve as recreational areas. The Rural Development Plan (RDP) which is a key instrument for assigning protection to rural landscapes stresses the important contribution that agriculture plays in the maintenance of landscape and cultural traditions. Yet in this document, there is no mention of the rehabilitation of degraded agricultural areas despite its statement ‘to conserve and enhance the landscape, wildlife and historic heritage of rural Malta’ (MRAE, 2004).

Table 4: Five levels delineate Landscape sensitivity with Level 1 being the most sensitive and Level 5 being the least sensitive.

Category 1	Area of Very High Landscape Sensitivity (AVHLS)
Category 2	Area of High Landscape Sensitivity (AHLS)
Category 3	Area of Significant Landscape Sensitivity (ASLS)
Category 4	Area of Moderate Landscape Sensitivity (AMLS)
Category 5	Areas Requiring Landscape Upgrading (ARLU)

Source: (MEPA, 2004).

The importance of the Landscape Study has been acknowledged by several European countries as they consider it to be heavily compliant with the ELC (Mallia, 2004). Malta has been one of the foremost countries to undertake the landscape assessment challenge and start a nationwide landscape characterization exercise (Mallia, 2004). The study also explores some of the most pertinent issues that contribute to a loss in the scenic value of the

landscapes. These problems mainly stem from the discrepancies between planning and development, the inefficiencies of supporting national awareness, and the mismanagement of those features which give the Maltese landscape an identity (MEPA, 2004). It mainly presents three major focal points that have to be directed into play if the Maltese cultural landscape is to be ameliorated. These three elements mainly relate to the public, a policy framework and research and development (MEPA, 2004). The Landscape Assessment Study has been effective in introducing a firm 'stepping stone' for improved landscape protection in strategic and subsidiary land-use plans (SOER, 2005)

2.3.3 The Gozo and Comino Local Plan

This plan is based on the strategies and guidelines provided in the Structure Plan with several amendments done as years and development progressed. This was necessary given that several data sets were either considered outdated, incomplete or new (MEPA, 2006). Moreover this plan defines the character of Gozo as inherently different from that of mainland Malta in several aspects, distinguishing this plan from the other plans endorsed by the Planning Authority. The document acknowledges the concept of sustainable development and models the planning strategy for Gozo and Comino based on the principle of sustainability (MEPA, 2006). Like the SP, this document has been subjected to policy changes that emanated from public consultation and a partial review is currently accessible to the public.

The utility of the Local Plan rests on six attributes (MEPA 2006):

- a) To apply the development strategy of the Structure Plan
- b) To safeguard environmental resources
- c) To provide a detailed basis for development control
- d) To provide a basis for promoting and coordinating appropriate development
- e) To bring local and detailed planning issues before the public
- f) To define special areas where detailed action, environmental management plans and development briefs will be drawn up and implemented.

From the first lines of Chapter 3 (Overall Strategic Guidance) it is noticeable that this plan is directed more to the urban landscape than to the rural landscape. This plan considers the urban areas as a priority and hence supplies various policies in order to improve the status of residential areas. It states that the control of urban sprawl is imperative if additional areas for residential developments can be restrained. The plan also outlines the current situation characterizing urban areas which mainly reflects the situation in other European countries. Low population growth which leads to increasingly vacant plots is conflicting with more emerging proposals for residential development which could encroach outside the peripheral urban areas. The plan points out that half of the properties that are considered to be UCAs are either under-utilized or vacant with a considerable fraction of land within the development zone still undeveloped.

Where no accountability exists for a decision taken, development in sensitive locations has been given the green light with the consequence of area degradation mostly evident in coastal areas (Scicluna, 2008). This might also be attributed to insufficient training and knowledge of the sensitivity of the issues in hand by decision makers which jeopardize the existence of environmental and cultural resources (Scicluna, 2008). The ribbon development that has occurred in certain localities has already marred the Gozitan landscape bringing out a loss of identity of distinct places. The policies which support this description give considerable importance to ODZ (Outside Development Zones) which are chosen as Strategic Open Space Gaps (SOSG). These specifications purposely contend the magnitude of Development Zones boundaries (policy GZ-SETL-2). The plan also provides a list of zoning area in order to ensure the compliance of development within development zones with what is permitted and what isn't permitted (GZ-EDGE-2/3). Moreover, within SOSG, MEPA encourages the conservation of nature and its habitats, the use of arable agricultural land uses which are not scheduled for environmental protection and the overall maintenance of landscapes by rehabilitating abandoned land through various landscaping strategies. Policy GZ-AGRI-6 which deals specifically with the reinstatement of abandoned agricultural land is a far cry from the current situation. This also ties in with the policy relating to rubble walls (GZ-AGRI-5) which unless the former policy is not sustained and

kept in practice, the skill of rubble wall building will also be lost and with it the soil that supports the rural environment.

There are specific policies which deal with the preservation of public open spaces. Policy GZ-URSP-1 is one such policy that refers to green areas and open areas located in urban areas that cannot be subject to development and may be predisposed to landscaping proposals to embellish the character of the urban areas. The rural environment is mentioned in relation to recreation as a common pool resource which has to be provided freely. However this has to be controlled by a visitor management plan as outlined in the Rural Topic Paper so as to limit the pressures exerted on rural areas especially those that are protected (MEPA, 2003). Policy GZ-RECR-5 also stipulates that development for recreation should be contained in development zones or in degraded sites if the former is not possible. The National Strategy for Sustainable Development (2006) also emphasizes the importance of new urban development and regeneration projects being wholly sustainable. Hence there is the need to safeguard the less intensively urbanized area so that visitor experience would not be hampered by a lack of attractiveness of the site as a result of anthropogenic impacts (NCSD, 2006).

The main revenue generating asset that the Maltese Islands is completely dependent upon especially for tourism and recreation is the coast. It is this area that has been the most negatively impacted by unregulated development which degrades the natural characteristics of such area. Conversely, artificial infrastructure and high rise developments have been erected and continue to do so in popular coastal areas which do not amalgamate well with the natural surroundings. This process transformed traditional fishing villages like Marsalforn into tourist sea resorts. Back in 1969, Masser already foretells the impending risks that ‘modern additions’ and architecture itself are having on traditional Gozitan settlements however the situation has aggravated. Above all, Masser recommends that development in Marsalforn “should not exceed two storeys in height”. This recommendation supplements more specific conservation policies and policy GZ-HTML-1 which provides Building height zones set up MEPA (a revision of the zoning in the temporary provisions of 1988) and prohibits any development which obstructs the

panoramic view. This is also supported by the Gozo and Comino Local Plan policy GZ-RLST-2, of Category 2 Rural Settlements ODZ where a threshold is set on height requirements of buildings in rural areas to minimize visual impact. However the prevailing situation in Marsalforn with high rise development is a far cry from this conservation effort. Specific measures posed by Masser (1969) mainly coincide with the preservation of the visual landscape components when new development is considered and the preservation of panoramic views in coastal areas: “Apart from a very limited infill, there should be no further development to the east of Marsalforn where the fine coastland is to be preserved, or to the south where valuable agricultural land would be lost” (p. 247). Being party to the Barcelona Convention and signatory to the Protocol on integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean, Malta is committed to prohibit construction within 100 meters of the coast.

2.3.4 Eco-Gozo Plan

Through the Eco-Gozo strategy, the Government will seek to put Gozo on the forefront of sustainable development (Ministry for Gozo, 2009). This initiative strives to elevate the status in the quality of life of the people both in the urban and rural areas and even those which are degraded to become an eco-island by year 2020. The plan itself is a new vision of looking at Gozo and its future. However, the author did not have access to the document so only a cursory overview can be written at this stage. What the Eco-Gozo scheme is proposing mirrors the objectives of the ELC. Essentially the following benefits will be prioritized if this scheme together with the ELC is efficiently implemented to aid Gozo to become a sustainable community (as found in the Eco Gozo Plan 2008):

- A better quality of life
- A society exerting less pressure on the environment
- A wholesome natural and cultural environment
- More sustainable jobs
- A caring society for all
- More quality investment
- An enhancement of the island’s identity

These principles will be delivered through various projects such as the Sewage Treatment Plant, the closing down of the Qortin rubbish dump, the development of a Centre for Mediterranean Research and several other projects (Ministry for Gozo 2009). Collectively all these projects will ensure that Gozo does not suffer any more market failures and will be a 'model for sustainable living, development and environment protection' (Ministry for Gozo 2009). In relation to the betterment of the tourism product and distinctiveness, there are plans to develop agro-tourism in Gozo which would serve as a model for the agro-tourism product in Malta.

2.4 Further Insights

The State of the Heritage Report 2005 contains a whole chapter (Chapter 2.5 *Cultural Landscapes*) dedicated to the ELC and its application in the Maltese context. It also mentions the policy documents that have to do with cultural landscape protection which have already been discussed in this review. The Environment Report (2008) supersedes the previous documents relating to environmental matters and the past editions of the State of the Environment Report in 1998, 2002 and 2005. The ultimate purpose of the 2008 report is to serve the policymakers and the public up to date environmental information in agreement with Malta's legal obligations under the Environment Protection Act, the Aarhus Convention and related EU Directives. Some of its main objectives include an increase in awareness and understanding of major environmental trends, to help policy and decision making by building integrated knowledge platforms, to enable better cooperation between different actors and to support the development of applications for environmental sustainability (MEPA, 2008). The Culture Heritage Act of 2002 seeks to manage Malta's heritage with a new vision and was spurred from the outcry that resulted from the damage caused by vandals on the Mnajdra temple in 2000 (Renwick, 2006).

Since Malta's accession to the European Union in 2004, numerous European and International Conventions have been signed by the Government of Malta which instigated the introduction of new legislation. Customary area-wide environment planning has already undertaken some of the required measures by the ELC for instance the involvement of

public hearing in the process of an EIA and the document itself made available to public commentary. The ratification of the ELC would however deliver a stronger framework for ongoing work or to bring about much needed specific landscape policies. Additionally it will assemble in a single forum key sectors such as cultural heritage, agrarian economies and the tourist industries where this is absent in existent policy documents (Scazzosi, 2004).

2.5 Employing Participatory Methods

Despite the vital importance of the social demand for multifunctionality, up to this date, the literature that explains the role of these functions in the developing sustainable landscapes that are projected to be “ecologically healthy, culturally and socially integrated among different stakeholders, and viable over many generations” is very little (Hamblin 1999, p.1). The identification of the landscape quality objectives is not easy as the ELC requires these objectives to be expressed by experts through public consultation. In order to identify the most appropriate research method to use in this study, several participatory approaches used by different researchers to analyze public perception in relation to landscape were contested and a relevant few are outlined below.

Models of citizen engagement have been widely employed in landscape management strategies. However, more often than not these are applied through council activities and thus may not be effective to mitigate apathy (Scott, 2002). Increasingly however, researchers are effectively conducting studies which totally focus on public perceptions. For example, Ramos (2010) attempted to propose an appropriate methodological approach to delineate the ‘landscape quality objectives’ by employing ‘exploratory landscape scenarios’ as the main tool of the study. This helped to identify any drivers of change which can originate in the future and by so doing generate discussions with stakeholders on the desired state of the future for their landscape. A municipality in southeast Portugal was chosen as a case study to apply this scenario. Ramos (2010) assembles the procedure of ‘explanatory landscape scenarios’ in 4 steps mainly: (a) the identification of driving forces and critical uncertainties, (b) the definition of plausible futures 25 years from now (c) the validation of the scenarios by an expert panel and (d) consultation of stakeholders (p.4).

The author collected “ideas” from the locals through site visits as regard the state of the landscape in the future so as to determine any future driving forces. This data established four scenarios for the year 2030 yielding a representation of “different but equally plausible worlds” each met with their respective objectives that have to be adopted for proper planning and management (Ramos 2010 p. 6). Photos were also used in individual interviews conducted amongst experts to discuss the issues that emerged from these four scenarios.

Brown & Raymond (2007) studied the external validity of a two-dimensional place attachment scale (Williams and Vaske, 2003) in the Otways region (Victoria, Australia) and its connection with landscape values. The place attachment scale and landscape value measures were included in a mail survey of residents and visitors. The authors determined the relationship between a map-based measure of place attachment and mapped landscape values. The spatial cross-correlation and regression analyses proved that aesthetic, recreation, economic, spiritual, and therapeutic values spatially co-locate with special places and the probability that they contribute to place attachment is high. The study by Nijnik and Mather (2008) helped identify future land cover changes in order to keep track of changes of woodlands in the Scottish landscape. Primarily, the researchers used interviews to gain knowledge about public opinion and distinguished between five different participants. Nijnik *et al.* (2008) did a similar study “public evaluation of landscape content and change” using several examples from Europe. Another study which considers public perception and attitude to facilitate landscape conservation measures is that conducted by Butula (2008b). The study revolves around a question posed by Davies (2001, p.78): “whose values were respected and how they came to count in the planning process?” Locals were interviewed by means of a public survey via questionnaires that included non-visual material and visual material (photos). Landscape as a living environment and landscape as a resource formed the backbone of the questions posed to locals, experts and people living in urban areas. Several landscape components were given points ranging from 1 to 5 similar to the previous study.

A study which was done as part of the realization of the requirements of the European Landscape Convention is that by Chmielewski and Sowinska done in 2008. This study focused specifically on the identification of the landscape quality objectives for the Roztocze – Solska Forest region. The researchers conducted a questionnaire among different groups which had to assign a point from 1 to 5 to given features of the landscape so as to finally define the preferences of respondents on landscape quality and identify those features of the landscape that are regarded as the most important. An extensive qualitative social research study using focus groups and in-depth interviews was prepared for Natural England (2009) to provide baseline evidence of the cultural services and experiential qualities that landscapes conveys to the public in the United Kingdom.

Locally, a study conducted by Conrad *et al.*, (2010b) had the aim to understand public perceptions of landscape and their participation in decision making using Gozo as a case study. The study was done with reference to the ELC and incorporated aspects of landscape character and change. Through an internet survey this study shows that the concept of ‘landscape’ as understood by the public is not fully conformant with the scope of the ELC. However, the authors acknowledge the interest that was evident amongst the public and the similarities that existed across different respondent groups. This methodology was also applied in a similar study conducted by Conrad *et al.*, (2009) which focused on ‘incorporating people’s perception into landscape planning: Ethical challenges in dealing with diversity of opinion within a community’ where the views of the respondents were collated to be used as the foundation for a landscape character exercise.

The literature contested in this study highlighted the process of policy-making in the Maltese Islands and to what extent is landscape spatially and structurally considered in the implementation phase. Shortcomings in local policy frameworks were noted particularly in relation to the assessment of community values and participation. As for the latter, the methodological review related to the topic of study exposed several approaches that were successfully applied by foreign and local authors to assess landscape in terms of people’s perception and participation. This helped the author determine which methodological approach would be the most suited for this dissertation.

CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

General studies on landscape preferences are vast but most of this literature does not focus on group-specific perception and assessment of past and expected future landscape changes (Hunziker *et al.*, 2008). The purpose of this study is to bridge these gaps and to achieve these two objectives. This study opts to use qualitative research to gain insights of the modern status of public perceptions and what they consider as landscape quality. Qualitative methods are generally employed to explore social issues through close-ended or open-ended questions. Double triangulation was employed by discussing the same issues with different stakeholders. Together these will help validate or not a conclusion.

3.1 Following the ELC rationale

The method that will be used for this research will consist of first hand participatory techniques directed to a wide audience and is exploratory in nature. People are at the heart of the ELC and public participation and consultation are regarded as a tool for the involvement of society including those groups which are normally disempowered, excluded or disenfranchised from the management and planning of its own landscape that is outside the formal decision making process of the government and local authorities (Article 5.c. 2000 of the European Landscape Convention). Such groups embrace the elderly, minority ethnic groups, young people and children (Roe, 2007). Since it describes landscape as “perceived by people,” the views of all groups and individuals should be considered collectively and not the outlook of the experts and professionals only (Jones, 2007). Societal values have changed over time as have their perspective on landscape change showing the importance of a landscape associated with a particular time. There needs to be a systematic understanding of the diverse preferences towards diverse types of landscapes and what is in actual fact leading to the formation of such attitudes in relation to changes in landscape so as gain adequate knowledge to deal with changes (Natural England, 2009).

3.2 Sample of participants and respondents

The participants of this research were selected through convenience sampling and the samples comprised adults and youths and males and females to ensure statistical validity. This sampling strategy involves a sample of people which are selected because they are the most conveniently available (Stewart *et al.*, 2007). Potential participants (over 40 individuals) were contacted and invited to participate.

Locals – In this sociological approach, the notion of landscape being shaped and altered by human experiences will be examined. Public awareness of landscape values and development occurring in the island are the focus of this participatory technique.

Authorities - The views of the authorities are examined to determine the future of landscape planning in Gozo. The inclusion of the expert-based view in this study will evaluate if there needs to be an enforcement of institutional frameworks and to create an inclusive, people centred approach.

3.3 - Research Design

This study will be delivered in two parts:

1. textual (written comments and review of policy documents)
2. verbal (oral interviews and discussions)

In this research small group techniques were used to encourage locals to represent their analysis of the situation and involvement in the process of planning and management of the local environment.

3.3.1 Focus Groups – Locals

Focus groups consist of a limited number of people as denoted by the term ‘focus’ listening and debating together to provide adequate information about any concepts (Krueger & Casey, 2000). In such a setting, participants can ‘react to and build on the response of other group members’ (Stewart *et al.*, 2007 p.43). Focus groups yield preliminary data where the views of groups can be identified and explained, something which is not easily obtainable from conventional survey approaches (Scott, 2003). Hence, validity, versatility and

flexibility are very high as any topic can be discussed providing data in a quick and cost-effective manner (Stewart *et al.*, 2007). However, one main disadvantage of focus groups is their open-ended nature itself which can complicate summarization and interpretation of results (Stewart *et al.*, 2007). Moreover the small size of the sample does not permit generalizability (Krueger, 1998).

Two main focus groups one for youths and another for adults (mixed-gender groups) having 10 youth participants and 11 adult participants were carried out. The reason for choosing this type of technique over the general workshop techniques which involves a larger number of participants is attributed to the limited time-frame available to complete this dissertation. However, having smaller groups encouraged better discussion and ensured full coverage of landscape perceptions. Having a diverse group will be prone to improper communication among group members which can lead to conflicts (Stewart *et al.*, 2007). Hence, having homogenous groups will ensure an easier and deeper evaluation of the outcome and would also avoid restraining group dynamics in mixed gender or age focus groups (Heary & Hennessy, 2000). However if participants are not diverse, this does not fully allow for contrasting opinions to emerge (Litosseliti, 2003). The focus-groups were audio-taped and the tapes were transcribed verbatim (word for word) and the English translated transcripts used in the data analysis containing also adequate profile information about the people who participated in the sessions as provided in Table 5. The author also wrote and conducted the focus groups in Maltese language for the convenience of those participants who have difficulty in grasping concepts in English. The focus groups organized under the title “Exploring Landscape Quality Objectives for Gozo” lasted approximately two hours each and were conducted in two parts as outlined below each resting on methods which are suitable in different community type and sizes. A discussion guide divided into two sets of questions served as the blueprint for the focus group session by broaching issues on changes, preoccupations, aspirations, feelings and recommendations. These focus groups were conducted prior to the semi-structured interviews so that initial qualitative data could be used in the design of the interviews.

Table 5: Summary of participant characteristics

ADULTS	
Gender	Male 7 Female 4
Age	Range : 25-80 years 25-34 (2) 45-55 (1) 55+ (8)
Location of residence	In town (4) Outside of town (7)
Level of Education	High school or less (3) At least some postsecondary education (5) Tertiary education (3)
YOUTHS	
Gender	Male 4 Female 6
Age	Range: 15-24 15-19 (2) 20-24 (8)
Location of residence	In town (2) Outside of town (8)
Level of Education	High school or less (1) At least some postsecondary education (2) Tertiary education (6)

Assigned in groups of five, participants created scenarios for 2, 10 and 30 years based on the drivers of change identified in the problem tree. These were developed on the following questions (20mins).

Discussion Questions Set 1

- 1. Do you feel that Gozo has changed at all?**
- 2. How do they feel Gozo has changed over the years in terms of:**
 - level of development;
 - general condition;
 - beauty;
 - its rural character and;
 - its urban character.
- 3. Does the human impact on the character over the years through various industries such as farming, quarrying, housing development etc. make them feel any different about the landscape or do they believe that it forms part of its character?**

3.3.2 Participatory Problem Analysis (60mins)

Using the brainstorming techniques, the participants were assigned in two main groups to analyze the **changes in landscape** by listing its **causes**, and the **effects** that are triggered as a result of these. This, together with the concerns expressed by the participants produced a **problem tree**. Brainstorming has the objective of giving participants an opportunity to start thinking logically and strategically on problem solving based on the problem tree (Lauesen 2005). It can encourage individual creativity through free thinking and free expression (Samanta, 1993). The author who acted as a facilitator asked the participants to explain how the public is affected by the driving factors mentioned and how they themselves contribute to the creation of the driving factors. The author ensured that the determinants of the causes identified by the participants touched on social, technological, cultural, economic, environmental and political trends by listing them as categories. If any participants looked at this change from a negative perspective, they were asked to analyze possible solutions to improve the situation. Two columns were produced listing the positive and the negative effects as a result of the changing or unchanging landscapes in Gozo and trends in particular areas to be placed within the bigger picture (if it mirrors the situation in Malta).

3.3.3 Visioning – Exploring Future Landscape Scenarios (40mins)

This was the final step where participants imagined how landscape will change in the future and how they would like landscapes to change. A visioning process can focus on creating scenarios to describe different future communities - ‘Scenarios are imaginative pictures of potential futures’ (Penker & Wyrzens, 2004 p. 178). According to Ramos (2009), this type of technique can help “ordering one’s perceptions about alternative futures” through constructions of “internally consistent views of what the future might turn out to be” (p.2). The ‘intuitive’ approach identified by Ramos (2009) is the one that is the more appropriate for this study as it concerns more communication, awareness raising, gaining better insights into societal thinking which is not possible with the ‘morphological’ approach as this uses quantified knowledge through simulation techniques and the like. This often involves

drafting a vision statement. A well drafted vision statement captures the primary aspirations held by stakeholders for the landscape and engenders interest and support for the final strategic plan (Hajkowitz *et al.*, 2003). Using this type of methodology will yield a variety of possible futures which can help to improve decision making and adjust development towards future desired landscape changes (Gantar, 2009). However, as a process it can be problematic to transfer into policy making (Cummings & Worley, 2008).

In the same groups participants also discussed how they would like their ideal landscape to be through the following questions.

Discussion Questions Set 2

- 1. In groups of 5 participants were asked to list how they would like to see landscape change over the next 2, 10, 30 years.**
- 2. Are there any particular features they would like to keep from the existing landscapes?**
- 3. How is the government contributing to ameliorate the general situation?**
- 4. What do they think needs to be done to improve protection and management?**

Overall the methods had to be kept simple and informal and were mostly based on discussions as this is fundamental in such contexts. Several technical concepts such as the definition of the word ‘landscape’ itself, the landscape character, landscape features and qualities that could have been difficult to grasp by the focus groups attendees were explained beforehand by the author for the sake of clarity. Foreseen challenges of the focus group method included different levels of education, difficulty in grading some outcomes, risk of domination from other people and side conversations. If a participant dominated the discussion, the author encouraged the opinion of other participants “Let’s find out what other people think on this” and other probes (Sarkissan & Bunjamin-Mau, 2009). On the other hand to avoid side conversations, the participants were asked to share their thoughts with the rest of the group.

3.4 Semi-structured Interviews – Policy makers & Local councils.

The perspective of the local and national authorities together with councilors was deciphered through detailed semi-structured interviews which helped the author better understand the current situation of landscape planning in Gozo and any future plans to prioritize this field. From their response, the author could explore emergent consensus or conflict between different respondent groups. The author designed a standard interview schedule in a way which allowed the interviewer to explore the issues identified in the literature review and the feedback given in the focus groups but discussions deviated from the questions depending upon the interviewee's particular knowledge or experience (See Appendix E). This was necessary to acquire a better understanding of the research question. The interviews lasted between 10 and 60 minutes and were held with 18 individuals. All the questions posed were open-ended and were audio taped and transcribed. The reason for choosing semi-structured interviews over the other type of interviews is the facility of adapting, modifying and adding to the planned questions if need be (Cousin, 2009). Such a technique was appropriate for the author's research since it permitted an in depth exploration of the research question as it was kept in an 'open' way. Moreover, this type of interview allows for comparing answers among a bigger number of informants. As the encounter with respondents occurs one time, it is imperative that all the necessary information is acquired. Therefore, upon completing the interview, the author wrote her own field notes about the event to add to the empirical data comprising any thoughts, missing gaps or reflections on the questions and answers.

3.5 Secondary data collection – Desk Study

The study which included a review of policy and planning documents to determine its coherence with the ELC can be found in Chapter 2. The amount of literature concerning landscape and its complex inferences is considerably large allowing for a huge portion of this study to be desk based. Documents and scholarly papers formed the bulk of this literature review, the majority of which were obtained from the internet. However, other

sources such as Planning documents and Annual reports were crucial to foster a good understanding of the subject and present an exhaustive documentary research.

Public perceptions of existing and desired landscape quality were evaluated against the present planning policy framework. The latter component involved the analysis of key planning documents, namely (i) the Structure Plan for the Maltese Islands, (ii) the Gozo and Comino Local Plan, (iii) the Eco-Gozo policy documents and (iv) other legal and administrative instruments related to the regulation of development. Provisions of these policy documents also served as the basis for comparisons with what people perceive; in particular, the evaluation focused on whether present planning policies are contributing towards the realization of the landscape quality objectives identified by the public. Similar studies have been conducted by various authors in particular, Velarde *et al.*, (2007) who reviewed publications of landscapes in conjunction with health effects. The authors identified gaps during their study underlining the need for more research on the subject.

3.6 Deficits of Data Collection

Basically, the quality of the collected information is contingent upon the data source and therefore on the position of the interviewed persons. For some questions:

- Information could not be collected entirely as key informants were unwilling to disclose information on details into the public domain for fear of drawing negative attention from pressure groups.
- Obtaining appointments with key informants was difficult owing to their busy schedule.
- Participants who were not very knowledgeable about the subject took a back seat during the discussions.
- There seems to be a lack of familiarity of local councils with the existing policies or confusion in understanding the technical nature of some of the questions posed as such questions were not accompanied by corresponding answers.

CHAPTER 4 - RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Thematic Analysis of Focus Group Sessions Adults & Youths

This section of the dissertation highlights the major findings from the focus group sessions summarizing what respondents said in response to specific questions. All participants participated actively in the debates. This information also represents the author's interpretation based upon: (1) notes taken during the focus group sessions, (2) a review of the audio recordings, and (3) a content analysis of the transcripts from the two sessions. This also applies for the semi-structured interviews data. Some illustrative quotes from the discussions are included in the text.

4.1.1 Gozo's general condition

As a focus group ice-breaker, the participants were asked to brainstorm about change. All participants acknowledged that Gozo has experienced radical change over the years, and they think it is customary for a place to undergo such change. Different exigencies as a result of improvements in the standard of living require the use of limited resources such as land. Development is quite a subjective topic as most of the participants remarked. In terms of construction, development has increased over the years with the result being us "*nibbling away*" at the countryside with widespread "*ripple effects*". Contrastingly, one young participant expressed that development reached its peak but has now decreased as "*everywhere is built-up.*" Both young and adult participant groups agreed that modern development, instead of spreading outwards is spreading upwards, describing the high rise apartments as a "*Jungle of Concrete*" obstructing their viewscape. However one young participant mentioned the economic convenience of demolishing existing structures and rebuilding new ones instead of buying new plots of land.

Accordingly, there was general feeling amongst all focus groups participants that Gozo's main asset - the quality of the natural environment - is deteriorating as natural spaces are decreasing. Although this impacts its rural charm, nevertheless, all these participants agreed that Gozo still sustains remote places that offer tranquility and peace of mind. According to

one young participant, tourists sought after Gozo because together with Malta, they were considered the ‘*untouched islands*’ because they were still in ‘*their raw stages*’. One youth participant even dubbed modern Gozo as a “*mini Malta*”. As one adult participant stated, although Gozo is promoted as a region in itself, it is highly dependent on mainland Malta as the Maltese are the highest contributors of tourism. All youths accepted development as long as it is sustainable but contrastingly the adults stated that not everything can be accepted.

“It is a dilemma and a continuous paradox because there exists development in the sense of improvement in the quality of life but on the other hand, there is the other type of development which is changing the face of the Gozitan landscapes.”

“What we have forms part of our culture and is a common good so it has to be protected.”

Although the youths and the adults agree that in terms of commodity and services, quality of life has improved, two adult participants pointed out that socially, the latter has been lowered as a result of changes in people’s aspirations with rising costs of living and property. As noted by three young participants, young couples seek to live in affordable apartments instead of houses of character inadvertently triggering the loss of traditional building characteristics by introducing different building styles which are out of tune with the Gozitan character. Many young families are living in village outskirts creating what is known as ‘ribbon development’ and increasingly rural roads are being built and existing ones widened by local councils to connect these places. These have also caused proliferation of urban activities; traffic has increased and roads have fragmented remote, tranquil areas. Such views were also supported by all the youths. Three youths noted that the increase in cars as a result of affluence and road improvement have created huge parking problems and a need to develop more parking spaces. This last requirement conflicts highly with the youth’s disapproval of the current increment in urban sprawl.

4.1.2 Controversial development projects

Although the focus group participants (adults in particular) expressed concern about island-wide issues affecting Gozo, they tended to steer the discussion toward issues affecting their own locality. Therefore such findings initially suggest that landscape quality considerations may be more effective if they are linked to local community issues.

For example, the Hondoq ir-Rummien Marina Village was a matter of intense discussion with some individuals claiming that such a proposal runs counter to the overall aim of an eco-island. 6 adults and 4 youths stated that the increase in development along the coast has exerted considerable pressure on the marine life, ecology and aesthetic qualities thereby jeopardizing the same uniqueness that is primarily sought after by tourists and in the case of Hondoq marina, locals will have one less natural place to enjoy. However, as another participant mentioned, such development can also prove to be beneficial by creating employment opportunities. The other 10 participants disagreed saying “*once you disturb the environment you cannot bring it back to its original state*”. One participant from Xewkija pointed out the Heliport project, stating that presently it is left unused. She also mentioned the set up of a Waste Transfer Station in her village. This participant was particularly concerned because fellow residents are annoyed as the locality is already experiencing high levels of pollution. Another participant mentioned the fact that some private projects are being advertised as part of the Eco-Gozo scheme; one such project features property development in Żebbuġ - one of Gozo’s traditional rural villages. A priest in the group said that when the need arises, the Environment Commission for the Church which voices its opinion on environmental and cultural issues from a religious aspects, condemns certain projects.

4.2 Driving forces of landscape change (Evaluation of the Problem Trees)

4.2.1 SOCIAL CAUSES

Five youths noticed a change in priorities where essentially quality of life is linked to materialism and not the quality of the environment. Moreover, they stated that modern means of entertainment mostly include “wine bars” and “lounges”. At the other end of the spectrum, three-quarters of the adult participants blamed child upbringing for most of the problems characterizing the landscapes such as vandalism and dilapidation (Fig. 6) *“The problem is at the roots, we instilled in our children a sense of egocentrism which has to be controlled as it is a fundamental problem.”* All the adults and youths agreed that the demography in Gozo is one fundamental root cause of the changes in Gozitan Landscape. Congruent views on ageing population label this a main threat as its causes some repercussions (Fig. 6). Primarily it creates a dire need for more retirement homes whilst leaving vacant houses and also requires sufficient funding for social welfare which is mostly provided by youth workers. Moreover elderly population is not being replaced as youths move out of the island with further reduction in maintenance of land use features.

“Gozo will become an old peoples’ locality where youths are resorting to work overseas or in Malta and consequently living in these places as locally they have to compete with foreigners.”

As one adult participant pointed out, Gozo does not yet offer sustainable jobs. Another participant added that the absence of a property tax and the soaring value of property are encouraging more owners to keep empty units.

4.2.2 TECHNOLOGICAL CAUSES

Both groups mentioned the same determinants of land-use change characterizing these categories namely non-traditional additions and new infrastructures. These are attributed to foreign influences and the commodity factor identified under social causes (Fig. 6 & 7). Discordant features such as satellite dishes, aerials and wires degrade the townscape as regards its architectural quality. One youth participant noticed that modern building designs especially apartments, do not take into account natural lighting and ventilation causing such homes to rely on non-renewable energy as there is no natural source of heat and light (Fig. 7). He also mentioned renewable/sustainable means of heating and cooling such as solar

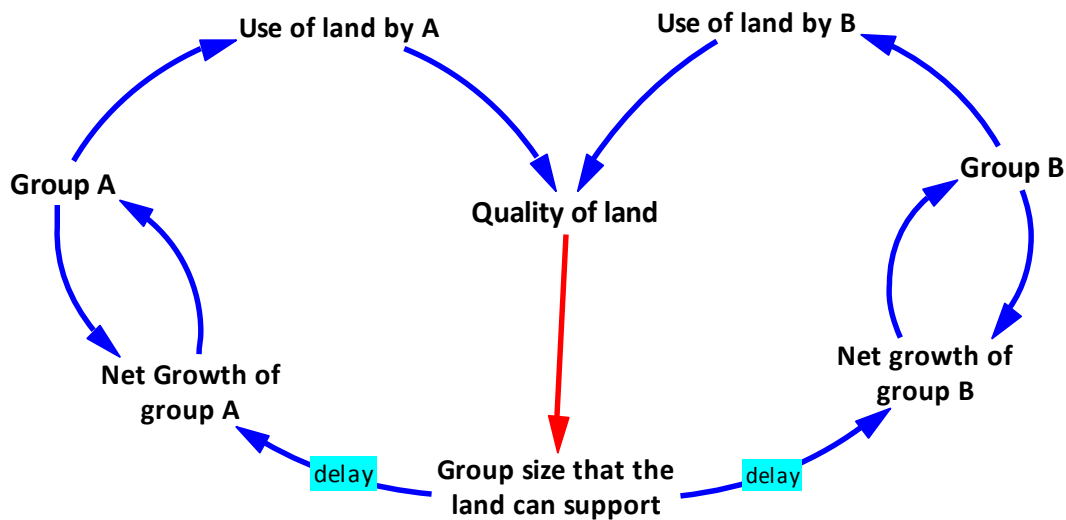
water heaters and fans which are installed outside as detracting features, although fellow participants recognize their benefits. Another participant mentioned that nowadays free internet connection is an essential requirement in a playing field or public garden, as this is the first thing people seek denoting that even in a natural setting people cannot break free from technology (Fig. 7).

An illustration of the mentality of the problem is exposed in the following quote by an adult participant (Fig.5):

“As people became more affluent, they invested in property, registering an increase in buildings, an increase in consumerism and modern technologies which exacerbated negative environmental impacts.”

Figure 5: Tragedy of the Commons Causal Loop Diagram adapted for land use and landscape quality based on the previous quote.

The tragedy of the commons refers to the situation when two or more individuals or groups all share and use a common resource, in this case the land. Each group, in a self-serving way, uses the resource and benefits from it in a socio-economic way. Over time, because none of the groups is monitoring everyone else's use of the resource, the resource is eventually depleted or degraded to the extent that it is no longer useable, or no longer desirable.



4.2.3 ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL CAUSES

Three youths identified the geographical characteristics of double insularity as a major handicap which puts Gozo at a disadvantage when compared to Malta (Fig. 7). This relates to the smallness of the island and its isolated nature which creates several geographical weaknesses especially space constraints. This hampers opportunities in particular for economic development, agriculture profitability and movement of people. One adult participant pointed out that the noisy petards that are let off in densely inhabited areas cause distress to the inhabitants in the form of noise pollution. Youths also identified Malta's family-centred culture as responsible for much of the destruction of the Gozitan semi-natural environment. This alludes to the N.I.M.B.Y (not in my backyard) syndrome which values the house and personal possessions and denies social responsibility (Fig. 7). Youths mentioned several promising initiatives in the cultural causes such as the inauguration of new playing fields and afforestation projects although these are not extensive in Gozo. Furthermore, awareness on the 3 'R's, i.e. Reduce, Reuse & Recycle and the 'bring in-sites' introduced recently are contributing to lessen littering problems.

When asked to indicate the one cause which in their opinion is the most serious as there are no ready-made solutions to contain the impacts resulting from this driving force, the adults stated that all the causes are serious as they all trigger side-effects but corruption predominates as it cannot be eliminated (Fig. 6 & 7). On the other hand, the youths chose the EU Energy 2020 targets as Malta is still far from meeting the targets with the current pace (Fig. 7).

Figure 6: PROBLEM TREE – ADULTS

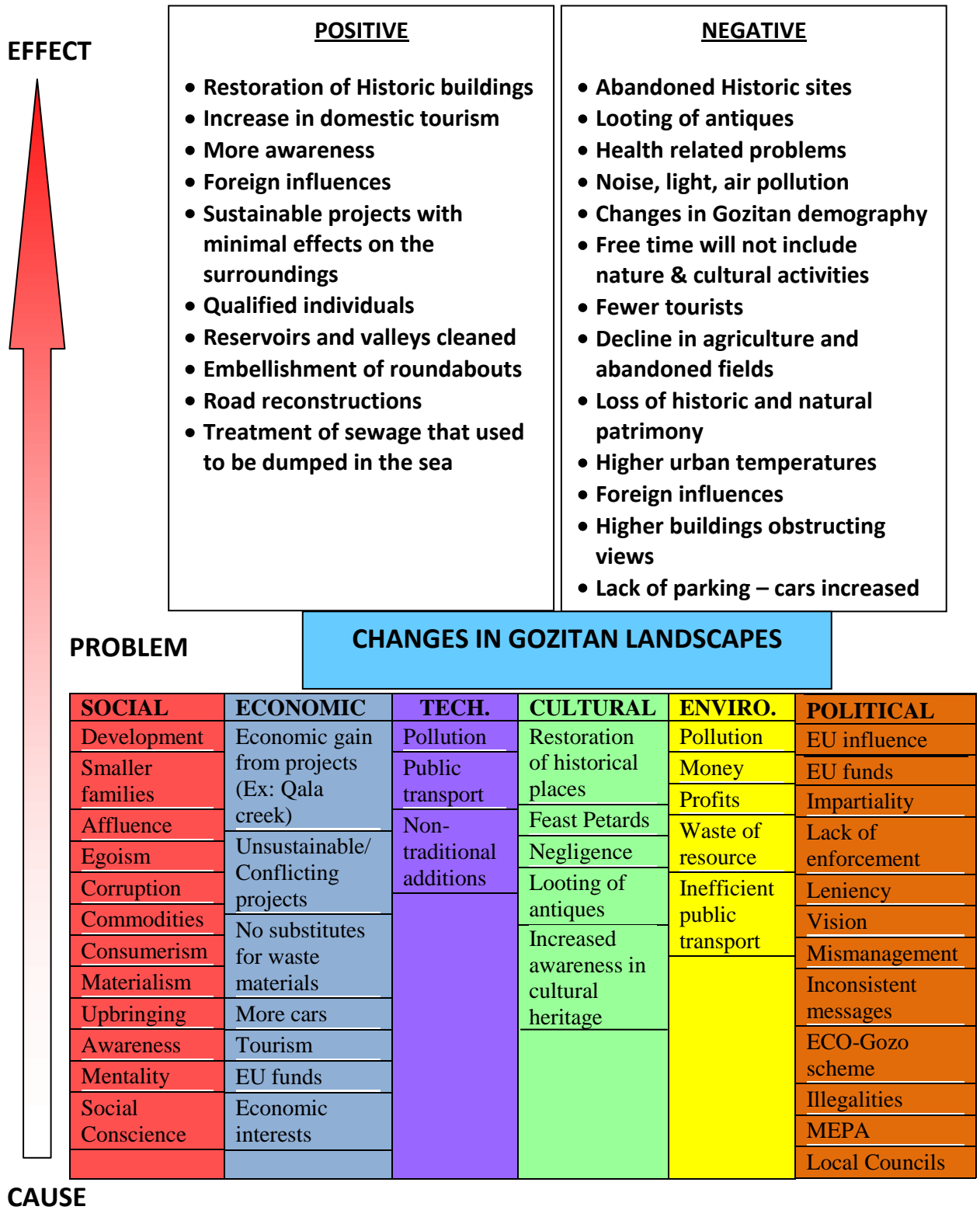
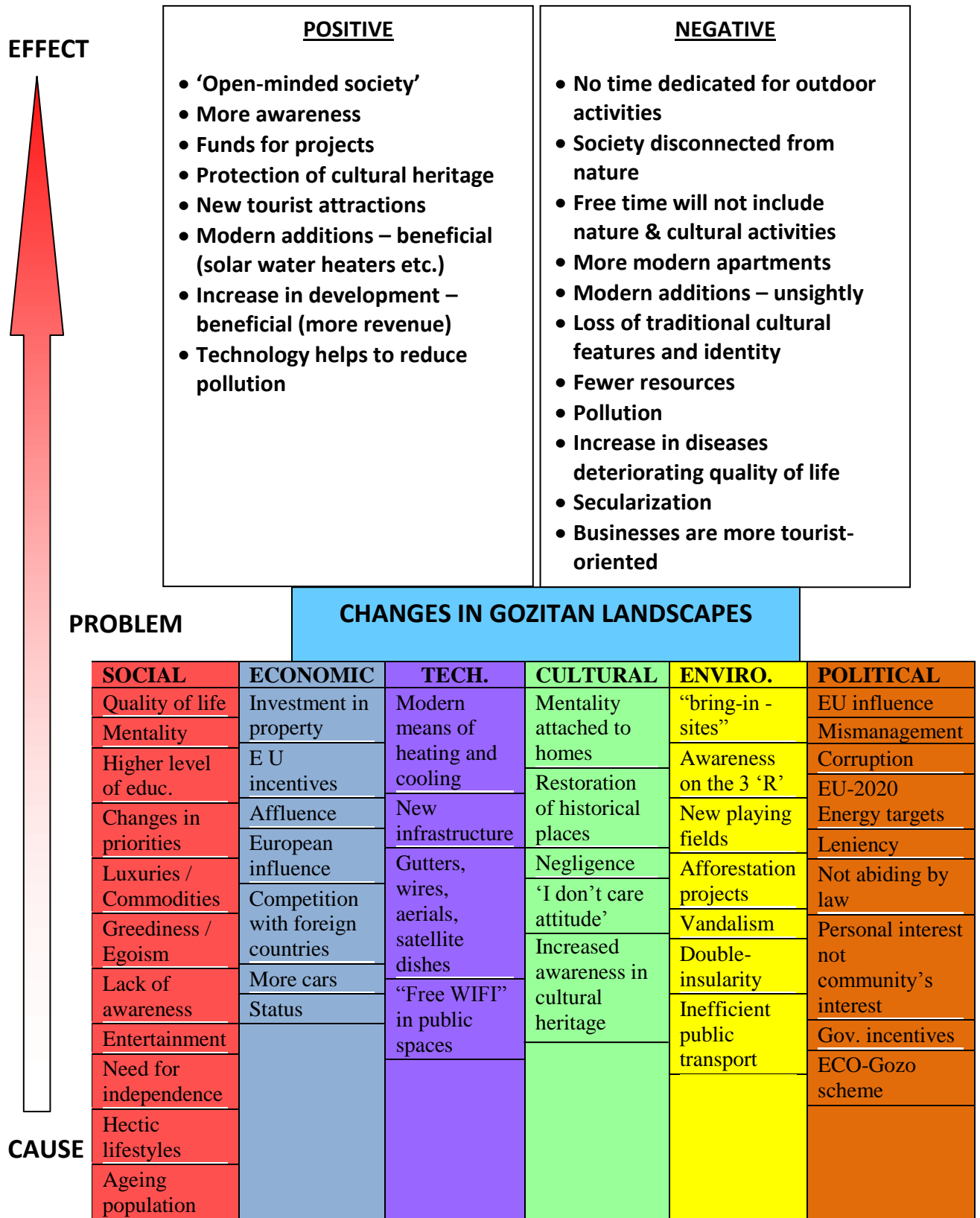


Figure 7: PROBLEM TREE – YOUTHS



4.2.4 Positive and Negative effects of changes in landscapes

The changes to the landscape identified in the problem tree are symbolic of the myriad social and environmental problems facing the Maltese Islands. They provided the participants with a clearer picture of how much they are contributing to the problem and their participation in curtailing the problem (Changes in Gozitan landscapes). These effects link to other primary effects and end with greater combined effects. At first sight, the hierarchies constructed for the positive and negative effects identified by the adult participants immediately indicate that these participants identified more effects than the youths (Fig. 8, 9, 10, 11). Moreover the perception is that the costs seem to outweigh the benefits caused by such changes.

According to the youths, changes in Gozitan landscape will lead to fewer time dedicated to outdoor activities producing nature-disconnected socialization and tourism-oriented business which consequently brings about changes in values (secularization) and a loss of traditional cultural features and identity (Fig. 8). This latter effect was also identified in the adult's negative effects hierarchy. However, the culmination of this effect arises from abandoned historic sites which lead to looting of antiques and a loss of historic patrimony (Fig. 10). The detrimental effect of pollution on health was also common for both groups where the adults also identified an increase in urban temperatures, factors which arise from vehicle increase (Fig. 8 & Fig. 10). The current pace of development is triggering an increase in unsightly additions in the youth's perspective. However, the situation is more extensive for the adults where they attribute an increase in development as a result of foreign influences which initiates the abandonment of land, leading to a loss of natural patrimony, higher buildings obstructing views which attract fewer tourists to the island. As for the positive effects arising from changes in Gozitan landscapes, the adoption of new technology will bring about beneficial modern additions and will reduce pollution levels (Fig. 9). Concurrently, funds for new projects will provide protection to the cultural heritage creating more attractions for tourists (Fig. 9). The human element ingrained in an open-minded society seems to be the main instigator leading to all other positive effects. This stems from more awareness which leads to more qualified individuals and more sustainable projects helping to boost domestic tourism (Fig. 9 & Fig. 10).

Figure 8: YOUTHS – NEGATIVE EFFECTS

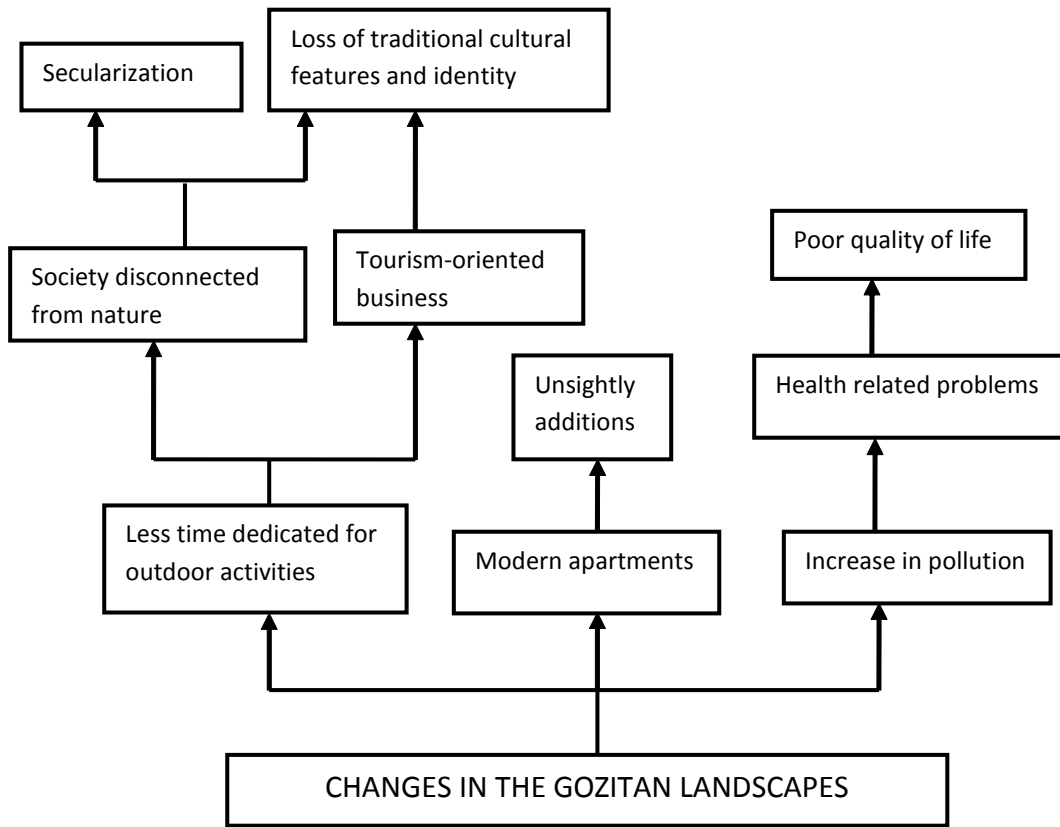


Figure 9: YOUTHS – POSITIVE EFFECTS

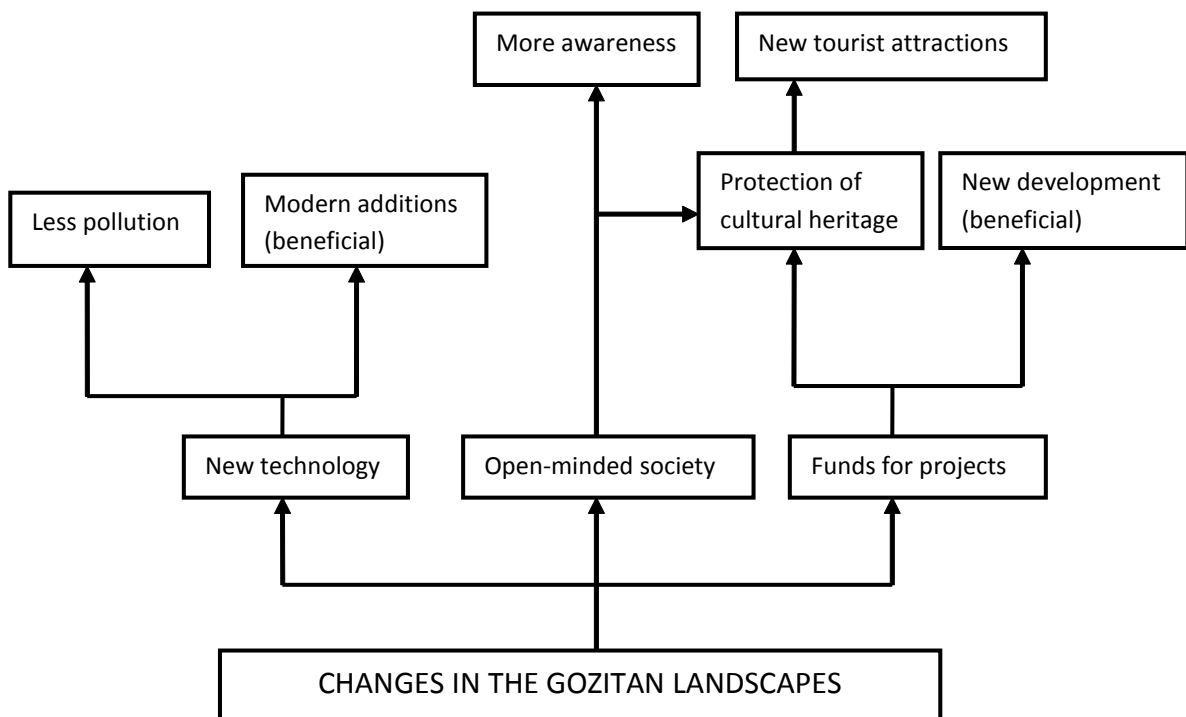


Figure 10: ADULTS – NEGATIVE EFFECTS

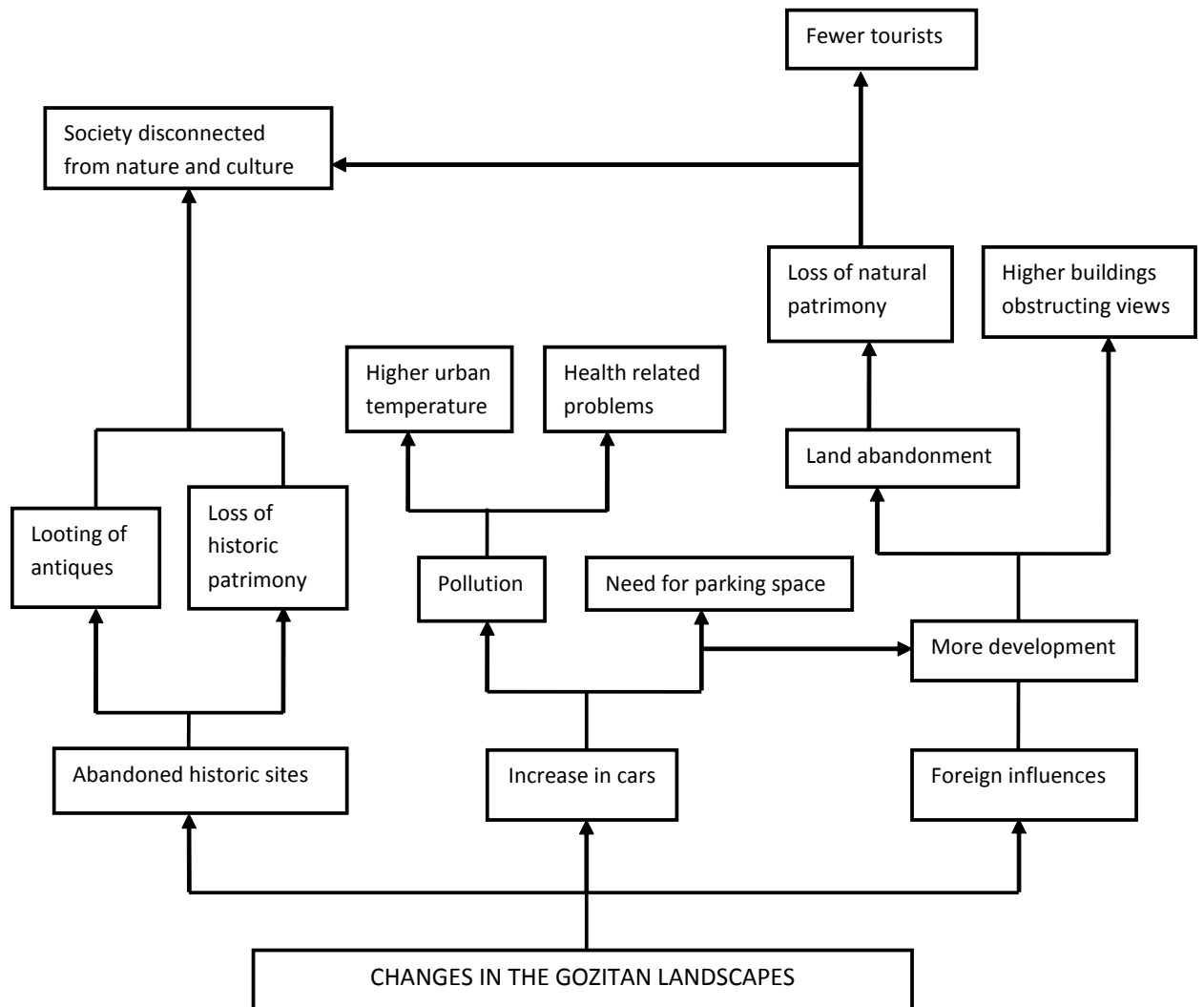
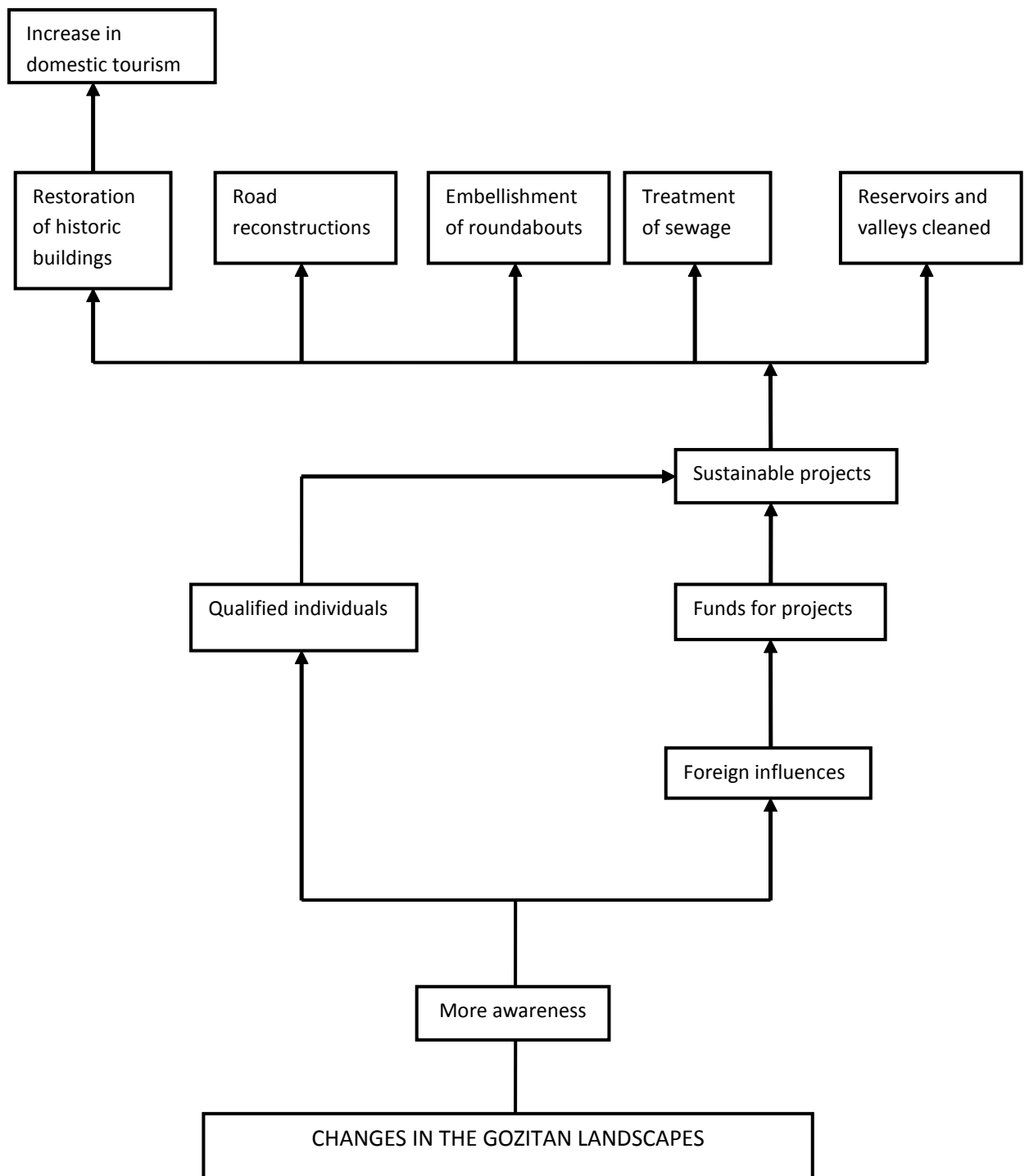


Figure 11: ADULTS – POSITIVE EFFECTS



4.2.5 Looking into future changes in landscapes – Normative scenarios

The following timelines present the most anticipated changes that are likely to affect the Gozitan landscapes over the coming years. The normative scenarios are built on the understanding of the determinants of land-use change identified in the problem-trees and predicting how these might change over time. It is evident that landscape will look very different by 2040 and there is general agreement on where it is headed especially with regards social structure, pollution and development. For both focus groups, negative future projections outweigh positive projections although scenarios are not excessively dismal. However, adults more than youths retained a more negative outlook on the rural landscape which seems to be the most environmentally-challenged. Most young people expressed more positive hopes about landscape's future. In the eyes of youths, alternative sources of energy will be the main positive drivers of landscape change. They are also optimistic in embracing better regulations to fix emergent problems. When it comes to fears about future changes, youths and adults foresee various social transformations which will indirectly trigger unavoidable landscape changes. As identified by participants in figures 9 and 11, building human capital through education is part of the solution to all these challenges.

Figure 12: ADULTS SCENARIOS OF CHANGE TIMELINE

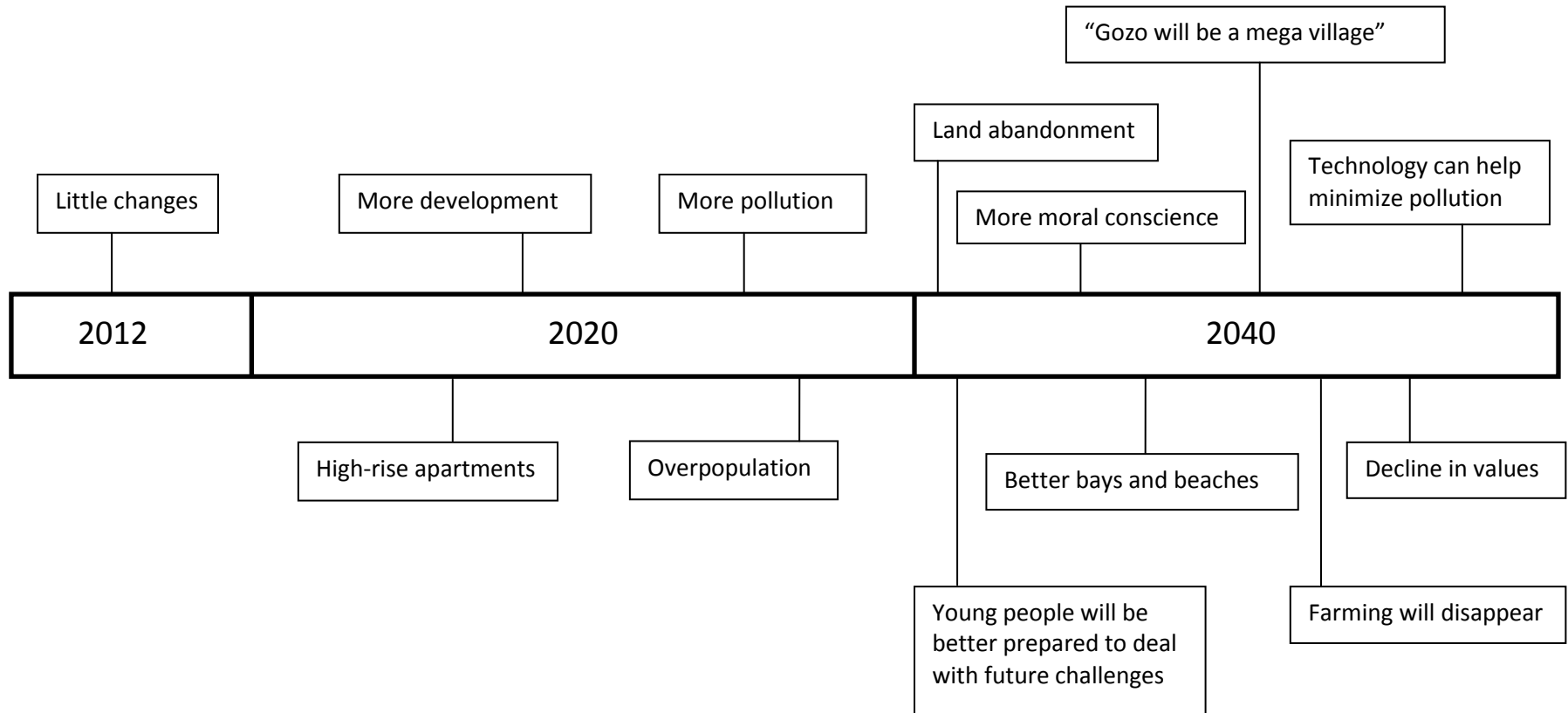
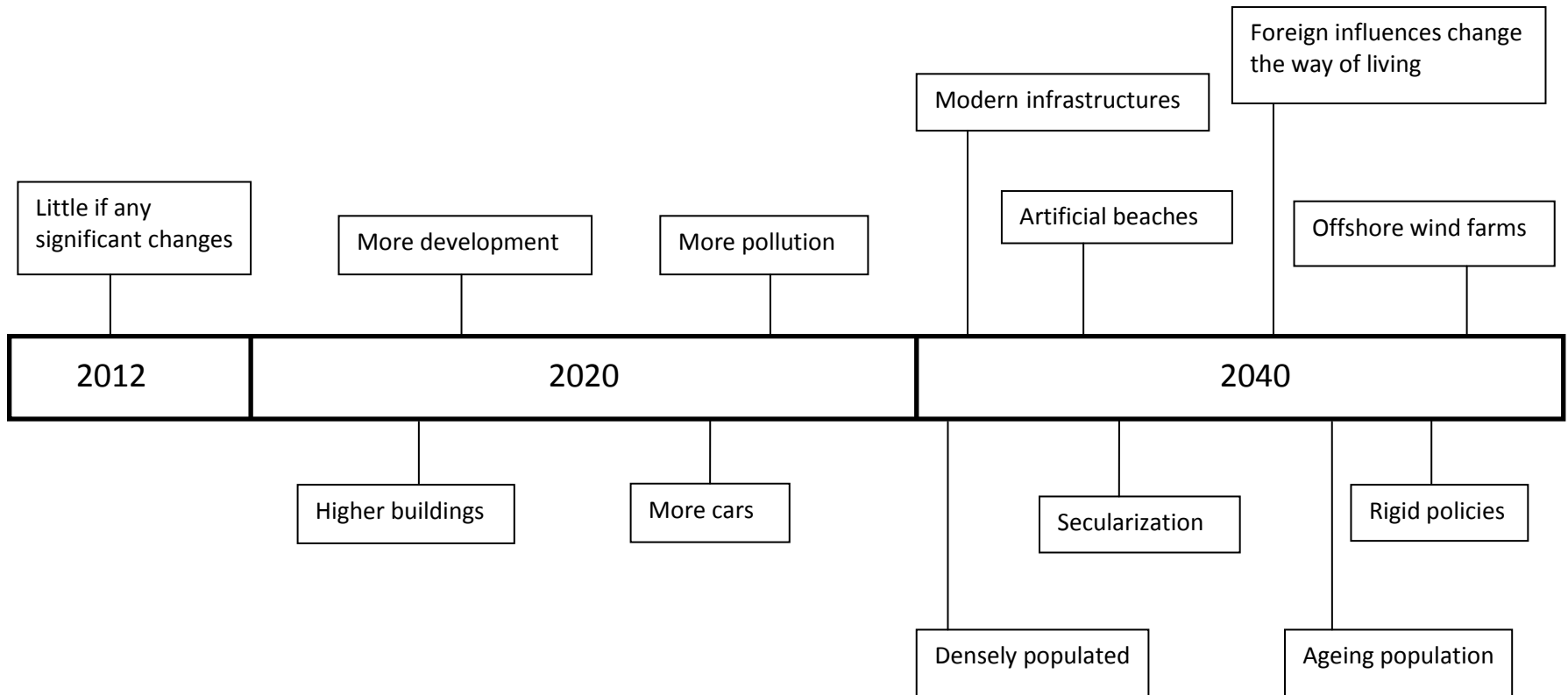


Figure 13: YOUTHS SCENARIOS OF CHANGE TIMELINE



4.3 Dwindling natural and cultural heritage

The individual landscape traits of the diverse Gozitan landscapes are being slowly changed prompting the loss of valuable historic cultural remnants. One youth mentioned the disappearance of functional windmills as an example. This is mainly attributed to the lack of upkeep and maintenance of a number of key amenities in Gozo. Adult participants agreed that historic sites have experienced negligence and have been prone to episodes of vandalism. However the increased awareness in cultural heritage is bringing more sites under the spotlight and more cultural heritage features are being given due protection. Both groups agreed that restoration of historical places has had positive results in some popular heritage sites but is lacking in others. One adult participant mentioned that the funds allotted for the Citadel Master Plan which entails better management of this site have not borne fruit as yet. Suitably, two participants questioned whether EU funds are being used to achieve the goal they are supposed to achieve and were sceptical as to how these financial resources are being allotted. Participants expressed concern over cultural and environmental factors having to compete with pressing demands from other sectors. On the other hand, six youths acknowledged the benefits acquired from European funds that are contributing to boost economic development in the Maltese islands.

Several adult participants, especially those that were older in age could recall some heritage buildings, in particular several historic chapels that have perished in certain cases along with their memories. One participant pointed out that in his recent visit to Ta' Ċenċ, he couldn't locate some prehistoric remains which were usually very easy to identify up to 3 years ago.

“When locals discovered that historic artifacts carry value, looting ensued either for personal keepsakes or to be sold for money.” Case in point is the Victoria Regina rectangular stone blocks which were put along roads as markers during British rule signifying that the land behind them was owned by the government used to be quite common but now have almost disappeared altogether. Two adults also mentioned that reservoirs are not being cleaned and their water is recklessly being used by individuals for

personal use; three counterparts added the over abstraction of the water table through illegal boreholing and valleys still have sewage seeping on the valley floors and into the sea to the list. If deterioration of these finite resources persists, the Gozitan natural and cultural environment will in turn suffer landscape quality deterioration. Ultimately these will have a more significant effect on local's health and well-being and might pose a threat to their human security.

4.4 Suggestions for protection and management

All the adults articulated the need for a better and clearer vision for Gozo. Development should not be given the green light in sensitive areas which happen to be those same areas that us locals are saying we need to promote. The contribution of the government in ameliorating the general situation in Gozo through enforcement and legislation and issuing of funds and subsidies was undisputable and universal. However, the adults insisted that MEPA has to be impartial and that politics should not be an issue in building permits. In this case, good governance and the rule of law have to be enforced so as to promote accountability, transparency and efficiency. Both groups emphasized the use of several buildings which are vacant before developing new areas and development should follow only if needed. One needs to find a means of equilibrium as this forms the basis of sustainable development but this is very difficult to find although control of development can be managed. Another participant proposed monetizing the value of certain environmental and cultural aspects. One adult suggested promoting more countryside walks and directing tourism to the countryside.

“Gozo as a modern island has to rest on several levels however if we need to keep Gozo as an ecological island we have to restrain building permits in the outskirts and development has to be at a minimum.”

“If we are saying that we have to promote Gozo as an island with its characteristics, then we have to capitalize on those characteristics. But if we are promoting it as an island that offers a certain type of leisure then we have to promote it on these lines and not have mixed interests.”

“To safeguard our natural and cultural patrimony we have to work in cooperation. The environment belongs to everyone and not to the developer only and this is the message that several entities and NGOs are trying to spread.”

All the youths suggested stricter permits and more conformity in building styles. A strong preference was held for virgin land to be preserved and not sold to private entities in order to improve the financial situation of the country. Fairness for all and rationality as the basis for better management of our cultural and natural patrimony were held as two main principles. They suggested increasing collective efforts to market Gozo as an eco-destination and attract other types of tourists such as those interested in agro-tourism and eco-tourism which is being developed in Gozo but can be potentially offered.

4.5 Thematic Analysis of Semi-structured Interviews (with local councils and authorities)

4.5.1 Knowledge about the ELC

Only half of the local councils know about the existence of a European convention on landscape (Table 6). Several of those local councils who replied yes think that the ELC is a big concept that would be problematic for the Maltese setting. Two local councils in particular stated that it entails huge funds and corporate monopolies which are presently lacking. However four local councils expressed their interest to a possible ratification of the convention in the future only if all the stakeholders pool their resources together and act in unison (Table 7). The planning authority is also in favor of the adoption of the ELC and is a signatory state, although considering that the Landscape Assessment Study for the Maltese Islands issued by the planning authority in 2004 is still in draft format 6 years later suggest that there isn't significant interest in ratifying. However as 3 mayors affirmed, such a decision is not the sole responsibility of the organizations and authorities but is predominantly a decision of the cabinet. None of the local councils or the Ministry for Gozo knows whether there are any plans for Malta to ratify the European Landscape convention. In contrast, the representative of Malta for the ELC affirmed that there are plans for Malta to ratify this convention but no details could be disclosed with respect to timeframes.

Table 6: Interested parties who know about the ELC and vice versa.

Have you heard about the European Landscape Convention?		
	YES	NO
LOCAL COUNCILS	GHAJNSIELEM	ŻEBBUĠ
	RABAT	MUNXAR
	GHARB	GHASRI
	QALA	FONTANA
	SANNAT	KERĊEM
	SAN LAWRENZ	NADUR
	XEWKIJA	XAGHRA
AUTHORITIES	MEPA MINISTRY FOR GOZO (ECO-GOZO)	MINISTRY FOR GOZO (IMPLEMENTATION)

Table 7: The reply of only those local councils and MEPA who know about the ELC is included.

Possible ratification of the ELC in the future	
YES	NO
GHAJNSIELEM	GHARB
RABAT	QALA
SAN LAWRENZ	SANNAT
MEPA	XEWKIJA

4.5.2 Understanding landscape quality

It was observed that discussion of ‘landscape’ by mayors was restricted to landscaping. In fact ‘landscaping’ and ‘landscape’ were used interchangeably and this was apparent in the first question posed by the author on any undergoing projects that lead to a sustainable landscape (See Appendix G). For example, the upgrading of Urban Conservation Areas is high on the agenda of every local council in terms of road embellishment, infrastructural works, street furniture and playing fields to name a few. Some mayors equated landscape with the natural environment in so doing overlooking the cultural aspect. Moreover, when the Maltese word for landscapes was used ‘pajsagġi’ there was some confusion in the

terminology with a similarly pronounced word which refers to heritage trails. None of the Local Councils have planned any initiative to develop landscape quality objectives for their locality or Gozo and, on being questioned on this point, some of the mayors resorted to a detailed description of projects they have embarked upon to improve their locality. Likewise the Ministry for Gozo and the Planning authority said they do not have the groundwork for identifying landscape quality objectives.

The Ministry for Gozo declared that Gozo will become an eco-island by 2020. When asked how this will be achieved and how the management of the landscape features in this 'vision', the Eco-Gozo representative stated that the aim is to attain higher sustainable development standards to strengthen tourism. He affirmed that Gozo is a rural destination with important landscape qualities that have to be safeguarded primarily for the locals and then for the economic well being of the island. Hence the inhabitants of Gozo are directly concerned in protection as these are the first users of this service through appreciation and enjoyment of the landscape. However the Ministry for Gozo interviewees stated that presently, they have no plans to involve the public to define what future landscapes they would like.

4.5.3 Tools adopted for the protection, management and/or planning of landscapes

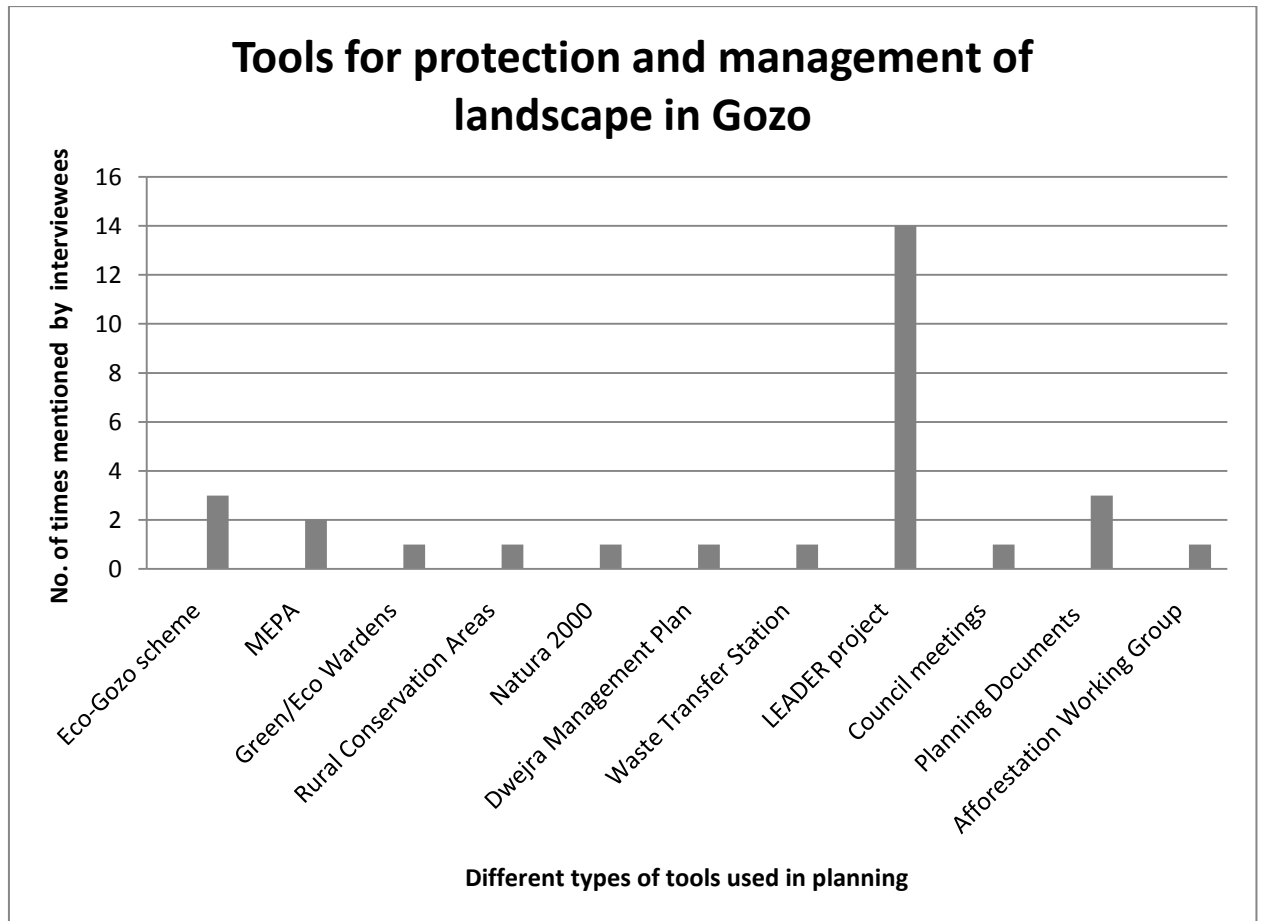
All 14 local councils in Gozo are members of the Gozo Action Group which was launched on August 8th 2008 and three mayors were appointed as their representatives. The underlying purpose of this partnership is that Gozo will contribute to the fulfilment of the LEADER Project which is a new foundation for Malta that can be implemented under the Rural Development Plan 2007-2013. LEADER follows a bottom-up approach by giving all stakeholders and the whole community the opportunity to be actively involved in the sustainable development of their rural area. As the author was informed by the Xaghra mayor, the allocated budget to provide for advertising Gozo as a destination, better landscaping, investment in culture and tourism and the industry has not been disbursed as yet and it seems as if plans in Gozo have stagnated. This initiative is crucial in containing speculative development in Gozo and decide on means to sustainably improve the quality

of life and the economic opportunities through the preparation of a Local Development Strategy. This should see a broad public consultation process to devolve decision making to the local authorities (Gozo Action Group 2010). Another tool mentioned for the protection and management of landscapes is the Covenant of the Mayors (Fig.14). Four local councils in Gozo are also party to this European initiative that sees Europe's local authorities collaborate to reduce CO² emissions by 20 per cent and improve energy efficiency.

The 'Eco-Gozo' project seems to be a pervasive theme amongst the local councils and authorities, as it was amongst the focus groups participants, featuring recurrently in answers to several questions. This is probably attributed to the recent emergence of this concept which has identified a set of strategic objectives for Gozo to transform it into a greener island. One of the interviewees for the Ministry for Gozo stated that the aspirations of the public are part of the goals of 'Eco-Gozo' and the ministry has several projects in the pipeline which are mounted with the latest green technology to reach environmental sustainability. The majority of the interviewees feel that the Eco-Gozo theme still has to gain credence as it is still a vague concept that has replaced the old cliché 'Għawdex presepju' – the perception of Gozo as “a crib”. Youth participants even more than their adult counterparts are less knowledgeable about Eco-Gozo. Some youths have next to no awareness of the proposed projects and their purpose.

The two main tools for the protection, management and/or landscape planning cited by both Mepa and the Ministry for Gozo were the Structure Plan for the Maltese islands and the Gozo and Comino local plan. The former was mainly mentioned for the designation of areas of high landscape value which was further developed in the local plans (See Chapter 2). The Qala mayor divulged that as an organization they were directly involved in the institution of the Gozo and Comino local plan policies which were subsequently amended without notice. This fact questions the efficiency of consultation and the quest for good governance.

Figure 14: The tools that have been adopted by the local councils and authorities to in some way protect, manage and plan the landscapes in Gozo.



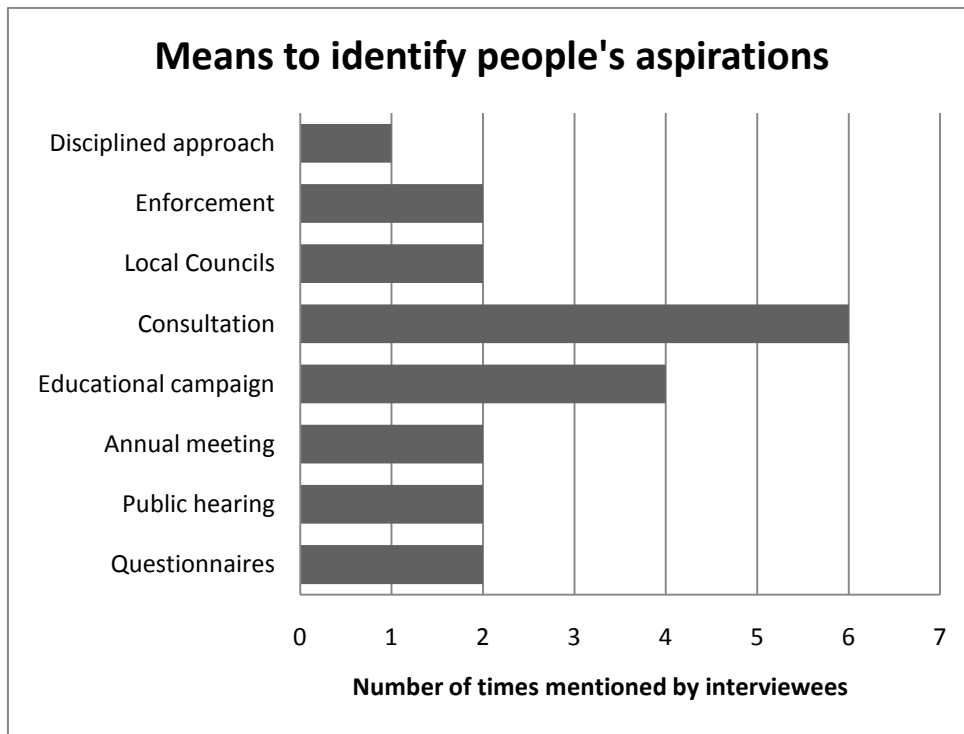
4.5.4 Public involvement in project development and landscape management

Authorities view

With regards to procedures for the participation of the general public in the realisation of the ‘Eco-Gozo vision’, the director of the Eco-Gozo project said that all the projects have undergone a wide consultation process with all interested stakeholders and suggestions were given due consideration and filtered by experts to be incorporated into the proposals. Consultation in fact emerged as the standard practice of public involvement especially in defining changing landscapes according to people’s aspirations, being mentioned six times (Fig.15). The planning authority said that it has no concrete plans of involving the public to define what future landscapes they would like. This is attributed to a lack of both human resources and financial resources which limit extensive research in this area. However, the

spokesperson for MEPA and the ELC affirmed that although presently the ELC is marginally addressed, there is an obligation for ulterior measures in the involvement of the public since it is a crucial aspect of the convention.

Figure 15: Potential methods that can be adopted by the interested parties to ensure that the preservation of the landscape mirrors the aspirations of the locals.



Local councils and focus groups view

Table 8 outlines 11 local councils' possible plans to involve the public in defining what future landscapes they would like. The remaining 3 local councils, Għasri, Fontana and Xewkija have no plans to involve the public in this issue. The most outstanding means of public involvement is the referendum held by the Qala local council as it was related to a controversial development project. Public hearings seems to be a popular means of communication with the locals. However, most mayors remarked that they have made commendable efforts in public engagement projects but the response is unsatisfactory as people are disinterested or lack the will to dialogue. This is contrary to the focus group data as the participants showed enthusiasm to attend future workshops that concern development

on a local scale and insisted for more publicity and information in advance. Most of the youths stated that they are never aware if a public meeting is going to be held by their local council and have never attended one. Other difficulties experienced by the mayors involve the implementation of certain projects owing to apathy on the part of certain individuals who do not have their country's interest at heart and the inability to control acts of vandalism.

Education was a recurring theme in several of the answers given to different questions. The focus group participants felt that education should be a key component of outreach efforts designed to raise environmental awareness levels and change the prevailing mindset to help improve the general condition of the Gozitan landscapes. This is considered to be the real problem by the Ministry for Gozo and not MEPA, contrary to what the focus groups participants felt. While being a positive institution in itself, MEPA is widely regarded as the overarching authority which approves speculative development in a senseless way. All mayors emphasized that policies have to be supported by the educational sector and that there is a promising drive from the younger generation. Education was also the second most popular method employed by the local councils to ensure that the preservation of the landscape mirrors the aspiration of the locals and to be effective at the grassroots. This technique was also adopted by the Ministry for Gozo, announcing plans to install information panels at certain facilities to make the users aware of the important features present in the area. Education on Landscape as promoted by the ELC has to be given importance as it plays a major role for implementing Education for Sustainable development. Both types of education would help expand the education on the environment currently offered in schools. According to Castiglioni (2009), landscape education not only guarantees more awareness where individuals learn to thoroughly observe what is around them and develop a personal connection and commitment with their surroundings. It is a form of experience which enhances one's knowledge about means to improve quality and anticipate threats and be aware of the consequences of one's actions. Therefore, this type of education is far-reaching as it is also influential in a child's upbringing through the application of interdisciplinary activities and different subjects. Hence, engaging with a specific landscape can ensure the sustainable development of landscapes.

Table 8: Techniques of community involvement used by some local councils.

Local Council	Types of Public Involvement
Għajnsielem	Questionnaires
Victoria, Kerċem, Żebbug & Nadur	Public hearings & Annual meetings
Munxar	Management of public places
Għarb	Outings
Qala	Referendum in the case of the Qala Creek Project, public hearing & local council gazette
Sannat	Subcommittees, cultural events, radio station, street meetings & 'Clean-up Sannat'
San Lawrenz	Educational Campaign
Xagħra	'Socio-cultural initiatives for the locality of Xagħra' (consisted of public interviews)

4.5.5 Strategic Planning in relation to the 'vision' of the public.

Local councils view

The issue of financial assistance brought up by many of the respondents suggests that landscape comes secondary to other projects that are not environment-related. In fact local councils acknowledge that securing revenue sources and discretionary spending are constraining factors in the fulfilment of the existing targets for completion of projects hampering the progress of the locality. In their opinion, they are being asked to do more with less. In contrast, other mayors boasted of the fact that they were working hard to maximize funds not solely from the planning authority (Urban improvement fund¹), and the EU but also through other entities. The general idea amongst the majority of the local councils is that development is very difficult to control and recreational areas are not given due consideration owing to the dominance of other priorities. The focus-group responses accord with the interview results in that the general perception is that the sole beneficiaries of massive projects are the developers who are threatening Gozo's idyllic rural character with the pretence that its economy would be stimulated.

¹ MEPA has made available Lm1 million to the Local Councils through the Urban Improvement Fund by virtue of a policy which promotes environmentally-friendly projects.

Authorities view

The representative of the Eco-Gozo project said that the ‘vision’ depends upon the cohorts of the Maltese population as different age groups tend to have different preferences for landscape services. He also admitted that although the policies are strict at certain points there can be failures and that it is customary to have people in agreement and people who are opposed to any type of change. The representative of the ELC in Malta alleged that landscape is covered by other policies and conservation and protection measures might therefore be achieved in an indirect way. In fact, most of the existing legislation is all-encompassing and is not explicit in its concern for landscape which is mainly articulated in policy guidance. As for the suggestion of demolition of illegal structures, she stated that there is nothing that can be done about already existing development as some of this could have been built before the coming into effect of building regulations and are only reconciled through height restrictions. For example high rise buildings would be refused on the grounds of obstruction of the views of fortifications or important landmarks.

4.6. Priorities for landscape change over the next years.

All participants and interviewees make fine distinctions in what is acceptable and what is unacceptable in landscape changes. The table below lists pursued landscape targets related to the rural and urban environment with the cultural heritage marginally considered. The adults expressed general support for the preservation of the salient features that are quintessentially Gozitan and the associated landscapes so as to prevent a gradual erosion of local distinctiveness. Any type of urban development and regeneration projects has to be sustainable from the economic, social and environmental side with a renewed interest in tranquil, rural landscapes. On the other hand, the tranquillity of the rural landscapes is not an attribute in the modern outlook of youths which necessitates more functional landscapes (facilities and amenities) especially in the transport sector. At the other extreme, some interviewees are reluctant to intervene on landscapes and simply want them to remain as they are without any changes, underpinning an old slogan developed to promote tourism: “Gozo – the island where time stood still”.

Table 9: Ideal landscape targets as identified throughout the study by focus group participants and interviewees.

Desired Landscape Targets	Locals	Authorities/Local Councils	Discrepancies / Agreements
Preservation of the layout of existent village	✓	✓	
Control of urban sprawl	✓	✓	There is a strong impetus to contain land development proliferation. All participants opted for the removal of eyesores in townscapes.
Better changes in transportation and improvement in the public transport	✓		Adults suggested lowering the license of motorcycles as in other EU countries, and positive discrimination for small efficient cars. Youths want fewer cars on the road and more hybrid cars.
Better road infrastructure	✓	✓	Youths stressed the need for pathways for bike users.
More recreational areas and preservation of green areas	✓	✓	
More uniformity of building styles	✓	✓	The Victoria mayor mentioned that the concept of farmhouses saved Gozo from becoming a 'concrete jungle' like Malta. These, together with houses of character are a selling-point of tourism.
Use of alternative forms of energy	✓		
More protected areas and animal species	✓		
Control of dumping		✓	
Conservation of agriculture and rural structures (rubble walls & corbelled huts)	✓	✓	Youths mentioned the adoption of permaculture ² techniques to minimize agricultural land abandonment. Adults and mayors gave particular importance to rubble walls as the markers of the rural landscape.
More eco-friendly strategies	✓		
Cleaning of valleys	✓	✓	
Countryside & Heritage trails	✓	✓	

²Permaculture (permanent agriculture) is the harmonious integration of landscape and people providing their food, energy, shelter, and other material and non-material needs in a sustainable way.

4.6.1 The impact of regional development policies on future landscapes.

The mayors hold firm to the importance of the establishment of local councils as these have been very efficient in the management of their respective localities. Most mayors said that local councils are contributing their utmost in landscaping and conservation of historic and natural elements through small projects. However three local councils complained of a lack of human resources especially technical advisors in the phase of project implementation. Similarly, the adult focus group participants acknowledged the benefits of local councils as these are entrusted to improve the standards of their locality on many levels whilst ensuring the satisfaction of the residents. The Ministry for Gozo endorsed the proactive measures to conserve the environmental integrity of Gozo through restoration projects of coastal towers for example through the help of local NGOs which ardently contribute to safeguard certain areas in the form of site managers. Reflecting a suggestion by most mayors, in the Eco-Gozo project, planners are ensuring that each site is to have one aspect of a self-sustaining resource to be re-used and to lead by example to the locals, for Gozo to be truly ecological. However, given that such projects entail a considerable budget, most of them are still in an experimental phase. MEPA certified the contribution of policies in landscape improvement as these were set up together with thresholds identified in village cores through a rationalization exercise to contain development.

There was general consensus amongst all participants that the lack of enforcement of existing policies has worsened the planning situation. Adult focus group participants observed that for every action there is a governing law but whether it is enforced or not is highly questionable. Few individuals are publicly punished or prosecuted in connection with illegal structures hence having other offenders following their example because of lenient laws. Another crucial factor is the system based on short-term planning which is geared towards quick profit at the expense of quality of life and heritage of the islands. The preponderance of certain negative views provides compelling evidence that participants feel little involved and contributing in the process of policy making implying that policy makers are significantly out of touch with the residents. The Xewkija mayor mentioned that although the policies on paper exist, they do not reach the parameters of the ELC.

4.7 Landscape Quality Objectives for Gozo

The balance of conflicting forces and deciding what kind of landscape is most desirable is a contemporary dilemma facing land use planners (Nikodemus *et al.*, 2005). Through structured analysis of the discussions on desired and perceived future changes, the following 8 landscape quality objectives were identified for Gozo:

LANDSCAPE QUALITY OBJECTIVES

1. More maintenance of the village cores and architectural characteristics to sustain the vernacular landscape. Together with the existent social fabric these present a safe and tranquil living environment.
 2. Safeguard landscapes which bear evidence of the traditional and historic character including country trails, rubble walls and ancient sites to preserve the character.
 3. Create landscapes which are attractive to the young generation in providing competitive tertiary education and job opportunities; the latter can be achieved by redeveloping inoperative industrial estates and by offering competitive remuneration packages when compared to those offered in Malta.
 4. Optimize land use to increase landscapes multifunctionality. This would be achieved through organic/bio-farming practices to provide sustainable agro-landscape management and long-term ecosystem services.
 5. Create self-sustaining landscapes that conform to the objectives of an eco-island dependent on energy efficient designs. This would be achieved through the provision of domestic and national incentives for investment in renewable energy sources and supportive infrastructure.
 6. Encourage greener landscapes consisting of more trees and green belts which offer the individual a closer link with nature.
 7. Ensure more resilient landscapes as a result of the protection of vulnerable resources such as coastal areas.
 8. Explore landscapes to identify specialized niche tourism, to culturally enhance the 'Gozo experience' and increase the number of visitors. This will create economically viable landscapes whilst developing the Gozo product.
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4.8 Interpretation of Findings.

The main objectives of this study were to identify the ideal landscape which the public and authorities envision over 2, 10 and 30 year time-frames, to what extent these are supported by present plans and policies and to explore consensus and conflict between different participant groups.

The focus groups provided the opportunity for participants to systematically determine the outcome of land use change and discuss possible solutions for the degradation of landscape components. This is contrary to the existing development planning practices where key environmental indicators identified in the 2008 Environment Report (MEPA) have not been tested against social values. Furthermore, the results reveal striking similarities between local councils and the adult focus group participants in the way they want landscapes to change in the future. The general feeling is to protect the distinctive natural and cultural characteristics of Gozo before they are totally eradicated from memory and sight. This stems from people's awareness and general knowledge about Gozo which enhances their experience in landscapes (Bell, 1999).

All the participants have a strong predilection towards the village core. They have shown opposition towards any type of development which would disturb the typical layout of typical villages. In fact, the UCA (Urban Conservation Area) was considered the most important contributor to landscape character by the adult focus group participants as these give a cultural sense of belonging. By end 2008, 62 UCAs had been designated and 1,904 cultural heritage buildings, monuments, features and archaeological sites were scheduled. This recorded a considerable increase over the UCAs reported by the then Environmental Management Unit denoting a positive trend towards conservation in this regard. Damaging threats to our heritage are most likely to affect the unscheduled archaeological sites found outside UCAs, irrespective of the existence of a National Protective Inventory (MEPA, 2008).

Some of the endemic constraints identified by the participants also featured in a SWOT analysis prepared as part of the 2010 Pre-Budget document for Gozo (See Appendix B). This further exposes the strategic importance of the environmental sector for the development of the Maltese Islands. The problem trees' driving forces are compatible with the findings of Conrad *et al.*'s research (2010b) focusing on the characterization of landscape by people in Gozo - urbanization being a common threat identified together with the "trend towards apartment blocks replacing terraced houses and farmhouses" (p. 9). Similarly to Conrad *et al.*'s study, in this dissertation, the 'abandonment of agricultural land' was identified as an aspect of landscape change. Despite its declining role in the economy as the adult participants anticipated that within 30 years the agricultural industry will disappear as it is facing extensive threats, its significant contribution to landscape management both aesthetically and functionally cannot be disputed. Youths' attitude towards agriculture seems to be negative as no mention was made in relation to changes. This is generally attributed to their strong inclination to live in urban or semi-urban areas (D'Silva *et.al.*, 2009). Another comparison to this study is the low percentage of survey respondents that participated in Conrad *et al.*'s research which are contrary to any changes in the future. In fact in this research the respondent groups that were opposed to any type of change to landscapes were mainly the planning authority and the Ministry for Gozo although there are exceptions as even some mayors did not wish to see any changes. Conversely, the majority of the participants in the present research advocated changes and distinguished the landscape features they would like to see or be improved in order to secure their role in the functioning of landscapes. Explanations were based either on a positive perception of the current situations or a negative perception of possible alterations. Hence this study provides strong evidence that 'landscapes have always changed and will continue to change, both through natural processes and through human action' (Council of Europe 2000, §42).

The results indicate that landscapes with greater heterogeneity and traditional elements are given a higher value over more uniform and modern landscape. Participants prefer to have variety in landscapes rather than single-typed landscapes as more cultural and ecosystem services can be provided. Nevertheless it seems that these benefits (e.g. production of

goods, escapism, spiritual, recreation) are not taken into account during decision making as multifunctional landscapes continue to be converted in simpler, mono-functional land use types because of settlement expansion. The issue of functionality underlines the major difference between traditional and modern landscapes. The latter are mainly characterized by uniform and rational solutions and lack the spirit of the place (Alumae *et al.*, 2003). The loss of landscape functionality is considered as a form of disturbance by Nohl (2001). Case in point is the meagre chance of experiencing naturalness in today's landscapes as expressed by the youths. Besides this type of loss, the decline in quality of the landscape also incorporates a loss of variety, a loss of 'rural structuring', a loss of regional identity and a loss of vista quality (Nohl, 2001). In terms of variety, the phrase "jungle of concrete" sums it all as it is indicative of the uniformity characterizing modern development. The loss of 'rural' structuring can be explained with several historic landmarks which have lost their function as visual landmarks as they are now concealed by higher constructions. Similarly this is also affecting the vista quality by obstructing distant views. The loss of regional identity is probably the most serious of all as landscape provides intrinsic values: "Landscape has lost its ability to tell specific and individual stories to the beholder" (Nohl 2001 p. 224). The present research runs parallel to this statement as the general view amongst the participants is that sooner or later it would be difficult to distinguish Gozo from Malta. It is these intangible characteristics that De Groot (2005) claims are difficult to measure in monetary value as their benefits are not included in economic models. This attitude preconditions the changes in land use of which the benefits are exploited by interest groups whilst the costs in terms of environmental externalities are shouldered by the community and future generations (Hajkowicz *et al.*, 2003).

Being an island devoid of natural resources, the study participants were highly concerned about the management of scarce resources other than land itself. In particular, water conservation seems to be a paramount issue where work is undertaken by the Ministry for Gozo and local councils to clean up valleys to ensure better flow of water and provide water catchment plans (See Appendix G). This type of management strategy is an example of a monofunctional solution which is intended for vulnerable landscape components (Selman, 2009). Given that landscape in essence captures the synthesis between ecological

processes and human intervention, landscape analysis has to be multifunctional by incorporating wider strategies to safeguard the landscape holistically (Farrell & Anderson, 2010). This task will be fraught with difficulty given that some multifunctional conservation approaches would be riskier to undertake as the complexity and diversity of dynamic environmental systems is not easily characterized. The continuity of the landscape has to be ensured without significant human disturbances which can fragment the landscape and weaken the long term viability of its functional units.

Assessing attitudes and interpreting perceptions.

Consultation seems to be a bone of contention in this study. On the one hand, citizens declare their lack of active awareness of workings of local councils. But on the other hand, the mayors affirm that the public features at an early stage in local council consultation processes before project development and decision making. However, according to the mayors the latter does not apply for the projects entrusted to the planning authority where planning is mostly *ad hoc* (Kamra tal-Periti 2008); consultation is normally held after all major aspects of projects have been defined in principle on the political level mostly disregarding civil society interests as noted by the focus group participants. This cognitive dissonance together with perceived inconsistency in decision making is seen to be a case of management being “strong with the weak and weak with the strong” (Polidano, 2008 p.15). Providing clear information and participation at an early stage in the decision making is one of the key components for establishing trust. The inclusion of public participation in the revision of the Structure Plan and the integration of landscape planning with the country’s planning framework are key criteria to satisfy the requirements of the ELC indicating early stages of conformity with the ELC.

The author noted comments from several mayors that suggested people are not motivated to attend public hearings and meetings, with these being generally perceived as a waste of time. Part of the reason could be attributed to the feeling of powerlessness when it comes to policy making (Butula, 2008a). However, if a development issue gains enough publicity,

then there is an outcry by the residents if it is not compatible with their line of thought (e.g. Hondoq ir-Rummien project). The implication is whether the mayors are advertising the information concerning their locality in unsuccessful ways which might be slow or antiquated as seemingly they are not reaching their audience. Engaging with citizens should not be seen as a challenge but as an opportunity. If the management of the landscape is to be sustainable and democratic whilst ensuring that the urban fabric is in good condition, all concerned parties and residents should be involved. Hence, a finding of this research is the need for clearer dialogue with the local people so as to facilitate mutual understanding and agreement on the needs of landscape planning. The concept of sustainable localities which has been successfully adopted by San Lawrenz locality in Gozo, should serve as a blueprint for other localities to devolve decision making directly to the local authorities (DOI, 2010).

According to the focus group participants there seems to be incongruence between what Outside Development Zone policies espouse as best practice and what is actually implemented as several development projects are still sanctioned in strategically sensitive sites. Taking a case in point, the proposed development of a marina village at Hondoq ir-Rummien which is designated as a Rural Conservation Area and an Area of high landscape value does not seem to follow the ODZ policies. This again is not consistent with policy GZ-TRSM-2 which allows for the existing buildings and structures located in ODZ. This particular policy follows SP policy RCO 2 which prohibits any type of urban development which is not earmarked for ODZ areas. Hence these past years, new considerations for modern constructions in Gozo have not been consistent with the Structure Plan and Local Plan provisions most of which are infringed or interpreted freely resulting in the destruction of the landscape image. It is apparent that most of the SP regulations are formulated for passive protection which is a restricted type of protection as it only protects against development in the landscape and pro-active measures for management or conservation are not offered (Per Grau Moller, 2008).

The attitudinal diversity amongst the locals and the authorities becomes the most apparent when participants ask local authorities to redefine their priorities in the planning system and allocate money in improving existing green spaces and providing additional ones in urban

contexts. The policies of the Structure Plan and Gozo and Comino local plan do not fully support the ideal landscape targets identified by the public primarily the one desired by the youths revolving around energy. The youths mentioned the EU 2020 by 2020 energy targets because in their opinion, these will help in achieving more energy savings and improve environment quality. This is also the ambitious goal of several energy efficiency measures undertaken by most of the local councils along with the Eco-Gozo scheme. Although the now 18 year old Structure Plan is outdated, a proposal for a national energy policy was launched in 2006 for public consultation which includes a number of government policies that concern the energy sector. The underlying problem as emphasized by the participants remains the lack of enforcement where compliance with legislated management provisions is generally temporary and short term. This indicates that the community itself is part of the driving forces that trigger negative landscape change owing to 'greediness', 'egoism', 'vandalism', 'corruption' and so forth, factors that are symbolic of indigenous Maltese culture and mentality. The long term effectiveness of enforcement programmes is enhanced when they are designed and used in combination with other management tools (Kay & Alder, 1999). This is especially so when enforcement is integrated with communication and educational programmes as opposed to indoctrination practices.

Contesting changes in landscapes.

The general view acquired from the response of the participants is that adults have the propensity to be more conservation-minded. A reason for this is probably grounded in their upbringing in a relatively undeveloped landscape. Such inferences show that the public is capable of assessing and understanding landscape in a multidimensional way contrary to the one-dimensional way that public perception is often represented (Scott 2002). The results show that the adaptive capacity of the adults to landscape change (Hunziker *et al.*, 2008) is not high and is the opposite for the youths whom embraced most of the changes they identified despite the perceived decline in environmental quality. The acceptance of change as part of the development of landscape rather than a negative outcome, leads to a better understanding of modern threats and their contribution to the character of a place

(Fairclough, 2006a). In this respect, the general feeling is that people are not very satisfied with the new version of Gozo's landscape character and fear a possible dilution in the future.

One key word that emerged from the focus groups/semi-structured interviews is 'innovative'. There is a reigning misconception that Gozo is simply branded as an attractive retirement location for foreigners and locals as proclaimed by youth participants. All the participants acknowledge that in order to ensure success, development in Gozo has to be innovative and not speculative. People having different backgrounds and ideas, engaging in different practices within single local contexts is the source of innovation (Clementi, 2003). There was a general consensus from all the participants of the research that Gozo's tourism product is outdated, limited and lacks upkeep. This is attributed to popular heritage sites such as Ġgantija and the Citadel which despite being inextricably linked to Gozitan cultural heritage, do not encompass the full potential of other places of interest that the island has to offer. There is a dire need to capitalize on yet unexplored/derelict sites or pre-industrial landscapes which abound in Gozo instead of focusing solely on expanding tourist resorts. As stated by the focus group participants, Cassar's (2010) study and the objectives of the Eco-Gozo, the island of Gozo should not be 'just another' Mediterranean island but should be promoted as an experience beyond the destination (Grech, 2004). According to Antrop (2000), a strong symbolic value is delivered by historic landscapes which play an important role in the tourism industry. In this way we would be preventing the cultural environment from becoming meaningless (Kobylnski, 2006). Many local councils are using funds purposely to attract 'high quality tourism' which would broaden and enrich the visitor's experience. The ambitious Eco-Gozo project also fits in this discussion promising 'an enhancement of the island's identity' as one of its strategic objectives. As as any other novel term, this concept still has to be fully substantiated as claimed by the mayors who are experiencing difficulties with realization of projects owing to bureaucratic burdens in the issuing of permits.

Another recurrent term that was practically mentioned by every participant is 'balance'. Discussion with participants uncovered a dire need for balance between development and

control of development as landscape is a resource in itself which if solely exploited for economic purposes would impinge negatively on the quality of life. Such an association was also reported by Cassar (2010) who affirms that ‘the natural heritage of the Maltese Islands is rarely presented as an economic asset’ (p.154). The focus group participants could not reconcile certain policies such as policy GZ-SETL-1 which has been in force since 1990, where the ever-increasing development is intended to be directed in the existing areas designated for urban development and not shift into intact areas. However there cannot be a moratorium on development as a restriction on the expansion of land use might have repercussions on the economy (Holryod, 2008). But demand should be met by efficient use of land already earmarked for development and the existing housing units in order to abide by the principles of sustainability and ensure that Gozo would be truly an eco-island. This also applies for the issue of parking spaces raised by the participants which despite its importance in the transport sector, was not considered as a landscape quality target in itself. The issue of demand and supply also conditions the economy of the island. The general attitude amongst the focus group participants is that the economic climate in Gozo is not attractive to the younger generation - limited prospects for career progression being the main reason cited. Social amenities and working places have to be improved in order to attract more investment.

Overall, the findings demonstrate stakeholders’ ability to recognize and advance important messages of their community. Although quality is subjective and means of action vary for different landscapes, this study has shown that ‘all landscapes matter’. The participant’s comments and the landscape quality objectives identified in this research can be used to directly inform the update of the Structure Plan and other policy documents discussed in Chapter 2 validating important characteristics; most valued landscape characteristics; forces for change; the cultural services delivered and pave the way for a possible ratification of the ELC.

CHAPTER 5 - CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has revealed that qualitative social research is an ideal method to delve deeper into understanding participation in landscape planning and important landscape attributes. The results encourage further research to supplement detailed information used to assess criteria for area classification based on quality. The validity of this study is proven by the satisfaction of three presumptions: participants were able to notice examples of poor condition and appreciate examples of good condition; participants were able to perceive change and able to identify appropriate means of intervention; participants did not limit themselves to a satisfaction of what is already in place but suggested new features which shifts importance on landscape characteristics which traditionally have not been given attention. This highlights the increasing demand of three main socially constructed activities, culture, labor and leisure, all somehow contingent on and influence landscapes. Following participants' suggestions, future landscapes have to be able to provide people with access to: a healthy environment which is less polluted; expanses of land devoted to job creation; and descriptive and evaluative components which diversify the landscape character and enhance its perceived naturalness as recreation and activities. Fulfilling such parameters simultaneously necessitates more functional landscapes which are truly sustainable and supportive of social demands.

This study has acknowledged the plurality of perspectives in assessing a number of landscape components on the basis of the identity factor it delivers, the 'capital value', the 'emotional value' and 'sense of well being' and its vital link in environmental management. This fact predicates that potential threats to the landscapes are very well known amongst the public and stakeholders making it less difficult to anticipate any impending changes of land use and guard against their impacts. Moreover, this fact facilitates analysis for socially acceptable landscape management to practice the objectives and to minimize conflicts that can delay this achievement. Landscape management in Malta does not directly target the enhancement and protection of quality *per se* and is therefore insufficient and in need of reform. A mind shift from narrow disciplinary approaches to inter – and trans-disciplinary approach of knowledge and action, as called for by the ELC, would be a turning point in

Maltese policy making. This interplay of disciplines ranging from the social sciences to the ecological sciences will provide an all-inclusive view of the diverse relationships that act and shape landscapes. Likewise, landscape policy should follow a horizontal, cross-sectoral dimension by assimilating with other policies such as cultural, financial, and social to be closely aligned with the objectives of the ELC.

An effective connection of landscape research and landscape planning is also required to manage processes of change other than the physical fabric itself. As for the latter, all landscapes should be given equal consideration in their totality, in particular historical and archaeological landscapes, as current emphasis is on the natural environmental landscape. The documents that are concerned with defining future green strategies and sustainable designs have to move beyond the assessments of environmental issues in isolation (Rio Declaration, Principle 4). Therefore, instead of assigning ranks that focus exclusively on sites of High landscape value or landscapes that reconcile High quality, one should work with landscape quality of all levels. No estimate of the loss of landscape quality can be derived if the role of different landscape components that are important for defining quality is not assessed in advance.

The evolution of landscapes is an unmistakable fact. Maintaining the multifaceted character of the island of Gozo mainly as a tourist destination and overcoming the influence of insularity is a complex task since pressures from development have lowered the contribution of Gozo's landscape to tourism. The future of landscape management in Gozo will focus on managing development by seeking a sustainable balance between future socio-economic needs of the public and increasing tourism value for the benefit of the island's inhabitants, its visitors and investors (Foxell & de Trafford, 2010). This is a complex task as requirements are diverse and very often conflicting. This study can contribute to improve the tourism product currently offered to visitors by emphasizing the cultural and environmental wealth in their visit. Hence, landscapes in good condition are a major asset for supporting quality tourism implying that landscape quality assessment should be largely considered as an investment. The return on investment would involve

protection and management strategies of landscape quality to subsequently provide benefits to the population.

Although, stakeholder input and community involvement in environmental management has gained momentum in Maltese environmental planning, the expert view is in principle total. Hence, to determine outcome-efficiency and general interest, roundtable discussion with both public and private stakeholders should be implemented. There has to be an analysis of the important drivers and the barriers for people's willingness to participate in landscape matters as generally this practice in Malta is inadequate. In this regard, this study has exposed that people's motivation to local level participation is high, the underlying reason being personal interest for the immediate living space but also the surroundings. It is true that the social conscience in Malta has only recently been stimulated to treat the environment responsibly. It is also true that more needs to be done to harness individual responsibility and restore moral values (NCSD, 2006). However, the participants of this study showed deep concerns about pollution levels and biodiversity and heritage loss. This indicates that a positive attitude and self-consciousness towards environment conservation has been developed not just superficially but also proactively. People want to see changes in landscapes and the changes they want to see would safeguard the Gozitan landscape character for the generations to come. However in terms of contribution at a personal level, it is safe to deduce that people are predisposed to contribute in resolving issues that directly affect them whereas issues that concern the whole island seem to come secondary. Most individuals still affirm that only the government has the power and the competency to deal with issues that concern the country. This unfolds a possible impediment to the advancement of the ELC in Gozo as perception-based landscape planning might not be promoting sustainable development of the landscape. In particular, land-use conflicts between different interest groups might arise on who adjudicates the right for the land. In other words, since the ELC is not legally binding, there is the possibility of interpreting its key actions in ways tailored to specific needs.

Given that the ELC does not rest on designation but adopts a three-pronged strategy of protection, planning and management, how will ordinary/everyday landscapes be managed?

The ELC demands that Malta's spatial planning framework should reflect people's vision for their landscapes. Such vision should be realistic by considering what is feasible in the existing social context and adopting the most viable strategy. A better vision of Maltese landscapes will give a sharper focus for decision makers and legislators to identify and assess the stakeholders that will be affected by a change to the landscape resources in conjunction with important factors such as society values (Kaltenborn & Bjerke, 2002). This could be linked to the use of indicators which determine acceptable or undesirable characteristics of development. Hence, in order to reject or approve changes in environment, the meaning or value should be attached to each act of change. The expansion of perspectives from the assessment of the functional aspects of the landscape to values and socio-cultural dimensions is in essence one of the biggest challenges of future land-use planning (Kaltenborn & Bjerke, 2001). This is referring to the subjectivity in landscape values and its variations.

This study has shown that although a shared landscape vision for the future among various players is not easily conceptualized a priori given the multiplicity of values, drivers and collective expectations for change, it is not an unattainable goal. In fact, the socio-cultural, socio-economic, environmental preferences introduced by the scenarios and landscape quality objectives for Gozo defined in this study are all related. Additionally, as evidenced by the study, government initiatives are increasingly geared towards providing sustainable cities by an approach to sensitive landscape designs. These facts might provoke a stronger stimulus for preparatory work towards ratification. The ELC would provide a useful foundation to curb the threats identified in the study and the damage they impose on landscape quality. The most pressing problem in this respect is the absence of an integrated long-term national development policy that would ensure that landscapes would acquiesce to society's changing needs and values (Boissevain, 2006b). In this case, collaboration with Parties to the ELC could provide useful insights.

Best means of intervention on landscape should involve people active within the landscape but most importantly the youths and school children so as to ensure that results would be long-term. If adequate resources are not in place, the management and realization of LQO

will not suffice. An inventory of various aspects of cultural and rural landscapes which monitors their status and sensitivity thereafter and adopts measures for protection based on their condition and possible elements which could degrade landscape quality should be incorporated in the planning frameworks. This measure could be streamlined via GIS applications and remote sensing technology which have the capacity to generate spatial data and together with already existent data, would secure a unitary system of collection. Such practice would help strengthen local landscape character. Moreover, this could be accompanied by a national strategy for Gozitan/Maltese landscapes to prioritize and coordinate the necessary activities in the coming years. This technical work however requires training and capacity building in landscape analysis and planning. Therefore Malta still has to work on applying one of the essential measures of the ELC where *each Party undertakes to promote training for specialists in landscape appraisal and operations*” (Article 6, B, a). This demands more information and educational material specifically on landscape especially in the educational system. This should be given importance as it is one of the communicative goals of the Convention.

Different judgments in structuring analysis of a development proposal continue to be one of the dilemmas faced by decision-makers during problem solving or decision making. This fact ties with the issue of subjectivity which characterizes the assessment of landscape quality. Expertise is also debatable as the locals at times might be more knowledgeable than policy makers explaining why public participation is insightful and recommendable. Proper debate is the best means to effectively understand disputes by evaluation of disparate arguments. Gozo is still significantly dependent on Malta’s for the adoption of innovative concepts such as the landscape quality objectives which will generally be applied first by Malta or through cooperation with Maltese local councils. However Gozo can be used as a testing ground to sustainable ideas before being implicated on a wider scale. Further research is needed to determine control rights to Gozitan landscapes and factors which hamper development. Gozitans must have a bigger role in planning their future and be the guardians of what they already enjoy. Dependence should not be an issue in the landscape quality objectives identified for Gozo which have to be put instantly into action in order to be effective and prevent future unintended landscape change.

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APPENDIX A

History of International landscape policy.

POLICY	YEAR
European Cultural Convention	1952
Valetta Convention on archaeological heritage	1969, 1992
Man & Biosphere Programm	1971
World Heritage convention, inclusion of cultural landscapes	1972, 1995
Granada Convention on architectural heritage	1985
Convention on Biological Diversity	1992
EC Habitats Directive	1992
Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy and its Action Plan for European Landscapes	1995
EC Biodiversity Strategy and its sectorial Biodiversity Action Plans	1998, 2001
EC Rural Development Regulation	1999
European Spatial Development Perspective	1999
European Landscape Convention	2000
6th Environmental Action Programme	2001
EU Sustainable Development Strategy	2000

APPENDIX B

SWOT analysis identified in the pre-budget 2010 document for Gozo.

	Positive	Negative
Present	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gozo's particular natural environment; • Still relatively 'unspoiled' • Flexible workforce; • Quality tourist accommodation; • Cultural heritage; • Social fabric; 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Double insularity; • Accessibility • Labour market mismatches; • Tertiary education capacity limitations; • Highly seasonal tourist industry; • Limitation and sensitivity of space.
Possible	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active ageing and life-long learning; • Investment in renewable energy; • Environmental contribution to the economy; • Eco-tourism; • Back-office work and IT services; • Niche-tourism; • Potential for distinctive branding (tourism); • Availability of under-unemployed labour force. 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ageing population; • Transport congestion; • Over-development of specific and sensitive areas; • Fragmentation of activities; • Brain drain.

APPENDIX C

Youth focus group session photos



Adult focus group session photos



APPENDIX D

Transcription of the focus group session with adults on the 7th of August 2010

* Audio recordings of the sessions are obtainable from the author upon request.

1) Do you feel that Gozo has changed at all?

Yes from different aspects. There also exists a religious influence that is having an effect on mankind and the natural environment. It's a dilemma and a continuous paradox because Gozo is changing according to human exigencies. Changes in the standard of living require that we adapt to different times.

2) How do you feel Gozo has changed over the years in terms of:

a) its level of development

Considering which development? It is subjective. If you're considering development in terms of a good life, that has been for the better. Development in terms of buildings has increased. We are frequently nibbling away the countryside till no more space for building is left and green spaces where one can have a stroll and rest as nature is in itself a means of 'leisure' and peace of mind. One needs to find a balance, a means of equilibrium but this is very difficult to find. We have to develop only if needed, vacant houses that are uninhabited considering the high value that property is carrying together with the expense of plots, many youth are considering apartments instead of buying houses. Instead of spreading outwards, development is rising vertically with the consequence that it is changing the townscapes – obstructing panoramic views etc all summing up to just a single phrase: 'Jungle of concrete.' We have to safeguard our patrimony.

a) its condition?

Again this is subjective. Some participants - quality of living has declined because people's aspirations have decreased. Couples aspire to live in apartments instead of houses of character, this has caused the loss of traditional building characteristics – lack of proper maintenance has triggered degeneration. Ex: in older times, Republic street was full of houses with similar features such as similar balcony design etc. now this is being lost lest for the schemes introduced by MEPA to safeguard traditional balcony designs. Moreover a new building style has been introduced which is more modern which is not conformant with the surroundings. Lately, Malta has registered an increase in pollution, and a loss of tranquility although some places which offer peace of mind still exist. Individuals who speculate only for money can still be found. Corruption has to be eradicated.

b) its beauty?

Its beauty has declined. Awareness and moral conscience is strong however in terms of commodity, quality of life has improved but contrastingly the quality of the environment is deteriorating. Depends how you look at it. We have to make use of old buildings instead of

developing new ones. Tourists appreciate the core village, visit Gozo because of its unique characteristics. If Gozo becomes like Malta or other foreign places, financially Gozo shall suffer. We have to control egoism because it's a fundamental problem. The problem is at the roots, we instilled in our children a sense of egocentrism. We have to become accustomed to attributing value to nature and culture.

c) its rural character?

Has decreased. Case in point: Zebbug project is a private project but has been branded as part of the Eco Gozo scheme. Where are the sustainable jobs that are listed as part of the projects of the Eco Gozo?

d) its urban character?

This is suggestive. For example, the Waste Transfer station had originally been scheduled to Ghajnsielem so why did they chose Xewkija as a station considering that the residents are irritated because of high levels of pollution and radiation and we already have the an unused heliport which in itself was developed unwisely. Gozo will become an old people's locality we are not creating jobs for our youths that are resorting to working overseas or in Malta and consequently living in these places. Tourist services such as restaurants etc are employing foreigners instead of locals with the result that many Gozitans are migrating to better places which are economically and socially sound. The Catholic church has to participate and condemn these activities because from a religious aspect they are morally negative.

3) Does the human impact on the character over the years e.g. through various industries such as farming, quarrying, housing development etc. make them feel any different about the landscape or do you believe that it forms part of its character?

We can't accept everything. There are limits. We have to strike a balance. Development has to be controlled. What we have forms part of our culture and is a common good so it has to be protected.

Socially we are benefiting however there needs to be better enforcements we have to protect what we have left. We need a proper vision for Gozo without sending any mixed messages. We have to be consistent in our views. We have to reduce and control development in the outskirts to stop urban sprawling. Education is crucial and has to start from tender age. We have to consider vacant plots. A new trend has recently emerged that of installing chimneys with ovens it is an eyesore and is creating more exhaust gases.

PROBLEM TREE CAUSES

SOCIAL

Restoration of old bastions; only now has these been given the adequate attention needed and restoration works started although most of them are in still in a dilapidated state. Inspection and the necessary steps have to be taken. In Malta, most of the things start to be

given due attention in the eve of an election. If development is done in a just manner, that is development which is controlled, it is accepted because lets face it development is part of life and what is existent and forms part of our patrimony has to be protected so there needs to be a balance. Government has to safeguard what we have and not go into extremes. Without control, the environment will surely suffer.

Every single evidence of some heritage buildings has been erased to the extent that some of these together with their memories have been lost forever. Ex: chapel of St Cosmo and St. Damian. One participant pointed out that in his recent visit to Ta' Cenc, he couldn't find some prehistoric remains which were usually very easy to identify up to 3 years ago. This shows the sad reality characterizing these islands. When locals started to acknowledge that historic artifacts carry value, looting took over either for personal keepsakes or to be sold to get money from ancient relics such as the Victoria Regina blocks and the 'horza'.

POLITICAL

MEPA it is a positive institution but it does not carry out its work correctly. It has to be more impartial; someone dubbed it as a 'dictatorship', it has to have one direction and not send mixed messages to the public. It is conflicting how it issues permits that contrast with the heritage you are trying to promote. We should not consider politics building permits and development should not be speculative.

CULTURAL

Sense of patrimony, public transport has to be more efficient

ECONOMIC

We have to give value in terms of money to certain environmental aspects, we have to promote countryside walks, cars have to be smaller and more efficient and there has to be positive discrimination for it, the license for motorcycles has to be low as it is in certain EU countries. Development from certain developed beaches will be less if tourists seek better beaches in foreign countries. One crucial question is whether the EU funds are being used to achieve the goal it had to achieve. There might be issues of individual interests or personal gain.

ENVIRONMENTAL

The environment has to be sustainable and care for people's health. we are constructing projects that are degrading the quality of the natural environment, there is an existing law that prohibits development in valleys but it has been disregarded and development has ensued case in point Zewwieqa etc...This means that for every action there is an accompanying law but whether it is enforced or not is questionable. For example we banned plastic bottles but bigger bottles are still produced in plastic so there hasn't been a substitute for plastic. Reservoirs are not being cleaned and individuals are incorrectly using the water of these reservoirs for personal use besides over abstracting the water table through illegal boreholes. This calls for more protection of resources which are being wasted. To safeguard the environment we have to work in cooperation. Everyone has to contribute his little bit because it's our duty to protect it for future generations. There has been a resurgence of interest in afforestation projects although not extensive in Gozo however this indicates that things are proceeding in the right direction which we have to sustain. Children nowadays are more aware, they were thought how to separate recyclable

waste. The environment does not belong to the developer only it belongs to everyone and this is the message that several entities and NGOs are trying to spread. The noisy petards that are let off in densely inhabited areas during feasts cause distress to the inhabitants in the form of noise pollution.

The proposed development of a Yatch marina project at Hondoq will ruin the leisure of the locals. If we are saying that we have to promote Gozo as an islands with its characteristics, than we have to keep those characteristics. But if we are promoting it as an island that offers a certain type of leisure than we have to promote it on these lines and not have mixed interests. However, it depends from which perspective you look at it as it can be beneficial to the locals in terms of job creation. It is a positive aspect but then it can usurp the whole scenario and create several risks. It is therefore a vicious cycle – a chain.

EFFECTS OF THE PROBLEM – Changes in Gozitan landscapes

There was an increase in disease and health related problems in general, the demography of the environment changed, streets changed, several rubble walls are dilapidated however on a positive note they are being used in buildings in a decorative way; several restrictions in certain places hindering the enjoyment of these places by the public. It is questionable whether EU funds are being spent correctly. Tourism will suffer, although restoration of several watch towers has recently ensued, we have lost many of these structures some of which were destroyed by Americans. We should do like other countries do and ask America to rebuild it or fund its redevelopment. This is the problem underpinning the current situation in Gozo - that we realized too late after that many things disappeared. Nowadays we have modern foreign cultural influences especially from European countries. These can be beneficial for example if it wasn't for the British Empire, there wouldn't be a Villa Rundle in Gozo or San Anton Gardens in Malta. On the other hand there were other projects which were developed haphazardly. For example the Don Bosco Oratory was built in place of a historic cemetery. This in itself was a bad decision as it could have been built in a better place at that time Tac-Cawla area was still undeveloped. We speak of Gozo as a region in itself but in truth we are highly dependent on mainland Malta. The Maltese are the highest contributors of tourism they generate revenue and get the economy of the island going. Apartments, farmhouses are rented or bought by Maltese. There has to exist a moral conscience public conscience of responsibility.

Which driving force is the most serious?

All the causes are serious because they cause some type of influence but corruption is the most serious because it can be controlled but not eliminated.

4) How do you think feel the landscape will change in the next 30 years and how would you like to see it change?

In 30 yrs time farming will disappear and with it the management of the fields. We will experience a rise in development especially more apartments. Gozo will become a single village, it will be over populated, increase in foreigners, more abandoned farmland, more types of pollution. On the positive side, there might be some technology to minimize pollution. Young people who are becoming more conscious of the needs of the environment

can be better prepared to deal with future challenges. We shall have better bays and beaches which we will protect. Values shall decline but moral concise will be on the rise. Every type of development will touch somewhere so we need to strike a balance. Control is fundamental.

5) Are there any particular features they would like to keep from the existing landscapes?

From the current landscapes we have we opt to keep everything but we would like if the flats that have been built in the core village that obstruct views would be removed. We would keep the same layout of the current villages but we ask for more control especially of urban sprawling.

6) How is the government contributing to ameliorate the general situation?

Through improvements in education.

7) What do they think needs to be done to improve protection and management?

We should safeguard what has remained. There has to be a better and clearer vision for Gozo. We should not send mixed messages and we should be aware not to develop in sensitive areas those same areas that we are saying we need to promote because in that case we are sending a conflict of messages. Gozo as a modern island has to rest on several levels however if we need to keep Gozo as an ecological island we have to restrain building permits in the outskirts because Victoria has nearly joined Xewkija and Kercem localities. Development has to be at a minimum with those vacant buildings being considered foremost before developing newer areas. Given that property value is on the rise, many people are opting to keep vacant houses instead of selling them.

Feelings for:

Natural landscape=more relaxing

Man-made features = depends, if they're attractive they can be pleasing, jungle of concrete 'suffocates you'

Simple landscape vs. Variety in landscape= there has to be a balance

Highly managed landscape =feeling of cleanliness

Transcription of the focus group session with youths on the 7th of August 2010

* Audio recordings of the sessions are obtainable from the author upon request.

1) Do you feel that Gozo has changed at all?

Yes there has been a drastic change. Primarily we are more aware because of EU regulations that are imposed on Malta, the funds that we acquire and the incentives to boost

development and amelioration of the islands. Thanks to these funds more land and heritage sites have been given due protection. Nowadays, less people are buying land because it is considered as expensive and out of reach, instead old houses are being demolished and apartments are being erected in their place. However one should not fail to mention that there a lot of these flats and houses that are vacant considering the population of the Maltese islands which is forecasted to decline. Development instead of spreading outwards is spreading upwards. There are green areas left because by law one should not develop these. MEPA is issuing permits instead of 2 floors or 4 floors. One should consider regeneration of old cities such as the Valletta regeneration project which has attracted young couples.

There was a peak in building boom, and then it plummeted, because where it was possible to build was built. The majority of people do not care about the environment. They care about living a good quality of life materialistically speaking. Introduction of foreign designs has degraded the quality of the urban environment, as you can find ultra-modern buildings alongside traditional houses of character. MEPA has to guarantee that housing facades remain traditional.

Participant – I can recall that during the past century Gozo was more concentrated on fishing and farming which were sustainable because of the small population and the gradual development. However during the last two or three decades population grew fast and technology took hold of the island, this meant that more young people had to leave the island to study and work in Malta because of the lack of work opportunities in Gozo leaving. This means that Gozo is now characterized by an aging population where development is trying to be stimulated to counter act this problem. This sometimes mean that green areas could be sacrificed in order to have more job opportunities (by building money generating businesses or other kind of buildings) and also attract more tourists in order to shift from a farming and fishing oriented community into a community which is dependent on tourist's money.

2) How do you feel Gozo has changed over the years in terms of:

a) its level of development

This has increased. Tourists sought after Gozo because together with Malta was considered the 'untouched islands' because they were still in 'their raw stages'. Now Gozo attracts different tourists. However we can work to attract other types of tourists such as those interested in agritourism which is already happening here through the AGER foundation as Gozo still offers rural places.

b) its general condition

This has experienced degradation. Air is more polluted so are quality has deteriorated, this is attributed to owners of more than one car and also creating traffic and parking problems.

c) beauty

This has also decreased. There is less nature and Gozo has become a 'mini Malta'

d) rural character

This is changing because of development. Urban sprawling is encroaching the rural environment.

e) urban character

The condition of the roads has improved, pollution has increased, there is less ventilation, the condition of modern apartments is not helping residents to lead a healthy lifestyle

With regards landscapes which are mostly threatened, these are traditional ones. You don't find lace making anymore, or functional windmills. Even the Gozo cheeselets (Gbejniet) have become industrialized. Coastal landscape is also threatened by tourism because people want to grab as much money as possible from tourists and so will install new "attractions" as umbrellas and ice cream vans and other beach concessions. The countryside is also threatened by development and widening of roads for cars and increasingly busy rural roads.

3) Does the human impact on the character over the years through various industries such as farming, quarrying, housing development etc. make you feel any different about the landscape or do you believe that it forms part of its character?

No we accept development as forming part of landscape's character.

PROBLEM TREE CAUSES

Socially there is a great need of refurbishing old schools as it is being done with the boys' secondary school and also a great need is needed for hospital refurbishing and therefore development is needed to improve the social service that is given to the inhabitants of Gozo. The public transport sector has to be improved in order to curb the problem of parking and traffic.

Refurbishment and regeneration projects have to ensure that the décor of the place remains the same and that the identity is not altered.

SOCIAL

Quality of life is changing, people's mentality is changing for the good and the bad. High level of education. People care about commodities and in search for luxuries, egoism. Lack of awareness. Increase in nightlife and entertainment necessitates more places for entertainment. Technology is keeping people at home instead of opting for out-door

activities. This is not a healthy lifestyle as means of communication emanate radiation. We are increasing more illnesses.

ECONOMIC

Investment in properties, EU incentives, more money which are not being spent properly. Competition with foreign places leads to a building boom. More cars are indicative of a rich country boosting the status.

TECHNOLOGICAL

Solar technologies and thermal heating in apartments. Increase in infrastructure, more gutters, more wires and aerials as a result of technology. Modern means of heating and cooling, air conditions necessitates instalment of outdoor fans. Satellite dishes.

CULTURAL

Restoration of historical places. N.I.M.B.Y syndrome. More hectic lifestyle does not leave time for relaxation. 'I don't care mentality.' Increased awareness in the natural heritage more than older times.

ENVIRONMENTAL

More awareness on the 3 'R's. New playingfields and public gardens, more trees. Is there 'free-wifi' in the playing field? Removal of pebbles from Ramla. Disagreement and agreement. Disagreement with Hondoq Project. Eco-Gozo.

EFFECTS OF THE PROBLEM – changes in landscapes

More pollution creates more illnesses. Increased infrastructural and economic development. We're entrapped in a wheel because of our small size – double-insularity. Secularism-changes in values, conflicting life style, related to jobs. If you look at Maltese people, they are able to have a good time compared to Gozitans. Gozitans are more concerned about work. This is leading to emigration especially to foreign countries however not in big amounts as in older times. Noise pollution. More wine-bars in Gozo following foreign customs. A society more disconnected from nature and prone to more illnesses as a result of an increase in pollution. No natural resources so we have to focus on human resources, focusing on education. More are opting for a career which makes us more money and business-oriented. But highly qualified individuals would be more aware, adopt recycling methods and more use of renewable technologies. High rise buildings are increasing. As for the funds, the goals for which they are given is not being reached. Kennedy Grove is not enough for the population. There has to be more similar parks.

Feelings for:

Natural landscape=more relaxing

Man-made features =can be relaxing too ex; shopping malls

Simple landscape = monotonous

Variety in landscape= contrast with new, natural with urban

Openness = feeling of liberty

Highly managed landscape =feeling of cleanliness

Which driving force is the most serious?

From the causes the most serious is the EU energy targets. We need to be at 10% energy from renewables by 2020 and Malta is at 0.2%. If this entails building an offshore wind farm, this will have a major impact on the landscape because there will surely be visual impacts from onshore.

4) How do you feel landscape will change in the next 2, 10, 30 years and how would you like to see it change?

In 2 years time there will be little if any significant change. In the next 10 years there will be higher buildings and hybrid cars, more solar and other re-usable means of energy, more cars. Solar water heaters are unsightly but beneficial. In the next 30 years there will be more development, more buildings, decrease in population ageing population, outburst in technology, rigid policies, secularization, foreign influences that change the way of living, ultra modern infrastructures, artificial beaches, offshore wind farms. Gozitan beaches will be threatened due to sea level rise. A densely populated island will also have major repercussions on the landscape.

More Green areas, better public transport, wind energy and other alternatives, ex: wave energy, more usage and application of solar panels, pathways for bike-users, better road infrastructure. More recreational areas, more protected areas, more protected animal species, less property development, fewer cars on the road, better roads, more incentives, more hybrid cars, more re-usable resources, less dependence on fossil fuel, more eco-friendly appliances.

5) Are there any particular features they would like to keep from the existing landscapes?

From the existing landscapes we will keep everything but certain structures that were not built properly have to be rebuilt.

6) How is the government contributing to ameliorate the situation?

Through enforcement, more regulations and policies,

7) What do they think needs to be done to improve protection and management?

There has to be fairness with everybody. Impartiality is imperative. Values have to improve. We have to be more rational.

APPENDIX E

Semi-structured interviews questions. The questions were posed in Maltese and where then later transcribed and translated to English by the author.

* Audio recordings of the interviews are obtainable from the author upon request.

Questions for Local councils & Authorities
1. (specifically to local councils) What is being done in your locality to improve and to achieve a sustainable landscape?
2. Have you heard about the European Landscape Convention? What do you know about it?
3. Do you know whether there are any plans for Malta to ratify this convention?
4. Does your organization have any interest in ratification of this convention?
5. This convention calls for the identification of landscape quality objectives based on people's aspirations. Has there been any initiative to identify landscape quality objectives for Gozo?
6. Which type of tools have been adopted for the protection, management and/or planning of landscapes?
7. Do you think that current policies are contributing to the 'vision' that the public wants to achieve? (brief explanation of the focus groups results)
8. In what ways will you strive to ensure that the preservation of the landscape mirrors the aspiration of the locals?
9. Are there any plans to involve the public in defining what future landscapes they would like?
10. How would you like to see the Gozitan landscapes change in the next 2, 10, 30 years?
11. What type of landscape do you feel that present policies are likely to lead to over the next 2, 10, 30 years?
12. (specifically to the Ministry of Gozo) The Ministry of Gozo declared that Gozo will become an eco island by 2020. How exactly will this be achieved and how does the management of the landscape feature in this vision?
13. (specifically to the Ministry of Gozo) How will the public be involved in the realisation of the Eco-Gozo vision?

APPENDIX F

Transcriptions of the semi-structured interviews with local councils and authorities.

* Audio recordings of the interviews are obtainable from the author upon request.

Ghajnsielem – Frans Cauchi 18/08/2010

1. What is being done in your locality to improve and to achieve a sustainable landscape?

As a local council we have embarked upon several projects. The most prominent one at the moment is the sewage treatment at Xatt l-aħmar where this bay is now fit for bathing; we are working to market this bay as a new diving spot as there are several wrecks. We are also trying to get more funds to restore this bay to its original state and install wash rooms for divers. Other investments are being done in energy saving solar panels and country walks. We plan to convert a derelict area to be frequented by rambblers. In Ghajnsielem there are also Neolithic temples which are still unexplored, found on private holdings, land of type Class A will try to get the government to expropriate it so that this area would be accessible for the public and can also be an attraction for tourists. The EU funds we are planning to acquire will also help to excavate and rebuild shelters which would eventually be open for the public, plans for a maritime museum in Mgarr harbor and also restoration of old wash houses. In the future we also have plans to do an Ecological park at Ta' Passi which is government owned property in that way helping to revive our heritage.

2. Have you heard about the European Landscape Convention? What do you know about it?

Yes.

3. Do you know whether there are any plans for Malta to ratify this convention?

No

4. Does your organization have any interest in ratification of this convention?

As a local council we will consider ratifying it maybe in the future.

5. This convention calls for the identification of landscape quality objectives based on people's aspirations. Has there been any initiative to identify landscape quality objectives for Gozo?

No

6. Which type of tools have been adopted for the protection, management and/or planning of landscapes?

The central government is working on it. Landscapes are our only resources. These issues are promoted and brought up in council meetings, even by the political parties. Government has to help local councils.

7. Do you think that current policies are contributing to the 'vision' that the public wants to achieve?

There exists bureaucracy in MEPA which deters the applicants. You have to make things simple for the locals to abide by them and respect them and there will be more progress. Give a choice applicant especially with regard to development. More policies imply more of these are breached. Flats will lose their purpose due to people not wanting to live in slums and farmhouses might take their place.

8. In what ways will you strive to ensure that the preservation of the landscape mirrors the aspiration of the locals?

Through questionnaires and public hearing involving the whole family and ensuring anonymity and confidentiality.

9. Are there any plans to involve the public in defining what future landscapes they would like?

Was on the agenda of the council meeting, if the councilors agree to send questionnaire to every family to say their suggestions and we highlight the essential points. This would facilitate the job of the local council to get to know what the residents of the locality wish for. I recommend that other local councils follow our example. This would be tied to a competition to urge the public to participate.

10. How would you like to see the Gozitan landscapes change in the next 2, 10, 30 years?

The preservation of agriculture and rubble walls is very important as we need more farmers. To stimulate more traditions we have to emulate foreign countries like Germany to get cultural tourism. In Gozo every town has its own distinct characteristics. It is the role of the local councils start introducing cultural events every year so that it becomes a routine. Gozo is geared towards a type of tourism of 'quality'. Tourists visit Gozo for its distinctiveness. We need discipline through fines. Gozo can't stay as a crib forever (Ghawdex presepu). Control development of especially of apartments. Build farmhouses on old styles. Restoration of old bastions Citadel.

11. What type of landscape do you feel that present policies are likely to lead to over the next 2, 10, 30 years?

MEPA is holds a crucial position in every aspect of the environment. The aim of the government is to considerably lessen these policies and to change the image of Malta from a dilapidated state. Local councils was an important step in the right direction

because every locality strives to improve its locality but the local councils do not have the potential to fulfill their possibilities on their own since they need to increase its personnel, full time advocate, accountant etc. and have to apply for EU schemes and funding projects.

Victoria – Samwel Azzopardi 19/08/2010

1. What is being done in your locality to improve and to achieve a sustainable landscape?

As a local council we did several measures. One project which comes close to the European Landscapes convention is that which integrates the Citadel and Victoria together. For this project EU funds were allotted- ERD European regional development – Setting an integrated cultural archeological and historical place in Victoria. Do heritage trails from Citadella to Victoria which is the suburb. There are also plans which will involve the scanning of it-Tokk square for archaeological artifacts. We will use means that are environmentally friendly which will involve water culverts which carry water that will be collected at Lunzjata Valley.

2. Have you heard about the European Landscape Convention? What do you know about it?

Yes it was an important step because the individuals hold different ideas of landscape. Moreover, tendentially we have specific conventions for heritage, different conventions, this convention will encompass everything its holistic as everything forms part of the landscape.

3. Do you know whether there are any plans for Malta to ratify this convention?

No but if not I hope Malta will ratify it.

4. Does your organization have any interest in ratification of this convention?

The Gozo Region was set up - 3 regions for Malta and Gozo – government wants to give the dimension of region officially as legally Gozo has never been recognized as a region and is still bound to Malta. Since this convention is applicable on a regional level, it would be appropriate for Gozo. However this has to be achieved by the coming together of all local councils.

5. This convention calls for the identification of landscape quality objectives based on people's aspirations. Has there been any initiative to identify landscape quality objectives for Gozo?

It is not on the agenda however I know about it and eventually once office with staff work is set up we will consider it.

6. Which type of tools have been adopted for the protection, management and/or planning of landscapes?

Yes from the central government case in point is the Citadel Master Plan.

7. Do you think that current policies are contributing to the 'vision' that the public wants to achieve?

Policies are in force but most of the time the main problem is financial resources. Nowadays, better standards are expected so more funds are needed. Targets exist through various initiatives for example: Eco Gozo vision, Wied ta' Zejta cleaned, road standards improved that are not always perceptible.

8. In what ways will you strive to ensure that the preservation of the landscape mirrors the aspiration of the locals?

Consultation is very important. In a recent meeting I attended of the European regions for youths, a particular workshop on public involvement in planning and children were involved was presented. We are applying the same concept in Victoria where the playing field is being converted to recreational area which would be socially beneficial containing a youth lounge, wifi connection, basically it will be targeted to all the family, Villa Rundle, socially family has less quality time available so this place would serve a good purpose and we are consulting the locals.

9. Are there any plans to involve the public in defining what future landscapes they would like?

Again consultation youth local council and establishment of youth council, public hearings. First we get the feedback from stakeholders and then we open it for public opinion.

10. How would you like to see the Gozitan landscapes change in the next 2, 10, 30 years?

You can't stop development. Ghawdex presejju. Development has to be sustainable although to find balance it would be difficult but MEPA's local plans can contribute. Contrasting, limitations in Victoria and then in other localities they permit cliff edge development. Eyesores in cliff edge. Foresee more apartments. Once Republic street had modern buildings, we should not build in the green belts remaining, we have to specify ex: this area bungalows, park, farmhouses, to ensure uniformity and better planning.

11. What type of landscape do you feel that present policies are likely to lead to over the next 2, 10, 30 years?

Everything is tied to people's mentality. If people appreciate that we have to forbid destruction of Gozo than education is important. Policies have to be supported by

education' we have to be very innovative. When the concept of farmhouses was created Gozo was saved from becoming a concrete jungle like Malta although there was the protest for the Hotel ta' Cenc controversy but it contributed something to Gozo as it preserved what was already there and created the farmhouse style, instilled a deeper value, developers everything rustic, but at least we demolished less buildings in favor of concrete.

Zebbuġ – Carmel Saliba 19/08/2010

1. What is being done in your locality to improve and to achieve a sustainable landscape?

Our local council has reached the last phase of completing a network of residential roads that will be covered with hot asphalt. We have targets for a number of roads to be reconstructed within the next four years.

2. Have you heard about the European Landscape Convention? What do you know about it?

No

3. Do you know whether there are any plans for Malta to ratify this convention?

No

4. Does your organization have any interest in ratification of this convention?

No

5. This convention calls for the identification of landscape quality objectives based on people's aspirations. Has there been any initiative to identify landscape quality objectives for Gozo?

No

6. Which type of tools have been adopted for the protection, management and/or planning of landscapes?

No

7. Do you think that current policies are contributing to the 'vision' that the public wants to achieve?

Yes there has been control of illegal dumping and tipping in Zebbug, even at Qolla il-Bajda in Marsalforn. We need holiday makers so we need hotels not apartments, we

want to have a Casino in Gozo. There has been a building boom of apartments and land speculation and there needs to be tree planting to cover up these buildings.

8. In what ways will you strive to ensure that the preservation of the landscape mirrors the aspiration of the locals?

By considering people's opinion

9. Are there any plans to involve the public in defining what future landscapes they would like?

Yes we do an annual meeting (legally obliging) to gather suggestions from the locals, a meeting, a meeting on traffic management. We have plans to do public hearings. The residents take interests and we usually receive phone calls giving suggestions.

10. How would you like to see the Gozitan landscapes change in the next 2, 10, 30 years?

Control ribbon development to preserve Zebbug. We have to keep the distinct characteristic of every locality. The distinctiveness of certain localities has been blurred (Kercem, Ghajnsielem, Xewkija). If a zone has been scheduled as an ODZ then it has to remain ODZ. We have to conserve the old houses of character.

11. What type of landscape do you feel that present policies are likely to lead to over the next 2, 10, 30 years?

The current policies have to be enforced.

Munxar – Joseph Sultana 19/08/2010

1. What is being done in your locality to improve and to achieve a sustainable landscape?

We are trying to acquire EU funds for the instalment of heritage trails. Funds were acquired for the renovation of the playing field which will contain a Wi-fi spot, solar panels and a reservoir to hold rain water which will be used to water the indigenous trees planted there.

2. Have you heard about the European Landscape Convention? What do you know about it?

No

3. Do you know whether there are any plans for Malta to ratify this convention?

No

4. Does your organization have any interest in ratification of this convention?

No

5. This convention calls for the identification of landscape quality objectives based on people's aspirations. Has there been any initiative to identify landscape quality objectives for Gozo?

No

6. Which type of tools have been adopted for the protection, management and/or planning of landscapes?

The LEADER project which involves 3 leader groups and consists of strategic plans involving all the local councils, the government and the NGOs.

7. Do you think that current policies are contributing to the 'vision' that the public wants to achieve?

The Eco-Gozo should help to improve the general situation. The Local Plan is also a good instrument.

8. In what ways will you strive to ensure that the preservation of the landscape mirrors the aspiration of the locals?

Xlendi Tower was leased to private persons but was recently entrusted to a restoration project as a joint venture between Din l-Arth Helwa and the Munxar Local Council. The Government has to preserve our national patrimony to create attractions for tourists.

9. Are there any plans to involve the public in defining what future landscapes they would like?

Where it is public we are trying to preserve it, Xlendi valley is being cleaned. The rubble walls we are constructing will be at eye level and in fact are not higher than 1 metre so that observers can see the views afforded behind these walls.

10. How would you like to see the Gozitan landscapes change in the next 2, 10, 30 years?

Follow better policies.

11. What type of landscape do you feel that present policies are likely to lead to over the next 2, 10, 30 years?

The covenant of the mayors is an initiative that is working to improve the environment. The policies developed by the central government are divulged to the local councils to be applied on a smaller scale.

Gharb – David Apap 20/08/2010

1. What is being done in your locality to improve and to achieve a sustainable landscape?

We have acquired funds to clean Wied il-Mielah and do some infrastructural work. We are holding educational walks for school children and active participation by the residents.

2. Have you heard about the European Landscape Convention? What do you know about it?

Yes heard of it. In my opinion it is not very applicable for Malta let alone for Gozo as it is targeted for bigger nations who are financially more advanced than Malta. Very difficult to implement as Malta is very little and we are financially limited.

3. Do you know whether there are any plans for Malta to ratify this convention?

No

4. Does your organization have any interest in ratification of this convention?

No

5. This convention calls for the identification of landscape quality objectives based on people's aspirations. Has there been any initiative to identify landscape quality objectives for Gozo?

No

6. Which type of tools have been adopted for the protection, management and/or planning of landscapes?

MEPA is the central authority so it decides how to issue protection

7. Do you think that current policies are contributing to the 'vision' that the public wants to achieve?

It depends because development is very hard to control and recreational areas are not given much importance due to other priorities.

8. In what ways will you strive to ensure that the preservation of the landscape mirrors the aspiration of the locals?

By involving the public directly

9. Are there any plans to involve the public in defining what future landscapes they would like?

Yes organize outings at Wied il-Mielah

10. How would you like to see the Gozitan landscapes change in the next 2, 10, 30 years?

I would like to keep them as they are at the moment but there is a need for more trees and rubble walls.

11. What type of landscape do you feel that present policies are likely to lead to over the next 2, 10, 30 years?

There are many policies we just have to determine how many of them are actually being implemented.

Qala – Paul Buttigieg 20/08/2010

1. What is being done in your locality to improve and to achieve a sustainable landscape?

As a local council we are part of the LEADER initiative financed by the European Commission under the Rural Development Programme. Measure 313 encourages Tourism Activities by the setting up of trails that interlink various sites of tourist value. In the locality of Qala, 11 sites found in the outskirts related to the town's history were approved by the EU and designated to be visited by the tourists; Given that Gozo is a small island if no funds are given sustainability it is difficult to be ensured, interpretation centre that announces the history of every feature. We have a dilapidated area in Qala that covers 16 hectares of land, we are renovating it and the local councils has plans to utilize it and preserve the area in its natural state. In this government land that has been devolved to the local council, Rubble walls were built and abandoned fields were cleaned worked and is being utilized to plant trees. The scope of this initiative is that the locals understand the value of this landscape and utilize it. In other projects, abandoned areas or dumps were transformed in public places and public gardens.

2. Have you heard about the European Landscape Convention? What do you know about it?

Yes it is a very interesting and important Convention. The problem lies in its implementation. Since it puts certain pressure on Gozo and its administration it is difficult to implement.

3. Do you know whether there are any plans for Malta to ratify this convention?

No

4. Does your organization have any interest in ratification of this convention?

Once that you're bound, you're obliged to follow certain criteria. Despite the amount of work undertaken in general, not all the departments are geared towards the successful deliverance of the actions stipulated in the Convention. This is mainly due to different interests upheld by different stakeholders.

5. This convention calls for the identification of landscape quality objectives based on people's aspirations. Has there been any initiative to identify landscape quality objectives for Gozo?

No

6. Which type of tools have been adopted for the protection, management and/or planning of landscapes?

No

7. Do you think that current policies are contributing to the 'vision' that the public wants to achieve?

Qala council was involved in the Local plan for gozo that gives direction to the landscape of Gozo – however unfortunately these policies are breached. We find faults to get more jobs and tourist attractions in Gozo. We don't need any more tourist villages because what we already have is not being fully utilized. Hotel bed occupancy 33% 36% and for half the year our hotels are empty. I don't feel that at the benefit of those who want to speculate our island by constructing massive projects we have to convert those areas that give Gozo its distinctiveness with the pretence that we are going to bring more economic benefits by suffocating these places. Local plans are being breached – case in point is Qala creek project. Tourists visit Gozo not to see blocks of concrete but they want to discover Gozo as it is, tourists do not swim in hotel pools but chose to go to our beaches to explore these areas. We can't explore Gozo by building everywhere with blocks of concrete. If we have 8 beaches in Gozo these have to be safeguarded because tourists want to see something different than if he went to London etc. The tourist wants to get the feel of other places besides the popular ones like Gigantija, Citadel Dwejra and Ta' Pinu. We are not in a position to sacrifice our beaches for high rise apartments.

8. In what ways will you strive to ensure that the preservation of the landscape mirrors the aspiration of the locals?

As a council we can put pressure. We were involved in the devising of the Gozo and Comino local plan but the word of the local council does not always get through. If we thought we agreed on certain issues, when the actual document was published we saw that those issues were totally changed.

As a council and as a government we have to see what exactly are our aims and priorities. Education should start from youths up to the elderly. The latter were instilled with a certain mentality that is difficult to eradicate. If an educational camping is set up,

the council would find it easier to implement certain projects and the authorities would understand the importance of environmental issues that we have in Gozo.

9. Are there any plans to involve the public in defining what future landscapes they would like?

For the Hondoq creek project a referendum and public hearings were held. The Local Council Gazette contains detailed information on the undergoing projects so that the residents are aware of what is happening in their locality and whoever has any query or suggestion can do so directly to the council.

10. How would you like to see the Gozitan landscapes change in the next 2, 10, 30 years?

Landscapes have to be safeguarded. We don't need more areas to be developed. We don't need more hotels in Gozo. The little public spaces we have should not be transformed into apartments. Saw a photo of Xlendi of about 50 years ago and the change is drastic as the bay is now engulfed by apartment blocks. I am not saying that Gozo has to be a crib but one has to ponder on the real needs of Gozo and not with the presumption that Gozo lacks job opportunities we give permissions to speculate all the land to attract more jobs in a totally unsustainable manner. In that case you are not addressing the problem but trimming it. You should not create work in expense of the environment. In Qala we have 2 hard stone quarries that are located in virgin land that is undeveloped but these quarries are an eyesore. However you cannot stop this activity as it is the only resource that generates asphalt but we can draw up certain conditions. The difference between the Hondoq creek project and these quarries is that the former is not needed.

11. What type of landscape do you feel that present policies are likely to lead to over the next 2, 10, 30 years?

The aim of the policies is to improve. Whoever devised the local plan did a good job however these policies are usually breached and when this happens the developer is at an advantage or to trim the problem.

Sannat – Philip Vella 21/08/2010

1. What is being done in your locality to improve and to achieve a sustainable landscape?

We have just issued a call for applications for solar panels. In each square, electric cars have been introduced, plans for wind turbines inland, reservoirs for water catchments, water culverts, plans to plant more trees as there is not being replacement of trees where indigenous trees are uprooted to construct buildings in their place. These past years Sannat was the locality where the most building permits were issued. Mgarr ix Xini regional park financed by Xewkija and Sannat Local Councils, 15000 elf collectively,

important archaeological findings, interpretation centre. The problem is financial resources which limits the amount and type of projects we can do.

2. Have you heard about the European Landscape Convention? What do you know about it?

Yes heard about it but I am not wholly aware of what it consists of exactly.

3. Do you know whether there are any plans for Malta to ratify this convention?

No

4. Does your organization have any interest in ratification of this convention?

No its not on the agenda because it involves a lot of money. We need huge funds from the EU to help us financially because in other case we would not have the chance to ratify it.

5. This convention calls for the identification of landscape quality objectives based on people's aspirations. Has there been any initiative to identify landscape quality objectives for Gozo?

No

6. Which type of tools have been adopted for the protection, management and/or planning of landscapes?

Waste transfer station – manure converted to energy,

7. Do you think that current policies are contributing to the 'vision' that the public wants to achieve?

The local council removed the rubbish skips from Ta' Cenc area and we have plans for a family recreational park 'Bidwi Park' with the help of funds and 313 measure. If we want our island to be ecological we have to have something ecological in every project.

8. In what ways will you strive to ensure that the preservation of the landscape mirrors the aspiration of the locals?

One means would be to show site plans beforehand. Discussions with stakeholders are very important and although the majority think that consultation is important this has to be accompanied by technical and expert personell.

9. Are there are any plans to involve the public in defining what future landscapes they would like?

Yes via subcommittees and plans to set up a youth council. This year we came up with a new idea to do a cultural activity in our locality 'Notte Scarlata' where all the local groups were involved. Another future plan is to set up a radio station all year so that the

illiterate people would know what's going on in his locality. A yearly activity known as 'Clean up Sannat' aimed at removing litter from certain sensitive sites in Sannat through the involvement of locals has not resulted in a big turnout and was not successful as people showed no interest even though we tried to hold meetings in the streets. People do not seem to take care of the environment. Despite the existence of a bulky refuse service people still continue to dump in the countryside. Youths prioritize bbqs, splash and fun.

10. How would you like to see the Gozitan landscapes change in the next 2, 10, 30 years?

More monitoring of the natural and cultural areas. This will ensure more attraction for the tourist sector. Mgarr ix-Xini parking problems, lease a field, need for public convenience.

11. What type of landscape do you feel that present policies are likely to lead to over the next 2, 10, 30 years?

Eco-wardens to enforce part of Eco Gozo scheme, harsher fines. Education is the key. Bureaucracy prevails in Malta.

Ghasri – Andrew Vella 23/08/2010

1. What is being done in your locality to improve and to achieve a sustainable landscape?

Finances are a problem, we need funds, local councils are finding difficulties in working with funds allotted for several large scale projects. At the moment we are more focused on the core village than on the outskirts.

2. Have you heard about the European Landscape Convention? What do you know about it?

No

3. Do you know whether there are any plans for Malta to ratify this convention?

No

4. Does your organization have any interest in ratification of this convention?

Don't know

5. This convention calls for the identification of landscape quality objectives based on people's aspirations. Has there been any initiative to identify landscape quality objectives for Gozo?

No

6. Which type of tools have been adopted for the protection, management and/or planning of landscapes?

MEPA and green wardens service.

7. Do you think that current policies are contributing to the 'vision' that the public wants to achieve?

There has been an improvement, to define the boundaries of development, measures by MEPA to control illegal development in ODZ.

8. In what ways will you strive to ensure that the preservation of the landscape mirrors the aspiration of the locals?

Illegal dumping is a main problem, NIMBY problem. There needs to be more emphasis on education and people have to contribute and report any abuses they witness.

9. Are there any plans to involve the public in defining what future landscapes they would like?

No plans

10. How would you like to see the Gozitan landscapes change in the next 2, 10, 30 years?

More trees, rubble walls, trails in our countryside, collection of waste.

11. What type of landscape do you feel that present policies are likely to lead to over the next 2, 10, 30 years?

Resources are a problem. Green wardens are expensive, to control the environment you need more financial incentives. Not easy to capture someone red-handed. Enforcement is an important factor.

Kercem – Joe Grima 23/08/2010

1. What is being done in your locality to improve and to achieve a sustainable landscape?

Restored the rural areas, built rubble walls, acquired funds to construct a belvedere in the centre of the town in the housing estate area, public garden, trail that encircles Ghar ilma, panoramic road that will be a new attraction for tourists.

2. Have you heard about the European Landscape Convention? What do you know about it?

No

3. Do you know whether there are any plans for Malta to ratify this convention?

No

4. Does your organization have any interest in ratification of this convention?

Don't know

5. This convention calls for the identification of landscape quality objectives based on people's aspirations. Has there been any initiative to identify landscape quality objectives for Gozo?

No

6. Which type of tools have been adopted for the protection, management and/or planning of landscapes?

In 2004 MEPA did a series of Rural Conservation Areas. Given that in Kerzem we have cliffs we have protected areas however in the future there will be discussion on how these zones will be managed.

7. Do you think that current policies are contributing to the 'vision' that the public wants to achieve?

MEPA is doing quite a good job as it identified village cores where only limited development can take place. Urban improvement fund for those developers pay money to the MEPA which gives it to the local councils to invest in public gardens etc

8. In what ways will you strive to ensure that the preservation of the landscape mirrors the aspiration of the locals?

Different people hold different views. It is impossible to do a project which suits everyone.

9. Are there any plans to involve the public in defining what future landscapes they would like?

Yes there are plans for consultation, public meeting for the residents to give their feedback. Whenever any of these were organised there has been a positive response.

10. How would you like to see the Gozitan landscapes change in the next 2, 10, 30 years?

More investments in rubble walls by the local councils are needed as these are part of our patrimony. There is a dire need for general improvement of the countrysides.

11. What type of landscape do you feel that present policies are likely to lead to over the next 2, 10, 30 years?

Restoration projects – coastal towers, praise for NGO's, Din l-art helwa and Wirt Ghawdex which ardently contribute to improve. EU funds; finances are a problem but nowadays it is easier to acquire such funds because there are additional funding from the government (29 schemes with funds this year to improve the locality and the surroundings). MEPA is the overarching authority which has good policies; we have to change the reigning mentality which is difficult to change; there is a promising drive from the educational sector which is instilling a positive attitude in the younger generation.

Fontana – Saviour Borg 24/08/2010

1. What is being done in your locality to improve and to achieve a sustainable landscape?

Most of our locality is scheduled property to safeguard the environment and most of our confines were declared Natura 2000. We applied for certain passages in rural areas to blend in with the environment. We got a permit from MEPA and we have undertaken restoration of rubble walls and aim to protect the freshwater crab which exists in Lunzjata valley and Xlendi valley only. We also plan to do other similar projects in other areas. As a locality, Fontana took part in the Green Challenge Award and placed 3. Currently as part of the Ec-Gozo scheme, Xlendi Valley is being cleaned. We also had a dilapidated area which we converted to a belvedere from funds of Urban Improvement fund and local council funds. Usage of energy saving lights in 60-70% of our alleys and roads, and solar panels is considered very important in our locality. There are also projects for the restoration of roads and certain historic wash houses.

2. Have you heard about the European Landscape Convention? What do you know about it?

No

3. Do you know whether there are any plans for Malta to ratify this convention?

No

4. Does your organization have any interest in ratification of this convention?

No

5. This convention calls for the identification of landscape quality objectives based on people's aspirations. Has there been any initiative to identify landscape quality objectives for Gozo?

No

6. Which type of tools have been adopted for the protection, management and/or planning of landscapes?

Yes sites being declared Natura 2000 and development would be limited in certain areas. Certain local councils agreed with MEPA to schedule certain areas as protected sites and Fontana local council took the initiative to protect the freshwater crab.

7. Do you think that current policies are contributing to the 'vision' that the public wants to achieve?

Green areas and Natura 2000 sites cannot be scheduled for development and would be difficult to use by the local councils. Distributed biodegradable bags and other eco-friendly means to every household to be used for separation of waste.

8. In what ways will you strive to ensure that the preservation of the landscape mirrors the aspiration of the locals?

There should be more enforcement from police and wardens who are the responsibility of local councils and control of illegal dumping and tipping.

9. Are there any plans to involve the public in defining what future landscapes they would like?

No

10. How would you like to see the Gozitan landscapes change in the next 2, 10, 30 years?

There should be more general upkeep of the environment, more enforcement, more rubble walls, EU schemes and funds should be promoted because these are very helpful, cleaning of valley. Local council regulations – as a mayor I suggested more safeguarding of endemic trees.

11. What type of landscape do you feel that present policies are likely to lead to over the next 2, 10, 30 years?

Policies have to be more enforced, ECO- Gozo should support the improvement of the environment and more funds would be allocated to the landscape.

Nadur – Miriam Portelli 24/08/2010

1. What is being done in your locality to improve and to achieve a sustainable landscape?

In Nadur we have valleys and we are working as regards clean up of valleys and maintenance of water culverts however we need more funds and we are neglecting other projects to complete this because of this problem of lack of funds. When we receive a permit we see how its going to affect the environment and as a local councils we do our objections but we cannot impose on MEPA's authority. We also did some energy savings in the core village.

2. Have you heard about the European Landscape Convention? What do you know about it?

No

3. Do you know whether there are any plans for Malta to ratify this convention?

No

4. Does your organization have any interest in ratification of this convention?

No

5. This convention calls for the identification of landscape quality objectives based on people's aspirations. Has there been any initiative to identify landscape quality objectives for Gozo?

No

6. Which type of tools have been adopted for the protection, management and/or planning of landscapes?

ECO Gozo scheme

7. Do you think that current policies are contributing to the 'vision' that the public wants to achieve?

We have to keep Gozo's characteristics, you can't stop development but need to strike a balance especially in the village core where there needs to be more uniformity.

8. In what ways will you strive to ensure that the preservation of the landscape mirrors the aspiration of the locals?

Involve the local council directly especially in any landscaping changes, not considered as another objector or participant because the decisions of the local councils have to be given weight. Sadly objections and considerations by the local councils are not always considered.

9. Are there any plans to involve the public in defining what future landscapes they would like?

Whenever we are about to apply for a project we involve the public and do a public meeting but finally someone has to decide. There hasn't been a project that has been 100% in support of the general public. Positive response by residents and attendance to meetings.

10. How would you like to see the Gozitan landscapes change in the next 2, 10, 30 years?

Gozitan characteristics should be preserved and certain zones have to be preserved. We have to be attentive of certain type of construction especially high rise apartment should not obstruct the townscape and plateaus. People have to be aware of Gozitan assets different from Malta to appreciate these. There was the popular saying "Gozo a time when time stood still" but this does not hold anymore due to development however this has to be sustainable and there has to be a balance. Policies have to be clear so that residents would be more aware and people have to take part in these decisions and express their opinions in an easier way. In our locality we have a country walks program but people are not aware that these country walks can be an attraction to tourism in itself. More importance is given to the popular areas like Ġgantija and Citadella for example. We have to move further by finding people who will risk to invest in bringing tourists only to Gozo and creating new tourism niche such as Torri ta' Sopu and Qortin which has given permission to be converted from a rubbish dump to a recreational park. The major problem is accessibility. MEPA has to be more lenient in giving small scale permits to allow footpaths to be constructed to convert inaccessible places to tourist attractions.

11. What type of landscape do you feel that present policies are likely to lead to over the next 2, 10, 30 years?

It's a move in the right direction, there has to be something in unison especially local councils have to come together. Such a step already occurred in the LEADERS program which provides funds to manage Gozo for the better but the situation has stagnated. As local councils we had reached a point where all the local councils agreed that signage would be standard or plans for a bicycle station in every locality through the use of funds but the projects have reached a standstill.

San Lawrenz – Noel Formosa 25/08/2010

1. What is being done in your locality to improve and to achieve a sustainable landscape?

As a local council we just received a confirmation from the E U to allow for the restoration of narrow alleys that would create a new tourist niche. Tied to this project

we have the Pjazza project as projects of landscaping. A belvedere and playing field, solar water heaters and energy saving light bulbs and photovoltaic panels are also some projects we did. Dwejra Management Plan considers the landscape.

2. Have you heard about the European Landscape Convention? What do you know about it?

Yes just heard of it but did not go into detail. I wish to go further into detail so that any landscaping projects entrusted to the local council would follow this convention.

3. Do you know whether there are any plans for Malta to ratify this convention?

No

4. Does your organization have any interest in ratification of this convention?

In the future yes

5. This convention calls for the identification of landscape quality objectives based on people's aspirations. Has there been any initiative to identify landscape quality objectives for Gozo?

Not yet but if they would be adapted to our locality yes we would implement them. There have to be people on board and consultation with the public would have to take place. San Lawrenz local council signed the Covenant of the Mayors.

6. Which type of tools have been adopted for the protection, management and/or planning of landscapes?

Eco-Gozo also includes something on landscape, Dwejra Management Plan proposes protection of the landscape.

7. Do you think that current policies are contributing to the 'vision' that the public wants to achieve?

Treasure hunt for tourists and locals exhibit their skills not only in terms of beauty but also to create economic revenue.

8. In what ways will you strive to ensure that the preservation of the landscape mirrors the aspiration of the locals?

Consultation people have to be on board before any decisions are taken. We already did consultation exercises but people do not take interest. A document of San Lawrenz Sustainable Locality which is a study to convert our locality in an ecological manner and has been made available to the public expected to be done by 2015 – questionnaires were used 47% lottery to coax people to participate.

9. Are there any plans to involve the public in defining what future landscapes they would like?

Education is the key appreciation of what we have in Gozo and what the ELC is and its benefits. Mayor became aware of the ELC when I spoke to him.

10. How would you like to see the Gozitan landscapes change in the next 2, 10, 30 years?

Gozo has to be a greener island with more green areas. We need strike a balance, sustainability holistic view – Gozo has to be a sustainable island even socially so that Gozo won't become an old people's island, create more jobs for youths so that they remain on the island.

11. What type of landscape do you feel that present policies are likely to lead to over the next 2, 10, 30 years?

The present policies have to be adapted to the Gozo of today and of the future. What was implemented today have to be sustainable so that it is recognized in the future as well. These are not being enforced enough and we have to emphasise on education especially education of appreciation and on the European landscape convention and its benefits.

Xewkija – Monica Vella 28/08/2010

1. What is being done in your locality to improve and to achieve a sustainable landscape?

Xewkija Local council is party to the Covenant of the Mayors so that by 2020 we would be a sustainable locality in terms of energy and environment. The Mgarr ix-Xini project is ongoing however during the last five years although we have strived to get funds, these are difficult to acquire. Lately we were informed that we are eligible for funds. In every project we do as a local council, we ensure that the surroundings especially the environment is kept in a natural state. There was also an initiative where the council renovated a dumpsite, landscaped it and was converted in an olive grove. There was an educational campaign where the primary school of Xewkija was involved to educate the students to foster the love towards the environment.

2. Have you heard about the European Landscape Convention? What do you know about it?

Yes through personal work. Local councils are limited financially. Was used in the project description statement of regional park of Mgarr ix-Xini are following the European Landscape Convention.

3. Do you know whether there are any plans for Malta to ratify this convention?

No discussion for ratification has been taken place as yet. The local council never took an initiative to adopt it as a policy of the local council.

4. Does your organization have any interest in ratification of this convention?

Not yet.

5. This convention calls for the identification of landscape quality objectives based on people's aspirations. Has there been any initiative to identify landscape quality objectives for Gozo?

No but we involved farmers etc in the project of Mgarr ix-Xini.

6. Which type of tools have been adopted for the protection, management and/or planning of landscapes?

As a local council during these last years we have been complaining on the central government to clean Mgarr ix-Xini valley. But recently through the Eco-Gozo scheme valleys started to be cleaned.

7. Do you think that current policies are contributing to the 'vision' that the public wants to achieve?

In a rationalization exercise, MEPA took account of the building boom especially in the village core to stop apartments. There is a need for a balance. Other than policies, people have to assume responsibility and take the initiative of reporting any vandalism or want for improvement.

8. In what ways will you strive to ensure that the preservation of the landscape mirrors the aspiration of the locals?

Annual meetings are open for the public but people do not take much interest in local issues despite grumbling between them.

9. Are there any plans to involve the public in defining what future landscapes they would like?

We involved the public in the Mgarr ix-Xinip project and had positive feedback. With regard to other areas, we have a pending application concerning an abandoned area which is prone to illegal dumping and we will do a recreational area and landscaping but it is marked a green area ODZ and permission has not been granted yet.

10. How would you like to see the Gozitan landscapes change in the next 2, 10, 30 years?

I wish that they are kept in their natural state. Some landscape features are not given the appropriate attention especially cultural ones. Case in point is the rubble walls that have to be built with the original skill not mixing old with new contrast.

11. What type of landscape do you feel that present policies are likely to lead to over the next 2, 10, 30 years?

The mentality has to change, if you see someone dumping, you have to take action and correct that person, give warnings. As for green wardens – policy is way behind, in the Mgarr ix-Xini project we applied for green guides to inform the public on their actions on the area. Policies on paper exist maybe they do not reach the parameters of the European landscape convention, but enforcements have to be stringent and education has to be proper education not the type that is based on mailing flyers only.

Xaghra– Joseph Cordina 31/08/2010

1. What is being done in your locality to improve and to achieve a sustainable landscape?

As a form of landscaping we did some restoration at Calypso cave, belvedere, playingfield, plans for a recreational area near Ġgantija temples.

2. Have you heard about the European Landscape Convention? What do you know about it?

Never heard of it

3. Do you know whether there are any plans for Malta to ratify this convention?

No

4. Does your organization have any interest in ratification of this convention?

Not yet

5. This convention calls for the identification of landscape quality objectives based on people's aspirations. Has there been any initiative to identify landscape quality objectives for Gozo?

No

6. Which type of tools have been adopted for the protection, management and/or planning of landscapes?

No

7. Do you think that current policies are contributing to the 'vision' that the public wants to achieve?

All the local councils are party to the Albor Convention. Local square – embellishment retain its characteristic. It very difficult to implement projects because people are accustomed to a particular system and they object to change because people are egoistic, finances are little

8. In what ways will you strive to ensure that the preservation of the landscape mirrors the aspiration of the locals?

Dictatorship because people oppose local council projects. The council tried to expropriate a government land to convert it to recreational area, it is leased to people who do not work the land but these people do not want to give this land for the public. The bottom line is politics. National interest is the last priority.

9. Are there are any plans to involve the public in defining what future landscapes they would like?

‘Socio-cultural initiatives for the locality of Xaghra’ is a document compiled from interviews that were done to the public and contains suggestions from the residents most of which can be actively considered.

10. How would you like to see the Gozitan landscapes change in the next 2, 10, 30 years?

The concept of Eco-Gozo, in theory is very good but in practice is very difficult. Only one valley has been cleaned to date but the more stakeholders are involved the more clashes there will be. Bureaucracy prevails as can be shown when Mepa was dragging its feet to issue a permit for the stones to be removed from Ramla bay...storic wall has been breached used to act as a sea wall and waves are reaching the shore.

11. What type of landscape do you feel that present policies are likely to lead to over the next 2, 10, 30 years?

Eco-Gozo policies. Local councils are contributing more than the central government in landscaping and conservation of landscapes through small projects. Preserves cultural artifacts that belongs to the locals.

LEADER project – NGOs and local councils are brought together – a budget is allocated to each country and these are spent on neccessities required by the county. In Malta 3 regions were chosen. Funds have not been given yet and this project has not started yet.

The contract was signed one year ago involving a sum of €100,000 to organise ourselves, to provide training etc. and to establish the Gozo Action Group. The use of such money should materialize in more advertising of Gozo, better landscaping, investment in culture and tourism and the industry.

POLICY MAKERS

MEPA – Mark Cini (Senior Planning Officer) 27/08/2010

1. Have you heard about the European Landscape Convention? What do you know about it?

Yes I only know it exists but do not know what exactly it consists of.

2. Do you know whether there are any plans for Malta to ratify this convention?

No

3. Does your organization have any interest in ratification of this convention?

Do not know, as that is not my role I'm not involved in ratification of Conventions. that's in another section known as forward planning that prepares policies so that development follows those policies and regulations are enacted for protection of landscapes.

4. This convention calls for the identification of landscape quality objectives based on people's aspirations. Has there been any initiative to identify landscape quality objectives for Gozo?

No

5. Which type of tools have been adopted for the protection, management and/or planning of landscapes?

In the Structure plan, Development planning act 1992, MEPA is obliged to safeguard the natural environment and cultural environment in the country. These have to be in line with the conservation policies. Measures to conserve the natural landscape - Structure plan policies Rural Conservation which are the areas found outside development zones, local plans, subsidiary guidelines that guides development at the edge of the development zone and take into consideration how development has to take place. Instead of high buildings, more setback development is implemented to minimize the visual impacts. Even height limitations especially at the edge, and nearing the countryside height limitation is reduced. An important measure found in the Local plan there has been introduced the 'edge of scheme,' at the end of the boundaries there is a measure that development is not high at the edge of slopes. There are other policies for

conservation such as the Legal notice of rubble walls, 160 and 169 with its aim to conserve the topography of the fields by delinating measurements for building.

6. In what ways will you strive to ensure that the preservation of the landscape mirrors the aspiration of the locals?

People have to be more appreciative of what is being done. Ex: Consent of the developer to understand that he's developing in a sensitive place. Enforcement is key, and public funding so the local councils would upgrade areas that are dilapidated to be rehabilitated through public involvement.

7. What type of landscape do you feel that present policies are likely to lead to over the next 2, 10, 30 years?

The policies are targeted to regulate development and conserve. For ex: for rubble walls, the countour lines of rubble walls are kept in the event of a development proposal. We prohibit formalization of the countryside. Policies are geared to improve conservation, rubble walls etc. It depends on public intervention to develop and the local councils and the central administration to embark on large-scale projects.

Ministry for Gozo - Pat Curmi (Assistant Director Major Projects) 31/8/ 2010

1. Have you heard about the European Landscape Convention? What do you know about it?

No

2. Do you know whether there are any plans for Malta to ratify this convention?

No

3. Does your organization (MEPA) have any interest in ratification of this convention?

Its more of a policy issue – I'm involved in implementation. It is constrained by what Mepa authorizes.

4. This convention calls for the identification of landscape quality objectives based on people's aspirations. Has there been any initiative to identify landscape quality objectives for Gozo?

Afforestation working group was set up to identify areas if these could be developed into public gardens or forested areas, pic-nic areas, Chambray. All the planning issues concern MEPA which has to provide an application.

5. Which type of tools have been adopted for the protection, management and/or planning of landscapes?

MEPA is the main watchdog. At the Ministry we have the afforestation working group, the principal agricultural officer who is educated on agriculture.

6. Do you think that current policies are contributing to the 'vision' that the public wants to achieve?

The Eco-Gozo is taking these current wishes and its part of the goals of eco –gozo. Basically it is to make gozo a green island (trying go), you find people in agreement and people who are opposed to any type of change. Being a green island is a new way of living. The ministry has to lead by example but the cost is very expensive. The projects we're doing are innovative. Ex: Garden at Marsalforn would be fitted with solar panels and LED lights – is eco friendly and very expensive.

7. In what ways will you strive to ensure that the preservation of the landscape mirrors the aspiration of the locals?

In each gardens that we do we look around the area and fit it to the whole family, plant indigenous trees and no palm trees.

8. Are there are any plans to involve the public in defining what future landscapes they would like?

Yes in the Eco-Gozo project there are plans but we're quite open to people's opinion. People come over with suggestions which are not always possible as there are also technicalities. For example, to construct a garden has to be government owned land, has to be restored, has to be suitable, has to be a large area etc. This issue is discussed by different areas coming together and meeting to discuss it its not just talk but a lot of work involved. For example, Marsalforn is a large area that incorporates different stakeholders. The public is hard to accept because they think its government workers dragging their feet. I wish there was some way to bring out the fact of what is involved when one decides to do something as simple as planting a tree

9. How would you like to see the Gozitan landscapes change in the next 2, 10, 30 years? How do you think they will change?

I would like more uniformity like in other foreign countries there is a plan. When I go to Marsalforn, Xlendi and other places it looks like a mess. We have to focus on the traditional. We have to control more development. It seems that everytime a house knocked down and a block of flats is built instead of it. When you had 1 family on a plot of land now you have 16 creating traffic and parking issues everything has a trickle down effect.

10. What type of landscape do you feel that present policies are likely to lead to over the next 2, 10, 30 years?

Policies of MEPA are there and are quite strict. Its a matter of how they're being implemented and enforced, maybe the core area has to be redefined. You have to take areas where there is irregularities and its area has to have its own definition, take each area for what it is and define it accordingly by seeing how many buildings are allowable. It would be good to have the input of the locals in each plan. People from the locality contribute to the discussion because at the end of the day they are the ones that live there. There is a problem of funding in the cultural heritage but with the eco gozo everything can't be focused on central government, local councils, NGOS and private investors, partnerships public funding. There has to be a team effort.

11. How will the public be involved in the realisation of the Eco-Gozo vision?

Information, we try our best to do billboards, and eventually when the projects are finished I hope we will have information panels at each sites, solar panels, reservoirs would be a self sustaining cess pits to clean the water, filter it and be used to water the plants. Each site is to have one aspect of self sustaining resource to be reused involves many expenses and some of them are still experimental. The Ministry will lead by example to the locals which can do in their own home.

Ministry for Gozo - Anthony Zammit (Director Eco-Gozo) 01/09/2010

1. Have you heard about the European Landscape Convention? What do you know about it?

Yes I heard about it. It is a set of recommendations not a set of binding rules that strives to safeguard the regional characteristics of the European Landscape.

2. Do you know whether there are any plans for Malta to ratify this convention?

No

3. Does your organization (Ministry for Gozo) have any interest in ratification of this convention?

We cannot ratify it by ourselves as it has to be a national effort. The spirit of the ELC is important for the future of Gozo.

4. This convention calls for the identification of landscape quality objectives based on people's aspirations. Has there been any initiative to identify landscape quality objectives for Gozo?

Yes there has been a research effort by Louis Cassar who did questionnaires and interviews similar to your study.

5. Which type of tools have been adopted for the protection, management and/or planning of landscapes?

On a local level the local plan, on a regional level the structure plan and Eco Gozo strategy is also contributing especially to tourism as Gozo's biggest selling point is its landscape and the locals value the qualities of the landscape.

6. Do you think that current policies are contributing to the 'vision' that the public wants to achieve?

It depends upon the cohorts of the population. I think the older generation wants the countryside landscape to remain a countryside landscapes. Although the policies are strict at certain points there can be failures.

7. The Ministry for Gozo declared that Gozo will become an eco island by 2020. How exactly will this be achieved and how does the management of the landscape feature in this vision?

If we manage to attain higher sustainable development standards this will imply that the production of resources and the development of the economic and tourist scenarios for stronger tourism. Gozo is a rural destination if we don't safeguard landscape qualities we would lose an asset. This also concerns the Gozitans as these are the first users of this service and they appreciate and enjoy the landscape so they have to protect the local landscape qualities. First for ourselves and then for economic well being of the island. In terms of sustainability we will be using these natural and cultural assets to develop the economy.

8. In what ways will your organization (Ministry for Gozo) strive to ensure that the preservation of the landscape mirrors the aspiration of the locals?

By checking what locals want contact with MEPA in whatever developing of policy is taking place. In Eco-Gozo people's aspirations are included.

9. Are there are any plans to involve the public in defining what future landscapes they would like?

No

10. How would you like to see the Gozitan landscapes change in the next 2, 10, 30 years? How do you think they will change?

By not changing

11. What type of landscape do you feel that present policies are likely to lead to over the next 2, 10, 30 years?

More agriculture, more farms and more afforestation done through EU incentives

12. How will the public be involved in the realisation of the Eco-Gozo vision?

Realisation, consultation, consensus material was filtered by experts. All the projects have undergone consultation by the public and suggestions were given due consideration.

MEPA – Anja Delia (Representative of Malta for the European Landscape Convention) 03/09/2010

1. Have you heard about the European Landscape Convention? What do you know about it?

Yes. It applies to all landscapes and the idea is to achieve an overall landscape quality not just to protect small patches and to have something that covers everything and its binding to the parties ratifying it.

2. Do you know whether there are any plans for Malta to ratify this convention?

Yes but there are no details on time frames.

3. Does your organization (MEPA) have any interest in ratification of this convention?

Yes absolutely we started working on the landscape assessment which is the first step toward the ratification on the ELC. However ratification does not depend upon Mepa but is the decision of the cabinet.

4. This convention calls for the identification of landscape quality objectives based on people's aspirations. Has there been any initiative to identify landscape quality objectives for Gozo?

Not really as there isn't any groundwork at the moment.

5. Which type of tools have been adopted for the protection, management and/or planning of landscapes?

The main tool is the designation of areas of high landscape value was stipulated in the structure plan of the Maltese islands, in the local plans further areas were proposed. This works the same with archeological and ecological. Protection can occur via other instruments through policies which guide development which happen in these areas. For example, a development application for high rise buildings in Valletta would be refused on the ground on the view of the fortification. The Eco-Gozo concept is a bit vague. Landscape is all-encompassing issue that when you do other things everything impacts

on the landscape wind farms on Gozo would be good for the ecology but bad for the landscape.

6. Do you think that current policies are contributing to the 'vision' that the public wants to achieve?

Current policies are covered by other policies specifically not the landscape such as the policies in the local plan. Protection therefore might be achieved in an indirect way. High rise buildings is another issue all together. With regards to the present high rise apartments, there were already application for high rise buildings and we couldn't say we are going to prohibit such development but instead Mepa designate certain areas.

7. In what ways will MEPA strive to ensure that the preservation of the landscape mirrors the aspiration of the locals?

Since we are in favor of the ELC one aspect of the ELC is the involvement of the public and we have an obligation for further measures in that regard.

8. Are there are any plans to involve the public in defining what future landscapes they would like?

For now there are no concrete plans. When the ELC will be adopted, then procedures can commence. However at the moment Mepa is limited in terms of financial and human resources.

9. How would you like to see the Gozitan landscapes change in the next 2, 10, 30 years? How do you think they will change?

No I would like it to be kept in its original state.

10. What type of landscape do you feel that present policies are likely to lead to over the next 2, 10, 30 years?

There are some things that would improve the landscape. Starting from the recent closure of the Qortin landfill that would be a positive aspect and even the after use of quarries such as restoration into agriculture that would also improve things. When it comes to development, the polices are trying to contain development especially in residential development. The local plan allows building height of 3 floors, stepping down of buildings have to have back garden; improve the appearance of the development using landscape buffers - trees and shrubs by trying to blend it with the surroundings. Someone from the environment section of MEPA has to look over the development application and go into detail.

APPENDIX G

The reply of the local councils to the question: What is being done in your locality to improve and to achieve a sustainable landscape?

Local Council	Upcoming projects to improve the landscape
Ghajnsielem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Sewage Treatment at Xatt l-ahmar — Energy saving solar panels — Country walks — Study unexplored Neolithic temples — Excavate and re-build shelters — Maritime museum in Mgarr Harbor — Plans for an Ecological Park
Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — ‘Setting an integrated cultural archeological and historical place in Victoria.’ — Collect water in Lunzjata Valley — Cultural trails — Scanning it-Tokk for archeological remains
Żebbug	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Improving residential roads
Munxar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Heritage trails — Playing field (indigenous trees & reservoir) — Solar-Panels — Clean-up of Xlendi Valley
Gharb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — The Wied il-Mielah Valley Restoration and Management of Storm Water
Qala	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Heritage trails — Tourism activities — Restoration of rubble walls — Abandoned areas or waste dumps transformed in public places or public gardens — Tree Planting
Sannat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Solar panels — Electric cars in each town square — Plans for wind turbines — Water catchments — Water culverts — Plans to plant more trees — Mgarr ix-Xini Regional Park
Kerċem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Built rubble walls — Plans to construct a belvedere — Public Garden — Plans for a panoramic road at Ghar ilma
San Lawrenz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Restoration of narrow alleys — Pjazza prject — Dwejra Heritage Park — Belvedere and playing field

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Solar water heaters — Photovoltaic panels and energy saving light — Plans to be a sustainable locality by 2020
Ghasri	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Focused on the inner core of the village
Fontana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Restoration of rubble walls — Cleaning of Xlendi valley — Plans for a belvedere — Use of energy saving lights — Use of solar panels — Restoration of roads and certain historic wash houses
Nadur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Clean-up of valleys — Maintenance of water culverts — Plans for energy saving in the core village
Xewkija	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Mgarr ix-Xini project — Educational campaigns — Converted a dumpsite into an olive grove
Xaghra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Cleared stones from Ramla Bay — Calypso Cave — Plans for a Belvedere — Conservation of the core village — Plans for a recreational area near Ġgantija temples

PQ 15037 - Seduta 210

Data: 07/04/2010

SKRIVAN**Measure 323 - Conservation and Upgrading of the Rural Heritage**

Appl. No.	Applicant Local Council	Project Title
323/03	Iklin	Conserving and Promotion the rural landscape of the locality of Iklin
323/06	Kirkop	Towards a Sustainable Future
323/07	San Lawrenz	Restoration and Enhancement of San Lawrenz Rural Qualities
323/08	Xaghra	The Sustainable Xaghra Project
323/09	Qala	Exploring & Improving Qala's quality of life through heritage trail
323/10	Għarb	Għarb's Cultural & Touristic Conservation Project
323/11	St Lucia	Embellishment of St Lucia & The Conservation of the Prehistoric Hypogeum
323/13	Kercem	Footpaths: Journeys Through the Hidden Paths of Gozo
323/15	Munxar	Conservation of Munxar & the Promotion of Rural & Cultural Tourism
323/17	Siggiewi	Enhancing the Visual Beauty of Siggiewi - Upgrading of Rubble Walls
323/18	Xewkija	Enhancement of Mgarr ix-Xini Valley
323/19	San Ġwann	Revive of our Cultural Heritage
323/20	Sannat	The tal-Bidwi Park
323/21	Marsaxlokk	Management Plan for Delimara National Park & Awareness Raising
323/22	Żebbug	Conservation & Upgrading of the Rural Heritage
323/23	Mosta	Embellishment of the rural locality of mosta
323/24	San Pawl	Conserving of Rural Heritage for a More Sustainable Tourism Sector
323/25	Mqabba	Promoting Mqabba Rural Heritage
323/26	Għajnsielem	The Reconstruction & Conservation of the 'Għajn Hasselin'
323/27	Mgarr	Rubble wall restoration along the route between Mgarr and Tas-Santi
323/29	Mellieħa	Selmun Archeological & Rural Heritage Trail
323/31	Birżebbuġa	Embellishment of the rural landscape of birzebbuġa
323/32	Naxxar	A Trail Management Plan for Naxxar
323/33	Dingli	Dingli: Towards Sustainable Rurality
323/34	Zurrieq	Embellishment of the Hal Millieri Rural Area
323/35	Għargħur	The Lanciritka Project
323/36	Rabat	Conservation and Restoration of Rabat's Rural Landscape