An Analysis of a Participatory Urban Design Approach to Shared Space in Malta

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Abstract

Community participation is considered as highly desirable and a positive contribution to the urban design process and the places it shapes. Several frameworks for urban design processes have been proposed that take different approaches to participation, but few consider the practical implications.

Using Malta as a case study and Carmona's (2014) *Place-Shaping Continuum* as a conceptual framework, this study explores how a participatory urban design process can inform an approach to introducing shared space in streets and squares. In Malta, such a participatory approach needs to take into account cultural issues such as apathetic local communities and a strong car culture. The latter has led to large parts of public space being taken over by the private car, with negative effects on walkability and quality of life.

Based on analysis of policy documents and interviews with key stakeholders, this research seeks to explore how the socio-economic and political context, stakeholder attitudes and power dynamics, and the urban design process influence the adoption of a participatory approach.

This research tests the validity of the *Place-Shaping Continuum* in a different context, and identifies two main adaptations, which consist of the need to give more consideration to how participation influences the urban design process, and to give more importance to the role of those who lead and coordinate the urban design process. The research also adds to the body of knowledge on the adoption of a participatory urban design process in Malta and identifies six recommendations for policy and practice, which include the need to depoliticise the urban design field, the collaborative development of visions and strategies, and the need for professionals trained to facilitate participatory processes. Three recommendations were made regarding shared space, including the need to address car culture first and not to overemphasise shared space.

Declaration

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

Luke Psaila

March 2021

Dedication

To my grandparents Joseph and Carmela, in loving memory.

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Abbreviations

BAG: Bicycle Advocacy Group

CLLD: Community-led local development

eNGO: Environmental Non-Governmental Organization

ERA: Environment and Resources Authority

EU: European Union

KTP: Kamra tal-Periti

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

GRTU: General Retailers and Traders Union

LCA: Local Council Association

LED: Local Economic Development

MDA: Malta Developers Association

MHRA: Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association

MTA: Malta Tourism Authority

MP: Member of Parliament

NEP: National Environment Policy

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

OPM: Office of the Prime Minister

PA: Planning Authority

PACTS: Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety

PR: Press Relations

PS: Parliamentary Secretary

SCH: Superintendence of Cultural Heritage

SPED: Strategic Plan for Environment and Development

TM: Transport Malta

UCA: Urban Conservation Area

Chapter 1   Introduction

1.1   Background Context

In recent years, there has been a re-emergent interest in the quality of public space in cities and villages. Whilst the core and seminal literature dates back to the 1960s and 1970s (Alexander et al., 1977; Appleyard et al., 1964; Cullen, 1961; J. Jacobs, 1961; Lynch, 1960; Whyte, 1980), the last two decades have seen a significant increase in the number of academic publications on the quality of public space (Ameli et al., 2015; Ewing et al., 2015; Jones et al., 2007; Mehta, 2007).

Streets and squares form an important part of the public realm, with many identifying these spaces as the fundamental reason for cities and urban areas. Streets and squares are the links between places and at the same time places where people meet, interact and conduct business (Goldberger, 2007; A. B. Jacobs, 1995; J. Jacobs, 1961; Kostof, 1992; Project for Public Spaces, 2010; Tibbalds, 2004; Whyte, 2009).

Since the 1960s, the widespread adoption of the private car has had a negative impact on the quality of these spaces (Carmona, Heath, et al., 2003; Newman & Kenworthy, 1996; Whyte, 2009), with studies showing that increases in car traffic have a negative impact on social interaction between people, with the number of people on the street being inversely proportional to the volume of traffic on the streets (Appleyard & Lintell, 1972; Eubank-Ahrens, 1984). This has led to a number of studies that have focused on identifying key characteristics that can improve walkability to encourage people to walk to their destinations while improving the public realm (Adkins et al., 2012; Alfonzo, 2005; Ewing et al., 2006; Forsyth, 2015; Forsyth et al., 2008; Ozbil et al., 2011; Sepe, 2009; Zacharias, 2001).

Several studies, some dating back to the 1960s, have discussed ways to reclaim street space, improve the street environment, and promote the social functions of streets and squares. The concepts of pedestrianisation and shared space schemes tend to be the most considered (Biddulph, 2012b; Hass-Klau, 2015; Monheim, 1986, 1992; Shared Space, 2005). Where the complete removal of cars is not possible or desirable, shared space principles can be introduced to increase the quality of the *place* function of a street while retaining the *movement* component of the street. Shared space is a concept that aims to integrate all activities on the street, with the goal of having all users navigate and use the space according to informal social rules that are often free of traditional road markings and traffic signs. Shared space often results in an increased level of sharing, with pedestrians using the full width of the street. This often leads to an increase in observed social and recreational activities. Furthermore, shared space is not a new concept, as several streets and squares in historic village

centres already function naturally as shared space (Biddulph, 2012b; Department of Transport (UK), 2011; Hass-Klau, 2015; Monheim, 1986, 1992; Shared Space, 2005; Vanderbilt, 2008).

The required improvements discussed above all have one thing in common: that these need to be introduced through the urban design process. The definition of urban design is open to interpretation, but in recent years there has been an increased emphasis on the importance of considering urban design as an ongoing process rather than the final outcome. The urban design process allows places to evolve and be reshaped to meet the changing needs of the community and ideally enhance the character and identity of places. The accumulation of this process over the years gives places a particular character and identity as they continually evolve and reshape themselves (Banerjee & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2011, p. 275; Carmona, 2014, p. 4; Ellin, 2006; Farrell, 2014; Hack, 2011; Inam, 2002, p. 37; Madanipour, 1996, p. 105).

In addition, the planning and urban design professions have come to view community participation as critically important, positive contribution to the urban design process and the places it shapes (Alzahrani et al., 2017; Farrells, 2014; Finn, 2014; Hall, 2014; Healey, 2015; Wates, 2014), inspired by several seminal texts such as Kevin Lynch's *The Image of the City* (1960) and Jane Jacob's *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961). However, a participatory urban design process is not straightforward, as different types of participation can be applied, with each type having its benefits and challenges (Innes & Booher, 2004; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Reed, 2008; Rowe & Frewer, 2000).

While extensive research has been carried out on these individual components, very few studies have attempted to consider how all of these considerations come together to improve the quality of urban spaces. The research in this thesis, therefore, seeks to address this gap by analysing how a participative urban design process can help to introduce shared space principles in Malta to improve the walkability and liveability of the streets and squares.

1.2   Malta as a case study

Malta, a small island state in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, offers a unique case study for the current research. Small island states such as Malta tend to have unique governance and policy networks, and Malta has a highly centralised system in which power is held by powerful institutions and politicians. Despite having a centralised system, this does not necessarily lead to policy integration between the different sectors and stakeholders, especially when considering that in small island states, the different entities tend to have clear remits that rarely overlap (Attard, 2006; Farinós Dasí et al., 2006). This is compounded by a two-party political system that leads to the politicisation of

small issues, which are often elevated to national issues, inevitably affecting the urban design process (Veenendaal, 2019; Warren & Enoch, 2010).

It is also important to consider the socio-cultural attitudes that influence the urban design process and have a major impact on the shaping of urban space. These include a car culture that prioritises the private car over other basic needs, resulting in a high level of car dependency, which over the years has led to an increased use of public land for streets and parking, resulting in a loss of pedestrian space. The continuous increase in the number of cars in Malta has also damaged the streetscapes and consequently affected the cultural and natural heritage, contributing to increased negative impacts on human health and quality of life (Government of Malta, 2015, pp. 13–14).

The need for urban areas to become more attractive places for people to live, work, play and interact has been identified in three key national strategy documents: *National Environment Policy* (Ministry for Tourism the Environment and Culture, 2012), *Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development* (Government of Malta, 2015), and *National Transport Strategy 2050* (Transport Malta, 2016a). These strategies identify the need to reduce the impact of the car on urban areas, whilst supporting the place function of streets in the search for a higher quality of life. Despite this, very few improvements have been experienced over the years, which is not aided by a lack of attractive alternative modes of transport.

Finally, there is also limited research in the field of urban planning in Malta, especially in urban design. This research seeks to address this gap by understanding how a participatory urban design process, which is not often adopted in Malta, can begin to implement projects and bring about much needed improvements to the urban qualities of streets and squares.

1.3   Aims and objectives

In view of the discussion above, the main question addressed by this research is:

> How can a participatory urban design process inform an approach to introduce shared space in Maltese streets and squares?

The objectives of this research in the context of Malta are:

1. To analyse the legislation, strategies and policies which control and guide the urban design process in respect to streets and squares.
2. To identify the different roles and interests of key stakeholders in respect to the future of streets and squares, focusing on their involvement in the urban design process.

3. To analyse how a participative urban design process can contribute to the (re-)introduction of shared space principles in Malta with the aim of increasing liveability and walkability.

1.4   Methodological approach

Carmona's (2014) *Place-shaping Continuum: A theory of urban design* is adopted as a conceptual framework to provide a structured approach to analyse different aspects of the urban design process, departing from the typical consideration of the urban design 'process' as a process sub-divided into phases. Instead, the *Place-shaping Continuum* considers urban design as a long-term, continuous place-shaping process that is influenced by three main components: the contextual factors of a place, including history and tradition as well as contemporary polity; four place-shaping processes that consider the use and management of a space in addition to the design and development phases; and the power relations among stakeholders that influence the direction and outcomes of the process.

To understand whether participation can inform an urban design approach that seeks to introduce shared space principles in Malta, a combination of methods was used. This included:

*   A literature review to extract existing knowledge on the topic.
*   A textual analysis of legislation and planning related documents to understand Maltese strategic policies and the roles, responsibilities and interests of stakeholders.
*   An analysis of participatory approaches currently in practice in Malta.
*   These were followed by interviews to understand the different perspectives and opinions of the stakeholders involved or interested in the process. The interview data was then analysed to find out how participation can influence the different components in the urban design process, while testing the Place-shaping Continuum in a different context.

1.5   Motivation for research

Before outlining the structure of the research, it may be considered important to identify the motivations for this particular research topic. First of all, it is a topic of great interest to the author as there is little research both in the Maltese and wider context, particularly research that can inform policy and practise. In Malta, there is a need to improve the quality of public space as it can be seen as lagging behind due to the status quo, while other countries focus on improving public space and invest significant resources in public space and public life strategies. To implement these strategies, there is a need for institutional frameworks and processes that enable these long-term strategies that aim to transform the urban environment over a number of years. Of paramount importance is the

urban design process where, with the participation of key stakeholders and local communities, these visions and strategies need to be developed, followed by the detailed design and development of projects. The urban design process is likely to play an important role in the use and management of these spaces in the long term, with the urban design process conceived as an ongoing place-making process that needs to be sustained to further improve the quality of streets and squares.

1.6   Structure

Chapter 2 Urban design process: streets and squares begins by discussing the different definitions of urban design before examining the literature on urban design in detail. The focus is on the importance of streets and squares and how they have developed and evolved over time, before discussing the principles of shared space and how these can contribute to the quality of streets and squares. The concept of *wicked problems* is introduced, which is followed by an overview of the stakeholders interested in the urban design process and their participation in it. The chapter then develops a critical review of thirteen frameworks, that propose urban design approaches or highlight key considerations, by analysing them in relation to five key characteristics identified through the literature review. The chapter concludes by identifying Carmona's (2014) *Place-shaping Continuum* as the selected conceptual framework for this research.

Chapter 3 Conceptual Approach and Methodology sets out the conceptual approach and methodology adopted to answer the research question and objectives and explains why this approach was chosen. The chapter also describes the research methods used and the documents analysed, before identifying the purpose behind the semi-structured interviews and identifying the participants, the challenges encountered, and the approach taken to analyse this data.

Chapter 4 Malta – setting the context discusses the Maltese context by first providing an overview of the socio-economic and political context. This is followed by a stakeholder analysis identifying the key stakeholders in Malta with their roles and interests. The chapter also analyses how streets in Malta have changed over time and identifies the main causes of this, before providing an overview of the Maltese spatial and transport planning system, which includes an analysis of local strategy and policy documents to identify the approach being proposed for participation in the urban design process in relation to the upgrading of streets and squares and the introduction of shared space.

The findings from the interviews are presented in Chapters 5 and 6. ***Chapter 5 Findings on the contextual factors and stakeholders*** first analyses the findings on the contextual factors which influence the urban design process before reporting on the stakeholders' findings, including how the

power relations and their approach to the urban design process affect the process in the shaping of streets and squares. ***Chapter 6 Findings on the urban design process*** analyses the existing urban design process in Malta, including the existing levels of participation, and compares this with the desired levels of participation. The chapter goes on to discuss the type of urban design process required to achieve the desired outcomes, including the importance of a holistic and long-term, approach which is identified as a requirement for implementing shared space and overcoming the challenges and barriers associated with it.

Chapter 7 Discussion discusses the wider relevance of the empirical findings and contrasts them with the wider literature and Carmona's (2014) *Place-shaping Continuum: A theory of urban design*. The chapter identifies implications for the Maltese context and for the *Place-shaping Continuum* and concludes with a discussion of the broad implications for the *Place-Shaping Continuum,* which includes recommendations to include two additional considerations in the theory.

Chapter 8 Conclusion concludes this thesis by revisiting the research objectives and outlining how the *Place-shaping Continuum* has contributed to this research and the contribution of this research to the *Place-Shaping Continuum*. It then identifies the contribution to knowledge, before outlining several recommendations for policy and practice in Malta, while also identifying the limitations and potential areas for further research.

Chapter 2 Urban design process: streets and squares

2.1 Background

This chapter is concerned with the urban design process through which streets and squares can be better adapted to the needs of the community and users. The term urban design is used by many in different circumstances and can have different meanings as it overlaps with many different disciplines (Cozzolino et al., 2020; Madanipour, 1997). This chapter therefore first discusses the different definitions of urban design and identifies a relevant definition of urban design. The chapter then examines the literature on urban design, focusing on streets and squares, and how the urban design process and places have been influenced by trends over the years, such as the widespread adoption of the personal car as the primary mode of transport.

The chapter then discusses the importance of streets and squares, including the characteristics and elements associated with high-quality urban places, before discussing the challenges associated with accommodating the various functions. It then introduces the concept of shared space and discusses how it can be used to accommodate the many street users without discriminating against some. This is followed by an overview of the challenges associated with urban design, including the concept of wicked problems, where the problem and the solution are not clear. An overview of the stakeholders involved or interested in the urban design process is then given, before discussing different aspects related to their participation in the urban design process.

The chapter then moves on to critically review thirteen conceptual frameworks that attempt to identify the key components of the urban design process and/or key considerations that contribute to the success of the process. These frameworks were selected through a literature review that sought to identify frameworks that have been proposed over the years. These frameworks were narrowed down to thirteen, to allow for a more detailed critical analysis of the selected frameworks. Through the analysis of these frameworks, five key characteristics were identified and used as the basis for the critical review. The chapter concludes by identifying an appropriate urban design process framework that can be applied and tested in the Maltese context to inform this research.

2.2 Urban design

2.2.1 Defining urban design

The definition of urban design is frequently open to different interpretations as it draws knowledge from several other disciplines onto which it can sometimes overlap (Cozzolino et al., 2020, p. 1; Madanipour, 1996, p. 117). In some respects, urban design might be considered as filling the gap left by other fields of study and specialisations which have resulted in a compartmentalised approach to the built environment (Biddulph, 2012c, p. 1). A number of authors consider urban design as the link between architecture and urban planning (Carmona et al., 2010, p. 5; Cuthbert, 2007, p. 190; Moughtin, 2003a, p. 1) although Cozzolino et al. (2020) remark that each of these three disciplines have their own characteristics and that it is probably irrelevant to draw precise boundaries as the relationship between them tends to vary depending on the context and circumstances.

Several authors have proposed definitions for urban design. Whilst they vary from one to another, generally, there is a common understanding of the core features of urban design. Cozzolino et al. (2020) identified eight common core features through an analysis of twelve definitions of urban design. These are:

- Feature 1: urban design deals with the production and adaptation of the built environment.
- Feature 2: urban design introduces spatial order.
- Feature 3: urban design acts in the name of the public interest.
- Feature 4: urban design expresses social values.
- Feature 5: urban design works at scales larger than a single building and across properties.
- Feature 6: urban design is a creative, goal-oriented activity.
- Feature 7: urban design is performed directly and indirectly.
- Feature 8: urban design is a practice requiring multiple skills (Cozzolino et al., 2020).

Based on these features, Cozzolino et al. (2020) propose the following definition of urban design:

Urban design is a creative and purposeful activity with collective and public concerns that deals with the production and adaptation of the built environment at scales larger than a single plot or building. Its main scope is to impress a certain degree of order in the shaping of new physical developments and in the creation and management of the public realm. It operates in two main ways: first, by visualizing the physical outcome of particular projects through drawings or, second, by providing rules to deal with the physical forms of future transformations. This

> *practice requires the capacity to analyse the current state of affairs, sketch out possible workable scenarios and implement them in reality.* (p. 8)

This definition considers urban design, firstly, as a process that delivers projects and, secondly, as a process that sets the policy framework which identifies the goals and rules of future developments. Banerjee & Loukaitou-Sideris (2011) remark that when considering urban design, not much literature has discussed the relationship between the urban design process and the final design outcome. They note that there is a need to find a balance between standards and unrestrained creativity. Urban design also deals with places and challenges which many stakeholders have an interest in. Since these interests are often conflicting, urban design also has to take into consideration societal aspects such as the power, control and rights of different social and stakeholder groups. Carmona (2014) shares the same view and quotes Inam (2002) when remarking that the focus on urban design as a product has marginalised urban design as a process that deals with the complex dynamics in a city. Inam defined urban design as "*an ongoing long-term process intertwined with social and political mechanisms*" dealing with "*the complex and rich dynamics of the contemporary city rather than with physical form*" (p. 38).

Similarly, several other authors emphasise the need to view urban design as an on-going process that transforms urban areas over the years. The urban design process allows places to evolve and transform to meet the changing needs of the community and, ideally, to enhance the character and identity of places. The accumulation of this process over the years gives places a particular character and identity, as they continually evolve and reshape themselves (Australian Department of Infrastructure and Transport, 2011; Banerjee & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2011, p. 275; Boyko et al., 2006; Carmona, 2014, p. 4; Cresswell, 2004, p. 39; Ellin, 2006; Farrell, 2014; Hack, 2011; Inam, 2002, p. 37; Madanipour, 1996, p. 105).

This research adopts the view of these authors and considers urban design as a long-term process that continuously shapes the built environment. As identified by Cozzolino et al.'s (2020) definition the urban design process can occur in two main ways either at a project level dealing with the design or as a process that defines a framework for future development. Therefore, it is important to consider how these two components of urban design have shaped urban areas and public space, especially the design of streets and squares, through the years.

2.2.2   A brief history of urban design and the car

Urban design and the shaping of urban space is influenced by many factors. These include the prevailing politics and policy of governments, the economic conditions and the social priorities within any given context. This can result in distinct urban morphologies and landscapes, with unique characters and aesthetic which represent the socio-economic and political context at different points in time.

Over the past centuries and decades, urban mobility and different modes of transport have played an important role in the design and transformation of settlements. Newman & Kenworthy (1996) identify four main eras associated with methods of transportation that have resulted in distinctive urban settlements. There are walking, rail, mass public transport and the advent of the car. Each era increased the ease of travel, with the personal car allowing the development of new kinds of urban areas, such as low-density suburbs. The car was identified as the dream, which suddenly turned into a nightmare due to the predict and provide approach to infrastructure which resulted in an endless search for more street and parking space. This problem was not limited to the new urban areas but also affected the existing urban areas.

The increasing popularity and adoption of the personal car also coincided with the Modernist Movement, which was based on the principles that 'form should follow function'. Their approach to urban planning and urban design is epitomised by Le Corbusier in 'City of Tomorrow and Its Planning' (1925), when he stated that "*A city built for speed is built for success*", whilst remarking that "*the street is no longer a track for cattle, but a machine for traffic, an apparatus for its circulation*" (as cited in Broadbent, 1990, p. 131). This approach formed part of the recommendations outlined in the 'The Athens Charter' which was an outcome of the IV International Congress of Modern Architecture, focusing on the functional city. The charter includes several recommendations including the separation of pedestrian and automobile routes, and a scientific approach to street design (Congress Internationaux d'Architecture moderne (CIAM), 1946).

The priority given to the car by the modernists resulted in changes to the existing streets, consisting mainly of the erosion of pedestrian space to make space for infrastructure which could accommodate more cars and faster journeys (J. Jacobs, 1961). Charles Landry (2005) states that "*… for decades we have adapted the city of the car, and its needs have shaped the look, feel and atmosphere of places*" (p. 7). The increase in car ownership and its use as the main mode of transport resulted in a drastic change to street design and completely changed their social dynamics. As cars on the streets started increasing, vehicular traffic and pedestrian movement started being separated. Of these two realms,

vehicular movement space has become dominant within our cities and villages (Carmona, Heath, et al., 2003; Whyte, 2009, p. 194).

This led several academics and authors to join forces in an attempt to stop this practice. This led to the development of the 'Townscape Movement' in the 1950s, led by the 'Architectural Review', which stressed the importance of a holistic approach to the design of cities and urban areas and emphasised the importance of the social functions of streets and other public spaces. This was a clear departure from the principles of the modernist movement. The townscape movement argued that the social qualities of streets should not be overlooked in favour of the car. They also stressed the importance of considering the relationship between buildings and the spaces around them, which together contribute to the overall experience of the space. The same approach was taken by several others in the United States including Kevin Lynch, Jane Jacobs and Donald Appleyard. They all focused on the need to shift the focus of planning and urban design back to the human experience within cities and spaces (Ellin, 1999, pp. 61–62; A. B. Jacobs & Appleyard, 1987).

Despite the focus on the sociological aspects of the streets back in the 1960s, today's approach to street design is still mostly based on traffic engineering models which take into consideration the existing vehicular traffic flow and estimated growth, with little concern given to the human dimension of the street (Carr et al., 1992; Gehl, 2010; Government of South Australia, 2012). The struggles faced since the 1960s to rediscover streets led Jonathan Barnett (2008) to remark that "*we once knew how to make them [streets] and we are learning to make them again*" (p. 17).

The situation became even more complex as the number of vehicles in the world increased drastically from the 1960s onwards, as can be seen in Figure 1. Today, car ownership is still on the increase in most countries around the world and it is making it more difficult to achieve objectives that focus on improving urban quality and sustainability (Warren & Enoch, 2010). There are also several external costs associated with transport, particularly that of the personal car, which include accidents, air population, climate change, noise, congestion costs and infrastructural costs (Attard et al., 2015; European Commission: Environmental Directorate, 2004).
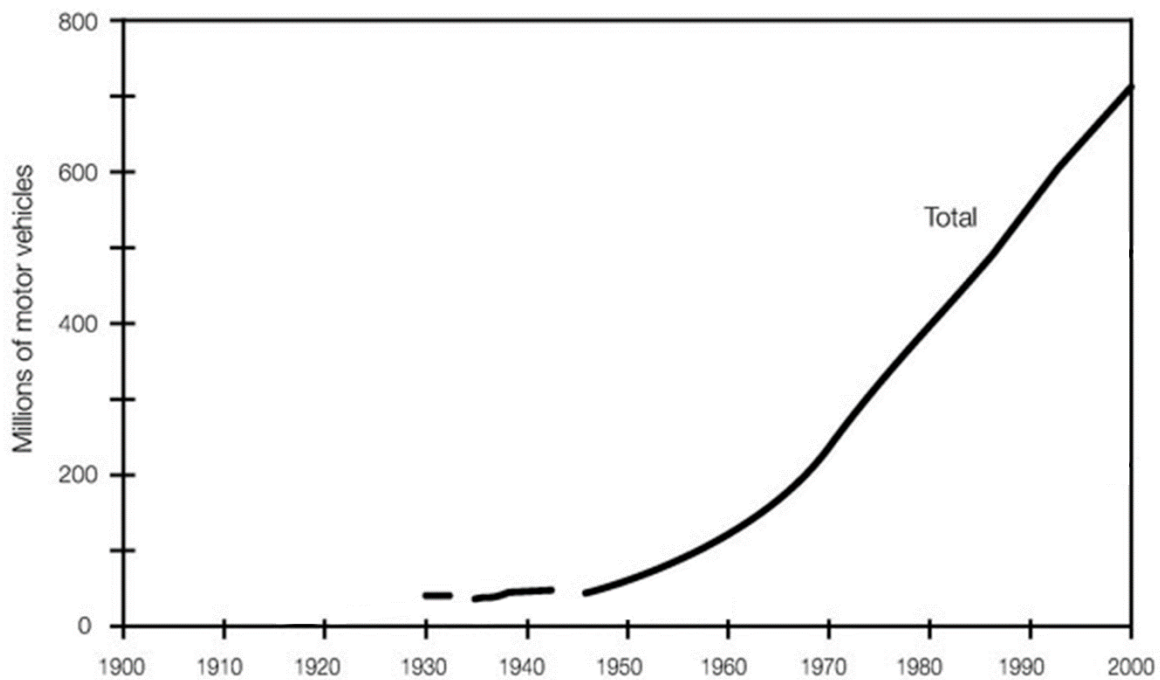
Figure 1: Number of vehicles in the world. Adapted from "The High Cost of Free Parking" by D. Shoup, (2017), p. 9.19.

'Recalibrating' streets and other urban spaces to prioritise pedestrians rather than the car has several benefits, including increased safety, improved health, well-being, can strengthen the economy and can result in a greater variety of street users and activities (Biddulph, 2012a; Phenton, 2013). However, shifting away from the car to more sustainable modes of transport is hampered by several factors including: "*political discourse favouring the car, lack of public, and therefore, political support for change, perceived high costs, need to compromise and path dependency in trying to find solutions*" (Attard, 2020, p. 353).

2.2.3   Streets and squares

The subject of urban design can vary widely, ranging from the development of an urban design strategy for a city to the design of a small left-over space after planning (SLOAP). The focus of this research is on streets and squares, which make up a large percentage of the public realm. This percentage can vary significantly depending on the urban morphology and the built density of the area, but studies have found that streets typically make up between 25 and 35% of the city, and account for up to 80% of public open space in a city (UN-Habitat, 2013, p. 21; WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2017, p. 29).

The importance of streets in the city has been emphasised by several authors, including Allan B. Jacobs (1995, p. 4), Francis Tibbalds (2004, p. 21) and Spiro Kostof (1992, p. 194) who identified streets as the

fundamental reason for cities, as they are the places where people meet and are the main places of social interactions and commercial transactions. Similarly, William H. Whyte (2009) notes that the street is "*the river of life of the city, the place where we come together, the pathway to the centre. It is the primary place*" (p. 7). Jane Jacobs (1961) also notes that streets define the image of cities:

> *Streets and their sidewalks, the main public places of a city, are its most vital organs. Think of a city and what comes to mind? Its streets. If a city's streets look interesting, the city looks interesting; if they look dull, the city looks dull.* (p. 29)

Squares are also important spaces in cities and towns. Before the Industrial Revolution, squares were the most important public spaces in European cities; afterwards parks and other public spaces were developed. Squares provide a focal point for communities and serve as common ground where the local community can meet, socialise, protest and celebrate important events (Carr et al., 1992). Successful squares attract different types of people and provide them with different opportunities such as socialising, eating, and relaxing. Consequently, successful squares can be "*the pulsing heart of a community and foster true urban sustainability*" (Project for Public Spaces, 2010, para. 2).

The way in which streets and squares have been studied in the urban design field has changed over the years. Camillo Sitte, Rob Krier (1979), Paul Zucker and others analysed streets and squares on their form, size and location, focusing on their visual appearance, geometry and their urban morphology.. Kostof (1992) noted that the study of streets and squares eventually shifted away from this approach as researchers started taking into consideration the functional aspects of these spaces, such as the way streets and squares are used. From measuring and analysing the physical proportions, urban designers started studying street life to identify how these spaces were being used by the local community and how different users interacted with each other in them. This shift has been accompanied by a large number of studies that aimed to identify street characteristics and elements that contribute to a high-quality pedestrian experience (Ewing et al., 2006; Ewing & Clemente, 2013; A. B. Jacobs & Appleyard, 1987; Mehta, 2007; Montgomery, 1998).

In the last two decades, there have also been several studies that analyse street to identify characteristics and elements which contribute to increased *walkability* – a measure of how friendly or attractive an area is to walk (Adkins et al., 2012; Alfonzo, 2005; Ameli et al., 2015; Ewing et al., 2006; Forsyth, 2015; Forsyth et al., 2008; Ozbil et al., 2011; Sepe, 2009; Zacharias, 2001). These and other qualities of streets and squares are important because they affect the level and type of activities in public space. Jan Gehl (1987) distinguished between necessary, optional and social activities. Necessary activities are those activities that need to take place irrespective of the quality of the space,

especially if there are no alternatives, such as going to work or waiting for a bus. Optional activities are those activities that occur only if the place is of a high quality which encourages users to walk or sit in the space. Social activities are those activities that depend on other people in the space. These include children playing or people socialising. These can evolve from the other two types of activities as people start to develop connections and relationships.

As discussed in the previous section, the introduction of the car has largely affected streets and squares, both in terms of their physical layout and the activities which take place in them. Studies have also shown that the volume of cars on a street directly influences the type of socialisation that occurs in them, as can be seen in Figure 2 (Appleyard & Lintell, 1972; Eubank-Ahrens, 1984).
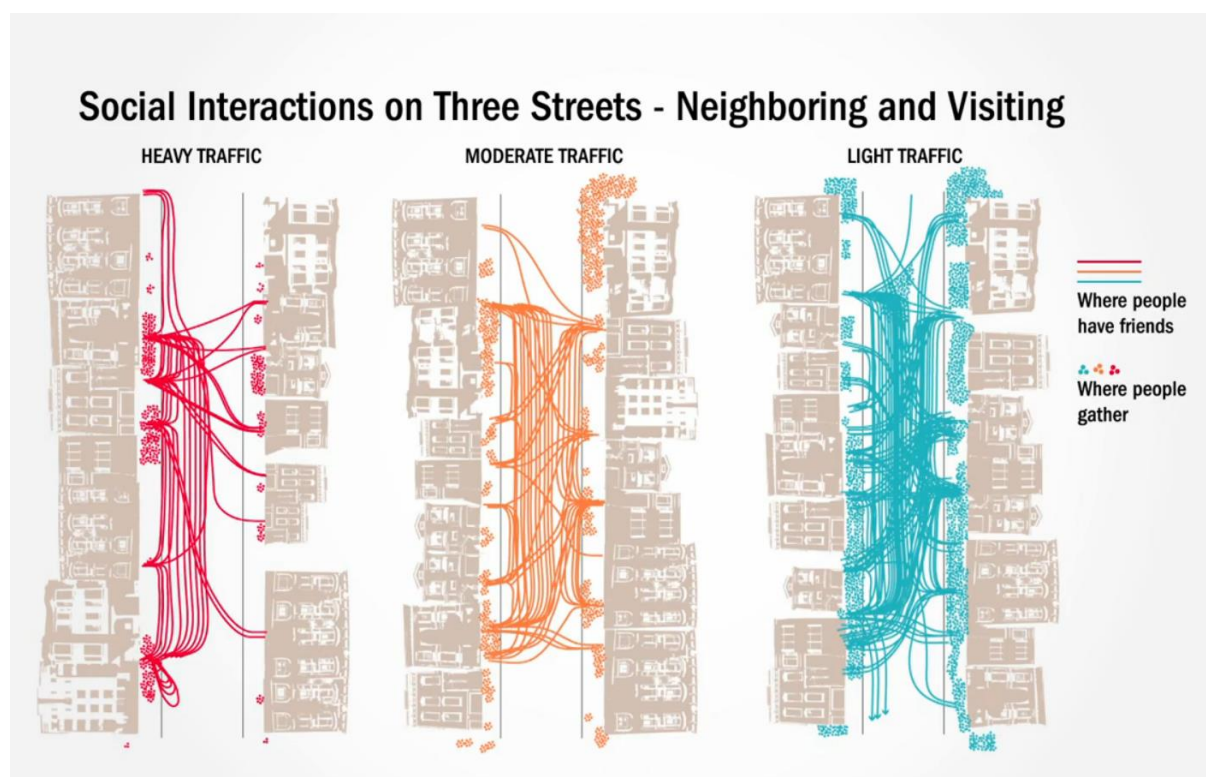
Figure 2: A visual representation of social interactions on three streets with heavy, moderate and light traffic. Reprinted from "Revisiting Donald Appleyard's Livable Streets" by Street Films, 2010.

Streets and squares accommodate a variety of activities and users and the challenge is often to find a balance. Jones et al. (2008) remark that there is an on-going struggle of balancing the 'link' and 'place' functions of streets and squares. The street as a 'link' connects different buildings and places, which can be through different modes of transport. The street as a 'place' represents the streets as a destination, where people are not just travelling through but also spending time. Based on these principles, Jones et al. propose a Link and Place Matrix (Figure 3) as a tool to classify streets in terms of these two attributes. By analysing the streets and their context, every street can be classified in

terms of the different 'place status level' and the 'link status level'. Based on this classification, the urban design process can take into consideration the required design and features to achieve the desired classification.

Figure 3: The Link and Place matrix. Reprinted from "Creating more people-friendly urban streets through 'link and place' street planning and design" by Jones et al., 2008, p. 17.

2.2.4   Shared space

A variety of approaches and concepts can be used to reclaim street space from cars, improve the street environment, and enhance the place functions of a street or square. These approaches can range from modifications to the existing layout to gain space for other street users, such as a road diet strategy, to pedestrianisation where absolute priority is given to pedestrians. Where complete removal of cars is not possible or desirable, *shared space* principles can be introduced to improve the quality of a street's *place* function while preserving its *movement/link* (Biddulph, 2012b; Hass-Klau, 2015; Monheim, 1986, 1992; Shared Space, 2005). Shared space is positioned as a concept that can attempt to address the balance of the link and place functions in streets and squares and often results in increased levels of space surface sharing, with pedestrians using the full width of the street and an increase in observed social and recreational activities. Shared space is not a new concept as several streets, particularly in the historic village cores, have already been designed or adapted to utilise shared space principles, in which the street users use social rules rather than traffic rules when navigating through and using these spaces (Department of Transport (UK), 2011, pp. 6–7; Vanderbilt, 2008).

Shared Space (2008, as cited in Grey & Siddall, 2012), a European funded project forming part of Interreg IIIB, defined shared space as:

A new philosophy and set of principles for the design, management and maintenance of streets and public spaces, based on the integration of traffic with other forms of human activity. The most recognizable characteristic of shared space is the absence of conventional traffic signals, signs, road markings, humps and barriers - all the clutter essential to the highway. The driver in shared space becomes an integral part of the social and cultural context, and behaviour (such as speed) is controlled by everyday norms of behaviour. (pp. 40–41)

The aim of shared space is not primarily to restrict car traffic but relies on a voluntary change in behaviour by all street users, supported by an appropriate design of the public space. This improved traffic behaviour is achieved by allowing informal social rules to govern movement on the street instead of traditional traffic rules (Methorst et al., 2007; Shared Space, 2005). Shared space principles are likely to play an important role in finding a better balance between street users and also improve the other characteristics of public space. Other tools such as the Link and Place Matrix, discussed in the previous section, can be useful in finding a compromise between different users and modes of transport (Jones et al., 2008).

Shared space design is often introduced to improve the quality of the built environment. According to an appraisal carried out by MVA Consultancy (2009), shared space can achieve a number of objectives such as:

- *Improving the urban environment.*

- *Giving people freedom of movement rather than instructing and controlling them.*

- *Improving the ambience of places.*

- *Improving social capital.*

- *Improving the economic vitality of places. (p. 3)*

However, shared space is not without its critics. Despite some safety concerns, studies have shown that shared space compares favourably to standard streets in terms of safety and number of accidents (Methorst et al., 2007; Pharoah, 2009; Southworth & Ben-Joseph, 2003; Vanderbilt, 2008). Most of the criticism relates to the navigability of shared space environments, particularly by visually impaired pedestrians who may have difficulty interacting with shared space environments where there is a higher likelihood of vulnerable people interacting with cars (Grey & Siddall, 2012; Imrie, 2012).

However, shared space streets come in a variety of forms, and design elements can be incorporated to address identified concerns and issues. Figure 4 illustrates a 'level surface' shared space, where the street is designed as one surface shared by different street users' groups using different modes of transportation. Design elements such as run-off water gutters can be used to visually delineate safe zones for pedestrians. However, shared space does not necessarily have to be a level surface and elements of traditional streets can be retained, while the carriageway becomes more shared, removing the right-of-way associated with drivers in other streets.

Figure 4: A level surface shared space street in which different street users share the same street surface in New Road, Brighton. Reprinted from "Paving the way for city change" by Gehl Architects, 2014, http://gehlarchitects.com/cases/new-road-brighton-uk.

It is essential that any concerns are overcome as the successful implementation of shared space depends on the willingness of street users to change the way they interact with others on the street. At its core, shared space focuses on the voluntary behavioural change of all street users, supported by the appropriate design and layout of public space. This improved traffic behaviour is achieved by allowing informal social rules to dictate the movement of the street instead of traditional traffic rules, particularly traffic signs (Hamilton-Baillie, 2008b; Methorst et al., 2007; Shared Space, 2005).

As with other urban design projects, the implementation of shared space must consider how the strategies and design proposals safeguard the interests and well-being of all stakeholders while improving their daily lives. When it comes to urban mobility, it is not always possible to predict how

certain interventions will affect the street activity and surrounding areas. This often requires a trial-and-error approach. The process must also take into consideration the many different stakeholders with their web of relationships and interests that are constantly changing. In addition, areas such as historic urban cores are characterised by complex spaces made up of different layers overlaid over time and there is a risk that new interventions will be seen as 'simplistic solutions' (Batty & Marshall, 2012). The next section discusses these challenges in terms of the concept of wicked problems.

2.2.5   Urban design and wicked problems

In urban design, there is no magical equation or formula which can be applied to understand and solve issues (Biddulph, 2012c, p. 12). The urban design field deals with societal problems, which are not always well defined or understood. Moreover, planners and urban designers cannot solve problems by adopting the approach used by scientists, who can study problems and test solutions in a controlled environment (Rittel & Webber, 1973, p. 160).

Rittel and Webber (1973) classify such problems as Wicked Problems, with ten distinguishing attributes:

1. "*There is no definitive formulation of a wicked problem*": the problem is not always well understood. Studying different solutions might help to understand the problems.
2. "*Wicked problems have no stopping rule*": since there is no definitive solution to wicked problems, the perfect solution is not possible and there is always room for improvement.
3. "*Solutions to wicked problems are not true-or-false, but good-or-bad*": it is not possible to say that a solution is correct or wrong and the judgement of different stakeholders and groups might differ.
4. "*There is no immediate and no ultimate test of a solution to a wicked problem*": It is not possible to assess a solution immediately. An intervention is likely to have consequences that might take time until they occur and are understood.
5. "*Every solution to a wicked problem is a 'one-shot operation'; because there is no opportunity to learn by trial-and-error, every attempt counts significantly*": Every solution implemented will leave consequences that cannot be reversed.
6. "*Wicked problems do not have an enumerable (or an exhaustively describable) set of potential solutions, nor is there a well-described set of permissible operations that may be incorporated into the plan*": It is not possible to know how many solutions there can be, therefore it is often

a matter of judgement whether to go for one of the identified solutions or search for other alternative solutions.

7. "*Every wicked problem is essentially unique*": Despite similar problems, there might be a different characteristic that makes the problem unique, which requires a solution to be tailored specifically to each particular context.

8. "*Every wicked problem can be considered to be a symptom of another problem*": therefore when seeking to address a problem, higher-level problems might need to be addressed first or simultaneously.

9. "*The existence of a discrepancy representing a wicked problem can be explained in numerous ways. The choice of explanation determines the nature of the problem's resolution*": numerous reasons can be considered as causing or contributing to a problem, however, due to attributes 7 and 5 it is not possible to identify the specific reason.

10. "*The planner has no right to be wrong*": urban design is unlike other sciences where a hypothesis can be tested over and over until it is contradicted. Planners and urban designers need to implement projects which seek to improve the existing problems and are held accountable for any consequences that might arise. (pp. 161–167)

Apart from having to understand and find solutions to wicked problems, the urban design process is taking place in an urban environment that is constantly changing and evolving. Even as a problem is being analysed, the urban environment and society are evolving, and stakeholders might start to look at things differently. As a result, planners and urban designers must embrace the interpretive and very political nature of the context (Biddulph, 2012c).

Improving the quality of streets and squares whilst seeking to balance their link and place functions can be considered as one of the many wicked problems in urban planning and design fields. Several of the attributes associated with wicked problems require an iterative and cyclical urban design process through which the designers need to first start by understanding the nature of the problem, which might be unclear in the initial stages.

As regards finding a better balance between cars and other street users, there is consensus that the dominance of the car is the problem, however, the problem becomes increasingly uncertain when analysing the underlying aspects leading to the dominance of cars. There is also no consensus and conflicting views on solutions. For example, on one side there can be calls to remove the car from parts of the urban areas, whilst on the other extent, there might be calls to not discriminate against drivers.

Roberts (2000) identified authoritative, competitive, and collaborative as three generic approaches to manage wicked problems, each with its strengths and weaknesses. In an authoritative approach, a small group of stakeholders are given the responsibility of defining the problem and finding a solution. In a competitive approach, different stakeholders can adopt different problem definitions and solutions, and work to convince the wider society to accept their views and proposals. In a collaborative approach, favoured by most of the literature on solving wicked problems, all the stakeholders affected by the 'problem' collaborate with the aim of finding a common solution. Experience has shown that participation can enhance the understanding of wicked problems and that the different stakeholders might start to understand the perspective of other stakeholders, increasing the likelihood of solutions or compromises (Australian Government, 2007; Head & Alford, 2013, p. 15; Rittel, 1972, p. 394; N. Roberts, 2000, p. 6). If the stakeholders have a shared understanding of the problem and the other perspectives, there is a higher likelihood of a behavioural change. On the other hand, a lack of understanding will most likely result in stakeholders believing that only their view is correct (Australian Government, 2007; Hämäläinen, 2015, p. 35; Head, 2008, p. 109).

Since the urban design process seeking to introduce shared space is likely to deal with wicked and complex problems, it is essential to consider the above when discussing the urban design process in the second part of this chapter.

2.2.6 Stakeholders

Urban design affects many stakeholders who do not always share the same vision and aspirations for the future of urban areas. These stakeholders will have different interests, approaches, skills, knowledge and power. Some might be very vocal whilst others might be silent and/or unaware of their stake (Healey, 1997, pp. 91–92). The motivations and priorities of the different stakeholders tend to vary between stakeholders. A resident will most likely have different priorities to those of a visitor or business owner in the area. Whilst the former will often prioritise a quiet and 'local' environment, the latter two will often prefer lively and attractive environments.

One of the main challenges of urban design is to manage the complex relationships which arise between the diversity and multiplicity of stakeholders. For the development of a successful urban environment, it is essential that the concerns of the different stakeholders are taken into account (Carmona et al., 2002; Healey, 1998). The urban design process needs to reconcile the different expectations to deliver urban areas which are suited to the widest range of users and stakeholders possible (Carmona et al., 2002, 2008; Healey, 1998).

Urban design is not limited to a set of professionals or experts, with stakeholders being able to give their contribution to the process from their unique perspective (Carmona et al., 2010). As discussed, when defining shared space, urban design is considered as an on-going process that through the years transforms urban areas. Decisions made by stakeholders, even during the use of the space, will influence the evolution of public spaces, including streets and squares. Therefore, the shaping of urban space is influenced directly by the motivations and concerns of the stakeholders. Carmona et al. (2002, p. 148) identified a number of these, which is reproduced in Table 1.

Table 1: The different stakeholders in urban design and their motivations.

Stakeholder (commercial property)	Primary motivations	Concern for better urban design
Private interests		
Landowners	Maximising returns from land development	Only insofar that profits are not diminished and other holdings are protected
Funders (short-term)	Good financial security, risk balanced against return	Only if higher risk is balanced by a higher return
Developers	Buildable, marketable, profitable, quickly delivered, profitable	If better urban design adds to either marketability or profitability
Design professionals	Meets brief, satisfies client, individually designed, innovative	Depends on training, but too often concerned for building design at the expense of urban design
Investors (long-term)	Good liquidity, easy/cost effective to maintain, profitable over the long term	If a market exists and therefore if design adds to profits and reduces running costs over time
Management agents	Management efficiency	Only that increased costs are reflected in higher fees
Occupiers	Value for money, flexible, secure, functional, correct image	Insofar as better urban design creates a more efficient work environment and is affordable
Public interests		
Planning authorities	Protects local amenities, delivers planning gain, meets planning policies, respects broad public interest, low environmental impact	Highly concerned, but frequently unable to articulate requirements or concerned to the extent that wider economic and social goals are not compromised
Highways authorities	Safe, efficient, adoptable (roads)	As long as functional requirements are met first
Fire and emergency services	Accessible in emergencies	Little direct concern
Police authority	Designed to prevent crime	As far as better design improves image and reduces crime
Building control	Designed to protect public safety	Little direct concern
Community interests		

| Amenity groups | Contextually compatible in design and uses | Highly concerned, but often broadly conservative in outlook |
| Local communities | Reflecting local preferences and protecting property values | Highly concerned but would often prefer no development at all |

Note. Reprinted from "Stakeholder Views on Value and Urban Design" by Carmona et al., 2002, *Journal of Urban Design*, 7(2), p. 148.

2.2.7 Participation

In the 1960s the urban planning and urban design fields started to shift away moving away from the highly technological and managerial approaches adopted in the previous decades. This was inspired by several seminal texts including Kevin Lynch's 'The Image of the City' (1960) and Jane Jacob's 'The Death and Life of Great American Cities' (1961). The planning and urban design professions have come to see community participation as critically important (Finn, 2014, p. 387). Jacobs and Appleyard (1987) in an attempt to create an urban design manifesto argued:

> As important as many buildings and spaces are many participants in the building process. It is through this involvement in the creation and management of their city that citizens are most likely to identify with it and, conversely, to enhance their own sense of identity and control. (p. 120)

Today the demand for more participatory approaches is being driven through top-down drivers and bottom-up drivers (Richards et al., 2004, p. 6). The top-down demand is from legislative and political drivers. The call for more participatory approaches can be identified in numerous declarations, charters, and legislation, including *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development by the United Nations* (1992), the *Aarhus Convention* by United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (1998), and the European Union's *Leipzig Charter* (German EU Presidency, 2007), *Marseille Declaration* (French EU Presidency, 2008), the *Toledo Declaration* (Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, 2010) and the *Urban Agenda for the EU - Pact of Amsterdam* (Netherlands Presidency of the Council of the European Union, 2016).

The bottom-up demand for more participation is driven by citizens, local communities and NGOs, who are becoming more actively involved in the planning and urban design process as they have started giving more importance to the urban qualities of their neighbourhood. This is accompanied by a segment of civil society who do not trust that the state has their best interests and decide to either embark on campaigns to instigate change or take action themselves, such as tactical or guerrilla urbanism (Healey, 2015).

Level of participation

The level of participation can be defined as how much power or influence participants have in the urban design process. When discussing the level of participation, one of the most frequently cited papers is Arnstein's (1969) *Ladder of Citizen Participation* which identifies a typology of citizen participation. The typology is organised in the form of a ladder – the Ladder of Citizen Participation – which is reproduced in Figure 5, and the different levels are briefly described in Table 2. Levels 1 and 2 are non-participative approaches in which the main aim is not to allow people to participate in the process but to educate them. Levels 3, 4 and 5 are levels of 'tokenism' which allow citizens to hear and voice their opinion. At level 5, powerholders might take the advice of people, but only if they choose to. From Level 6 to 8, citizens start to get increasing levels of power with decision-making influence (p. 217).
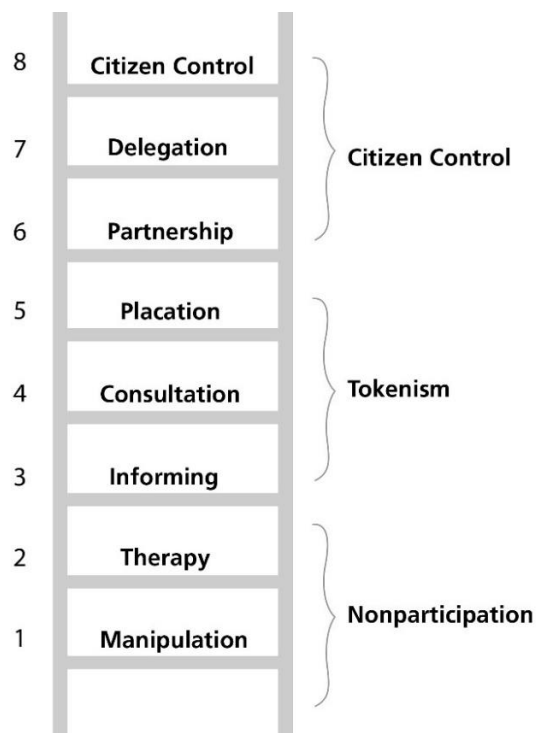
Figure 5: Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation. From "A Ladder Of Citizen Participation" by S.R. Arnstein, 1969, *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35(4), p. 217.

Table 2: Definition of the Eight Levels of Arnstein's (1969) Ladder of Participation.

	Level		Description of the level of participation
Citizen Control	8	Citizen Control	Full delegation of all decision-making and actions.
	7	Delegation	Some power is delegated. Citizens hold significant power to assure accountability.
	6	Partnership	People negotiate with institutional power holders over agreed roles, responsibilities and levels of control.
Tokenism	5	Placation	People's voice has some influence, but institutional power holders still make decisions.
	4	Consultation	People are given a voice, but no power to ensure their views are heeded.
	3	Informing	Inform people what is going to happen, is happening, or has happened (often 1-way communication).
Nonparticipation	2	Therapy	Try to align the participants' way of thinking.
	1	Manipulation	Try to 'educate' participants - distortion of public participation into a public relations vehicle.

Note. Source: Author summarising the definition of each level as defined by Arnstein (1969).

Arnstein (1969) herself identified several limitations of the ladder including that in reality there might be many more levels of participation with less sharp and clear distinctions. She also notes that this ladder is grouping people into homogenous blocs, despite having divergent views and interests (p. 217). In addition, the Ladder of Citizen Participation should not be seen as a hierarchy in which Level 8 should always be achieved (Collins & Ison, 2009; Fung, 2006; Reed, 2008, p. 2419). Different scenarios require a different balance between public opinion, stakeholder's opinion and expert advice. Some decisions might require more-knowledge based decisions that do not require a high level of participation, whilst others decisions might be more value-based designs in which participation can play an important role in identifying the priorities (Fung, 2006; Rowe & Frewer, 2000).

Lower levels of participation might be desired when:

- Locals are reluctant to get involved, especially when they feel certain issues should be handled by professionals or entities responsible for that particular sector (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004, p. 62).
- Decisions require complex technical knowledge and studies (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004, p. 62; Rowe & Frewer, 2000, p. 5).
- The subject being considered is not identified as an issue by the public (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004, p. 62).

- A process driven by public opinion could result in priorities and decisions based on the crisis of the day rather than based on long-term benefits (Rowe & Frewer, 2000, p. 5).

However, Irvin & Stansbury (2004) go on to identify a number of cases where public participation can be highly beneficial. These include:

- When a decision needs to be taken on issues disputed between different stakeholders.
- Hostility or lack of trust in entities that need to take tough decisions.
- Issues that are of high interest to stakeholders (p. 62).

Several benefits are associated with higher levels of participation, including improved quality of decisions, consensus building through the process and the anticipation of public concerns and attitude (Creighton, 2005). One of the most frequently cited benefits of participation is that of acquiring local knowledge. This local knowledge can create new knowledge and can contribute to new perspectives. This non-expert knowledge can be useful in finding creative solutions tailored to a specific context (Brabham, 2009), especially when it is combined with scientific knowledge to produce more relevant and effective policy and practice for that particular context (Reed, 2008, p. 2425).

Another benefit associated with citizen participation is that participants gain more knowledge about the subject. It is referred to using different terms such as 'social learning', 'collective learning', 'developing civil society' and 'building stakeholders` capacity'. As the different stakeholders interact which each other, they start to build up knowledge whilst understanding the views adopted by other stakeholder groups, allowing all the stakeholders to contribute in an informed way. This is something which is built through time and can result in long-term benefits (Al Waer et al., 2017, p. 5; Cohen et al., 2015, p. 8711; Creighton, 2005, p. 19; European Commission, 2014, p. 9; Fraser et al., 2006, p. 115; Innes & Booher, 2004, p. 423, 2010, p. 144; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004, p. 56; Richards et al., 2004, p. 14).

There are however some disadvantages and challenges associated with public participation. These include:

- Participatory approaches are generally believed to lengthen the process (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004, p. 58; Reed, 2008)
- Cost required to undertake comprehensive participatory approaches. Resources are required to not just carry out the participation but to reach out and engage the various stakeholders. Some also identify the time spent by participants as a hidden cost (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004, p. 58).

- Obtaining representative participation. If not all segments of society are willing to participate, some segments will be underrepresented. In addition, there will be some stakeholders who have more to gain and are more willing to spend time and resources to influence the decision in their favour (Cilliers & Timmermans, 2014; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004, p. 59).

2.2.8 Concluding Remarks

In summary, then, urban design is a complex field that has shaped spaces through the centuries an accumulation of layers/interventions. These interventions are shaped by the socio-political context of the time. Streets and squares, which form a large part of the public space in towns and villages, have been at the centre of this process. During the 20th century, large parts of these streets and squares were adapted to accommodate the increasing popularity of the car by adopting a 'predict and provide' approach to car infrastructure (Gössling et al., 2016).

As the qualities of streets and squares become more important in terms of walkability and liveability, there was an increased focus on the need to address the negative impacts of cars on the urban environment. Several cities around the world have followed the initiatives of cities like Copenhagen and Amsterdam to reduce the impact of the car, in search of more walkable and liveable places. This is not easy, as many urban design and urban mobility problems can be classified as 'wicked problems' that require defining the problem itself in addition to finding a solution.

Shared space can be the approach that reconciles people, places and traffic. The concept allows cars to continue to travel through the streets but focuses on the need to find a way for different users to coexist while improving the quality of the built environment. The concept of shared space is not new and was the status quo before the introduction of the car. Street users used to navigate the streets using informal social rules and negotiation, without the need for traffic control measures and segregation. Shared space requires a different approach to street design, bringing together multiple sectors and specialisations whether the different professionals need to understand each other's roles and perspectives, rather than the current compartmentalised approach to street design (Hamilton-Baillie, 2008a).

The above points and more need to be considered when discussing the urban design process, otherwise there is a risk that the process will be superficial and cosmetic rather than taking a holistic approach. There seems to be a consensus that such issues require a collaborative approach that draws on the knowledge of experts and local stakeholders to capture and understand the existing problems

and challenges. The same approach is needed in the analysis of potential solutions that can contribute to a better understanding of the challenges.

2.3   Urban design process

2.3.1   Defining the urban design process

The urban design process can be defined as the process that produces urban space or adapts existing urban space such as streets and squares with the aim of improving the existing urban environment that has been built and shaped over time by various stakeholders (Madanipour, 1996). As discussed in *2.2.1 Defining urban design*, several authors have proposed a definition for urban design. Similarly, several authors have proposed frameworks that attempt to explain or identify key components of the urban design process. Boyko et al. (2010) noted that despite the existence of a variety of conceptual processes, there is no formally recognised urban design process. However, they noted that the design processes proposed in several disciplines and professions often include the following phases:

- Preparation phase, in which the existing context is analysed; visions and goals are established; community needs are understood.
- Design and development phase, in which proposals are drafted.
- Evaluation phase, in which proposals are evaluated and assessed.
- Construction phase, in which the project is developed.
- Use phase, in which the developed project is used and the design is evaluated under real conditions.

Most of the proposed frameworks and process models refer to processes aimed at upgrading specific areas, rather than an on-going urban design process as defined in *2.2.1 Defining urban design*. Apart from considering urban design as an on-going process, it is important to recognise that the urban design process is influenced by the wider context, including the economic and political context, along with the fluid set of stakeholders that gain or lose interest depending on the scope, objectives and proposed outcomes (M. Roberts & Greed, 2001). In addition, the urban design process often has to address various issues beyond the scope of urban design, such as designing for social inclusion, diversity, and crime prevention, as well as the need to respond to government policies (Boyko et al., 2006).

2.3.2 Review of urban design process frameworks and their characteristics

This section reviews a number of frameworks that propose a model for the urban design process or identify important considerations required in the process. The rationale behind the review of these frameworks is to identify the key characteristics and components that need to be considered when considering an urban design process to introduce shared space principles. This in turn can inform a theoretical framework upon which can inform the methodology of this research.

An extensive literature review was conducted to identify a number of frameworks that consider urban design from different perspectives. Table 3 lists the 13 frameworks that were selected for more in-depth analysis. The list was reduced to 13 by first identifying a list of frameworks which was then reduced by removing frameworks such as those by Boyko et al. (2005) and Roberts & Greed (2001) as they take similar approaches and are derived from the same key texts as other frameworks in the list, such as those identified by Moughtin (2003a) and Carmona et al. (2010).

Table 3: Urban design-related frameworks processes being considered.

Author	Name of Framework
Moughtin (2003a)	Integrated Design Process
Carmona, Heath, Oc, & Tiesdell (2010)	Integrated Urban Design process
Black & Sonbli (2019)	The Urban Design Process by Black & Sonbli
Besley (2010)	Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) Model for Shared Space
European Commission (2014)	Community-Led Local Development (CLLD)
Brown, Dixon & Gillham (2014)	Urban Design for an Urban Century – A community-based urban design process.
Al Waer, Cooper, Murray, Wright, & MacPherson (2017)	Shaping better places together: Research into facilitating participatory placemaking
Caneparo & Bonavero (2016); Berta el al. (2015)	Incubators for Public Space
Dias (2015)	Community Embedded Sustainable Urban Design Process Framework
Government of South Australia (2012)	Streets for People
Berman (2017)	Berman's Two-Phase Participatory Model
UN-HABITAT (2005)	Local Economic Development (LED)
Carmona (2014)	The Place-shaping Continuum

The selection of frameworks under consideration was made through an extensive literature review, which was not limited to the field of urban design. As mentioned earlier, one of the most important prerequisites for understanding and solving wicked problems is the application of a holistic approach where the whole community and different disciplines work together with the aim of reaching a common understanding of the problem.

Most of the frameworks considered are from the field of urban design, as shown in Table 4. However, several frameworks from related fields such as spatial planning and economic development are suitable for urban design as they focus on the basic core principles, such as improving the quality of life of the community and try to find an equitable compromise between the different stakeholders, but from a different perspective or at a broader scale.

Table 4: Frameworks categorised by their field of study.

Fields of Study	Frameworks
Urban Design, focusing on the urban design process and related considerations	Moughtin's (2003a) Integrated Design Process
	Carmona et al.'s (2010) Integrated Urban Design Process
	The Urban Design Process by Black & Sonbli (2019)
	Urban Design for an Urban Century – A community-based urban design process (Brown et al., 2014)
	Community Embedded Sustainable Urban Design Process Framework (M. Dias, 2015)
	Incubators for Public Space (Berta et al., 2015; Caneparo & Bonavero, 2016)
	The Place-shaping Continuum (Carmona, 2014)
	Shaping better places together: Research into facilitating participatory placemaking (Al Waer et al., 2017)[1]
Urban Design: Street Design	Streets for People (Government of South Australia, 2012)
	PACTS' Model for Shared Space (Besley, 2010)
Spatial Planning	Two-Phase Participatory Model (Berman, 2017)
Local Development	CLLD (European Commission, 2014)
Economic Development	Local Economic Development (UN-Habitat, 2005)

Note: 1 - Al Waer et al.'s (2017) framework discuss participatory placemaking at various levels, including planning and urban design. It is being classified under urban design since the discussion in the paper mainly focuses on community design.

Despite most frameworks being derived from the urban design field, they adopt very different approaches in the way they analyse, discuss, and conceptualise different components and factors associated with the urban design process.

In the analysis of the 13 frameworks being studied, it was found that they can be divided into two main categories, depending on how they approach and discuss the urban design process. The two categories are:

- Frameworks that propose or consider the urban design process as a process, sub-divided into stages, which can be applied to most contexts, problems and projects.
- Frameworks that discuss process-related considerations, often focusing on specific elements or attributes of the process depending on the focus of the study. In the case of this research, the focus of the frameworks chosen tends to be related to participative aspects of the urban design process.

The type of approach adopted by each framework along with a brief description of the focus of the frameworks are summarised in Table 5.

Table 5: Frameworks categorised depending on the 'approach adopted'.

Type of approach	Frameworks	The focus of the framework
A generic process, sub-divided into phases	Moughtin's (2003a) Integrated Design Process	Proposes a method for urban design, focusing on the design of streets and squares, consisting of a hierarchy of levels, ranging from National Planning down to Building Design.
	Carmona et al.'s (2010) Integrated Urban Design Process	Identifies an urban design process sub-divided into stages. They adopt a holistic approach to the urban design projects, discussing how apart from planned initiatives (knowing urban design), the urban design process is also active unknowingly through the use and management of public space.
	The Urban Design Process by Black & Sonbli (2019)	The framework proposes an urban design process based on stages of work, with each stage including several other components. The proposed process is to act as a guide, which needs to be adapted to the needs of a problem or context.
	CLLD (European Commission, 2014)	Identifies a series of steps through which an integrated development strategy is designed and implemented with the involvement of local stakeholders. The focus of the framework is on how local actors can be involved in neighbourhood regeneration with the aim of bringing lasting change, including building the capacity and resources of the local community.

	Community Embedded Sustainable Urban Design Process Framework (M. Dias, 2015)	Proposes an urban design process sub-divided into five different stages, seeking to combine the benefits of top-down and bottom-up approaches.
	Incubators for Public Space (Berta et al., 2015; Caneparo & Bonavero, 2016)	Propose a multi-step design process that focuses on the involvement of multi-stakeholders seeking to shift away from design processes dominated by experts.
	Local Economic Development (UN-Habitat, 2005)	Proposes a framework consisting of 10 steps based on interaction and collaboration between different stakeholders with the aim of generating holistic strategies which address local challenges. The LED framework is focused on stimulating the local commercial activities but the structure of modules and steps can be adapted to address local challenges in the urban design field.
Process related considerations	PACTS' Model for Shared Space (Besley, 2010)	Discusses key findings concerning the introduction of shared space from the *European Shared Space Project* and then identifies a basic model which outlines the main stages and key components required to introduce shared space.
	Urban Design for an Urban Century – A community-based urban design process (Brown et al., 2014)	Identifies several process-related considerations focused on community-based approach, split between different phases of the urban design process.
	Shaping better places together: Research into facilitating participatory placemaking (Al Waer et al., 2017)	Identifies several components and variables in the urban design process focusing on the facilitation of participatory place-making.
	Streets for People (Government of South Australia, 2012)	Discusses several process-related considerations specific to the design of streets and squares, focusing on the need to adopt a holistic approach to the design and custodianship of streets.
	Two-Phase Participatory Model (Berman, 2017)	Discusses a range of public participation methods with different levels of participation, focusing on the collecting and processing of local knowledge and its integration within the deliverables of the process.
	The Place-shaping Continuum (Carmona, 2014)	Proposes a theory of urban design consisting of key elements and considerations that are at the core of the urban design process.

The frameworks of the first type tend to take a generic approach to the urban design or design process and propose a generic step-by-step process that can be adapted and applied to most scenarios. Most of these frameworks present a linear process consisting of different phases, similar to the process identified by Boyko et al. (2010), which was outlined in the previous sub-section. Due to the nature of urban design, all frameworks note that iterations of the phases may be required, as knowledge accumulated during the process may inform the previous phases. In addition, the selected frameworks pay particular attention to the involvement of the local community and other citizens.

While these frameworks tend to identify a similar structure of the urban design process, frameworks that discuss process-related considerations tend to differ significantly from one another as they focus on specific features or agendas. For example, Al Waer et al.'s (2017) framework focuses specifically on features and attributes related to facilitating a community design process. Therefore, the discussion in this framework tends to focus on those aspects of the urban design process to achieve the aim of their research.

Both categories of frameworks have their merits. While the former frameworks outline a step-by-step process of the different stages that forms the general structure of the urban design process, the latter type of frameworks identify the key elements and features that influence the process in relation to specific objectives or components. Some frameworks have elements of both approaches but have been classified according to their dominant approach.

The two types of frameworks also have commonalities. These common features include the importance they place on considering the local context and the importance of context sensitive projects, the scale at which the urban design process takes place, the identification of key stakeholders, and the type of participation that determines how stakeholders interact with the process. These characteristics are discussed in more detail in the following section, which will enable the researcher to critically analyse the proposed frameworks.

2.3.3   Five key characteristics of the urban design frameworks

In reviewing the literature and analysing the frameworks identified, four main characteristics were noted. Regardless of the discipline or the type and focus of the approach adopted, the majority of frameworks discuss these four main characteristics in relation to the urban design process. These are:

1. The Context

For urban design to be successful, it must be embedded in the context. The context in urban design is not limited to the physical or existing urban morphology, but also extends to the historical, geographical and cultural context (Madanipour, 1997; Tibbalds, 2004). In addition, the urban design process must take into account social, economic and political phenomena (A. B. Jacobs & Appleyard, 1987; Kasprisin, 2020; Lang, 2005). These are important considerations because the socio-political and economic context, together with the public policy context, define the scope of the urban design process and its outcomes (Lang, 2005; Punter, 2011; Urban Task Force, 1999).

The context is typically assessed at variety of scales, often adopting a series of concentric areas that allow the project to be viewed in relation to the various policy hierarchies, ranging from the specific site to national wide context (M. Roberts & Greed, 2001). The context also determines the purpose and approach that needs to be taken. A more open and diverse society tends to lead to greater participation and a greater diversity of opinion, which requires a different approach to urban design than that required in another type of society (Lang, 2005). Therefore, context is directly related to the stakeholders characteristic, discussed in *2.2.6 Stakeholders*, which together determine the most practical type and level of participation for a given context, as discussed in *2.2.7 Participation*.

2. Scale

As discussed in *2.2.1 Defining urban design*, the boundaries between planning, urban design and architecture operating in the same physical realm overlap at different scales. Within the field of urban design itself, there are a number of scales that can be considered:

> *… urban design can be regarded as design applied to create an urban product, typically above the scale of individual buildings but below that of a whole settlement.* (S. Marshall, 2016, p. 400).

Alexander et al. (1977) in *The Pattern Language* and other literature such as *Urban Compendium 2* (Homes and Communities Agency, 2007) identify a range of scales, from the large scale structure of urban areas, including nations, regions and cities, to small design details involving specific streets or buildings. Madanipour (1997) argues that different scales of urban design are dealing with different things. At the level of cities and settlements, referred to as the macro-scale, the focus is often on a holistic approach to the city and its functioning. This includes Public Space Strategies and other similar design guidance. At the scale of public space, the micro-scale, the focus is on detailed design considerations and functions at this particular scale, which is close to architecture.

There will always be differences when the purpose of the urban design process is to define a vision for a region, as opposed to another process that focuses on the detailed design of a small public space. Therefore, it is important to consider the scale at which the identified frameworks are focused. At the larger scale, one usually finds complex and multi-layered problems that can sometimes be classified as wicked problems, as discussed in *2.2.5 Urban design and wicked problems* (Mehaffy, 2008).

3. Stakeholders

As discussed in *2.2.6 Stakeholders*, in any urban design project there are a number of stakeholders who are directly and indirectly affected, each with their own interests and responsibilities. Madanipour (1996) discussed that the urban design process is partly a social process as the interaction between the stakeholders, including the design team, influences the processes and the places. Often the urban design process needs to find a balance between different motivations and priorities. In order to do this successfully, it is probably necessary to consider the power of the different stakeholders and how this can influence the urban design process. It is therefore important to analyse how the frameworks seek to consider the stakeholders and their power relationships, and how the urban design process needs to balance any imbalances in order to protect minorities (Healey, 1997). Participatory approaches give stakeholders the opportunity to contribute directly to the urban design process, as explained below.

4. Participation

As discussed in *2.2.7 Participation,* stakeholder participation in the urban design process has been identified as important by several authors. These authors also identify several benefits associated with participation in the process, with the ideal level of participation depending on the problem and context. Therefore, it is important to consider the type and level of participation proposed or considered in the frameworks, as the focus of this research is to understand how a more participatory approach can improve the process and its outcomes.

5. Shared space

The introduction of shared space or other related concepts will likely require specific considerations in the urban design process. In such cases, urban design not only about the design of public space, but also needs to be take into account an additional dimension, namely urban mobility, which, as mentioned above, is very controversial – especially when trying to restrict car traffic. Shared space is essentially a road space allocation exercise, which is an "*intersection of transport planning, governance, organisational convention and infrastructure*" (Henning Jones, 2014, p. 207). There are

also several tensions associated with this, including issues related to "*liveability, spatiality, capacity and network*" (Henning Jones, 2014, p. 207).

As this research focuses on the introduction of shared space principles in streets and squares, the frameworks considered are also analysed in terms of their approach to shared space (if any) or other related approaches to the reallocation of street space, such as pedestrianisation or other measures aimed at creating more space for pedestrians.

It is also important to note that these characteristics are often interrelated. For example, stakeholders and their opinions, shaped by their culture, are an essential part of the context. Identifying stakeholders and using an appropriate participatory approach can also be critical to understanding both the context and the problem at any scale, as mentioned in the discussion of wicked problems in *2.2.5 Urban design and wicked problems*.

These five characteristics will be used to identify how the frameworks considered approach the urban design process. An overview of the approaches of the 13 frameworks in relation to the five characteristics is presented in Table 6. These are then discussed in more detail in the following sub-sections. A more comprehensive analysis of the 13 frameworks is presented in *Appendix 1 – Analysis of 13 frameworks*.

Table 6: Overview of the urban design process frameworks and an overview of the identified characteristics.

Framework	Context	Scale	Stakeholders	Participation	Shared space
Moughtin's (2003a) Integrated Design Process	Focuses on the need to understand the community, for which streets and squares are designed. Identifies the political system in place and other socio-economic factors as essential when identifying the ideal approach to urban design.	Considers urban design as one of a hierarchy of levels, with regional and town planning above and building design below. Proposes 'Spatial Units' as a scale, which range from a Room up to a whole Nation.	Mainly refers to citizens. The framework notes that in participatory approaches which redistribute powers, planners, urban designers and architects might lose their ability to decide the outcome of the process.	Identifies participation as a key factor for sustainable development. Discusses participation in terms of the type of participation and techniques used at each stage of the process. Type and level of participation need to take into consideration the context.	Adopts a generic approach to urban design without referring to any specific scenarios.
Carmona et al.'s (2010) Integrated Urban Design Process	Identifies four types of contexts that need to be taken into consideration when discussing urban design: • Local context. • Global context. • Market context. • Regulatory context.	Conceptualises urban design operating at and across various scales. Discusses the importance of putting boundaries around the subject of urban design, with urban designers having to consider the scales below and above.	Everyone can be an urban designer. Distinguishes between knowing designers such as planners and urban designers; and unknowing urban designers such as politicians, who influence the urban design process through everyday choices, directly or indirectly.	Community engagement can result from top-down or bottom-up approaches. Community engagement should aim to achieve a more advantageous outcome for all stakeholders.	Adopts a generic approach to urban design without referring to any specific scenarios.

Framework	Context	Scale	Stakeholders	Participation	Shared space
The Urban Design Process by Black & Sonbli (2019)	Places a lot of importance on understanding the context. This involves a detailed Urban Analysis stage, which includes the need to analyse local institutions, mechanisms and regulations which can be key to the success of a project.	The urban design is focused on 'place scale', but analysis extends to city, neighbourhood and block scale.	Highlights the need to identify the widest range of stakeholders to be represented in the process at an early stage.	Participation needs to be carried out as early as possible, noting that participation can be more important in the analysis rather than the design stage. Identify the importance of communicating and presenting data and proposals in a very clear way that can be easily understood by the public. Identify different methods and techniques which can be used in public participation.	Adopts a generic approach to urban design without referring to any specific scenarios.

Framework	Context	Scale	Stakeholders	Participation	Shared space
PACTS' Model for Shared Space (Besley, 2010)	Essential to take into consideration the context, especially the local one. Busy strategy and policy arena might result in different documents looking at things from a narrow perspective.	The design needs to take place on the local level. However, objectives, goals, policies at a higher level need to be addressed beforehand. There is also the need to consider projects in terms of the neighbourhood.	Widest engagement of stakeholders. Highlights the important role of the Local Government, which often has the responsibility of identifying priorities and funding of such a process.	A high level of participation was identified as essential, as experience has shown that without community involvement there are shortcomings in the proposal. The model also highlights the importance of not having an underrepresented segment of society.	Discusses how shared space should not be considered solely as a design concept.
Community-led Local Development (European Commission, 2014)	Identifies the need to study the context well since it will determine the type of approach that needs to be adopted.	No specific scale, but when preparing strategies, the scale needs to be large enough to ensure critical mass, whilst ensuring that the chosen size is manageable.	The focus is on local communities and the importance of adapting the process to their needs whilst building their capacity and resources.	Participation is seen as being able to adapt policies and projects to better address the real needs and opportunities of an area. Participation needs to be at the core of the process rather than an add-on.	Adopts a generic approach to urban design without referring to any specific scenarios.

Framework	Context	Scale	Stakeholders	Participation	Shared space
Urban Design for an Urban Century – A community-based urban design process (Brown et al., 2014)	A wide variety of aspects contribute to the context. These include the needs and aspirations of stakeholders, the physical context, as well as the physical, social, economic, cultural and environmental issues. Understanding these is essential as the urban design process needs to analyse how a strategy or project can contribute and enhance the context.	Only makes reference to the urban design scale. Case studies are of masterplan and neighbourhood scale.	The full-spectrum of stakeholders should be involved throughout the whole process. Stakeholders learning from each other rather than opposing and confronting each other. Proposes the adoption of an advisory committee that represents the different perspectives throughout the process.	The framework discusses how there is no right way for participation and stakeholder engagement. Key aspects of the participative process are identified: transparent, compromise is better than confrontation, participants are free to contribute to the process without consequences.	Discusses the need to claim city streets as public places. Mentions the importance of walkable communities and the benefits associated with Complete Streets.
Shaping better places together: Research into facilitating participatory placemaking (Al Waer et al., 2017).	Every community design approach will vary depending on the context and objectives of the initiative. Professionals facilitating the process need to be aware of the local context to adapt the approach accordingly.	Neighbourhood level.	Proposes a robust stakeholder analysis to identify who needs to be involved. Stress the need for professionals across disciplines to collaborate. The framework focuses on the role of facilitators in the urban design process.	A particular focus is given to the role of facilitation. The engagement process should be simple, open, creative and transparent. The level of participation might change through the process.	Adopts a generic approach to urban design without referring to any specific scenarios.

Framework	Context	Scale	Stakeholders	Participation	Shared space
Incubators for Public Space (Berta et al., 2015; Caneparo & Bonavero, 2016)	Focuses on the physical context and the modelling of different scenarios.	Case studies apply the proposed process to the village/large neighbourhood scale.	The proposed process is based on the interface between experts and non-experts (local stakeholders). These include: people, businesses, enablers (such as authorities, developers) and providers (such as universities, consultants etc…)	Rather than participation, they advocate for self-organisation, in which the community is also responsible for the actions, decisions and the places they shape.	Adopts a generic approach to urban design without referring to any specific scenarios.

Framework	Context	Scale	Stakeholders	Participation	Shared space
Community Embedded Sustainable Urban Design Process Framework (M. Dias, 2015)	Discusses the need to identify the socio-economic profile and getting insights by engaging stakeholders and professionals with experience working in the local context. Specifically refers to the need to analyse previous cases to identify any lessons to ensure that any mistakes are not repeated.	Derived from the study of social housing areas, but can be applied on various scales.	Apart from a generic reference to community and local stakeholders, Dias makes specific reference to stakeholder leading and taking responsibilities for outcomes.	The participation adopted will likely depend on the education and skill level of the community. It is essential to allow for opportunities for participation before any decisions are taken. Identifies the need for a clear, concise, yet detailed and informative approach to stakeholders. Stakeholders need to be given the opportunity to re-assess proposals at various stages. Need to ensure representative participation.	Adopts a generic approach to urban design without referring to any specific scenarios.

Framework	Context	Scale	Stakeholders	Participation	Shared space
Streets for People (Government of South Australia, 2012)	Focuses on the polity context and the need for projects/visions to respect local visions and strategies. Identifies several issues, such as dispersed guidance or gap in guidance. Each design needs to be suitable for its context: human-centred and based on an understanding of how people use streets.	Streets and places, considered in terms of the surroundings and context rather than in isolation.	Identifies a range of stakeholders which include traffic engineers, urban designers, authority representatives and community representatives amongst others.	Inclusive and meaningful participation needs to be carried out early in the process. Identifies several ways in which participation can contribute to the process.	Discusses shared space in detail, including the key principles and the design approach required for shared streets.
Two-Phase Participatory Model (Berman, 2017)	Highlights the importance of local knowledge. This is in a way informed by the context. The approach adopted is a comparison between methods with the aim of identifying one which gives enough detail about the causes, significance and implications of problems and situations.	Focuses on city and neighbourhood scale	The focus is on the residents and their needs. However, all stakeholders are important, including developers and the city council which need to fund and approve projects. The need to engage all stakeholders and mediate with the aim of finding a compromise that is favourable for the local community.	Identified five different models of participation with varying levels of incorporating local knowledge in the process. Identified four variables that influence how much of the local knowledge can be incorporated into the process. These also need to be considered in respect to the context.	Adopts a generic approach to urban design without referring to any specific scenarios.

Framework	Context	Scale	Stakeholders	Participation	Shared space
Local Economic Development (UN-Habitat, 2005)	Highlights the need to understand the local area by identifying strengths, gaps, threats, opportunities as well as the needs of the area in consideration.	Can be adapted to various scales, including local, regional and national. The higher up the scale, the more complex the process becomes with several layers/hierarchies.	Apart from identifying the key stakeholders, the framework also proposed the identification of a core group consisting of stakeholders who become partners in the process. Provides an extensive list of stakeholder groups that are important to be consulted.	Identifies the need for a participation plan which should be developed for specific contexts and objectives. Identifies ten factors for successful participation. Encourages stakeholders to create partnerships and collaborate to find local solutions.	Adopts a generic approach to urban design without referring to any specific scenarios.

Framework	Context	Scale	Stakeholders	Participation	Shared space
The Place-shaping Continuum: Theory of Urban Design (Carmona, 2014)	The theory identifies contextual factors as one of three key elements which influence the urban design process. Decisions by stakeholders are informed by past experiences. Contemporary polity and how certain policies adopted by governments shape the urban spaces around us.	Derived from studying public spaces, but Carmona remarks that this can be applied to larger scales.	Identifies key stakeholders. Identifies the power relationship between the different stakeholders as an essential part of the urban design process, as this determines the focus of the urban design process.	Carmona calls for a realistic approach to participation in the urban design process, noting that the right level of participation might not be that idealised in participatory design textbooks and paper Communication is identified as being key and essential to safeguard against the hijacking of the process resulting from narrow interests. Does not go into the specifics of participation like the other frameworks.	When discussing trade-offs, Carmona mentions specifically the need to address competing calls for limited space, making reference to the balance between traffic and pedestrian movement in London.

2.3.4   Context

The different frameworks being considered adopt different approaches to the context. When discussing the context several frameworks refer to stakeholders and their approach to urban design, however, this is discussed in more detail in *2.3.6 Stakeholders*.

Most of the frameworks discuss the importance of the context and how instead of a one-size-fits-all process, the urban design process needs to be adapted to the context. The context tends to include physical context, socio-economic context as well as the aspirations and needs of the stakeholders. History, traditions and culture of a place play an important part in the local context, as these have influenced the way spaces have developed and influence the way people approach certain challenges. It is also important not to limit the context considerations to the urban design field, since a holistic approach is often required in which the policy context and agendas across various sectors need to be taken into consideration. Both the Place-Shaping Continuum and Moughtin's framework also consider how the political structures and the political direction adopted play an important role in shaping urban areas since they determine and define the objectives for the urban design process.

This research focuses on the introduction of shared space principles, which can be a cause of concern for communities with car culture. Urban design processes seeking to introduce shared space principles cannot be considered in isolation but need to take into consideration the socio-political factors. The socio-political factors can also influence the type of participatory approach that should be employed. As an example, some cultures are more open to participation and collaboration than others. Therefore, it is important to understand the context and traditions, to identify an appropriate approach that can deliver the best results for that context.

In this regard, all frameworks point to the need to understand the context in order to choose the right approaches to the culture, knowledge and experience of the local community. The Place-shaping Continuum proposes a detailed framework for the urban design process through which the influence of contextual factors, including the polity of a place, can be discussed. This is essential because the urban design process is usually political, so an understanding of the socio-political context of the country, city or neighbourhood is essential.

2.3.5   Scale

The frameworks studied consider urban design at different scales. Therefore, it is important to classify the scale they consider. The unit of analysis in this research is the street and the square, but it is

necessary to consider these spaces in their wider context, as they cannot be considered in isolation. They are also affected by several national issues which are likely to need to be addressed at a national strategic and policy level.

All the frameworks considered, even those that focus on a specific spatial unit such as the street, emphasise the importance of considering the strategic and policy hierarchies that may cut across sectors at a higher level. The urban design process itself can be carried out at different scales, from the development of urban design strategies to the detailed design of urban space. Moughtin's **Integrated design process for Planning** (Figure 6) visually represents the approach identified by the majority of the frameworks reviewed, where urban design cannot be considered in isolation but must be considered in the context of other processes such as National and Town planning.
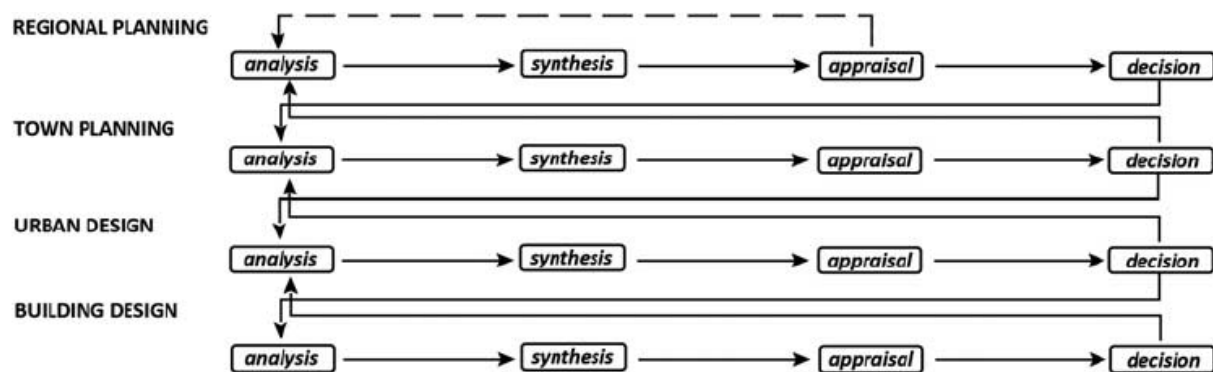
Figure 6: Integrated design process for Planning. From "Urban Design: Method and Techniques" by C. Moughtin, 2003, p. 19.

When considering the introduction of shared space on a wider scale, it is likely that the process will start at a higher level by establishing a strategy and design guidelines which will then be used to identify local visions and design options. Different challenges will arise at different levels and different resources and skills will be required.

2.3.6 Stakeholders

The frameworks considered all point to the importance of consideration all stakeholders in the urban design process. They identify key stakeholders and/or point to the need for stakeholder analysis to understand the interests and roles of different stakeholders. However, each of these frameworks adds something specific to the discussion by focusing on or elaborating on certain aspects, such as the role of certain stakeholders within the process, as summarised in Table 6. Many of the frameworks share similar observations about stakeholders. These include:

- Stakeholders need to be identified and involved at an early stage. A stakeholder analysis enables the urban design team to understand the different roles and interests that exist.

- There are complex relationships between stakeholders and there can be power struggles as they try to influence the process in their favour.

- Different stakeholders have different roles within the process: champions are needed to initiate and kickstart the process, while process leaders and facilitators need to lead, manage and facilitate the process.

- Several frameworks discuss the benefits of advisory committees that can advise project leaders on the different perspectives and opinions in the local community.

From the 13 frameworks analysed, only Moughtin's (2003a) **Integrated Design Process** and Carmona's (2014) **Place-shaping Continuum** frameworks indicate that power relations between stakeholders influence the urban design process. They also discuss how the urban design process is influenced by public policy and that it sometimes requires political judgement. In addition, both discuss the need for citizens to adjust their behaviours and practises for successful and sustainable projects. While Moughtin (2003a) does not offer a framework through which these conditions can be analysed, Carmona (2014) identifies a range of stakeholders' groups which are linked to six factors that can help in identifying their aspirations and resources and how these can influence the urban design process.

The discussion on stakeholders overlaps with that on participation. Most of the frameworks noted that the stakeholder analysis is needed at an early stage to determine the type of urban design process and the participation strategy, which must be adjusted on a case-by-case to ensure a fair and balanced process that protects the needs of 'weak' stakeholders while minimising the risk of one stakeholder group taking control of the process. These and other aspects related to stakeholder participation and engagement are discussed in the next section.

2.3.7   Participation

The 13 frameworks take different approaches to conceptualising participation. As can be seen in Table 7, some of the frameworks discuss the structure of the urban design process and discuss participation as an important feature of the process. Others focus specifically on participation in the urban design process and analyse the benefits associated with it and/or how these can be maximised by using the right methods and techniques. Regardless of the approach taken, there is a consensus among the majority of frameworks that participation processes and the choice of techniques cannot be prescribed but must be adapted and tailored to specific contexts and projects.

Table 7: The approach adopted by the urban design frameworks in relation to participation.

Characteristic: Approach to participation	Frameworks
Frameworks that focus specifically on participation in the urban design process	CLLD (European Commission, 2014)
	Shaping better places together: Research into facilitating participatory placemaking (Al Waer et al., 2017)
	Incubators for Public Space (Berta et al., 2015; Caneparo & Bonavero, 2016)
	Community Embedded Sustainable Urban Design Process Framework (M. Dias, 2015)
	Two-Phase Participatory Model (Berman, 2017)
	Local Economic Development (UN-Habitat, 2005)
Frameworks that primarily discuss the urban design process but consider participation as an important part of the process	Moughtin's (2003a) Integrated Design Process
	Carmona et al.'s (2010) Integrated Urban Design Process
	The Urban Design Process by Black & Sonbli (2019)
	PACTS' Model for Shared Space (Besley, 2010)
	Urban Design for an Urban Century – A community-based urban design process (Brown et al., 2014)
	Streets for People (Government of South Australia, 2012)
	The Place-shaping Continuum (Carmona, 2014)

Note. Source: Author.

The authors of these frameworks discuss different levels of participation, benefits and challenges associated with participation, and various other aspects, such as different tools and methods that can be used, as summarised in Table 6. Most of the frameworks discuss participation without recommending a particular type or level of participation. Instead, they identify key aspects that are important for participation, such as the need for it to be carried out early in the process, being representative, transparent, and traceable. Some frameworks also discuss the importance of stakeholder engagement and how different levels of participation can redistribute power among stakeholders. However, **PACTs** (Besley, 2010), **CLLD** (European Commission, 2014) and the **Incubators for Public Space** project (Berta et al., 2015; Caneparo & Bonavero, 2016) identify a clear preference for high levels of participation where community participation is central to the process rather than a superficial add-on.

There is an infinite range of levels of participation that can be adopted, but in the frameworks considered and the wider literature these are rarely discussed in terms of how they can be adopted to address the challenges facing cities and villages. This led Carmona (2014) in the **Place-Shaping Continuum** to call for a realistic approach to participation rather than an idealised one. Carmona notes that communities can be apathetic in some cases and often need to be convinced to contribute. As such, Carmona cautions against romanticising the benefits associated with participation and

collaboration too much and points out that professional guidance should not be undervalued. At the same time, it is important not to underestimate the potential contribution of communities and not to rely too much on professional advice that is not always right. Therefore, there needs to be a balanced approach, which is certainly not easy to achieve, and which is different in each context and for each problem (p. 22).

When dealing with shared space, it is expected that such a balanced approach will be required. As discussed in *2.2.4 Shared space*, certain stakeholder groups need to be convinced of shared space. In addition, projects which seek to restrain or remove cars from streets and squares tend to be met with resistance from the local community, sometimes resulting in controversy. Therefore, for such projects to be implemented, decisions often need to be taken by professionals rather than through a bottom-up approach. In their approach, professionals need to anticipate resistance and with political backing, they need to embark on a participative strategy that engages and convince stakeholders of the benefits expected from their proposal (Melia & Shergold, 2018).

2.3.8   Shared Space

The urban design process and the approach required will vary depending on the context and objectives of the process. The introduction of shared space principles will lead to specific challenges that need to be taken into consideration by the urban design process. Frameworks and models that seek to address these issues are usually undertaken from a transport engineering perspective based on vehicle volumes and speeds assessed against road capacity and geometry. There is a need to move to a context-sensitive street design that takes into account the surrounding buildings and a holistic approach to the desired street activities (Hebbert, 2005).

When studying the 13 frameworks in terms of introducing shared space, only **PACTS' model for Shared Space** (Besley, 2010) and **Streets for People** (Government of South Australia, 2012) offer solutions on how to balance the 'link' and 'place' functions of a street. PACTS' draws on the experience of a European project involving seven cities that aimed to develop new policies and methods for introducing shared space, whilst Streets for People proposed the use of the Link and Place matrix (discussed in *2.2.3 Streets and squares*). While the **Place-Shaping Continuum** only briefly mentions the need to reclaim parts of the streets, it provides a framework that takes into account the recommendations of the PACTS' model.

2.3.9   Concluding Remarks

When considering the above discussion, all 13 frameworks can contribute to this study in one way or another, as they tend to discuss and focus on different aspects of the urban design process. When considering the first three characteristics - the context, scale and stakeholders - the frameworks tend to take a similar approach and all focus on similar aspects, such as adopting a context-sensitive approach, considering scale and adapting the process accordingly, and the importance of identifying stakeholders, either through pre-determined groups or through stakeholder analysis.

While all frameworks acknowledge the benefits associated with participation, they approach the discussion on participative from different perspectives. Some discuss high levels of participation, such as **Incubators for Public Space,** which identifies a framework for urban design based on the concept of co-design and co-organisation. Others such as **Moughtin** (2003a) and **Berman** (2017) discuss different types of participation methods.

The right participation strategy can ultimately determine how successful the introduction of shared space principles can be and whether the intended goals are achieved. This participation strategy must strike a balance between professional advice and local knowledge, with the goal of overcoming wicked problems. Due to the 'wickedness' of the problems considered, it is almost impossible to identify the ideal approach and solution, and they tend to be fluid, as each process iteration and project represents a learning opportunity by assessing the benefits and impacts of the interventions implemented.

When considering the wider literature on participation in urban planning and urban design and the 13 frameworks, there is limited empirical evidence on how different types and levels of participation contribute to the urban design process and its outcome. Therefore, there is a clear need to evaluate how different types and levels of participation can influence the urban design process and how these affect and are affected by the other four characteristics. Therefore, this research seeks to address this gap by exploring how a participatory urban design process can be used to inform the introduction of shared space principles in streets and squares.

Of the frameworks considered, Carmona's (2014) **Place-shaping Continuum** is identified as the most appropriate framework to adopt as the conceptual framework for this research. At the same time, the research will test the validity of the Place-shaping Continuum as a theory of urban design. The Place-shaping Continuum provides the most complete view of the urban design process, as it incorporates the key recommendations and considerations from the other frameworks. Furthermore, it conceptualises the urban design process as an ongoing process rather than a one-off iteration, taking

into account the 'Space in use' and 'Management' phases of urban design in addition to the typical 'Design' and 'Development' phases, which is consistent with the definition of urban design adopted for this research.

The next chapter describes in more detail the *Place-shaping Continuum* and outlines the approach taken to address the identified research needs.

Chapter 3 Conceptual Approach and Methodology

3.1   Introduction

This chapter sets out the conceptual approach and methodology adopted to respond to the research needs. Chapter 2 considered a range of urban design-related process frameworks with the aim of identifying or developing a conceptual framework that could help to examine and address the research question and objectives. The Place-shaping continuum was identified as the most comprehensive framework which can help to address these. This chapter begins with the formulation of the research question and objectives and then analyses in more detail the Place-Shaping Continuum, to identify the key components and considerations that can be used to structure the research in order to (i) address the research question and (ii) test the validity of the theory in a different socio-political context and in relation to the urban design process with streets and squares as the main subject matter. The chapter then outlines the data collection and analysis methods and how potential limitations were addressed.

3.2   Research question, aims and objectives

In recent years there has been a clear desire to open up the urban design process for wider segments of the community and has been identified as an important exercise in good governance and an integral part of democracy (Brabham, 2009; Creighton, 2005; Madanipour, 2006). Even when the role of citizens is limited, citizen involvement can still have benefits to democracy as studies how shown that it can lead to more citizens feeling responsible for public matters, citizens being exposed to a diversity of opinions, increases public engagement, and can also contribute to the legitimacy of decisions (A. B. Jacobs & Appleyard, 1987; Michels & Graaf, 2010).

Public participation is now a requirement in most of the western world to ensure that the public has an opportunity to participate and to have access to all the information required regarding decision-making (Creighton, 2005, p. 1). There is a growing body of literature that discusses the benefits of public participation in the urban design process, highlighting the importance of increasing the level of participation and power of the community, especially those of residents. As discussed in Chapter 2 (sub-section *2.2.7*), the benefits associated with increased participation include more widely accepted proposals, more contextually sensitive proposals through the access of local knowledge and developing civil society.

However, there are several challenges and difficulties associated with participative approaches which need to be addressed, such as the need to ensure representative participation, and the need to take into consideration the time and resources required. In addition, questions remain whether residents and local communities will prioritise short-term goals which could result in prejudicing the quality of the streets and squares in the long-term (Innes & Booher, 2004; Richards et al., 2004).

The literature review in Chapter 2 revealed the need to better understand how increased participation can contribute to the urban design process and its outcomes. This study seeks to understand whether adopting a participatory urban design process can in any way contribute to the introduction of shared space principles in streets and squares in the Maltese context. Shared space is used as a thematic lens around which the discussion and analysis can revolve, with the aim of understanding the interactions between stakeholders and elements of participation in the urban design process. Shared space was chosen for this study for a number of reasons, including:

- It incorporates many of the challenges associated with the urban design process and attempts to strike a balance between different street users, which is one of the most controversial and contentious aspects. The aim of shared space is precisely that, to find a consensus or balance through which different users can use the space without excluding one or more user groups.

- Shared space tries to find a balance between urban mobility (the link function) and the quality of place (the place function). Urban mobility is important because streets serve as links between places, while the quality of a place can be just as important, if not more so, because it determines whether pedestrians and other users want to use the space. This is particularly important for streets and squares that also serve as social and recreational areas (as described in *2.2.3 Streets and squares*).

- Shared space is identified in several Maltese spatial and transport strategies, including the *National Environment Plan* (Ministry for Tourism the Environment and Culture, 2012); the *Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development* (Government of Malta, 2015); *National Transport Strategy 2050* (Transport Malta, 2016a); and the *Transport Masterplan 2025* (Transport Malta, 2016b), as a concept that can improve the character and amenity of some urban areas by reducing car traffic and the associated negative externalities.

- The design of streets and squares, especially when considering shared space, requires a multi-disciplinary approach as the success of the project depends on how well the different disciplines are integrated. Karndacharuk et al. (2014) identified several disciplines that are typically involved in the design of a street and its surroundings. These include city planning, urban design, traffic engineering, landscaping engineering, urban planning, architecture, and

building design (p. 91). Apart from public participation, these different disciplines need to participate and collaborate with the objective of achieving the best balance and solution.

As noted in Chapter 2, attempts to reduce the dominance of the car in urban areas are often met with resistance from the local community and may require a long-term approach for significant change to occur. There may also be different measures and solutions that can be used to achieve this objective. It is therefore likely that the urban design process will require a balance between professional advice and the involvement of the local stakeholders, who have local knowledge required to make context sensitive proposals that meet local needs.

Therefore, this research seeks to address the following underlying question:

How can a participatory urban design process inform the introduction of shared space principles in Maltese streets and squares?

The objectives of this research are the following:

1. To analyse the legislation, strategies and policies which control and guide the urban design process in respect to streets and squares.
2. To identify the different roles and interests of key stakeholders in respect to the future of streets and squares, focusing on their involvement in the urban design process.
3. To analyse how a participative urban design process can contribute to the (re-)introduction of shared space principles in Malta with the aim of increasing liveability and walkability.

3.3 Conceptual approach

This research is concerned with the urban design process and how participation can inform this process with the aim of achieving higher quality outcomes, in particular more pedestrian friendly streets and squares that contribute to a more liveable and walkable environment. This research is less concerned about *what* the outcome is and more concerned with the urban design process itself, exploring *how* and *why* participation can influence the urban design process. Reed (2008) notes that in the literature on public participation, "*often the focus is on the tools of participation rather than the process within which tools are used…*" (p. 2426). Reed believes that focusing on the process is equally important because the quality of decisions is highly dependent on it, regardless of the tools used for public participation. The process must integrate scientific and local knowledge, with the aim of taking a holistic approach to urban design. Reed also notes that to understand the ideal participatory

processes, more research is needed on how these processes work in different socio-cultural and political contexts.

The urban design process is a complex problem-solving activity that seeks to find a balance or compromise between the various interests that might exist. Therefore, a robust conceptual approach is required to address the research question. As identified in the literature review in Chapter 2 (section 2.3), different frameworks for the urban design process have been proposed. Based on the potential contribution to the research question and to theoretical work, the Place-Shaping Continuum offers a clear and holistic conceptual and analytical framework upon which to base an empirical review. The following sub-section considers Carmona's (2014) *Place-Shaping Continuum: A Theory of Urban Design Process* in more detail, including an overview of three main components of the urban design process followed by a discussion on how the theory can support the research and how this research might contribute to the theory.

3.3.1   The Place-shaping continuum

3.3.1.1   What is the theory?

The 'Place-Shaping Continuum: A Theory of Urban Design Process' (Carmona, 2014) is a theory of urban design derived from empirical research on squares in London. The theory considers urban design as a long-term continuous place-shaping process that is influenced by three main components:

1. Two key contextual factors, consisting of the *history and traditions* of a place which influence the process, and the *contemporary polity* which defines the institutional structures, goals, and objectives for the urban design process.

2. *Four active place-shaping processes* consisting of the (1) Design and the (2) Development processes which shape the *physical public realm* for use (the knowing processes) and (3) Space in Use and (4) Management processes which shape the *social public realm* through use (the unknowing processes).

   Each of the active place-shaping processes includes complex sets of agendas that together influence the public space outcomes. These sets of agendas are summarised in Table 8.

3. The *power relationships* between the different stakeholder which act as a lens, focusing the process of the urban design process on specific issues and directions.

The theory proposed in Place-Shaping Continuum is summarised in Figure 7.
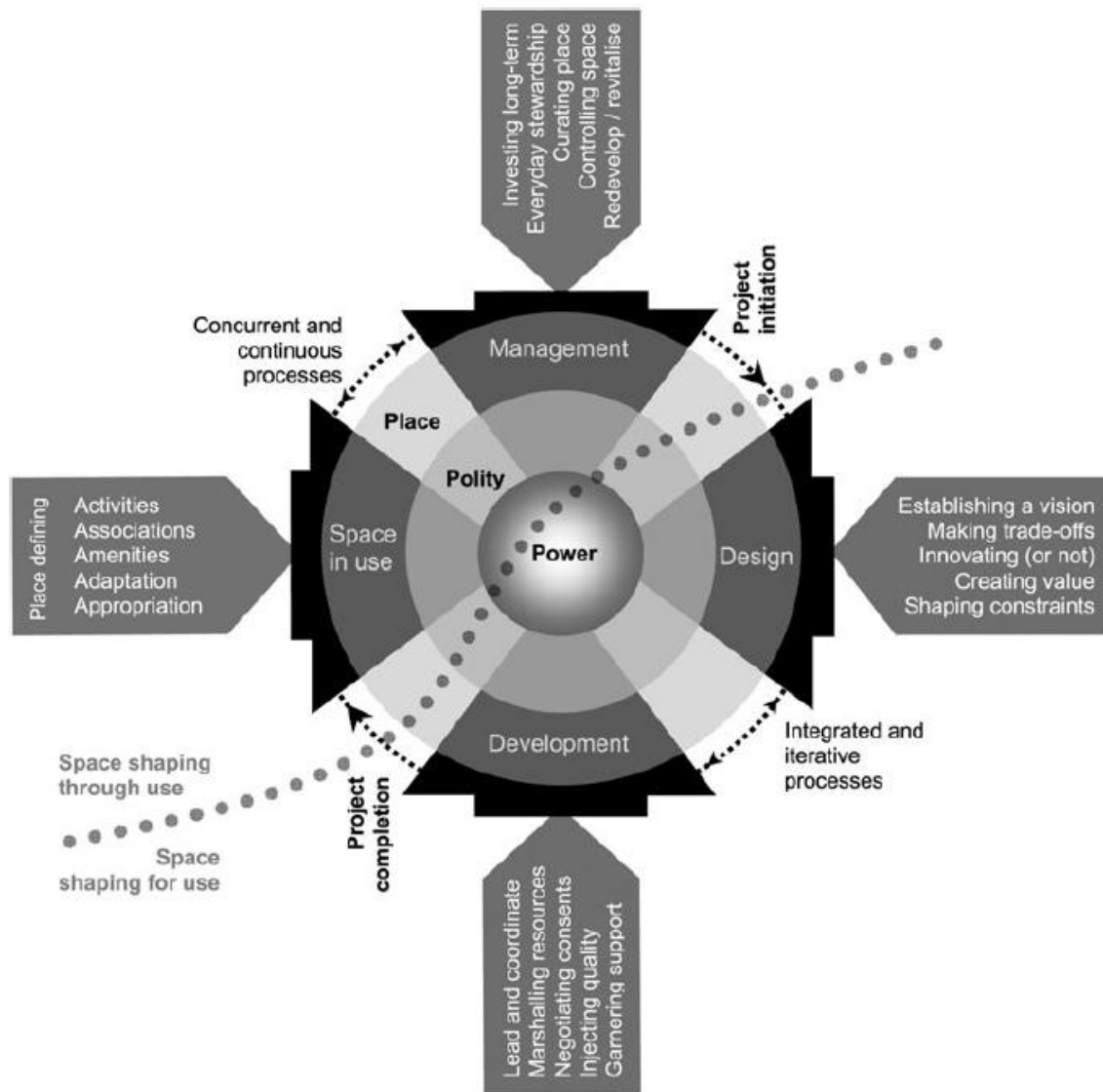
Figure 7: Urban Design process: a place-shaping continuum. Adapted from "The Place-shaping Continuum: A Theory of Urban Design Process" by M. Carmona, 2014, Journal of Urban Design, 19(1), p. 11 (https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2013.854695).

3.3.1.2 How can this theory contribute to the research?

Of the 13 frameworks of the urban design process considered in Chapter 2, the *Place-shaping Continuum* theory provides the most detailed and complete overview of the urban design process. While most other frameworks present the urban design process as a linear process consisting of various stages or phases, the Place-shaping Continuum identifies key elements and agendas that influence the urban design process and its outcomes. The theory also views the urban design process as a continuum – a continuous integrated process that transforms the public realm "*from history to and through each of the place-shaping processes of today and on to tomorrow*" (Carmona, 2014, p. 33).

Carmona (2014) starts by highlighting that the urban design process is directly influenced by contextual factors, including:

- *History and traditions of a place*, which shape the views and opinions of stakeholders and influence the way stakeholders approach certain issues and how they interact with the urban design process.
- *Contemporary polity* is an important element as the urban design process reflects the changing socio-political and economic contexts. This changing context often leads to identifiable time periods associated with changes in institutional structures, visions, strategies and/or policies that define the framework within which the urban design process should operate.

These contextual factors are important to consider when upgrading spaces such as streets and squares. These spaces have evolved through the years to accommodate different uses and needs of the local community and there is an expected way of using certain streets and squares. Similarly, contemporary polity often sets a 'known' way or approach of doing things, informed by the objectives of the government or authority of the day. This can inform the first objective of this research, which is concerned with analysing how the contemporary polity is seeking to control and guide the urban design process in respect to streets and squares.

Carmona (2014) then discusses how contextual factors influence the urban design process, which Carmona divides into four different and equally important sub-processes: Design, Development, Space in Use, and Management. Carmona identifies five agendas for each of the sub-processes, which are listed and summarised in Table 8.

Table 8: Summary of the different sub-process and agendas identified by Carmona (2014) in the Place-shaping Continuum.

Sub-Process/Agenda	Summary
Design – the generation of design strategies for public space. During the design process different aspirations are mediated. Design is used as a tool to shape the future of places.	
Establishing a vision	The ultimate purpose of the urban design process is the develop a vision for positive change informed by the physical context, stakeholders and aspirations.
Making trade-offs	There is a need to consider the competing demands of different stakeholders on the limited space.
Innovating (or not)	Decisions about whether to apply innovative or simple traditional solutions. Innovation can be not only in terms of style, but also in terms of use or philosophy.

Creating Value	Decisions often need to be made about what type of value to prioritise in the urban design process. These include social value, aesthetic value, use value and economic value.
Shaping constraints	Regulatory processes, as defined by policies and laws, impose certain constraints on the urban design process and the proposals/designs themselves.
Development – The development process is typically integrated with the design process and is iterative in nature. The design process is where redesigns and re-negotiations are made over time. The development process is the means by which these designs are advanced, and places are shaped.	
Lead and co-ordinate	A critical task is to coordinate diverse interests in the face of contrasting opinions about how to shape a place.
Marshalling resources	Complex stakeholder relationships are made even more complex by the combination of financial resources (private and public) needed to support many urban design projects.
Negotiating consents	To implement projects, whether public or private, a range of regulatory instruments must be negotiated.
Injecting quality	The individuals leading the process can range from a creative force to a powerless servant of the market forces. The role of urban designers and master planners is essential to create a quality public space while ensuring feasibility and financial return – they must create value. This must involve creative design and reconciliation of stakeholders, market and regulatory constraints to maximise overall quality.
Garnering support	Residents and stakeholders have an important role to play. The right balance needs to be struck between over-romanticising engagement and the value of a clear professional vision.
Space in Use – The everyday use and management of a space continues to change and shape places to meet the needs of users or specific interests.	
Activities	Activities and uses in a space define its character and shape the users' experience. A mix of activities can create daily cycles that can attract different people at different times of the day. There are different types of activities, some are movement oriented while other activities can be recreational and social as described by Gehl (1987) in *Life Between Buildings*.
Associations	Certain spaces are associated with particular user groups, while others may be popular with society at large.
Amenities	Spaces can sometimes act as an amenity, especially for commercial establishments in the area. High amenity can attract more people or certain groups to an area.
Adaptation	Spaces adapt and evolve over time. Adaptation can occur through use, gradually adapting spaces to accommodate a different use or culture, such as the adaptation of urban areas to the car.
Appropriation	A space can also be appropriated by specific groups of people who were not originally intended to "control" the space. Appropriation can also be driven by businesses that can take over parts of the public space.

Management – a space is rarely left unmanaged, and it tends to be managed to some degree. This management can lead to small incremental changes in a place and can lead to changes in the way a space is used, for example by changing traffic flows.	
Investing long-term	A short-term emphasis on the product should be avoided at all costs, especially when coming from the public sector. There is a need to assess the feasibility of a project, taking into account the expected maintenance costs.
Everyday stewardship	Long-term management is essential to maintaining the quality of a space. Long-term management in the public sector can be done through a variety of approaches – for example, they can be managed by local entities or they can be subcontracted to the private sector.
Curating place	Curating a place can be essential for a more vibrant urban public realm. This can be done in a variety of ways, such as organising activities in the space and encouraging businesses to collaborate and organise events.
Controlling space	Sometimes certain spaces need to be controlled. Apart from crimes, it is also important to control the irregular use of a space or undesirable activities, such as driving through a pedestrian zone.
Redevelop/revitalise	Management must be open-ended and continuous. A cyclical pattern emerges that begins with the formal design process and then continues to be adapted through the informal design process until it is time for another formal design process. Allowing this process to occur while controlling its quality can be a sustainable way through which communities and users adapt their urban areas to their ever-changing needs.

Note: Table by author summarising the four sub-processes and their respective agendas identified by Carmona (2014) in the Place-Shaping Continuum.

The sub-processes and various agendas will be tested in the Maltese context to determine whether they are applicable to Malta and which, if any, are of greater importance and whether additional agendas can be identified. The sub-processes and various agendas will also be analysed in terms of how they can influence and be influenced by participation, which in turn informs the third objective of this research, which focuses on how participation can improve the urban design process and its outcomes.

Power, the third component of the theory, is identified at the core of the Place-Shaping Continuum diagram (see Figure 7). In discussing power relationships, Carmona (2014) identifies agency and structure. Agency can be defined as the ability of individual stakeholders to make their decisions, while structure refers to an arrangement or system that can influence the decisions and actions of agents. Therefore the same agents in a different structure can lead to different decisions (Dowding, 2008).

Carmona (2014) notes that stakeholders will use their political leverage and power to influence the urban design process, reminiscent of Bentley's (2005, p. 27) 'battlefield' concept of power-play, where stakeholders in the urban design process scheme and manoeuvre to undermine others with the goal

of achieving the built forms they desire. Carmona (2014) notes that these power relations act as a "*lens, focusing the processes of urban design in different directions and in diverse and inconsistent ways, and decisively moulding the nature of outcomes in the process*" (p. 11).

Focusing on agency, Carmona (2014) notes that the urban design process is shaped by the different stakeholders involved in the process, each with their own interests and aspirations. Through the case studies, Carmona identified six factors that influence how stakeholders affect the process and the way public space is designed and transformed. Each factor representing specific stakeholder groups can be used to discuss the aspirations, powers, roles, and abilities of the various stakeholders involved.

The theory proposed by Carmona (2014) also identifies a list of stakeholders in London and identifies the degree of influence these stakeholders have in the four active place-shaping processes. This and the six factors identified above can help to inform the second objective of the research, which is to identify the roles and interests of key stakeholders in the urban design process.

3.3.1.3   How can this research contribute to theory?

The main contribution of this research to the Place-shaping Continuum will be to test the theory in a different context and in relation to streets and squares. Carmona (2014) himself noted that the proposed theory needs to be tested, developed and challenged by considering different contexts and development scenarios.

When the Place-Shaping Continuum was published in the Journal of Urban Design, it was accompanied by commentaries in which five renowned academics reflected on the theory and gave their opinions. This research seeks to develop the comments identified by the following three academics:

- Similar to Carmona's comments, Jon Lang (2014) noted that the model can be further refined when tested in different *cultural contexts*. This research tests the theory in Malta, a small country in the middle of the Mediterranean with a centralised spatial and transportation planning system that has a unique political and power structure.

- Jonathan Barnett (2014) notes in his commentary that Carmona (2014) derived the theory by studying urban squares - which may define urban design too narrowly. Barnett notes that urban design for other types of public space, such as streets, requires a different approach as it necessary to consider in traffic patterns. This research will test the validity of the proposed theory in relation to the design of streets and squares.

- Cliff Ellis (2014) believes that more attention needs to be paid to the *structural obstacles* that limit significant change in urban design. These structural obstacles include the "*inertia of*

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existing transportation systems" (p. 48). By testing the theory in relation to the implementation of shared space, any structural obstacles related to the upgrading of streets and squares in Malta can be identified and considered in relation to how they affect the urban design process and its outcomes.

3.3.2   Malta as a case study

This research examines the urban design process, in particular the introduction of shared space principles in streets and squares. This presents an exploratory research topic to investigate the interaction of different stakeholders in the urban design process, and how these are shaped by culture and traditions. Malta provides a case study to understand the complex interactions and multiple tensions that make the urban design process challenging.

Malta is a small country with a two-tier system of government: the national government and 68 local councils (local governments). Malta has a centralised system where all authorities and government departments are at the national level, with all strategies, policies, and decision-making being the responsibility of the national authorities. Local Councils are mainly responsible for the day-to-day management of their localities, with no decision-making powers in relation to urban design.
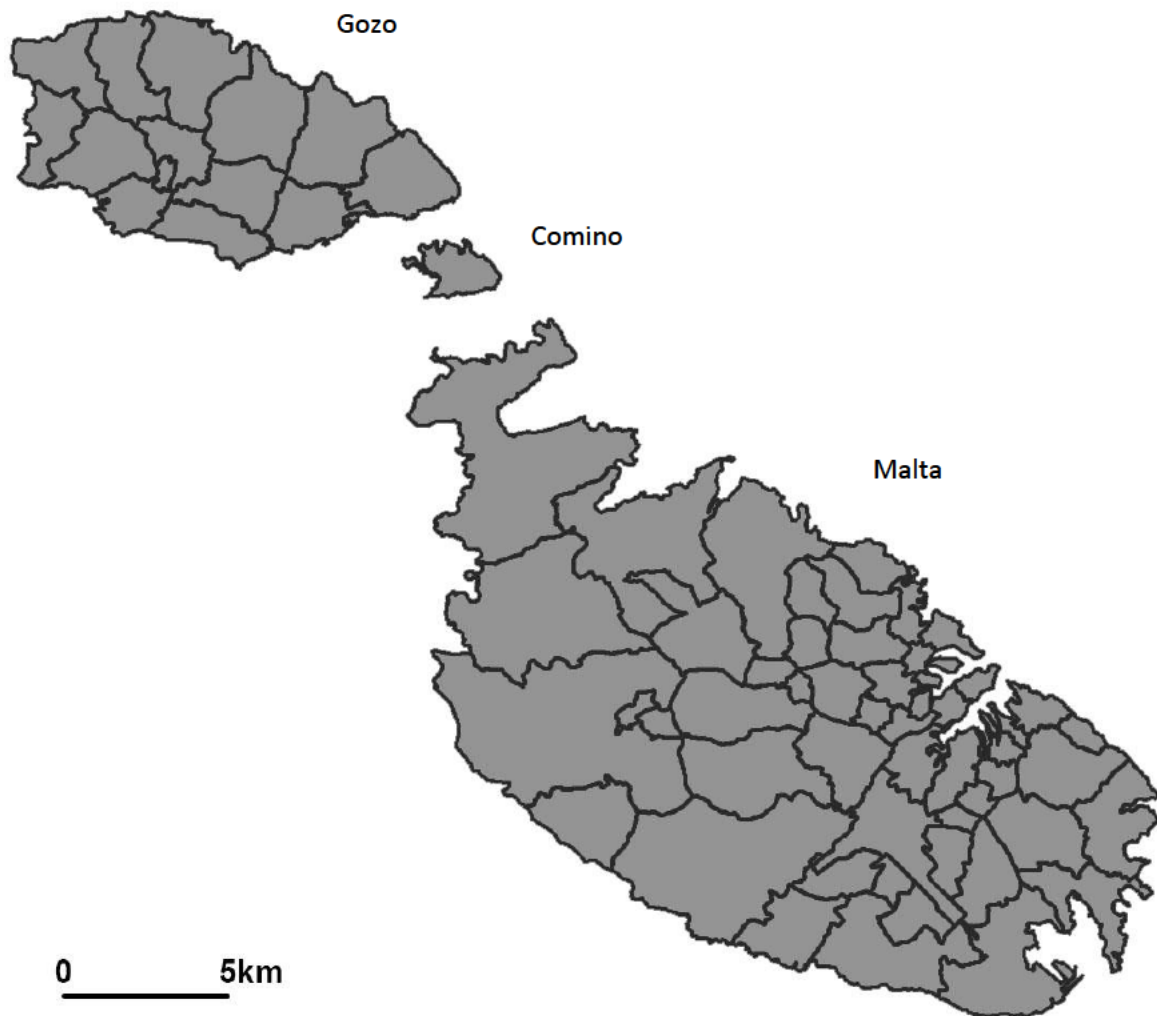
Figure 8: Map of Malta showing the administrative boundaries of the 68 local councils. Adapted from PA Geoportal, in Planning Authority, 2021, Retrieved 27 February 2021, from http://geoserver.pa.org.mt/publicgeoserver

Looking at the existing streets and squares in Malta, it is clear that they are the product of ideals, mindsets and practises of their respective times. Some of these spaces, such as those in the historic urban cores, existed before the advent of the car. In recent decades, these spaces have been retrofitted to accommodate the increasing popularity of the car. Others have been designed specifically for the efficient use of the car. This has led to various urban and spatial quality issues being identified in various national strategy and policy documents. Shared space has been identified by government and authorities as a potential solution to the overwhelming presence of the car in urban cores.

This challenge needs to be considered in light of the fact that Malta has one of the highest car ownership rates and car densities, which is a result of the car culture where society relies heavily on the use of the car. Considering the importance that the local population attaches to the car, Malta can

be an excellent case study to explore whether public participation and collaboration between stakeholders can positively contribute to the urban design process to address these issues through the introduction of shared space.

Malta also provides a case study where the role and influence of politics are identified as being very powerful in the urban design process due to clientelism, which is defined by Piattoni (2001) as "*the trade of votes and other types of partisan support in exchange for public decisions with divisible benefits*" (p. 4). This leads to a strong and direct relationship between citizens, key interest groups and politicians (Veenendaal, 2019).

In conclusion, the introduction of shared space provides a useful exploratory research topic to analyse how participation in the urban design process can influence the process and outcomes. Using Malta as a case study will enable the researcher to identify the different components and elements that influence the urban design process, paying particular attention to how participation influences or is influenced by them. It will also enable the researcher to understand the day-to-day urban design process and how it shapes the built environment. In order to achieve this, a number of methods need to be used, which are detailed below.

3.4   Methods

The following section outlines the research methods proposed to support an empirical examination of how a participative urban design process can inform an approach to introduce shared space in the Maltese Islands, using the Place-shaping Continuum as a conceptual framework. This research examines how a participative urban design process can contribute to the introduction of shared space principles. Rather than identifying a particular type of process, this research explores whether a participative urban design process can contribute to the introduction of shared space principles in Malta, taking into account how this process is influenced by contextual factors and the stakeholders involved.

This research is predominantly qualitative and analyses how the stakeholders identified through a stakeholder analysis, as described in *3.4.2.1 Desk-based stakeholder analysis*, interact with each other and with the process. These interactions are assumed to be influenced by the context and embedded power relations, which in turn influences the urban design process and its outcomes. The unit of analysis in this research is the involvement and participation of stakeholders in the urban design process. By focusing on the three main components identified in the Place-Shaping Continuum: contextual factors, the four-active place-shaping processes, and the power relationships between

stakeholders, this research can analyse how these three components are influenced by participation and how these components themselves may influence the type of participation required in the urban design process.

To achieve this, a mixed-method approach was adopted which included: a wide literature review; a review of local legislation, strategies and policies; a desk-based stakeholder analysis; semi-structured interviews; as well as an ongoing review of newspapers and other forms of media which provide first-hand accounts of experiences, opinions and/or reports of events.

| Literature Review | + | Textual Analysis | + | Current Affairs | + | Stakeholder Analysis |

informs

Interviews
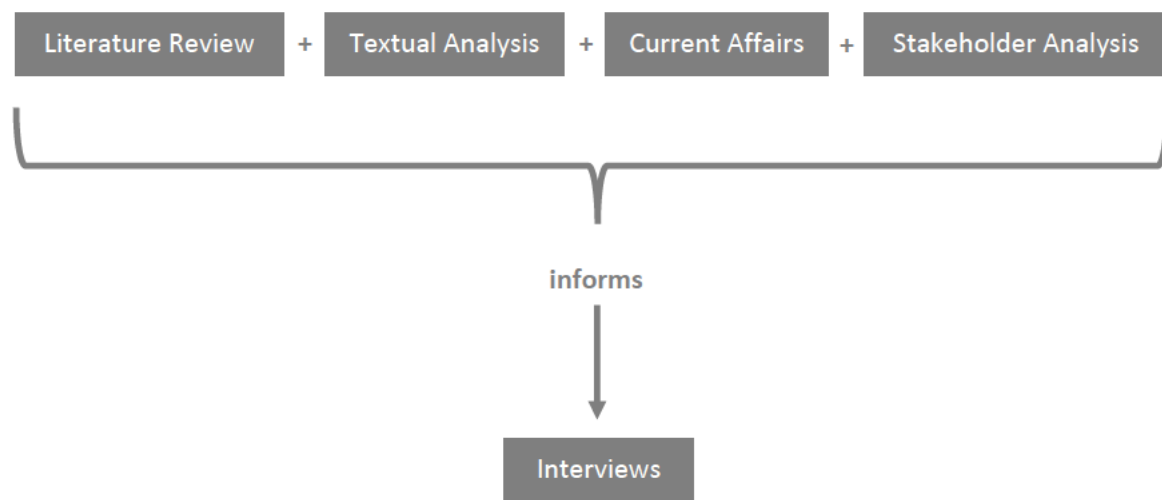
Figure 9: Research Design Diagram

Table 9: The research objectives, with the methods and techniques used.

Objectives	Methods and Techniques
1. To analyse the legislation, strategies and policies which control and guide the urban design process in respect to streets and squares.	Desk-based research supplemented with stakeholders experiences and opinions obtained through the interviews. Techniques: • Literature review • Textual analysis • Interviews • Media
2. To identify the different roles and interests of key stakeholders in respect to the future of streets and squares, focusing on their involvement in the urban design process.	Desk-based research was initially used to identify the various stakeholders in Malta, including the identification of any roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders. This was further informed by the semi-structured interviews with stakeholders actively involved in the urban design process. Techniques: • Literature review • Textual analysis • Stakeholder analysis • Interviews • Media
3. To analyse how a participative urban design process can (re-)introduce shared space principles in Malta with the aim of increasing liveability and walkability.	Due to the lack of literature and research on the Maltese context in this regard, most of the data comes from the interviews. Techniques: • Interviews • Media

By combining detailed analysis of the policy documents, legislation, and a broad range of interviews there is the opportunity to gain insight regarding the approach stakeholders are likely to take in the urban design process and how participation can influence this. Whilst the subject of participation and engagement of stakeholders has gained popularity, there are very few studies and written documents that refer to the Maltese context. Locally, most of the knowledge of the stakeholders is through direct experience in the process with very little documentation about previous decisions or approaches used.

This might be due to various reasons, including the size of Malta and small numbers of researchers focused on this sector. For this reason, newspaper articles and opinions from other sources have been considered important as these offer further insight into the views of stakeholders on urban design matters, particularly in relation to current affairs. When referring to such sources, it is important to consider and present them as opinions rather than facts or results of empirical research.

Due to lack of data and research in the Maltese context, it was necessary to combine different data sources, mainly interviews, documents, media and opinion articles, in order to gain a better understanding of the current urban design process. In addition, it proved difficult to engage specific stakeholders such as community groups and developers, as individuals who were invited for interviews declined citing scheduling problems despite being offered an open invitation. These difficulties in engaging stakeholders were anticipated by some of the interview participants who noted a lack of willingness to participate in the local community.

The next sub-section outlines the different research activities carried out to address the research question and objectives.

3.4.1   Literature review

The literature review is intended to build the foundation of the research. This is essential since it provides an up-to-date understanding of the subject; identifies research methods being used in the field; informs the study through research and views of experts in the field; and provides a basis on which to compare research findings. The literature review needs to be sustained through the whole study (Gray, 2004, p. 52).

The literature review presented in Chapter 2 analysed a range of literature, including peer-reviewed literature, legislation and policy documents, with the aim of gaining insights into the urban design process related to streets and squares, focusing mainly on the need to find a better balance between the different street users. The literature review sought to understand the evolution of streets and squares and how approaches and decisions taken in the past have led to the current challenges and issues. This was considered essential since the urban design process is being considered as a continuous process that through the years shapes the urban environment.

To better understand the urban design process, various urban design process frameworks were analysed with the aim of obtaining a better understanding of key components and elements. Particular focus was given to public participation and collaborative approaches as advocated for, or required, by

several EU declarations and national legislation. The review found that whilst many papers discuss benefits and challenges associated with public participation, and the different tools and methods which can be used, very few studies explore how public participation can be pragmatically incorporated in the urban design process or how it needs to be managed, especially in relation to the design of streets and squares.

The literature review led to the identification of *The Place-shaping Continuum: A Theory of Urban Design Process* (Carmona, 2014) as a framework that can contribute to this research, offering a link between the various complex and interconnected components which make up and influence the urban design process.

3.4.1.1   *Desk-based analysis of public documents in European Union and Maltese context (Policy Analysis)*

The strategic and policy context that governs the urban design process is one of the key components identified by Carmona (2014) in the *Place-shaping Continuum*. In Malta, a textual analysis of legislation, policy, political and administrative documents is required to gain a better understanding of the approaches taken by the Maltese government, authorities and other entities due to the lack of academic and research on the subject (Attard, 2006). This is particularly important as the Maltese spatial planning system follows a 'plan-led discretionary system' which in theory provides "*a greater degree of certainty and consistency in decision-making, whilst retaining a degree of flexibility, it also retains a degree of inconsistency, uncertainty and arbitrariness*" (Carmona, Carmona, et al., 2003, p. 108).

This textual analysis forms the backbone of this research as it informs the approach to the other methods, such as the data required from the interview stage. The analysis of statutory documents, including strategic and policy documents, is essential as they form the basis of the urban design process and decision-making. Punter et al. (1994) discuss that content analysis has certain advantages and limitations. The textual analysis attempts to address similar objectives to those identified by Punter et al., namely that of revealing:

- The broad approach adopted in the statutory documents.
- The level of detail included in the documents and guidance documents.
- The relationship between the various documents and policy documents, across sectors.
- How certain policies are expressed in the various plans.

Punter et al. (1994) adopted a quantitative approach to contextual analysis, using a set of predetermined criteria to determine the frequency of use of these criteria either manually or through the use of data analysis software. In contrast, this research adopted a qualitative approach using data analysis software to identify relevant sections of the document, which was particularly helpful when analysing lengthy documents such as the seven Local Plans. This was done by identifying a range of themes including participation and collaboration, shared space and related concepts such as pedestrian priority areas and identified street and square improvements. The associated keywords were then entered into the data analysis software, which reduced the volume of text into a manageable amount, which was then manually analysed by the researcher reading through different extracts, taking into account the 'context' around them.

This was done in a way that took into consideration Krippendoorff's (2004) advice that whilst computer aids can be more reliable and faster in terms of coding, there are limitations that the researcher needs to be aware of. Knowing the limitations allows the researcher to programme and input the search queries in a way that ensures a correct output by the software.

The textual analyses focused specifically on government and national authorities' strategies, plans and policy documents that are relevant to public participation, the identified improvements in streets and squares, and shared space especially in relation to shared space and the need to address the overbearing presence of vehicles. The list of fourteen documents analysed is provided in *Chapter 4, 4.3.3 Policy analysis on public participation, street and square improvement and shared space*, with Figure 21 and Figure 22 in *4.3.2 Hierarchy of strategies, policies and plans* showing the hierarchy of these policy documents.

The aim of this textual analysis was to establish the current strategic and policy context on the following four subjects:

- The approach to participation in urban planning and urban design processes proposed in the policy documents.
- The strategic approach, policies, measures and project proposals to improve the quality of streets and squares.
- The strategic and policy context for the introduction of shared space.
- Identification of any gaps in design guidelines for streets and squares.

A better understanding of the Maltese strategic and policy context, including the knowledge gaps and other potential shortcomings such as the lack of attention to public participation, enabled the

researcher to design the subsequent research phases to collect the missing data to achieve the research objectives.

3.4.2 Exploratory work

In parallel with the literature review, exploratory work was carried out in relation to the Maltese context in order to gain a better understanding of the local urban design process and places. This was necessary as there is a lack of research on this topic at the local level and research data is rarely published or made available to other professionals. This exploratory work included:

- An analysis of Maltese urban morphology and landscape and the way it has been shaped over time by different rules and in different periods. This analysis examined different typologies of Maltese streets and squares, mapping their evolution over the years and the quality of today's streets compared to the main characteristics associated with high quality urban spaces.

- An analysis of the participatory approaches used in recent street and square upgrading projects in Malta to determine the type of approaches and the level of participation in the Maltese urban design process. Although several projects have been implemented in recent years, there is very little publicly available information on the participatory processes applied and their outcomes. This research therefore identified seven recent initiatives, ranging from strategies for a region to the design of a specific square, and assessed them in terms of the participatory approach they adopted. This analysis also provided an initial understanding of the approach taken by the different stakeholders in the urban design process.

- As mentioned earlier, newspapers and social media opinions were followed throughout the research as they were the only source of secondary data from which the aspirations and opinions of local communities and citizens regarding streets and squares could be determined. Particular attention was paid to those articles, opinion pieces and posts that discussed concepts such as shared space and pedestrianisation. During the research period, a large number of articles and opinion posts were published on this topic, as it was one of the main points of discussion.

In addition to gaining a better understanding of the existing urban design process, this analysis also started to identify the key stakeholders, which were then analysed in more detail through a desk-based stakeholder analysis, discussed below.

3.4.2.1   Desk-based stakeholder analysis

Part of the exploratory work also consisted of a desk-based stakeholder analysis which was used to identify the various stakeholders in the planning and urban design field in Malta, along with their interest in respect to streets and squares and their roles within the urban design process.

In Malta, the institutional setup tends to be different due to its size, with a centralised system consisting of national authorities and government organisations which are responsible for strategy, policy-making and decision-making. The 'Espon Project - Governance of territorial and urban policies' (Farinós Dasí et al., 2006) identified a highly centralised system with everything controlled by people in power, namely politicians. This is accompanied by a weak vertical structure, with high fragmentation, lack of trust and lack of co-operation between bodies. Similarly Veenendaal (2019) identified a centralised system that is highly controlled by politicians, which encourages clientelism as citizens try to exert pressure on the politicians to prioritise their aspirations in consideration in return for their vote.

Due to these unique and particular circumstances, a list of stakeholders in Malta was identified through a stakeholder analysis. In addition, interview participants were asked to identify stakeholder groups that may have been overlooked. The identified stakeholders were in turn compared to the six stakeholder groups identified by Carmona (2014) in the Place-shaping Continuum, consisting of: owners of the space, regulators, designers, communities, long-term managers, and public space users.

A range of legislations, strategic documents, policies and guideline documents were also analysed by adopting the same approach to context analysis as discussed in *3.4.1.1 Desk-based analysis of public documents in European Union and Maltese context (Policy Analysis)*. Legislation analysed included:

- Development Planning Act (Government of Malta, 2016b), which makes provision for development planning as well as the establishment of the Planning Authority, along with its scope, responsibility and powers amongst several other aspects related to planning.
- Authority for Transport in Malta Act (Government of Malta, 2009), which establishes Transport Malta, a government body overlooking transport in Malta, and which identifies several functions and powers.
- Local Council Act (Government of Malta, 1993) establishes Local Councils modelled on the European Charter of Local Self-Government. The act identifies the powers and functions which have been delegated to the Local Councils.

The strategies and policies identified in *3.4.1.1 Desk-based analysis of public documents in European Union and Maltese context (Policy Analysis)* were also analysed with the aim of identifying the strategies and policies being proposed by the Government, Planning Authority and Transport Malta. Since other bodies and non-governmental organisations do not tend to have statutes or policy documents, several documents, reports and position papers published by these organisations were analysed with the aim of identifying their aspirations, opinions and approaches. These include documents such as:

- *Reducing Traffic Congestion: Short Term Measures*, a consultation document published by the Nationalist Party identify 14 measures to reduce traffic congestion (Partit Nazzjonalista, 2016b).

- *The Urban Challenge: Our Quality of Life and the Built Environment* published by Kamra tal-Periti (2007), which is the Maltese Chamber of Architects, outlining the chamber's position on the quality of the built environment.

- Several newspaper articles and press releases such as *AD calls for more pedestrian town areas* ("AD Calls for More Pedestrian Town Areas," 2012), *Idea Ambjent: Our 5 Policy Drivers* (Partit Nazzjonalista, 2016a), *Twenty Proposals to Political Parties for the 2017 General Election* (Archdiocese of Malta, 2017) to obtain views of political parties and other organisation, such as the church and other organisations.

This analysis was required since stakeholders are likely to have very different sets of aspirations and motivations which inform their approach to the urban design process and can vary from one context to another. Whilst some stakeholders such as residents will likely have motivations to improve the environment for a better quality of life, other stakeholders such as business might prioritise projects and activities which will generate more revenue. It is therefore important for project leaders and designers to be aware of the stakeholder motivations as reconciliation might be required when the different motivations are not compatible with each other – which can lead to clashes (Carmona et al., 2008, pp. 19–21).

The insights gained from this analysis helped to identify the aspirations, powers, roles and abilities of the various stakeholders involved, as identified by Carmona (2014) in the Place-shaping Continuum. These insights also better informed the researcher, enabling him to discuss these in further detail in the interviews which were held subsequently, as will be discussed in the next sub-section.

3.4.3   Interviews

As there is very little research on urban design and related sectors in Malta, knowledge needs to be gathered from professionals and other stakeholders who are involved or have an interest in the urban design process. They can offer insights into existing practices, challenges and potential improvements to the urban design process through their experiences and reflections on the process.

The purpose of the semi-structured interviews is to:

- Examine how different stakeholders involved and interested in the urban design process perceive public participation in the urban design process in Malta, including current levels of participation, desired levels of participation and any challenges to higher levels of participation.
- Identify the different stakeholders involved in the urban design process and the nature of collaboration between them.
- Investigate stakeholders' views on introducing shared space through a participatory approach, including any anticipated challenges, conflicts and potential improvements.
- Examine the opinion of stakeholder on whether a strategic and participatory urban design process is needed.

This data is valuable for better understanding stakeholders opinion about public participation in the urban design process, using the concept of shared space as a thematic lens. This can also help to understand whether different stakeholders think that more participatory approaches are needed and what challenges they anticipate. An interview guide was developed which was used to ask the same set of questions, which were read out verbatim to ensure there were no leading questions. However, depending on how the interview progressed, additional unplanned questions could be asked to follow up on the interviewee's responses (Robson & McCartan, 2016, p. 285).

The initial interview guide, information sheet and consent forms were developed and subsequently approved by the University Ethics Committee. During the development of the interview guide, there were several revisions in which questions were continually refined to avoid any possible form of bias, including overly leading questions. The guide was aimed at individuals involved in or familiar with the urban design and planning process, from policymakers to active citizens seeking to safeguard their interests. The interview guide was piloted through three interviews in January 2019 and found to be satisfactory. However, with input from the three participants, some questions were refined and reworded to make them easier for potential interviewees to understand. This included splitting one

question into two questions and reordering some questions to allow the interview conversation to move smoothly from one topic to another.

During the pilot interviews it also became clear that although the participants were fluent in English, some felt more comfortable answering in Maltese. In the pilot interviews, the researcher had the strong impression that participants were more descriptive and detailed when speaking Maltese. In the remaining interviews conducted between February and May 2019, participants were given the option to respond in the language they felt most comfortable speaking. At the beginning of each interview, the researcher indicated that the data analysis would be in English, which was also the preferred language of the interview, but it was clearly indicated that participants had the option to respond in the language in which they felt more comfortable. Ten participants chose to respond predominately in English, while twenty-four participants chose to respond predominantly in Maltese. The latter were then translated into English as faithfully as possible during the transcription process. Translation was facilitated by the fact that most references to technical terms in all interviews were predominantly in English, as this is the language used by Planning Authority for strategy, policy and guidance documents, as well as the language of choice for all formal communication.

It was also noted that whilst some participants engaged themselves in the conversation, others required the researcher to follow up with additional questions to get more insightful opinions. To aid the researcher in such cases, several prompts were included in the interview guide which could be used as required. Additional questions covering a range of topics were identified so that they can be used towards the end of the interview if certain topics were not brought up during the interview.

A total of 34 interviews were conducted (including the 3 pilot interviews), with participants including ministers, members of parliament, politicians, local council mayors, authorities' officials, professionals such as architects and planners, and NGOs. The list of participants can be found in Table 10, which includes the interview number, the entity they represented, and the role or position they held. The table also indicates the predominant language used in the interview and the reference used when citing that specific interviewee in *Chapters 5* and *6*.

Table 10: Interview participant list

Participant Number	Entity	Role at time of interview	Predominant Language	Reference used when citing
1. (Pilot)	Mosta Local Council	Mayor	English	mayor
2. (Pilot)	Private Practice	Architect	English	architect
3. (Pilot)	Kamra tal-Periti (Chamber of Architects)	Council Member/ Architect	Maltese	KTP

4.	Sliema Local Council	Mayor	English	mayor
5.	Debono Group	Expert on Future Mobility	English	Future mobility expert
6.	Paola Local Council	Mayor	Maltese	mayor
7.	Government Agency responsible for road development and upgrade	Architect & Civil Engineer specialised in Road Engineering	Maltese	Road engineer
8.	Green Party	Chairman of Green Party/Architect focusing on representing Local Community in several applications	Maltese	Architect/politician
9.	Din l-Art Helwa (National Trust of Malta)	Board Member/Architect	English	architect/eNGO
10.	Grand Harbour Regeneration Corporation	Architect	Maltese	GHRC
11.	Government of Malta	Member of Parliament (Responsible for Cottonera Strategy)	Maltese	MP
12.	University of Malta - Institute for Climate Change and Sustainable Development	Director of Institute/ Associate Professor	English	professor
13.	Government of Malta	Parliamentary Secretary for Planning	Maltese	PS
14.	Project Aegle – NGO with a mission to enhance quality of life and environmental conditions through improved mobility	Manager	English	eNGO
15.	Malta Public Transport	General Manager of Bus Company/Transport Expert	Maltese	Bus company
16.	Government of Malta	Member of Parliament and Government representative on Planning Board	Maltese	MP

17. (Written submission)	Government of Malta	Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Capital Projects	English	Minister
18.	Planning Authority: Green and Blue Sustainable Unit	Unit Manager	Maltese	PA
19.	Planning Authority: Residential Unit	Unit Manager; Up to a few months ago Unit Manager of Business Unit	Maltese	PA
20.	Planning Authority: Transport Unit	Unit Manager	Maltese	PA
21.	General Retailers Trade Union (Association of General Retailers and Trader)	President	Maltese	GRTU
22.	Senior Lecturer/Private Consultant/Lands Authority Board Member	Academic, Private Consultant and Lands Authority Board Member (transport expert and lands authority board member)	Maltese	Architect/Lands Authority
23.	Chamber of Planners	General Secretary	Maltese	planner
24.	Malta Hotels and Restaurant Association	Technical Advisor to MHRA on infrastructural projects.	Maltese	MHRA
25.	Malta Tourism Authority	Director of Product Planning & Development	Maltese	MTA
26.	Architect/Planner/ Senior Lecturer	Co-ordinates Environmental Impact Assessments on a number of Major Projects	Maltese	Urban planner/ academic
27.	Malta Road Safety Council	Executive Chairman of Malta Road Safety Council/ Strategic Consultant	Maltese	road safety
28.	Transport Malta	Senior Architect in the Integrated Transport Strategy Directorate	Maltese	TM architect

29.	Chamber of Planners	President of Chamber of Planners, Planning Consultancy and Transport Impact Assessments	Maltese	planner
30.	Local Council Association	President/Local Councillor	Maltese	LCA
31.	University of Malta/ Bicycle Advocacy Group	Behavioural Economist/Lecturer/ Activist	English	economist
32.	Housing Authority	Senior Architect/Local Councillor	English	Housing authority
33.	Church Commission/University of Malta	Member of the Church's Environmental Commission/ Academic/Architect	Maltese	architect
34.	Transport Malta	Deputy Chief Officer	Maltese	TM planner

Before the interviews, participants were given four options in relation to anonymity. These are listed hereunder, along with the number of participants who chose these:

- I understand that my organisation and I will not be identified either directly or indirectly. [1 participant]
- I agree that my organisation may be identified for the purposes of this research. [2 participants]
- I agree that my position and organisation may be identified for the purposes of this research. [6 participants]
- I agree that my name, position and organisation may be identified and waive the right to anonymity for the purposes of this research. [23 participants]

Two participants amended the last option as follows:

I agree that my name, position and organisation may be identified and waive the right to anonymity for the purposes of this research, *subject to review direct quotations*.

The need to give the specific names of the participants was not judged to add any value. In most cases, participants are identified by their organisation and/or position (if allowed), except for one participant who chose the first option and was identified only by profession.

One of the limitations of the study was the small population size of Malta coupled with the centralised planning and urban design system consisting only of national authorities, resulting in few potential interview candidates occupying specific positions within the authorities or other institutions. This was especially true as interviewees needed to be embedded in and familiar with the process, further limiting the pool of interviewees. The desk-based stakeholder analysis revealed that stakeholders had limited access to the urban design process and that participants themselves had to be directly involved in the process or have an interest in it in order to be familiar with the urban design process and the day-to-day relationships between the various stakeholder groups.

A list of potential interviewees was identified with the aim of including at least one participant from each stakeholder group identified in the stakeholder analysis so that a broad range of perspectives would be represented in the interview data. Attempts were also made to interview one person from the key institutions, organisations and groups in Malta, but despite numerous attempts it proved difficult to secure their participation. An additional difficulty in conducting the interviews was that they were conducted at a time when Malta was experiencing a construction boom, with a record number of residential and commercial developments being approved, as well as large investments in infrastructure (Debono, 2019). Professionals and others with a direct interest in the process, such as NGOs, noted that they were overwhelmed with work and found it difficult to accommodate a meeting.

A total of 20 participants identified in the initial list (37%), including several NGOs and professionals who support them, community groups, journalists who follow the sector, the developers association and other bodies such as Arts Council and the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage were not interviewed. Eleven of them did not respond to the request despite multiple reminders, while a further nine communicated with the researcher but did not communicate their availability for an interview, or an interview appointment was made and subsequently cancelled with no response to requests for a new appointment. This information is presented in more detail in Table 11.

Table 11: List of contacted persons contacted with whom no interview was conducted.

Number	Entity	Role at time of interview	Reason
1.	Infrastructure Malta	CEO	Attended the interview appointment but after a 30-minute wait, the interview was cancelled as the CEO was too busy.
2.	Planning Authority	Unit Manager of Forward Planning	Cancelled three scheduled meetings.

3.	Moviment Grafiti (NGO safeguarding citizen rights)	Spokesperson	Asked for more detail about what the interview consists of. After several reminders, no reply.
4.	Attard Residents Environmental Network (residents community group)	Member	Informed that members are too busy to meet.
5.	Lawyer for most environmental eNGOs and activist.	Lawyer	Agreed to a meeting and requested a reminder in a week time. Despite several reminders, no replies were received.
6.	Transport Malta	Deputy CEO, Chief Officer of Integrated Transport Strategy Directorate	After several reminders, I was given an appointment on a date when I was abroad. Despite several attempts to reschedule no reply.
7.	Town Centre Management Paceville	Chairman	Despite spending weeks trying to schedule a meeting this never took place.
8.	Sociologist and MEP candidate, former leader of the Green party	-	Agreed to a meeting but no reply to set date.
9.	Foundation for Tourism Zone Development	Chairman	Agreed to a meeting but no reply to set date.
10.	Transport Malta	Manager and National ITS Co-ordinator.	No reply
11.	Transport Malta	Project Manager on several initiatives.	No reply
12.	Flimkien ghal Ambjent Ahjar	-	No reply
13.	Arts Council	Chairman	No reply
14.	Superintendence of Cultural Heritage	Superintendent	No reply
15.	Nationalist Party	Spokesperson for the sector	No reply
16.	Malta Developers Association	President	No reply
17.	Environmental Resource Authority	CEO	No reply

18.	Malta Today	Reporter on Planning and Environment	No reply
19.	Cottonera Strategy Co-ordinator + PhD Student	-	No reply
20.	Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD)	Chairman	No reply

3.4.3.1   Interview data analysis

Coding was used to categorise the qualitative interview data to establish a framework of thematic ideas. Coding makes subsequent data analysis more manageable as similar data can be quickly retrieved whilst it makes data more manageable and can be used to identify things such as reoccurring patterns (Miles et al., 2014).

Several methods can be used to code the data. Miles et al. (2014) remark that one of the most common approaches is to create a starting list of codes which is derived from the conceptual framework, research questions and other elements which are related to the research, often identified in the literature review (deductive coding). During the data collection and coding, more codes start to emerge. These codes often tend to be of special interest to the research since these discovered from the data being collected (inductive coding). The latter approach is also important since it shows that the research is open to other ideas rather than being restricted to the initial codes.

The approach described above was adopted to analyse the interview transcripts. Initially, a deductive approach was taken to derive the initial list of codes from the research question, Carmona's Place-Shaping Continuum, and other important characteristics identified in the literature review. The coding list and structure was then refined using an inductive approach to derive additional codes and refine and remove some of the deductive codes by reading and analysing the qualitative data itself. A similar hybrid approach was used by Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) as it can lead to a more complete and unbiased analysis of the interview data compared to a deductive approach.

Throughout this whole process, the researcher was careful to avoid mistakes. In coding, there needs to be consistency, so that coding is applied in the same manner from the first transcription down to the last transcription being coded. There is also the need to safeguard against observer drift, as the researcher might start to interpret some coding differently through the coding process (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

The coded text was then analysed to group the codes, which resulted in the identification of four themes that are closely linked to Carmona's Place Shaping Continuum and to the three research objectives. These four themes, outlined below, are then used to present the findings in *Chapter 5* and *Chapter 6*. The four themes are:

1. **Context and Polity**: the history and traditions which continue to influence the urban design process, the character of spaces, the current polity and processes with their strengths and weaknesses.

2. **Stakeholder and Power**: the stakeholders involved, the power relationships between them, stakeholders' attitude towards participative practices. As noted by Carmona (2014), these factors will act as a lens that focuses the process on a particular issue or a particular outcome (p. 11). It will also determine how the urban design process needs to be managed to achieve the desired objectives.

3. **Urban Design Process**: the urban design process itself, which needs to be managed and led. The process needs to decide on trade-offs, keeping a balance between stakeholders.

4. **Participation**: directly related to the urban design process, different approaches can be adopted in the urban design process, including the levels of participation. Challenges and difficulties associated with the different levels of participation that might be adopted.

3.5   Concluding Remarks

Using Carmona's (2014) *Place-Shaping Continuum* and a qualitative mixed-methods approach provides a way to analyse the complex components that come together in the urban design process and determine how places are designed.

To answer the research question, the methodology outlined seeks to understand how participation can improve the urban design process and its outcomes, using shared space as an empirical lens. In addition to understanding the contextual factors that influence the process, it is also necessary to understand the various interests and aspirations of stakeholders, along with a clear understanding of the existing and desired levels of participation. For the latter, Arnstein's (1969) *Ladder of Participation* offers a clear ladder of participation that identifies a number of different levels of stakeholder and local community power. Understanding how different stakeholders view and approach participation and collaboration in the urban design process, along with their views on the introduction of shared space, can provide a clearer understanding of how different levels of participation can contribute to the success of the urban design process that seeks to introduce shared space principles in streets and squares.

Key findings from the interviews are presented in *Chapter 5 Findings on the contextual factors and stakeholders* and *Chapter 6 Findings on the urban design process. Chapter 7 Discussion* then discusses these findings in terms of the implications for the Maltese context and the implications for the *Place-Shaping Continuum*. Before presenting and discussing the findings, the next chapter introduces the Maltese context in which this research is embedded.

Chapter 4 Malta – setting the context

4.1 Introduction

The following chapter sets the context in which the research is conducted. The main purpose is to present the Maltese context so that the main empirical findings can be understood within the socio-economic, political and cultural factors of the island. This is presented in three parts:

In the first part, a brief overview of Malta's current socio-economic context is first presented, before outlining how urban areas have been adapted over time, including the development of streets and squares into their current forms and functions. The strong car culture and associated challenges that have a strong impact on streets and squares are discussed, before Malta's unique governance and political context is discussed. This is followed by a stakeholder analysis that identifies the key stakeholders in the urban design process, together with their main interests and roles from the limited secondary data that exists in the Maltese context.

The second part of this chapter gives an account of the spatial and transport planning system in Malta, which is identified as a plan-led discretionary system. This includes a brief overview of the strategies, policies, plans, and guidance documents and briefly discusses the objectives and policies that relate to the need to improve the quality of streets and squares and the introduction of shared space. This is followed by a detailed policy analysis that seeks to understand the approach taken to i) public participation, ii) proposed street and square improvements, and iii) the introduction of shared space. This is followed by an analysis of the type of participatory approaches currently in practise in Malta.

4.2 Malta

4.2.1 Background

The Maltese Islands in the middle of the Mediterranean cover a total land area of 312 square metres. 51.3 per cent of the total land area consists of agricultural land, whilst 29.3 per cent of the total land area is developed (Environment and Resource Authority, 2019). The estimated total population of the Maltese Islands at the end of 2019 stood at 514,564, with an increase of four per cent when compared to 2018 (National Statistics Office - Malta, 2020). This translates to a population density of around 1,548 person per square metre which is the highest in the European Union (Eurostat, 2020a).
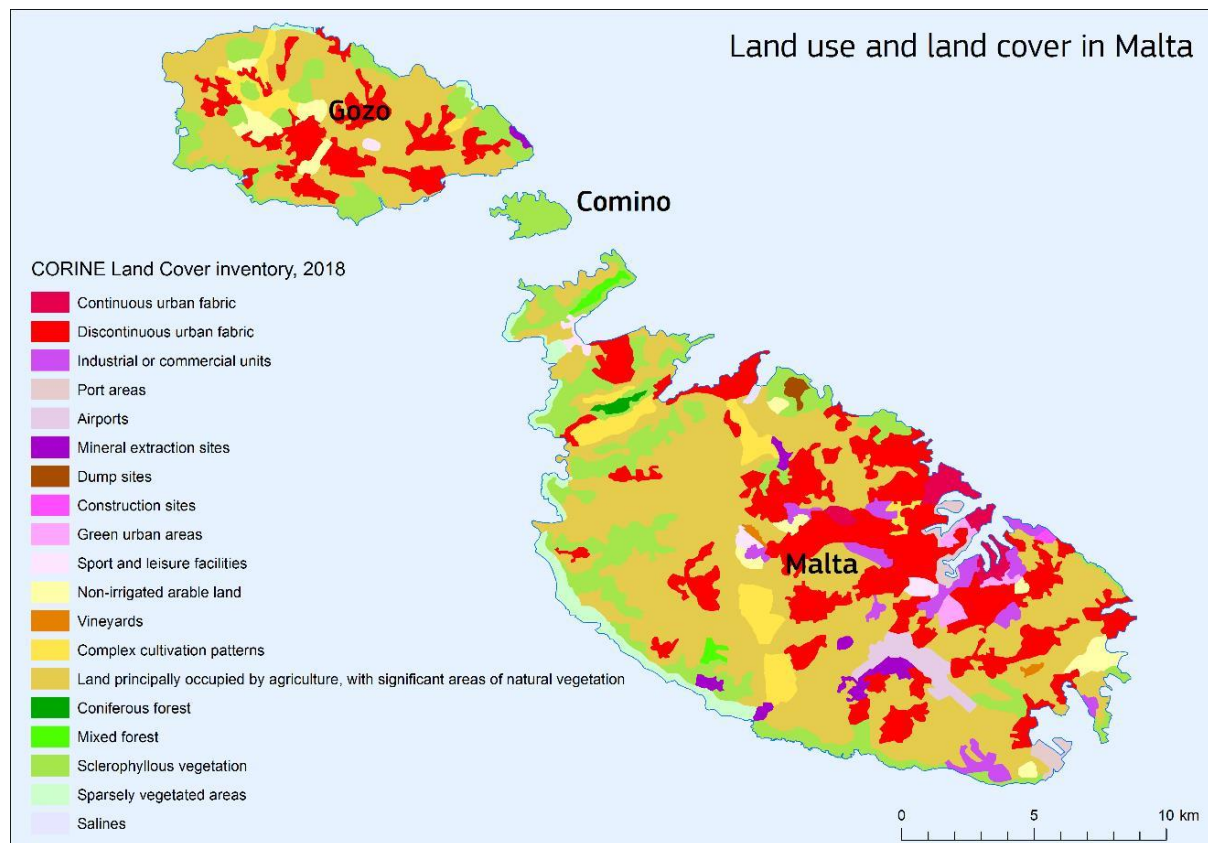
Figure 10: Map of the Maltese Islands showing the land use and land cover in 2018. Reprinted from "2019 Report on the economic and social situation of Gozo (Malta)" by European Commission, 2019, p. 2.

4.2.2   Historical development

Traditionally both architecture and urban design were based on local, bottom-up decision making. The figure-ground diagrams of traditional villages (see Figure 11 and Figure 12) clearly show how pre-1900 urban settlements were developed along a walking route or around the parish church. However, following the introduction of building and sanitary laws in the 19th century, streets started being laid out on plans rather than being formed organically through negotiations between the neighbours of an area. Post-1900, the villages grew through planned extensions in the outskirts of the existing settlements. This process accelerated after 1968, along with the construction of new villages and areas, such as the development of Qawra (see Figure 13). This increase in the rate of development coincided with a period in which Malta experienced the biggest transformation in terms of the social, economic and the built environment (De Lucca & Bonnici, 1996).

1958 - 1968

1900 - 1958

1993 - 2012

1968 - 1993

1900
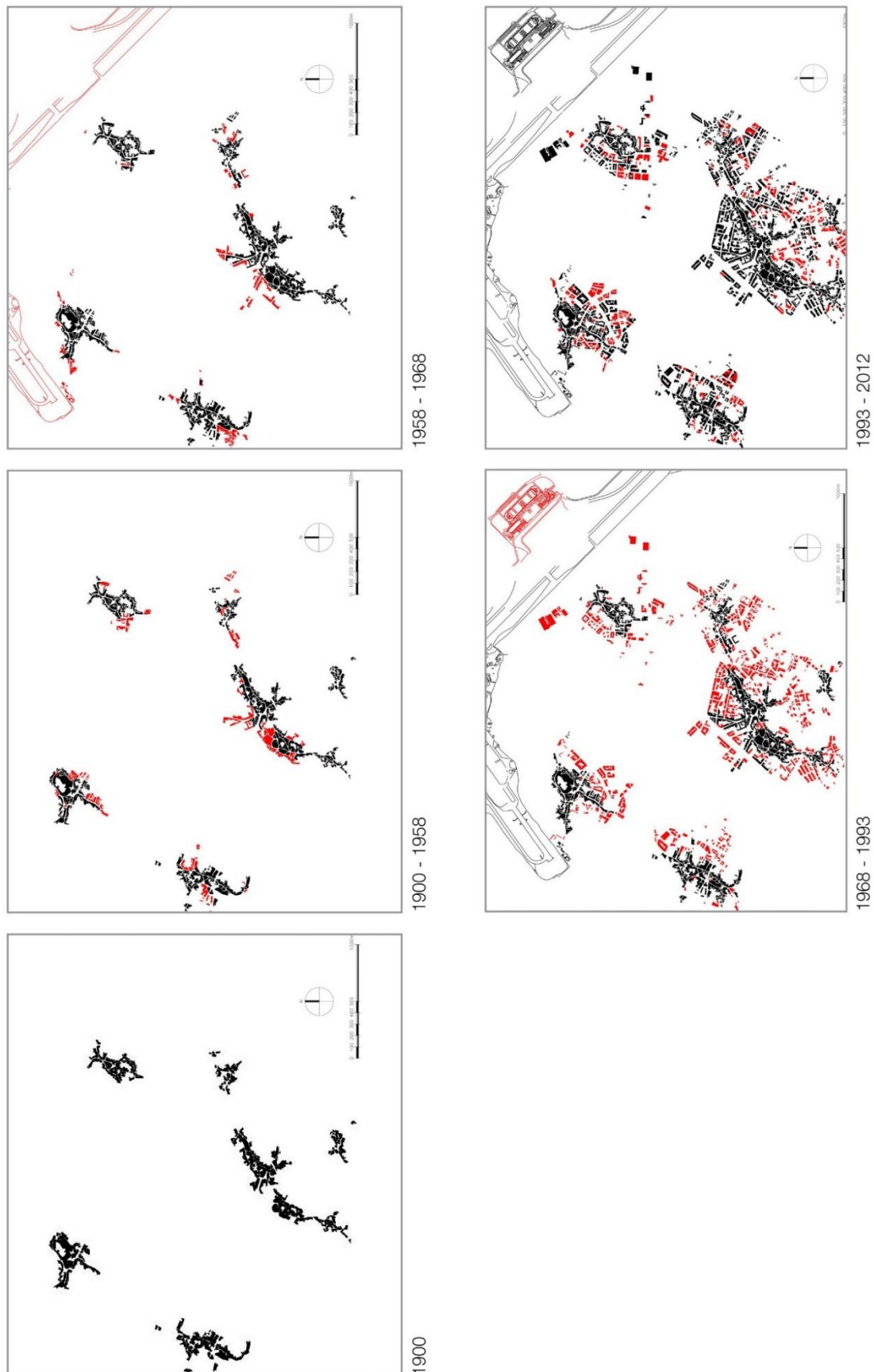
Figure 11: Figure-ground analysis from the start of the 20th century of the villages of Hal Kirkop, Hal Safi, Mqabba, Qrendi and Zurrieq. Red indicates the development which had occurred in the specified period. Source: Author.

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Figure 12: Figure-ground analysis from the start of the 20th century of the villages of Ħal Kirkop, Ħal Safi, Mqabba, Qrendi and Zurrieq. Source: Author.

Figure 13: Figure-ground analysis from the start of the mid-20th century of Qawra, a popular tourist area in the north of Malta. Red indicates the development which had occurred in the specified period. Source: Author.

During the nineteenth and twentieth century, especially in the post-war period, urban growth was also influenced by the development of the transport network. The construction of new roads to accommodate the increasingly popular car started to drastically alter the character and movement routes within the villages. Peter Richardson (1969) in *Rape of a Village*, published back in 1969 in a special issue of the Architectural Review on Malta, warned against the 'misguided' idea of breaking up the village through the introduction of new roads to accommodate the increasing levels of cars. In most villages, new streets started being constructed leading directly to the centre of each village. This changed the nature of the enclosed squares, which suddenly started being opened up to accommodate new main roads which led directly to the village cores, along which axis more development took place (M. Richardson, 1960, p. 254). The parish squares of villages such as Mosta and Naxxar were transformed from enclosed squares dominated by the church into busy thoroughfares accommodating large volumes of cars. As a result of this, squares started to function more as junctions or bus termini rather than a social space.

Figure 14: Naxxar's parish square in 1958 (circled in red), consisting of a modest square enclosed from all sides, with relatively narrow streets and alleyways leading to it. Adapted from "Malta Ordnance Survey, 1958" by Ordnance Survey.
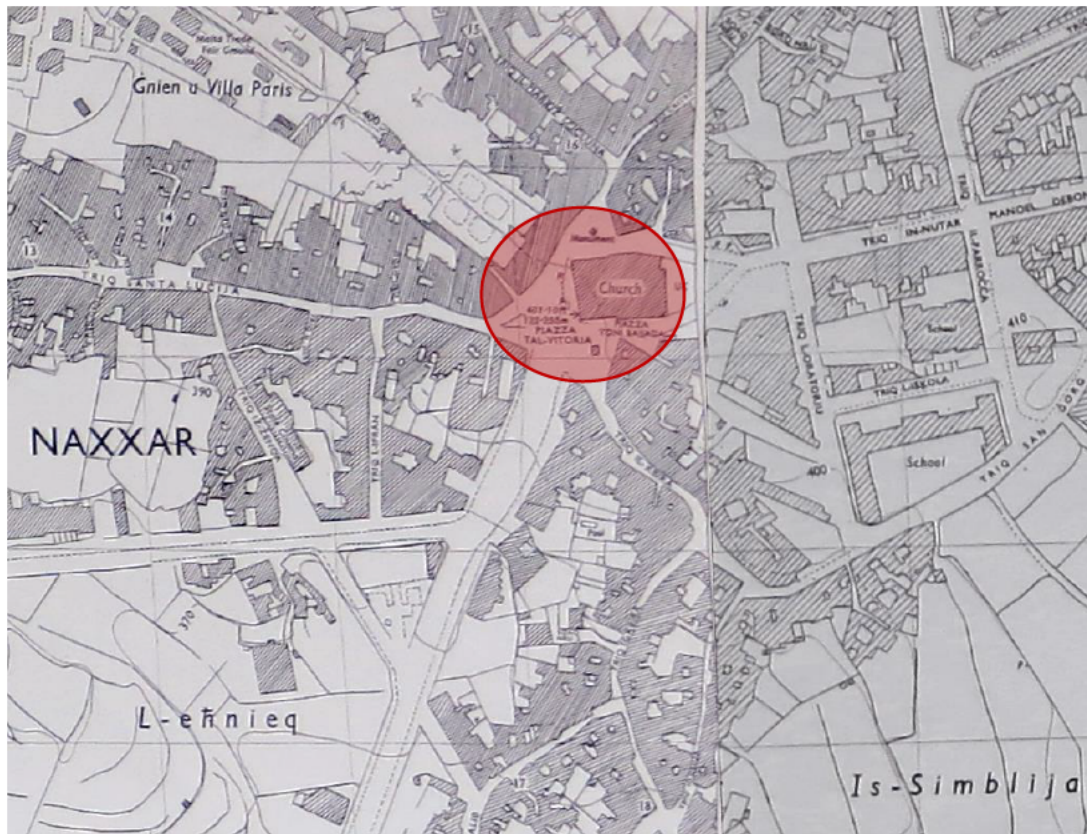
Figure 15: Naxxar's parish square in 1968 (circled in red) following the construction of Labour Avenue and Parish Street, which opened up the square to large volumes of traffic. Adapted from "Malta Ordnance Survey, 1968" by Ordnance Survey.

The character and function of streets and squares, however, have changed not only with the advent of the car, but also with other globalised cultural shifts. A major cultural shift began in the 20th century due to technological advances and the move towards market liberalism. This cultural shift led to a decline in the vital economic and social life that used to take place in the square and centre of the village core (Banerjee, 2001, p. 9; Kostof, 1992, p. 181; Sennett, 2002, p. 28).

Photos of Mosta's village square reveal the changing functions of the square. Whilst at the start of the 20th century, the main features of the village square consisted of seating, trees and fountains ancillary to the social function of the space, in the 21st century the square open space is mainly taken up by the traffic junction, with pedestrians restricted to the edges of the square (see Figure 16, Figure 17 and Figure 18).

Figure 16: Mosta's village square. (Left) Photo was taken by Richard Ellis at the start of the 20th century. Reprinted from "Richard Ellis: Malta – Portrait of an Era – 1860-1940" by R. Ellis, 2014. (Right) Photo of the square today, in which the fountain and trees have made way for carriageways and roundabouts. Source: Author.

Figure 17: An aerial photo of the area around the Parish Church of Mosta taken in the 1920s. Reprinted from "The Mosta Dome in 1920s" by Bay Retro, 2013.

Figure 18: Satellite three-dimensional image from a similar angle in 2018. From "Google Earth" by Google, n.d.

4.2.3   Car culture in Malta

It is widely acknowledged that the quality of the public realm of the urban areas in the Maltese Islands needs to be improved. The need for urban areas to become more attractive places for people to live, work, play and interact has been identified in three key national strategy documents: the *National Environment Policy* (Ministry for Tourism the Environment and Culture, 2012); the *Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development* (Government of Malta, 2015); and the *National Transport Strategy 2050* (Transport Malta, 2016a), which will be discussed in more detail in sections 4.3.2.

One of the biggest issues in the Maltese Islands is the high vehicular usage and the associated negative impacts on the urban areas. Between 1970 and 1990, the number of vehicles on the Maltese roads have doubled in number, as can be seen in Figure 19. There are various reasons for this growth, however, it is indicative of a general failure of policy and fiscal control to restrict growth in vehicle ownership. With private vehicle registrations of 257,000 out of a total of 335,000 vehicle registrations, Malta has one of the highest licensed private vehicles per 1000 population of the 28 EU member states (Transport Malta, 2016a, pp. 20, 50, 59).
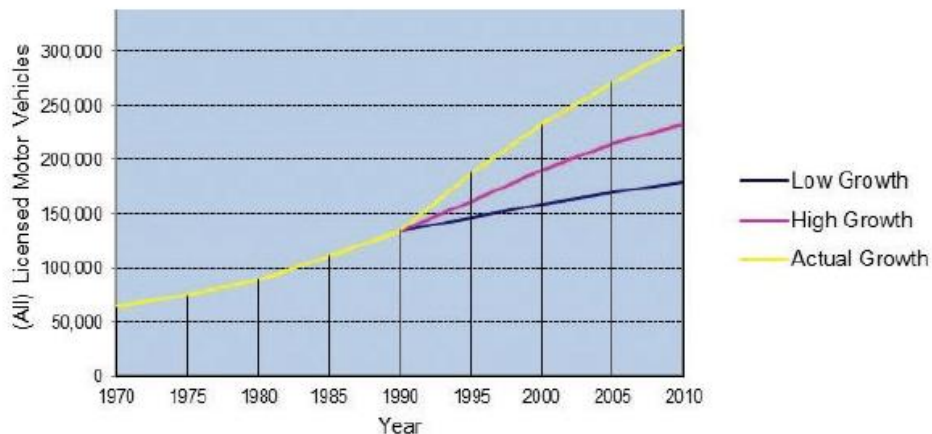
Figure 19: Vehicle Ownership Growth Rates estimated in Structure Plan in 1990. Reprint from "National Transport Strategy 2050" by Transport Malta, 2016a, p. 60.

Due to the car culture and the transport policy adopted by successive governments, the car has taken over large parts of the urban areas. The Kamra Tal-Periti (2007) in a report discussing the urban challenges in Malta stated the following:

> *The car became a defining tenet of urban space as ownership increased dramatically, a result of greater affluence, longer travel distances and the absence of adequate, reliable public transport. Historic village cores were taken apart in the post war decades to free up access through and to their centres. The design of new streets and urban areas paid little attention to alternative modes of transport which were never considered, or to the convenience of pedestrians. Our by-passes disrupted the once smooth transition between village and countryside. The private car and its associated effects came to dominate the topography of the Maltese townscape.* (p. 18)

4.2.4   Governance and politics

When considering the urban design process, it is important to analyse this within the governance and political context, which is responsible for defining the goals and objectives. These need to be taken into consideration since cultures and institutional structures provide a better context for certain types of approaches, such as consensus-seeking approaches (Healey, 1998).

Small island states such as Malta tend to have unique governance and policy networks. The number of stakeholders is not high and the integration of stakeholders, including government entities, occurs at the national level. This however does not necessarily mean policy integration between the various sectors and stakeholders. In small island states, the different entities tend to have clear remits which rarely overlap (Attard, 2006, pp. 172–173). The *Espon Project - Governance of territorial and urban*

policies (Farinós Dasí et al., 2006), which discusses different aspects of governance in the EU member states, drew the following conclusions on the Maltese governance system:

- It is a highly centralised system in which everything is controlled by people in power, namely politicians (p. 84).
- There is high fragmentation, lack of trust and lack of co-operation between bodies, with a culture of mistrust and a fragmented approach to dealing with challenges and issues (p. 155).
- People and stakeholders who are highly competitive and prioritise the safeguarding of their personal and family interests (p. 155).
- Malta has a system with mainly horizontal coordination, and weak to no vertical coordination due to the highly centralised system adopted. This was identified as having a potentially negative impact on the adoption of comprehensive and integrated strategies (p. 69).
- Lack of coordination among public policies was identified as one of the key spatial problems (p. 307).

Related to this, in Malta every discussion and debate tends to be politicised due to the two-party political system, in which every vote counts. This political system, coupled with the smallness of the country, "*limits the extent to which potentially unpopular policies (e.g. restricting car use) can be applied, resulting in a relatively low level of policy intervention*" (Warren & Enoch, 2010, p. 199). This statement is corroborated by a recent study by Veenendaal (2019) who found that: "*the small dimensions of the Maltese society entail that direct contact is a powerful norm in Maltese politics, and there is a strong expectation among citizens that politicians will engage and interact with them*" (p. 7).

Therefore, the political context needs to be taken into consideration when considering the introduction of concepts such as shared space since these are likely to require political direction and approval. EU's *Shared Space project* (2005) found that politicians play an important role in influencing transport and traffic objectives, including developing visions and making key decisions, which might include choosing between traffic space or pedestrian scale. In this regard, political decisions seem to have favoured the car rather than the pedestrians in the last 50 years (p. 29).

A recent study in Vienna also found that the politicising of the urban design process can have an adverse impact, as urban design ends up as a political debate at a national level instead of 'cool-headed' problem solving (Bartenberger & Sześciło, 2016). The same adverse impact can be identified in Malta, where the two main political parties frequently politicise issues and proceed to debate these in a partisan way rather than objectively ("PN MP Says Government Being Advised to Cap Number of

Cars on Roads," 2019; Vassallo, 2019). The politicisation of the sector also results in four to five-year cycles, coinciding with the term of office, which prioritises short-term achievements rather than targeting a holistic and long-term approach (Transport Malta, 2016a, p. 46).

4.2.5   Stakeholders in Malta

To understand the influences on the urban design process it is important to identify and discuss the main stakeholders in the urban design process. A wide range of stakeholders are involved in the development of the built environment, each with their own roles and interests. Over the years, it has become apparent that the development of a successful urban environment usually depends on identifying the needs and requirements of the stakeholders. These stakeholders are likely to have different motivations and perceptions about the built environment, which may also change over time. While some stakeholders may be more interested in short-term outcomes, others may prioritise long-term outcomes. Therefore, one of the major challenges in the urban design process is to manage the complex relationships between numerous and diverse stakeholders (Carmona et al., 2002; Healey, 1998).

As described in *Chapter 3* (sub-section *3.4.2.1*), a stakeholder analysis was carried out to identify key stakeholders in Malta, with their respective interests, objectives and responsibilities. An overview of the institutional structure with the main stakeholders is presented in Figure 20, with their main interests and roles summarised in Table 12. The objectives and responsibilities of the government, public authorities and local councils were identified through a review of legislation, official documents, and position papers. For the other stakeholders, including political parties, NGOs, businesses and residents, there are few documents that can help identify their position on urban design and streets and squares. Insights are gained by reviewing the limited literature and newspaper articles that report on events, speeches and positions communicated by the various stakeholders.

Legislative & Decision Making

Government

Entities

Transport Malta

Planning Authority

Ministry for Transport, Infrastructure and Capital Projects

Parliamentary Secretary for Planning and the Property Market

Political Parties

Labour Party (PL)
Nationalist Party (PN)
Green Party (AD)
Others

Local Management

Local Councils

68 Local Councils

Local Community & Private Sector

NGOs

Environment NGOs

Private Sector

- Hotels - Malta Hotels & Restaurants Association (MHRA)
- SMEs
- Retail (GRTU)
- Business Communities/Associations
- Developers

Can influence upper hierarchy

Church

Church Environment Commission

Professionals

Kamra tal-Periti (Chamber of Architects)

Malta Chamber of Planners

Able to influence stakeholders at different levels of hierarchy

Citizens

Residents

Visitors

Community Groups

Residents' Associations

Limited influence on decision making

Figure 20: Diagram showing the structure of the Maltese institutional structure and stakeholder groups in Malta in 2018. Source: Author.

Table 12: Summary of the interests/objectives and responsibilities of the key stakeholders in relation to streets and squares.

Stakeholder	Interests/Objectives in relation to urban design	Role in urban planning and urban design
Government and Ministries	The interests and objectives of the government are set out in the *National Environment Plan* (Ministry for Tourism the Environment and Culture, 2012). One of the policies under Objective 4 is to "*Improve the liveability of urban areas in terms of pleasantness and amenity*". The priorities identified include: • addressing the overbearing presence of motor vehicles in urban spaces, • improving the provision of public open space, • promoting quality in design, and • addressing shabbiness and dilapidation (p. 62).	• Setting the overarching vision for the Maltese Islands. • Set key strategic objectives and identify priorities for the authorities. • Fund the authorities, implementing agencies and Local Councils. • Fund and Implement projects through the Public Works Department within the Ministry for Transport and Infrastructure or other implementing agencies such as Infrastructure Malta. • Ensure that national planning policies and plans are regularly updated to tackle any issues or shortcomings (Government of Malta, 2016b).
Planning Authority	The interests and objectives of the Planning Authority are set out in the various strategies, policies and guidance. The *Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development* (Government of Malta, 2015) sets out the long-term aims and objectives of the authority. Amongst other things, the Planning Authority needs to ensure that any proposed policies and guidance seek: • "*To improve the townscape and environment in historic cores and their setting with a presumption against demolition of property worthy of conservation*" (p. 24). • "*To identify, protect and enhance the character and amenity of distinct urban areas*" (p. 24).	The responsibilities of the authority which are defined in the *Development Planning Act of 2016 - Act VII of 2016* (Government of Malta, 2016b) include to: • Develop strategies as instructed by the government. • Update Local Plans and Planning Parameters. • Update policies and guidance documents that are used to control development. • Approve or refuse proposed development applications. • Ensure that approved developments contribute to the public realm.

	• "To *reduce traffic in traffic - sensitive urban areas by promoting pedestrianisation, shared space streets, traffic calming and green modes of travel*" (p. 25).	
Transport Authority (Transport Malta)	The goals and objectives are outlined in the Transport Strategy 2050 (Transport Malta, 2016a) and *Transport Master Plan 2025* (2016b). These include the need to address the acute impact that transport has on the urban environment. Therefore, one of the identified goals is to minimise the negative impact of traffic to enhance the liveability of urban areas.	*Act XV of 2009* (Government of Malta, 2009) lists several functions and powers assigned to Transport Malta. These include: • to advise the Minister on the development of transport policies applicable both at a national as well as at a local level • to ensure that transport policies adopted by the Minister are implemented and that local transport schemes are in line with national transport policies and that no local transport scheme is introduced without the approval of the Authority • to develop the necessary strategy to achieve the policies, strategies and objectives set by Government or by the Authority (pp. 7–9). • to assess development applications which will significantly impact the traffic system or attract many vehicles to the area.
Lands Authority	Make the best use of the government-owned land, which includes streets and squares.	The functions of the authority are listed in *ACT XLIII of 2016* (Government of Malta, 2016c) and includes: • Administer land owned by the Government of Malta. • Sub-lease and issue concessions for the use of publicly own land.
Infrastructure Malta	Improve the transport network, including reducing congestion and increasing safety.	The functions of the agency are listed in *Act XXVIII of 2018* (Government of Malta, 2018). These include:

	One of the main objectives of Infrastructure Malta is to resurface all Maltese roads in a seven year period: 2017 – 2024 (Infrastructure Malta, 2019).	• implementation of national plans for road infrastructure construction, strategies, and masterplans. • to plan, design, construct, reconstruct, repair any road infrastructure (p. 5).
Political Parties	The overarching objective is to win elections at both the national and local levels. Public space and street upgrade proposals are often part of the election manifesto used to encourage people to vote for their party.	• Strategy making, often through the policies and pledges set out in the election manifestos, which if elected, will be used to assess success in delivering on their promises. • They drive the debate on strategies and policies. • Educate and explain to citizens why their ideas need to be implemented.
Local Councils	Similar to political parties, local politicians attempt to persuade the local community to vote them as representatives, often based on an election manifesto which includes urban design improvement projects. The interests and objectives of Local Councils are often driven by the elected local councillors, in particular the Mayor.	The majority of the functions of Local Councils, listed in "Local Councils Act (Chapter 363 of the Laws of Malta)", are related to the urban environment, which include: • upkeep and maintenance of, or improvements in, any street or footpath, • establishment, upkeep and maintenance of children's playgrounds, public gardens and sport, cultural or other leisure centres • to establish and maintain pedestrian and parking areas • to propose to and be consulted by any competent authority on any changes in traffic schemes directly affecting the locality • issue guidelines for restoration, design or alternations of any building façades • protect the natural and urban environment of the locality

		• "to promote an entrepreneurial policy whereby the interests of shop owners and the needs of the residents and the consumer in the community are catered for." (Government of Malta, 1993, pp. 17–19)
Professionals[1]	• Contribute towards the creation of high-quality urban environments. • Professionals in different sectors or disciplines could have specific interests prioritising their fields.	Warranted architects are bound to a code of ethics, which include the need to achieve the highest possible standards as well as safeguarding the interests of the local community. Therefore, architects are required to: • Ensure the implementation of an inclusive urban design process – according to best practices. • Adopt a holistic approach that contributes to the urban quality, which reaches the most reasonable and favourable compromises for society.
NGOs and community groups	NGOs in Malta were classified into four categories by Dr Michael Briguglio (2015, p. 10): • Conservationists, who advocate for the protection of the environment and wildlife • Sustainable Developments, who advocate against excessive development and for projects that do not endanger future generations. • Local, who advocate for the protection of specific regions or oppose specific projects which affects them directly. • Radical, who focus on their fundamental beliefs – mostly from the left-wing. Each of these groups in their own way has an interest in urban planning and urban design.	NGOs play an active role in the urban design process, including: • Scrutinise planning applications, particularly controversial ones, making the authorities accountable. • Highlight flaws in the process and decisions. • Appeal against questionable or controversial decisions. • Ensure their views are well represented in any consultation process.

Private Sector (Businesses & Developers)	The main interest for the private sector is to have high quality urban environments which adds to their marketability and profitability. These tend to be positively affected by high quality urban spaces in the immediate vicinity of the business or property. To enjoy these benefits, they attempt to influence decision makers, something which they have been quite successful in doing in Malta, including reversing traffic diversions.	Their role in urban design is that of contributing to the quality and liveliness of the public realm, especially if they are gaining from the high-quality public spaces in nearby areas. They can also play an important role in activating the urban areas by organising events and activities, either individually or collectively with other businesses in the area.
Citizens & Residents	Residents have a have a direct interest in streets and squares, especially when considering that in Malta 76% of the occupied dwellings being owned by the occupants, which is quite high compared to other EU countries (National Statistics Office - Malta, 2014, pp. 211–212). Therefore, residents seek to influence the urban design process to: • Safeguard their property value. • Safeguard their interests such as quietness, availability of parking, maintenance of streets, amongst other things. • Enjoy public spaces • Higher quality of life Sometimes their objectives are driven by NIMBYism (Conrad et al., 2011, p. 775).	• Vote for the local councillors who will work best for the interests of their locality. • Lobby politicians – both local and national – in attempt to push their agenda and interests. • Form community groups and/or join NGOs to advocate for a better urban environment. • Participate and contribute to the urban design process.

Notes:

1 - In Malta, the only recognised professionals in this sector are architects, with planners still not recognised professionals in Malta. This is typical in southern European countries, such as Spain and Italy, where the planning profession is closely linked and controlled by the profession of architecture (Stead & Nadin, 2009, p. 291).

During the stakeholder analysis, it became clear that the government in Malta is a key stakeholder in the field of planning and urban design as it plays a very active role when compared to other countries. Together with its accredited bodies and professional bodies, the government sets the rules through statutory and non-statutory control and guidance (Nase, 2013, p. 4). In a state-centred model of public space management model, as applied in Malta, investment in public space needs to capture an appropriate slice of the public budget. Therefore, government policy on public space plays a key role in the resources allocated to the upgrading and maintenance of public space. If policy shifts to value public space more than other public assets, the budget is likely to increase. However, these policy changes may be triggered by pressure from lobby groups, NGOs and others (Carmona et al., 2008, p. 74).

In Malta, successive governments tend to adopt different structures. The current cabinet, which was appointed in January 2020, is the largest and the youngest in recent years, with 26 MPs, comprising of 17 ministers and eight parliamentary secretaries. As for the design of streets and squares, there are four main ministries that deal with it on a day-to-day basis, with each ministry having one or more agencies responsible for the sectors. These ministries and agencies are identified in Table 13, together with a brief description of their responsibilities.

Table 13: The government ministries and entities that have an interest in the upgrading of streets and squares.

Ministry	Entity	Responsibilities
Ministry for the Environment, Climate Change and Planning	Planning Authority (PA)	The Planning Authority is responsible for the development and approval of any strategies and policies related to spatial planning and urban design. The Planning Authority is also responsible for the control of development and is required to assess these with respect to the approved strategies and policies.
	Environment and Resources Authority (ERA)	ERA is the national regulator on the environment, with the aim of safeguarding the environment for a sustainable quality of life (Government of Malta, 2016a).
	Ambjent Malta	Ambjent Malta is an agency tasked with the implementation of holistic environmental projects which seek to truly improve the quality of life and wellbeing of the Maltese citizens.
Ministry for Transport, Infrastructure and Capital Projects	Transport Malta	Transport Malta is the transport authority that has several roles including the development of transport strategies and policies and the regulation of the transport sector.

	Lands Authority	The Lands Authority ensures the best use of Government land and property, whilst enhancing transparency and accountability.
	Infrastructure Malta	Infrastructure Malta is the agency entrusted with the development, maintenance and upgrading of roads and other public infrastructure in the Maltese Islands.
	Grand Harbour Regeneration Corporation plc (GHRC)	GHRC's role is to implement the Government's vision for the Valletta Harbours, the restoration and regeneration of Valletta grand harbour and the surrounding areas.
	Projects Malta Ltd	Projects Malta Ltd was set-up and is fully owned by the Government of Malta to coordinate and facilitate Public-Private Partnerships between Ministries and the private sector.
	Projects Plus Ltd	Projects Plus Malta Ltd was set-up to co-ordinate and provide project management services for projects and investments for the public and private sector. This includes overseeing the implementation of public projects which seek to upgrade public spaces and promenades.
Ministry for Tourism and Customer Protection	Malta Tourism Authority (MTA)	The Malta Tourism Authority was set up to regulate and improve the Maltese touristic product. MTA also embarks on several projects which seek to improve the tourist's experience, through funds obtained from the Ministry or EU funds. These include the upgrade of promenades, restoration of heritage sites and new urban landscaped areas (Malta Tourism Authority, 2015).
	Foundation for Tourism Zone Development	Foundation for Tourism Zone Development is an agency tasked with the administration, maintenance and enforcement in touristic zones.
Ministry for the National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government	Superintendence of Cultural Heritage	The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage's mission is to fulfil the duties of the State in ensuring the protection and accessibility of Malta's cultural heritage.

Note. Source: Author.

Other ministries and agencies are likely to have an interest in the quality of streets and squares, such as the Ministry for Health. However, these are not being included as they tend to have a passive role in Malta. This is not always the case in other countries, where in some cases they take an active role in urban design, including conducting research and developing guidelines to promote high quality and walkable streets due to the associated health benefits (Tolley, 2011).

The next section presents the Maltese spatial and transport planning system, which sets out the objectives to which the urban planning and design process must be directed, as well as the strategies, policies and guidelines to be taken into account. Institutional structures and policies may also influence the way in which different stakeholders are expected to interact and contribute to the process, particularly in relation to the government and authorities, which must follow certain procedures and apply specific participatory processes, as required by law.

4.3 The Maltese spatial and transport planning system

4.3.1 Introduction

The Maltese planning system is quite young, as the Planning Authority was established only in 1992 through the *Development Planning Act of 1992*, based on the British planning system (Government of Malta, 1992). Prior to this, planning decisions were made by a board appointed by the Ministry of Works based on rudimentary and outdated planning schemes with no formal policy guidance (Ebejer, 2002). These rudimentary schemes were not fully replaced until 2006 when the Local Plans for the whole of Malta were issued by the Planning Authority.

The Maltese system can be defined as a 'plan-led discretionary system' (Zammit, 2013, p. 164). *Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 (PPG1)* (Department of the Environment, 1997) identified five main objectives for the adoption of a plan-led system:

- *Ensuring rational and consistent decisions.*
- *Achieving greater certainty.*
- *Securing public involvement in shaping local planning policies.*
- *Facilitating quicker planning decisions, and*
- *Reducing the number of misconceived planning applications and appeals.* (para. 41)

However, the system remains discretionary as it must take into account a range of government strategies, planning policies and guidance documents (Carmona & Sieh, 2004). Over the years, however, the Maltese planning system has gradually changed to a more 'rigid' planning system (while retaining some flexibility) as policy documents left less and less room for interpretation. This change was an attempt to close loopholes in policies that developers sought to exploit in order to maximise the development of a site (Ebejer, 2009).

4.3.2   Hierarchy of strategies, policies and plans

The direction set out in the strategy documents by the current and previous governments has acknowledged the challenges Malta faces in improving the quality of its public space. These challenges are acknowledged in the *National Environment Policy (NEP)* (Ministry for Tourism the Environment and Culture, 2012), which was published in 2012 to provide direction in the environmental sector and ensure integration of all policies across different sectors, in the *Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development (SPED)* (Government of Malta, 2015), which was published in 2015 and provides a strategic spatial policy framework for both the environment and development up to 2020, and in the *National Transport Strategy 2050* (Transport Malta, 2016a) and *Transport Masterplan 2025* (Transport Malta, 2016b)*,* which set out a strategic approach to transport that integrates planning across different transport sectors. Seven Local Plans, development briefs and policy documents regulate permitted developments in different areas of Malta. The hierarchy of documents is shown in Figure 21 and Figure 22.

National Environment Policy (2012)

Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development (2015)

Transport Strategy 2050 (2016)

7 Local Plans (1995 - 2006)

Central Malta (2006)
Gozo & Comino (2006)
North Harbour (2006)
North West (2006)
South Malta (2006)
Grand Harbour (2002)
Marsaxlokk Bay (1995)

Transport Masterplan 2025 (2016)
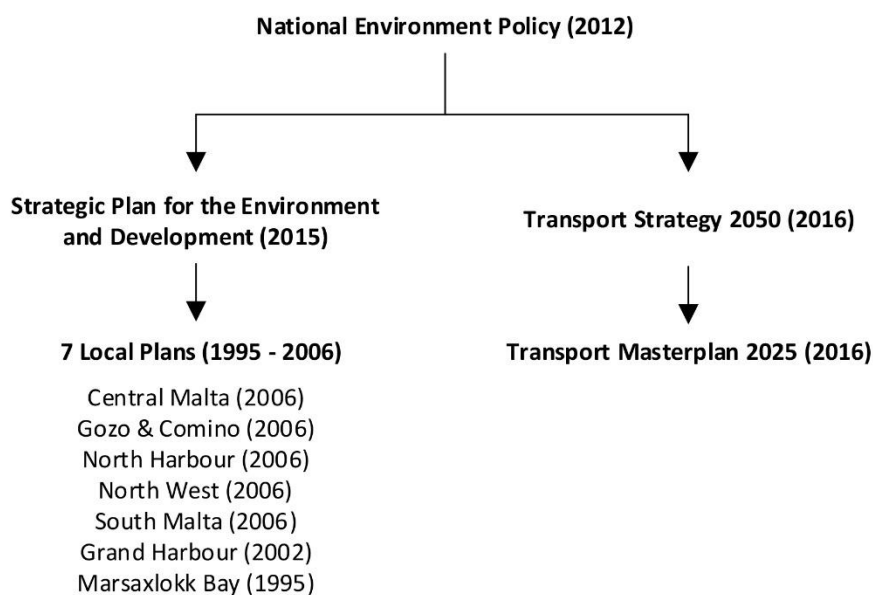
Figure 21: Hierarchy of national strategies and plans directly related to spatial and transport planning. Source: Author.

Strategic

Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development (2015)

Regional & Local

7 Local Plans (1995 - 2006)

Central Malta (2006)
Gozo & Comino (2006)
North Harbour (2006)
North West (2006)
South Malta (2006)
Grand Harbour (2002)
Marsaxlokk Bay (1995)

Area

Action Plans

3 Approved Action Plans which detail policies for an area.

Development

Development Briefs

18 Approved Development Briefs outlining various planning parameters for specific developments.

Policy

Policies & Guidance

Development Control Policy & Design Guidance 2015

Figure 22: Hierarchy of spatial planning policies in Malta. Source: Author.

4.3.3   Policy analysis on public participation, street and square improvement and shared space

A policy analysis of local strategy and masterplan documents in the spatial and transportation planning sectors, as well as other plans and policy documents, was undertaken with the aim of identifying the approach and considerations adopted in the main strategy and policy documents in the Maltese context. This analysis focused on the following three main themes which are considered central to this research:

1. Public participation

2. Street and square improvements

3. Introduction of shared space

The following fourteen documents were analysed:

- National Environment Policy (NEP) (Ministry for Tourism the Environment and Culture, 2012)

- Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development (SPED) (Government of Malta, 2015)

- Transport Strategy 2050 (Transport Malta, 2016a)

- Transport Masterplan 2025 (Transport Malta, 2016b)

- Local Plans

  - Central Malta Local Plan (Malta Environment and Planning Authority, 2006a)

  - Gozo & Comino Local Plan (Malta Environment and Planning Authority, 2006b)

  - North Harbour Local Plan (Malta Environment and Planning Authority, 2006c)

  - North West Local Plan (Malta Environment and Planning Authority, 2006d)

  - South Malta Local Plan (Malta Environment and Planning Authority, 2006e)

  - Grand Harbour Local Plan (Malta Environment and Planning Authority, 2002)

  - Marsaxlokk Bay Local Plan (Malta Environment and Planning Authority, 1995)

- Development Control Design Policy, Guidance and Standards 2015 (DC2015) (Malta Environment and Planning Authority, 2015).

- Strategy for Valletta (Office of the Principal Permanent Secretary (OPM) & Planning Authority, 2016)

- Strategy for Kottonera (Planning Authority et al., 2019)

The textual analysis of these documents was carried out using two different approaches. As described, The first approach, described in *Chapter 3*, *3.4.1.1*, was used to analyse the Local Plans. Due to their length, NVivo was used to identify sections of the policies that referred to keywords associated with the three identified themes. These sections and their wider context were then analysed by the researcher to identify the issues highlighted along with the proposed measures and recommendations. The other documents were analysed by reading them in their entirety and highlighting the relevant sections for each of the three themes. The findings in relation to the three themes are discussed in the following sub-sections.

4.3.3.1 Public participation

The textual analysis of the fourteen documents revealed very little reference to public participation and consultation. The *NEP* was the exception as it contains a clear reference to the need for stakeholder involvement and empowerment and points out that Malta is one of the signatories of the *Aarhus Convention,* which requires states to empower all citizens and provide them with access to information. The *NEP* recognizes the importance of stakeholders and the benefits that their participation and input can have on the process. The policy notes the need for a comprehensive approach to public participation in which the public is not only consulted, but also educated and encouraged to participate.

The *SPED, Transport Strategy* and *Transport Masterplan* do not contain any significant references to the need for public participation and consultation during policy formulation, design and implementation. Similarly, the Local Plans do not contain any meaningful consideration of participation, other than the occasional note that certain measures need to be introduced in collaboration or consultation with affected stakeholders. The *Grand Harbour Local Plan* departs from this, indicating that although the Local Plan has been adopted, significant work is still required, including stakeholder engagement and involvement, if the measures identified are to be implemented.

DC15 does not make any reference to participation, while the *Strategy for Valletta* only discusses participation in the context of managing and organising events and activities. Although the *Strategy for Kottonera* has a similar scope to the *Strategy for Valletta*, it takes a different approach. The *Strategy for Kottonera* describes itself as a people-centred strategy that was developed through an extensive stakeholder engagement process, which included sending a postcard to each residential unit asking for feedback. Throughout the document the importance of working with the local community and stakeholders is emphasised.

4.3.3.2 Street and square improvement

A detailed analysis of Maltese national strategies, policies and local plans was also carried out to identify the approach proposed to improve the quality of streets and squares. The analysis aimed to identify any measures that could be taken to improve the quality of these spaces, particularly in relation to walkability and liveability. The analysis considered all references to these concepts, including the need to find a better balance between vehicles and pedestrians, traffic calming solutions, and greening of spaces.

The findings reveal that all the documents except for *DC15* identify the overbearing presence of cars in the streets and squares as one of the main issues in Malta. They identify how this is negatively affecting the urban areas and the quality of life of residents, whilst acknowledging that the social functions of the street need to start being given prominence once again.

At a strategic level, the *NEP*, *SPED* and *Transport Strategy* all identify the need to reduce traffic from the urban centres, to reclaim space for pedestrians. The *Transport Masterplan* acknowledges that not enough has been done in recent years to address this shortcoming, whilst highlighting the benefits achieved by a few projects which were implemented in recent years.

The *Local Plans* identify several policies and measures related to the quality of streets and squares. Some of these outline projects for specific squares and streets which seek to improve the quality of these spaces, some of which include pedestrianisation. When discussing squares, the local plans recognise that the majority of squares function as parking spaces rather than the social spaces they were originally designed for. Despite the latest Local Plans being approved in 2006 and having exceeded their identified timeframe, very few of the identified measures have been implemented over 14 years later. The *Strategy for Valletta* and *Strategy for Kottonera* adopt a very similar approach to those identified by the Local Plans, however, these two strategies also stress the importance of management of these spaces.

It can be concluded that the strategies and policies adopted over the last two decades have recognised the clear need to address the shortcomings of Malta's current streets and squares, particularly the dominance of the car and its impact on the environment and the quality of life of residents. Despite this, and as clearly identified by the *Transport Masterplan*, very few projects have been implemented, and the aims and measures identified concerning these have remained unfulfilled.

4.3.3.3   Shared space

A similar policy analysis has also been undertaken to analyse whether strategies and policies identify shared space as a potential approach to improving the quality of streets and squares. There is no direct reference to shared space in the *NEP, Local Plans*, *Strategy for Valletta* and *Strategy for Kottonera*, while *DC15* simply defines a level surface shared space in relation to the measurement of building heights.

In the *SPED*, shared space is mentioned as one of the ways to reduce traffic in traffic-sensitive areas in order to protect and enhance the character and amenity of distinct urban areas such as Urban Conservation Areas (Government of Malta, 2015, pp. 24–25). In turn, *Transport Strategy 2050* refers

to and supports this objective in the SPED (Transport Malta, 2016a, p. 175). The *Transport Master Plan 2025* proposes the use of shared space in urban streets to reduce vehicular speeds and achieve a better balance between different modes of transport. This should have a positive impact on the quality of life and social aspects of public space. The masterplan also identifies the need to develop design guidelines for shared space that are specific to the Maltese context. The masterplan envisages that these guidelines are published in the period between 2021 and 2025 (Transport Malta, 2016b, pp. 127–128).

From this analysis, it emerged that the concept of shared space was originally mentioned by the Planning Authority (1995) in *Traffic Calming Guidelines* in 1995 as a way to reduce vehicular speed. However, it was not mentioned again in subsequent plans and strategies until the adoption of the *SPED* in 2015, where shared space was identified as a potential solution to improve the quality of streets and squares where pedestrianisation is not possible. Given the importance placed on shared space in both *SPED* and *Transport Masterplan*, it is expected that the concept of shared space is considered when analysing different options for the redesign and upgrade of streets and squares. However, the *SPED* is near its end-of-life and no major discussion on shared space has yet taken place. Although the objectives in the SPED have helped to inform the approach in the Transport Strategy and Masterplan, no major projects have been implemented using shared space principles.

4.3.3.4   Concluding Remarks

The policy analysis found that the strategies set out a clear vision for improving the quality of streets and squares, including consideration of shared space. However, the various policies introduced over the years fail to consider one of most important urban scales, the streets, as there are no policies, technical or design guidelines for the design of streets and squares, including for conventional streets (Zammit, 2014, p. 451). The street design guidance issued by Transport Malta approach this from a road engineer's perspective and focus on aspects such as road geometry, design speeds and sight distances. Malta's only street design guidance is an adapted version of the *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges,* which applies to roads with a design speed of 50 km/h. Whilst several policies have been introduced through

In Malta, several of the issues identified are similar to the main issues associated with the street design guidance South Australia, identified in *Streets for People - Compendium for South Australian Practice* (Government of South Australia, 2012). These include:

1. Dispersed guidance
2. A gap in guidance for low traffic and local streets

3. Complexity and uncertainty associated with standards, guidance and approvals processes

4. Limited local exemplar street designs (pp. SA 09–10).

Apart from the lack of street design guidance, there is also a lack of strategies and guidelines for public space and strategies for public life, in which streets and squares are usually given important consideration. This is quite different from several cities and municipalities around the world that have hired urban research and consulting firms, such as Gehl Architects (2007; 2013, 2014) to help them analyse public space and public life in order to develop strategies to improve the quality of their public space infrastructure.

4.3.4 Public participation in the urban design process in Malta

It was also considered important to analyse the type of participation used in practise in Malta. However, only one study from 2011 could be found which looked at participation in the urban design process in Malta and concluded that "*there is evidence that the participation mechanisms are limited in extent and effectiveness and fail to meet public expectations*" (Conrad et al., 2011, p. 764). The study also identified low levels of participation and that processes are dominated by lobby groups seeking to gain an advantage, resulting in the marginalisation of the public (p.764). The study also found that the public felt that the public participation process was sub-par, while planners and policymakers felt that it was at an average level. While the majority felt that the urban design process was conducted with good intentions, several concerns were raised. These include:

- The adoption of low levels of participation, with the researchers noting that the methods used were consultative rather than participatory (pp. 771–772).

- Lack of professional ethics and expertise in public participation, including lack of technical competence among professionals in Malta to effectively communicate with and engage the public (p. 772).

- Concerns about the methods and techniques used, including some participation processes that were carried out late in the process (pp. 773–774).

- Lack of publicly available information, with stakeholders provided with incomplete and selective information, often of a technical nature (p. 774).

- A culture that negatively impacts participation mechanisms, with low levels of participation, with participation often driven by self-interest and NIMBYism (pp. 774–775).

To gain a better understanding of the public consultation and participation practises, seven projects that have been initiated and implemented in recent years were analysed to determine the public

consultation practises used and whether they have impacted the projects in any way. The findings are

summarised in Table 14.

Table 14: An overview of six urban projects carried out in recent years, indicating the type of consultation carried out.

Project (project leader) project date	Type of Project	Type of Consultation
Marsaxlokk Regeneration Plan (Ministry of Tourism) 2013 -	A project consisting of several interventions, ranging from road upgrades, parking areas, upgrades to the promenade, creating more green areas.	During the development of the regeneration plan, several consultation meetings were organised by Ministry officials with stakeholders to ensure that their concerns and needs were addressed in the proposed plan. However, the public consultation was held at a fairly late stage in the process, when the projects had already been determined. The Local Council played an important role and worked closely with the urban designers. The project was publicly launched at Marsaxlokk's village square. An information stand with representatives was set up for two consecutive weeks. The public had the opportunity to review the proposals and give their feedback and comments to the representatives. Representatives took written notes of proposals that they felt needed to be passed to the architects and/or other decision-makers. Feedback was also accepted through e-mails. The launch was accompanied by a website where citizens could submit their opinions, from which 66 submissions were received. Some of the submissions were answered by Ministry officials who provided further information when requested and in other cases explained that certain suggestions had been considered but could not be implemented for various reasons, such as planning policy. (E. Mintoff, personal communication, 4 August, 2018)

Mqabba – Regeneration and embellishment of the village square (Ministry of Infrastructure) 2018	A €2.2 million project to embellish the village square, including paving part of the square to introduce shared space principles, seeking to improve the quality of life of the local community.	A press conferencing announcing the project was held during the planning application process (Pace, 2018). The only form of public consultation was the statutory consultation period in the development planning application in which no submissions from the public were submitted.
St. Francis Square, Victoria (Ministry for Gozo) 2018	A project seeking to transform the square by reclaiming space from the car and offers more space for pedestrians.	An online consultation period was open between 12th and 26th January 2018. Due to a lack of publicly available information on the submissions received, a request for information was sent to the Ministry for Gozo, the ministry responsible for this process. A one-line reply stated that "*all feedback received for both St Francis and Xewkija square were positive overall*" (C. Vella Masini, personal communication, 27 August, 2018). A request for more details on the nature of the feedback received remained unanswered.
St. John the Baptist Square in Xewkija (Ministry for Gozo) 2018	A project seeking to transform the square by reclaiming space from the car and offers more space for pedestrians	An online consultation period was open between 5th and 19th January 2018. Due to a lack of publicly available information on the submissions received, a request for information was sent to the Ministry for Gozo, the ministry responsible for this process. A one-line reply stated that "*all feedback received for both St Francis and Xewkija square were positive overall*" (C. Vella Masini, personal communication, 27 August, 2018). A request for more details on the nature of the feedback received remained unanswered.
Castille Square, Valletta (GHRC) 2015	Pedestrianisation of large parts of the square in front of Auberge de Castille, which today houses the Office of the Prime Minister of Malta.	No public participation was held prior to the presentation of the project, prompting the Malta Independent Editorial to remark: "The designs presented by the government on Monday were presented as a *fait accompli*, a done deal". Following the presentation, there were opposing opinions on the aesthetics of the project and street furniture. Some spoke in favour of the design, others against. However, the biggest criticism was the lack of public participation and/or request for design proposals

		(competition). The editorial notes that the tight deadline for completing the project before a high profile Commonwealth meeting might justify an accelerated procedure, but this does not justify the total lack of public consultation ("Castille Square Revamp: More Open Space, Pedestrianisation for Valletta," 2015). However, in the interviews, an architect working at the GHRC (Interview 10) who was directly involved in the process noted that despite the lack of public consultation, several consultation meetings were held with stakeholders during the design stage.
Triton Fountain Square and the Biskuttin area, Valletta (GHRC) 2016-2018	Pedestrianisation of area in front of Main Gate of Valletta and around the Triton Fountain.	Similarly, the Triton Square Project was launched with finalised designs and visuals. The plans were made available for public viewing at the Parliament building in Valletta following the launch. During the launch, the Minister responsible for the project remarked that widespread consultation occurred. However, no details were given regarding the type of consultation and with whom. The Minister also remarked that Renzo Piano, the architect for the Parliament building in the vicinity, also gave his input in this project (Schembri Orland, 2016). During the interviews, an architect working at GHRC (Interview 10), who was directly involved in the process, remarked that over 150 consultation meetings were held at the design stage to resolve a number of issues, especially the shifting of Malta's central bus terminus to an alternative location.
Strategy for Kottonera 2019	Strategy for the regeneration of Kottonera is based on three pillars: • Improving Social Capital • Upgrading the Urban Environment	Several participation opportunities were available during the drafting of the strategy, which was issued for public consultation. These included: • Meetings directly with stakeholders • Postcards sent to every home, which could be returned with feedback. • Public meetings The strategy also identified plans for ongoing consultation and collaboration during the duration of the strategy (Planning Authority et al., 2019).

	• Increasing Business Attractiveness The strategy is defined as a people-centred one, in which residents and citizens are genuinely involved (Planning Authority et al., 2019).	

Note: Table by author. References are cited within the text where necessary.

While the *Marsaxlokk project* and the *Strategy for Kottonera* attempt to conduct effective and representative participation, most participation mechanisms are limited in scope and effectiveness, as noted by Conrad et al. (2011). Moreover, design workshops, design reviews and other similar approaches are not widely used in Malta. Such tools aim to empower stakeholders and provide them with opportunities to engage in the process. Calls for proposals or competitions are rarely conducted in Malta. Some studies have found that competitions are associated with a number of benefits and often lead to higher quality urban spaces (Davison et al., 2018).

However, in most cases, the adopted approach is one where design professionals discuss with selected stakeholders during the design stage, with public consultation only taking place after the finalisation of the design proposal.

4.4   Concluding Remarks

A number of important insights emerge from the analysis of the Maltese context. In relation to the socio-cultural and political context, two arguments have been identified that require further consideration as they influence the adoption of a participatory urban design process to introduce shared space. The first factor is the car culture, which has strongly influenced the development of streets and squares in Malta and also influences the response of stakeholders to proposals, as they tend to resist changes that involve restricting car traffic or reducing parking spaces. The second factor is the highly politicised context in which the urban design process has to take place, with a two-party political system and the narrow gaps between the two parties giving stakeholders more power to influence politicians to gain an advantage or prevent the introduction of unpopular measures.

During the stakeholder analysis, it became clear that there is a general lack of understanding of stakeholder interests and aspirations in Malta due to a lack of research and surveys on the subject, which highlights a knowledge gap. However, it is immediately clear from the stakeholder analysis the power and influence the government has in Malta due to the highly centralised system in which the government is required to give specific objectives and directions to the government entities, including the planning and transport authorities. There is also a need to better understand how stakeholders interact with each other. This should not only be limited to authorities and government agencies but should be extended to all other stakeholders as well. The interviews must therefore attempt to fill some of these gaps by analysing the type of collaboration that currently exists in the urban design process in Malta. It is also necessary to understand the power that some stakeholders, such as businesses, have.

The last section of this chapter analysed the Maltese spatial and transport planning system, which adopts a 'plan-led discretionary' approach due to the desire for consistent decision making. The Maltese spatial and transport planning system has a strategic policy context that clearly identifies the need to address the car, with shared space identified as one of the concepts that can help to deliver the required improvements. However, there is a lack of policy and design guidance to ensure the quality of streets and squares. Furthermore, participation seems to be taken for granted in strategy and policy documents, often resulting in only the statutory minimum being adopted. This needs to be considered in the context of EU charters and directives that emphasise the importance and benefits of local community participation and involvement (French EU Presidency, 2008; German EU Presidency, 2007; Netherlands Presidency of the Council of the European Union, 2016; Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, 2010). These charters also emphasise the

importance of improved access to information and data, as well as the importance of communicating with stakeholders, all of which is very limited in Malta.

The interviews seek to better understand the above considerations whilst addressing the identified knowledge gaps, with questions aimed at gaining insights from participants' first-hand experience, given the lack of research and documentation of the urban design process in Malta.

Chapter 5   Findings on the contextual factors and stakeholders

5.1   Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the Maltese context in which the research is being conducted and discussed the socio-economic and political context in which the urban design process has to function. The chapter also identified the main stakeholders in Malta, together with their responsibilities and interests, and provided a brief overview of the existing spatial and transport planning system.

This chapter presents the findings from the interviews in relation to the contextual factors and the stakeholders involved in the urban design process. The first section (*5.2*) on contextual factors in Malta aims to contribute to the discussion on the first objective of this research, which is to analyse the *legislation, strategies and policies which control and guide the urban design process in respect to streets and squares*. The section begins by identifying key contextual factors that influence the urban design process, including the character, the challenges associated with car culture, before discussing shortcoming in the spatial planning system and how the process is influenced by the Maltese political context.

The following three sections (*5.3*, *5.4* and *5.5*) present the findings on stakeholders, in order to address the second objective of the research which is *to identify the different roles and interests of key stakeholders in respect to the future of streets and squares, focusing on their involvement in the urban design process*. The findings on stakeholders are divided into three sections:

1. the identification of the key stakeholders in the Maltese context and their analysis in terms of the six factors identified by Carmona (2014) in the Place-shaping continuum that influence how public space is shaped by the different stakeholder groups.

2. an analysis of the relationships between the different stakeholders in Malta, including the collaboration or lack of collaboration between the authorities themselves and the other key stakeholders. This is followed by a discussion on conflict between stakeholders.

3. the attitudes of the various stakeholders towards an urban design process aimed at introducing shared space principles in streets and squares. This includes the unwillingness of stakeholders to change and an egoistic approach to urban design where stakeholders only consider a how a proposal will affect them.

As shown in Figure 23, the different sections seek to address specific components of the Place-Shaping Continuum. Section *5.2* addresses the Place and Polity components, while the other three sections

discuss stakeholders and their power relations, which Carmona (2014) identifies at the heart of the Place-Shaping Continuum.
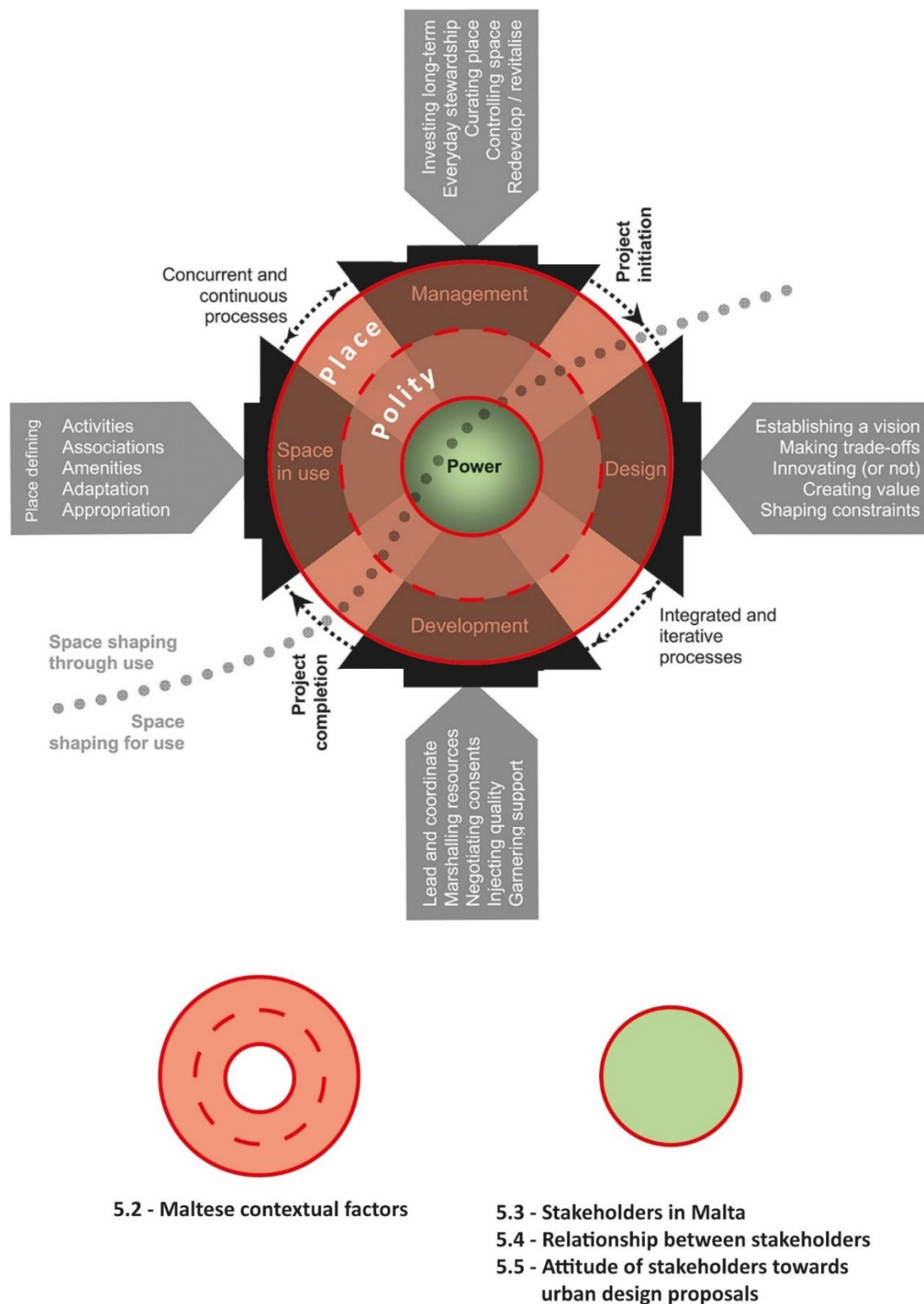
Figure 23: The relationship between this chapter's sections and the key components of the Place-Shaping Continuum. Adapted from "The Place-shaping Continuum: A Theory of Urban Design Process" by M. Carmona, 2014, Journal of Urban Design, 19(1), p.11 (https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2013.854695).

5.2   Maltese contextual factors

The Maltese context was introduced in *Chapter 4 Malta – setting the context*. This section builds on this by focusing on the findings in relation to the context, including how cultural traits and the character of places, shaped by previous generations continue to influence the urban design process and its outcomes. The focus then shifts to the findings on the strong car culture in Malta and the challenges associated with it, the shortcomings in the planning system that have led to the current problems and lack of improvements over the years and ends with a discussion of how politics affects the urban design process.

This section is directly related to the two contextual factors identified by Carmona (2014) in the *Place-shaping Continuum*, which he argues have a significant impact on the urban design process. These are:

- *"the history and traditions of place, which in multiple ways continue to exert their somewhat intangible influence on projects from one generation to the next; and*

- *the contemporary polity, the policy context through which the prevailing political economy is directed (or not) to defined design/development ends" (p. 6).*

Setting the Maltese context was also identified by the President of the Chamber of Planners as the most essential part of the search (Interview 29):

I think you need to go discuss a number of aspects so that you portray the Maltese context. Those who have not lived and experienced working in Malta often do not realise the complex system full of interests that we have here.

5.2.1   Cultural traits

In the Place-shaping Continuum, Carmona (2014) identifies how culture and traditions influence the way stakeholders approach the urban design process. During the interviews, several participants identified various Maltese cultural traits that influence the urban design process and citizen participation. Some believe that Maltese people are culturally inclined not to participate in the urban design process, which is discussed in more detail in *6.3.3 Challenges associated with higher levels of participation* (Interview 2, architect; 9, architect/eNGO; 12, professor; 22, Architect/Lands Authority). Two participants (Interview 9, architect/eNGO; 18, PA) believe that this could be a trait passed down through generations who grew up in a colonial system where the Maltese were given orders and they had to obey.

The concept of public participation and public criticism and holding the government accountable for whatever it is, whether it is planning, or anything else is not within our blood. We are subservient, we have a feudal mentality and when you speak to people they say: "what is the point of complaining if nobody is going to listen to me". (Interview 9, architect/eNGO)

At the same time, the colonial past can also be one of the reasons why Maltese citizens tend to be rebellious and confrontational when faced with projects or situations which are not to their liking and which will affect them directly (Interview 19, PA). Therefore, two participants (Interview 2, architect; 19, PA) discussed how in Malta there is the need to engage citizens and slowly start to change their mentality in relation to the way they approach the urban design process and how they can successfully contribute to the shaping of the streets and squares.

Related to this several participants also discussed the egoistic approach taken by some stakeholders, which is discussed in more detail in *5.5.2 Egoistic*. Whilst the Maltese population is considered as quite a generous population, when citizens consider that a proposal will be affecting them negatively they see this as a tragedy and they will do everything in their power to stop this (Interview 4, mayor; 5, future mobility expert).

The Maltese also tend to be territorial. Although Malta has a total area of only 316 square kilometres, one of the strengths of the Maltese Islands is that each locality and neighbourhood has its own character and sense of identity (Interview 4, mayor; 5, future mobility expert; 27, road safety). The cities, towns and villages in Malta grew around smaller settlements that had distinctive characteristics that still contribute to the diversity of stakeholders, relationships, and interests, which requires professionals to adapt their approach (Interview 5, future mobility expert; 6, mayor; 11, MP; 26, urban planner/academic; 28, TM architect).

A mayor (Interview 4) remarked how in large towns such as Sliema, each parish has its own identity, with people retaining strong roots and affiliation to their area or parish. The character and sense of identity are considered as an advantage when adopting a participatory approach to the urban design process, with interviewees discussing that citizens can be engaged and mobilised by appealing to their sense of belonging and attachment to a place (Interviews 5, future mobility expert; 6, mayor; 24, MHRA).

If I was involved in a pilot project in a village, the first thing I would do is instigate the belief that the village was once beautiful with a unique character, however through the years it has lost part of this beauty and character. Will you join me in trying to get back this beauty and character of the village for the benefit of all of us? You need to bring people with you, sharing

> *a common vision. If they are involved in the process and they really believe in the vision, then they will be less negative about having to walk 5 minutes to get to his car.* (Interview 24, MHRA)

However, due to the research topic, the most frequently mentioned cultural trait is that of the strong car culture in Malta, which inherently informs the approach that the stakeholders adopt when considering upgrades or regeneration of streets and squares. This topic will be discussed in detail in *5.2.2 Car culture.* Despite the fact that most of the cultural aspects identified can be considered as negative traits, the unique cultural and political context over the years has had its benefits, including the development of areas that characterise and represent different periods in Maltese history, which will be discussed next.

5.2.2   Car culture

As discussed in *4.2.3 Car culture in Malta* the national strategies, policies and guidance documents all point to a car culture in Malta, in which citizens give high priority to the car. The interview participants also emphasise the high level of car dependency in Malta, noting how policies and interventions which attempt to limit car access or limit on-street parking will be objected to by a large percentage of the population. This sub-section will elaborate on these aspects with the aim of understanding how it can affect the introduction of shared space in Malta and the implications to the Place-shaping continuum.

The findings will be presented in the following three main themes: the high car dependency in Malta, the importance attributed to on-street car parking and the need to address the car culture.

5.2.2.1   Car dependency

The high car dependency was identified as one of the causes of car culture, in which all decisions start to revolve around the need to provide fast and congestion-free travel from one place to another. Table 15 identifies the main remarks which the interview participants made in relation to the high car dependency in Malta. As can be seen in the table, several participants identified the high car dependency in Malta, which results in the car always being given priority when designing and using streets (Interview 3, KTP; 9, architect/eNGO; 12, professor; 14, eNGO; 18, PA; 23, planner; 25, MTA; 26, urban planner/academic; 31, economist; 33, architect).

Table 15: Key findings from the interviews in relation to car dependency.

Remarks by the participants on car dependency	Number of interviewees	Interviewee No., profession
Car dependency is resulting in one way of using and designing streets and squares, in which the car is always given priority.	10	3, KTP 5, future mobility expert 9, architect/eNGO 12, professor 14, eNGO 18, PA 23, planner 25, MTA 26, urban planner/academic 31, economist 33, architect
Car dependency is likely to continue increasing.	5	10, GHRC 13, PS 18, PA 27, road safety 30, LCA
Planning decisions are leading to a more car-dependent lifestyle.	3	7, road engineer 8, architect/politician 29, planner
Political will is required to address car dependency.	2	10, GHRC 33, architect

In addition, this dependency is still on a continuous increase and participants discussed how projections reveal that this will only get worse. This increase is attributed to a lack of viable alternatives, which makes people dependent on the car (Interview 10, GHRC; 13, PS; 18, PA; 27, road safety; 30, LCA). In addition, three professionals (Interview 7, road engineer; 8, architect/politician; 29, planner) are of the opinion that rather than addressing car dependency, certain planning decisions are leading to a more car-dependent lifestyle. These include the recent drive to develop supermarkets and schools in the urban peripheries, which requires people to drive there.

Two architects (Interview 10, 33) noted that until there is the political will and commitment to address car dependency, Malta is likely to continue with road widening schemes, resulting in further loss of pedestrian and social space, rather than consider alternative means of transport such as walking and cycling.

5.2.2.2   Importance attributed to on-street car parking

Another aspect associated with car culture is the importance that the population attributes to the provision of on-street car parking. Interviewees identified the provision of on-street car parking as one of the most important considerations by citizens, as outlined in Table 16.

Table 16: Key findings from the interviews in relation to on-street car parking.

Remarks by the participants in relation to the importance attributed to parking	Number of interviewees	Interviewee No., profession
Stakeholders will oppose any project which will result in a reduction in parking spaces. On the other hand, few objections are received when proposing projects in which no parking spaces are being reduced.	20	2, architect 3, KTP 4, mayor 7, road engineer 8, architect/politician 9, architect/eNGO 10, GHRC 11, MP 14, eNGO 15, bus company 19, PA 20, PA 22, architect/lands authority 24, MHRA 25, MTA 27, road safety 28, TM architect 29, planner 31, economist 33, architect
The Maltese population places a lot of importance on being able to park outside one's doorstep.	18	1, mayor 4, mayor 5, future mobility expert 6, mayor 7, road engineer 8, architect/politician 9, architect/eNGO 10, GHRC 11, MP 13, PS 19, PA 21, GRTU 22, architect/lands authority 24, MHRA

		26, urban planner/academic
		27, road safety
		28, TM architect
		33, architect
Participants identify the need for a long-term approach that seeks to educate citizens on the benefits associated with liveable and walkable spaces, with the aim of encouraging them to be more willing to compromise on car parking.	12	3, KTP
		6, mayor
		7, road engineer
		8, architect/politician
		13, PS
		16, MP
		21, GRTU
		22, architect/lands authority
		23, planner
		27, road safety
		29, planner
		33, architect
Participants identify the need to offer alternative parking areas when there is a significant loss of parking, so as not to shift parking problems to neighbouring areas.	8	6, mayor
		7, road engineer
		11, MP
		13, PS
		22, architect/lands authority
		23, planner
		24, MHRA
		29, planner
Politicians need to be willing to introduce unpopular measures, such as on-street parking charges.	3	23, planner
		24, MHRA
		33, architect
Some Local councils are prioritising the need to retain parking spaces over improving the quality of streets and squares	3	12, professor
		15, bus company
		20, PA

As can be seen in Table 16, 20 interview participants discussed at length how the loss of parking spaces tends to be the most controversial issue when proposing interventions in streets and squares. The participants are of the opinion that residents will oppose initiatives and concepts such as shared space if there is a reduction in on-street parking. On the other hand, when projects do not require any reduction in parking, there tends to be very little participation in the process, with no objections from the local community. Eighteen interview participants attribute this to the importance Maltese citizens give to the ability to park their car outside their own doorstep, or in very close proximity.

Twelve participants also discussed how citizens need to become more aware of the benefits that can arise from reducing on-street parking. Therefore, the need to engage and educate citizens was

identified as one of the requirements to address issues and controversies which arise due to the loss of parking spaces. This will require a shift in the mindset of citizens, which according to another seven participants cannot be achieved in the short-term and requires a long-term strategy in which the public start to appreciate and prioritise the quality of walkable and liveable urban environments.

Eight participants also discussed that whilst removal or reduction in the number of parking spaces is often justified, policymakers and professionals cannot simply remove parking without offering alternatives. Some form of balance needs to be retained, especially in localities and areas where lack of parking is already an issue. It is also essential that any proposals do not shift a problem to neighbouring areas. Therefore, any loss of parking in urban cores needs to be compensated by offering alternatives such as a car park in the immediate vicinity.

5.2.2.3   The need to address car culture

Due to the negative impact cars of cars on the quality of streets and squares, interview participants stressed the need to address car culture in Malta. Table 17 lists the main comments on this issue, with the most common being the need to move away from the current culture in Malta, which will probably require a change in citizens' aspirations. Citizens need to start prioritising the quality of streets and squares over the car. This also needs to be accompanied by the provision of attractive alternative modes of transport to facilitate this change.

Table 17: Key findings from the interviews in relation to the need to move away from car culture.

Remarks by the participants in relation to the need to address car culture	Number of interviewees	Interviewee No., profession
Participants discussed the need for citizens to move away from car culture, whilst alternative modes of travel need to be provided to facilitate this shift.	14	3, KTP 5, future mobility expert 6, mayor 7, road engineer 8, architect/politician 13, PS 14, eNGO 16, MP 21, GRTU 22, architect/lands authority 23, planner 27, road safety 29, planner 33, architect
The shift away from car culture will require a long-term approach.	13	4, mayor 5, future mobility expert

		7, road engineer 8, architect/politician 13, PS 18, PA 21, GRTU 22, architect/lands authority 27, road safety 28, TM architect 29, planner 31, economist 33, architect
The shift away from car culture will likely require the government and authorities to impose unpopular decisions	6	7, road engineer 13, PS 19, PA 22, architect/lands authority 26, urban planner/academic 31, economist 33, architect

Thirteen interview participants are of the opinion that long-term and strategic approaches are required to reduce car dependency. In their opinion, such a strategy is central to achieving the government and authorities' goals in relation to improving walkability and liveability qualities of streets and squares in Malta. These long-term strategies are also required to build the infrastructure required to improve the service of existing alternatives, such as cycling infrastructure and dedicated bus lanes, as well as the construction of new infrastructure to accommodate new modes of transport, including mass transit. This will also need to be matched with a well-managed education and information campaign focusing on the benefits associated with the use of alternative modes of transport and lower dependency on the car.

A behavioural economist (Interview 31) with an interest in sustainable mobility remarked that it will be difficult to shift away from the car culture as it is something which people have become accustomed to. The strategies will likely need to include measures that seek to restrict and disincentivise the use of the car. The participant however stated that lack of action is likely to result in an even worse situation in the long run:

> *So, what is the difficulty of reining in a little bit the car? It is like the difficulty of ripping off a band-aid. You will have had a band-aid on for two weeks, sticking to everything, picking up at your hair and getting infected, just because you do not want to rip it off.*

A leading urban planner and academic (Interview 26) remarked that change is not always simple as "*everyone has the perfect argument to leave things as they are*". This opinion was shared by an architect specialised in transport engineering (Interview 7) and a technical advisor to MHRA (Interview 24) who said that they experience this attitude on a daily basis.

In such cases, the Parliamentary Secretary for Planning (Interview 13) noted that the government and institutions are there to make a decision. If the government and institutions are convinced that a decision will benefit the community, they should proceed ahead with it, irrespective of whether it is an unpopular decision or not. This view was shared by several other participants (Interview 7, road engineer; 19, PA; 22, architect/lands authority; 33, architect) who remarked that in some cases, decisions might need to be taken and imposed by authorities, as long as they are in the best interest of the community.

Whilst several issues and challenges found in the streets and squares are mainly attributed to the importance given to the car by the Maltese population at large, these can also be linked to shortcomings in the planning and urban design system, which is the focus of the discussion in the next sub-section.

5.2.3   Shortcomings in the planning system

In discussing the context, several interview participants referred to the existing planning and urban design system in Malta and identified several shortcomings, as shown in Table 18.

Table 18: Interview participants' views on the shortcomings in the planning system that lead to a lack of improvement in the quality of streets and squares.

Remarks by the participants in relation to the shortcomings related to the planning legislation and strategies	Number of interviewees	Interviewee No., profession
There is a lack of accountability in relation to the implementation of objectives and actions set out in the strategies and policies.	8	3, KTP 19, PA 25, MTA 23, planner 29, planner 30, LCA 31, economist 33, architect
Objectives and required improvements, including street and square improvement projects, identified in strategies and policy documents	7	3, KTP 8; architect/politician 12, professor

remain unrealised despite exceeding expected timeframes.		18, PA 20, PA 23, planner 29, planner
Strategies and policies are not being followed by the government and authorities.	6	8, architect/politician 9, architect/eNGO 12, professor 20, PA 25, MTA 29, planner
Participants discussed that the challenges being faced, such as high car dependency, require a holistic approach which is not being taken.	4	7, road engineer 8, architect/politician 23, planner 29, planner
Policy documents exceed their intended timeframe without timely reviews.	3	3, KTP 23, planner 29, planner
The type of planning system used in Malta has several limitations that can limit the effectiveness of participation.	2	16, MP 24, MHRA

The two most discussed shortcomings in the planning system are both about the fact that most objectives, measures and projects identified in the strategies, plans and policies have remained unimplemented despite some of these documents having exceeded their original timeframe (Interview 3, KTP; 8, architect/politician; 12, professor; 18, PA; 20, PA; 23, planner; 29, planner). As an example, the president of the Chamber of Planners (Interview 29) noted that several shared space and pedestrianisation projects were identified in the strategy and policy documents, of which very few have been implemented to date. This led to the participant stating that: "*these strategies tend to be just rhetoric*". A unit manager at the Planning Authority (Interview 20) is of the opinion that the low implementation rate is due to a lack of ownership of these strategies and policies. Despite being national strategies approved by parliament, often they are considered as being 'owned' by the Planning Authority rather than being considered as strategies, policies and objectives which all the stakeholders, including the government, authorities, public entities and the private sector should strive to contribute to.

There was also criticism that the government and authorities themselves do not seem to always take into consideration the national strategies, masterplans and policies (Interview 8, architect/politician; 9, architect/eNGO; 12, professor; 20, PA; 25, MTA; 29, planner). This criticism was made mainly about the ongoing street upgrade projects which are considered by many as seeking to further

accommodate the car rather than improve the walkability and liveability qualities of space as specified in the strategies and masterplans.

Some participants also discussed how the system in Malta is not giving due importance to policy documents, such as the seven Local Plans, with a number of these exceeding the review dates by several years. Apart from the 'expiry' of these documents, they discussed how there does not seem to be any tracking of the progress on the objectives identified in these documents. According to them, this indicates that the planning system is not functioning efficiently (Interviews 3, KTP; 23, planner; 29, planner).

There was also criticism about the type of planning system in Malta, which was discussed in *4.3 The Maltese spatial and transport planning system*. One of the criticisms of the plan-led discretionary system is that the decision-makers are obliged to assess proposals mainly with respect to policies, which need to be respected even if a supermajority of the stakeholders and citizens are against them. A member of the Planning Board (Interview 16) explained that the role of the board members is to ensure that any developments proposed are adhering to the strategies and policies which are currently in force. The participant remarked what when a development is in line with the policies and procedures, it is irrelevant whether one agrees with the project or not:

> *This is like you are playing football - a referee cannot cancel a goal just because he does not like the team or did not like how the goal was scored. If there was no rule infringement, the referee is obliged to give the goal.*

A technical advisor to MHRA (Interview 24) is of the opinion that such a planning system results in an exercise of ticking policy boxes rather than focusing on the design quality and feedback received from the local community.

These shortcomings also need to be looked at in terms of the government and political system in Malta, as most of these shortcomings need to be addressed by the government and politicians as they are a structural problem. These will be discussed next.

5.2.4   The influence of politics on the urban design process

Several participants discussed how politics and politicians influence urban design processes and the various stakeholders. As discussed when setting the Maltese context, in *4.2.4 Governance and politics*, studies have found that Malta's small population and accessibility to politicians results in a unique

political system in where clientelism is prevalent (Veenendaal, 2019; Warren & Enoch, 2010). This was one of the main comments by interview participants as can be seen in Table 19.

Table 19: Key findings from the interviews in relation to the political context and urban design.

Findings on governance and politics	Number of interviewees	Interviewee No., profession
A short-term approach is adopted with respect to urban design due to the five-year political cycles.	13	1, mayor 3, KTP 5, future mobility expert 8, architect/politician 12, professor 13, PS 16, MP 19, PA 23, planner 24, MHRA 29, PA 30, LCA 31, economist
Politicians influence the urban design process.	9	7, road engineer 8, architect/politician 18, PA 19, PA 25, MTA 28, TM architect 29, planner 31, economist 34, TM planner
Stakeholders try to influence politicians to gain advantages through clientelism.	5	8, architect/politician 9, architect/eNGO 19, PA 26, urban planner/academic 29 planner
Politicians do not take bold decisions, as they seek to appease citizens.	4	16, MP 20, PA 23, planner 31, economist
The tribal nature of Maltese politics and the two-party system limits the discussion on urban design challenges as parties are unwilling to collaborate and share visions.	3	5, future mobility expert 6, mayor 12, professor

Several participants believe that the political context in Malta, where politicians have a major influence on the urban design process, leads to a short-term approach to urban planning and urban design, linking this to the five-year political cycles (Interview 1, mayor; 3, KTP; 5, future mobility expert; 8, architect/politician; 12, professor; 19, PA; 23, planner; 24, MHRA; 29, PA; 30, LCA; 31, economist). This was also confirmed by the Parliamentary Secretary for Planning (Interview 13) who noted that this was taking place frequently, but there was a recent shift to start issuing visions for the next 10 to 15 years.

The majority of the interviewees at some point highlighted how politics affects the urban design process, but nine participants specifically discussed how the urban design process is highly reliant on, and influenced by, the government. A unit manager at PA (Interview 18), the president of the Chamber of Planners (Interview 29), and a behavioural economist with an interest in the field (Interview 31) remarked that in Malta authorities are so dependent on the politicians that they expect the politicians to advise them what to do rather than be proactive and propose policies themselves. Interviewee 18 was one of the four persons who drafted the *Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development* (SPED). The interviewee recalled that one of the roles was to collaborate with other authorities in order to develop an integrated and co-ordinated spatial strategy. However, the process was characterised by lack of input from the different authorities, with most implying that they need direction from the government.

Five participants (Interview 8, architect/politician; 9, architect/eNGO; 19, PA; 26, urban planner/academic; 29 planner) also discussed how politicians tend to get involved in the urban design process when stakeholders approach them with the aim of influencing the outcome in their favour. This practice is not limited to citizens, as other stakeholder groups such as businesses and developers also have a close relationship with politicians, which makes it easier to get their demands prioritised.

Four participants also discussed how politicians often do not make the bold decisions necessary to avoid risking alienating people and losing their vote (Interview 16, MP; 20, PA; 23, planner; 31, economist). In fact, a behavioural economist (Interview 31) discussed how politicians do listen to their constituents, but this can be problematic if they only consider the short-term complaints and based their policies and decisions on these, as is often the case. Similarly, an MP (Interview 16) discussed how politicians tend to prioritise the wishes and requests of their constituents rather than take bold decisions on required, and sometimes unpopular, measures which are needed to address any shortcomings. As a result, the priorities of the citizens tend to become the priorities of the politicians, especially in the months leading to an election.

5.3   Stakeholders in Malta

This section and the rest of this chapter address the second objective of the study, which is to "*identify the different roles and interests of key stakeholders in respect to the future of streets and squares, focusing on their involvement to the urban design process.*"

This section begins by identifying the stakeholders in the urban design process in relation to streets and squares in Malta. The roles, interests and aspirations of these stakeholders are analysed, along with the relationships and attitudes expected from the stakeholders regarding the introduction of shared space.

In the Place-shaping Continuum, Carmona (2014) discussed how the urban design process is "*defined by a particular set of stakeholder power relationships*" (p. 33). Carmona also identifies six factors that determine how public space is shaped and re-shaped:

1. "*The aspirations, resources and determination of those who own the space, whether public or private.*
2. *The aspirations, powers and skills of those with regulatory responsibilities and their willingness to intervene to secure particular ends.*
3. *The aspirations, skills and sensibilities of designers; the scope given to them by the first two stakeholder groups (above), and their awareness of the needs and aspirations of the last three groups (below).*
4. *The aspirations of communities and their ability and determination to influence the work of the first three stakeholder groups (above).*
5. *The aspirations, resources and abilities of those with long-term management responsibility for the space.*
6. *The manner with which public space users engage with spaces and, through their use, define and redefine the nature of each space over time*" (Carmona, 2014, p. 30).

These six factors are used to structure the data collected in order to assess how stakeholders are likely to influence the urban design process and the way public space is shaped.

5.3.1   Identification of stakeholders in the Maltese context

During the interviews, interviewees were handed a sheet with a non-exhaustive list of stakeholders (Table 20), intentionally omitting out authorities such as Lands Authority and Environment and

Resource Authority, and they were asked to name any other stakeholders they felt had an interest in the process.

Table 20: List of stakeholders presented to the interview participants.

Stakeholders
Government
Ministry for Transport, Infrastructure and Capital Projects
Ministry for Tourism
Political Parties
Planning Authority
Transport Malta
Infrastructure Malta
Local Councils
Church
Professionals (Architects, Road Engineers, Planners)
Non-governmental organization
Community Groups
Residents
Visitors
Tourists
Private Businesses (inc. Hotels & Restaurants)

The identified stakeholders have been consolidated in Table 21 which lists the key stakeholders in the Maltese Islands in respect to streets and squares. The additional stakeholders identified by the interview participants are shaded in orange.

Table 21: List of the identified stakeholders in the Maltese Island from the interviews in relation to the urban design process concerning streets and squares.

Stakeholders	Interview Participants
Government	
Ministry for Transport, Infrastructure and Capital Projects	
Ministry for Tourism	
Ministry for the Environment and Sustainable Development	12, 15, 22
Ministry for Health (and Health Department)	9, 15, 26, 31, 34
Political Parties	
European Commission Representation	31
Planning Authority	
Transport Malta	
Environment and Resources Authority	8, 12, 13, 15
Lands Authority	19, 22, 25
Superintendence of Cultural Heritage	10, 11, 16, 22, 25

Infrastructure Malta	
Other government agencies (such as Ambjent Malta, Grand Harbour Regeneration Corporation, Valletta 2018, the Foundation for Tourism Zones Development)	22
The Malta Police Force	19, 25, 27
Civil Protection Department	16, 25, 27
Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD)	10, 15
Malta Public Transport	10, 11, 22, 27, 31
University of Malta	5, 24
Schools	5, 14, 22, 27
Local Councils	
Church	
Constituted bodies and business representatives [Chamber of Commerce, Malta Hotels & Restaurants Association (MHRA), General Retailers and Traders Union (GRTU)]	15, 21, 22, 30
Malta Developers Association	29
Professionals (Architects, Road Engineers, Planners)	
Non-governmental organization	
Community Groups	
Residents	
Visitors	
Tourists	
Private Businesses (inc. Hotels & Restaurants)	
Children	11, 18, 31

Notes:
- The stakeholders identified by the interview participants are shaded in orange.
- Since the interviews, some of the names and portfolios of the ministries have changed. Whilst before planning was under the responsibility of the Ministry for Transport, Infrastructure and Capital Projects, in November 2020 planning falls under the Ministry for The Environment, Climate Change and Planning, which was previously named Ministry for the Environment and Sustainable Development.

Interview participants identified a variety of stakeholders, including ministries indirectly involved with the quality of streets and squares, such as Ministry for Health and the Health Department, which some interviewees felt were overlooked in Malta. Similarly, other authorities such as the Environment and Resources Authority (ERA), the Lands Authority and Superintendence of Cultural Heritage (SCH) were mentioned as being directly/indirectly involved with sector and playing a role in safeguarding certain characteristics of the streets, such as cultural heritage for the latter.

Five participants (Interview 10, GHRC; 11, MP; 22, architect/lands authority; 27, road safety; 31, economist) also noted that the Malta Public Transport, the company responsible for the public bus service, is often overlooked. They pointed out that bus infrastructure requires a significant amount of

dedicated space in streets and squares to accommodate bus termini and bus stops. These can have a major impact on the quality of urban space, particularly if they are located in squares.

Some participants also discussed the need for some agencies to be consulted when streets and squares are redesigned, as this may impact on their services and operations. These include the Civil Protection Department (Interview 16, MP; 25, MTA; 27, road safety) and the police, particularly in light of the increasing concerns about national security that may affect public spaces through the introduction of physical barriers or other methods of segregation (Interview 19, PA; 25, MTA; 27, road safety).

Three interviewees (Interview 11, MP; 18, PA; 31, economist) emphasised the importance of addressing the specific needs of children. Another group of interviewees stressed the importance of involving schools in the urban design process, both to get feedback and to disseminate knowledge and information (Interview 5, future mobility expert; 14, eNGO; 22, architect/lands authority; 27, road safety). Community groups such as church groups and band clubs were also identified as a way to involve citizens (Interview 4, mayor; 6, mayor; 12, professor; 30, LCA).

When discussing the factors that influence how space is shaped and re-shaped, Carmona (2014) identifies six main stakeholder groups in the Place-shaping Continuum. Carmona discusses how the aspirations, interests, resources, and abilities of these stakeholders influence the urban design process. To discuss the findings in relation to the Place-Shaping Continuum, the key stakeholders in the Maltese Islands that will be discussed in the rest of this chapter were mapped to these six groups (see Table 22).

Table 22: Stakeholder groups identified in Malta categories in the six stakeholder groups identified by Carmona (2014).

Stakeholder Groups	Stakeholders
Owners	Government of Malta
	Lands Authority
	Private Sector Owners
Regulators	Planning Authority
	Transport Malta
	Environment and Resources Authority
	Malta Tourism Authority
	Superintendence of Cultural Heritage
Designers	Planners
	Architects & Civil Engineers (Periti)
	Urban Designers
	Road Engineers
Communities	Environment NGOs

	Business Communities and Representatives
	Residents
Long-term management	Local Councils
Users	Visitors/Users

Carmona (2014) does not clearly describe which stakeholders belong to each group. Therefore, the stakeholders were classified at the author's discretion by analysing in which group some of the stakeholders fit best. For example, when talking about users, this may include different stakeholders, including residents, visitors or workers in the area, among some others. However, residents seem to fit better into the community stakeholder group as they have aspirations and determinations that are not part of the factors identified for the user stakeholder group. The findings on each stakeholder group are now discussed in the following sub-sections.

5.3.2   Owners

When it comes to streets and squares, in Malta the state is typically the sole landowner, as it was and still is common practice to expropriate all privately owned areas when constructing new streets or public spaces. As discussed in *4.2.5 Stakeholders in Malta*, the Lands Authority is responsible for the management of land owned by the Government of Malta, with the board of governors of the authority having to approve any form of proposed development on publicly owned land.

This section will specifically focus on the role of the government and its entities, whose role was considered essential to the urban design process by the respondents, as the government is responsible for issuing of strategic direction and objectives when strategies and policies need to be updated by the respective authorities, as well as allocating the necessary resources to the regulators and agencies responsible for implements projects.

When discussing the government's aspirations, these are often clearly defined in the electoral manifesto on which they were elected. Given the size of the Maltese Islands, these manifestos are not limited to strategic and policy proposals, and they often identify specific interventions such as the upgrade of a specific street or square (Interview 1, mayor; 3, KTP; 6, mayor; 12, professor; 16, MP).

> *Let me tell you, in Malta, the problem was always that the government determined its policies depending on the elections. This is clear and unequivocal. I take this even from the state of the government finances. The government used to get its finances in order in the first few years,*

> *then when it is an election year, all the money used to be spent. This applies to all sectors.* (Interview 16, MP)

As discussed in *4.2.5 Stakeholders in Malta*, the government has a high level of power over a number of stakeholders. The legal notices that establish the various authorities require the government to provide strategic guidance and give the responsible ministers power to intervene. It is the government that directs the Planning Authority and other entities to develop strategies or masterplans for specific areas (Interview 4, mayor; 11, MP; 20, PA). The minister in charge also often has the final say when important decisions need to be made in policymaking or decision-making (Interview 3, architect; 18, PA; 19, PA; 26, urban planner/academic, 29; planner). As a result, the views of ministers responsible for the authorities can influence their approach and work.

There was also criticism that the government tends to sometimes just implement things without necessarily listening to other stakeholders, or that certain decisions are influenced by stakeholders which are close to the government (Interview 2, architect; 5, future mobility expert; 12, professor). Three MPs (Interviews 11, 13, 16), one of whom is the Parliamentary Secretary for Planning, stated that this approach is changing as the government is placing more importance on public participation, especially in relation to urban development which has become a hot issue in recent years. Related to this, participants also criticised the government and authorities for not always taking into consideration the national strategies and masterplans, something which was discussed in *5.2.3 Shortcomings in the planning system* (Interview 8, architect/politician; 9, architect/eNGO; 12, professor; 20, PA; 25, MTA; 29, planner).

Some of the participants also believe that there needs to be better synergy and collaboration between different Ministries. They discussed the need for a wider range of ministries to be involved in policymaking that affects the quality of streets and squares (Interview 12, professor; 26, urban planner/academic; 29, planner). A PA unit manager (Interview 19) and a Lands Authority board member (Interview 22) discussed how collaboration between authorities depends on the government, especially the Office of the Prime Minister, which often plays the role of coordination. A deputy chief officer (Interview 34) from TM believes that the government itself should have a section that focuses on Forward Planning to carefully analyse the current context along with forecasts and projections. This will enable the government to plan ahead while ensuring a level of synergy between the different authorities and entities.

Table 23 shows how the findings from the interviews map onto the factors identified by Carmona (2014) for the owners' group.

Table 23: Key findings from the interviews on the government's aspirations, resources and determination.

Stakeholder	Aspirations	Resources	Determination
Government of Malta	The national aspirations are defined in the various national strategies and masterplans. However, the main aspirations of each government are outlined in the electoral manifesto on which it was elected. The electoral manifesto seems to take priority over the national strategies, with the government closely monitoring the implementation of the measures in the manifesto. According to the interview participants, the same monitoring is not carried with respect to national strategies.	The government through the national budget is responsible for allocating the available resources and funding to the various sectors and authorities. The percentage of resources allocated to the upgrading of the built environment is an indication of the priority the government is giving to urban design.	The national aspirations identify a clear need to improve walkability and liveability, but determination is needed for these aspirations to be achieved. The determination to upgrade streets is there, with the setting up of Infrastructure Malta specifically with the purpose of resurfacing all streets. However, whether the government is determined to upgrade streets for more walkable and liveable streets, and to introduce shared space, is not clear – since very few projects have sought to deliver these.

5.3.3   Regulators

The second stakeholder group identified by Carmona consists of regulators, whose aspirations, powers, skills and willingness to intervene to ensure the implementation of goals influence the success of the urban design process. With regards to streets and squares, the two main regulatory authorities in Malta are the Planning Authority and Transport Malta, which are responsible for spatial and transport planning, respectively. The two authorities are responsible for issuing relevant strategies, policies and guidelines to regulate developments while achieving objectives set by the government.

An architect (Interview 3), who is also a KTP councillor, discussed that the authorities in Malta have an important role to play. The authorities have to assess all proposals against the national context, including approved strategies, local plans and other policy and guiding documents. Another important function of the authorities which was identified by two participants is that of communicating with the

stakeholders. They are of the opinion that this is not being done effectively which is alienating certain stakeholders (Interview 2, architect; 8, architect/politician). Three participants (Interview 3, KTP, 9, architect/eNGO; 29, planner) also noted there is a segment of society that does not trust the different authorities, especially the Planning Authority. The authorities are not considered autonomous, with Chairman's and CEOs appointed directly by the government as noted in other sections. When this is the case, automatically a segment of society will only be willing to collaborate with authorities.

To shift away from this sentiment and start building trust with other stakeholders, the transport planning unit manager at PA (Interview 20) and an urban planner (Interview 26) believe that authorities should not just adopt the roles of policymakers and regulators. Authorities should be open to discussing ideas and proposals with all stakeholders who approach them at any stage of the urban design process. A director at the Malta Tourism Authority (Interview 25) also shared the view that authorities and government entities should not limit themselves to regulation but should sometimes co-fund part of an initiative or project, which gives them a greater opportunity to influence the proposal to align the initiative with the strategic goals of the particular authority. However, this is not easy to achieve, especially since several participants noted that the Planning Authority and Transport Malta suffer from a lack of human resources especially professionals specialised in urban design and urban planning, which makes it difficult to allocate more resources to this task (Interview 18, PA; 19, PA; 28, TM architect; 29, PA).

In these findings, one thing that stands out is the importance that interview participants place on stakeholders **trusting** the authorities, which also affects the dynamics of relationships with other stakeholders. In this context, several participants also spoke about the collaboration, or lack thereof - between authorities themselves, and between authorities and other stakeholders. These are discussed in *5.4.1 Collaboration*, where the nature of the collaboration that exists between different stakeholders is discussed.

Table 24 shows how the findings from the interviews map onto the factors identified by Carmona (2014) for the regulators group.

Table 24: Key findings from the interviews on the regulators' aspirations, powers, skills and willingness to intervene.

Stakeholder	Aspirations	Powers	Skills	Willingness to intervene
General observations	The goals and objectives are clearly identified in the national strategies, masterplans and policies. The government is responsible for setting the main objectives, with the authorities responsible for translating these into strategies, plans, policies and guidance documents.	The two authorities have regulatory powers in their respective sector.	Professionals working in the two authorities note that the authorities have the necessary expertise; however, it is difficult to attract new professionals.	There is the need for authorities to be more proactive in discussing with other stakeholders with the aim of ensuring that proposed objectives are met.
Planning Authority	Same as general observations.	They do have the power, but since the government appoints the majority of the Planning Authority Board and Commission it retains the possibility of influencing decisions.	The core of the Planning Authority expertise is of a certain age, with very little new blood. Some participants discussed how this can limit creativity and new perspectives.	Same as general observations.
Transport Malta	Same as general observations.	In terms of development control, PA is the leading entity, which in turns consults with TM.	Few experts in the field of road design and engineering.	Same as general observations.

5.3.4   Designers

The third group of stakeholders identified by Carmona (2014) consists of the designers. Carmona discusses how the urban design process is influenced by:

> *The aspirations, skills and sensibilities of designers; the scope given to them by the first two stakeholder groups [owners and regulators], and their awareness of the needs and aspirations of the last three groups [communities; long-term managers; users].* (p. 30)

As identified in *4.2.5 Stakeholders in Malta*, in Malta most of the professional roles fall within the remit of the architect, with warranted architects and civil engineers given the title of 'perit'. The role of professionals was discussed by several participants. An architect (Interview 2) and planner (Interview 23) discussed how professionals should be given an opportunity to give their honest opinions and recommendations rather than be restricted by directives from the government or authorities which constrains them to a particular solution or approach. A director at MTA (Interview 25) also discussed how professionals need to be pro-active and if necessary, they should engage with policymakers, politicians and the government to convince them of changes which in their opinion will result in an improvement.

In other cases, it was identified that professionals need to step in to fill a gap or a shortcoming in the system. When appointed by entities that lack the required expertise, such as Local Councils, professionals need to show clear leadership and clearly outline the process which should be followed to achieve a good masterplan or design proposal (Interview 5, future mobility expert; 10, GHRC).

Seven participants discussed how the character of professionals is a key factor when it comes to engaging with the public or collaborating with others. Not all professionals have the same character and qualities; some professionals are excellent at designing spaces while others are excellent at communicating design to others. Participants also discussed that if each professional focused on this strength, a collaborative approach to urban design would likely maximise public benefits (Interview 12, professor; 18, PA; 19, PA; 23, planner; 24, MHRA; 25, MTA; 34, TM planner).

Table 25 shows how the findings from the interviews map onto the factors identified by Carmona (2014) for the designers group.

Table 25: Key findings from the interviews on the designer's aspirations, skills, sensitivities, scope and awareness.

Stakeholder	Aspirations	Skills	Sensitivities	Scope	Awareness
Designers	A few participants discussed how professionals in the sector should be aspiring for their ideals and try to convince Owners and Regulators about their views: professionals need to be champions.	Few architects work in urban design and street design. Therefore, there is a limited skill pool when considering street and squares.	The need for more sensitivity, especially in relation to the local context and local stakeholders. The lack of sensibilities can also be a result of the tight deadlines given to professionals, which limits the amount of analysis they can carry out before moving into the design stage.	When discussing streets and squares, the government implementing agencies will give the scope to the designers. As noted, the tendency is for designers to be given tight deadlines to work with. In terms of regulators, whilst the Maltese planning system is a plan-led system with the aim of ensuring consistent decisions and greater certainty, when discussing streets and squares there is a lack of design guidance. This allows a level of flexibility.	In terms of public needs, there is very little awareness due to the short time frames they work in, which is accompanied by a lack of research and data. As a result, professionals are not always fully aware of the needs and aspirations of communities, long-term managers, users.

5.3.5   Communities

The fourth stakeholder group that Carmona (2014) identifies is that of communities, noting that they influence the urban design process because of their aspirations and their ability and determination to influence the owners, regulators and designers. However, Carmona does not define which stakeholders can be classified under this group.

In this research, any group of people who have an interest or live in the area and share a common view or characteristic the stakeholders can classified as part of the communities group. Based on this definition, the communities group includes NGOs (which are a community of like-minded people or share a common goal), the business community, and also residents. These three main sub-groups are discussed in the following sub-sections.

5.3.5.1   Non-governmental organisations

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and Lobby Groups play an important part in the process as they represent the views of a group of like-minded persons, or a group of people which the same objectives. Environmental NGOs (eNGOs) are especially active in the development permitting process, in which they review most development applications to determine whether they need to object to any applications.

Whilst no participants dismissed the contribution of eNGOs, several were highly critical of the approach some eNGOs adopt in Malta. Instead of collaborating and seek to influence policymaking, most eNGOs in Malta adopt a confrontational approach with authorities, government entities and developers (Interview 14, eNGO; 18, PA). A council member of KTP (Interview 3) and an architect specialising in road engineering (Interview 7) stated that NGOs tend to object to almost every proposal, even in cases in which the community is going to benefit. They both noted that certain NGOs expect that projects are stopped if there is something not to their liking. They concluded by saying that if the government and authorities had to heed this advice every time, one will end up doing nothing.

A Lands Authority board member (Interview 22) is of the opinion that if NGOs are going to contribute and are afforded a certain level of power in a long-term strategic approach, they need to shift from amateur organisations focused on NIMBYism to highly organised and informed organisations which can truly add value in the urban design process. This view is shared by other participants who remarked that these groups are likely to have a more positive impact if NGOs work together, come up

with proposals, and collaborate with the different authorities with the aim of improving policy and decision making, along with improving the quality of projects (Interview 14, eNGO; 18, PA).

Five participants (Interview 3, KTP; 10, GHRC; 15, bus company; 26, urban planner/academic; 29, planner) are of the opinion that due to lack of collaboration in the civil society, there are currently too many NGOs in Malta which seek to achieve the same objective. This makes it difficult for authorities and designers to engage with them all. The President of the Chamber of Planners (Interview 29) discussed how these small and divided NGOs are up against more resourceful stakeholders such as developers who have joined up in a single lobby group – the Malta Developers Association – in which they pool together all the resources and present their opinion in one single and powerful voice.

Another five participants (Interview 8, architect/politician; 14, eNGO; 18, planner; 22, architect/lands authority; 26, urban planner/academic) also discussed how abroad there are several lobby groups and NGOs which are highly informed and have resources to carry out research, sometimes having more data and are more informed than the authorities themselves. Unfortunately, this is not the case in Malta, with very few NGOs having the resources to employ a full-time person to administer the organisation.

5.3.5.2 Business communities

The second sub-group being considered under the communities category is the business community which is typically seen as a powerful group in the urban design process as they can organise themselves to try to influence decisions with the aim of maximising their benefits. A number of participants discussed how businesses, such as restaurant and shop owners, are inclined to get more actively involved in the urban design process since they have more to gain out of the process than other stakeholders (Interview 1, mayor; 2, architect; 3, KTP; 16, MP; 19, PA; 23, planner; 25, MTA; 29, planner; 32, housing authority; 33, architect; 34; TM planner). To further maximise their benefits, businesses tend to lobby politicians and decision-makers. This often results in an imbalance of space allocation with a significant amount of space dedicated to outdoor tables and chairs area (Interview 3, KTP; 19, PA; 23, planner; 29, planner; 31, economist; 32, housing authority). Whilst their cooperation and contribution can be essential in transforming a street or square into an active and high-quality public space, there is criticism that certain businesses seem to have a high influence on the decision-making process. The over-commercialisation of public space is one of the main concerns of residents, as they associate this with new issues such as increased demand for parking (Interview 6, mayor; 11; MP; 31; economist; 32, housing authority).

In the past businesses and associations representing the commercial sector were totally against schemes that restricted vehicular access (Interview 15, bus company; 19, PA; 26, urban planner/academic; 29, planner; 33, architect), with the main concern being any loss in parking (Interview 6, mayor; 7, road engineer; 13, PS; 32, housing authority). This has started to change in recent years following the successes experienced in the pedestrianisation of Valletta in 2007 and Bisazza Street in 2012. Businesses have started to realise that these schemes are beneficial to them (Interview 15, bus company; 19, PA). Businesses today see the restriction of vehicular access, and the introduction of concepts such as shared space, as an opportunity to extend their business outwards into the streets and squares, which they value a lot since the outdoor area is often their biggest asset (Interview 9, architect/eNGO; 10, GHRC; 16, MP; 19, planning). Despite this, some businesses, especially family-run small businesses, are not likely to be in favour of such schemes. They still prioritise cars and parking which they believe are essential to attract passing trade, without considering that people are more likely to go in a shop if they are walking. (Interview 4, mayor; 5, future mobility expert; 6, mayor; 15, bus company; 19, PA).

5.3.5.3   Residents

Similar to businesses, residents have a direct interest in the quality of streets and squares, especially in Malta where a large percentage of the population tend to be property owners. Residents also have the ability to influence the streets and squares in the way they use the space, through the 'unknowing' urban design process, however, the interview participants focused on the 'knowing' urban design process. Eleven participants discussed how despite not being knowledgeable about certain design philosophies and schemes, residents experience the street or square on a daily basis and they can give an important contribution during both the data collection and the design stage. Their involvement is deemed important as ultimately they will be the users of the upgraded space (Interview 1, mayor; 3, KTP; 5, future mobility expert; 8, architect/politician; 9, architect/eNGO; 12, professor; 13, PS; 18, PA; 20, PA; 22, architect/lands authority; 27, road safety).

Despite this valuable contribution few residents tend to participation in the urban design process. Residents tend to only participate if they are approached directly or when they believe a proposal will affect them directly (Interview 2, architect; 10, GHRC; 8, architect/politician; 22; architect/lands authority).

The general manager of the local bus company (Interview 15) noted that residents are often well represented by Local Councils, therefore in some cases, there is the need to just to consult with the Local Council, which often are aware of the opinions and requirements of the residents in an area. The

president of the Local Councils Association (Interview 30) agreed with such an approach noting that when a Local Council becomes aware of a project or policy which will affect residents, the Local Council often consults with residents before formulating an opinion.

5.3.5.4   Summary of the aspirations, abilities and determination of communities

Table 26 shows how the findings from the interviews map onto the factors identified by Carmona (2014) for the communities group.

Table 26: Key findings from the interviews on the communities' aspirations, abilities and determination.

Stakeholder	Aspirations	Ability	Determination
NGOs	NGOs tend to have very clear mission statements and goals – although there is criticism that some small NGOs have been set up simply to object to proposals in a NIMBY approach In Malta, the majority of the NGOs in the planning and urban design field are focused on safeguarding the natural and built environment. In the case of the built environment, the focus of NGOs tends to be against overdevelopment and the conservation of historic or vernacular buildings. More NGOs are however becoming interested in the quality of the urban area, including streets and squares.	Their ability to 'contribute' is restricted by a lack of resources. Their ability is also 'hampered' by being seen as adopting a NIMBY approach. Some reputable NGOs are given management responsibilities in historic and environmental cases. In terms of town management, this is still not the case. Smaller, poorly organised NGOs may not have the skills to contribute, and their NIMBY approach may harm the efforts of other, better organised NGOs.	In recent years, NGOs have shown to be very determined to object and oppose development. This includes crowdfunding to submit appeals against approved developments. The same determination does not currently exist in terms of carrying out primary research or the proposal of informed solutions.

	NGO members also discussed how most NGOs have aspirations to contribute in a more meaningful way if they have resources and are willing to adopt a more collaborative approach with the authorities.		
Business Community	In the urban design process, the main aspiration of the business community is to maximise their benefits. The business community aspires to improve the quality of streets and squares and if possible making use of public land to extend their business into the streets and squares, especially for food and beverage outlets. This has signified a shift in recent years since previously businesses were against the restriction of cars.	They have the ability to influence the policy and decision makers since they are represented by strong organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce and GRTU. These organisations are well respected and informed bodies, often affiliated with foreign organisations and associations. These organisations have recently started being involved in partnerships with authorities and the government, in both policy-making and management of areas.	Business and their representatives can be very determined as the quality of streets and squares impacts their business directly. Businesses also have a lot to gain, such as an extra area in the form of concession to make use of public land, which automatically makes them more determined in participating in the process and attempting to achieve what they want.
Residents	Aspirations to participate in the urban design process are not necessarily there. Residents tend to participate only if there is something	Recently more residents have been forming residents' associations or joining in ad hoc groups, most commonly to object to proposals. As this becomes more	The determination of residents to get involved and influence the process depends on how they see the proposals as affecting them. If these are seen as negatively

	that they believe will benefit them. Residents tend to have conflicting views since they aspire for higher quality streets and squares but at the same time, they are willing to make compromises regarding car access and on-street parking.	frequent, their abilities to both contribute and influence the urban design process will most likely start to increase. When in numbers, residents are likely to be more successful in lobbying politicians, especially at a national level where they are more likely to influence the outcome of the process since these politicians often have to take the key decisions as discussed in *5.2.4 The influence of* politics on the urban design process.	affecting them, residents are likely to be very determined in safeguarding their interests, which can include retaining cars on the street. Residents tend to be determined to favour the status quo.

5.3.6   Management

The fifth group of stakeholders identified by Carmona (2014) consists of the managers of public space. In relation to streets and squares in Malta, Local Councils have the long-term responsibility for management. The concept of town managers being responsible for maintenance and management in tourist areas has also been introduced but is still in its infancy and pilot phase. Therefore, the discussion will mainly focus on the role played by the Local Councils.

Several participants are of the opinion that *Local Councils should be given more responsibilities* to manage the locality and its public spaces. They discussed how they should play a role in the decision-making process with respect to planning and development control (Interview 8, architect/politician; 23, planner; 29, planner). Thirteen interviewees (Interview 2, architect; 6, mayor; 8, politician/architect; 9, architect/eNGO; 10, GHRC; 12, professor; 13, PS; 16, MP; 20, PA; 22, architect/lands authority; 25, MTA; 30, LCA; 31, economist) discussed how *Local councils know what the needs of their community* are and they can have an important role in relaying these to the

authorities, politicians and decision-makers. Therefore, these participants remarked that Local Councils should be involved in any collaboration and consultation exercise, which is currently not always the case. Two transport professionals (Interview 7, 28) and a director of MTA (Interview 25) remarked that authorities, including Infrastructure Malta, Transport Malta and Malta Tourism authority, consult with Local Councils as the representatives of the local community.

However, others discussed that there are a number of *problems and shortcomings* in devolving more responsibility to Local Councils. Local councils suffer from the same problem as the governments, usually operating in five-year cycles leading up to elections. When the political party that has the majority changes, visions can change completely and the council starts all over again (Interview 3, KTP; 8, architect/politician; 20, PA; 24, MHRA; 28, TM architect; 29, planner). Partisan issues and bickering were also mentioned as possible obstacles to the work of Local Councils, especially when the political party in the majority in the Local Council of a locality is different from the party in the national government (Interview 4, mayor; 7, road engineer; 12, professor; 16, MP; 29, planner).

Fourteen interviewees (Interview 1, mayor; 8, architect/politician; 12, professor; 13, PS; 20, PA; 22, architect/lands authority; 24, MHRA; 28, TM architect; 29, planner; 30, LCA; 31, economist; 32, housing authority; 33, architect; 34, TM planner) also discussed how it is essential that authorities and professionals advise and support Local Councils as local councillors and the staff do not have the necessary expertise or know-how on aspects of planning and urban design. Participants discussed how the Local Council Associations already tries to support the Local Councils in an attempt to overcome several of the shortcomings identified (Interview 13, PS; 15, bus company; 30, LCA). Two participants (Interview 24, MHRA; 29, planner) are of the opinion that a specific agency should be set up to support Local Councils in the co-ordination and design processes in relation to the embellishment of public space in the locality.

Three mayors (Interview 1, 4, 6) discussed how the local council are often not in a position to consider the embellishment of squares and streets due to lack of funding. This also limits Local Councils from thinking about solutions strategically and in a long-term manner (Interview 12, professor; 19, PA; 26, urban planner/academic; 29, planner). As a result, Local Councils often have to lobby the government and Ministers for additional funding for specific projects (Interview 12, professor; 19, PA, 22, architect/lands authority).

Other participants discussed how mayors play an important role in overcoming challenges and lack of resources noting from experience that when Mayors have a clear vision and objective, they will somehow find a way to achieve their objective even if they have no funds (Interview 20, PA; 22,

architect/lands authority; 30, LCA). The approach taken by the Local Councils also depends a lot on the Mayor, who usually has priorities and a vision for the locality (Interview 5, future mobility expert; 13, PS; 15, bus company; 16, MP; 29, planner; 30, LCA; 31; economist).

Table 27 shows how the findings from the interviews map onto the factors identified by Carmona (2014) for the management group.

Table 27: Key findings from the interviews the managers' aspirations, resources and abilities.

Stakeholder	Aspirations	Resources	Ability
Local Councils	As is the case with the national government, the main aspirations of the Local Councils are outlined in the electoral manifesto on which they are elected.	Limited resources, especially in terms of funding. This automatically translates into a lack of other resources, such as technical expertise since Local Councils do not always have the funding available for this.	The ability of Local Councils is limited due to two main factors. The first one being the lack of resources and the second factor being that mayors and local councillors tend to not be experts in the field.

5.3.7 Users

The final stakeholder group identified by Carmona (2014) is that of users, stating that "*the manner with which public space users engage with spaces and, through their use, define and redefine the nature of each space over time*" (p. 30). When discussing users, these can include a very wide range of people. All the individuals within the other stakeholder groups will be a user of streets and squares (Interview 18, PA).

Reference to the users' group was limited during the interview stage. This can be a result of the interview questions being partly focused on participation, which led the interviewees to continue to focus on participants who are most likely to participate in the urban design process during the design and development stages – residents and other community groups. However, some participants discussed how the way street users and citizens make use of a space determines how public space will evolve. This includes how particular areas or parts of the streets in most village cores have become associated with the socialisation of the elderly, which along the years has resulted in the placing of benches and other amenities to support and encourage this.

Another set of users are car drivers driving through the area. These individuals are likely to resist any attempt to improve the quality of the pedestrian environment that involves restricting or slowing car traffic, as their only interest is a faster journey, as discussed in *5.2.2 Car culture*. Car culture in itself is driving change, as several streets have been widened over the years to reduce congestion and accommodate the ever-increasing number of cars. This process is ongoing despite increasing opposition from eNGOs, professionals, and other stakeholders. This change is directly driven by the way people chose to travel, with their choices in turn leading to the need to improve the infrastructure unless alternative solutions are sought.

5.4 Relationship between stakeholders

This section continues to address the second objective of the study. While the previous section discussed the different roles, aspirations, determination and other factors associated with the different stakeholders, this section seeks to understand the type of relationships that exists between stakeholders. This is then used as a basis to discuss power in the urban design process in *Chapter 7*, section *7.3*, which Carmona (2014) identified as being as a key aspect of the urban design, discussing how power relations between stakeholders *"sit at the heart of the urban design – place-shaping – process, dictating the flow and function of the process itself, and the nature of its outcomes"* (p. 30).

5.4.1 Collaboration

As discussed in *Chapter 2*, collaboration in urban design can lead to higher quality projects which address the needs of a wider range of stakeholders. Some interview participants discussed how collaboration is likely to make stakeholders more aware of the challenges being faced by others and can adjust their expectations accordingly (Interview 15, bus company; 16, MP; 21, GRTU; 22, architect/lands authority). Participants stated that stakeholders are not always willing to collaborate, especially if they do not believe they will gain by doing so (Interview 2, architect; 4, mayor; 6, mayor; 31; economist).

5.4.1.1 Collaboration between authorities

When discussing collaboration between stakeholders, the interview participants focused most of their discussion on collaboration, or lack of, between the authorities themselves, as outlined in Table 28.

Table 28: Findings on collaborative practices between authorities.

Findings on collaboration between authorities	Number of interviewees	Interviewee No., profession
There is a lack of collaboration between the authorities themselves.	11	9, architect/eNGO 10, GHRC 16, MP 18, PA 19, PA 23, planner 25, MTA 26, urban planner/academic 29, planner 31, economist 34, TM planner
Lack of collaboration between Infrastructure Malta and other authorities leads to conflict.	11	1, mayor 2, architect 3, KTP 5; future mobility expert 7, road engineer 8; architect/politician 9, architect/eNGO 12, professor 23, planner 25, MTA 29, planner
Authorities only consider their own sector and do not take into account how certain issues overlap with other sectors that fall under the responsibility of other authorities.	6	10, GHRC 19, PA 23, planner 25, MTA 29, planner 34, TM planner
In related to the above point, the lack of collaboration between authorities leads to a lack of integration between strategies and policies of different authorities.	3	18, PA 20, PA 26, urban planner/academic
The lack of collaboration between authorities limits the sharing of data and resources.	3	18, PA 20, PA 24, MHRA
Sometimes project leaders need to bring the authorities together in an attempt to find a compromise between authorities.	3	9, architect/eNGO 10, GHRC 16, MP

When discussing the Maltese context, eleven participants identified lack of collaboration between the authorities as an issue. This lack of collaboration can be linked to the authorities restricting themselves to their exclusive domains and 'interfering' with one another. This results in a system in which the authorities focus on their sector without considering the overlaps between the sectors and issues, something which is required to adopt a holistic approach (Interview 10, GHRC; 19, PA; 23, planner; 25, MTA; 29, planner; 34, TM planner). Sometimes, this lack of collaboration can also be identified between the different units within the authorities themselves (Interview 18).

A technical advisor to MHRA (Interview 24) discussed how this results in a system in which authorities and entities seem to be working in separate 'boxes' each bound by their set of regulations. Issues however start to arise when certain projects or challenges affect several of these different boxes as collaboration and diffusion between them does not exist. The interviewee remarks that in an ideal system instead of 'boxes', the authorities are like a set of 'layers' which overlap in certain areas (Figure 24). This would ensure that the strategies and policies are coordinated between all the entities rather than each entity adopting its own approach and perspective.

Blocks   Layers
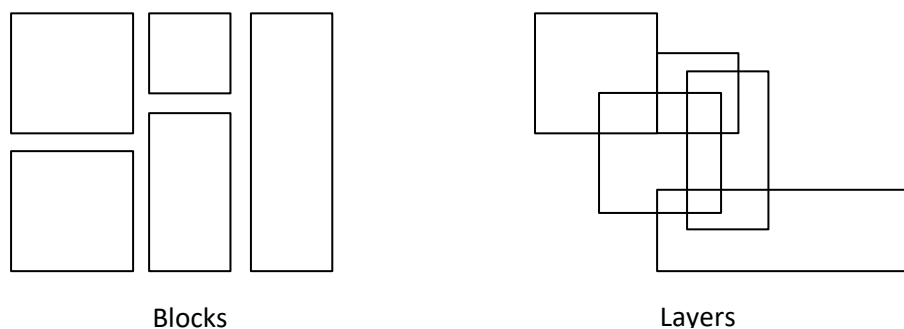
Figure 24: Left: Authorities and entities within their separate 'boxes' with clear boundaries and remits. Right: Authorities and entities which overlap, with less clear boundaries requiring more collaboration and coordination with the other entities.

Apart from lack of collaboration, participants identified cases in which authorities have different visions, which results in conflict. In particular, Infrastructure Malta was identified as having a history of conflict with the Planning Authority, Transport Malta and the Environment and Resource Authority. It is not the first time that IM starts to implement the works in absence of approval from both TM and PA, which creates further tension and mistrust between the authorities (Interview 1, mayor; 2, architect; 3, KTP; 5; future mobility expert; 7, road engineer; 8; architect/politician; 9, architect/eNGO; 12, professor; 23, planner; 25, MTA; 29, planner).

> *Between Ministries and Authorities there is no collaboration. In fact, they always blame things on each other and put any delays down to other ministries.* (Interview 26, urban planner/ academic)

A deputy chief officer at Transport Malta (Interview 34) is of the opinion that the best solution for Malta is a system in which every government entity and authority has a planning section. These planning sections would need to collaborate to coordinate the approach of the various authorities and entities. These planning sections can then seek further collaboration with other stakeholders such as Local Councils, which would, in turn, benefit from better guidance and advice.

> *I think in general when there is a project, especially a government project, a national one and there is a direction that this project needs to be done, or at least the majority of people are in agreement with it, normally the authorities pull the same rope.* (Interview 22, architect/lands authority)

Therefore, it can be concluded that the government, especially the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), plays an important role in bringing the authorities together to collaborate. Since the OPM cannot get involved in every issue, this approach tends to be limited to the most important and most urgent sectors and projects. A change in the structure and system is likely required for authorities to start collaborating in a more effective manner and in an ongoing process, in which they are required to collaborate daily rather than in ad-hoc groups where everyone presents and defends the views of their authority.

5.4.1.2   Collaboration between key stakeholders

Apart from the collaboration between authorities, the collaboration between key stakeholders in the urban design process was also discussed extensively. Based on their experience in the urban design process, interview participants identified several aspects of the urban design process which are directly related to the type of collaboration that exists between the key stakeholders. These are listed in Table 29.

Table 29: Findings on collaboration between key stakeholders

Findings on collaboration between key stakeholders.	Number of interviewees	Interviewee No., profession
Authorities, especially Transport Malta, collaborate with other stakeholders with the aim of improving the quality of the public realm.	7	4, mayor 6, mayor 10, GHRC 15, bus company 21, GRTU 28, TM architect 30, LCA 34, TM planner
Trust has been identified as very important for collaboration. According to the participants, the greater the trust, the greater the willingness to collaborate and work towards a common vision.	5	3, KTP 10, GHRC 12, professor 16, MP 29, planner
Ad-hoc committees were identified as an effective way to coordinate between different stakeholders.	4	8, architect/politician 11, MP 20, PA 21, GRTU
Local Councils do not always find the required collaboration from authorities and other government entities.	3	1, mayor 4, mayor 6, mayor
The type of collaboration often depends on the persons leading the process.	3	25, MTA 29, planner 34, TM planner
Lack of collaboration between NGOs.	2	14, eNGO 29, planner

Transport Malta was identified as an authority that collaborates extensively with other stakeholders. An architect at the authority (Interview 28) noted that they collaborate with a range of stakeholders on a daily basis, with the level of participation and collaboration varying depending on the stakeholder and their knowledge. Similarly, a director at Malta Tourism Authority (Interview 25) discussed how as an authority they adopt a collaborative approach to tourism in which they collaborate with a wide range of stakeholders. Through this collaboration MTA seeks to influence the urban design process, to align it to the authority's objectives and priorities.

Four participants (Interview 8, architect/politician; 11, MP; 20, PA; 21, GRTU) discussed how the setting up of ad-hoc committees can be used to coordinate between the interests of various stakeholders. From experience, the participants discussed how these types of committees promote

collaboration between stakeholders and who often end up agreeing on a shared position. These types of committees can be especially important as collaboration from authorities and government entities is not always forthcoming.

Irrespective of the type of collaboration or stakeholders being considered, the interview participants who discussed this subject in detail stressed that trust is one of the most important factors in successful collaborative approaches (Interview 3, KTP; 10, GHRC; 12, professor; 16, MP; 29, planner).

5.4.2   Conflict

Without collaboration, conflict can occur, especially when the stakeholders have conflicting aspirations and interests. As discussed earlier, there have also been cases of conflict Local Councillors, due to partisan politics or differing opinions, which often results in the council not functioning and not delivering the required improvements (see 5.3.6). This section presents the opinions of the various interviewees on conflicts within the urban design process, which are listed in Table 30.

Table 30: Findings on conflicts in the urban design process.

Findings in relation to conflict	Number of interviewees	Interviewee No., profession
Conflict is to be expected in the urban design process.	10	1, mayor 4, mayor 5, future mobility expert 6, mayor 20, PA 23, planner 24, MHRA 26, urban planner 28, TM architect 29, planner
The level of conflict will depend on the project.	5	1, mayor 7, road engineer 9, PA 18, PA 19, PA 33, architect
The level of conflict will depend on project co-ordination.	5	3, KTP 12, professor 14, eNGO 19, PA 23, planner

Different opinions can be healthy as long as stakeholders respect others' opinions and do not result in conflict.	4	9, architect/eNGO 15, bus company 30, LCA 32, housing authority

Ten interview participants believe that conflicts are to be expected in the urban design process. They said that this is especially true for the redesign of streets and squares. Participants further discussed that for any project, there is likely to be a group of people or some individuals who may be opposed to the proposal. Therefore, conflict management will be required at one point or another in the process.

The level of conflict will also depend a lot on the approach taken by the project co-ordinators (Interview 3, KTP; 12, professor; 23, planner). If professionals leading the process, including the decision-makers, carefully assess all the feedback and they manage to find a balanced compromise between the stakeholders, then there might be a low level of conflict. If on the other hand they are considered as favouring one group over another, then there might be a lot of conflicts that might negatively affect the confidence of participants in subsequent projects (Interview 3, KTP; 14, eNGO; 19, PA; 23, planner).

Conflict and different opinions can sometimes lead to controversies. Controversy, in which the conflicts between stakeholders become public, can result in a more complex situation to manage. In Malta, several policies and projects end up being controversial due to the politicisation of the process (see *5.2.4 The influence of politics on the urban design process*).

5.5   Attitude of stakeholders towards urban design proposals

The second objective of this study also identifies the involvement of stakeholders in the urban design process. To address this objective, there is the need to consider the general attitudes which stakeholders adopt when considering proposals or participating in the process. This section seeks to contribute to this discussion by reporting two main findings. One of these is that stakeholders tend to be afraid of change which often leads to resistance to change, something which is not unique to Malta. The second identified factor was that the stakeholders' approach and involvement in the design process tend to be of an egoistic nature, in which stakeholders participate in search of increasing their benefits, even if this is at the cost of others.

The attitudes of stakeholders are likely to be associated with the aspirations and determination of stakeholders, which Carmona (2014) identifies as key factors which influence how stakeholders seek

to influence the urban design process. The findings in this section also contribute to the discussion on the stakeholders' power and relationships, since the attitudes adopted by the stakeholders will determine the type of relationship that exists between them, which in turn affects the urban design process itself.

5.5.1 Stakeholders attitude towards change

The findings presented so far show that there are several cases where stakeholders are not willing to accept change but prefer the status quo, especially in the context of the car culture described in *5.2.2 Car culture*. As shown in Table 31, seven participants talked about how stakeholders are often unwilling to change their practises and compromise. At the same time, eight participants discussed how the Maltese public and stakeholders can adapt to change despite initial resistance, referring in particular to pedestrianisation and shared space projects.

Table 31: Findings on stakeholders' attitude towards change.

Key points related to an unwillingness to change.	Number of interviewees	Interviewee No., profession
Stakeholders accept and adapt to change, despite initial resistance.	8	1, mayor 2, architect 4, mayor 9, architect/eNGO 15, bus company 16, MP 20, PA 27, road safety
Stakeholders are not willing to change their practises and are not ready to make compromises, especially in relation to the car.	7	4, mayor 7, road engineer 9, architect/eNGO 16, MP 27, road safety 28, TM architect 30, LCA 31, economist
Unwillingness to change can result in initial resistance to shared space or other concepts that depart from the norm.	5	3, KTP 16, MP 20, PA 27, road safety 28, TM architect
Stakeholders tend to be wary of change, especially in their own neighbourhood (NIMBY).	3	5, future mobility expert 18, PA

		21, GRTU
Unwillingness to change can be overcome by engaging with stakeholders.	2	12, professor 27, road safety
Unwillingness to change might result in the need for certain decisions to be imposed.	2	21, GRTU 26, urban planner/academic

A behavioural economist (Interview 31) discussed how in behavioural economics there is frequent reference to the status quo bias, where people prefer the current state of affairs and resist change. People will get involved to ensure that the current context remains, usually on the basis that the current context is meeting their needs. However, this can be considered dangerous as what has worked in the past and what is working today will not necessarily work in the future.

However, several interviewees discussed ways through which 'unwillingness to change' can be overcome. Two mayors (Interview 1, 4) discussed how from experience people are more likely to accept change if the stakeholders are aware of why certain measures are required. Similarly, an architect (Interview 2), the director of the Institute for Climate Change and Sustainable Development at the University of Malta (Interview 12) and the manager of the Malta Road Safety Council (Interview 27) discussed how the populations' ability and willingness to adapt can be higher if they are informed of the underlying principles and the rationale behind the proposals. In the case of shared space, it was identified as essential that the public is informed about the potential benefits. Therefore, the persons leading the process need to make use of their communication and their 'sales' skills to convince stakeholders that change is required as this plays an essential role in encouraging residents to explore different options.

5.5.2   Egoistic

A recurring theme in the interviews was the participants opinion that the Maltese, as a population, take an egoistic approach when it comes to proposals for the built environment. As shown in Table 32, which summarises the responses, more than half of the interviewees referred to the selfish nature when considering proposals, as they tend to only consider how a proposal will affect them, rather than evaluating it based on the benefits to the community.

Table 32: Findings in relation to an egoistic attitude in urban design.

Key points related to an egoistic attitude to urban design proposals.	Number of interviewees	Interviewee No., profession
Stakeholders tend to adopt an egoistic approach to urban design by considering only how the proposal will affect themselves.	18	1, mayor 3, KTP 4, mayor 6, mayor 7, road engineer 9, architect/eNGO 11, MP 13, PS 18, PA 20, PA 24, MHRA 25, MTA 29, planner 30, LCA 31, economist 32, housing authority 33, architect 34, TM planner
Stakeholders tend to participate in the urban design process with the sole aim of maximising their benefits. Such an approach might require the imposition of decisions in the interest of the common good.	4	10, GHRC 13, PS 18, PA 33, architect
Conflict can occur at all stages and levels of urban design. Sometimes biggest issues in the local community are on small design details or placement of street furniture.	3	1, mayor; 25, MTA; 33, architect

Such an approach by stakeholders can take over the public participation process being adopted for such projects. Rather than considering the different aspects of the strategy or proposals in a holistic manner, stakeholders tend to comment only about their interest and other aspects which will be affecting them directly. As a result, very few people assess and consider strategies and proposals holistically. The president of the Chamber of Planners (Interview 29) stated that "*in the urban design and planning process, you have a lot of interests. But when push comes to shove, the personal interests win. Therefore, you start eating away from the best interest for the public*".

When stakeholders consider only their interests, conflict can also arise at the micro-level. Participants noted that sometimes there is unanimous agreement about a project, but conflicts start to arise during

the design stage due to small decisions that need to be taken such as where to install street lighting, street furniture, bus stops and other elements (Interview 1, mayor; 25, MTA; 33, architect).

5.6   Concluding Remarks

The findings presented above seem to confirm Carmona's (2014) assertion that contextual factors directly influence the urban design process. Cultural characteristics in Malta, such as the colonial past, influence the way stakeholders approach the urban design process, such as their unwillingness to participate, which in turn might require a specific participation process based on engagement and communication.

The strong car culture is also deeply entrenched, with citizens placing a high value on the car, which is due to the high level of car dependency and the lack of attractive alternatives. This has led to the design of urban spaces being car-centric, with car parking being the main concern of participants in the urban design process and may be the reason why certain urban improvement projects are rejected.

The findings also suggest that several shortcomings identified in the Maltese urban planning and design system need to be addressed, as these lead to lack of upgrades and improvements to the urban realm. Part of the shortcomings are related to the centralised political system which gives a lot of power to the government and the politicisation of the process which results in a short-term urban design approach based around the five-year political cycles. In addition, politicians do not take the necessary bold and unpopular decisions.

It was also discussed that authorities do not communicate effectively, with many feeling that they should move away from being strict policymakers and regulators and collaborate more with the rest of stakeholders, which is currently lacking even between the authorities themselves. In general, there seems to be a need for more collaboration between the different stakeholders in Malta, with many noting that the characters and skills of the people involved in the process determine the success of participatory processes and whether the process maximises the benefits for all stakeholders. Participants also made it clear that conflict is to be expected in the urban design process. The level of conflict is likely to depend on the project and the different aspirations and views of stakeholders.

A common finding in this chapter is the important role that project leaders have in bringing stakeholders together, building relationships and trust, and managing any conflict that may arise. This is discussed in more detail in the next chapter, sub-section *6.2.4 Persons leading the urban design*

process. Local Councils can also play an important role as representatives of the local community, but also has a number of challenges and problems, mostly related to lack of resources and expertise.

The above factors require a specific approach to a participatory urban design process. There will most likely need to be a transition phase from the current practises where stakeholders begin to build trust. An educational phase where stakeholders begin to appreciate the benefits of shared space and other approaches that have been documented in various studies in recent years. This is also likely to require a long-term strategy that may also involve experts and politicians imposing unpopular decisions, as will be discussed in further detail in *6.3 Participation*.

In considering these findings, where there are conflicts, differing aspirations and interests, power relations will play an important role as stakeholders will seek to influence the process for their benefit. This will be discussed in more detail in *7.3 The influence of stakeholders and their power relations*.

Chapter 6 Findings on the urban design process

6.1 Introduction

The urban design process is influenced by contextual factors and stakeholders, with the findings on these presented in *Chapter 5*. This chapter will further present the findings from the interviews, focusing on the urban design process itself, in order to address the third objective of this research: "*to analyse how a participative urban design process can contribute to the (re-) introduction of shared space principles in Malta with the aim of increasing liveability and walkability.*"

The findings in this chapter are being divided into three parts, as follows:

1. The first part provides an overview of the findings on key considerations in the urban design process, including the type of decision-making required, the need to balance stakeholders when making trade-offs, the importance of research and data to inform the process, and the identification of the important role of professionals in leading the urban design process, which is key to its success.

2. The second part consists of a detailed overview of the existing level of public participation in Malta, using Arnstein's Ladder of Participation to classify the level of participation. This is followed by a review of the participants' opinion on whether more participation is needed in Malta, including the expected challenges that may be encountered in shifting to the desired level of participation. This part concludes by outlining the findings on the importance of engagement to overcome these expected challenges and the importance of finding consensus or compromise.

3. The third part explores the views of interview participants on the desired outcomes of the urban design process, first discussing the need for change, before focusing on the introduction of shared space with the aim of achieving more walkable and liveable streets, including the associated benefits and challenges. The findings on the need for an integrated, holistic, and long-term approach required to achieve these objectives are then discussed.

As can be seen in Figure 25, the first section (*6.2*) presents the findings on sub-processes, most of which relate specifically to the Development and Design sub-processes of urban design, with one sub-section focusing specifically on the important role of those who lead and coordinate the process. Similarly, section *6.3* focuses on the two 'shaping for use' processes, discussing in detail the need to gain support and make trade-offs. The third section *6.4* focuses on the objectives of the urban design process and provides insights into all four place-shaping processes and their agendas.
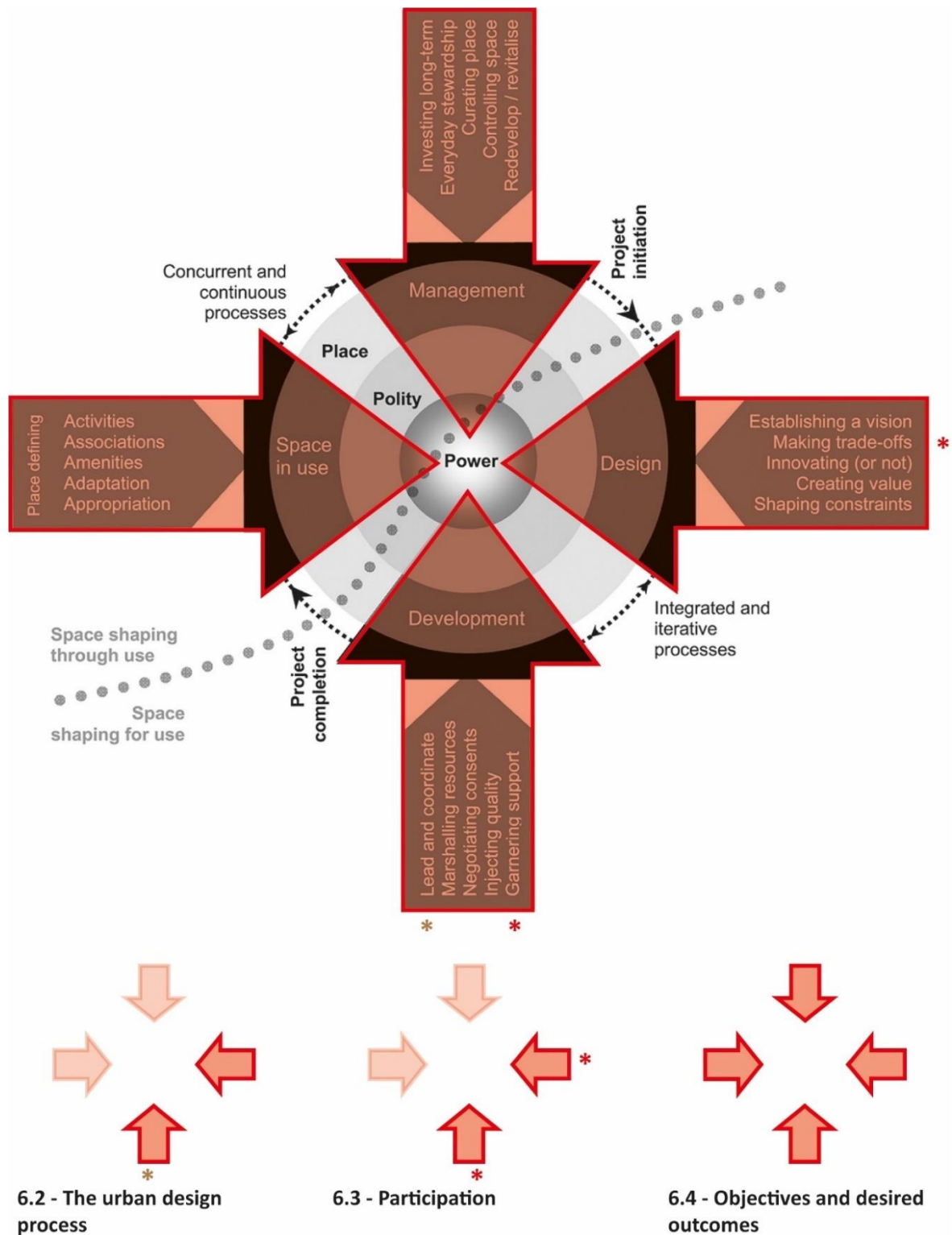
Figure 25: The relationship between the sections in Chapter 6 and the key components of the Place-Shaping Continuum. The * indicate the agendas most related to the findings of each section. Adapted from "The Place-shaping Continuum: A Theory of Urban Design Process" by M. Carmona, 2014, Journal of Urban Design, 19(1), p.11 (https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2013.854695).

6.2   The urban design process

When discussing the definitions of urban design in *Chapter 2* (sub-section *2.2.1*), Inam (2002) refers to urban design as a process that deals with the complex and rich dynamics of a place. The problems that the process addresses may also be wicked problems (sub-section *2.2.5*), where different stakeholders may have different ideas and sways of thinking, with no one solution being obviously better than another.

In discussing these challenges, interview participants identified several key considerations that need to be made when discussing the urban design process and its outcomes. The first part of this section discusses the urban design process as one in which decisions must be made. Sometimes these decisions can be unpopular and may need to be imposed. However, the importance of keeping a balance between stakeholders was found to be one of the most important factors for successful projects. Due to the complex nature of urban design, research and data analysis along with case-studies are considered essential to the urban design process. This section concludes with a review of the importance attributed to the people who lead the urban design process.

6.2.1   Decision making

While various aspects of the urban design process were discussed by interview participants, such as the need for participation, the importance of finding balance, and the importance of those who lead the process, these are discussed more in terms of how they might influence the decision-making process. The decision-making process can be particularly difficult when stakeholders have different aspirations and interests, making it difficult to reach consensus or some form of compromise. In such cases, the urban design process can essentially be seen as an exercise in trying to find the best compromise between the aspirations and needs of stakeholders, as well as a compromise between competing or conflicting urban design features.

Table 33 lists the key findings identified by interview participants on the decision-making. As can be seen in the table, the most common discussion was that there will inevitably be instances where decision-makers will have to make unpopular decisions.

Table 33: Findings on decision-making in the urban design process

Key findings related to decision making	Number of interviewees	Interviewee No., profession
There are cases where it is necessary to impose unpopular decisions.	12	1, mayor 4, mayor 5, future mobility expert 14, eNGO 15, bus company 19, PA 20, PA 25, MTA 26, urban planner/academic 29, planner 30, LCA 32, housing authority 33, architect
A top-down approach to decision-making is necessary when a holistic and long-term approach is taken.	8	5, future mobility expert 14, eNGO 15, bus company 16, MP 25, MTA 26, urban planner/academic 31, economist 33, architect
Important and controversial decisions are usually put before politicians in government, who then have to make a decision after hearing the arguments of the professionals advising them, as discussed in *5.2.4 The influence of politics on the urban design process*.	4	12, professor 26, urban planner/academic 28, TM architect 29, planner
Local councils play an important role in the decentralised urban design process and in decision-making.	3	8, architect/politician 16, MP 30, LCA

While the majority of participants support a higher level of participation, as discussed in *6.3.2 Desired levels of participation*, several participants noted that certain decisions need to be imposed, stating that the government, authorities and politicians need to have the courage and willpower to enforce certain measures that may prove to be unpopular, such as taxes. At the same time, it is important that the reasons for such decisions are explained to the public.

A behavioural economist (Interview 31) discussed that while she is a strong proponent of bottom-up approaches, sometimes top-down approaches are needed to regulate market failures. "*In short, when it comes to public spaces, there is very high demand because they are free, and very limited supply because there is no profit in providing public space*". This view was shared by six other participants (Interview 5; future mobility expert; 14, eNGO; 15, bus company; 25, MTA; 26, urban planner/academic; 33, architect) when discussing the introduction of shared space principles. They believe that top-down decisions need to be made to disincentivise car use while providing alternatives and incentives to use alternatives.

The Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Capital Projects (Interview 17) is of the opinion that whilst people should be involved in policymaking and visioning, decision-making should rest with the institutions. The Parliamentary Secretary for Planning (Interview 13) also discussed how decision-makers need to realise that they cannot please everyone, noting that at the end of the day the government and institutions are there to take the necessary decisions.

These results clearly argue for a retention of decision-making processes that are controlled and guided by authorities and professionals. At the same time, there is a clear desire to increase the level of participation and allow citizens to influence decisions to a greater extent, as reported in *6.3.2 Desired levels of participation*. Regardless of the approach taken, any decision-making process must seek to a balance between stakeholders, particularly in spaces such as streets and squares where users and activities may be incompatible. This is discussed in the next sub-section.

6.2.2   Balance between stakeholders

When streets and squares are upgraded or redesigned, there are many stakeholders who may be directly affected. Throughout the various stages of the urban design process, a balance must be maintained between stakeholders while attempting to ensure that as many stakeholders as possible benefit from proposed strategies, policies or interventions. This balance is also often necessary to gain the support and backing of stakeholders – which can be fundamental to the successful implementation and use of a space. Various interview participants comment on this and are listed in Table 34.

Table 34: Findings on the need to find a balance between stakeholders.

Key points in relation to the balance between stakeholders.	Number of interviewees	Interviewee No., profession
Participants are of the opinion that the needs of residents are given priority when considering streets and squares.	15	1, mayor 3, KTP 2, architect 4, eNGO 9, architect/eNGO 10, GHRC 13, PS 18, PA 22, architect/lands authority 27, road safety 30, LCA 33, architect 34, TM planner
Finding a balance between stakeholders can be challenging, especially they have very different aspirations and beliefs.	13	5, future mobility expert 7, road engineer 11, MP 13, PS 14, eNGO 15, bus company 16, MP 19, PA 21, GRTU 26, urban planner/academic 28, TM architect 29, planner 32, housing authority
Finding a balance between stakeholders can be important since it determines whether a compromise or consensus can be found between stakeholders.	10	3, KTP 4, mayor 13, PS 15, bus company 16, MP 21, GRTU 23, planner 27, road safety 28, TM architect 30, LCA 32, housing authority

The urban design process needs to take into consideration the power and resources of the different stakeholders if it is to ensure a balanced outcome.	6	14, eNGO 18, PA 22, architect/lands authority 23, planner 27, road safety 29, planner

As shown in Table 34, ten interview participants state that achieving a balance between stakeholders is crucial in the public participation process, as this can determine whether a compromise or consensus can be reached between the different stakeholders. However, participants also note that it is very difficult to find a balance in the urban design process and that it is difficult to implement projects where all stakeholders are satisfied, especially if they have opposing views and opinions. The president of the Chamber of planners (Interview 29) stated that: "*we believe planning is minimising the losers. There are rarely win-win situations*".

Six participants are of the opinion that the urban design process must take into account the power and resources of different stakeholders to ensure a balanced outcome. The Minister for Infrastructure (Interview 17) agreed with such an approach, noting that "*giving priority to one group at the expense of another is not a solution. Solutions should be based on the sum of the inputs*".

Fifteen participants called for a balanced approach to urban design and spoke about prioritising the needs and aspirations of residents, as they are the primary beneficiaries of street and square embellishment projects. Others argued how residents should be given prioritised in the public participation process, as they typically do not participate as much as other stakeholders.

An urban planner (Interview 26) concluded his discussion on finding a balance between stakeholders by referring to wicked problems, noting that "*there are no ideal solutions in both planning and urban design. But there may be better solutions than others*". Therefore, professionals often need to design and analyse different solutions, underpinned by research and case studies in similar places and contexts, as discussed in the next sub-section.

6.2.3   The importance of research and data analysis

Interview participants also noted the importance of having research findings and data to inform the urban design process. However, as discussed in the previous findings, in Malta one of the shortcomings identified is the lack of research and data in the field of urban design. Apart from

confirming this, the findings on research and data analysis mainly focused on the challenges faced by Malta as summarised in Table 35.

Table 35: Findings in relation to research and data analysis

Key points related to research and data analysis	Number of interviewees	Interviewee No., profession
Participants identify the need for more research since the existing body of knowledge in the Maltese context is limited. This is compounded by the lack of research sharing, which often requires authorities and other stakeholders to research each project from basic principles.	15	3, KTP 5, future mobility expert 9, architect/eNGO 12, professor 13, PS 16, MP 18, PA 20, PA 21, GRTU 22, architect/lands authority 24, MHRA 26, urban planner 27, road safety 29, planner 32, housing authority
Analysis of data collected through public participation identified as one of the biggest challenges in the urban design process.	7	11, MP 15, bus company 18, PA 19, PA 24, MHRA 29, planner 34, TM planner
Related to the point above, there is the need to understand the reasons behind feedback from stakeholders, whilst ensuring a representative sample.	4	13, PS 18, PA 19, PA 24, MHRA
Authorities and government entities reduced their research output in recent years.	4	18, PA 28, TM architect 29, planner 34, TM planner
Research and analysis of both the before and after are required to develop case studies that can inform future projects and encourage stakeholders to support proposals.	4	16, MP 18, PA 19, PA 21, GRTU
There is the need to balance data collection and analysis with time and resources required.	3	11, MP 15, bus company 20, PA

Authorities and government entities are not willing to share the limited body of knowledge despite attempts to develop a shared body of knowledge.	3	18, PA 23, planner 28, TM architect

The director of the Institute for Climate Change and Sustainable Development at the University of Malta (Interview 12) and the Parliamentary Secretary for Planning (Interview 13) both discussed lack of research and data on the existing urban design context in Malta, which requires authorities and other stakeholders to start by collecting basic data each time they are working on a policy or project. As shown in Table 35, 11 participants identified the need for more research and public opinion surveys in Malta. At the same time, several participants discussed how whilst this data is essential for professionals to make informed decisions, the available time does not always permit comprehensive research (Interview 3, KTP; 12, professor; 18, PA; 21, GRTU).

Seven participants also discussed that analysing the data takes time and resources. Therefore, it is important to find a balance between the amount of research and the amount of time and resources required. For this reason, seven participants identified structuring and analysing public participation data as one of the biggest challenges. To make the process more efficient, public participation needs to be focused and structured around the data and feedback needed for design and decision-making. From the data analysis, professionals need to understand the different outcomes and analyse how to address any shortcomings and how to improve the proposal.

These findings suggest that more research and data collection is needed in Malta to better understand the current context and measure the effectiveness of introducing new policies and the implementing new projects.

6.2.4   Persons leading the urban design process

Another aspect identified as very important to the success of the urban design process was the approach of the individuals or teams leading the process. Several interview participants commented on the importance of leading and coordinating the process, which are presented in Table 36 and discussed in more detail below.

Table 36: Findings in relation to persons leading the urban design process

Key findings in relation to the role of those leading the urban design process.	Number of interviewees	Interviewee No., profession
Participants discussed how the role of leading the urban design process can be assigned to different authorities, professionals or stakeholders. Some identified:	13[1]	
Local Councils as best placed to lead the urban design process on a local scale.	(9)	8, architect/politician 9, architect/eNGO 10, GHRC 13, PS 15, bus company 22, architect/lands authority 23; planner 29; planner 30; LCA
Steering Committee or foundations as best placed to lead the long-term urban design process.	(5)	11, MP 13, PS 20, PA 24; MHRA 27, road safety
Project leaders can influence the way stakeholders' approach and interact with the process	11	3, KTP 7, road engineer 12, professor 16, MP 18, PA 19, PA 21, GRTU 23, planner 26, urban planner/academic 27, road safety 28, TM architect
The leaders can play an important role in finding a compromise between stakeholders, including authorities.	7	10, GHRC 11, MP 13, PS 16, MP 21, GRTU 22, architect/lands authority 25, MTA

The project leaders also can be champions who seek to push for change.	7	15, bus company 16, MP 18, PA 19, PA 20, PA 23, planner 24, MHRA
In some cases, the project leaders need to show clear leadership, including the need to impose decisions, whilst explaining and educating other stakeholders why this is necessary.	5	2, architect 5, future mobility expert 10, GHRC 29, planner 31, economist
Persons leading the process will likely need to engage stakeholders and encourage them to participate in the process.	5	2, architect 11, MP 16, MP 27, road safety 28, TM architect
Persons leading and facilitating the urban design process need excellent communication skills.	3	18, PA 21, GRTU 25, MTA

Note: 1 – the total does not add up, since Interviewee 13 was in favour of both approaches.

Eleven interviewees remarked that the persons leading the participation or urban design process can influence the way stakeholders approach and interact with the process. In their opinion, there is a higher likelihood that a compromise is found if the persons leading the process listen to the different views and explain why certain compromises and decisions are required.

> *Personalities make a big difference. You might have the most knowledgeable and intelligent person but if that person does not have the right communication and negotiation skills, then that person might not be the ideal person to lead such processes. You also find other characters who do not accept criticism and opposing views. In a public consultation exercise, the persons leading the process should listen to everyone and truly consider their feedback.* (Interview 18, PA)

Participants also discussed how project leaders and coordinators need certain skills which not everyone has. A unit manager at PA (Interview 18) and the president of GRTU (Interview 21) are of the opinion that professionals trained in this field, including planners, geographers and architects are not trained to listen and to empathise when meeting people in consultation meetings.

Participants also discussed how the persons leading the process need to be proactive and if necessary, they need to approach stakeholders to encourage them to participate (Interview 2, architect; 16, MP;

11, MP; 27, road safety; 28, TM architect). Five participants (Interview 18, PA; 19, PA; 20, PA; 23, planner; 24, MHRA) also spoke about how strategies and projects often have a person or body who initiates the process – a champion, without whom change is unlikely to happen. An MP (Interview 16) also discussed how at the initial stages of the process, the project leader needs to have a clear vision and idea of what the strategy, policy or projects needs to achieve.

A transport expert (Interview 15) discussed how the introduction of shared space is likely to require strong leadership:

> *I do not think the challenge is such that big to introduce shared space. The challenge is that you have a very strong leadership in the process. So I might say we want to increase the pedestrianisation area, or implement shared space in these areas, who will lead it? Who will take the role? A politician, a policymaker, a stakeholder or a chairman of something. But there must be someone leading this. Because if someone does not lead it, champion it, and sell it to people you will end up not implementing anything. I'm certain of this*.

There are also cases in which the biggest challenge for the project leader is to find a compromise between the different stakeholders, including the authorities themselves. The project leader would need to convince all the stakeholders of the proposed vision, strategy or project. It is also important to mobilise the different entities and get them around a table for discussion at some stage in the process (Interview 10, GHRC; 11, MP; 13, PS; 16, MP; 21, GRTU; 22, architect/lands authority; 25, MTA).

Apart from discussing the importance of people leading the process and their responsibilities, participants also discussed which stakeholders are best placed to lead the urban design process in respect to the design of streets and squares. Seven interviewees believe that Local Councils are best placed to lead the urban design process on a local scale as they understand the needs and priorities of the local community and locality.

In case of regional visions and strategies, a Steering Committee or Foundations can be set up which includes a range of stakeholders such as Transport Malta, Planning Authority, Superintendence of Cultural Heritage, Heritage Malta and Local Councils. Long term Steering Committees or Foundations could be beneficial since they can plan long term, rather than a definitive period of 5 years such as the case of Local Councils. Local Councils could however form an essential part of these foundations and should have a powerful vote (Interview 20, PA; 24; MHRA).

6.3   Participation

As discussed in *Chapter 2*, participation in the urban design process has become very important in recent years. This participation can take different forms and levels of power. To distinguish between the levels of power given to participants, this research refers to Arnstein's (1969) *Ladder of Participation*, which offered participants a ladder of participation levels which they could refer to when indicating the existing and desired levels of participation.

This section presents the findings on participation in the urban design process, beginning with the identification of existing levels of participation, before discussing the desired levels identified by participants and the challenges associated with adopting higher levels of participation. It then discusses the importance of engagement in the process and how participation can influence the outcomes of attempts to reach consensus or compromise.

These findings will provide further insight to address the third objective of this research by reporting findings on how a participatory approach to the urban design process can improve the process.

6.3.1   Existing levels of participation

One of the aims of the interviews was to obtain feedback from the interview participants on the current level of participation in Malta. The participants selected for the interviews were all individuals or professionals who are familiar with the urban design process in Malta and could provide first-hand feedback due to their involvement or close following of the urban design process.

One of the interview questions aimed to identify the current level of participation being adopted in the Maltese context: "In general, at which level on Arnstein's ladder of participation would you place the level of participation in the Maltese urban design process for the redesign of streets and squares?" The responses to this question are summarised in Table 37 and plotted as a distribution chart in Figure 26. While some participants identified specific levels, others identified a range of levels or identified different levels associated with particular stakeholders or interest groups.

Table 37: Summary of responses in relation to the existing levels of participation in Malta.

Identified Existing Levels of Participation	Interviews	No. of participants [1]	Existing Level of Public Participation						
			0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Level 0	25 [by Infrastructure Malta]; 29 [by Infrastructure Malta]; 31	3	■						
Level 1	1 [at Government level]; 26	2		■					
Level 1 - 3	12	1		■	■	■			
Level 3	2; 4; 5; 8 [not always real-time]; 10	5				■			
Level 3 - 4	3; 6; 20; 21; 23	5				■	■		
Level 3 - 6	15	1				■	■	■	■
Level 4	1 [at Local Council Level] 7; 9 [typically, but sometimes level 1 or 2]; 11; 14; 16; 24; 29; 30; 33 [but perception of people is Level 1]; 34	11					■		
Level 4 - 5	27	1					■	■	
Level 0 - 5	25	1	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Level 5	Interview 10 [by GHRC]; 13; 17; 18; 22; 31 [especially close to election]	6						■	
Level 5 - 6	19; 32	2						■	■
Level 1 – 6 depending on projects	28; 29 [higher levels adopted with powerful NGOs and stakeholders]	2		■	■	■	■	■	■
Total			4	6	4	15	21	13	5

Notes:

1. The total is more than 34, the number of interview participants, since some participants identified more than one level, often associated with a specific stakeholder. When level is specific to a stakeholder or stakeholder group, these are specified within square brackets.

2. Any additional conditions or remarks made by the interviewees when making reference to a specific level of participation are reproduced between [ ].
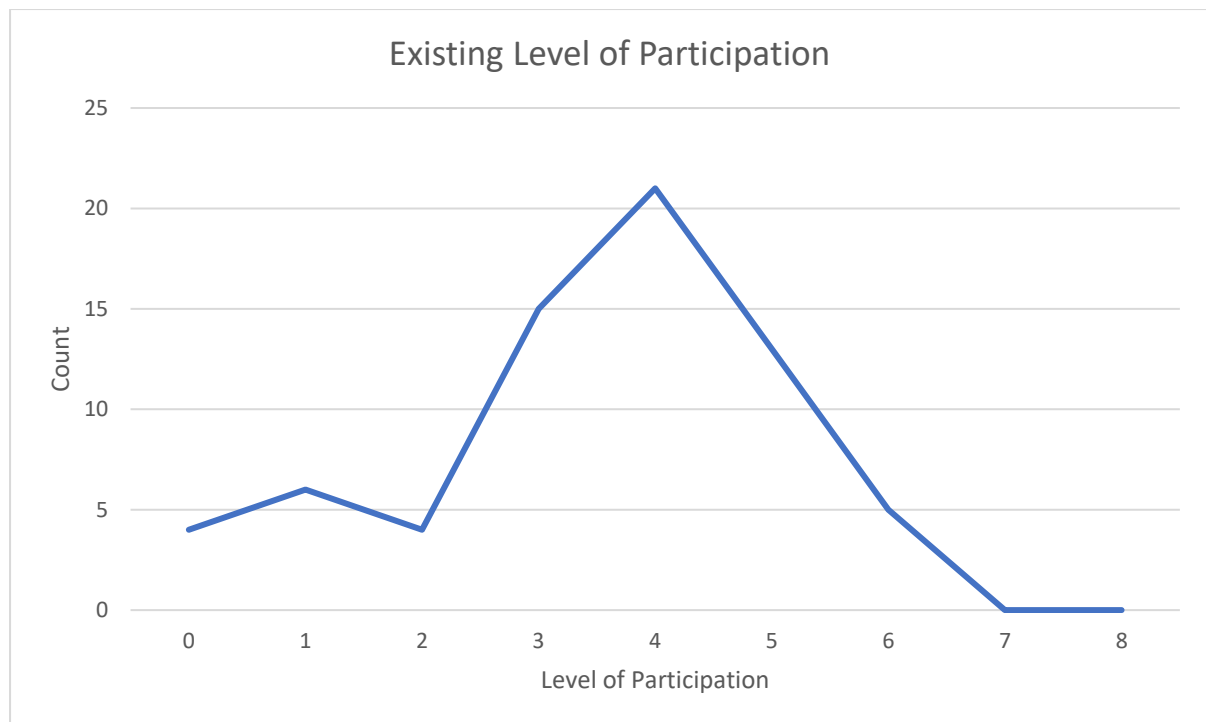
Figure 26: Distribution chart of the existing levels of participation

The data used to create Table 37 and Figure 26 are limited to those collected from the specific question about existing levels of participation. However, participants continued to refer to the level of participation throughout the interview, which understandably varied depending on the case and stakeholders involved. The findings below take into consideration all references to levels of participation throughout the interview.

For a start, there were several participants who believed that a Level 0 on Arnstein's Ladder of Participation needs to be considered in the Maltese context due to lack of genuine participation processes (Interview 3, KTP; 8, architect/politician; 12, professor; 26, urban planner/academic; 31 economist). The Director of the Institute for Climate Change and Sustainable Development at the University of Malta (Interview 12) stated that "*when it comes to my particular field of work, roads and public urban space, there is absolutely no consultation whatsoever.*" This remark was repeated by other participants, with the design of streets specifically identified as lacking any form of participation (Interviews 9, architect/eNGO; 16; MP; 25, MTA; 29, planner).

Other participants discussed how in most cases public participation is limited to that required by the planning law, both in the policymaking and development permitting process (Interview 2, architect; 24, MHRA; 29, planner; 31, economist; 32, housing authority; 33, architect). As a result, public participation tends to be limited to the development permit process, when the designs are almost finalised and have been submitted for planning approval. When this is the case, public participation is

carried out too late in the process, when the major decisions have already been made (Interview 3, KTP; 6, mayor; 12, professor; 15, bus company; 21, GRTU; 29, planner; 32, housing authority

An expert on future mobility (Interview 5) and the transport unit manager at PA (Interview 20) believe that not enough information is provided to interested stakeholders and citizens and that they are not kept informed during the process. Similarly, the president of GRTU (Interview 21) when discussing about participation, said: "… *we are halfway. We do a lot of dialogues, meetings etc... but at the end of the day, the perception of the public is that the decision is already taken. And that is what is wrong."*

Seven participants (Interview 11, MP; 13, PS; 15, bus company; 20, PA; 22, architects/lands authority; 31, economist; 33, architect) discussed how the existing system attempts to balance public participation with expert opinion. Several reasons were given for this, including that citizens may be afraid of change and that they tend to focus on the short-term. They also discussed that in some cases the experts must make unpopular decisions, which could be seen as a non-participative approach by stakeholders who disagree with the decisions.

As discussed previously, the level and type of participation also vary between authorities and stakeholders. In *5.4.1.2 Collaboration between authorities*, 11 participants had discussed how Infrastructure Malta does not collaborate with the authorities and other stakeholders. In this regard, three participants discussed how Infrastructure Malta tends to adopt an approach where whatever needs to be done is done without necessarily informing stakeholders that may be directly affected (Interview 1, mayor; 25, MTA; 31, economist).

However, a few participants also discussed how the existing level of participation is not just dependent on the authorities and the government entities. An architect and NGO member (Interview 9) noted that we live in a democracy and people can speak up freely and participate in the urban design process, however very few do. Similar, a unit manager at PA (Interview 19) remarked that the process is very open but very few people participate:

> *On paper public participation is total. There are no limits to it. In the sense that if a policy is being drafted, first you need to issue the objectives for public consultation. Then you must issue the first draft, therefore public participation is very thorough on paper. The process is truly open but how many people really participate?*

Consequently, the participant believes that authorities need to reach out to stakeholders and encourage them to participate. Four participants agreed with such an approach and discussed that in their experience, project teams build working relationships with other stakeholders when they

frequently collaborate with each other (Interview 10, GHRC; 11, MP; 13, PS; 28, TM architect).

6.3.2   Desired levels of participation

The interview questions also sought to identify whether participants believed that more participation is required in the urban design process. In reply to the question: "In the Maltese context, is more participation desired in the urban design process?", 28 participants from the 34 participants (83% of the participants) believe that more participation is required, as can be seen in Table 38.

Table 38: Summary of responses to question five in the interview: "In the Maltese context, is more participation desired in the urban design process?"

Response	Interviewees	Count	%
Yes, more participation is required.	2; 3; 4 [it does not mean people are ready for it]; 5; 7 [as long as informed by professionals]; 8; 9; 10 [as long as there is a balance with time and resources]; 11; 12; 13; 14; 15; 16; 17; 18; 19; 20; 21; 22 [but need for citizens to organise themselves]; 23; 24; 25; 26; 27; 29; 30 [keeping in mind that sometimes you need to impose decisions]; 32	28	82.4%
Not a lot more is required	1 [important to listen to ideas but everyone seems to only consider their interests]; 6; 34	3	8.8%
Depends	28; 31 [In some cases there might be the need for manipulation to educate people on what is right]; 33 [It is a question of culture. In Malta it worries me].	3	8.8%

Note: 1.   Any additional conditions or remarks made by the interviewees when making reference to a specific level of participation are reproduced between [ ].

Three participants (Interview 1, mayor; Interview 6, mayor; Interview 34; mayor) believe that the current level of participation adopted for the design of streets and squares is adequate, with not a lot more required. They are of the opinion that the current process allows for several opportunities in which interested stakeholders can participate in, however, the authorities and decision-makers need to retain the decision-making power.

Another three participants (Interview 28, TM architect; 31, economist; 33, architect) discussed how the need for more participation depends on the project being considered and other factors, such as whether more citizen participation will add value to the process. A behavioural economist (Interview 31) is of the opinion that when discussing streets and squares, especially on the need to restrain the car, more participation is not required as it is more a question of how to manipulate and educate people in order for them to realise that the proposed intervention is for the common good of the local community.

In a follow up question, the 28 interviewees who believed that a higher level of participation was necessary were asked to indicate which level of participation Malta should aim for when upgrading streets and squares. The responses to this question are summarised in Table 39, with over three quarters of the participants indicating either Level 5 or 6 as their desired level of participation. This indicates a clear desire for stakeholders to be given more power to influence the process and outcomes, while at the same time authorities retain some degree of control over the process.

Table 39: Summary of response to the question asking "Which level of participation on the Arnstein's ladder do you think Malta should aspire to be at when upgrading streets and squares?"

Response	Interviews	Count	Level				
			4	5	6	7	8
Level 4 - 5	27; 32	2					
Level 4 - 6	15	1					
Level 5	13; 14; 16; 23; 26 [when citizens become more knowledgeable]; 33	6					
Level 5 – 6	2; 5	2					
Level 6	3; 7; 9; 10; 11; 12; 17; 20; 21	9					
Level 6 - 7	18	1					
Level 7	22; 29	2					
Level 8	8 [for major projects]	1					
A mix of levels depending on the type of project	24; 25 [project affecting the local community directly should include higher levels of participation];	3					
	Total		3	11	13	3	1
	Percentage distribution		10%	35%	42%	10%	3%

Notes: 1. Interviewee 4, 19, 30 - no direct answer was given and difficult to pin-point the level they are referring to.
2. Any additional conditions or remarks made by the interviewees when making reference to a specific level of participation are reproduced between [ ].

Considering the preferred level of all participants, including that of the other six interviews who identified that the current level of participation was adequate, the average level of participation drops slightly; however the preference for Level 5 or 6 remains high at about 71 percent, as shown in Table 40 and Figure 27.

Table 40: Desired level of participation considering the 28 participants who stated that more participation is required and taking into consideration the levels the other participants identified as sufficient.

Response	Interviews	Count	Level					
			3	4	5	6	7	8
Level 3 - 4	6	1	▓	▓				
Level 4	1; 34	1		▓				
Level 4 - 5	27; 32	2		▓	▓			
Level 4 - 6	15	1		▓	▓	▓		
Level 5	13; 14; 16; 23; 26; 31; 33;	7			▓			
Level 5 – 6	2; 5	2			▓	▓		
Level 6	3; 7; 9; 10; 11; 12; 17; 20; 21	9				▓		
Level 6 - 7	18	1				▓	▓	
Level 7	22; 29	2					▓	
Level 8	8	1						▓
A mix of levels depending on the type of project	24; 25; 28	3						
	Total		1	5	12	13	3	1
	Percentage distribution		3%	14%	34%	37%	9%	3%
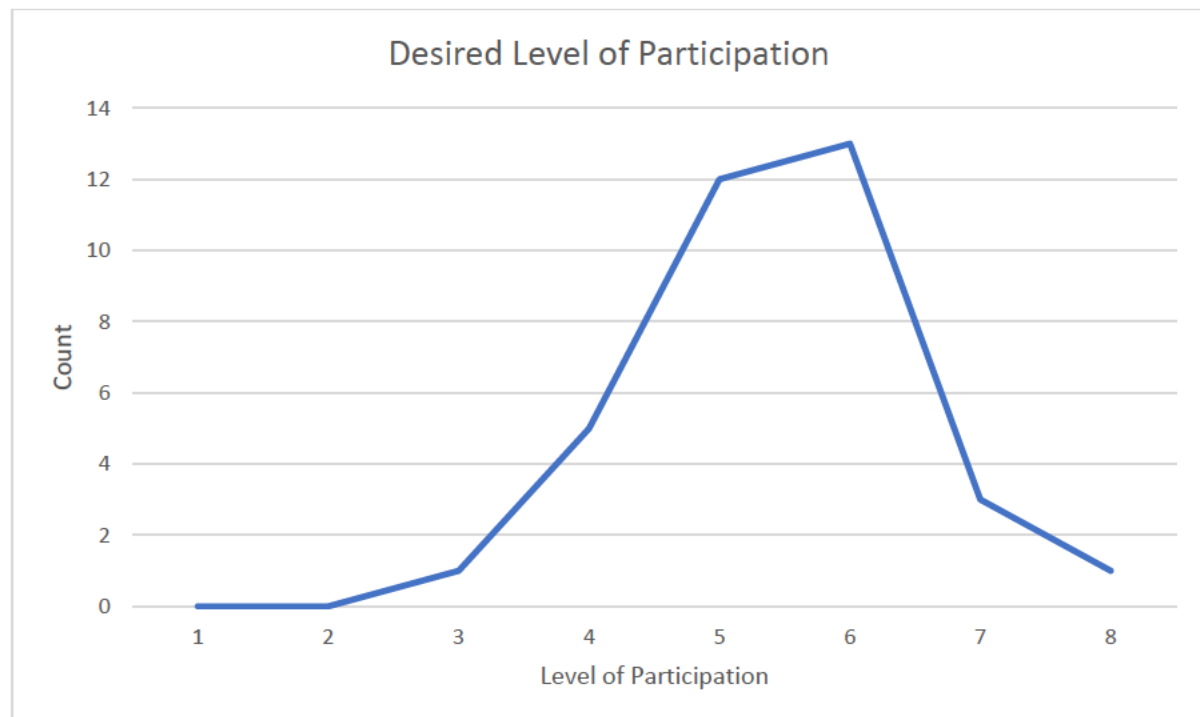
Figure 27: Distribution of the desired level of participation.

Figure 28 plots both the existing level of participation (Figure 26) and the desired level of participation (Figure 27) charts, visually illustrating the desired change toward a higher level of participation. Although the totals do not match, as several participants indicated a range when identifying the existing levels of participation, the shift in the peak indicates a clear desire to move from Level 4 to Level 5 and 6.
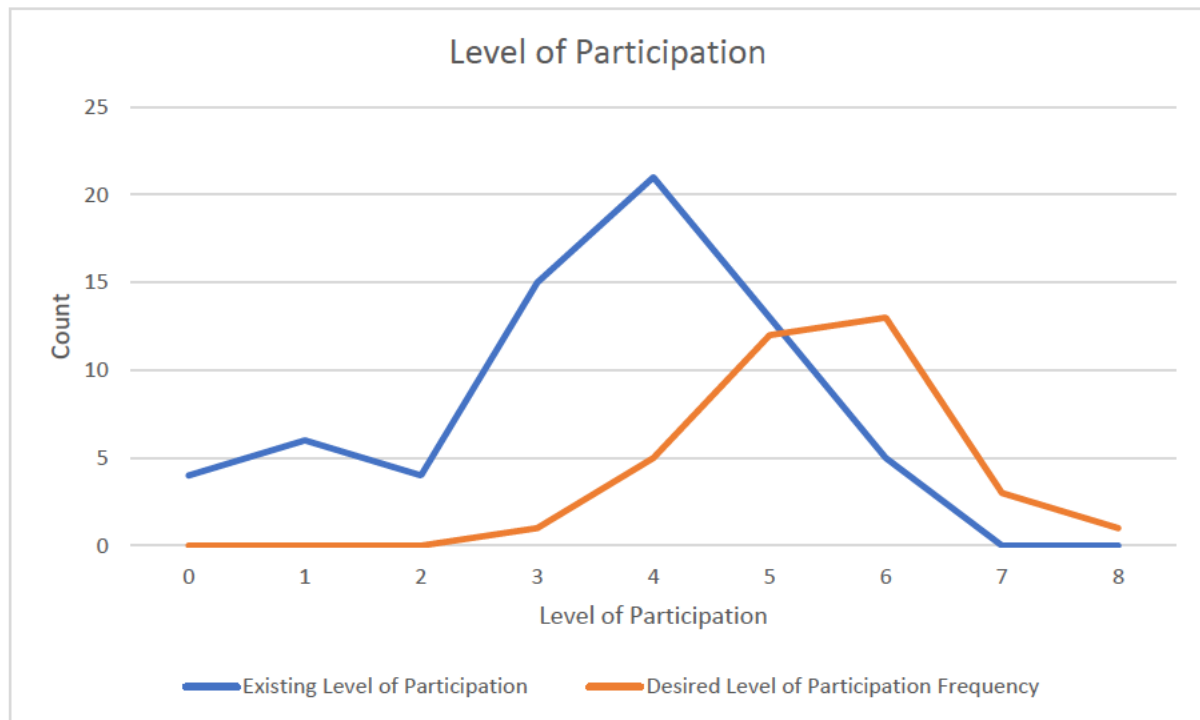
Figure 28: A comparison between the existing and desired levels of participation was identified by the interview participants.

The 28 participants who identified the need for more participation however identified several challenges in the shift to a higher level of participation. The majority of the identified concerns are related to how stakeholders and citizens might not prioritise the common good in an attempt to gain an advantage. There were also concerns that stakeholders might not have the required skills to contribute and take the required decisions. Therefore, there might be a need for a slow transition to higher levels of participation. These and other challenges will be discussed in the next sub-section.

6.3.3   Challenges associated with higher levels of participation

Despite identifying the desire to adopt a higher level of participation, participants identified several challenges during the interviews, which are listed in Table 41.

Table 41: Findings on the challenges associated with higher levels of participation

Key points related to challenges	Number of interviewees	Interviewee No., profession
Stakeholders only consider what they will be losing rather than assessing the potential benefits.	14	1, mayor 4, mayor 6, mayor 11, MP 15, bus company 18, PA 20, PA 22, architect/lands authority 23, planner 25, MTA 27, road safety 30, LCA 32, housing authority 33, architect
Stakeholders adopt a NIMBY approach to participation, in which they consider only their needs and limits the quality of the feedback received in the public consultation exercise.	13	1, mayor 6, mayor 8, architect/politician 13, PS 16, MP 19, PA 22, architect/lands authority 23, planner 26, urban planner 29, planner 30, LCA 33, architect 34, TM planner
Stakeholders are often unwilling to participate. There is a need for stakeholders to recognise the importance of participation.	9	2, architect 6, mayor 9, architect/eNGO 12, professor 16, MP 18, PA 24, MHRA 27, road safety 33, architect
There is a need to educate people to recognise the benefits of certain interventions.	8	3, KTP 9, architect/eNGO 16, MP 18, PA 19, PA

		21, GRTU
		31, economist
		33, architect
Participants tend to speak late in the process.	7	4, mayor
		7, road engineer
		20, PA
		24, MHRA
		25, MTA
		26, urban planner
		28, TM architect
The level of public participation depends on how much time, energy and resources one is willing to spend to engage and discuss with stakeholders.	7	10, GHRC
		11, MP
		15, bus company
		18, PA
		19, PA
		26, urban planner
		34, TM planner
A higher level of participation should not come at the expense of a lengthy urban design process.	6	7, road engineer
		15, bus company
		19, PA
		20, PA
		25, MTA
		30, LCA
Stakeholders are not ready for more participation.	5	1, mayor
		4, mayor
		6, mayor
		19, PA
		22,
Stakeholders tend to be unwilling to work with others, seeking to gain an advantage instead.	3	14, eNGO
		24, MHRA
		27, road safety

As can be seen from the table above, one of the most frequently cited challenges is that *stakeholders tend to only consider the privileges they will lose without considering the short-term and long-term benefits*. This is particularly evident when proposals seek to reduce car access and on-street parking, which can be attributed to the car culture discussed in *5.2.2 Car culture.* This challenge has also been identified a result of an egoistic approach to the urban design process, as discussed in *5.5.2 Egoistic.*

In this context, some participants believe that there is a culture in Malta that thinks only about its own needs when it comes to development or infrastructure projects, without considering the needs of others. Six participants (Interview 1, mayor; 6, mayor; 13, PS; 16, MP; 29, planner; 34, TM planner)

cite *NIMBY*ism as one of the main barriers to higher levels of participation. The Parliamentary Secretary for Planning (Interview 13) and five other participants (Interview 11, MP; 15, bus company; 20, PA; 22, architect/lands authority; 29, urban planner) are of the opinion that NIMBY could affect the introduction of shared space, noting that most people are in favour of the shared space concept until it is proposed in their street or neighbourhood.

Nine participants also discussed that an increase in the level of participation must be accompanied by an increase in the *willingness of stakeholders to participate*. Three participants (Interview 2, architect; 12, professor; 27, road safety) discussed that there seems to be a culture of complacency in Malta where citizens choose not to address things that they feel should be improved. Four participants (Interview 9 architect/eNGO; 18, PA; 20, PA; 26, urban planner/academic) argued that this culture and attitude of expecting others to find solutions to problems can be traced back to Malta's colonial past, where people have become accustomed to relying on others to solve problems and challenges, as reported earlier when discussing the context in *5.2.1*. Consequently, a more open and participatory approach does not automatically lead to higher participation rates. In this context, seven participants (Interview 2, architect; 4, mayor; 5; future mobility expert; 10, GHRC; 14, eNGO; 16, MP; 22, architect/lands authority) discussed that opportunities for participation need to be easily accessible so that citizens and other stakeholders are more willing to participate and contribute to the process.

Seven participants (Interview 4, mayor; 7, road engineer; 20, PA; 24, MHRA; 25, MTA; 26, urban planner; 28, TM architect) discussed how there are also cases in which *stakeholders participate late in the process* rather than during the consultation period. They discussed how this might either be because they did not understand the project or other times people simply do not take notice of any ongoing consultation and only take notice when the projects start to be implemented period.

In discussing the quality of streets and squares, some participants also discussed how *stakeholders may not be ready for higher levels of participation* as they do not seem to recognise that changes are needed to improve the quality of urban areas. They, therefore, pointed to the need to educate people about the benefits associated with higher quality spaces before moving to higher levels of participation (Interview 9, architect/eNGO; 16, MP; 18, PA; 21, GRTU; 31, economist; 33, architect). This will most likely require project leaders and practitioners to engage stakeholders with the aim of educating and persuading them about the benefits associated with particular projects and/or approaches.

6.3.4   Engagement

Engagement was considered essential in overcoming the challenges discussed in *6.3.3 Challenges associated with higher levels of participation*. This sub-section will discuss in more detail the main observations on engagement in the urban design process which are listed in Table 42.

Table 42: Key findings on engagement in the urban design process

Key findings related to engagement	Number of interviewees	Interviewee No., profession
Engagement is required to educate stakeholders to increase their capacity to contribute to the process and make the right decisions.	16	5, future mobility expert 6, mayor 8, architect/politician 9, architect/eNGO 11, MP 12, professor 13, PS 16, MP 18, PA 21, GRTU 27, road safety 28, TM architect 29, planner 31, economist 33, architect 34, TM planner
Engagement is required to build awareness and knowledge on shared space, especially when adopting a strategy that seeks to introduce shared space on a national scale.	15	2, architect 3, KTP 4, mayor 5, future mobility expert 6, mayor 7, road engineer 10, GHRC 13, PS 16, MP 18, PA 21, GRTU 22, architect/lands authority 27, road safety 32, housing authority 34, TM planner
Public relations is essential to engage and educate stakeholders and to achieve the objectives listed in this table.	12	2, architect 4, mayor 5, future mobility expert

		15, bus company
		16, MP
		18, PA
		21, GRTU
		22, architect/lands authority
		24, MHRA
		27, road safety
		30, LCA
		31, economist
Engagement is required to explain the proposed changes and the expected benefits.	10	2, architect
		3, KTP
		6, mayor
		8, architect/politician
		11, MP
		12, professor
		13, PS
		20, PA
		21, GRTU
		30, LCA
Successful engagement of stakeholders is dependent on the skills of the facilitators.	8	4, mayor
		5, future mobility expert
		12, professor
		18, PA
		19, PA
		21, GRTU
		31, economist
		33, architect
There is the need to empower stakeholders.	6	2, architect
		9, architect/eNGO
		12, professor
		18, PA
		29, planner
		31, economist

Sixteen interview participants identified *educating stakeholders* and increasing their level of knowledge on the subject as the main purpose of engagement. Participants discussed how more educated citizens can give more detailed and helpful information to professionals who are often dealing with complex, and sometimes unknown problems. They also discussed how the higher the level of participation, the higher the level of knowledge required by citizens which enables them to take on the additional power and responsibilities.

As indicated in Table 42, when discussing shared space, 15 participants believe that the *ideas and principles behind shared space need to be communicated to the public* so that they understand what this involves, what is possible and what is best for the community. Building awareness and knowledge were identified as being very important in a strategy seeking to introduce shared space on a wider scale. It was also identified as essential to engage with all the different stakeholders so that professionals can highlight and *explain the expected changes and benefits* associated with concepts and/or specific proposals, including those associated with shared space. Such an approach will allow the stakeholders to dream about and visualise higher quality streets and squares.

The Executive Chairman of Malta Road Safety Council (Interview 27) noted that sometimes it is essential that the stakeholders are approached by authorities with a carefully built narrative and arguments – which explain why stakeholders should embrace the proposed interventions. This was identified by three participants (Interview 6, mayor; 12, professor; 22, architect/lands authority) as necessary to convince stakeholder to accept proposals which include a reduction in on-street parking or other elements which are typically objected to by the local community. An MP (Interview 11) and a transport expert (Interview 15) noted that from experience such an approach results in less criticism at later stages since the stakeholders understand what the proposals entail at an early stage.

Participants also discussed how communication and education should be ongoing, however, there might be periods in the process that require more focus on engaging stakeholders (Interview 2, architect; 21, GRTU; 22, architect/lands authority; 34, TM planner). Public relations and effective communication were identified as a weakness in the Maltese context. Participants singled out national entities such as Transport Malta, Planning Authority and Infrastructure Malta as having a poor public relation. They identified the need for these entities to better inform the public and stakeholders why certain decisions are made, clearly explaining the reasons and consideration of any alternative proposals (Interview 1, mayor; 2, architect; 4, mayor; 8, architect/politician; 18, PA; 24, MHRA).

Other participants discussed how the success of the engagement processes is largely affected by the *communication skills of the professionals* leading the engagement process and meeting with the stakeholders (Interview 4, mayor; 5, future mobility expert; 12, professor; 18, PA; 19, PA; 21, GRTU; 31, economist). These persons need to be able to 'sell' the vision, concept or design to the stakeholders whilst encouraging them to give their own feedback.

Six participants pointed out that it is not only important to engage with stakeholders and give them the opportunity to contribute, but it is also important to *empower* them. Citizens need to realise that if they voice their opinions and participate in the urban design process, they will be heard and can

help shape their streets and squares (Interview 2, architect; 12, professor). A unit manager at Planning Authority (Interview 18) noted that the law provides for several stages of consultation in policymaking. However, the participant noted that it is important to ask: "*How are we enabling and empowering the public to participate proactively in the process?*".

6.3.5   Finding consensus or compromise

As discussed in *5.4.2 Conflict*, conflict is to be expected in the urban design process, which often requires the need for some form of consensus or compromise between the stakeholders. The interview participants identified the benefits associated with participation, especially when the process brings stakeholders closer together. The main points raised by the interview participants are identified in Table 43.

Table 43: Key findings on achieving consensus and compromise in the urban design process.

Key points related to consensus and compromise in the urban design process	Number of interviewees	Interviewee No., profession
It is more likely to find consensus by involving stakeholders.	6	3, KTP 4, mayor 12, professor 16, MP 19, PA 23, planner
Participation early in the process can increase the likelihood of finding consensus or compromise.	3	4, mayor 21; GRTU 33, architect
Project leaders and facilitators play an important role in finding consensus or compromise between stakeholders.	3	16, MP 19, PA 23, planner
Authorities are also required to make compromises.	2	7, road engineer 10, GHRC

Six participants are of the opinion that by involving stakeholders, there is a higher likelihood of finding consensus. They discussed how explaining the decisions and compromises can be essential in ensuring consensus, as if left stakeholders are left uninformed there is likely to be some who might feel that they have been unnecessarily disadvantaged. Two participants (Interview 4, mayor; 21; GRTU) discussed how more public participation at an earlier stage often leads to a higher probability of finding consensus or mutual compromises between stakeholders.

As discussed in *6.2.4 Persons leading the urban design process*, the persons leading and championing the projects play an essential role in all of this. The responsibility of those leading the process should be to ensure that consensus is reached, with their role being that of facilitating the process rather than imposing their views on others (Interview 16, MP; 19, PA; 23, planner). A road engineer (Interview 7) and an architect at GHRC (Interview 10) also discussed how professionals and authorities themselves sometimes need to make compromises, especially when adopting a multi-disciplinary and holistic approach to solve wicked problems. In such cases, the project leaders need to take a leading role to convince the different authorities of the proposals – which sometimes can be very difficult as each authority assess the project from its perspective.

Three mayors (Interview 1, 4, 6) interviewed noted that consensus is very difficult to find amongst residents and often they are not able to agree on the basic principles. Similarly, a leading urban planner and academic (Interview 26) in Malta noted that it is very difficult to find consensus:

> *You will always have conflict. Finding consensus is very difficult. I'm a person who is suspicious of consensus. In the sense that when you have a group of people how much of them are really agreeing with the plan? You might have a number of people who are agreeing because they are shy or afraid of speaking against a project. Or they might hold back not to anger anyone or make enemies*.

The participant (Interview 26) continued by discussing how in his doctoral studies he came across Habermas' views on consensus. On the other hand, there was Lyotard who believed that consensus tends to be oppressive because there will always be one stakeholder who more powerful than another, and when all stakeholders start to agree it is because:

1. they want the process to be over and done with;
2. they afraid of the powerful stakeholder; or
3. they lose interest.

The participant continued by noting that when one of the above occurs, it seems that consensus has been achieved consensus, but this could be far from reality. The participant noted that in his opinion Lyotard was right and you cannot achieve a true consensus in most projects.

6.4 Objectives and desired outcomes of the urban design process of streets and squares

The final theme that emerged from the analysis of the interview data was that the urban design process is largely dependent on the objectives and desired outcomes. This section begins by presenting the results on the interview participants' opinions on the introduction of shared space principles in Malta, including the expected benefits and possible problems. The focus then shifts to the considerations that need to be made when seeking to improve the liveability and walkability of streets, with participants highlighting the need for an integrated and holistic urban design approach that takes a long-term approach to achieve the desired goals. These important considerations are discussed in more detail in the following sub-section.

6.4.1 Introduction of shared space

Since the focus of the research in the interview guide was on shared space, the interview participants shared their opinions and views on shared space. The main findings about shared space are summarised in Table 44.

Table 44: Key findings on shared space

Key points related to shared space	Number of interviewees	Interviewee No., profession
Participants believe that shared space projects should be actively pursued if they prove to be beneficial to the community.	13	2, architect 5, future mobility expert 6, mayor 8, architect/politician 10, GHRC 11, MP 12, professor 13, PS 20, PA 22, architect/lands authority 24, MHRA 29, planner 33, architect
Shared space is not a new concept, as several streets in urban cores still function based on shared space principles.	12	6, mayor 7, road engineer 8, architect/politician 16, MP 18, PA 19, PA

		20, PA
		26, urban planner/academic
		27, road safety
		29, planner
		31, economist
		33, architect
The focus of projects to introduce shared space should be on improving the quality of the urban areas for the local community.	6	8, architect/politician
		10, GHRC
		12, professor
		29, planner
		33, architect
		34, TM planner
Participants believe that it is important to explain to stakeholders and the local community what shared space really is, as they will then be more likely to accept such proposals.	5	2, architect
		11, MP
		12, professor
		21, GRTU
		31, economist
People accept shared space if access for cars is not too restricted and parking is still allowed.	5	9, architect/eNGO
		11, MP
		16, MP
		19, PA
		20, PA
(6.4.1.1) Benefits of shared space[1]		
Shared space is likely to result in more people using the streets and squares as social space, helping to the develop close-knit communities.	11	5, future mobility expert
		6, mayor
		11, MP
		13, PS
		17, Minister
		18, PA
		20, PA
		26, urban planner/academic
		30, LCA
		31, economist
		33, architect
Shared space can improve liveability and walkability.	6	4, mayor
		8, architect/politician
		16, MP
		18, PA
		21, GRTU
		24, MHRA
Shared space can improve the aesthetic qualities of streets and squares.	3	8, architect/politician
		11, MP
		34, TM planner
(6.4.1.2) Potential Challenges and issues		

The successful implementation and operation of shared space requires a certain degree of discipline on the part of street users.	8	4, mayor 6, mayor 7, road engineer 13, PS 14, eNGO 16, MP 27, road safety 34, TM planner
Participants are concerned about the safety of shared space.	7	4, mayor 6, mayor 9, architect/eNGO 10, GHRC 14, eNGO 16, MP 17, Minister
Participants are concerned that cars may take up all the space if left uncontrolled.	4	2, architect 28, TM architect 32, housing authority 33, architect
Shared space might not be accepted by the local community if it leads to a loss of parking spaces.	4	14, eNGO; 15, bus company; 26, urban planner/academic 33, architect

Note: 1 – Benefits associated with shared space in terms of walkability and liveability are discussed separately in Table 45.

One of the most frequently expressed opinions about shared space is that this is not a new concept in Malta, as streets and squares already functioned as shared space before the widespread introduction of the car. People used to go out in the streets and socialise in the evenings, especially in the summer months. The streets and squares were the centres of village life and served as places for socialising, as playgrounds for children, commerce, and for various other purposes. To this day, some village squares and streets in the urban core function as shared space, where pedestrians, drivers and other users are accustomed to using a space in a particular way that has become accepted over the years (Interview 7, road engineer; 16, MP; 18, PA; 19, PA; 20, PA; 29, planner; 31, economist; 33, architect).

Therefore, when considering shared space, the idea and key principles behind it must be communicated to the public as the local community will be more likely to accept the proposals (Interview 2, architect; 11, MP; 12, professor; 21, GRTU; 31 economist). Businesses were identified as another stakeholder group that can benefit from improved street and square environments (Interview 9, architect/eNGO; 15, bus company; 21, GRTU). However, some participants highlighted that there is a need to ensure that businesses do not take advantage of reclaimed space, such as extending out into the street, which can end up being an inconvenience to residents (Interview 18, PA; 29, planner).

The Minister for Infrastructure (Interview 17) however stressed that the concept of shared space should only be taken forward when all the stakeholders are on board. Whilst agreeing that having stakeholders on board is important, thirteen participants believe that these projects should be actively pursued if they are shown to be beneficial to the local community.

6.4.1.1 Benefits associated with the introduction of shared space

Table 45 also lists the benefits the interview participants associate with shared space. The most frequently cited benefit is that the introduction of shared space can increase public space where communities can socialise and use for recreation. This was cited as essential for communities, particularly for children who can be more independent and have more spaces where they can play safely. Others discussed how shared space can improve liveability, walkability, and aesthetical qualities of streets and squares, all of which can help to slowly improve the character of streets and squares, especially as the number of cars in these areas decrease.

When asked how shared space can improve walkability and liveability, eight interviewees stated that the main benefit is that urban space can be reclaimed from the car, which can then be designed for pedestrians.

Table 45: Summary of response to question 15: "In your opinion, how can the introduction of shared space through a participative process improve the walkability and liveability of Maltese streets and squares?"

Expected Benefits of shared space	Number of interviewees	Interviewee No., profession
Shared space can improve the liveability and walkability in villages by reclaiming space from the car which can be landscaped and designed for pedestrians, potentially leading to more people on the street.	8	3, KTP 6, mayor 8, architect/politician 9, architect/eNGO 10, GHRC 18, PA 20, PA 28, TM architect
Shared space can result in a big improvement to walkability and liveability **ONLY** if all the stakeholders come together, start sharing the road and respect each other.	4	1, mayor 13, PS 16, MP 19, PA 27, road safety
Shared space can find a balance between the car, pedestrians and other street elements such as greenery and sitting space.	5	5, future mobility expert 11, MP 15, bus company 23, planner 24, MHRA

Shared space was identified as the only way forward and needs to be implemented as quickly as possible as it can offer an alternative street and square design approach.	4	4, mayor 26, urban planner/academic 30, LCA 33, architect
Shared space can help transform the quality of the villages, not just the streets and squares, by offering a different way in which villages are experienced.	3	25, MTA 26, urban planner/academic 34, TM planner
Shared space will have a positive effect on community cohesion.	2	17, Minister 20, PA

6.4.1.2 *Expected challenges and issues when introducing shared space*

Despite the various expected benefits associated with shared space, several concerns were also identified, as summarised in Table 44. A common concern of several interviewees is that drivers might take over the whole space with little consideration given to pedestrians (Interview 2, architect; 28, TM architect; 32, housing authority; 33, architect).

Safety was cited as another major concerns when introducing shared space, particularly with vulnerable people who may not understand the concept of shared space and the subtle cues in its design. Participants highlighted the importance of drivers understanding that they are driving in a shared space area and that they need to slow down and react to their surroundings (Interview 4, mayor; 6, mayor; 9, architect/eNGO; 10, GHRC; 14, eNGO; 16, MP; 17, Minister).

An urban planner (Interview 26) discussed how in the 1990s all the Local Councils were in favour of shared space however their position changed when people started to oppose the concept when they realised that they might no longer be able to park their car where they currently do. Similarly, three interviewees (Interview 14, eNGO; 15, bus company; 33, architect) remarked that shared space might not be accepted at first if stakeholders think that it will result in a loss of some privileges, such as on-street parking, as discussed in *5.5 Attitude of stakeholders towards urban design* proposals

6.4.2 Urban design through an integrated, holistic and long-term approach

Another recurring theme through the interviews was that improving the quality of the urban environment cannot be achieved overnight. This is related to several aspects, such as the need to address car culture, the approach of stakeholders to urban design, and the need to address the shortcomings built into the planning system. As a result, several participants discussed the need for a

holistic approach, the importance of visions, strategies, and masterplans, and the fact that these are likely to require a long-term approach. In addition, there are several related challenges that need to be addressed. These matters will be discussed in the next sub-sections.

6.4.2.1   Holistic Approach

Table 46: Findings related to the adoption of a holistic approach to urban design.

Key points related to adopting a holistic approach	Number of interviewees	Interviewee No., profession
Malta is currently not adopting a holistic and integrated approach.	8	2, architect 3, KTP 5, future mobility expert 10, GRTU 23, planner 25, MTA 29, planner 30, LCA
Malta needs to change its approach to urban design due to lack of coordination and few tangible improvements, especially as the authorities are not considering the overlaps between the various sectors, which has already been highlighted in *5.4.1.1 Collaboration between authorities*.	6	3, KTP 10, GHRC 12, professor 19, PA 28, TM architect 30, LCA
Some interventions, such as those that require traffic re-routing require a holistic approach to study the effects over the whole locality or region.	4	6, mayor 7, road engineer 11, MP 23, planner
Due to lack of experience in Malta, pilot projects might be required to develop best practices when adopting holistic approaches.	4	12, professor 24, MHRA 27, road safety 34, TM planner

Addressing the complex and multiple factors which are contributing to the current lack of improvement is likely to require a holistic and multi-disciplinary approach seeking to develop visions, strategies and policies which can deliver the required improvements. Several participants (Interview 2, architect; 3, KTP; 5, future mobility expert; 10, GRTU; 23, planner; 25, MTA; 29, planner; 30, LCA) involved in the urban design process discussed how in Malta this is not currently the case, as policies

and projects tend to be assessed as standalone rather than in a holistic and integrated approach which takes into consideration the cumulative impact of the proposals.

An MP (Interview 16) and the deputy chief officer at TM (Interview 34) discussed how a holistic approach also requires a departure from focusing on the short-term. A holistic approach needs to analyse the challenges and issues that the country might face in the next 30 years. In turn, any vision, strategy, or policy review needs to take these into consideration. As a result, several participants (Interview 3, KTP; 10, GHRC; 12, professor; 19, PA; 28, TM architect; 30, LCA) discussed how a different approach to planning and urban design is required in Malta. The system needs to ensure that the planning and urban design process considers policymaking and development in a holistic manner.

A holistic approach in urban design will require professionals from different ministries, departments, authorities, entities and boards to continuously collaborate in relation to both policymaking and development control. The discussion needs to be on a technical rather than on a political level (Interview 12, professor; 23, planner; 34, TM planner). The deputy chief officer at TM (Interview 34) is of the opinion that every authority and entity need to have a planning section whose role is to consider the work of that particular entity in terms of the wider planning context.

6.4.2.2   Vision, strategies, and masterplans

Throughout the interview, some interview participants emphasised the importance of visions, strategies, and masterplans to guide the urban design process and project implementation. The main remarks on these are summarised in Table 47 and briefly discussed below.

Table 47: Key findings on visions, strategies and masterplans in the urban design process.

Key points related to visions, strategies and masterplans	Number of interviewees	Interviewee No., profession
Visions		
It is important to have visions which clearly set out the desired outcomes of the urban design process.	6	4, mayor 5, future mobility expert 8, architect/politician 9, architect/eNGO 16, MP 24, MHRA
Any proposed projects need to be assessed in terms of the visions in place.	5	3, KTP 16, MP 23, planner 25, MTA 30, LCA

In a participatory approach to urban design, project leaders require a strong vision before engaging stakeholders which clearly outlines the concept and which stakeholders can contribute to.	4	15, bus company 16, MP 19, PA 20, PA
Strategies		
In Malta, strategies are exceeding their expected timeframes by several years without being replaced or updated. It is therefore important to understand why this is the case.	5	3, KTP 18, PA 19, PA 20, PA 29, urban planner
Long-term strategies, that can be practically implemented, are crucial to successfully tackle complex problems such as that of urban mobility.	4	10, GHRC 11, MP 14, 15,
No one seems to be implementing the strategies.	2	8, architect/politician 25, MTA
Masterplans		
Masterplans are identified as essential by Local Councils, as they allow them to consider different projects, prioritise them and obtain the necessary funding.	4	1, mayor 4, mayor 6, mayor 30, LCA

When discussing the urban design approach required to implement shared space and improve liveability and walkability of Maltese streets and squares, interview participants stressed the importance of having **visions** that clearly outline the objectives and desired outcomes. Six participants discussed the importance of each locality having a vision that clearly outlines the goals that the community should strive for and that differentiates it from other localities. To successfully implement such visions, participants discussed how all proposals must be evaluated in terms of their contribution to those visions.

In discussing *strategies*, most of the discussion revolved around national strategies and their shortcomings, as most strategies have exceeded their lifespan and few results have been achieved. Participants discussed how the reasons for this need to be understood, with some speculating that it could be related to the politicisation of the process, characterised by cycles in which a government develops a strategy but does not necessarily implement it in the next political term. This prompted the president of the Chamber of Planner (Interview 29) to state that *"strategies in Malta which seek to introduce shared space are just rhetoric since there is no real effort to implement shared space"*.

Participants, especially those who focused on the local level, also pointed out the importance of *masterplans*. Three mayors discussed how masterplans allow Local Council to consider several projects, which are then used to prioritise and obtain the necessary funding for these developments. In addition, masterplans can also be used to convince businesses, commercial entities and other stakeholders to participate in the process.

6.4.2.3   Long term approach

In addition to the need to take a holistic approach with visions, strategies and masterplans, participants also stressed the importance of a long-term approach when it comes to the redevelopment or adaptation of streets and squares, such as through the introduction of shared space principles. Successful implementation on a national level scale is likely to require a clear set of goals and objectives to achieve the desired change. In the absence of such long-term approaches, the urban design process is likely to go round in circles as different people and leaders change their goals and objectives according to their preferences (Interview 3, KTP; 6, mayor; 9, architect/eNGO; 16, MP; 18, PA).

Table 48: Key findings on a long-term approach to urban design.

Key points related to the long-term approach	Number of interviewees	Interviewee No., profession
It is important to monitor and measure the success of the strategies.	7	9, architect/eNGO 18, PA 20, PA 21, GRTU 22, architect/lands authority 23, planner 24, MHRA 26, urban planner
Long-term approaches open up the options and alternatives, with more ambitious projects becoming possible.	6	8, architect/politician 14, eNGO 16, MP 27, road safety 30, LCA 31, economist
Long term approach are required to deliver the required improvements.	5	3, KTP 6, mayor 9, architect/eNGO 16, MP 18, PA

There is the need to lead and coordinate long-term processes.	5	8, architect/politician 13, PS 21, GRTU 25, MTA 28, TM architect
Strategies should be sub-divided into phases to allow monitoring and tracking of progress.	4	2, architect 8, architect/politicians 10, GHRC 21, GRTU
Shifting to long-term approaches in urban design will require changes to the institutional structures and governance.	4	25, MTA 26, urban planner 30, LCA 32, housing authority
A long-term approach is often not adopted due to politics, with politicians prioritising projects that can be implemented in 5 years, the length of the legislature.	4	8, architect/politician 13, PS 11, MP 16, MP

One of the benefits of a long-term approach is that a relationship develops between the stakeholders. Experience has shown an architect at GHRC (Interview 10) and an MP (Interview 16) that relationships and acquaintances result in a better understanding and closer collaboration between stakeholders. When these relationships are built, the process can shift towards a bottom-up approach in which the stakeholders and citizens themselves are given more say and power in the process. The participants continue by discussing how if everyone contributes to this long-term process, the designers and decision-makers are better informed, through increased local knowledge and awareness of the various opinions.

Six participants (Interview 8, architect/politician; 14, eNGO; 16, MP; 27, road safety; 30, LCA; 31, economist) discussed that another benefit of long-term approaches is that more options and alternatives become viable and possible, which allows professionals to think outside the box. The potential long-term benefits can also be used to justify certain decisions and convince stakeholders to accept necessary difficult choices. When trying to change urban mobility trends, it will take time to change citizens' attitude. Therefore, the vision needs to about 20 or more years into the future to allow these attitudes to change while alternative modes of transport can be developed.

A long-term approach however does not come without challenges. Two participants (Interview 8, architect/politician; 25, MTA) questioned who will be responsible to ensure that a long-term vision or strategy will be observed over the years. The parliamentary secretary for Planning (Interview 13)

proposed the use of ad hoc foundations which are made up of the main stakeholders, whose responsibility would be to ensure that the visions and strategies agreed are being implemented.

Four participants (Interview 25, MTA; 26, urban planner; 30, LCA; 32, housing authority) believe that while the adoption of long-term approaches is necessary, the institutional structures and governance system must be changed to accommodate and successfully manage long-term approaches if these visons, strategies and masterplans are to be truly successful and achieve the desired goals. In parallel, efforts must be made to encourage stakeholders to stop giving preference to short-term and reactive solutions and to shift to a long-term proactive approach that will better prepare them to address the challenges that are expected in the near future.

One of the elements which needs to be given particular focus when modifying the structures and system is that of monitoring. Monitoring and evidenced-based studies are required to measure the impact of the interventions whilst also building up-to-date data to be used as case studies and identify any required improvements both in the process and the outcomes (Interview 9, architect/eNGO; 20, PA; 22, architect/lands authority; 23, planner; 24, MHRA; 26, urban planner). This is lacking in Malta, with the success or failure of urban design interventions normally judged on general perception (Interview 20, PA; 23, planner; 30, LCA), with an urban planner (Interview 26) explaining how currently when a project has been developed, it is inaugurated, and all the resources are shifting onto the next project.

6.5   Concluding Remarks

In considering the above findings, a number of observations emerge. In terms of the current level of participation in the urban design process in Malta, most of interviewees indicated a level between Level 3 and 5. 82% of the interviewees believe that more participation was needed and identified Levels 5 and 6 as desirable. This is a clear preference for more stakeholders and citizens' influence in the urban design process, shifting away from Level 4 where the authorities only need to listen, as defined in Arnstein's (1969) Ladder of Participation.

Despite this desire, participants are clear that moving to a higher level of participation will be fraught with challenges. One of the biggest concerns is that participants will only consider their own interests without considering the long-term benefits and advantages to society. Therefore, a transition period may be needed to educate people about some concepts and the importance of participation, and to show them that change may be necessary, even if it requires trade-offs such as the loss of parking

spaces. As a result, engagement is seen as an essential part of the transition to a more participatory process.

While most interviewees see the need for greater participation in the urban design process, they also point out that there will be instances where it will be necessary to impose unpopular decisions. As mentioned in *5.2.4 The influence of politics on the urban design process*, these decisions are usually political in nature, with politicians not always willing to make them. In addition, all decisions must attempt to strike a balance between stakeholder groups so as not to alienate sections of society. It is also important to take into account the power of stakeholders when implementing participatory approaches. In this regard, a transparent and accountable decision-making process can help to explain and justify the decisions made. To enable this, more research is needed in Malta to make informed decisions, recognising that this is resource intensive and challenging.

The individuals or entities leading the urban design process have been identified as critical to its success as they play an important role in bringing together all stakeholders when it comes to adopting collaborative approaches. Their skills and approach can influence whether stakeholders are willing to consider and accept proposals. This is particularly important given the unwillingness to change and the prevailing car culture in Malta discussed in *5.2 Maltese contextual factors*. In addition, Malta currently lacks 'champions' who advocate for change and act as catalysts in transforming the quality of streets and squares by generating an interest from the local community.

In discussing the introduction of shared space, participants believe that it should be pursued if it proves beneficial to the community, especially as some of Malta's highest quality streets and squares still operate in this way. Expected benefits include the creation of more social space, improved aesthetics and higher levels of liveability and walkability. Like everything, this is not without challenges, including the need for users of these spaces to be disciplined and respectful of others.

Malta needs to move to a more holistic and integrated approach that places a higher value on participation and collaboration, as mentioned in the previous chapter. This is particularly necessary because addressing contextual elements such as car culture requires a wide range of initiatives. As discussed in *2.2.5 Urban design and wicked problems*, it is not easy to predict the outcome of wicked problems especially when taking a narrow perspective and focusing on a single project. Certain urban design challenges that are influenced by factors such as car dependency need to be addressed with a long-term and holistic approach that attempts to look at the problem from different angles. Therefore, it is important to have visions that set goals, as well as strategies and masterplans that identify paths and developments that can achieve these goals.

It is likely that a long-term approach is needed as it unlocks the goals and opportunities. It is also important to monitor progress over the years to ensure that the necessary work is done to ultimately achieve the visions. Leadership and co-ordination therefore become important. In Malta, a gradual transition to such an approach is likely to be required, as the structures and frameworks through which the urban design process operates may need to be reconsidered. Challenges include the politicisation of the process, as important results need to be achieved in less than five years and difficult decisions are only taken in the first years of the legislature.

The implications and recommendations for the Maltese context and Carmona's (2014) Place-shaping Continuum from these findings are discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 7 Discussion

7.1 Introduction

The various themes that emerged from the analysis of the interview data contribute to a better understanding of the key components of the urban design process. This section draws on the empirical analysis from *Chapter 5* and *Chapter 6* to consider how the findings align with the wider literature on the urban design process and with Carmona's (2014) *Place-Shaping Continuum: A theory of the urban design process*. The discussion also considers the implications of the findings for the Maltese context in relation to the Place-shaping Continuum derived through the study of public space in London. The discussion also considers the implications of a participatory approach in the implementation of shared space in Malta, which is the third objective of this research.

The discussion is structured around the three key elements identified in the Place-Shaping Continuum that influence the urban design process, as shown in Figure 29. The discussion begins with the contextual factors (*7.2*) and how the historical and cultural factors continue to influence the urban design process, which together with contemporary polity influence place-shaping processes. The focus is then shifted to stakeholders by discussing the aspirations, resources, determination, and other factors associated with the various stakeholder groups that ultimately determine the outcomes of the urban design process based on the existing power relations (*7.3*). This section concludes with a discussion of the power that the different stakeholders have in the four different place-shaping processes, from which two power hierarchies are derived. Section *7.4* then discusses the four-active place-shaping processes and discusses the findings in relation to the five agendas that Carmona identifies for each of the processes.

Section *7.5* discusses the influence of participation in the urban design process, including the associated benefits and challenges, which provides additional insights that can inform the evaluation of Carmona's Place-Shaping Continuum. This chapter concludes with the implications of this research for the Place-Shaping Continuum (7.6), with two additional considerations on the theory.
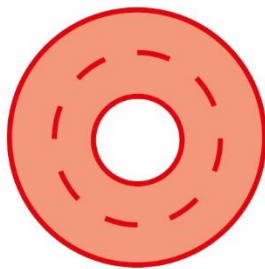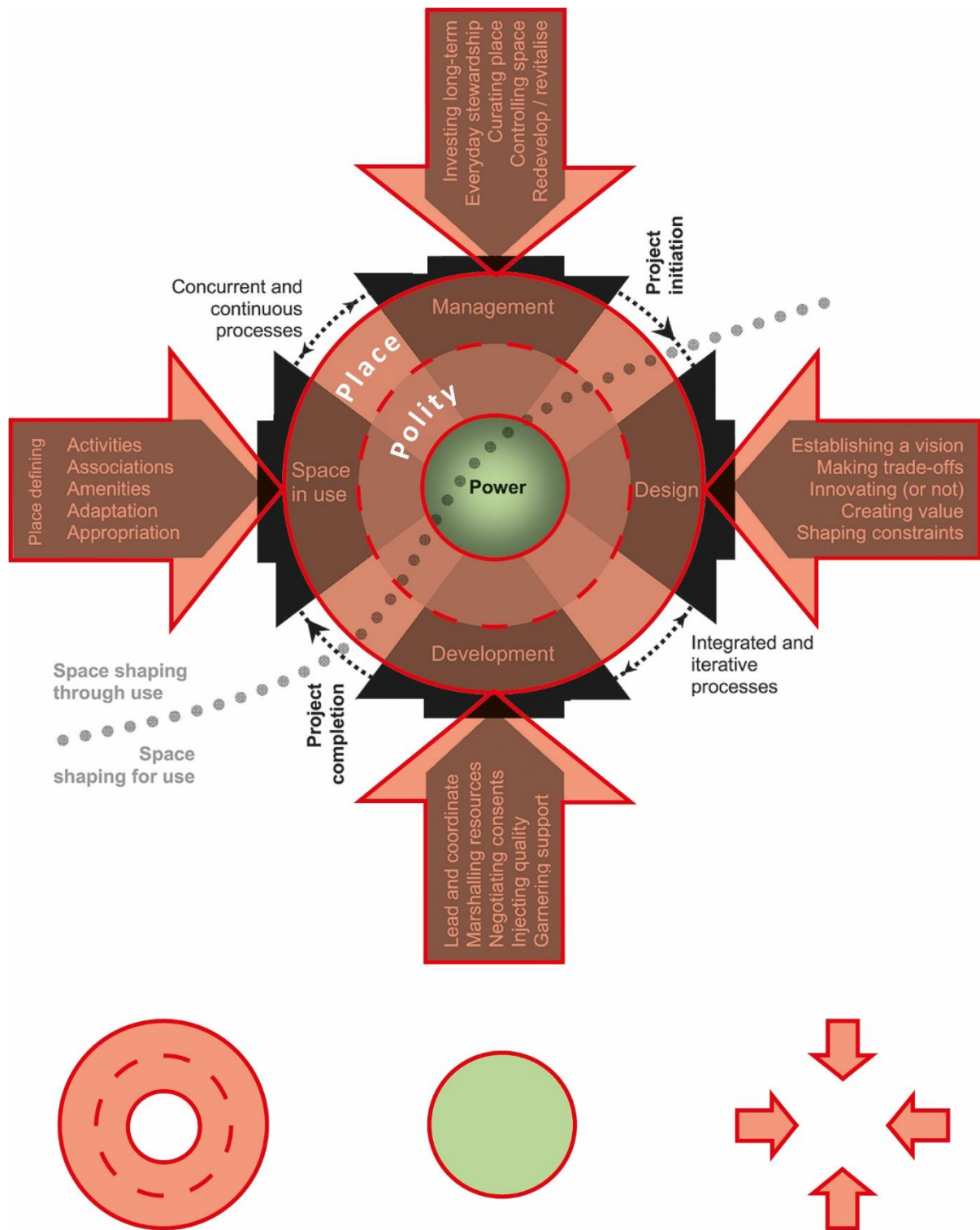
7.2 - The influence of the context on the urban design process
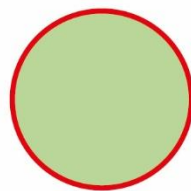
7.3 - The influence of stakeholders and their power relations
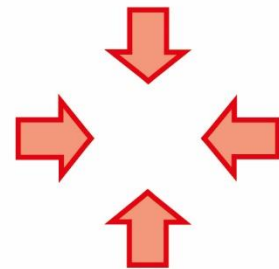
7.4 - The four sub-processes and agendas of urban design

Figure 29: The relationship between the sections in Chapter 7 and the key components of the Place-Shaping Continuum. Adapted from "The Place-shaping Continuum: A Theory of Urban Design Process" by M. Carmona, 2014, Journal of Urban Design, 19(1), p.11 (https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2013.854695).

7.2   The influence of the context on the urban design process

As discussed in *2.3.3 Five key characteristics of the urban design frameworks*, the urban design context does not work in isolation but is informed and embedded in the context, and reflects the social, economic and political phenomena of that particular period (Madanipour, 1997; Tibbalds, 2004). This also forms a core part of Carmona's (2014) Place-Shaping Continuum, which understands the process as one shaped by the historic processes of a place and the current polity, socio-economic context.
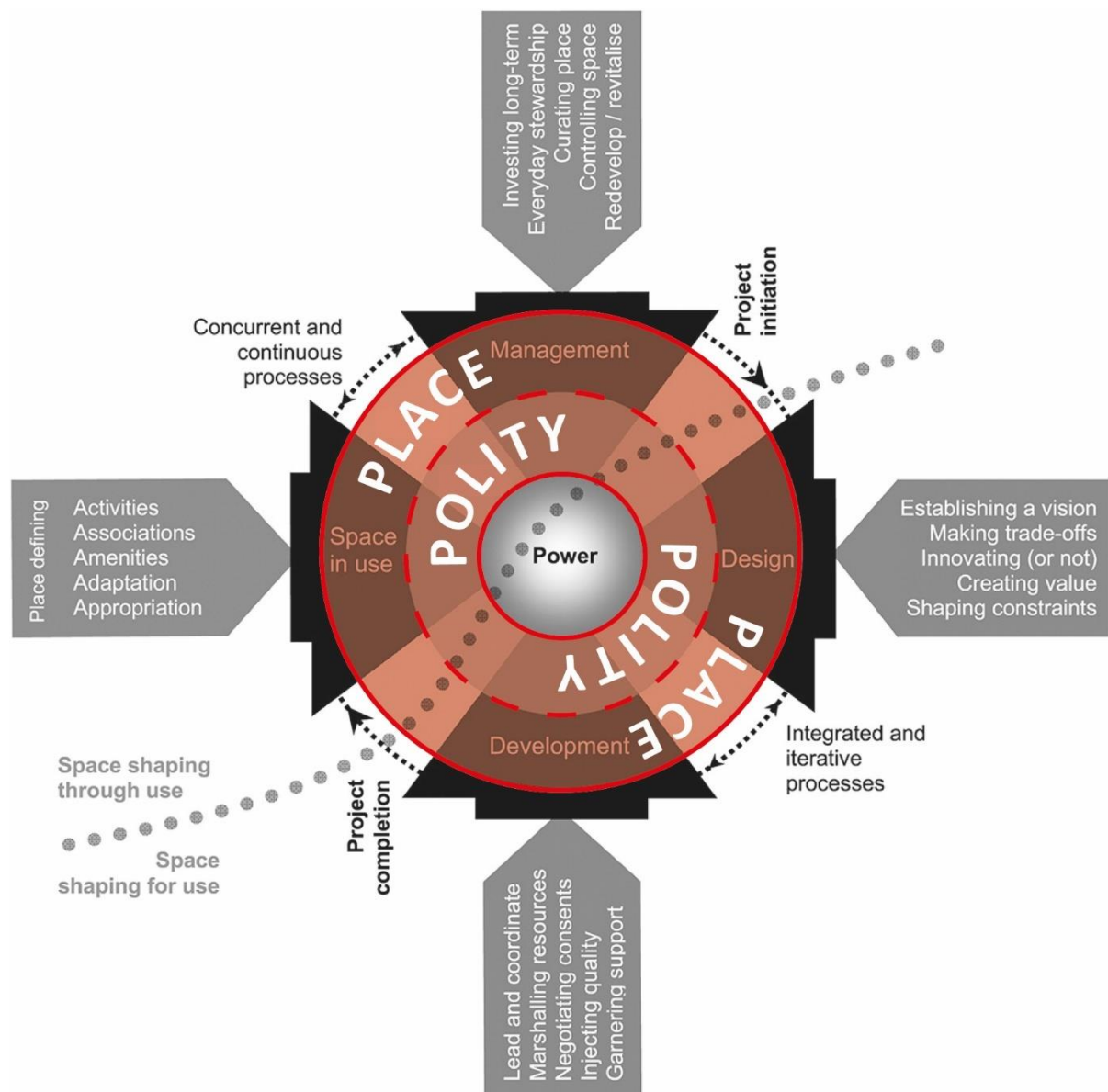
Figure 30: The place and polity components of the Place-Shaping Continuum. Adapted from "The Place-shaping Continuum: A Theory of Urban Design Process" by M. Carmona, 2014, Journal of Urban Design, 19(1), p.11 (https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2013.854695).

When studying the public space in London, Carmona (2014) observed that most of the successful and high-quality spaces have evolved slowly over the years. On the other hand, public spaces that were

specifically designed for a social purpose were either demolished or redeveloped. Similarly, the most successful streets and squares in Malta have generally been created in the past and have evolved into their present forms through an urban design continuum of alternating self and unself-conscious urban design processes. Some streets and squares still function on the principles of shared space, as users have been using these spaces in the same way for decades. Therefore, also in Malta, one can see that *history and traditions* continue to influence the use of public space and the development of projects.

When focusing on streets and squares, a trend that trumped all other considerations in recent decades is car culture, which has led to decisions being made based on how to accommodate cars rather than pedestrians and other street users. As a result, car culture can be identified as the motive that has led to the car-dominated streetscapes, which are identified in the *National Environment Policy, Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development*, the *Transport Strategy 2050* and *Transport Master Plan 2025* as needing to be addressed, as detailed in *4.3.2 Hierarchy of strategies, policies and plans*. Apart from retrofitting older urban areas for the car, most of the urban areas developed from the mid-20th century onwards were designed for the car, resulting in the loss of human scale in the streets and squares.

Despite the need to address the overbearing presence of the car being identified as central to improving the quality of the urban environment and quality of life in Malta, very little has been done in this regard in recent years. This is in line with Gössling's (2020) observation that both urban planners and politicians are finding it challenging to reduce the dominance of the car in search of more liveable cities. The biggest challenges seem to be linked to fierce resistance to measures that seek to limit the car use, even when these are associated with visions that seek to offer a more liveable and walkable environment, from which the majority will benefit in the long term (Attard, 2020; Gössling et al., 2016; Nieuwenhuijsen et al., 2019; Tibbalds, 2004).

The findings of this research support these observations and identify car culture as one of the causes of the lack of progress in achieving the strategy and policy objectives. It is also clear that it will take time to change or mitigate car culture. The lack of alternative modes of transport makes this even more of a challenge in Malta, especially when considering Gössling's (2020) assertion that "*where no transport alternatives exist, changing transport cultures is impossible*" (p. 445).

Addressing the car culture in search of higher quality streets and squares will largely depend on the strategic direction of the government and authorities, and the measures and actions politicians are willing to take in search of more liveable and walkable environment. This shifts the discussion to *contemporary polity,* which is the second contextual factor identified by Carmona (2014).

Contemporary polity directs and influences the urban design process to shape public space in a certain way. This must be considered in terms of the socio-political and economic context which, together with the public policy context, determines the scope of the urban design process and its outcomes (Lang, 2005; Punter, 2011; Urban Task Force, 1999).

When discussing this characteristic, Carmona (2014) focuses on the prevailing policy context, and how changes to polity over the years have affected the urban design process. Carmona goes into detail about how public realm improvements in London were driven by Mayors Livingstone and Johnson, who explicitly recognised the importance of high-quality urban design. The research in the Maltese context underpins the importance Carmona assigns to contemporary polity and its role in successful urban design, albeit in a contrasting situation where a lack of political will has led to little improvement in recent decades.

While Carmona (2014) limits the discussion to high-level policies and strategies and the important role of mayor, this research suggests that it is also important to extend the discussion to the institutional structures and frameworks that form a core part of contemporary polity. Governance structures, legislation and other related considerations greatly influence the way in which the urban design process operates, including the way in which identified strategies, policies and specific proposals are implemented. They also influence the way in which stakeholders are expected to interact the participate in the process. In Malta, the current system was found to be failing to deliver the required improvements. The most frequently cited shortcomings include the lack of consideration given to participation and the lack of the necessary structures and experience to define and progressively implement long-term strategies.

Implications for the Place-Shaping Continuum: Whilst the research in Malta supports the importance Carmona attributes to politicians in power, such as mayors, when discussing contemporary polity the theory needs to also take into consideration the governance structure and the institutional frameworks which play an essential role in the urban design process, both in terms of its management and its outcomes.

Implications for the Maltese context: The research identifies the need to improve the institutional structures which are required to address several shortcomings identified. There is also the need to proactively review the strategy, policy and guidance documents which currently is being done reactively when they exceed their intended timeframe.

The findings from the interviews also back up Veenendaal's (2019) assertion of a clientelistic society in which politicians, especially those who form the government, are at the centre of the urban design

process and can largely influence it. It was also noted that due to political clientelism, Maltese politicians seem to be unwilling to take the necessary unpopular decision, otherwise they would risk losing votes - which is highly undesirable in a two-party political system. This also leads to a context where every issue becomes politicised at the national level. This is consistent with the findings in EU's *Shared Space* (2005) research project which observed that politicians have a big influence on transport and traffic objectives, and with the findings in Henning Jones' (2014) research which found that the influence of politics on street space allocation should not come as a surprise.

In Malta, there is a high level of political influence in the governance of the urban design process, with many interviewees identifying how politicians often 'interfere' in projects and frequently renegotiate trade-offs made by professionals. This is consistent with Ali Madanipour's (2006) observation that urban design projects are often hijacked by politicians who use these projects as a means to demonstrate their commitment to the local community in the hope of getting re-elected (p. 186).

Madanipour (2006) also discussed that change can only take place if the desired ideas and concepts are entrenched in national strategies, policies and good practice guidance which are then supported both politically and economically (p. 191). The latter seems to be precisely the problem in Malta, with a lack of political commitment and political will to initiate the required change identified in the national policy documents.

In Malta, the system itself affords a lot of power to the government, specifically to the responsible minister, in the running of the authorities, especially at the strategic level, resulting in a highly politicised system. This is in line with *Espon Project - Governance of territorial and urban policies* (Farinós Dasí et al., 2006) findings which identified that in Malta power is centralised and held by a few individuals. This can result in issues when it occurs in a political context in which politicians lack vision and are not willing to introduce the required improvements to the public realm, especially when concerning streets and squares. This lack of commitment is mentioned throughout *Chapter 4*, *Chapter 5*, and *Chapter 6* and has limited the improvement to streets and squares over the last decade, resulting in several visions, strategies and measures not being implemented within the proposed timeframes.

Implications for the Maltese context: Whilst it is acknowledged that certain urban design decisions are inherently political, there is the need to depoliticise the urban design process allowing professionals with expertise in the field to make decisions and impose measures that will result in long term benefits to the local community. For this to be successful, there is likely the need for some form of agreement between the political parties agreeing on a set of basic principles such as the

***need to reduce the number of cars, which gives the power to the government to start introducing
unpopular measures.***

Therefore, this research finds that the governance system is as important as the contemporary policy
context, as without a functioning system the identified policies are unlikely to be implemented. This
governance system needs to be considered in terms of the power relationships of the stakeholders
and how this determines the approach to the urban design process and the ultimate outcomes. This
is discussed in more detail in the next section.

7.3   The influence of stakeholders and their power relations

The urban design process affects and is affected by many stakeholders. The literature review on the
subject (*2.2.6 Stakeholders)* identified how one of the biggest challenges in urban design is to manage
the complex relationships between the different stakeholders, each having their interests and
motivations – which can sometimes be in conflict.

This section seeks to discuss the influence of stakeholders and their power relations, taking into
consideration how the context discussed in the previous section influences this, including the highly
politicised urban design process in which politicians tend to play a key role in its management and its
outcomes. This was identified as being especially important when focusing on streets and squares
since these fall under the responsibility of elected politicians, both at the national and local level.

This section first discusses the six factors that Carmona (2014) associates with different stakeholder
groups that influence how space is shaped or reshaped. Each factor is discussed in relation to the
Maltese context to determine whether it is applicable or whether additional considerations are
required. This discussion is followed by an analysis of the power relations between stakeholder groups
in Malta to determine how some stakeholders might influence other stakeholder groups. Where
necessary, the implications for the Place-Shaping Continuum and the implications for the Maltese
context are highlighted.

The first factor identified by Carmona (2014) concerns the owner of the space, which in the case of
streets and squares is the national government:

1. The aspirations, resources and determination of the owner [the government who owns the streets
   and squares] determine the strategic approach, along with assigning priorities and funding.

In Malta, the aspiration and determination of the government have proven over the years to be
essential to improving the quality of the public realm, which echoes the findings of Carmona (2014) in

London, who discussed how the aspirations and determination of two successive mayors to improve the quality of the public realm was a key element in achieving the desired improvements as discussed in the previous section. The same aspirations and determination are not always present in Malta. Many participants discussed how there is sometimes an unwillingness to make the necessary decisions, often with the aim of not upsetting the citizens whose vote they require.

Implications for the Maltese context: Government needs to have clear aspirations and determination if the quality of streets and squares is to improve in the coming years. These aspirations need to be matched by a determination to take the necessary unpopular decisions if required.

The government's work and priorities in Malta form an integral part of the electoral manifesto on which it was elected to govern for the next five-year period. Therefore, the aspirations and priorities of the government in the urban design field can be identified in the measures listed in the electoral manifesto. Due to the size of Malta, the manifestos refer to specific infrastructural and urban improvement projects – which often take precedence over other projects. This tends to result in a cyclical approach to urban planning and design as governments focus on the next five-year term, which automatically limits the adoption of long-term initiatives. Given that in the previous section (7.2), a long-term approach was identified as being required to address the car culture in Malta, the focus on a five-year term can be an issue, especially when considering that there is likely the need to offer attractive alternative modes of transport and other measures which are likely to extend beyond several terms of office.

Implications for the Maltese context: It must be ensured that all electoral manifesto promises are contributing to the visions and strategies in place, which often go beyond the five-year term. In absence of this, there is the risk that after every election there is a new start and a new direction, especially if the political party in government changes.

2. The aspirations, powers and skills of those with regulatory responsibilities and their willingness to intervene to secure particular ends.

As discussed in sub-sections *4.2.5* and *5.3.2*, the high-level and strategic objectives of the regulators are set by the government, as required by law. One of the roles of the authorities and regulators is to develop the necessary strategies, policies and guidelines in line with these objectives. The aspirations of regulators and authorities should in the opinion of several stakeholders extend beyond the regulation of the sector. In recent years, the focus of most authorities has shifted to regulation and

development control. This has negatively impacted the urban design process, as fewer resources and time are being dedicated to forward planning and research.

The approach adopted by the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA) was identified as an exemplary approach, in which the authority party funds projects as a means to gain more power to influence the design, allowing the authority to ensure the project is aligned with its authority's vision and objectives. Such an approach can be used by authorities to exert more control, instil ideals and/or create best practice examples, without having to lead or take total control over the whole process.

Implications for the Maltese context: Authorities need to dedicate more resources to forward planning, including more research and data collection, which can be key when seeking to introduce shared space, which will likely require a holistic approach to spatial and transport planning.

An important aspect noted in the Maltese context, but not discussed by Carmona (2014), is the need for collaboration between authorities and regulators, especially in the field of urban design where several sectors often overlap. This collaboration is necessary to define long-term and holistic approaches that often need to be integrated and co-ordinated across the different strategies and policies of the respective authorities. Unfortunately, the lack of collaboration has been defined as a deep-rooted problem in Malta, even between different units within the same authorities. This can lead to uncoordinated strategies and evaluation of proposals, which in turn increases the likelihood of conflicts between authorities.

Implications for the Maltese context: Authorities need to adopt a more collaborative approach to develop holistic and integrated strategies and policies which take into consideration the challenges and needs in various sectors, as discussed in 5.4.1.1 Collaboration between authorities. One of the most recommended solutions was that of having a co-ordination working group in which representatives from the various authorities co-ordinate the strategic work of the authorities, as well as identify the need to collaborate and consult on more specific projects.

Implications for the Place-shaping Continuum: The theory needs to consider how authorities and regulators need to collaborate, especially when considering that urban design often required a multi-disciplinary approach.

3. The aspirations, skills and sensibilities of professionals involved in the urban design process; the scope given to them by the government and authorities, and their awareness of the needs and aspirations of the communities, long-term managers and users.

When discussing the third factor, Carmona (2014) focuses on designers, but when considering the diverse range of professionals that may be involved in the design phase of the process, professionals may be considered a more appropriate stakeholder group, particularly as this research identifies the important role that other professionals may have, including the role of leading and coordinating the process as well as facilitating the public participation process. This is consistent with the findings of one of the frameworks considered in *2.3 Urban design process*, *Shaping better places together* (Al Waer et al., 2017), which identifies the important of role facilitators in participatory urban design processes.

The importance of multi-disciplinary teams is also becoming more widely acknowledged. Apart from the traditional professionals usually associated with street and public space design, the *Street for People* (Government of South Australia, 2012) framework identified how more professionals are becoming involved in the process, including social planners and sociologists who are tasked with assessing the social impact of process policies or projects.

Implications for the Place-shaping Continuum: There is the need to widen this stakeholder group to consider all professionals that might be involved in the design and development stages of urban design, rather than limiting the discussion to designers.

When discussing skills, one of the characteristics which stands out in the Maltese context is the lack of specialisation in the spatial and transport planning sector. This has been reiterated through the years in research in the sector, with no significant changes identified to date (Attard, 2006; Zammit, 2013). As a result of this, the majority of the roles in the urban design process in Malta tend to be undertaken by architects. Therefore, Malta can be considered as having a limited 'skill set', which can be partly due to the size of the population. This is an important consideration since the skills and approach of professionals were identified as being an essential attribute that can lead to the success or failure of the urban design process. This was found to be particularly the case when discussing participation processes, in which the skills, character and sensibilities of the professionals play an important role in determining whether stakeholders find consensus or compromise – which can make or break the process.

Implications for the Maltese context: The lack of specialisation in urban design and related disciplines can be considered as a shortcoming in Malta. This results in architects being responsible for a wide range of responsibilities, having to take on tasks, such as public participation, in which they might not have the fully developed skills required to maximise the potential of the process.

In terms of sensibilities and awareness of the needs and aspirations of other stakeholders, especially those of communities and users, this research found that this largely depends on the time available for professionals to analyse the context and the requirements of the stakeholders. Interview participants discussed how professionals tend to be given tight deadlines, which limits the amount of analysis and participation they can carry out at the analysis and design stage. This will inevitably impact the quality of the proposals, with analysis and early participation identified as one of the core aspects of highly successful urban design projects (Black & Sonbli, 2019).

Implications for the Maltese context: Professionals leading, facilitating and designing the project need to be given adequate time to analyse the context and carry out the necessary participation process for them to be aware of the needs and aspirations of the other stakeholders.

4. The aspirations of communities and their ability and determination to influence the work of the first three stakeholder groups (above).

As discussed in *4.2.5 Stakeholders in Malta*, a wide range of stakeholder groups can be considered under this category, however, the focus in this research is on NGOs, businesses and residents. These three stakeholder groups will be discussed in turn below.

Firstly, when analysing the findings on NGOs, the consensus among the interview participants, including NGO members, is that NGOs should aspire to contribute in a more meaningful manner. It can be far more beneficial if NGOs contributed to the urban design process by carrying out research and developing their proposals. This is the approach adopted by several NGOs abroad, which have the ability to drive changes in policies and practices. These NGOs include the Heart Foundation in South Australia which was a key partner in the development of *Streets for People* (Government of South Australia, 2012). This type of contribution was identified as highly beneficial and something which is missing from the local context.

These remarks are aligned with other studies that identified NGOs as being instrumental in ensuring higher standards and exploring alternatives, with some arguing that when this is the case the government and authorities should actively support and facilitate their contribution (Zbuchea & Romanelli, 2018). To maximise these benefits, the structures and frameworks in the urban design field need to facilitate the participation of informed stakeholder groups such as NGOs.

Implications for the Maltese context: NGOs should seek to shift to a more constructive approach to the urban design process by developing proposals and design guidelines, amongst other things.

Whilst acknowledging that this requires resources, NGOs abroad have shown that this is possible and their input greatly improved the outcomes of the urban design process.

Secondly, several studies on participation reveal that when stakeholders have more to gain from the process, they are willing to invest more time in an attempt to influence the process (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004). This was identified as the case in Malta when it comes to businesses, which tend to be very active in the urban design process and determined to influence it to maximise their benefits. This includes informally lobbying politicians and decision-makers, with some participants discussing how this tends to be reflected when allocating space in streets and squares.

Businesses tend to have a high level of influence in the process since constituted bodies such as the Chamber of Commerce and GRTU are often included as members in committees advising the government and authorities on policies and proposals which directly impact the business community. Therefore, the aspirations of the business community tend to influence the urban design process.

Implications for the Maltese context: It must be ensured that the proposed policies and designs seek a fair and reasonable allocation of street and square, rather than prioritising the aspirations of particular stakeholder groups.

Thirdly, one of the main traits identified by the interview participants was that the local community tend to resist change. A behavioural economist explained that in economics this behaviour is known as the status quo bias, which is defined as an emotional bias that leads one to prefer the current situation and circumstances and is often willing to take action to safeguard them. In Malta, the preference for the status quo is particularly strong when attempting to restrict or reduce car access or car parking due to the strong car culture, as discussed in the previous section on the context (*7.2*). Whilst generally citizens are unwilling to participate in the urban design process, in such cases, citizens tend to actively participate in an attempt to retain the status quo. This is one of the reasons why professionals require the necessary skills to convey and 'sell' ideas to other stakeholders, as discussed in the previous factor. These professionals also need to be able to empathize with citizens and listen to any concerns they might have. Experience has shown that when this successfully done, the local community are more likely to accept that there is a need for change and amend their aspirations accordingly.

Despite these challenges, the majority of the frameworks identified in Chapter 2 (*Section 2.3*) recognise the importance of involving the local community in the process, since this allows the other stakeholder groups to identify the real needs and aspirations of the community. To this extent, Berman (2017) in the **Two-Phase Participatory Model** identifies the local community as the primary

stakeholder, whilst **CLLD** (European Commission, 2014) proposes that the local community should be included as partners in the process, whilst highlighting the need to build their capacity so they can effectively participate in the process.

Implications for the Maltese Context and Implications for the Place-shaping Continuum: The aspirations, abilities and determination of the stakeholders forming part of the communities group need to be taken into consideration to determine the ideal type of approach and level of participation.

5. The aspirations, resources and abilities of those with long-term management responsibility for the space.

In Malta, Local Councils have the responsibility for the long-term management of streets, squares and other urban space within their locality boundaries. Throughout the interviews, concerns were raised regarding the aspirations, resources and abilities of the local councils. Similar to the government's aspirations discussed in the first factor, the aspirations of Local Councils are dictated by the electoral manifestos on which the party with the majority was elected. This leads to five-year terms cycles, with local councillors planning and budgeting until the next election.

Several concerns were also raised in terms of the Local Council's ability to contribute to the urban design process. Despite being identified as those best placed to represent the local communities, since they are elected to represent their constituents, the elected local councillors tend to lack expertise and know-how in the field. Without any support or professional input, Local Councils will not be able to develop visions and masterplans through a participative approach.

Despite these difficulties, the majority of participants believe that Local Councils should be given more responsibilities in respect to the urban design process in their locality provided that this is backed up by more professional support. The arguments in favour of this often are based on the idea that Local Councils are more aware of the needs and aspirations of the local communities, which they can in turn relay to the authorities, politicians and decision-makers.

Implications for the Maltese context: Local Councils have been identified as good representatives of citizens. However, a clear need for more resources and professional support was identified. A specific central entity can be given the responsibility of supporting and guiding Local Councils in urban design matters. The support should extend to the participation process, in particular, to engage with residents in a more effective manner. Once Local Councils have the support and resources required, they can start taking on more responsibilities.

6. The manner with which public space users engage with spaces and, through their use, define and redefine the nature of each space over time.

This factor is directly related to the *Shaping through use* sub-process that is discussed in *7.4.3*. The users of the public space can be considered as the biggest stakeholder group as it includes people from the other groups using the space under consideration. It is generally accepted that the way users use space shapes it in the long-term (Gehl, 1987). The discussion in this research focuses mainly on the car culture that has shaped urban areas in recent decades and how difficult it is to change these practices when trying to redefine these spaces using the design and development stages, which Carmona (2014) defines as the 'knowing' processes.

Furthermore, history and traditions influence the way a space is used and redefined, as discussed in *7.2 The influence of the context on the urban design process*. In Malta, several village squares have been used in the same way for five or more decades, although the streets in the area have been adapted for car traffic, which seems to be their main purpose today. Not much attention is paid to this in Malta and there are no studies on how the use of space has changed over time.

Implications for the Maltese context: It can be considered important to analyse why certain spaces have continued to be used in the same way, whilst others have been completely transformed, often due to the need to accommodate the car.

To conclude the discussion on the six factors identified by Carmona (2014) in the Place-Shaping Continuum, this research supports the six factors associated with six stakeholder groups that influence how public space is shaped.

However, it can be safely stated that these six factors do not have equal levels of influence. This is likely to depend on the power each stakeholder group has in a given context. Therefore, the need to discuss power is inevitable. Carmona (2014) placed power at the core of the Place-Shaping Continuum diagram (see Figure 29). Power was also attributed a lot of importance by the interview participants who discussed the large efforts and extents stakeholders go to in an attempt to influence the process in their favour, which is completely in line with Carmona's statement that "*set of power relationships between stakeholders operates like a lens, focusing the processes of urban design in different directions and in diverse and inconsistent ways, and decisively moulding the nature of outcomes in the process*" (p. 11).

Similarly, Bentley (2005) described the power plays within the urban design process as a battlefield where different stakeholders are continuously " ... *plotting and scheming to use their power in the best*

ways they can devise, in attempts to achieve the built forms they want" (p. 27). Carmona (2014) attempts to analyse the power relations in the urban design process by identifying the level of influence nine stakeholders having in the four phases of urban design in London's public spaces. This research adopts a similar approach by identifying the Maltese equivalent of London's stakeholders, who are then assigned to one of the six stakeholder groups discussed above - as shown in Table 49. Table 50 then summarises the level of influence that Maltese stakeholders typically have in the four different sub-processes.

Table 49: The Maltese equivalent of the stakeholders identified by Carmona (2014) in London and the identification of the stakeholder group to which they belong.

Stakeholders in London's public space	Stakeholders in Malta streets and squares	Stakeholder group[1]
Private developers/ investors[2]	Government and government agencies	Owner
Local authority providers	National authorities and regulators	Regulators
Conservation	Superintendence of cultural heritage	Regulator
Masterplanner	Architects[4]	Designers
Public space designers		
Planners[3]		
The wider community	NGOs	Communities
	Business Community	
	Residents	
Managers	Local Councils	Management
Everyday users	Everyday users	Users

Notes: 1: Makes references to the stakeholder groups identified in 5.3 Stakeholders in Malta.

2: In streets and squares, the main owner, developer and investor will be the government. The private sector can contribute to the development of streets and squares through certain initiatives that can form part of the Business Community group.

3: Planners in the Maltese context tend to work within the planning authority. There are very few planners which work with the private sector as consultants for developers. When this is the case, private planners are brought on board in an attempt to build a case for the proposal.

4: Architects commonly take on most of the roles in the planning and urban design field.

Table 50: The recurring power relations identified in Malta's street and squares.

Stakeholder	Power	Influence by phase			
		Knowing place shaping		Unknowing place shaping	
		Design	Development	Space in use	Management
Government	The role of the government is crucial in the urban design process concerned with streets and squares. Apart from being the landowner, the government is also responsible to issue strategic guidance to authorities, fund capital projects, appoint professionals to design projects (either directly or through a government agency), as well as fund Local Councils who will ultimately be responsible for the management of the space.	High	High	Low, since this mainly depends on the community and everyday users, however, there might be instances where the government incentivises some uses.	Low, but can indirectly influence the management of spaces through its agencies.
Local authorities	Authorities have an important role in both the design and development stage since they need to assess proposals to ensure these are in line with the policies in force. They can also be responsible for deciding on trade-offs when there is conflict between stakeholders.	Significant, Can be high if authorities are directly involved in discussions early in the process.	High	Low	Low

Superintendence of Cultural Heritage (SCH)	The power of SCH is restricted to areas of historic and cultural value. In such areas, they have significant power to ensure that any interventions respect the context and improve.	Significant	High, Most of the power is during the negotiating consent stage, where SCH are required to give their approval.	Low	Low, Although they could be involved when minor maintenance is made in historic areas.
Architects	Architects, as the main professionals in this field in Malta, take on several roles. Whilst having a high level of influence in the 'knowing processes', they have to work within the constraints defined by regulators and within the brief assigned to them by the government.	High, but within the scope given by the government when designing streets and squares.	High, Since they need to give their input throughout the process. They can play a key role in leading and coordinating the process, negotiating consents, injecting quality and garnering the support of other stakeholders.	Low	Low, but can be significant at times, for example when proposing a new traffic management scheme.
NGOs	NGOs can include a wide range of groups, including citizen groups and social clubs, which all have different interests and opinions.

The focus is however on NGOs which seek to safeguard the built heritage and promote sustainable development. Generally, these NGOs have low | Low | Low | Low | Low |

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	influence across the urban design process, unless they are brought in as collaborators in the process. Whilst this is not common when the subject is streets and squares, it is becoming common practice in projects concerning the natural environment. NGOs can also have more influence if they do their research and propose alternative solutions.				
Businesses	Businesses have significant influence in the knowing process, especially when they are represented by a Chamber or a Union. Businesses are also likely to dedicate more time and resources to influence the process since they can gain a lot compared to other stakeholders.	Significant	Significant	Significant, Businesses can attract people to the area and they can appropriate public space, which if done sensitively can benefit the space.	Low, Unless business communities take some of the responsibilities associated with the management of a space, however, this is not common.
Residents	The influence of residents in the knowing processes depends on the level of participation adopted, which in Malta tends to be low.	Low	Low	High, Since they are important users of the space who over time can change the space through their use and changing needs.	Low, However, more community-managed spaces are being introduced over time.

Local Councils	The role of Local Councils in the knowing place-shaping process can vary significantly, depending on whether they are proposing the project themselves, or whether they are representing the local community in the process.	Varies, High if Local Councils are the owners of the project but can be low in projects proposed by government agencies since they are not always involved.	Varies, High if Local Councils are the owners of the project but can be low in projects proposed by government agencies since they are not always involved. Local Councils also have a vote on the Planning Authority board which decides on major projects.	Significant, They can play a role in activating spaces as well as follow how public space is being adapted to through use.	High, One of their main responsibilities is to maintain space. They can also be the best placed to identify the need to redevelop or revitalise the space.
Users	The influence of users in the knowing processes depends on the level of participation adopted, which in Malta tends to be low.	Low	Low	High, The way users use the space influences how it is shaped through use and how the design and development sub-processes will seek to address the changing requirements of users.	Low

When comparing the typical level of influence in the Maltese context to those identified by Carmona (2014) in London, they are almost identical which signifies that the two places have similar power relationships in the shaping of public space. It is important to note that the level of influence can change from one project to another and dependent on the type of approach adopted by the stakeholders proposing the projects.

When analysing the levels of influence in Table 50, a hierarchy of stakeholders based on power can be derived. When Carmona (2014) outlined the four sub-process of urban design, he distinguished between the 'knowing' and 'unknowing' place-shaping processes. The *knowing process* refers to the deliberate attempt to shape places through the 'design' and 'development' phases, whilst the *unknowing processes* refer to the 'use' and 'management' phases which are 'unknowingly' shaping places since the change which arises is often not deliberate.

The *knowing processes* can be considered as *space shaping for use*, whilst the *unknowing processes* are *space shaping through use*. Carmona (2014) identifies this in the Place-shaping Continuum diagram through the dotted line which cuts across the diagram, as shown in Figure 31. When analysing the power of these two divisions, there is a clear difference in the hierarchies since stakeholders tend to have different levels of influences in the different phases. The two hierarchies will be discussed in the following paragraphs.
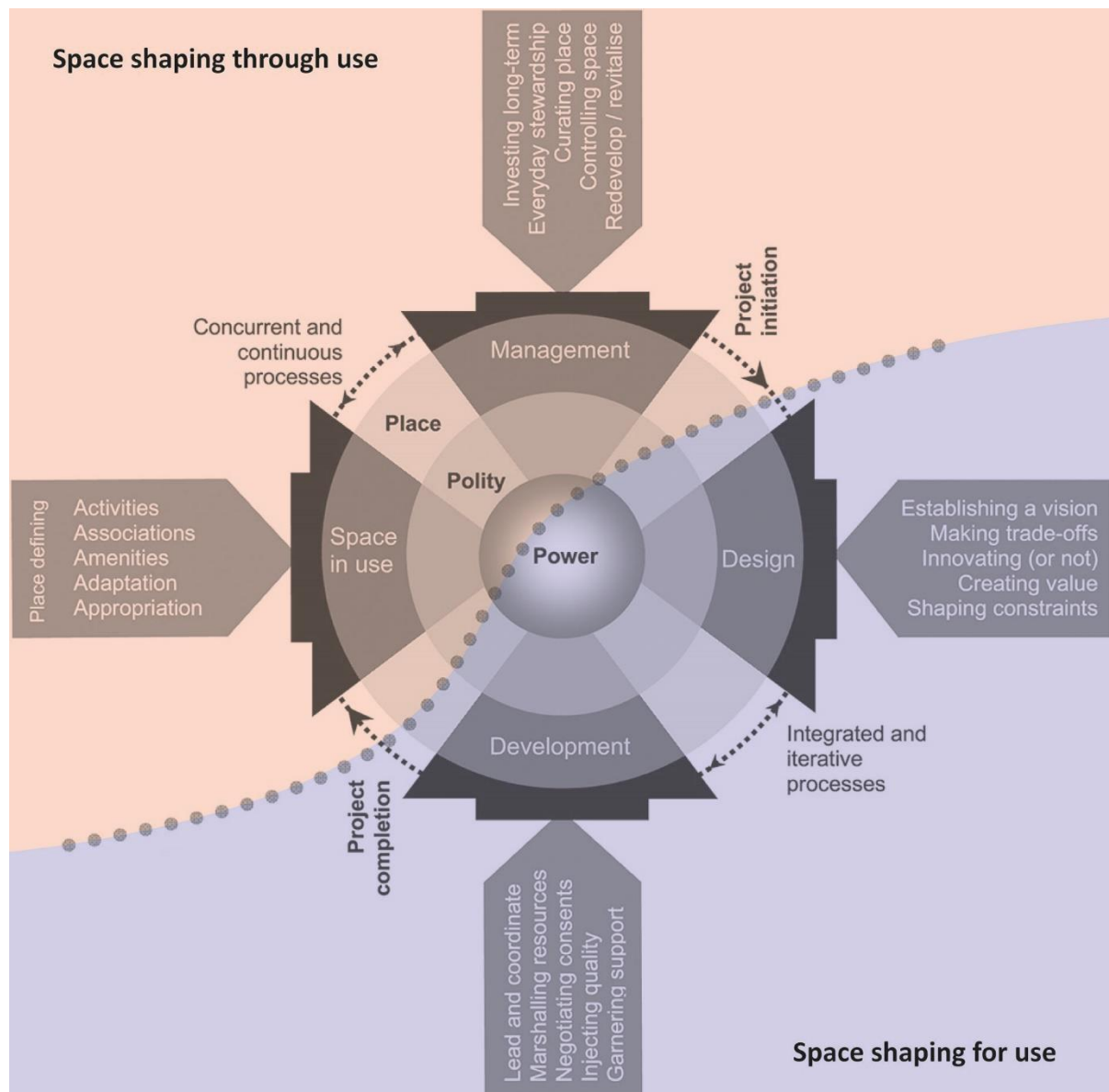
Figure 31: Space shaping through use and the Space shaping for use components of the Place-Shaping Continuum. Adapted from "The Place-shaping Continuum: A Theory of Urban Design Process" by M. Carmona, 2014, Journal of Urban Design, 19(1), p. 11 (https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2013.854695).

When discussing the ***space shaping for use***, the following hierarchy based on power emerges:

1. Government, as the owner of streets and squares, is responsible for the upgrade of streets and squares. The government also has the responsibility to issue strategic objectives to authorities, appoint professionals and designers, and fund the Local Council which are responsible for the management of these spaces. In addition, they can also influence the decisions of communities and users by incentivising or disincentivising certain practices. These lines of influences are graphically represented in Figure 32.

2. Authorities, with regulatory responsibilities, need to act on the objectives given by the government to draft strategies and policies which are then used for development control and

assessment of proposals. Any type of development requires a planning permit which the Planning Authority, in collaboration with other authorities needs to approve, before these can be implemented which therefore makes regulators one of the most powerful stakeholders in the shaping for use component of the urban design process.

3. Professionals and designers, need to work within the brief provided by the government or one of its implementation agencies, whilst also respecting any policies and guidelines issued by the various authorities.

4. Long-term managers, who in Malta are the elected local representatives, have a vote on major projects and are normally one of the first stakeholders to be consulted about projects in their locality, however, their power to influence the process is limited.

5. Communities, can exert pressure on the other stakeholders in an attempt to influence the process. Usually, this is in the form of clientelism, in which persons approach ministers and politicians to attempt to influence the process in exchange for votes. However certain sub-groups such as businesses, can in some cases be higher up the hierarchy, sometimes up to third, above designers. In such cases, they informally lobby the government to issue directions and a brief that seeks to favour their interests.

6. Everyday users, are often limited to participation through any form of participation process as part of the planning application process. However, if users will be strongly affected by some decision, they are also likely to resort to clientelism.
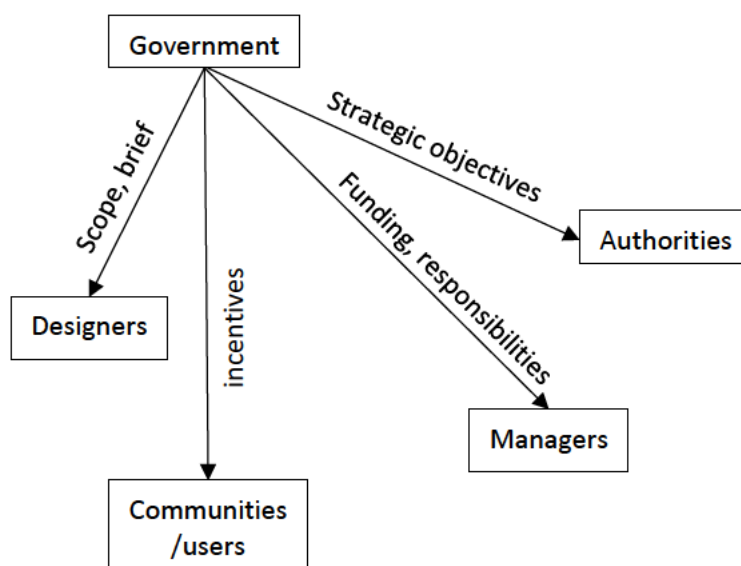
Figure 32: Links between the government and other stakeholder groups.

A different hierarchy can be identified when considering the ***space shaping through use*** component of the place-shaping continuum. The main responsibilities shift to the long-term managers of space who are likely to be responsible for maintaining and controlling the space, whilst the government plays a secondary role unless any issues arise. The hierarchy with the different responsibilities is outlined below.

1. Long-term managers of a space, who can have a range of responsibilities including that of maintaining the space, as well as starting the processes of change when and if required. They will likely require co-operation from other stakeholders. For example, when enforcing the use of space, they will most likely require collaboration from regulators.

2. Communities, will play an important role in shaping through use as often the places evolve to suit their needs and aspirations. Communities such as businesses can also play an important role since high-quality places areas likely to be of benefit to them.

3. Similarly, everyday users through the way they use the space will affect the activity in the space, which might require changes to the public space or the need for other stakeholder groups to intervene.

4. Regulatory authorities, who are tasked with enforcement might need to get involved to stop any illegal or undesired activities or changes to the urban fabric. Apart from the traditional regulators discussed in urban design, there might also be the need to involve the police.

5. Government, as the owner, usually does not need to get involved in the unknowing process of urban design unless there is the need to change the way a place is being used. These include the introduction of schemes such as the controlled vehicular access introduced in Valletta a few years back, in which drivers started being charged for entering within the city boundaries by car. In other cases, the government might want to incentivise some uses or activities.

6. Designers do not tend to be involved in these two phases unless they are required to introduce minor adaptations.

Whilst a hierarchy of influence and power exists in the space shaping through use part of the urban design process, there is no dominant stakeholder group, as is the case in the space spacing for use component of urban design.

This research supports Carmona's (2014) claim that power relations sit at the heart of the urban design process, and can also shift from one project to another, as well as through time. This research also supports the claim that the key power relationships change depending on the phase of the project, as shown by the different hierarchies between the shaping through use and shaping for use components of the process.

As discussed earlier, the participation approaches that are adopted in the process will influence these power relations. In high levels of participation, those high up in the hierarchy will be ceding power to those found lower down. However, it is essential that if given the opportunity stakeholders do participate in the process. When certain groups do not participate in the process, they are automatically ceding power to other stakeholders. Therefore, if in the knowing urban design process a high level of participation is being sought, the government, authorities and professionals need to engage with the other stakeholders whilst providing them with the tools, knowledge and data required.

Implications for the Place-shaping Continuum: The theory is identifying the typical power relationships in the urban design process. However, this research which is focused on participation notes that different levels of participation on Arnstein's ladder of participation are redistributing the power in the urban design process. When adopting Citizen Control, the power balance shifts away from authorities and professionals to citizens. The Place-shaping Continuum does not seem to give enough consideration to this as it seems to accept the existing power relationships between stakeholders. Understanding the power and influence in a particular system or society is important, however, there is also the need to understand how these can be transformed through arguments or debates (Vigar, 2002). For this reason, there is also the need to understand how participation, including engaging and empowering the various stakeholders, might change the aspirations, determinations and effectively the power relationships at the core of the process.

7.4   The four sub-processes and agendas of urban design

After discussing contextual factors and power of stakeholders, the discussion shifts to the third component of the urban design process itself. In the *Place-shaping Continuum* Carmona (2014) suggests that the urban design process shapes space through the combined outcomes and interactions of four sub-processes:

- *Design—the key aspirations and vision, and contextual and stakeholder influences for a particular project or set of proposals.*
- *Development—the power relationships, and processes of negotiation, regulation and delivery for a particular project or set of proposals.*
- *Space (or place) in use—who uses a particular place, how, why, when and with what consequences and conflicts.*
- *Management—the place-based responsibilities for stewardship, security, maintenance and ongoing funding.* (p. 33)

In the following sub-sections, the four urban design processes will be discussed by analysing the findings of this research in terms of the four sub-processes identified by Carmona (2014). This approach allows the mapping of the findings on the various agendas to test the validity of the identified agendas, determine whether there are any which are of greater importance in the Maltese context or whether additional agendas can be identified. Any important implications for the Maltese context or the Place-Shaping Continuum are identified at the end of the sub-sections discussing the individual agendas.

7.4.1   Shaping through design

The shaping through design sub-process is mostly concerned with design strategies for the development of public space, which normally follows an idealised design process to understand the context, propose solutions and implement the chosen option. As noted in *2.2.1 Defining urban design,* when people refer to the urban design they are normally referring to this sub-process rather than an on-going process that slowly transforms urban places as posited by the Place-shaping Continuum.

7.4.1.1   *Establishing a vision*

Carmona (2014) identifies the establishment of a vision for positive change as the ultimate purpose of the knowing urban design process. The process for this varies depending on the context and stakeholders involved, however it often consists of an iterative design process (p. 16).

The research in the Maltese context supports the idea that agreeing on a long-term vision is essential for the success of the urban design process, especially when the objective of the process is to address wicked or complex problems such as that of introducing shared space principles in car-dominated environments. A vision should provide a set of clear goals and objectives which need to be taken into consideration at all times. Such an approach was identified as essential when discussing the introduction of shared space principles in Malta since the majority of the interview participants and literature identify the need to adopt a holistic and integrated approach that addresses the problems related to car culture from all perspectives and sectors. This observation is supported by one of the frameworks considered, *Streets for People* (Government of South Australia, 2012), which states that any process must have a vision and a set of guiding principles that provide an overall direction for the project.

This research also identifies the need to not only set the vision, but it must also be embedded in all the strategies, policies, masterplans and guidelines to ensure that all these are co-ordinated and aimed at achieving the vision. It is then important to monitor the progress and implementation of the objectives and measures of these documents to ensure that progress is registered. Great importance has been attached to monitoring of progress since as discussed in *Chapter 4*, *Chapter 5* and *Chapter 6*, very few improvements have been experienced in recent years when considering the quality of streets and squares despite this forming a core part of the national strategies and policies.

Implications for Maltese context: This research identified the need to establish visions collaboratively, while monitoring the progress of their implementation to ensure that the required improvements are delivered within the set time frames. This was deemed essential as it forms the backbone of the urban design process which can help to overcome the five-year political cycles. These long-term visions are necessary because, as discussed in sections 7.2 and 7.3, it will take time to address the issues related to car culture, which are necessary to improve the quality of streets and squares.

Implications for the Place-Shaping Continuum: The findings in this research and wider literature identify the need to adopt a collaborative approach to establish visions as this is likely to result in more stakeholders working towards its objectives. Apart from establishing the vision, the need to monitor the progress of implementation was also identified as crucial to the eventual success of the urban design process in delivering the required improvements.

7.4.1.2   *Making trade-offs*

Carmona (2014) notes that the urban design process tends to be iterative in nature due to the need to address competing calls on the limited space available. While urban design is presented as a process seeking to make reconciliations, often the core of the process consists of making trade-offs. Carmona notes how traffic exemplifies this challenge, as any solution can be controversial. Whilst it is often desirable to restrict car use, politicians are often under pressure not to. As a result, space allocation in streets is likely to remain an on-going source of tension (p. 17).

Similarly, this study found that the need to find compromises and make trade-offs between different stakeholders is a very important part of the urban design process. In relation to streets and squares, this research supports the contention that space allocation is likely to remain an ongoing source of tension between different stakeholders and is often the most contentious issue in the design of streets and squares. Attempts to restrict car access and reduce on-street parking are cited as the main barriers to the introduction of shared space or the upgrading of streets and squares.

As a result of these on-going tensions and the difficulties of bringing all the stakeholders into agreement, the regulatory authority or decision-making body must, in most cases, make a decision that seeks a balanced compromise between the various interests and aspirations. These decisions are often difficult to make, especially when dealing with wicked problems, where there are several unknowns and potential solutions that cannot be tested before implementation (Rittel & Webber, 1973). Deciding on the ideal trade-offs becomes even more difficult when there is a lack of research evidence and data to understand the context and a lack of case studies through which professionals can analyse the before and after comparison of an intervention. This has been identified as a problem in Malta, where the lack of research and data makes it difficult to predict the outcomes of some interventions.

Furthermore, it is generally believed that projects are more likely to be accepted and successful if compromises are agreed upon with the affected stakeholders. Therefore, a participatory approach can be beneficial, but in order to maintain the balance, it is important to ensure that there is representative participation and that the process adjusts for any additional influence from stakeholders who are willing to invest more time and resources as they have more to gain if the compromises benefit them. However, it is not always possible to find consensus or mutual compromises due to the egoistic and NIMBY approach that sometimes stakeholders adapt, as discussed in *7.3 The influence of stakeholders and their power relations*. Stakeholders adopting an egoistic and NIMBY approach in the urban design process can limit the level of participation that can be adopted in the urban design process. In cases where there is a high level of conflict between stakeholders, it may also be counterproductive to assume a high level of participation as they are unlikely to agree on a solution.

Inevitably there will be cases where there might be the need to impose decisions. Interview participants discussed that like tax, several measures are unpopular but are required for a place to function or improve. This comment was made mostly about the need to restrain the car. To justify this approach, several made references to how today's successful pedestrianised streets were heavily objected to when they were proposed but over the years most of the population have changed their opinion.

Another important consideration made is that sometimes trade-offs are re-negotiated by politicians, who often have the final say in the process since national strategies and plans are debated and approved at the parliament level. Several participants strongly believe that the final decisions should rest with the professionals, who are the experts in the field, with politicians only intervening if there are different approaches or solutions (linked to wicked problems).

Implications for Maltese context: This research identifies the need for more research and data which can help professionals to better understand how to tackle wicked and complex problems, enabling them to find the ideal trade-offs. This process needs to be transparent and traceable, with the involvement of stakeholders which can result in achieving consensus or mutual trade-offs. Finally, there is the need to depoliticise the urban design process, allowing professionals to recommend the ideal solutions based on research and experience, and taking into consideration the input of other participants in the process.

Implications for the Place-Shaping Continuum: This research finds that when making trade-offs, it is important to involve stakeholders as they are then more likely to understand why certain trade-offs are necessary and more likely to accept them. It is also important for the theory to give greater consideration to the importance of ensuring fair and balanced trade-offs, which may require that the urban design process adjusts the balance to protect the interests and needs of stakeholders who are underrepresented in the process, such as the vulnerable and minorities.

7.4.1.3   Innovating (or not)

Carmona (2014) discussed how when designing spaces, some designers were in favour of innovative contemporary solutions since in their opinion they are more likely to attract users to the area. Carmona however noted that there is no evidence backing this up as simple traditional solutions delivered the greatest positive impact in London (p. 18).

Similarly, this research finds that little consideration is given to whether proposals are innovative or not and this does not seem to affect the success of projects. Instead, more consideration is given to whether the proposed projects or solutions will deliver the required improvements. However, how projects are presented was identified as being very important so as not to cause any unnecessary controversy. When introducing 'new' concepts such as shared space it was suggested not to portray this as a revolutionary concept as people might rebel against something without realising what it entails. In the case of shared space, it can be presented as an improvement over the way streets and squares are used, which can lead to more people enjoying the space.

Implications to the Maltese context: Project leaders and facilitators must be careful in the way they present new concepts and proposals to avoid unnecessary opposition or controversy linked to the fear of change, as discussed in 5.5.1 Stakeholders attitude towards change.

7.4.1.4   Creating Value

When discussing the creation of value, Carmona (2014) remarked that while urban design tends to be discussed in terms of social value, for places to be successful there is the need for other values, such as economic and aesthetic value which also contribute to the urban quality. Different stakeholders are likely to prioritise different values, with residents typically favouring the aesthetic value, whilst businesses prefer the use-value since the more users a place draws, the bigger their potential market (pp. 18–19).

Similar conclusions were found in this research. When making 'trade-offs' there is the need to retain a balance between the different types of values since the most successful spaces tend to offer a mix of values. The focus on the economic value, which results in the over-commercialisation of space was identified as undesirable, however, if balanced with other considerations commercialisation of public space can attract users and generate street life.

Implications for the Maltese context: When reclaiming space from the car to introduce shared space principles, the urban design process must seek a balance between the different values, whilst safeguarding against the over-commercialisation of the reclaimed space.

7.4.1.5   Shaping constraints

When discussing shaping constraints Carmona (2014) discusses how the regulatory process as defined through policy imposes some constraints. These constraints can come in various forms and can include minimum standards and restrictions concerning historical locations. At times, a design might need to be re-negotiated as constraints change over time (p. 19).

During this research, apart from the existing urban fabric, few constraints in terms of design were identified, mostly due to the lack of guidance on the design of streets and squares. One of the main constraints identified in the planning and urban design field was the plan and policy-led approach adopted in Malta, which binds authorities to assess proposals in terms of the approved plans and policies, leaving little room for interpretation. As a result, when defining new strategies and policies it must be ensured that the policies do not narrowly restrict the shaping constraints which might be a limiting factor in the future.

Implications for the Maltese context: Lack of shaping constraints can be considered as not having enough safeguards to ensure the design and development of high-quality spaces. Therefore, there might be the need to introduce basic guidelines for the design of urban streets and squares which

seek to introduce these safeguards, whilst allowing room for participation to influence the outcomes.

7.4.2   Shaping through development

Development is the stage following design in which the projects are advanced and places reshaped in the process. Design and development are typically interlinked and iterative in nature, as changes and fine-tuning to proposals are often required during the development phase. In London, Carmona (2014) identified several variations in the practice of this sub-process but identified five common sub-processes which emerged from the public spaces studied.

7.4.2.1   Lead and co-ordinate

The *Place-shaping Continuum* (2014) identifies the need to coordinate the various interests in face of contrasting opinions on how to shape a place as a critical task of the urban design process. Project leaders and champions are also required to drive visions and projects forward, ensuring timely implementation. Experience has shown that the absence of leaders and co-ordinators often leads to delays.

This research strongly substantiates these observations, with the lead and co-ordination of the urban design process identified as one of the most critical elements to a functioning urban design process and the eventual success of its deliverables. The skills and approach of the leaders were identified as key in participative approaches as these require a specific set of skills, including negotiation and communication skills. The benefits and responsibilities associated with strong leadership and coordination are listed below:

- Leadership and coordination are required for the timely delivery of the required deliverables, being policy changes or implementation of physical projects.
- Leaders and coordinators have the responsibility to ensure that the policies and projects under discussion are contributing to the identified objectives and measures in the national visions, strategies and policies.
- Champions can be catalysts for change, offering a vision and encouraging stakeholders to get involved and contribute to these visions. Several studies have identified the importance of champions, especially in their role as initiators and promoters of innovative policies and proposals which can transform the quality of public space (Healey, 1997; N. Marshall, 2016; Richards et al., 2004). Lack of champions was identified as a limiting factor in Malta.

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- In Malta, the leaders and coordinators were also identified as being responsible for bringing all the stakeholders together, sometimes this includes the need to co-ordinate between the authorities in search of a compromise.

- When introducing concepts such as shared space, the leaders and coordinators are likely required to engage all stakeholders to garner support for the proposals, especially when there is a strong resistance to change as discussed *5.5.1 Stakeholders attitude towards change*. This is envisaged to be required when seeking to upgrade streets and squares to gain the support of the various stakeholders, as will be discussed in *7.4.2.5 Garnering support*.

The leaders were identified as also playing an important role in retaining a balance between stakeholders during the urban design process (directly linked to *7.4.1.2 Making trade-offs*). They need to ensure that all segments of society are represented in the process so that the outcomes cater to the needs of the whole society.

Similar to Carmona's (2014) observation, different opinions exist on who should be responsible for this role since it can be carried out by several stakeholders. The most frequently mentioned were Local Councils and steering committees or foundations which are tasked with the long-term management of the urban design process. Local Councils were identified as potential leaders and co-ordinators due to their knowledge of the local context and local stakeholder requirements. However, as discussed in *7.3 The influence of stakeholders and their power relations* it was often noted that Local Councils do not currently have the necessary skills and resources to take on this role. The setting up of steering committees or foundations seems to be the preferred solution, which is also the most commonly used approach for new projects in Malta. These committees consist of representatives of key stakeholders and professionals who together collaborate to ensure timely delivery of visions and strategies.

Related to this, Bryson et al. (2012) identified three types of leaders: sponsors, champions, and facilitators. Sponsors are those who legitimise and fund the process. Champions can be defined as persons or entities who use the trust and their demonstrated competence to build up support and enthusiasm for proposals. Facilitators can help to manage conflicts and build relationships between stakeholders to encourage collaboration. All these three roles have proved to be important in successful urban design processes. Since committees can include persons which these three qualities, coming from different stakeholder groups and backgrounds, it seems to be a preferable option over Local Councils. The committee would then become responsible for defining and managing the delivery of visions, strategies and projects.

Implications for the Place-Shaping Continuum: Whilst leadership and coordination are important in the design and development phase, these are likely to span over years, even decades – which results in overlaps with the other two sub-processes: use and management. Therefore, leadership and coordination should be considered as an overarching consideration in the urban design process. They are likely to take different forms over the years depending on the stage/phase of the urban design process and the stakeholders involved. Leadership and coordination have also been identified as being critical to a successful urban design process and can help bring stakeholders together.

Recommendation for the Maltese Context: Effective leadership and coordination were identified as essential if long-term visions and strategies are to be implemented. The need to have more professionals specialised in taking on these roles was also identified. This finding is in line with other research findings in recent years, with Attard (2006) and Zammit (2013) identifying the need to diversify the specialisation in the urban design and transport planning fields in Malta.

7.4.2.2   Marshalling resources

The second agenda identified is that of marshalling resources and funding, with Carmona (2014) discussing how complex stakeholder relationships are made more complex by the combinations of funding, both private and public, which is required to underpin the urban design process (p. 20).

As discussed in *7.3 The influence of stakeholders and their power relations*, the resources and funding concerning streets and squares largely depend on the government which allocates funding through its yearly budget based on its vision and priorities. These resources are not limited to funds allocated to develop and construct a project but also to the resources dedicated to research, data analysis, development of human resources and other elements, all of which play an important role in the functioning of the urban design process.

Implications for the Maltese Context: When considering the public space, the government must allocate the necessary resources to the urban design sector to ensure that authorities and government agencies have the necessary funding and skills to deliver projects and fulfil the visions.

Implications for the Place-shaping Continuum: Apart from discussing the resources in relation to the development of specific projects, there is the need to consider marshalling of resources in the long-term, such as resources that need to be dedicated to on-going research and resources required to engage and educate citizens.

7.4.2.3   Negotiating consents

The third agenda identified is concerned with the need to negotiate a range of regulatory instruments to realise projects, whether public or private. The local authorities were identified as having a key role in the urban design process in London, however, pressure for them to intervene becomes less when projects being designed and implemented take into consideration the public interest (Carmona, 2014, p. 21).

When analysing the Maltese context, the Maltese planning and urban design system adopts a 'plan-led discretionary system' which aims to ensure rational and consistent decisions, as discussed in *7.4.1.5 Shaping constraints*. As a result, planning controls and other development applications are assessed in terms of the policies in place, which often tend to allow for little to no flexibility.

Negotiating consents can also include the participation of any interested stakeholders since the local legislation identifies a statutory period in which anyone can submit a representation outlining their support or objection to the proposal. Due to pressures on professionals to submit proposals for consent, there tends to be minimal participation during the design stage, which makes participation during the negotiating consent process even more important, despite being quite late in the process.

Implications for the Maltese context: The negotiating consents stage is often the only when stakeholders can give their feedback on proposals, as they are rarely consulted at the design stage. Until this practice is improved, it is important to take into account any feedback received at this stage in order to improve the design, even if it is quite late in the process.

7.4.2.4   Injecting quality

The fourth agenda identifies how urban designers can have different roles in the urban design process, which range from being a creative force to a sub-servant of the market. Carmona (2014) discusses how urban designers tend to adopt two main roles, either that of masterplanners working on larger developments with multiple spaces or the role of public space designers working within the confines of individual spaces. In addition, Carmona discussed how in some cases the role of urban designers is fundamental in finding workable solutions reconciling the different needs of stakeholders, whilst in other cases, they have a peripheral role in which they apply a "*decorative sheen*" (p.21).

This research in the Maltese context found that the injection of quality from professionals is essential as they are often the best placed to address wicked or complex problems typically associated with urban design. However, they are often given tight timelines within which they need to work, which

can limit the quality of their input. Another limiting factor in the Maltese context is that, unlike London, the majority of the roles are taken on by architects, who tend to work within the confines of individual spaces.

In terms of influence, the need for professionals to assert their views was identified, especially when the final decisions rest with the politicians. In such cases, professionals need to build a clear case to persuade politicians to retain any compromises or unpopular decisions which form a core part of the proposal. Planners and architects working within the authorities discussed how such an approach is essential since the final decision often rests with the government and minister and their role is to guide them in making the correct decisions.

A departure from Carmona's remark is that those involved in the urban design process expect that injection quality is not solely the role and responsibility of professionals. NGOs, citizens and other stakeholders should also inject quality through their contribution in the process by critically analysing proposals and submitting informed submissions which seek to improve the proposals.

Implications for the Place-Shaping Continuum: Whilst the theory considers the injection of quality in respect to urban designers, this research identifies the need to consider the injection of quality from all stakeholders. The injection of quality should not be considered solely in terms of design, but also with respect to other elements in the urban design process, such as injecting quality in participation and PR campaigns.

Implications for Maltese context: Professionals need to be afforded the required time to carefully analyse and propose solutions, including the involvement of stakeholders from early in the process. There is also the need to ensure that their fundamental compromises in the proposals are retained when politicians take the final decisions. In addition, stakeholders such as NGOs and citizens need to be given more opportunities to inject quality into the urban design process.

7.4.2.5   Garnering support

In his biggest reference to participatory urban design in the *Place-shaping Continuum*, Carmona (2014) comments that whilst residents and stakeholders have an important role to play in the urban design process, this may not be as the idealised participatory approach envisaged in literature. Carmona refers to apathetic communities which need to be encouraged into making any contribution, whilst also identifying the powerful and active communities which seek to maximise the benefits from the process. Carmona notes that it is easy to over-romanticising engagement, but in reality, there is the need to balance it with professional advice (pp. 21–22).

The research in Malta substantiated these observations. Whilst a high level of participation is desired, sometimes there are cases where there is the need to impose informed decisions rather than garner support from the stakeholders. In certain aspects, such as the car dominance in streets and squares, citizens need to realise that the status quo is not sustainable and that change is required before they can be given more power in the process. NIMBY was identified as one of the main obstacles to garnering support, as citizens tend to react negatively to any proposals that propose to change the existing context, even if these are in their best interest.

Interview participants believed that most Maltese citizens can be classified as part of the apathetic communities which in turn requires the project leaders and facilitators to actively seek and engage stakeholders to persuade them to participate and give their contribution in the process. This often requires the adoption of participation and public relations strategy in an attempt to involve citizens in the process and to garner their support. Despite the resources and effort required for this, studies have shown that this can be highly beneficial (Brabham, 2009; Creighton, 2005; European Commission, 2014).

Whilst not required, having the support of all stakeholders is often desired as experience has shown that such projects tend to be more successful for a variety of reasons, including a higher sense of belonging and a higher sense of ownership. Garnering support can also accelerate the introduction of measures, especially if citizens start putting pressure on politicians and authorities to have these implemented.

Implications for the Place-Shaping Continuum: Participation has been identified as a central component of the urban design process. The ideal level of participation may vary from one context to another and from one project to another. As Arnstein (1969) noted, participation need not necessarily involve the delegation of power, but can also consist of educating stakeholders to align their aspirations with those of the authorities. Therefore, this research suggests that participation is an over-arching concept that needs further consideration beyond that found in the Place-shaping Continuum. Participation, which does not necessarily require garnering support, is required throughout the urban design process, even during the unknowing urban design process. This is similar to Schäfer (2011) concept of explicit and implicit participation. Explicit participation consists of knowing and active engagement of stakeholders, whilst implicit participation is more subtle and unknowing, which can be used during the 'use' and 'management' phases of urban design to build up knowledge or align aspirations of stakeholders without directly engaging them.

The implications of participation for the Place-shaping Continuum will be discussed in more detail in *7.5 The benefits and challenges associated with participation*.

Implications to the Maltese Context: Support from all stakeholders is often desired, but it is also recognised that this is often not possible. This research acknowledges that when implementing concepts such as shared space, which require the restraint of cars, there is likely to be some resistance to the proposed measures and projects. While any criticism and objections need to be taken on board, professionals responsible for the design and decision-making process must carefully assess the benefits of the proposals under discussion and proceed ahead with their implementation when experience and studies show that it will benefit the local community, irrespective of whether citizens oppose the project. However, it is still essential to engage with stakeholders and explain the reasons for the decisions taken.

7.4.3   Shaping through use

The Place-Shaping Continuum gives equal importance to the phases which follow design and development. Following the shaping or re-shaping of space in a 'deliberate' way, public space continues to evolve as it is used and managed. These processes can influence the shaping of space considerably, especially over a long period of time. This section will present the findings in relation to the five agendas identified by Carmona under the *shaping through use* sub-process.

7.4.3.1   *Activities*

Activities and uses in a space help define its character and shape the experience of the user. Different types of activities exist, some are associated with movement whilst other activities are of a recreational and social nature, as identified by Gehl (1987) in 'Life Between Buildings'. The case studies in London revealed how a mix of activities can create daily cycles which can attract different people at different times of the day (Carmona, 2014, pp. 22–23).

Similar observations were made in the Maltese context, where the balance between different activities and uses was considered as a very important characteristic of high-quality places. To this effect, it is essential to consider how an increase in public life due to higher quality streets and squares will affect the residents in the long-term.

Several interview participants also observed that it is often difficult for users who have used a space in a certain way to voluntarily change their practices. As discussed in *7.4.3.4 Adaptation*, these uses have shaped streets and squares over time, and adapting these spaces to a different type of activity

likely requires a lengthy urban design process. It is likely that participation and engagement will be required to convince stakeholders that certain changes are needed.

Implications for the Maltese context: While some activities and uses contribute to the quality of urban spaces, others have a negative impact on them. If a space has been used in a certain way for years, it can be difficult to change it, especially if this involves car use. This presents an additional challenge when introducing concepts such as shared space. However, this is not always a negative attribute as some streets and squares in Malta still function as shared space areas as they have been used in this way since the introduction of the car in Malta.

7.4.3.2 Associations

Carmona (2014) discusses how the normative assumption is that in an inclusive space, users should reflect the population at large. However, this is rarely the case, with different spaces or sub-areas typically associated with specific user groups. These users will likely use the space for a different purpose: some might use it for socialisation, others for relaxation, whilst others might use it as a movement space, amongst several other users (p. 24).

Similarly, user groups and their associations with specific places were identified as an important part of the character and charm of several urban places in the Maltese cities and villages. In such cases, the needs of those user groups must be given priority as they add to the activity of the street, whilst also having a sense of belonging and ownership. In such cases, it was identified as very beneficial to consult with these groups at a very stage of the urban design process.

Implications for the Maltese context: Any proposals seeking to reshape public space should seek to safeguard any associations that some user groups have in a place. It is therefore essential for the urban designers to understand the aspirations and needs of those user groups early in the process as these need to form the basis of the design process.

7.4.3.3 Amenities

Public spaces can sometimes act as an amenity to other activities and uses, especially to commercial outlets in the area. Carmona (2014) mostly discusses how private developers tend to develop amenities that seek to attract certain types of people to the area. When this is the case, the provision of these amenities can largely dictate the use of these spaces (p. 24).

Limited data was collected in this research in relation to this agenda, but the same concept appears to apply to the development of public streets and squares. The allocation of space for cafes, kiosks,

toilets and other uses determines the type of crowd that will be attracted to and frequent the space. Therefore, the provision of these amenities must be carefully considered in light of the types of activities, uses and users that are desired in that particular street or square. It is also important to note that the upgrade of these amenities alone can lead to an improvement in the quality of streets and squares.

7.4.3.4   *Adaptation*

The fourth agenda recognises that all spaces are inevitably adapted over time. Spaces can be adapted through use, gradually adapting to a different use or a changing culture. One of the clearest examples of this form of adaptation is the adaptation of urban areas to accommodate the car. Carmona (2014) notes that few realised the impact on urban areas until it was too late. This adaptation has now resulted in the need to reclaim space from the car, with Carmona noting that the few attempts to do so have been transformative (p. 25).

The research in Malta fully validates these observations. It was also noted that in the urban cores, some streets and squares have been adapted in their use without undergoing any physical changes. However, even in these cases, it is not easy to return to the way streets and squares were used before. There are structural barriers to this 'roll back' and it can take years to reclaim the space from the car, despite several projects clearly demonstrating the benefits involved.

Implications for the Place-shaping Continuum: It is important that all stakeholders learn from past mistakes and carefully consider the long-term benefits and consequences of trends that lead to adaptation of streets and squares. Although the process of adaptation is part of the 'unknowing' process, it is important that urban designers and other professionals continue to monitor these spaces. Urban designers can then guide stakeholders in the adapting these spaces, or may need to intervene to prevent undesirable adaptations.

Implications for the Maltese context: The Place-Shaping Continuum, the wider literature and the findings of this research all form that reclaiming space from the car is a major challenge (Barnett, 2014; Hass-Klau, 2015; Lang, 2014; Whyte, 2009). This becomes even more complex as it is likely to require a cultural shift where the Maltese population switches to other modes of transport. As a result, an urban design process that aim to reclaim space from the car while significantly improving the quality of streets and squares is likely to require a long-term process of adaptation.

7.4.3.5   Appropriation

Carmona (2014) states that a space can also be appropriated by specific groups of people who were not originally envisaged to 'control' a space. Appropriation can also be driven by businesses that can appropriate parts of the public space (pp. 25–26). The latter was identified as a concern in the Maltese context, with many wary of over-commercialisation of upgraded areas – which seems to be an issue that blights most of the projects in recent years. In relation to shared space, several participants expressed their concern about the removal of clear delineations between spaces, which could lead to some user groups appropriating more space than they are entitled to. Therefore, they see the need to control space in such cases, as is discussed in *7.4.4.4 Controlling space*.

Implications for the Maltese context: As discussed in 7.4.3.1 Activities, the appropriation of space is likely to change the activities in a space. Appropriation often takes place through use, and once again these changes must be monitored to ensure that an appropriation of space is not to the detriment of some user groups. In Malta, it was identified essential to monitor the appropriation of space by businesses to ensure that a large part of the reclaimed space from the car can be used and enjoyed by the public.

7.4.4   Shaping through management

Over the years, streets, squares, and other spaces are not left alone but are managed. Carmona (2014) discussed how the management of space can lead to small changes, including upgrading street furniture, which can change the way a space is used. Changes in traffic management can also have a large impact. Similarly, this research shows the importance of continuing to manage and monitor places, particularly where there are long-term visions and strategies. The following sub-sections discuss this in more detail in relation to the five identified agendas.

7.4.4.1   Investing long-term

The first agenda in this sub-process states that short emphasis on the product should be avoided at all costs, especially those coming from the public sector. In addition to considering initial costs, it is important to conduct long-term feasibility studies for projects (Carmona, 2014, p. 27).

A similar emphasis on the short-term was found in Malta, which is directly related to political cycles, as discussed in sections *7.2* and *7.3*. This research highlights the importance of considering and investing in the long-term throughout the urban design process, not just during the management sub-process. A short-term approach to urban design limits the visionary aspects and leads to small

incremental changes rather than working towards an ambitious goal. It was also noted that citizens and stakeholders need to consider the long-term benefits of projects, not just the short-term, as stakeholders are more willing to compromise if they are aware of the long-term benefits.

In addition, most interview participants discussed that some challenges, such as high car dependence, can only be addressed through long-term management that seeks to address problems on multiple fronts. This is likely to require a systematic way of monitoring the implementation of visions and overseeing the process, which underlines the importance of leadership and coordination in this process, as discussed in *7.4.2.1 Lead and co-ordinate*.

Implications for the Maltese context: Changing car culture requires a long-term investment and approach. It is not only about the long-term management of a space, but also about the long-term management of transport policy. This might require incentives to make the use of alternative modes of transport more attractive and disincentives to make the use of the private car less attractive or more expensive.

Implications for the Place-shaping Continuum: This research suggests that the long-term approach needs to be considered for the whole urban design process and not just in relation to the management of space.

7.4.4.2   Everyday stewardship

The Place-Shaping Continuum notes that everyday stewardship helps to maintain the long-term value of a space. In relation to the public sector, Carmona (2014) notes that stewardship of public space by the public sector tends to vary depending on whether there are maintenance programmes, whether management services are contracted out and whether professionals are employed, all of which often need to be considered in relation to neighbourhood or locality (pp. 27–28).

In the Maltese context, stewardship of streets and squares falls under the responsibility of Local Councils. However, the participants extended the concept of stewardship to include the stewardship of visions and strategies which concern a particular area, or neighbourhood. Whilst Local councils were identified as responsible for the stewardship of the physical space, committees or foundations were identified as the ideal candidates to steward the implementation of long-term plans. Other stakeholders should also be encouraged to play a role in the stewardship of places and visions. This tends to be one of the benefits of adopting a high level of participation in the urban design process, in which a higher sense of ownership and belonging makes it more likely for stakeholders to participate in such initiatives.

Implications for Place-Shaping Continuum: The concept of stewardship is extended to include the management of long-term visions and strategies, which makes them more likely to be implemented and desired objectives achieved.

7.4.4.3   Curating place

Curating a place can be essential to achieve a more vibrant urban public realm. This can be done in different ways, such as organising activities in the space, encouraging businesses to collaborate and organise events, and several other initiatives (Carmona, 2014).

Although interview participants did not place much importance on this aspect of the urban design process, the curation of public space was mentioned as a way to improve liveability and walkability. Upgrading streets and squares to improve the quality of these spaces and make them more attractive places in which to organise activities can be used as one of the incentives to encourage businesses to accept any compromises they may have to make in order to introduce shared space.

Implications for the Maltese context: This aspect of the urban design process tends to be ignored in Malta. There needs to be more consideration on how the curation of places can improve the quality of life of the community.

7.4.4.4   Controlling space

The fourth agenda refers to the control of space to deter crime as well as to control any irregular or undesirable use of space, such as driving through a pedestrian zone. Whilst there is criticism about the way in which public space is sometimes controlled, Carmona (2014) found that public space users identified this as necessary to maintain desirables public spaces.

In the Maltese context, any reference to controlling space was made in reference to the need to control speeding in streets and squares. This was given particular importance when discussing shared space principles since the concept relies on soft controls and subtle design elements to guide users and relies on cooperation from street users. There seems to be a preference to adopt a transition period in which people have time to get used to new concepts – in which more control and surveillance is carried out.

Implications for the Maltese context: This research found that Interview participants are in favour of approaches and designs which require the minimum level of control. This includes the use of designs that allow less room for abuse and irregularities, as well as education and instilling of discipline.

7.4.4.5   Redevelop/revitalise

The final agenda identified under shaping through management is that management needs to be open-ended and continuous. The cyclical pattern which forms the continuum occurs as space is shaped through the formal design process which then continues to be adapted through the informal design process until the time comes for another formal design process, which cycle keeps on repeating (Carmona, 2014, p. 29).

A similar observation can be made in the Maltese context, where most of the existing public space, including streets and squares, have evolved through this approach as various interventions over the years have sought to address the problems of the day. These cycles of change are likely to be required to address the ever-changing demands and challenges that arise from time to time. This research has identified that this agenda is essential for improving the quality of streets and squares on a national scale. This can be achieved through a long-term strategy that aims to develop a forward-looking vision by establishing a series of cycles through which spaces can slowly evolve towards the desired visions, while allowing the various stakeholders to use and change the space through the unknowing urban design process between the different phases.

Implications for the Maltese context: This is an important consideration that needs to be given in the Maltese context. Currently, in Malta the urban design process moves from one project to the next, without considering the redevelopment and revitalisation of the space – which is the way in which the high-quality urban spaces were developed over time, as discussed in 7.2 The influence of the context on the urban design process.

7.5   The benefits and challenges associated with participation

This research also identified the importance associated with participation in the urban design process. When analysing the Place-Shaping Continuum, there is little consideration given to participation in the urban design process apart from the agenda 'garnering support' (7.4.2.5) under the shaping through development sub-process. This research and the wider literature identify several benefits, as well as challenges, associated with participation. Therefore, it is pertinent to discuss the outcomes of this research in respect to participation. Since this discussion does not fit with any of the key characteristics and agendas, the discussion on participation will be done separately in this section.

Participation can be considered as the formal way in which stakeholders can contribute to, and influence, the urban design process. The level of participation adopted, along with the methods chosen, determines how these stakeholders can contribute to the processes. There can be a large

range of scales and types of participation. In this research Arnstein's Ladder of participation was used to distinguish between the different levels of participation. It ranges from Level 1, where attempts are made to inform education in order to get them to agree with the proposals, to Level 8, where decision-making is delegated to citizens and stakeholders.

As discussed in *2.2.7 Participation*, participation is becoming increasingly important as there is a demand for more participation, both from legislative and political drivers and from citizens and local communities who want to be more involved in the process (Healey, 2015; Richards et al., 2004). However, this research reveals that in the Maltese context, participants identified the inadequacy of current participatory practices, which was also acknowledged by several professionals working within the authorities. Most believe that authorities have decreased engagement with stakeholders and are currently providing fewer opportunities for participation when compared to the early 2000s. This prompted the Parliamentary Secretary for Planning and two government MPs to state that the government recognises the importance of participation and collaboration and is actively seeking to increase levels of participation across the board.

When discussing the urban design process concerning streets and squares, the interview participants believe that participation is minimal, mostly due to the approach adopted by Infrastructure Malta, the agency responsible for the upgrade and development of the transport infrastructure in Malta. Infrastructure Malta is focused on implementing projects, sometimes without consulting other authorities and stakeholders. This results in various conflicts with other stakeholders, including the regulators who have issued issues numerous enforcement notices and stop-work notices.

When discussing the planning and urban design system in relation to streets and squares, many believed that the current level of participation is around Level 4, where people are free to express their views and opinions but have no power to ensure that these are taken into account. This is in line with the minimum requirements set out in legislation, which in most cases is limited to a specified period during which any interested stakeholder can submit feedback on a proposed policy change or development application. As discussed in *4.3.3 Policy analysis on public participation, street and square improvement and shared space*, there is very little reference to participation and consultation in the documents that form the core of the spatial and transport system. This tends to lead to an urban design process where public participation is only carried out during policymaking or the assessment of development applications. In the case of development proposals, the statutory public consultation period is too late in the process as a detailed design would have already been developed and submitted to the authorities for consideration. On the other hand, best practice dictates that public participation needs to take place early in the process to be effective. This requirement was identified

in three of the urban design process considered in *2.3 Urban design process*, the Urban Design Process by Black & Sonbli (2019), Urban Design for an Urban Century (Brown et al., 2014) and Community Embedded Sustainable Urban Design Process Framework (M. Dias, 2015).

Eighty-three per cent of the participants believe that more participation is needed in the Maltese context, identifying Levels 5 and 6 as desired in the current Maltese context. This involves giving stakeholders more responsibilities and power to influence decisions in the urban design process. At the same time, there is a clear agreement that authorities and professionals should retain the final control and decision-making responsibilities. However, there can be cases where these responsibilities can be shared with some stakeholder groups such as business communities and NGOs.

It is also acknowledged that that there might be cases where higher or lower levels of participation are required. Lower levels of participation were identified as most likely required when proposing measures to address the car culture and to reduce or incentivise the use of the car. In such instances authorities and professionals need to retain control rather than redistribute power to other stakeholders, diminishing their ability to decide and influence the outcome of the process. This is in line with literature which identifies that the 'required' level of participation is likely to depend on a number of factors including the context, complex or wicked problems, when unpopular decisions need to be taken (Fung, 2006; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Rowe & Frewer, 2000).

Benefits

As discussed in 2.2.7 Participation, there are many benefits associated with a participative process that can no longer be ignored. The main benefits associated with participation identified in this research are the following:

- Improved design and decision-making, resulting from additional insights from local knowledge which can make the difference between an unsuccessful and successful project.
- Can bring stakeholders closer together, building relationships and gaining trust, making it more likely to reach consensus or compromise, reducing the chances of confrontation and controversy, especially if participation is carried out early in the process.
- Can lead to more transparent and traceable decisions, especially if stakeholders are involved and kept informed throughout the whole process.
- Can develop civil society, with citizens and stakeholders building knowledge and starting to understand other stakeholders' aspirations and opinions through their involvement in the

process. This can empower stakeholders as they become more understanding and knowledgeable in the subject.

- Can lead to smoother implementation of projects, with less criticism at later stages of the process.

- Participation can lead to a greater sense of belonging and ownership. The more responsibility given to stakeholders, the more careful they have to weigh things up as they cannot blame others.

These findings are aligned with the several benefits associated with public participation in the wider literature (Creighton, 2005; Reed, 2008).

Challenges

Although participation has benefits and is often desirable, this research identified several challenges in applying participatory approaches to the urban design process in the Malta:

- Stakeholders can use it as an opportunity to prioritise their interests rather than the common good. This can lead to NIMBY, which can sometimes overwhelm the participation process to resist change.

- Stakeholders might not have the necessary skills and knowledge to allow for the adoption of high levels of participation. This is especially important in the urban design field where often a fine balance between users' needs to be achieved

- Stakeholders might not be aware that change is required, especially if this is required to address any upcoming challenges or issues.

- As discussed by Carmona (2014), there may also be apathetic communities who are unwilling to participate or who do not appreciate the importance of participation. In Malta, interview participants linked this to a culture resulting from years of subordination to those in power, where citizens expect other stakeholders such as professionals to find solutions to their problems.

- The Maltese context also presents a situation where many stakeholders, even from the same stakeholder group, are unwilling to work and co-operate with each other, often due to competitiveness. If this carries into the participation process, the benefits associated with stakeholder collaboration are not achieved.

- More participation in the urban design process needs to be introduced without lengthening the process which can be challenging as there needs to be a balance between the amount and length of participation and ensuring timely delivery of projects.

- Higher levels of participation is likely to increase the amount of data collected. This will require significant time and resources to structure and analyse.

These are similar to the findings in the EU co-funded project CH4LLENGE which sought to identify and address the barriers for the wider take-up of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs) in Europe (Böhler-Baedeker & Lindenau, 2013). Another similar finding is that engagement can be the best approach to overcome these challenges.

Implications for the Maltese context: Given the above discussion and the lack of implementation of participation in Malta, there seems to be a need for more detailed guidance on how to implement participatory urban design. One of the recommendations from this research is to develop model strategies or guidelines for participation and engagement to maximise potential benefits while overcoming barriers. These need to be tailored to the local context which, as discussed in '7.2 The influence of the context on the urban design process', offers several challenges that need to be considered. Rather than defining an ideal approach, there needs to be a range of approaches to guide on any issues or challenges that might arise.

To conclude this section, it is important to discuss the ***implications for the Place-Shaping Continuum***. Looking back at *2.3.7 Participation*, Carmona's (2014) Place-Shaping Continuum offered a holistic theory of the urban design process that was consistent with the research objectives, but out of the other 13 frameworks considered, it gave the least consideration to the importance of participation. Instead, the theory emphasised that participation should not be romanticised as the literature often paints an idealised vision of participation, noting that there are instances of 'apathetic communities' to very narrow-minded stakeholder groups doing everything they can to derail the process.

Although this is the case in the Maltese context, the importance of participation in the process has been strongly emphasised. Therefore, ***participation needs to be given more importance in a theory of the urban design process as it determines how the different stakeholders interact with each other and with the process itself. This research does not take a romanticised approach to participation, but looks at a ladder of participation with different levels suitable for different contexts and scenarios. The different levels require a different approach to the urban design process and result in different ways in which stakeholders interact with the process. Because of the way in which participation can influence the overall urban design process, participation is therefore proposed as a fourth key consideration, as discussed in 7.6 Implications for the Place-Shaping Continuum.***

7.6   Implications for the Place-Shaping Continuum

When considering the findings in *Chapters 5* and *6*, and the discussion in this chapter, this research supports Carmona's (2014) Place-Shaping Continuum. The key themes which are derived from this research were able to be mapped onto the Place-Shaping Continuum, which can be considered as evidence that the theory is considering all the major aspects of the urban design process. Despite two different contexts: London from where the Place-Shaping Continuum was derived from; and Malta where this study is based, there are many similarities including contextual factors, similar power relationships and sub-processes.

This section starts by summarising the implications identified in sections *7.2*, *7.3* and *7.4*, before discussing in more detail the two biggest implications to the Place-Shaping Continuum.

7.6.1   General implications

A number of general implications for Carmona's (2014) Place-Shaping Continuum were made throughout this chapter. Some of the characteristics and agendas were substantiated through this research and no additional considerations or modifications were required. In others, this research identifies additional considerations that need to be made or in some cases identifies the need to give more importance to some of the agendas. These are being presented in Table 51.

Table 51: Summary of implications for Carmona's (2014) Place-shaping Continuum.

Characteristic/sub-process/ agenda	Implications for Place-Shaping Continuum
Contextual Factors	
History and traditions	-
Contemporary Polity	Carmona discusses the important role of politicians in power, such as ministers and mayors, have in the urban design process. This research suggests that when discussing contemporary polity the theory needs to also take into consideration the governance structure and the institutional frameworks which play an essential role in the urban design process, both in terms of its management and its outcomes.
Stakeholders	
Owners	The theory needs to give more consideration to the political nature of urban design, especially when the subjects of the urban design process are publicly owned spaces, such as streets and squares.
Regulators	The theory needs to consider how authorities and regulators need to collaborate, especially when considering that urban design often requires a multi-disciplinary approach.

Designers	There is the need to widen this stakeholder group to consider all professionals that might be involved in the design and development stages of urban design, rather than limiting the discussion to designers.
Communities	-
Management	-
Users	-
Power relationships and Level of influence	The Place-shaping Continuum seems to accept the existing power relationships between stakeholders. Understanding the power and influence in a particular system or society is important, however, there is also the need to understand how this can be affected by different participatory approaches. It then becomes important to consider how certain approaches, including engaging and empowering the various stakeholders, might change the aspirations, determinations and effectively the power relationships at the core of the process.
Urban design sub-process	
Design	
Establishing a vision	This research identifies the need to adopt a collaborative approach to establish visions. It is also important to monitor the implementation of the visions, to ensure milestones are being reached.
Making trade-offs	This research identifies the need to involve stakeholders when making trade-offs. The urban design process also needs to ensure that the trade-offs made are fair and balanced, safeguarding the interests of non-participants.
Innovating (or not)	-
Creating Value	-
Shaping constraints	-
Development	
Lead and co-ordinate	Leadership and coordination were identified as very important throughout the urban design continuum, with this research suggesting that this agenda should be an overarching consideration that encompasses the four sub-processes of urban design. Leadership and coordination were also identified as being central to a successful urban design process and can help to bring the stakeholders together. This will be discussed in *7.6.2 Lead and coordinate*.

Marshalling resources	The discussion on resources to develop projects needs to be extended to take into consideration the resources required for the urban design process, some of which are not project-specific, such as on-going research and resources required to engage and educate citizens.
Negotiating consents	-
Injecting quality	Carmona discussed injecting quality with respect to masterplanners and urban designers. This research identifies the need to consider the injection of quality from all stakeholders.
Garnering support	Participation was identified as central to the urban design process, with the ideal level of participation varying from one context to another, and from one project to another. Therefore, this research suggests that participation is an over-arching concept which needs to be given further consideration than that given in the Place-shaping Continuum. Participation, which is not necessarily garnering support, is required throughout the whole urban design process. The findings on participation and its implications to the Place-shaping Continuum will be discussed in more detail in *7.6.3 Participation*.
Space in use	
Activities	-
Associations	-
Amenities	-
Adaptation	This research suggests that lessons need to be learned from the mistakes made in the past, when streets and squares were adapted without considering the long-term implications. Therefore, despite forming part of the 'unknowing' process, it is essential that urban designers and other professionals continue to monitor these spaces to prevent any undesired adaptations.
Appropriation	-
Management	
Investing long-term	This research suggests that the long-term implications of projects need to be considered for the whole urban design process rather than simply in relation to the management of space.
Everyday stewardship	The concept of stewardship can extended to include the management of long-term visions and strategies, which makes them more likely to be implemented and desired objectives achieved.
Curating place	-
Controlling space	-
Redevelop/revitalise	-

Note: - indicates that this research validates Carmona's statements, with no additional findings meriting proposed changes or additional considerations.

As can be seen in Table 51, several of the additional considerations are directly related to participation and collaboration in the process. These are discussed in more detail in *7.6.3 Participation*, after discussing the importance of leading and co-ordinating the urban design process.

7.6.2   Lead and coordinate

Lead and co-ordinate, one of the agendas identified under shaping through development was identified as an important agenda throughout the whole urban design process, as discussed when analysing the findings in *7.4.2.1 Lead and co-ordinate*. This research supports Carmona's (2014) observation that an intensive period of leadership and coordination is required during the development stage. However, this research also suggests that lead and co-ordination need to be considered throughout the whole urban design process since streets and squares tend to be subject to long-term strategies and plans which extend across different phases of the urban design process. In the case of a long-term vision, a responsible entity or persons is likely to continue to lead and co-ordinate the processes including during use and management phases of the urban design process. In addition, lead and co-ordination do not necessarily have to be through a top-down approach typically associated with developments. Local leaders or champions can take initiatives to mobilise the local community to improve the existing context, such as through guerrilla or DIY urbanism. In recent years such concepts have become more popular and have shown to be beneficial. Therefore, this research is proposing that whilst the *Lead and co-ordinate* remains as an intensive and important agenda under the development sub-process, there is scope to include an over-arching lead and co-ordinate agenda which is more concerned with the long-term objectives of the urban design process.

7.6.3   Participation

As discussed in the previous section, *7.5 The benefits and challenges associated with participation*, when analysing the findings in this research, as well as the wider literature on urban design, Carmona does not seem to have considered the implications different levels of participation has on the urban design process. As discussed in this chapter, participation and collaboration between stakeholders can influence almost each of the agendas which make up the Place-Shaping continuum. This research identifies the need for collaborative approaches to visioning, the need for a participative approach to making trade-offs, the importance of engaging stakeholders when proposing innovative solutions, the need for stakeholders to inject quality in the urban design process through participation and collaboration, and several other agendas and situations where participation is beneficial to the process.

Therefore, the implications for the Place-shaping continuum related to participation are as follows:

When considering participation in the urban design process, it needs to be considered in terms of how it is seeking to (re-)distribute power in the process. Different levels of participations distribute power in different ways, with the lower levels giving power to the government, authorities, and professionals, with the higher levels shifting the power balance in favour of citizens and other less powerful stakeholders. The ideal level of participation is likely to vary depending on several factors, including the context, complexity, and views of stakeholders. In some cases, high levels of participation can be beneficial, whilst in others, there might be the need to impose decisions.

If participation is carried out successfully, it can result in the following benefits:

- *Improved design and decision-making.*
- *Increased stakeholder cohesion, resulting in stakeholders more likely to collaborate for the benefit of the local community.*
- *A higher sense of belonging and ownership by the participants.*
- *A more transparent and traceable decision-making process.*
- *Development of civil society, which will result in further benefits to the urban design process.*

At the same time, a number of challenges need to be overcome. These include:

- *The need to adopt a level of participation appropriate for the level of knowledge and aspirations of the stakeholders*
- *It must be ensured that a balanced outcome, not one taken over by NIMBY and egoism, especially in the higher levels of participation.*
- *As discussed by Carmona (2014), such approaches might not work if communities are apathetic to such approaches.*
- *Participative approaches require additional resources and skills to be successfully implemented.*

Engaging the stakeholders early in the process can address a number of challenges. Engagement can also be used to:

- *Help build relationships and trust between stakeholders.*
- *Encourage stakeholders to accept proposals by explaining the expected benefits.*
- *Educate stakeholders with the aim of having more informed contributions.*

To conclude this discussion, this research identifies a number of principles, derived from interviews and literature, on which participative approaches need to be based are identified. Participation should:

- *start early in the process.*
- *be representative.*
- *have clear objectives.*
- *adopt appropriate approaches and methods.*
- *have skilled leaders and facilitators.*
- *become the norm.*

7.7   Concluding Remarks

Considering the above discussion, the proposed modifications to the Place-shaping Continuum lead to a more complete theory that is more considerate of the need to:

- Lead and co-ordinate, which have been shown to be key to a successful urban design process that implements visions and strategies within established timeframes.
- Participation and engagement, which have been widely advocated over the years, with much seminal work dating back to the 1960s, as discussed in *2.2.7 Participation*, and have been increasingly researched and given importance in recent years.

Due to this, the Place-Shaping Continuum diagram has been adapted to include these two overarching considerations which influence the urban design process at any stage, as shown in Figure 33. The other implications identified in *7.6.1 General implications* seek to give a wider dimension to some of the factors and agendas, and these can be linked to three main recurring themes:

- The need to adopt participative and collaborative approaches.
- The need to consider the political nature of urban design, especially when the focus is on streets and squares, which are state owned spaces in which the politicians in government have a high level of power.
- The need to consider some of the agendas not solely in respect to the sub-process in which they are grouped, but in terms of the whole urban design process.
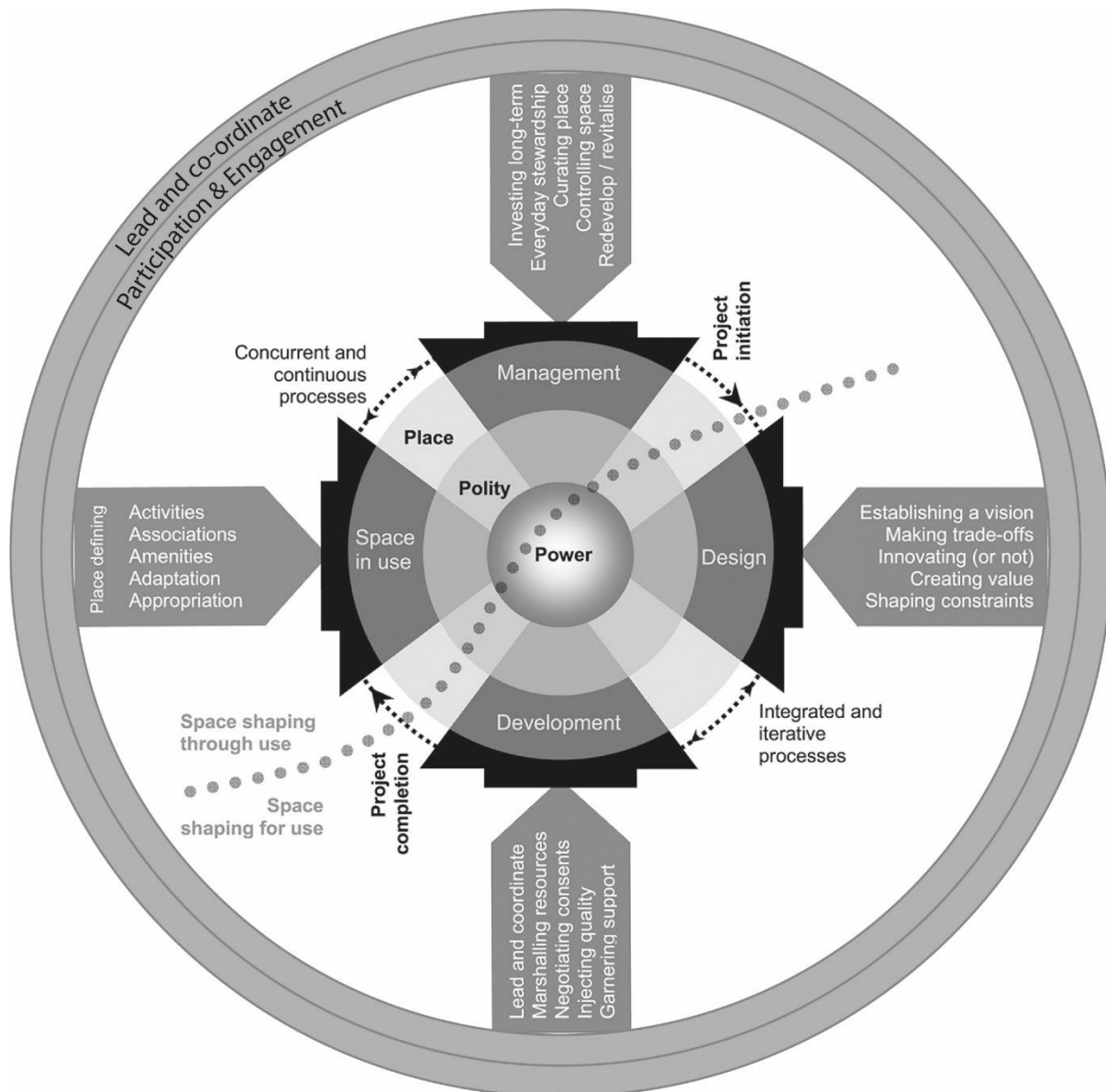
Figure 33: Proposed amendments to the Place-Shaping continuum diagram. Adapted from "The Place-shaping Continuum: A Theory of Urban Design Process" by M. Carmona, 2014, Journal of Urban Design, 19(1), p.11 (https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2013.854695).

This chapter will conclude by revisiting the 13 urban design frameworks discussed in *Chapter 2*, to consider their relevance following the analysis and discussion of the findings in this research. From the outset, the Place-shaping Continuum was identified as the most complete urban design process framework, which does not solely consider the design and development components of the urban design, but also gives the same importance to how places evolve through the unknowing process.

When theorising the urban design process, Carmona (2014) takes a wide approach to urban design since his objective was to propose a normative theory of the urban design process. On the other hand, some of the frameworks identified in Chapter 2 focus on very specific issues or propose an urban design process with a specific intention.

Moughtin's (2003a) *Integrated Design Process* model gives more attention to how the urban design process is affected by a range of factors, including the level of participation, the methods of participation, the political system of the region or country, as well as the mode of planning (see Figure 34). All of these four factors have been identified as requiring more detailed consideration in Carmona's (2014) *Place-shaping Continuum*. However, when it comes to the urban design process itself, Moughtin's framework is very rudimentary, focusing solely on the 'knowing' component of urban design and identifies a design approach consisting of the analysis, synthesis, appraisal, and decision phases. Similarly, Black & Sonbli's (2019) *Urban Design Process* identify a staged urban design model, consisting of analysis, pre-design, design and post-design, which are then sub-divided into further steps. Once again, this is quite basic in nature with a brief discussion on how public participation is very important when designing spaces for the local community.

1. Techniques of Participation	2. Levels of Participation		3. Political System		4. Spatial Units	5. Mode of Planning	
1. Community Administration	1. Citizen Control	Degrees of Citizen Power	1. Anarchy	Democratic Government	1. Room	1. Non-plan	Non-design
2. Self - Build	2. Delegated Power				2. Home		
3. Community Planning and Design	3. Partnership		2. Participatory Democracy		3. Street	2. Action-plan	Ad-hoc
4. Political Manifesto	4. Placation				4. Neighbourhood	3. Incremental Planning	
5. Public Meeting		Degrees of Tokenism					Informal
6. Public Enquiries	5. Consultation		3. Representative Democracy		5. District Quarter	4. Mixed Scanning	Formal
7. Planning Appeals					6. Town		
8. The Exhibition						5. Structure Planning	Geometrical
9. Press Release	6. Informing				7. City		
10. Planning Survey	7. Therapy	Non-participation	4. Totalitarian Government		8. Region		
11. User Study						6. Master Planning	Axial
12. Anthropological Study	8. Manipulation				9. Nation		

Figure 34: Moughtin's (2003a) analytical scale of participation, which identifies the boundaries in which a representative democracy typically operates in.From "Urban Design: Street and Square" by C. Moughtin 2003b, p. 17.

Dias's (2015) *Community Embedded Sustainable Urban Design Process Framework* adopts a similar approach but takes into consideration how these stages are influenced by adopting a community embedded urban design process, seeking to combine the benefits of top-down and bottom-up

approaches. Similarly, *Community-Led Local Development* (European Commission, 2014) identifies basic steps through which an integrated development strategy is designed and implemented with the involvement of local stakeholders. The *Local Economic Development* (UN-Habitat, 2005) framework consists of 10 steps based on interaction and collaboration between different stakeholders to create holistic strategies which address local challenges. Therefore, these three frameworks can provide additional insights when adopting a community embedded or community-led urban design process since they focus specifically on how to enable the local community to contribute to the process.

Other urban design frameworks focus on specific considerations in relation to participation in the urban design process. AlWaer et al.'s (2017) *Shaping better places together* focuses specifically on facilitation in participative urban design processes. *Incubators for Public Space* (Berta et al., 2015; Caneparo & Bonavero, 2016) propose a multi-step design process that adopts a high level of participation since they focus on self-organisation which shifts the design process away from professionals. Similarly, Brown et al.'s (2014) *Urban Design for an Urban Century – A community-based urban design process* offer a community-based urban design process, identify key principles and important considerations, such as that the process has to be rooted in a vision. Berman's (2017) *Two-Phase Participatory Model* offers perspectives on public participation and different levels of participation. These four frameworks can give additional insights into the urban design process when there is the need to adopt a higher level of participation that includes strong local community involvement.

The other two frameworks considered focus specifically on the urban design process in relation to streets and squares. *Streets for People* (Government of South Australia, 2012) identifies fundamental principles that need to be considered when designing streets, especially on the need to reclaim space from the car. The framework also suggests a best-practice integrated design approach for streets. Whilst not comprehensive as Carmona's, it offers a more practical approach, including the use of specific tools which can be used to design streets. These include principles such as the need to balance between movement and social functions of streets, whilst referring to specific tools such as the Link and Place matrix approach. It also focuses on shared space by analysing several case studies. Likewise, Besley's (2014) *Model for Shared Space* can give specific insights when introducing shared space principles, which are derived from case studies. These frameworks can be used in parallel with Carmona's Place-Shaping Continuum when designing streets and introducing shared space principles, especially when there is no local guidance, as is the case for Malta.

After considering these frameworks, this research concludes that the Place-shaping Continuum is the only framework identified that provides a normative framework that attempts to identify how the

urban design process works in its entirety and how it is influenced by some factors such as context and stakeholders. At the same time, it is acknowledged that there is a need to keep such a theory concise, especially when it is published as one of the first theories that attempts to introduce the idea of the continuum in which the urban design process seamlessly transitions from knowing to unknowing processes and shapes places over time. Other frameworks that more specifically consider certain elements and features, such as community-led processes, are needed to provide more insight when adopting a particular type of urban design approach, which often involves the design and development phases of urban design.

The above reflections follow closely the implications identified for the Place-Shaping Continuum. It is also important to translate these into recommendations for the Maltese context, which will be discussed in the concluding chapter of this research.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

8.1 Revisiting the research question and objectives

The main question posed at the beginning of this research focused on the role that a participatory urban design process can have in informing an approach to introducing shared space principles in Maltese streets and squares. In answering this question, three objectives were identified:

1. To analyse the legislation, strategies and policies which control and guide the urban design process in respect to streets and squares.

2. To identify the different roles and interests of key stakeholders in respect to the future of streets and squares, focusing on their involvement in the urban design process.

3. To analyse how a participative urban design process can contribute to the (re-)introduction of shared space principles in Malta with the aim of increasing liveability and walkability.

This section summarises the findings in relation to the above research objectives before discussing the contribution of this research in relation to the Place-Shaping Continuum and the contribution to the Maltese context and wider knowledge.

8.1.1 Objective 1

With respect to the first objective, the research found a strategic and policy context which is very much aware of the challenges being faced due to the high level of car dependency. The strategies and policies prioritise the need to address these issues to improve the quality of the urban areas. The reintroduction of shared space is identified as one of the preferred solutions to address the overwhelming presence of the car in streets and squares. Despite this, there is a lack of detailed policies and guidance which seek to encourage and control the quality of streets and squares. The local policy context is also lacking in terms of participation in the urban design process, with most of the participation exercises being limited to the statutory 21 days representation period forming part of the development control process. The findings reveal that the legislation, strategies, and policies need to actively consider how participation can contribute to achieving the required objectives whilst improving the quality of the outcomes, something which is currently not being given enough consideration.

It was also found that despite the strategy and policy context identifying the need to improve the quality of streets and squares, very few projects have sought to deliver these improvements over the

last decade. This suggests that the authorities and key stakeholders need to take a leading role in driving the required change whilst encouraging other stakeholders to implement projects which seek to improve the quality of streets and squares. Looking at the urban design process metaphorically, one interview participant likened it to a train journey, which has a schedule with arrival and departure times at a number of stops. At each stop, there is the need to monitor the progress and if required adjust the subsequent departure and arrival time to ensure that the train is running on schedule. Applying the metaphor to the findings reveals that this is the approach required when adopting long-term visions and strategies. These need to be monitored and adjusted to ensure that they are delivered in a timely manner.

In this metaphor, the train director has a key role in the process as s/he needs to adjust accordingly, especially having to consider the movement of other trains, or in this case the movement and happenings of other sectors. Therefore, one train cannot be considered in isolation but needs to be considered in terms of the whole network, which might extend outside the train system due to multi-modal models which requires a certain level of integration. Applying the metaphor to this research suggests that a vision or a strategy needs to be considered with respect to other visions and strategies which are often working in parallel across different sectors. It also highlights the importance of having an authority, an entity or even a professional, such as a planning expert, who is responsible to monitor the implementation of a strategy to ensure that this is being delivered within the required timelines and where necessary adjusting the process or coordinate with other stakeholders to get the strategy back on track. Two models can be adopted for monitoring these strategies: either the monitoring of these strategies becomes another layer of policy as part of the planning process, or it can be carried out by an independent foundation or group of experts who are entrusted with this task for the duration of the strategy period.

8.1.2   Objective 2

The second objective focused on the roles and interests of stakeholders, as well as their involvement in the urban design process. The literature review on the subject in Chapter 2 (sub-sections 2.2.6 and 2.3.6), identified a range of stakeholders, each having different aspirations and concerns about the urban design process. When analysing the urban design process, it is important to consider these differences along with the power relationships between the stakeholders since these will largely influence the process and its outcomes. As suggested by the findings in the first objectives, the roles of those leading, coordinating and facilitating the participation process were identified as having an essential role in bringing stakeholders together.

When discussing the urban design process in respect to streets and squares, the influence and role of the government and politicians in the process were found to be very powerful. This arises from two factors. Firstly, power is afforded to the government by legislation, which assigns a lot of responsibilities to the government, especially at a strategic level, requiring that the main objectives are issued by the government to the respective authorities. Secondly, this research has shown that any improvements in the streets and squares are very much dependent on the government, its agencies and politicians. Apart from setting the main objectives, the government is responsible to fund the various capital projects as well as fund regulators, designers and the long-term managers of the space.

The findings also point to the importance of considering the power relationships between the stakeholders and how these can impact the urban design process. The process often needs to adjust against any power imbalances between stakeholders for balanced and fair outcomes which safeguard the interests of less powerful stakeholders. This research also discussed how the level of participation adopted in the urban design process can redistribute the power in different ways, with lower levels placing more power in hands of the government, authorities and stakeholders with close links to them, whilst higher levels of participation attempt to democratise the propose giving equal power to stakeholders.

This starts to shift the discussion towards the third objective, which sought to analyse how participation can improve the implementation of projects which seek to reintroduce shared space principles in streets and squares.

8.1.3   Objective 3

When discussing participation, the empirical research revealed that in general more participation in the Maltese planning and urban design system is desired by the various stakeholders. At the same time, interview participants acknowledged that sometimes unpopular decisions need to be made and stakeholders need to be educated about them. This suggests that a participation strategy is needed to determine the ideal level of participation depending on a number of factors, including the nature of the problem, the objective of the process, and the knowledge of stakeholders. If the objective of the process is to upgrade a square, the local community can become partners in the process in which they can co-design the space. If the objective of the process is to introduce tough measures, such as those required to discourage the use of the car, then it is likely that the level of participation will be lower, sometimes requiring the need to adopt one-way communication which seeks to educate and

explain why certain measures are required (Fung, 2006; Healey, 1998; Lerner, 2007; Rowe & Frewer, 2000).

This objective, again, highlighted the important role of the project leaders and of those who are tasked with facilitation and engaging stakeholders. Various studies and this research have shown that their performance and approach can be directly correlated to the eventual success of the participation process as well as the eventual success of the urban design process.

The findings also revealed several benefits associated with the use of a participatory approach that are consistent with findings in the literature on the subject. These benefits include improved design and decision-making, greater stakeholder cohesion, civil society development, and a greater sense of belonging and sense of ownership. At the same time, a number of challenges were identified, which include the stakeholders' unwillingness to participate, participation of stakeholders with the sole purpose of trying to influence the process to advance their interests, and the resources and time required for participatory approaches. Several requisites for an effective participation process were also identified. These included the need to start participation as early as possible, the need for a representative sample, the need to employ the appropriate approaches and methods, the need to be led by skilled professionals, and the need for such processes to become common practice over time.

These objectives were informed by, and inform, Carmona's (2014) Place-shaping Continuum which was adopted as a conceptual framework in this research. The next section reflects on the study, starting by discussing how the Place-shaping Continuum contributed to this research in more detail, as well as how this research contributed to the theory.

8.2   Reflecting on the study

8.2.1   The Place-Shaping Continuum

This section will briefly discuss how the Place-Shaping Continuum has contributed to this research and the contribution of this research to the Place-Shaping Continuum.

Of the models considered in the literature review in Chapter 2 (section 2.3), Carmona's (2014) Place-shaping Continuum was identified as offering the most complete theory of urban design which could inform this research in the Maltese context. The Place-Shaping Continuum offers a structured overview of the various aspects of the urban design process which departs from the typical staged approach considering the Analysis, Design, Testing and Implementation phases. The theory was

developed through a study of several squares in London, but it also benefits from the years of experience Carmona has in the urban design field, something which Black and Sonbli (Black & Sonbli, 2019) felt was highly beneficial when proposing their framework.

The Place-shaping Continuum helped to break down the complexity of the urban design process, as well as identify certain considerations and elements, such as the unknowing process, which are normally overlooked by other models. The theory identified three main factors which affect the urban design process, each of which can be analysed independently with the aim of understanding how it can affect the urban design process and the other identified elements. The latter was essential due to the various interlinks and overlaps between the elements which make up the complex urban design process, as represented by the Place-Shaping Continuum diagram itself (see Figure 7).

In turn, this research contributes to the Place-shaping Continuum, by testing the framework in a different context, and by testing the framework in respect to streets and squares rather than urban squares. Jon Lang (2014) and Matthew Carmona (2014) himself remarked that the proposed theory needs to be tested, developed and challenged by considering different contexts and development scenarios, which is the main contribution of this research to the Place-Shaping Continuum. The findings in this research validate the proposed theory, with the importance of all the key elements being highlighted at one point or another of this research.

At the same time, this research is contributing to the further development of this theory by proposing the addition of two key considerations to the theory:

1. The first key consideration being proposed is that participation should be identified as the fourth key element when discussing the urban design process. Participation should not solely be discussed in terms of the benefits and challenges that might arise from such practices. This tends to be the focus of most of the literature studying participation across a range of sectors. This research suggests that participation needs to be considered in terms of how it will affect the different components and agendas identified in the Place-Shaping Continuum. The level of participation adopted can also affect the way stakeholders interact with both the process and with other stakeholders, which can also adjust the power relationships in the process. Since it can affect the power relations, it is a pivotal factor to consider since as discussed by Carmona (2014) this can change the focus of the urban design on a specific issue or towards a preferred outcome.

2. Directly related to this, the second consideration identifies the need to give more importance to the 'lead and co-ordinate' agenda within the 'development' active-placing process. Whilst this is likely to be more intensive in the 'development' sub-process, this research has shown that lead and co-ordination is required on an on-going basis especially when it is crucial that long-term visions and strategies are implemented. While Carmona discussed how the best places tend to be historical places that evolved through time by unknowing processes, there are also several of these historical places which have been adapted in a way that reduces their quality, most commonly taken over by the car. As will be discussed below, in some cases there are structural obstacles that need to be overcome to implement some measures, therefore a long-term approach is required to break through these barriers, which is why 'lead and co-ordinate' agenda becomes an overarching agenda in the urban design process. This is especially important when moving away from considering urban design as a process that delivers one project before moving to the next, towards the place-shaping continuum in which urban spaces are continuously changing and evolving.

When *The Place Shaping Continuum: A Theory of Urban Design Process* (Carmona, 2014) was published in the Journal of Urban Design, it was accompanied by commentaries in which several authors expressed their personal opinion on the proposed theory. Two of these commentaries identified the need for additional considerations. This research contributes to this discussion, with the following paragraphs briefly discussing how this research addresses the criticism or backs the need for additional considerations.

In his commentary, Jonathan Barnett's (2014) showed concern that the Place-Shaping Continuum might be defining the urban design process too narrowly since it was derived by studying squares, noting that spaces such as streets can have different design issues. This research tests the model in respect to streets and squares, in which the biggest difference identified was that there is the added complexity of traffic movement. This may require the need for a multi-disciplinary approach that seeks to find a compromise between the aspirations and needs of the stakeholders. Despite deriving the theory from studying urban squares, Carmona (2014) mentions this added complexity when discussing 'Making trade-offs', noting how finding a balance between traffic and pedestrian movement is often controversial.

In turn, Cliff Ellis (2014) identified the need to give more attention to 'structural obstacles' which limit significant change in urban design. Amongst these obstacles, Ellis identified the "*inertia of existing transportation systems*" (p. 48). In Malta, car culture can be seen as one of these structural barriers, especially when considering the lack of alternatives to the car. These two factors have been identified

as the biggest obstacle to improving the quality of streets and squares, as it is widely accepted that significant improvements require a reduction in car use. The politicisation of the process, with accusations of patronage, can be seen as another structural barrier limiting change when unpopular measures are required. These structural obstacles pose a greater challenge to achieving desired or ideal outcomes. The two proposed additions to the Place-Shaping Continuum, identified above, are in part motivated by the need to address these structural barriers. Overcoming these challenges will likely require a long-term approach, the success of which will depend on good leadership and coordination to ensure that all goals and objectives are met in a timely manner. Participation and engagement will also be required to overcome these barriers, particularly if a cultural or behavioural change is required for the ultimate success of the proposed developments, which in this research is the introduction of shared space principles.

8.2.2   The study's contribution to knowledge and literature

The contributions of this research to knowledge can be identified with respect to three levels.

The first level is that the study advances knowledge with regards to participation in the urban design process in Malta. Locally, no studies have analysed the role of participation in the urban design process and how it can be adapted to better suit the local context. This study advances this understanding by first identifying the existing practices and level of participation on Arnstein's (1969) Ladder of Participation. The research then finds that stakeholders in Malta are in favour of an increased level of participation in the urban design process. It is acknowledged that a shift to a higher level of participation is likely to require a phased approach in which stakeholders and citizens start to build social capital and knowledge before they start being given more responsibilities and power. This added responsibility and power needs to be matched with the willingness of stakeholders to participate and contribute to the process. The success of this process is also likely to depend on those leading and facilitating the process, who also have the role of bringing all stakeholders together. These aspects tend to not be given priority in literature discussing participation in the urban design process, with the focus often being on the associated benefits, the expected challenges and different methods that can be employed.

Secondly, this research contributes to the Place-Shaping Continuum by testing and developing the theory by applying it in a different context and to two different types of public space, as discussed in *8.2.1 The Place-Shaping Continuum*. In summary, the research validates and develops the proposed theory by suggesting the addition of two overarching considerations: the consideration of how

participation affects the urban design process, and the importance of leading and coordinating the urban design process, particularly when it comes to long-term visions and strategies. Based on these findings, the Place-Shaping Continuum diagram was adapted to include these two overarching considerations that influence the urban design process at any stage, as shown in Figure 33 (in sub-section *7.7*). It also confirms Ellis' (2014) statement that the theory needs to give more consideration to 'structural obstacles' which can limit change. The car culture and the political nature of urban design were identified as the two main structural obstacles to the adoption of concepts such as shared space in Malta, which are likely to be present in other cities, regions and countries with a similar socio-political context.

The third level of contribution is that this research advances the knowledge of how the urban design process in Malta can be improved, including the benefits associated with a participative approach. This contribution is in the form of several recommendations, outlined in *8.2.3 Recommendations for policy and practice*. Along with the importance of participation, other important considerations were identified, which include the need for long-term visions and strategies, the need to depoliticise the urban design process, as well as more specific policy and guidance which control the quality of shared space proposals were identified.

This study points to the need to frame the role of participation in the urban design process in relation to the local context, the relationships between stakeholders and the objectives of the urban design process itself - all of which may influence the type and approach of participation required. This is likely to require further studies, as discussed in *8.2.5 The implications for further studies*.

8.2.3   Recommendations for policy and practice

From this research, a number of recommendations for policy and practice in Malta emerge. Some are generic to the urban design process, whilst others are more specific to introducing shared space principles.

Recommendation 1: The need to depoliticise the urban design process.

As discussed throughout this thesis, the urban design process in Malta is highly politicised. The two-party political system in Malta, in which every vote counts, results in the politicisation of every issue and every decision taken by the government and authorities. The five-year political cycles are also reflected in the government's objectives in the urban design field. This is not conducive to the long-term strategies required to achieve the desired improvements in the quality of public space. A more

conducive context is one where there is consensus between the two main parties on the visions and strategies required, with both parties collaborating for the common good rather than using this sector to score political goals. Experience has shown that the politicisation of the urban design field is limiting the potential of the urban design process, especially when tough and unpopular decisions might need to be imposed. At the same time, it must be accepted that some decisions are likely to remain political, especially when dealing with wicked problems where there might be different interpretations and solutions. In such cases, it is important to find a balance between politicians, professionals and other stakeholders.

When considering the introduction of shared space, the depoliticisation of the process is likely to be required since for effective implementation they need to be matched by initiatives and measures which seek to dis-incentivise the use of the car whilst offering alternative modes of transport.

Recommendation 2: The need to establish visions, strategies and policies collaboratively which need to be lead, monitored and co-ordinated to ensure their implementation.

The need to establish forward-looking visions, strategies and policies through a collaborative approach amongst the different authorities and stakeholders was identified. This is required to ensure that the different stakeholders share the same vision and are willing to contribute to achieving these identified objectives and measures. Due to the lack of implementation of the measures identified in the current national policies, interview participants stressed the importance of strong leadership, coordination and monitoring of these strategies to ensure that they are being achieved in a timely manner. The most recommended solution was that of setting up foundations or committees, consisting of stakeholder group representatives, which are tasked with leading, coordinating and monitoring the process of any visions and strategies. These initiatives are likely to be dependent on the government, which needs to set up these foundations whilst assigning them roles and responsibilities, identify their member composition, and will most probably need to fund them.

When discussing shared space, such an approach is likely to be required to ensure that shared space principles start being introduced on a wider scale in Malta. Despite being identified as a key priority in several national strategies, very few have been implemented in recent years. Such an approach is also required since the successful implementation of shared space relies on some the implementation of several related measures, such as reducing cars from the urban cores.

Recommendation 3: Need for participation strategies guidelines

The wider literature and this research identify the benefits associated with participation, along with the challenges that might arise. There is a clear agreement amongst most of the interview participants that as a country Malta cannot continue to rely on the minimum participation defined by law, which is restricted to the development control stage. Where possible, participation needs to be carried out early in the urban design process, rather than at the planning permission stage when a developed proposal would have already been submitted.

This research particularly finds that different levels of participation will be required in different situations. Therefore, there is likely the need for participation strategy guidelines that outline several best practices to be utilised in different scenarios and contexts. These guidelines need to take into consideration the Maltese context and the stakeholder dynamics that exist. These guidelines should not just refer to the methods to be employed but should also discuss in detail the level of influence different stakeholders should be afforded.

There is also the need to shift away from the concept of having participation exercises linked to particular initiatives or projects. There is the need to have the necessary structures to allow for on-going participation and collaboration between stakeholders, especially given the need for long term strategies as identified in the previous recommendation. These on-going processes should seek to empower stakeholders and aim to build social capital rather than simply allow stakeholders to express their opinions.

Such an approach is likely to be important when introducing shared space since the stakeholders with a direct interest in the affected streets and squares, such as residents and businesses, need to be convinced about the benefits of shared space, especially in the first few projects.

Recommendation 4: Professionals trained in participation and communications skills

The research findings give a lot of importance to the communication and negotiation skills of the professionals leading and facilitating the participation process. The skills and approach of these professionals were identified as being crucial to bringing stakeholders closer to each other to find consensus or a mutual compromise. It was also remarked that when some measures or projects affected people directly, the professionals facilitating the process need to show empathy and calmness in their ability to explain these projects. At the same time, they require the necessary skills to 'sell' ideas and convince the stakeholders to support and contribute to the success of the proposals.

Since the majority of these roles in Malta are the responsibility of architects, these skills were identified as lacking in the Maltese context. Consequently, there is the need for further training and

development, in particular on the participation and communication skills of planners, urban designers and architects who on a day-to-day basis need to meet and work with other stakeholders.

When discussing shared space, participation and communication are likely to be required since citizens and stakeholders tend to be afraid of change. If carried out effectively they can go a long way in convincing stakeholders to accept the proposed interventions. It is most likely that this cannot be achieved overnight, therefore as discussed in Recommendation 3, this will most likely be an on-going process in which entities leading these proposals continuously inform and try to educate citizens with the aim of gaining their trust.

Recommendation 5: Need for more research and publicly available data

Malta has generally low research funding, with Eurostat figures showing that Malta has one of the lowest research expenditures in the EU, with only 0.61 per cent of the GDP spent on research compared to the EU average of 2.19 per cent in 2019 (Eurostat, 2020b). Research in Malta has been identified as particularly lacking by interview participants in the urban planning and urban design fields. They note that as the workload of authorities increased, resources were shifted away from research and innovation which automatically lowered the amount of research being carried out in the field. In turn, the participants questioned whether enough data is available to policymakers and decision-makers, referring to the early 2000s when the Structure Plan review was preceded by the development of 16 topic papers, each of which analysed a specific sector, which included tourism, transport, and agriculture.

Therefore, the need for more research and publicly available data was identified to enable more informed policymaking and designs, especially dealing with complex or wicked problems. Additional research can inform both professionals and stakeholders who are participating in the process – which is why this research should be available to the public, who can then inform themselves and contribute in a more informed manner.

In Malta there is also very limited research from the private sector. For years, *Today Public Policy Institute* was Malta's only independent, non-partisan and not-for-profit think tank, which offered important research work on alternative modes of transport and negative externalities associated with the use of the car, when this subject was still not on the public's agenda. However, in 2018, the institute was disbanded based on two factors, difficulty in securing private funding and the sense of defeatism by members and funders that their work was being ignored. Current NGOs also cite the lack of funding as the main reason why they do not carry out primary research.

This research and data are likely to be important when introducing shared space as it allows professionals to make informed assumptions. There is also the need to develop case studies, which consider the before and after scenario to identify how certain decisions and design elements affect places in different contexts. These can then be used to inform future projects, especially when dealing with wicked problems when the problems and solutions are not always clear.

Recommendation 6: Professionals need to be given adequate time to develop policies and proposals

Professionals tasked with drafting policies or design projects need to be afforded the required time to analyse the context and adopt some participation strategy with the stakeholders. Carmona (2014) in one of the factors highlights how the quality of the outcomes depends on the awareness of the needs and aspirations of the users.

This is currently not always the case, especially when complex projects need to be implemented in a relatively short period to ensure that it is delivered before the next election. This automatically limits the amount of analysis that can be done and excludes the use of local knowledge in the process, which was identified as being key to the success of projects.

In addition to these six recommendations on the urban design process in Malta, a further three recommendations that are more specific to the introduction of shared space in the Maltese streets and squares are being proposed as a result of the research findings.

Recommendation 7: Need to address the car culture in Malta.

For the introduction of shared space principles to truly transform the character and quality of streets and squares, there is the need to address the car culture in Malta. As discussed in *4.2.3 Car culture in Malta*, citizens tend to prioritise the car in any decision they make. As a result, overcoming car culture is considered a big challenge, but something which is identified as being required due to the benefits associated with it. Should shared space start to be introduced in urban cores, then the approach adopted needs to reduce the number of cars driving and parking within the urban cores to reclaim space from the car. This will allow the introduction of shared space to result in more pedestrian-focused areas and qualities associated with liveable and walkable streets and squares. This is likely to require a long-term approach to address, but it was found essential that measures and initiatives start being introduced to kickstart the process.

Recommendation 8: Do not label shared space

Shared space is not a new concept in Malta, with the principles currently in use in several areas around Malta. These include several village squares which function as shared space at certain times of the day, in which cars and pedestrians use the same surface simultaneously. Unlike traditional roads, car drivers are more aware of their surroundings and respond to the pedestrian movement around with, with very few accidents ever being recorded in such spaces.

Therefore, some participants identified the need not to put a label on shared space, or make a big thing out of it, as stakeholders might be wary of change and it might drive them to actively object to its introduction due to status quo bias. Consequently, it might be best to present shared space as an improvement over the existing streets and squares, trying to benefit from the nostalgia of the older population whilst encouraging the younger generation to walk more in favour of higher quality streets and squares.

Recommendation 9: Shared space guidance

In Malta, there is a general lack of design guidance for public space, including the design of urban streets and squares in which the urban design considerations are as important as those of road engineering. Literature such as Allan B. Jacob's (1995) seminal work on the qualities which contribute to high-quality places in *Great Streets* can be used as a basis to develop a holistic street and space design guidance. This guidance possibly needs to be accompanied by public space strategies or other types of masterplans that identify how the overall urban qualities of the Maltese urban areas can improve, with streets serving as corridors between spaces such as squares.

The development of design guidance for shared space is identified as one of the key measures in the National Transport Masterplan: "*2.2.5.4 Develop design guidelines for the development of shared space and home zones*" (p. 127). The masterplan states that these guidelines need to be researched and developed specifically for the Maltese context since they would need to take into consideration contextual and cultural factors which might vary from one country to another. This guidance is targeted to be developed in the 2021-2025 period according to the masterplan timeline (p. 395).

Rather than focusing on the design characteristics, materials and details, the guidance should go beyond these considerations and look at the urban design process itself, including the trade-offs that might be required. As discussed by Carmona (2014) and several others, space allocation is likely to remain an on-going source of tension. The policies and guidance should seek to safeguard the quality of spaces, whilst allowing participants to influence the process. The guidance also needs to accept that certain cultural shifts might be required, as discussed in Recommendation 7, which will inevitably require a long-term approach to achieve the required improvements.

This guidance should also focus on the need to be sensitive to the existing context and activities, especially the need to safeguard spaces or areas in spaces that are associated with a particular group of people, such as places used by the elderly to socialise. There is also the need to consider how projects can affect some stakeholders, especially residents in regeneration projects. Too often, whilst the quality of an area improves, residents suffer due to increased activity in the area and/or increases in rent prices.

8.2.4   Limitations of research

Any research is likely to have limitations, therefore it is important to recognise these. Four main limitations were identified in this research.

The first limitation identified was the lack of previous studies on the subject. In the Maltese context, no studies in the urban design field have analysed this subject in any detail. There is also a lack of literature and available data, which required the researcher to gather the data from beginning to end, by analysing and interpreting a long list of documents, and other background work to better understand the Maltese context. In the wider context, very few studies have considered the urban design process holistically, departing away from the typical stage design process. This resulted in a limited selection of literature that could be referenced in this research to support several arguments, especially when this cannot be appropriated from research in other fields which overlap with urban design, such as urban planning.

The second limitation is the transferability of the findings from the Maltese context to other contexts or generalisation. As discussed throughout this study, Malta has several specific characteristics that make it a rather unique case. These include: a small population; the two-party political system in which politicians are easily accessible to citizens; a centralised planning system which, due to Malta's size, takes place only at the national level; and a very strong culture, partly due to the lack of attractive alternative modes of transport.

The third limitation is related to the interviews. When identifying the potential stakeholders, a list that was representative of the stakeholders interested in the urban design process was identified. Despite attempts to find alternative persons, which is not always possible due to Malta's population size and centralised system with very few people occupying certain roles, over a third of the list were not interviewed. These stakeholders, with the reasons associated, were identified in Table 11 in Chapter 3 (sub-section 3.4.3). Despite the remaining interviewees still offering a representative sample, these other stakeholders would have provided additional views from different perspectives. These

stakeholders include community groups and/or resident associations that were set up specifically to oppose projects, and professionals directly involved in the process or in charge of agencies that have a direct interest in the urban design process.

The fourth limitation arises from the findings of the research on the urban design process, most of which are on the 'knowing urban design process' consisting of the design and development sub-processes, which form the knowing urban design process. This is natural since people tend to associate urban design with this. In hindsight, more consideration could have been given to the unknowing process, especially in the interview questions. Conversely, this is a case for further studies which focus specifically on how the unknowing process shapes places, on which there is very little research.

8.2.5   The implications for further studies

This research identifies four main areas in which further research is required. These will be briefly discussed below.

The research identifies the need for more research on the unknowing process that shapes places.

Carmona's (2014) Place-Shaping Continuum distinguishes between the knowing urban design process (space shaping for use) and unknowing process (space shaping through use) which both have equal importance in shaping urban space (see Figure 31). This concept was originally proposed by Carmona et al. (2010) in *Public Places - Urban Spaces: The Dimensions of Urban Design*, in which they also identify knowing urban designers (such as urban design practitioners, architects and planners) and unknowing urban designers (such as politicians and citizens).

The concept of the unknowing urban design process is shared by several other academics who consider urban design as a process that shapes and gives identity to places over the years. Different layers are overlaid on each other as places continuously evolve and reshape themselves, both when implementing projects (knowing process), but also through the day-to-day use and management of such spaces (unknowing process) (Banerjee & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2011, p. 275; Carmona, 2014, p. 4; Ellin, 2006; Farrell, 2014; Hack, 2011; Inam, 2002, p. 37; Madanipour, 1996, p. 105).

Most of the research on urban design, however, focuses on the knowing process, while few studies attempt to analyse and understand how the unknowing process shapes places. Similarly, and as discussed in the limitations (*8.2.4*), the majority of interview participants focused on the knowing component of the urban design process. There is, therefore, a need for further research that seeks to understand how the various agendas in the unknowing process can be realised to improve the quality

of the space shaped through use, whilst ensuring that past mistakes, such as retrofitting urban areas for the car through such a process, are not repeated.

The research identifies the need for more research on the ideal level of participation, and how this may vary in different scenarios depending on a number of factors including contextual factors, stakeholder factors, as well as the nature of the challenge.

Whilst this research identified the need to adopt different levels of participation depending on these factors, there is the need for more research to identify in more detail how these, and other factors, influence the ideal level of participation, which in turn will allow professionals to make informed decisions on the type of approach to adopt early in the process.

Moughtin (2003a) proposed an analytical scale of participation which linked the level of participation to participation methods, the political system of the place, the spatial unit, as well as the mode of planning adopted. Applying the scale, representative democracy is likely to afford stakeholders the ability to be informed, to give their opinion, and in some cases placation, as shown in Figure 34. A totalitarian government is not likely to afford this level of participation and will likely resort to manipulation.

This scale needs to be extended to take into consideration more factors, such as the nature of the problem, the culture, the aspirations of stakeholders on the space under consideration, the speed of decision-making required and several other factors such as economic ones which determine the level of investment and the resources that can be dedicated to such approaches.

There is a need to get a better understanding of stakeholder relationships and power relations in the urban design process.

This research substantiates the importance Carmona (2014) attributes to power in the urban design process since this largely influences its focus and outcomes. Carmona adopts a rudimentary approach to analyse the level of influence each stakeholder groups has in the four different phases of the urban design process, which approach is used in research. Given its importance, a more comprehensive way of analysing this is required.

To gain a better understanding, further research is needed to analyse the different inputs in the process and how they are considered in the sub-processes of urban design and how they may influence the outcome. The study also needs to consider how stakeholders interact with each other during the process, including how they change their opinions or co-ordinate their views. This research

also highlights the need to recognise the long-term implications as this research suggests that when stakeholders being to build relationships they become more collaborative and supportive of each other.

In addition, there is also a need for further studies which propose a way to measure the power of the various stakeholders, using a scale or other detailed metrics, which could potentially be used to adjust against any power imbalances that might exist in the urban design process.

This research identifies the need to consider how politics influences the urban design process.

This research clearly identifies that some urban design initiatives require political support to be even considered, let alone be implemented. This research and Attard's (2020) identify various cases in Malta in which lack of political support hindered the introduction of measures, especially those seeking to reduce cars in urban areas. In small island states like Malta, this could possibly be a more important consideration due to the high level of influence that politicians have on the urban planning and urban design process, especially when coupled with clientelism (Veenendaal, 2019).

This is however not only limited to small island states, with Madanipour (2006) observing that there are several cases where urban design projects are hijacked by politicians, which leads him to question the influence of the political agendas in the urban design process. There is however very limited literature on this subject, with more insights required on how and why politicians tend to influence the urban design process and the decision-making process.

There is a need for more guidance on shared space and the process to introduce these principles.

A multi-disciplinary approach that seeks to balance the various interests, functions and uses of streets and squares was one of the main attributes identified as essential to the successful introduction of shared space. Local Transport Note 1/11 (Department of Transport (UK), 2011), which has now been withdrawn, discussed general considerations related to the design of shared space. It also acknowledged the importance of the engagement process, referring to PACTS' Kerb Your Enthusiasm (Besley, 2010) report, which was analysed in Chapter 2 (sub-section 2.3). Further research is required on the processes and the considerations required when introducing shared space, especially given the difficulties faced in the UK.

More detailed research is also required at the local level. In Malta, the need for further research has already been identified in the National Transport Masterplan 2025 (2016b) with two medium-term measure identifying the need for design guidelines for a balanced approach to different modes of

transport and (pp. 126 – 128). This is essential since the urban design process needs to be matched with good design philosophies to ensure the development of high-quality spaces (C. Ellis, 2014). The need for urban design guidance and quality-driven policy frameworks was also identified in a doctoral thesis that questioned the role of development control in ensuring urban design quality using Malta as a case study (Zammit, 2013).

8.3   Concluding reflections

This study on a participatory urban design process highlights the importance of considering the broader contextual factors, including the political, economic, socio-cultural and environmental context, all of which influence the urban design process. In Malta, the urban design process has to take into account several realities, including a highly politicised context where political polarisation and patronage are prevalent. This is compounded by a culture that gives the highest priority to the car, which is exacerbated by a lack of viable and attractive alternatives.

Similar to other small island states, stakeholders tend not to work together, each seeking to protect their rights and interests, sometimes at the expense of the common good. This can be particularly challenging when adopting a participatory approach to achieve desired improvements in a timely manner. For truly participatory approaches to be adopted, there needs to be a wide range of changes, which include changes in culture, changes in governance structures and changes in the political context in Malta, with political parties putting the interests of the country above their party. This needs to be accompanied by stakeholders who are more aware of the challenges. This implies that a shift to a more participatory urban design process cannot happen overnight.

This research highlights the fundamental role of politics in the urban design process and points to the need for some kind of consensus among political parties and other stakeholders in which there is a clear agreement on the way forward in relation to the need to improve the quality of streets and squares in Malta. The foundations for this agreement can be found in the national strategies: *National Environment Policy* (Ministry for Tourism the Environment and Culture, 2012), *Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development (SPED)* (Government of Malta, 2015), the *National Transport Strategy 2050* (Transport Malta, 2016a) and *Transport Masterplan 2025* (Transport Malta, 2016b). There now needs to be the political will and support from civil society to introduce all the necessary measures, including those that discourage car use. These measures will open the possibilities to start introducing the necessary change in collaboration with all interested stakeholders.

If the economic and social benefits are understood by all stakeholders, these can become shared objectives among all stakeholders, central to the adoption of holistic and long-term approaches in which everyone strives to achieve the same vision and goals.

With all stakeholders participating and contributing to the urban design process, the vision of transforming Maltese streets and squares into more liveable and walkable places can finally become a reality.

> *A good environment and an attractive public realm are not just created by professional specialists—architects, town planners, engineers, landscape architects and so on—or even just by the patrons of those professionals. They are created and maintained by the love and care of the people who live and work in a town or city.* (Tibbalds, 2004, p. 100)

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Appendix 1 – Analysis of 13 frameworks

A detailed analysis of each the 13 frameworks in respect to the identified characteristics: Context, Scale, Stakeholders, Participation, and the introduction of Shared Space.

A1.1   Context

All the 13 frameworks identify the importance of taking into consideration the context. **CLLD** (European Commission, 2014) stresses the importance of studying the particular urban context since this will determine the type of approach that can be adopted, along with the required resources. By understanding the local context, the urban design process can maximise the potential of projects by designing them to address the specific needs and challenges for any given. Despite the focus on the local context, there is scope for collaboration, and transfer of knowledge, between areas since local contexts tend to experience globalised trends – such as changes in public revenue expenditure and consumption patterns – which can be used to inform approaches from one context to another.

Incubators for Public Space (Berta et al., 2015; Caneparo & Bonavero, 2016)**, Community Embedded Sustainable Urban Design Process Framework** (M. Dias, 2015) and **LED** (UN-Habitat, 2005) frameworks all remark that each project will have its specific socio-spatial, socio-economic and political context which the urban design process needs to take into consideration. Certain information and insights on the context, including strengths, threats, opportunities, and gaps in knowledge can only be gained by engaging with local stakeholders and professionals. All three frameworks also highlight the importance of secondary data, including insights from previous projects to ensure that lessons learned in the past are not lost. They also emphasise the importance of engaging and involving citizens and stakeholders as they help to understand the context, especially in identifying the problems and can play an important role in finding a solution.

Related to this, **Shaping better places together** (Al Waer et al., 2017) notes that each project and context is different and that there can be no "one-size fits all" approach. The urban design process and the team facilitating the process need to adapt their approach to the context of every case. When discussing the context, **Urban Design for an Urban Century** (Brown et al., 2014) identified a wide range of elements that make up the context. These include:

- Needs and aspirations of stakeholders.
- Physical, social, economic, cultural and environmental issues which shape the urban design process.

- The physical context, including topography, natural boundaries.

The framework also notes that any proposal needs to respond to the context and needs to be assessed in terms of its contribution to the various contextual characteristics (Brown et al., 2014). This view is shared by several others including Moughtin (2003a) who quotes Tibbalds: "*They [places] need to be unique and different from one another – each rooted in their own particular historical, geographical, physical or cultural context*" (p. 7). Subsequently, **Moughtin's Integrated design process** identifies the need to start the process by understanding the context and the local community – which is the subject of urban design. The urban designer needs to understand their values and aspirations whilst acknowledging that culture is in constant flux. This dynamic culture needs to be given particular attention since urban designers are not designing for the present but for the future (p. 13).

Similarly, **Black & Sonbli** (2019) state that "*Design is rooted in context*" (p. 200). In turn, they propose a framework for practice which then needs to be adapted to the local context. The initial part of the proposed urban design process consists of an Urban Analysis at various scales and an analysis stage that considers 'Policy and People', which seeks to analyse the local institutions and stakeholders. These two are identified as essential in understanding the context, which are then linked to the design stage through the 'Strategic Design Framework' being proposed which identifies the visions, objectives and strategies.

Berman's (2017) **Two-Phase Participatory Model** identifies the importance of understanding in detail the causes, significance and implications of problems and circumstances, whilst discussing how this understanding is dependent on having access to the local knowledge and how a range of participation methods can be implemented to access this knowledge. **Moughtin** (2003a, p. 13) also discussed how the urban design process is also dependant on the polity of the place, including the type of political system in place, ranging from Anarchy to a Totalitarian Government. The mode and type of planning in force also can influence the urban design process since these take different approaches and can impose different constraints/challenges.

The Place-Shaping Continuum (Carmona, 2014) identifies two contextual factors in the proposed urban design framework. The first factor is the history and traditions of a place, which continue to influence the development of urban areas across generations. History and experience have shaped the way people look at spaces and which through time has established a way of doing things. The second factor is the contemporary polity, which defines the institutional structures through which the urban design process has to function and the policies it needs to respect. This tends to be linked to politics and clear distinct periods can often be identified, as different governments and legislatures

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shift their focus on different aspects or adopt a specific school of taught. This is especially the case in the provision of public space, especially when a period is characterised by a renewed interest in the quality of public space. Persons leading the process, such as Prime Ministers, Ministers and Mayors can help to influence this.

PACTS (Besley, 2010) and **Street for People** (Government of South Australia, 2012) also consider the policy context, with both frameworks identify an increasing crowded policy context, with several national and local policies across various sectors. This, along with dispersed guidance, results in a fragmented approach to problems. When analysing guidance for street design in Australia, **Street for People** identified gaps in guidance, complex policies and uncertainty associated with some standards and guidance, along with limited local exemplar street designs. Both frameworks remark that a holistic approach, in which the various stakeholders collaborate is more likely to address the issues and reach the objectives. Whilst both approaches advocate for the need to engage local stakeholders to access local knowledge, they also identify the importance to plan within wider planning, physical and social context – balancing the two.

Carmona et al. (2010) when discussing the **Integrated Urban Design Process** adopt a wider approach to the context, noting that the context can encompass a wide range of aspects since urban design intervenes on spaces that are influenced and will affect a range of sectors. They identify four types of contexts when discussing urban design:

- The local context, which needs to take into consideration the larger context of the site. The level of attention required will depend on the type of context, with some areas meriting more focus and sensitivity to the existing context (p. 47). It can also be important to consider the cultural context, which can be distinctive and help shape the environment in a particular manner (p. 49).

- The global context also needs to be taken into consideration as local actions have global impacts whilst global actions have local impacts. These can include global issues such as climate change, or other cultural changes which slowly transform the culture around the world, such as the increasing use of technology in all aspects of life (p. 51). One of these cultural changes is the importance being given to the quality of urban spaces, as cities and urban areas compete for higher liveability.

- The market context also needs to be given consideration since urban design actions tend to occur in market economies. Urban development tends to be controlled by those who have control or access to resources, with the financial and economical processes playing an important role in the development of urban spaces (pp. 55–60).

The urban design process is also working within the regulatory context. The public policy context set at government or lower governmental levels directly influence the development of public space. The regulatory context also needs to be considered in terms of politics and government. Decisions by politicians can influence the urban design and can set specific objectives which need to be met, whilst the structure of the government also determines how certain decisions are made (pp. 63).

A1.2   Scale

Several frameworks acknowledge that different scales exist, with initiatives or projects at any scale needing to respect the scales above and below. **Moughtin's** (2003a) **Integrated design process** discusses that urban design cannot be considered in isolation but needs to be considered in terms of Regional Planning and Town Planning which are found at a higher level of the hierarchy and the Building Design which is found at the lower level of the hierarchy. Whilst the upper levels inform the lower levels, return loops were introduced in the model since the lower design levels can inform the higher levels. This results in the Integrated Design Process for Planning reproduced in Figure 6.

Apart from the different hierarchies of planning and design, Moughtin also identifies a range of Spatial Units, which range from the room, home, street, neighbourhood up to the national level. **Black and Sonbli** (2019) and **Urban Design for an Urban Century** (2014) adopt a similar approach identifying the need to analyse projects in terms of policy and context at the various scales. Similarly, **Carmona et. al's** (2010) **Integrated Urban Design process** discuss how urban design operates at and across several scales, which can range from a strategic, city-wide, study to the design of a street or public square. They believe that it is essential not to put boundaries around the subject of urban design and that in any scenarios urban designers need to be aware of the scales below and above.

Street for People and the Place-shaping continuum discuss a specific type of scale and space. **Street for People** (Government of South Australia, 2012) focuses on the design of streets whilst recognising that streets are not isolated elements within the urban area and they need to be considered in terms of the surroundings and context. Street design considerations need to take into consideration the urban design strategies and principles adopted for the wider neighbourhood area.
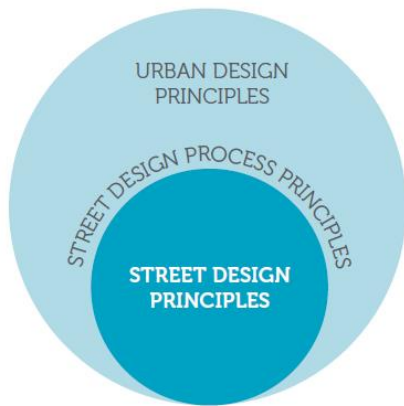
Figure 35: Street design considerations are nested with urban design considerations of wider neighbourhood areas. From "Streets for people: compendium for South Australian practice" by Government of South Australia, 2012, p. SB02.

The **Place-Shaping Continuum** is derived from studying public spaces. Carmona (2014) observes that the design of these spaces must take into consideration defined strategies, city-wide policies, and other guidance. Carmona is of the opinion that the findings can be applied to a range of scales since the core of the urban design process will retain the same key elements and components.

Other frameworks focus on a larger scale, focusing on developing and implementing strategies. The **CLLD** (2014) mentions that the scale of the area should be chosen to ensure that it is large enough and has 'critical mass' to achieve the goals, whilst ensuring that the chosen size is manageable (p. 15). The **LED** (UN-Habitat, 2005) framework can be adapted to various scales, including local, regional, and national, but is focused on the creation of strategies which to be successful require a size which results in a sufficient critical mass. The higher up the scale, the more complex the process becomes with several layers and hierarchies of strategies and policies.

Other frameworks are focused on the neighbourhood scale, where it is expected that local stakeholders will be involved in shaping the future of their neighbourhood. The **Incubators project** (Berta et al., 2015; Caneparo & Bonavero, 2016) focuses on how experts and non-experts can share ideas and create shared strategies, with case studies varying in size between 200 hectares, 25 hectares and another site consisting of 2400 residential units. **Berman's** (2017) **Two-Phase Participatory Model** focuses on city and neighbourhood scale, in which different stakeholders can be consulted about specific places or sub-projects. Similarly, **Community Embedded Sustainable Urban Design Process Framework** (M. Dias, 2015) and **Shaping better places together** (Al Waer et al., 2017) frameworks focus on the neighbourhood scale, whilst noting that it is important to identify the scale of the area in the initial process to identify the affected stakeholders which will need to be engaged or brought in the process as partners.

PACTS' Model for Shared Space (Besley, 2010) focuses specifically on the introduction of shared space, noting that certain aspects, such as strategies and some policies need to be debated at national levels, but states that design should be carried out at a local level, following all the other stages. At the various stages, different national documents need to be taken into consideration whilst ensuring that the design is locally and contextually driven.

A1.3 Stakeholders

The frameworks under consideration address the stakeholders in different ways. Some identify key stakeholders whilst others identify the need for stakeholder analysis since these will vary from one context to another. This will be discussed in more detail for every framework.

Carmona et al. (2010) distinguish between the knowing urban designers (urban design practitioners, architects, planners …) who are purposely shaping the urban spaces and unknowing urban designers (politicians, citizens …) who shape the urban spaces around them indirectly, through day-to-day decisions or through the way they view and use a space. Similarly, the **Incubators for Public Space** (Caneparo & Bonavero, 2016) framework identifies four types of stakeholders, based on their role in the use or provision of the public space:

- *people (i.e. citizens who want to solve their real-life problems),*
- *utilizers (enterprises that want to develop their businesses in the area),*
- *enablers (public-sector actors, developers), and*
- *providers (domain experts, e.g. universities, consultants, technicians).* (p. 206)

Moughtin's (2003a) **Integrated design process,** the **Urban Design Process by Black & Sonbli** (2019)**, Urban Design for a century** (Brown et al., 2014), **Shaping better places together** (Al Waer et al., 2017)**, Street for People** (Government of South Australia, 2012) and **LED** (UN-Habitat, 2005) all identify the need to identify stakeholders at an early stage in the process since these vary depending on the scale and type of proposal. There can be a wide range of stakeholders which represent the community, including political and statutory bodies, private interests and community interests. The **LED** framework (UN-Habitat, 2005) also notes that different stakeholders have different roles to play. They identify the need for a local champion who needs to initiate and maintain the process. The process leaders and facilitators then play an essential role in managing the process and the stakeholder interaction within it.

Urban Design for a Century (Brown et al., 2014) lists several questions which can help in identifying the affected stakeholders. The framework discusses the idea of having an advisory committee

representing different perspectives that can guide the professionals leading the process. **Streets for people** (2012) also questions who should be involved in the process, noting that these will most likely vary depending on the type of project or area. The participants identified include traffic engineers, social planners, urban designs, authority representatives, as well as community representatives.

Other frameworks identify and discuss the role of specific stakeholders. **Shaping better places together** (Al Waer et al., 2017) focuses on the role of the facilitators in managing the urban design process. **PACT's** (Besley, 2010) focus is on the role of the Local Government, which often has the responsibility of identifying priorities and funding of such a process. **CLLD** (European Commission, 2014) focuses on the local community, highlighting the need to build their capacity so they can effectively participate in the process. The framework also notes that there might be complex relationships, interests and power between stakeholders and a stakeholder analysis might be required to identify these. Berman (2017) in the **Two-Phase Participatory Model** adopts a similar approach where the community is identified as the primary stakeholder. However, the research also highlights the importance of developers and the city, who need to fund and approve the projects. **Dias** (2015) discusses how a stakeholder group or an entity needs to take responsibility for the outcomes. The framework also elaborates on the importance of having local politicians onboard to reduce any delays in taking any necessary decisions.

The Place-Shaping Continuum identifies the importance of the power relationships between the stakeholders and how this influences the direction and outcome of the urban design process. Related to this, Carmona (2014) identifies six factors that determine how public space is shaped and reshaped, each associated with a stakeholder group: owners of space, regulators, designers, communities, managers of space, and users. These different groups have different powers and levels of input in the different stages of the urban design process. Carmona also gives an example of the power relationships in relation to the shaping of London's public spaces. **Moughtin** (2003a) also refers to the power relationships between stakeholders, nothing that when adopting participative approaches, there will be a redistribution of power, where some stakeholders have powers removed whilst the powers of others is increased (p. 14).

A1.4   Participation

A1.4.1 Top-down vs bottom-up

When considering participation in the urban design process, it is also important to distinguish between participation in terms of decision-making abilities (that is the level of influence on the eventual

decision) and participation in terms of the management and the running of the urban design process itself.

In the case of decision-making, a top-down approach often implies a process run or managed by local entities or bodies, with authorities or appointed bodies having decision-making responsibilities whilst accommodating some level of participation. A bottom-up approach will adopt a similar format, however, the local community has more power and influence on the decision-making process. This is directly related to the level of participation adopted in the urban design process. All the 13 frameworks can accommodate a range of 'Level of Participation' but most are geared towards a participatory approach in which the local community is at least consulted and informed why certain decisions need to be taken.

Few frameworks give consideration to different types of *management* in the urban design process, especially to the way the process is run and by whom. Recently there has been an increase in bottom-up managed processes in which a group from the local community start a process to implement change, such as guerrilla urbanism or tactical urbanism. Whilst most of the frameworks under consideration adopt a top-down management approach in which the process is led and managed by authorities, entities or professional, the **Incubators for Public Space** project aims to foster self-organisation in the design of public space. They remarking that 'do-it-yourself' urbanism has recently started taking off and that their project aims to provide the tools and support required to the various stakeholders to self-organise, co-create and co-fund. The project seeks to motivate, encourage, and enable stakeholders to reach common understanding and agreements rather than rely on strategic actions. It is expected that the local stakeholders themselves can self-initiate processes and other initiatives to drive change (Berta et al., 2015; Van Reusel et al., 2015).

The **CLLD** and **LED** propose frameworks in which groups and partnerships can get involved in the management of the process itself. The **CLLD** framework is presented as "*an approach that turns traditional 'top down' development policy on its head*" (European Commission, 2014, p. 9). The framework proposes that local stakeholders form partnerships that can design and implement the agreed development strategy. Similarly, the **LED** framework notes that local stakeholder can form core groups which can become partners in the process.

Dias (2015) in his doctoral study identified the need for a new urban design framework that achieves a balance between the top-down and bottom-up approaches. He identifies the "*integrative approach to regenerative design*" which adopts a *"bottom-up process which starts with community engagement, continues and ends with the community engagement; employing the community in each and every*

step of the process" (p. 100) as a basis of a good solution on which the benefits of bottom-up approaches can be assessed. However, a core project team will be responsible for running such a process and they will determine the best-suited approach to community engagement. Dias however then states that the project team should give prominence to the majority rather than focusing on the needs of individuals or small groups, which distinguishes it from other frameworks which often highlight the need to safeguard the interests of minorities.

The majority of the other frameworks adopt a top-down managed approach with varying levels of participation (See Table 52). Even a framework such as **LED** which proposes the involvement of local core groups is still inherently a top-down approach in which the local core groups typically only have a small say. There can be several reasons why most frameworks adopting such an approach. One of these is that the urban design process needs to be controlled to a certain extent to ensure that key aspects of the process, such as the representation of the whole society in the process, are ensured (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004).

Carmona et al. (2010) discuss both bottom-up approaches driven by community initiatives or top-down approaches which are driven by authorities or developers. **Carmona et al.** remark that the aim of community engagement can be beneficial in both forms as long as the process seeks to achieve a more advantageous outcome for all the affected stakeholders.

Table 52: The frameworks under consideration categorised according to 'top-down' or 'bottom-up' characteristic.

Characteristic: Approach Adopted	Frameworks
Top-down approach with stakeholder participation	Moughtin's (2003a) Integrated Design Process
	Carmona et al.'s (2010) Integrated Urban Design Process
	The Urban Design Process by Black & Sonbli (2019)
	Local Economic Development (UN-Habitat, 2005)
	PACTS' Model for Shared Space (Besley, 2010)
	Urban Design for an Urban Century – A community-based urban design process (Brown et al., 2014)
	Shaping better places together: Research into facilitating participatory placemaking (Al Waer et al., 2017)
	Streets for People (Government of South Australia, 2012)
	Two-Phase Participatory Model (Berman, 2017)
	The Place-shaping Continuum (Carmona, 2014)
Balanced Approach	Community Embedded Sustainable Urban Design Process Framework (M. Dias, 2015)
Bottom-up approach, with local stakeholders involved in the management of the process	CLLD (European Commission, 2014)
	Incubators for Public Space (Berta et al., 2015; Caneparo & Bonavero, 2016)

Note. Source: Author.

A.1.4.1 Approach to participation adopted in the models

The Urban Design Process by Black & Sonbli (2019), Urban Design for an Urban Century (Brown et al., 2014) **and Community Embedded Sustainable Urban Design Process Framework (M. Dias, 2015)** identify key aspects which are essential for successful public participatory processes, such as the need for participation at an early stage, participation of a wide range of stakeholders and the importance of transparency and traceability throughout the whole process. **Black & Sonbli (2019)** also identify the importance of communicating and presenting data and proposals in a very clear way that can be easily understood by the public. Where necessary, proposals need to be accompanied by a clear explanation of why certain decisions were made and how their input was taken into consideration. This is essential in ensuring the transparency of the process and increase the accountability of the decision-makers (pp. 189–190). Similarly, **Urban design for a century** (Brown et al., 2014) identifies the need to build realistic expectations and the importance of reporting back to the community in a comprehensive manner throughout the urban design process.

Some frameworks also identify different methods and techniques which can be used in public participation. **Black & Sonbli (2019)** identify several methods for public participation noting that these need to be chosen by considering the required input from the public participation. This will help to determine which methods are best-suited in any given context. Whilst the choice of method is important, it is also important that the persons carrying out the participation process and designers take an objective view of this process and maximise its potential with the aim of achieving a "contextually responsive design" (p. 130).

Moughtin (2003a) and **Berman** (2017) also discuss different types of participation methods whilst linking these to Arnstein (1969)'s Ladder of Participation. Moughtin discusses how techniques of participation associated with the upper levels of Arnstein's ladder seek to redistribute power amongst stakeholders. As the stakeholders and community are given more power, professionals such as planners, urban designers and architects start to lose their ability to decide and influence the outcome of the process. Moughtin notes that the type and level of participation need to take into consideration the socio-political context and will also most likely depend on the type of planning and political system in place (p. 16). **Berman** (2017) identified a range of public participation methods which range from unilateral participation to 'pure' collaborative public participation process, linking these to Arnstein's Ladder of Participation. Berman discusses how the different methods have different exposure level of local knowledge and integration of local knowledge within the process (p. 182). Similar to Moughtin, Berman discusses the required contexts for each method and the benefits associated with each method.

LED (UN-Habitat, 2005) and **Streets for People** (Government of South Australia, 2012) focus on the involvement of stakeholders in the development of holistic strategies and proposals. Both identify the need to develop a plan for participation early in the process, which must be meaningful and inclusive. LED identifies ten factors for successful participation and proposed the establishment of partnership groups to ensure that all perspectives are taken into consideration. Street for People focuses on how participation and the involvement of stakeholders can benefit the street design process. **Shaping better places together** (Al Waer et al., 2017) focuses specifically on the role of facilitation in a participative approach and how this might need to adapt according to the different levels of engagement at different stages of the process.

Whilst some frameworks discuss participation without recommending any particular type or level of participation, three frameworks identify a clear preference for a high level of participation. **PACTs** (Besley, 2010) associates shared space with joined-up thinking and shared understanding of the space. Therefore, a high level of participation in the urban design process seeking to introduce shared space

is identified as fundamental. **CLLD** (European Commission, 2014) expects participation to be at the core of the process rather than an add-on. The guidance document notes that the term 'community-led' was purposely chosen, expecting the community to take a leading role.

Similarly, the **Incubators for Public Space** project (Berta et al., 2015; Caneparo & Bonavero, 2016) advocates for self-organisation, in which the community does not only participate but is also responsible for the actions, decisions and the places they shape. The contributors to this project remark that they expect a change in the community dynamics if self-organisation is implemented. The community and stakeholders will consider 'what will happen if' rather than 'what will happen' if they are given more responsibility in the process. They will need to consider different scenarios themselves, rather than relying on others.

In the **Place-Shaping Continuum**, Carmona (2014) calls for a realistic approach to participation in the urban design process, noting that the right level of participation might not be that idealised in participatory design textbooks and paper. In practice, it is more about finding the balance where citizens can give their input whilst professionals ensure that decisions taken are in the best interests of the whole community. This is a departure from the other frameworks which do not discuss in any details issues that might arise during public participation, such as the conflict between stakeholders, despite being widely acknowledged in the wider literature as discussed earlier.

A1.5   Shared Space

Not all the frameworks under consideration discuss the introduction of shared space principles or other related concepts. PACT's and Street for People are the only two frameworks that directly discuss the introduction of shared space principles in streets and squares.

The **PACTS' model for Shared Space** (Besley, 2010) specifically discusses shared space and how it can contribute to the quality of the public realm. The report notes that most of the issues and debates surrounding shared space tend to be at a local level related to design. The authors are of the opinion that this debate should remain at a local level since it needs to take into consideration the specific cases, contexts and objectives. On a national level, the report focuses on how shifting the thinking about the public realm and shared space can be used to deliver projects which address the community needs. The PACTS model conceptualises shared space as a vehicle through which streets and squares can be adapted to meet the needs and desires of the local community. Therefore, shared space needs to be considered as a process rather than an objective or product – similar to urban design as discussed in *2.2.1 Defining urban design*.

The framework identified a process that seeks to maximise the benefits of the public realm through the introduction of shared space. An important role of the urban design process is that of changing the public perception of the importance and role that the car, and how this can lead to higher quality public spaces. The process is based on five lessons learnt from the *European Shared Space Project*, five lessons relevant:

- Different streetscapes and contexts require new approaches. Throughout this, the community need to understand and have the required tools and opportunities to participate in all the stages of the urban design processes.
- Tensions might arise between stakeholders due to conflicting views but the participation plan should clearly outline how any issues can be addressed by having clearly defined roles.
- Citizen and stakeholders need to buy-in (ownership and responsibility).
- Persons leading the process should adopt the role of enablers and facilitators, bringing together the many stakeholders and agendas.
- The urban design process needs to emphasise the local, historical and cultural context and will be more likely to result in successful projects.

As a result, the proposed process is very generic to allow these local factors to be taken into consideration. The first step of the process is that of establishing a Vision for the area, which in the case of shared space is often that of reclaiming street space for pedestrians whilst improving the pedestrian quality of the public space. The second stage is that of Collaboration, in which all the stakeholders come together and contribute to a shared understanding. The third stage is that of creating a Strategy that takes into consideration problems, causes, symptoms and solutions. The last stage is Action, that of designing and implementing the interventions.

Streets for People (Government of South Australia, 2012) discusses the opportunities for shared space streets and how the shared space philosophy can be used to deliver street environments that are shared between all users rather than dedicating areas to specific users. Street for People uses the Link and Place matrix proposed by Jones et al. (2008; 2009) to help in determining the ideal balance between the link and place functions. This can then be used by professionals and local stakeholders to design a shared space design that takes into consideration this classification. Through such an approach, the report seeks to depart from the problem-solving approach adopted in traffic and transport engineering to a more place focused approach in which the character of a place is essential to the success of a street. In respect to this, the authors discuss several findings, including the required conditions, key design principles and benefits associated with shared space which need to be taken into consideration when seeking to introduce shared space principles.

Urban Design for an Urban Century (2014) and the **Place-Shaping Continuum** (Carmona, 2014) identify the need to reclaim streets as public spaces, both mentioning the need to address the competition for the limited space in the urban areas and how a balance between car and pedestrian movement is required. Whilst the PACTS model for Shared Space is focused on the shared space directly, the proposed process does not depart from the processes proposed in the other frameworks such as those proposed by Moughtin (2003a) and Black & Sonbli (2019). The specific considerations and recommendations identified in both PACTS and Streets for People however can be used to address specific challenges and maximise the benefits associated with shared space.

Appendix 2 – Interview guide

<u>Introduction</u>

As outlined in the information sheet, this research seeks to understand how a collaborative urban design process can inform an approach to introduce Shared Space in Maltese streets and squares.

The aim of these interviews is to understand the views and opinions of different stakeholders on several aspects related to the urban design process including public participation; the relationships between different stakeholders; and shared space.

The urban design process can be defined as the process of designing and shaping the built environment in cities, towns and villages. In my research, the focus is on the streets and squares in Malta. Therefore, in this interview, the main interest is the urban design process in relation to urban streets and squares.

The interview is divided in 4 different parts. At the start of each part a brief introduction will be given.

<u>Part 1: Participant Information</u>

1. **State your name,**

   Qualification/professional status/experience,

   Position held in which organisation and for how long have you been in this position.

2. **What is your role in the urban design process?**

<u>Part 2: Questions about Public Participation</u>

This section will ask several questions on Public Participation. The questions being asked should be considered in terms of the urban design process concerned with the upgrade of streets and squares. Public Participation can come in different 'flavours'… Over the years there has been a substantial amount of research and discussions on the different forms and levels of public participation. In some cases, stakeholders might be involved in the decision-making process on projects, whilst in others they have no opportunities to contribute to the process.

3. **To what extent does Malta's urban design process include public participation? Can you identify examples of such practices?**

One of the first and perhaps most popular classification of public participation is Arnstein's Ladder of Participation which identifies a range of levels of participation, ranging from 'manipulation' to allowing 'citizen control'. <Give Handout 1 to participant>

4. **In general, at which level on Arnstein's ladder of participation would you place the level of participation in the Maltese urban design process for the redesign of streets and squares?**

5. **In the Maltese context, is more participation desired in the urban design process?**

    (If in favour of more participation) - Which level of participation on the Arnstein's ladder do you think Malta should aspire to be at when upgrading streets and squares?

    (If in favour of higher level of participation) - What in your opinion are the main challenges in shifting to the desired level of participation?

    (If in favour of higher level of participation) - How do you think these challenges can be overcome or addressed?

6. **Do you have any best practice examples of public participation which you can share?**

    <if finding it difficult, ask them to think about a square and street and how they would like the urban design process to be carried>

    On which level of Arnstein's ladder do you assign these best practice examples to?

    <Are there any relevant documents I should be aware off?>

7. There are several different tools used to help achieve public participation. These include: information meetings, workshops, questionnaires, participatory mapping, option preference polls, onsite walking assessments, social media, and several others…

8. **Are there any tools which you think can be useful in improving public participation in Malta, especially in relation to street and square design?**

Part 3: Stakeholders in Malta

Stakeholders are all those organisations or persons with an interest or concern in streets, squares and the urban design process. Stakeholders can range from policy makers down to the actual users of a street or square.

9. **Can you identify any missing stakeholders from the following list?**

   <Interviewee to be handed Handout 2>

   Government

   Ministry for Transport, Infrastructure and Capital Projects

   Ministry for Tourism

   Political Parties

   Planning Authority

   Transport Malta

   Infrastructure Malta

   Local Councils

   Church

   Professionals (Architects, Road Engineers, Planners)

   Non-governmental organization

   Community Groups

   Residents

   Visitors

   Tourists

   Private Businesses (inc. Hotels & Restaurants)

10. **Which stakeholder groups' opinion should be prioritised in the design of streets and squares?**

    Why and to what extent?

11. **Do you have examples of collaborations between different stakeholders in the urban design process, especially in reference to street and square design?**

    <if not mentioned, prompt whether authorities take on board any suggestions by organisations>

Part 4: Shared Space

Around the world, there has been an increased focus on the need to improve the urban quality in urban areas. This need was also identified by several Maltese strategies. These strategies identify Shared Space as one of the tools/concepts which can be used to improve the Maltese streetscapes whilst reducing the car dominance in the urban areas.

12. **To what extent are you familiar with principles of Shared Space?**

<Handout 3 showing Shared space examples>

If required mention the following: Shared Space seeks to reduce the clear rules and demarcation of spaces within streets in order to encourage informal social rules to dictate the movement on the streets instead of traditional traffic rules. Example: Drivers make eye contact with pedestrians to decide whether they need to stop or slow down. Often this results in less space dedicated strictly to cars.

13. **Can you identify any challenges or issues you think might arise when implementing Shared Space in Malta?**

14. **When adopting a participative approach to implement Shared Space, what response do you expect from the various stakeholder groups?**

15. **To what extent do you expect conflicts or consensus between stakeholders when discussing a vision or design for a specific street or square?**

    <if answer is solely conflict or consensus: Ask to give examples of conflicts or consensus which have encountered>

16. **In your opinion, how can the introduction of shared space through a participative process improve the walkability and liveability of Maltese streets and squares?**

17. A strategic and participatory urban design process can be a wide-ranging approach which seeks to improve living conditions of citizens. It can help citizens to adapt their urban areas to new circumstances and challenges. It can consist of several elements, including: long term visions agreed with the local community, broad stakeholder engagement, availability of community resources including best practice examples and information websites, evidence-based studies which analyse the before and after of a project, and several others tools.

    To what extent do you think such an approach is required to improve the quality of streets and squares in Malta?

    (if yes:) How do you expect such an approach to improve on the existing urban design process in Malta?

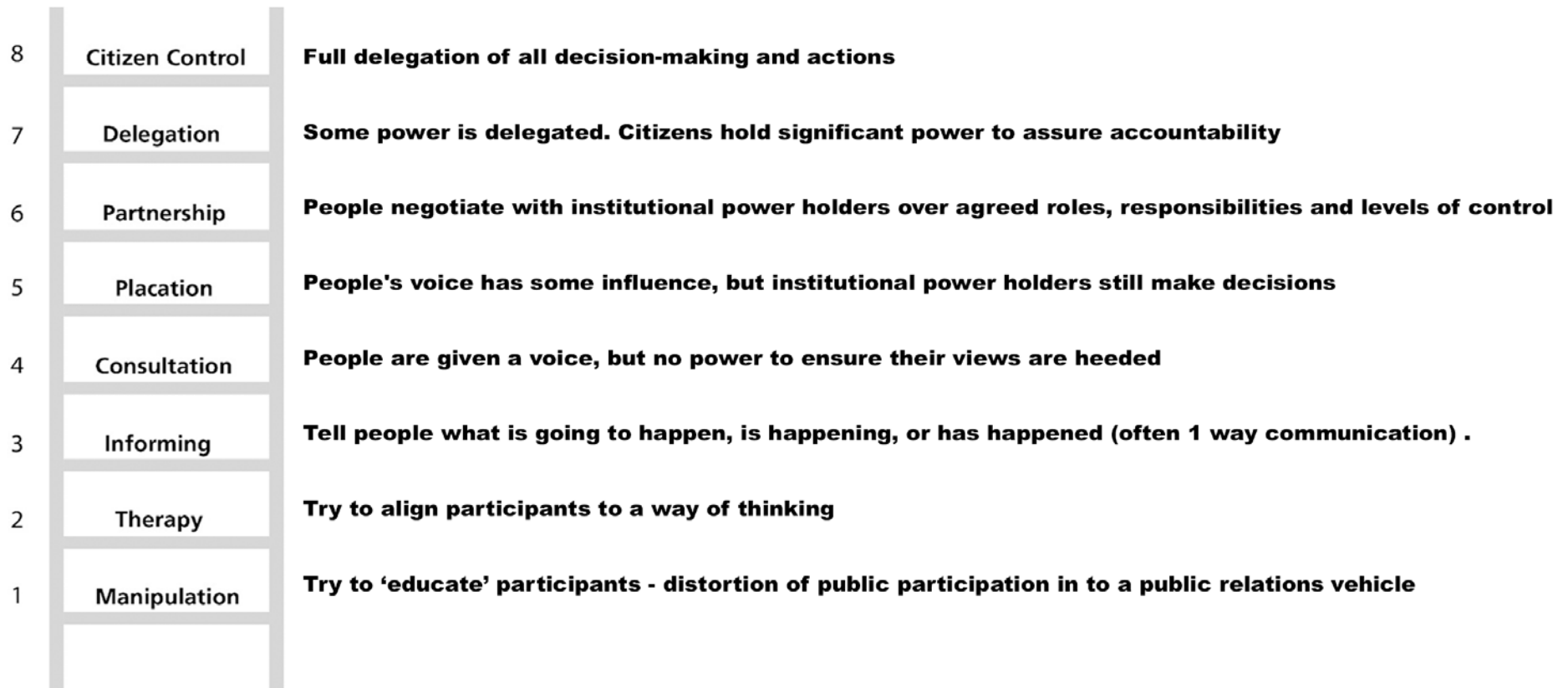   **Are there any challenges or difficulties when shifting to a long-term strategic approach?**

18. **Would you like to add anything else?**

Thank you for your contribution and time. After analysis of the data collected from the interviews, some participants might be selected to discuss the initial findings of the research. Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up interview or discussion?

Handout 1: Arnstein's Ladder of Participation

Arnstein's Ladder of Participation

8	Citizen Control	Full delegation of all decision-making and actions
7	Delegation	Some power is delegated. Citizens hold significant power to assure accountability
6	Partnership	People negotiate with institutional power holders over agreed roles, responsibilities and levels of control
5	Placation	People's voice has some influence, but institutional power holders still make decisions
4	Consultation	People are given a voice, but no power to ensure their views are heeded
3	Informing	Tell people what is going to happen, is happening, or has happened (often 1 way communication) .
2	Therapy	Try to align participants to a way of thinking
1	Manipulation	Try to 'educate' participants - distortion of public participation in to a public relations vehicle

Handout 2: Stakeholders

Government

    Ministry for Transport, Infrastructure and Capital Projects

    Ministry for Tourism

Political Parties

Planning Authority

Transport Malta

Infrastructure Malta

Local Councils

Church

Professionals (Architects, Road Engineers, Planners …)

Non-governmental organization

Community Groups

Residents

Visitors

Tourists

Private Businesses (inc. Hotels & Restaurants)

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Handout 3: Shared Space Examples

A recently implemented shared space street: New Road, Brighton, United Kingdom

A street in an urban conservation area which adopts shared space principles. Triq San Rokku, Kirkop, Malta.