Chapter 1

Introduction: Scope and Context

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"There are only two forces that unite men - fear and interest."

Napoleon Bonaparte
French general, politician and emperor
(1769-1821) [1]

1.1   Research scope

This study seeks to explore the impact of Europeanisation on domestic interest groups in the Republic of Malta (hereafter referred to as Malta) and the Republic of Ireland (hereafter referred to as Ireland). In particular it investigates how the embedded geopolitical characteristics originating from small and remote member states affect the incorporation of, or resistance to, external incentives and norms of EU governance. Research primacy rests on the role and character of interest groups involved in national and sub-national policy-making and their interplay with governmental actors, as well as their participation in EU affairs. The study has two principal aims:

1. to measure the extent of Europeanisation experienced by Maltese and Irish interest groups in the period between 2004 and 2011, and
2. to identify whether the resulting Europeanisation is a consequence of rationalist or sociological triggers.

This twofold aim is particularly stimulated by the way domestic interest groups react to changes taking place both within their traditional polity - *the nation state* with its embedded features of centuries-old traditions and patterns of authority (Warrington 1994, Wettenhall and Thynne 1994) - and the supranational polity - *the European Union* (EU) with its emerging paradigm of political architecture based on multi-level governance (Bache and Flinders 2004, Gualini 2004), networking (Benkler 2006, Saliminen 2003, Leonard 1999) and structured consultation processes (Grima G. 2009,

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[1] http://www.famousquotesandauthors.com/authors/napoleon_bonaparte_quotes.html. Accessed on 15 September 2009.

Pace 2009). The essential conceptual argument accentuating the need of understanding national adaptability to Europeanisation requires an approach that is sensitive to the particular domestic institutional configuration of member states (Bache and Marshall 2004, Hanf and Soedtendorp 2002).

In a world characterised by economic regionalism, the interdependencies of polities and the hybridisation of specialised policy communities, both governmental and non-governmental actors (NGOs) that have come to terms with new constellations of power that do not necessarily emanate and fade within the traditional borders of the nation state. The EU presents us with an unprecedented striking case involving the blurring of the delineation line between the domestic and external affairs, which is eventually constructing a continental political platform, sprouting spill-over effects over national polities. Today interest groups, and governments alike, have to operate not only within the well-known parameters of their endogenous political environments crystallized with deeply embedded traditions of governance, but they also have to take into account the new stimuli resulting from the European institutional framework which is always in a state of flux (Kohler-Koch and Eising 2002).

1.2   Key questions

The first aim of the study seeks to establish the element of significance in relation to domestic change. In other words, it attempts to confirm or otherwise whether change among domestic interest groups has been significant or marginal as a result of EU influence. The second aim revolves around the *why* question. It is specifically concerned with the underlying reasons that make interest groups in Malta and Ireland respond positively to opportunities and norms emanating from the EU and the other member states. If rationalist triggers are the core cause of Europeanisation, then interest groups adapt their structures and actions to profit from the new multilevel European power structure. Thus political change occurs primarily when groups 'rationally' use European resources in order to supplement their predefined preferences (Graziano and Vink 2013: 40). Contrastingly, if sociological triggers are at play, the elasticity of interest groups can be understood in terms of 'cognitive' Europeanisation, that is changes are the result

of the construction and diffusion of EU ideas and the socialisation provided by EU institutions and policy processes (Graziano and Vink 2013: 40). In this sense, Europe is not a mere extension of the domestic arena where partisan interests are preserved or promoted, but becomes an 'aspiration' and 'master symbol' for the development of interest groups (Moreno and Serrano-Pascual 2011: 53). Bache and Jordan call this usage of Europeanisation 'the creation of a new, European lodestar for domestic politics' (Bache and Jordan 2006: 60).

A set of key research questions lies at the heart of this thesis. What factors determine domestic change (or lack of change) towards a more meaningful engagement of sectoral interest representation in public affairs? How does smallness and remoteness affect the transition of change among interest groups? Has change been significant or not during the selected time frame? Is this change caused by EU's vertical pressures and requirements for institutional reform, or by horizontal interactions with other member states? Or is it generated by the interplay between European and domestic variables for change? Can it be a case where domestic changes are triggered by other international factors, like the United Nations (UN) and globalisation that are not necessarily confined to the European integration model? Is there a relation between the magnitude of change and its true nature? How does the EU membership affect the responsiveness of interest groups to seize opportunities via domestic and/or Brussels routes of influence? How are groups' structures and cultures affected by the EU and its member states? Why and when will groups bypass the nation state to target their lobbying at the EU level?

A conceptual framework, fuelled by explanatory theories, has been devised in order to provide answers for these questions and, hence, achieve the general scope of this research. This entails the application of a comparative research design based on the hypothetical-deductive model and the utilisation of both quantitative and qualitative data streams. The remaining sections of the introduction acquaint the reader with these fundamental building blocks that run through the thesis.

1.3   Research primacy

All of the questions revolve around domestic interest groups that have become important actors in contemporary democracies and in the provision of public goods and services. Simply defined, interest groups comprise a wide and diversified range of rational entities, united by a common belief system, that have sufficient identity to act on behalf of their members and which, therefore, have some influence either on public opinion or on government to attain their prescribed goals (Scruton 2007: 338, Huggins and Turner 1997). They encircle a pluralist range of NGOs operating across different sectoral areas at the local, national and supranational orbits of power, including individual corporations, chambers of professions, producers' confederations, employers' associations, trade unions, think-tanks, environmental activists, consumer groups, charities and philanthropic foundations, heritage organisations, religious guilds, youth affiliations, social/community groups and an ever growing number of single issue groups (Greenwood 2003, Grant 2000, Smith 2006). Lately, the term *interest groups* has widened its meaning, as it is now also incorporating universities, local government committees, state-sponsored bodies, public/private partnerships (PPPs), the media, and foreign and pan-continent interest groups that are all exerting a direct or indirect impact on domestic institutions and processes that enact public policy (Cigler and Loomis 1995, Alexander 1998). The summation of all these forms of public activism was commonly referred to as 'the third sector' (Chapman 2006, Evers and Laville 2004, Anheier and Seibel 1990), but nowadays international organisations, like the United Nations (UN), the World Bank (WB) and the European Commission (EC), seem to prefer the all embracing term 'civil society' (Xuereb 2009, Axford et al. 1997).

Although literature does sometimes differentiate between interest groups and civil society where the former are associated with self-centred inside lobbying and the latter as being more transparent in defending the common good (Beyers et al. 2008: 1110), empirical research on their action strategies and target institutions suggests how similar they can be (Saurugger 2013: 335). Ultimately they all aim at representing their interests in a specific section of society. The term 'interest groups' is the one preferred in this study not only because it is one of the widely used terms in scholarly literature

but, more importantly, because it entails a degree of structured organisation. Social network societies where no central coordinative function exists are, therefore, excluded. At the same time, when only trade unions and employers' associations are implied, the term 'social partners' is used to mark their common economic interests that render them protagonists in corporatist models.

Interest groups provide a link between state actors and the rest of society (Bache and George 2006). Their meaningful input into the decision-making process is seen as a sign of a functioning democracy (Karr 2006, Smismans 2006), particularly in contemporary times that are characterised by erosional symptoms of public trust in traditional politics made evident by popular uprisings, miserable electoral turnouts, low party memberships and dwindling interest in traditional political affairs (see Farrell et al. 2013: 100-101) Although elected governmental representatives may feel themselves 'first among equals' due to their democratic mandate and formal accountability through the ballot box, they increasingly need to work with and through representatives of other types (Lowndes and Chapman 2009). Concepts of good governance, including the ones advocated by the UN and the EU, call for the participation of actors which are independent of government institutions. These additional 'actors' must have a contributing voice in all stages of the policy process.

The relevance and importance of interest groups to public policy have developed radically, as today governments are more disposed to enter into agreements with civil society in implementing social and economic projects for the benefit of society and the economy. These include the formation of PPPs, the engagement of non-elected representatives on state commissions and policy working groups, revamped empowerment to local councils on issues involving local/regional development, and the free/subsidised lease of government properties to voluntary organisations to transform neglected public sites into cultural, sports and recreational complexes. In this context, this research is particularly keen to explore whether the potential of interest groups in Malta and Ireland has increased substantially as a consequence of the transformation of the state or as a result of opportunity structures and learning incentives that they currently enjoy as part of EU membership.

Like other European politicians, Maltese and Irish political elites are aware of the escalating importance of interest groups in managing public affairs within an EU context. Warrington (2010) claims that civil society in Malta offers one of the most interesting and diverse forms of citizens' engagement, deeply rooted in Catholicism and in representative democracy; yet Sant (2009: 128) laments that it 'is still considered a vague field of analysis, lacking adequate national awareness and consistent momentum of leadership'. On their part, Adshead and Tonge (2009) maintain that civic activism in Ireland takes place via a wide range of organisations, covering every area of social, cultural and economic life; however there is limited information in literature with regards to the impact of EU membership on Irish interest groups (*Study on Volunteering in the EU: Country Report Ireland* 2011: 21). To this end, this study strives to address this literature gap from practitioners' viewpoints. It also presents an opportunity to analyse the Europeanisation of interest groups from the perspective of small island member states.

1.4   Theoretical background

The best way to study the evolving character of interest groups is by anatomising the machinery of the polity - examining both its formal structure or *skeleton,* and decoding its working culture/practices or *flesh and blood* (Van Schendelen 2005: 56). According to Schmidt (2006), new institutionalism is equipped with the right theoretical features to understand the logic of political actions and how governing structures, governmental as well as non-governmental, adapt to internal and/or external forces of change. Bulmer (2008: 51) asserts that an awareness of new institutionalism is indispensable for understanding how Europeanisation is theorised.

In particular, the concept of Europeanisation will be explored from the theoretical perspectives of rationalist and sociological institutionalisms which lie at the core of the scientific method of this study. The new institutionalist school rests on the premise that institutions, broadly defined as sets of rules, procedures, historical pathways and social norms that determine how 'collective actions are made', 'give meaning to interactive

relationships' and 'provide the context' within which interactive relationships take place (Caramani 2008: 10, Hix 2005: 13). Different political actors, including interest groups, are engaged in a cobweb of interactive policy networks wherein the contradictory forces of stability and change are mediated through the understanding of actors' preferences and interpreted in the context of structures, rules, norms and interpersonal relationships within the institutional system (Richardson 2000: 1008). It involves bringing institutions back in into the explanation of politics and society, emphasising the extent to which political conduct is shaped by the institutional landscape in which it occurs, the importance of historical legacies and the range of diversity of actors' strategies (Pollack 2005a: 19/22). The logics of Rational Choice Institutionalism (RCI) and Sociological Institutionalism (SI) stress different mediating factors that facilitate or preclude domestic adaptation to Europeanisation (Börzel and Risse 2003).

So far, the set of basic variables that are crucial for the successful achievement of the scope of this study have already been implied. The independent variable is made up of the EU as a political system that radiates change through its style of governance, norms, policies and networking opportunities, while changes within domestic interest groups are the dependent variables. The intermediary variables that determine the kind of relationship between the EU and interest groups are the logics of new institutionalisms. In line with Exadaktylos' and Radaelli's assertion (2009: 507), Europeanisation is considered as a process in this study, and not as an outcome variable. This conceptual framework, as applied in this research, has been widely applied by numerous scholars, including Graziano and Vink (2013), Eising (2008), Bulmer (2008), Featherstone (2003), Featherstone and Radaelli (2003), Börzel and Risse (2003). Now that the variables have been established, it is appropriate to formulate a set of hypotheses that shall determine the analytical design of this inquiry.

1.5   Hypotheses setting

The analytical model revolves around the testing of a null hypothesis and two contending causal hypotheses that focus on rationalist and sociological stimulus. In contrast to the synthetic approach developed by Börzel and Risse (2003: 69) that treats RCI and SI as

compatible, the hypothetical scenarios in this thesis imply a competing relationship between the two variants. The three hypotheses are built on a number of variables that stem from the 'three-step' framework developed by Risse, Cowles and Caporaso (2001: 6), where Step 1 involves identifying the relevant EU-level processes, Step 2 identifies the relevant mediating factors and Step 3 lays out the elasticity of domestic structural and attitudinal formations. The exposition and analysis of the mediating variables is a determining step in understanding why and to what extent change happens and embedded practices remain constant.

1.5.1 The null hypothesis

> *Due to the inelasticity of domestic polity and politics, EU membership has made no significant change to the character of interest groups' participation in the politics of Malta and/or Ireland.*

This first scenario presents a null hypothesis which is contingent on the premise that domestic governance, together with its deeply embedded structures and norms, is highly inelastic to the conditionalities resulting from EU membership (see Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1: The null hypothesis model
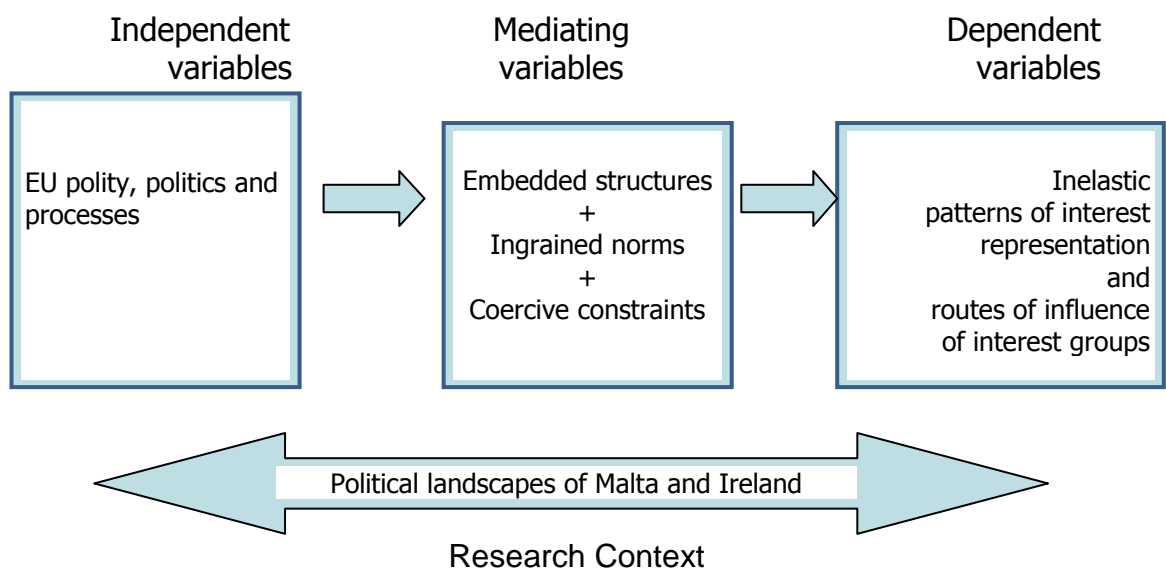
This scenario follows the dialectic that the traditional governing style of small states is almost exclusively state centric (Ingebritsen et al. 2006, Hanf and Soetendorp 1998, Pirotta 1996, Lockhart et al. 1993), where the role of interest groups is often weak due to sectoral fragmentation and their poorly organised structures (Saurugger 2013: 336). It presents the case of inelasticity that signifies the absence of any causal relationship between European-level and domestic change. However, the apparent immunity of domestic political architecture from external incentives promulgated by the EU does not necessarily entail strict embalmment of the member state's polity formation and interactions. It may also be the case that domestic change, or changing relations between state and non-state actors, might be the result of other causalities which are not necessarily EU-related, namely globalisation, membership in other international/regional formations or home-grown restructuring programmes.

The reluctance of Maltese and Irish actors to seize European opportunities and internalize new norms can be the result of a variety of causes. Organised groups may voluntary conform to the existing domestic polity structure because they are already well-connected with the establishment. Actors may have a vested interest in upholding the ingrained domestic 'system-without-system' associated with small states characterised by clientelistic relationships, informal interactions, relative easy access to power and the preservation of a self-interested *klikka tal-qalba* (elite clique) who know each other personally, and manage politics and bureaucracy to their own interest (Mitchell 2002, Cooper 2009, Mifsud 1995, Boissevain 1993).

Contrastingly, interest groups may be constrained not to diversify their tactics and avenues of influence because of coercive limitations resulting from lack of administrative capacity. The prevalence of the status-quo can thus be attributed to the inherent institutional and operational limitations (Olaffson 1998). In this context, most of the cross-cutting issues are related to the state's smallness and remoteness.
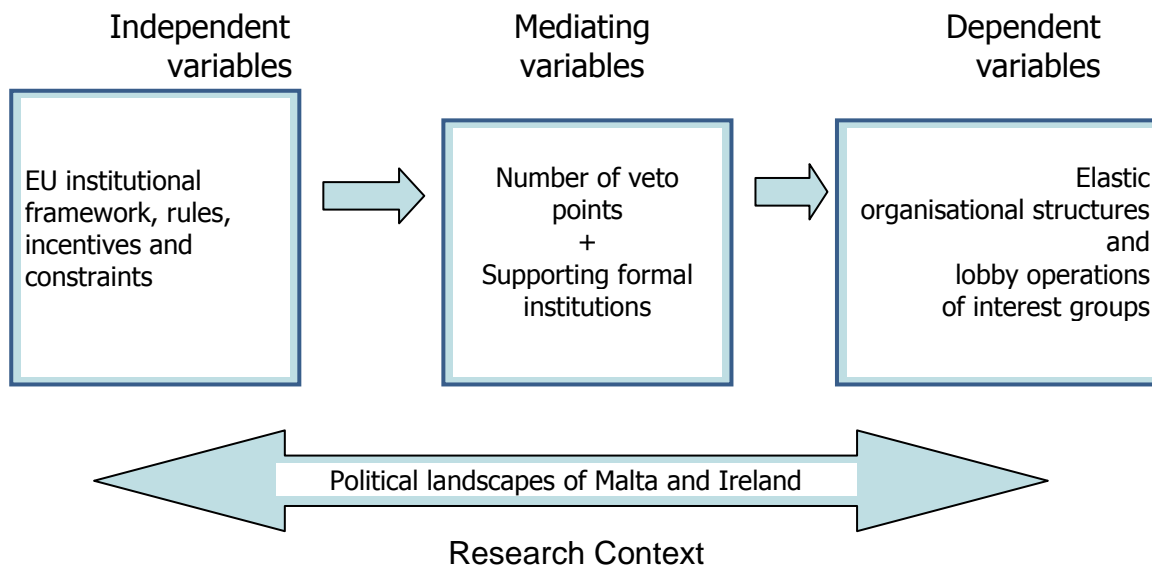
1.5.2 The rationalist hypothesis

Through the emergence of new opportunities and constraints, EU membership has made a significant change to the character of interest groups' participation in the politics of Malta and/or Ireland.

This hypothesis contemplates that the change stimulus, initiated from 'Brussels', reshapes national polity, and contributes towards the loosening of the traditional 'fixation' of national decision-making styles (Hanf and Soetendorp 1998: 10). It unravels the element of institutional elasticity wherein the endogenous characteristics of Malta and Ireland, including the interaction mechanisms between central authorities and interest groups, are transformed in order to absorb or adapt to the European mode of governance driven by hard law[2] and formal institutional settings. It is the case where organisational structures and fieldwork lobby of domestic interest groups are remoulded to take account of the new set of regulations, opportunities and constraints as a result of EU membership.

Adhering to the actor-centred, rationalist-based approaches, the second hypothesis focuses on the role of individuals within institutions and political systems. Because the main focus is on individuals and how they calculate their interests, institutions can change rapidly depending on the interest of key actors. Interest is assumed to be primarily rational, not necessarily selfish; and, although it can be pursued by the actor, it has nonetheless to be articulated within the institutional context (Oppenheimer 2012: 114). Actors, in our case Maltese and Irish interest groups, shall deploy their resources in such a way as to maximise their gain and also to minimise their dependence on other actors in the area. As figure 1.2 shows, this process is subject to two key mediating factors, namely, multiple veto points (and the more there are the greater the difficulty in bringing about change) and facilitating formal institutions (opportunities for actors to organise themselves around mediating structures and, thus, increase their relative power).

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[2] Hard law includes the Acquis Communautaire, formal institutional procedures, commitment devices and standards, regulations, directives and court decisions.

Figure 1.2: The rationalist hypothesis model

Independent variables	Mediating variables	Dependent variables
EU institutional framework, rules, incentives and constraints	Number of veto points + Supporting formal institutions	Elastic organisational structures and lobby operations of interest groups

Political landscapes of Malta and Ireland

Research Context

This hypothesis predicts that there is a positive causal relationship between incentives and constraints stemming from the EU polity and resulting changes in repositioning interest groups on the national and supranational political platform. For Checkel (2001: 559), actors compliance to European rules stems from 'coercion' (rarely in case of interest groups), 'instrumental calculation' (always), and 'incentives', like funding and policy measures. The choice mechanism is 'cost/benefit calculations' and the environment is one of strategic interaction in that it is premised on a 'unilateral calculation' of verbal and nonverbal cues. These are the classical cues pertaining to the rationalist narrative.

1.5.3   The sociological hypothesis

> *Through the provision of socialisation and collective learning processes, EU membership has made a significant change to the character of interest groups' participation in the politics of Malta and/or Ireland.*

The third hypothesis is derived from SI which holds that the interests of actors and how they conceive their interests are determined by the institutions they form part of. Because EU membership creates new values, norms and processes of mutual learning across member states, actors change within this context. It presents another case of

elasticity where the identity and culture of interest groups are reshaped because of EU stimuli. In this respect, two key factors operate as intermediate variables in determining domestic response to European integration: norm entrepreneurs and cooperative informal institutions (see Figure 1.3). The former relates to expert knowledge and advocacy actors and communities that actively promote change within the continuously evolving European context, while the latter refers to informal understandings of correct institutional behaviour and the logic of change.

Figure 1.3: The sociological hypothesis model
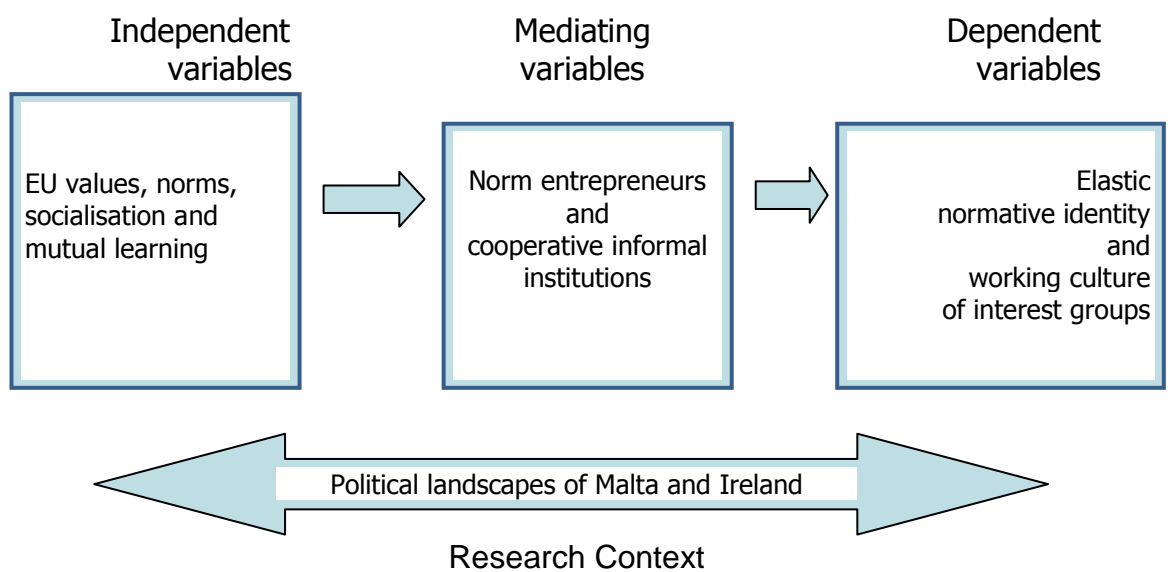
This method of influence encapsulates the fundamental principles of SI which, as a variant of the new institutional school, is more interested in behavioural norms, and personal and collective ideologies rather than in formal structures (Hix 2005: 12). SI suggests research agendas exploring the behavioural transformation of Maltese and Irish actors within national and EU institutions, particularly the ways in which their participation leads them to alter behaviour through a process of learning and culture change (Bulmer 2008). In this vein, Checkel (2001: 553) maintains that the choice mechanism is 'non-instrumental', and the environment, contrary to the RCI hypothesis, is one of 'social interaction' between agents, where 'mutual learning' and the 'discovery of new preferences' replace unilateral calculation.

Whilst many scholars claim that 'the shadow of the past' still haunts small island states that draw lessons from past experiences than from outside threats - a direct reference to Historical Institutionalism (HI) which is another major variant within the new institutionalist school of thought - others like Katzenstein (1985) and Baldacchino (2007: 17) hold a contrary view and maintain that they can in fact be 'sites of agency, depositories of new things'. In this vein, the SI hypothesis calls for the investigation of patterns of socialisation, embracing also soft Europeanisation,[3] that act as strategic drivers in the absorption or adaptation of the EU mode of governance by domestic interest groups. It takes into account a transnational working culture based on dialogue, compromise and consensus-seeking, alliance formation, cross sectoral interactivity and sharing of best practices.

1.6   The domestic impact of Europeanisation

The set of hypotheses presented in the previous section capitalise on new institutionalism as the explanatory theory to identify, and eventually verify, alternative causal accounts of Europeanisation. Indeed, Europeanisation as such is not a theory but rather a phenomenon that needs to be explained (Bulmer and Lequesne 2013: 19, Bulmer 2007). Since the 1990s there has been a heightened interest in Europeanisation literature and, according to Olsen (2003), there have been five different meanings attributed to the term. The earlier studies interpreted Europeanisation as a *historical phenomenon*, while the second generation of studies defined Europeanisation as a carrier of transnationalism through a *bottom-up approach*. Europeanisation as a vehicle for domestic adaptation through a *top-down approach* formed the basis of the third generation of studies. The latest two generations explain Europeanisation in terms of *governance style* that is typical and distinct for Europe and beyond, and as a *political project* aiming at a unified and politically stronger continental platform. Other scholars came up with different mappings of usage (see Buller and Gamble 2002, Bache and Jordan 2006). This study is particularly concerned with uses of the term

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[3] Soft Europeanisation comprises such instruments like codes of conduct, norms of 'accepted discourse', agenda priorities (e.g. Lisbon Agenda, Europe 2020), Charters and Open Method of Coordination (OMC).

Europeanisation that characterise the changing relationship between the EU and its member states.

The focus of this study is in synch with recent trends of Europeanisation studies that started to concentrate on the impact of European unification on domestic political and cultural processes of member states and beyond (Börzel and Risse 2003: 57). Notwithstanding the emphasis on 'bottom-up' initiatives on policy processes, the conceptual scope of Europeanisation started to incorporate 'top-down' and 'horizontal' initiatives in favour of the European regional integration, together with an accentuation on national and sub-national structures and actors (Vink and Graziano 2008). Europeanisation in its contemporary meaning involves a 360 degree approach, implying the co-existence of vertical and lateral directionalities portraying, in Börzel's terms (2005), the *uploading*, *downloading* and *crossloading* of policy matters and interest representation. Bulmer and Burch (2001: 78) adhere to this multi-directionality approach but propose alternative terminology, namely *projection*, *reception* and *horizontal* Europeanisation.

In this context, this study's supports Bache and Jordan (2006: 30) when they define Europeanisation as 'the reorientation or reshaping of politics in the national arena in ways that reflect policies, practices or preferences advanced through the EU system of governance'.[4] In line with its specific aims, this study opts for an original and more stringent definition,

> *Europeanisation refers to the impact of European influence on the elasticity of domestic interest groups to adapt their character to new opportunities and norms as a corollary of EU membership.*

This definition, inspired by the works of Eising (2008), Bache and Jordan (2006), Börzel and Risse (2003) and Hanf and Soetendorp (2002) is formed around the research primacy of this study. It is particularly interested in the trade-off, or the synchronous existence, of change and continuity in domestic politics. Moreover, the conceptual

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[4] In this definition, 'politics' is used broadly to capture concerns with polity, politics and policy dimensions.

framework of this study is encapsulated in this definition wherein the independent variable is the European stimulus triggered either by tactical opportunities or social interaction, and the dependent variable is the resulting change in the character of interest groups operating at the national and sub-national levels. In this vein, change in interest groups' structures, activities and norms is a way of assessing their elasticity in relation to EU vertical and lateral triggers.

1.7   Determining the extent and nature of Europeanisation

Since the scope of the study is to determine the extent and nature of Europeanisation, it is crucial to establish which criteria are to be used to assess the impact of change over interest groups in Malta and Ireland. The early identification of these criteria is pertinent to the formulation of workable research methodology that shall ultimately put to test the original set of hypotheses.

Scholars have used different yardsticks to measure Europeanisation but, in their absolute majority, they have relied on 'the qualitative tradition' to come up with matrices of categorised results (Exadaktylos and Radaelli 2009: 518). In measuring the impact of Europeanisation in UK's economic policy making, Hall (1993) devises a three-tier change scheme: 'first order change' comprising incrementalist and routine changes, 'second order change' featuring strategic action, and 'third order change' in which goals, instruments, and instrument settings of policy changed in tandem. Bulmer and Burch (2005) also came up with their own version of measuring the impact of Europeanisation on UK polity. Contextualising their study within an HI perspective, they decode 'receptive' or 'projected' adaptation as either being a 'quiet revolution' or a 'step-change'. Bardi (2010) uses three impact assessments to identify the effects of Europeanisation over political parties, that is 'cohesiveness', 'inclusiveness' and 'systemness'. Studying the impact of policy change, Bache (2008) categorises the state's responses to Europeanisation into four types, namely 'transformation', 'accommodation', 'absorption' and 'inertia'. In addition, and most important for this research, Balme and Chabanet (2008) argued that four types of transformations might be identified for interest groups, namely:

1. *Internalisation* when groups concentrate their actions at the domestic level
2. *Externalisation* when groups circumvent the domestic level and directly 'go to Brussels'
3. *Supranationalisation* when groups establish or join federations at the European level to influence the EU level directly
4. *Transnationalisation* when domestic groups transform into global actors.

This thesis presents an alternative method to the qualitative paradigm applied in the aforementioned studies as it relies on statistical measures to quantify the impact of Europeanisation. Thus the idea of significant change referred to in the three original hypotheses is intrinsically tied to statistical significance. The methodological design, not only tries to decode the nature of Europeanisation being experienced by Maltese and Irish interest groups, but also seeks to quantify the impact of Europeanisation. Such an impact is to be measured across four distinct, yet complementary, dimensions that make up the character of interest groups, as shown in table 1.1.

Table 1.1: The four dimensions of the character of interest groups

Dimension	Dynamics as a result of EU membership
Internal structure	Groups may have enriched their resource base and diversified their internal organisational structure to access additional incentives and internalise new norms made available by the EU.
Domestic responsiveness	Groups may have enhanced their participation in domestic policy-making by embarking on a set of strategies advocated by the style of EU governance, like solidifying their voice through umbrella formation, strengthening their role in public-private partnerships and striving to become consensus builders.
European involvement	Groups may have established points of contact with the EU architecture of governance, including European federations and other member states through the identification of partner organisations.
Attitudinal transformation	Groups' members and leaders may have modified their personal outlook to start engaging more with the EU, embracing European norms and values that challenge their traditional individual and collective psyche.

Through a rigorous process of deduction, change of statistical significance is to be determined across each of these four dimensions. EU influence over interest groups is

not only manifested in their engagement with the European institutional architecture and the formation of new attitudes towards the EU, but also in the ways they resort to in order to re-engineer their internal structures and enhance their participation in the national arena. Van Schendelen (2005: 218) maintains that 'managing the EU arena' and 'handling the home front' are not contrary forces but, in actual fact, they are part of the same continuum.

Thus the first aim of the study that attempts to measure the degree of Europeanisation is to be achieved by a quantitative strategy making use of questionnaires distributed among four sectoral groupings in Malta and Ireland. The selected four sectors are dealt with in the next section. The second aim of the study that strives to decode the nature of Europeanisation is to be managed by a multi-qualitative strategy which is specifically designed to understand change in terms of rationalist or sociological underpinnings. Interviews and observations are employed as primary data collection tools to comprehend how the dynamics of intermediate variables work to absorb or resist changes as a consequence of EU membership.

The reliance on mixed methodology to analyse the complexity of Europeanisation presents a great potential for an original contribution in terms of applied research design. While quantitative data gives an aggregate overview of the phenomena under scrutiny, the use of qualitative data is grounded by the persistent requirement to understand interdependent behaviours, needs, systems and cultures.

1.8   Selected case scenarios

As hinted in the previous section, this comparative study focuses on four specific types of interest groups – trade unions, employers' associations, environmental groups and social and human rights organisations - that have been purposely selected for a case study investigation. They have been carefully pinpointed for their rather conflicting narratives and for the different policy domains in which they are functional. Thus the concept of Europeanisation shall be probed into by a versatile array of stakeholders.

As revealed by scholarly literature and empirical evidence, trade unions and employers' associations are amongst the best organised and most influential in national and European public affairs. These associations feature prominently in the composition of the major elements constituting the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), a consultative body within the EU's decision-making process acting as an intermediary between the Commission, and the European Parliament (EP) and the Council. Sustained by a long tradition of policy involvement through corporatist models, employers' and workers' representative bodies are invariably considered as core insider groups that are deemed to have political legitimacy with the government of the day.

Contrastingly, environmental groups (comprising both single issue groups and permanent promotional groups) and social and human rights organisations (embracing a wide range of interests, including gay rights, ethnic minorities, migrant communities, victim support, disabled people and so on), are tagged as outsiders on the national scale, mainly because many of them are associated with reformists and radical minority leaders who may be ideologically opposed to institutionalised political systems. Lacking resources and political clout, they try to gain political influence by mobilising popular support, even to the extent of adopting militant campaigns to voice their suppressed concerns. Others, who have transformed themselves into think-tanks, act more as policy experts and compile research dossiers that are often presented to government agencies, parliaments as well as the media. Furthermore, environmental policy is one of the most developed EU policy domain, while social policy presents a case where the EU has a rather weak grip since it is still largely formulated by national governments (Graziano and Vink 2013: 46).

1.8.1   Different policy domains

The selection of the four types of interest groups to form the case scenarios in this study has been made for more than one purpose. They were chosen not only because they differ in terms of internal structures and in their relationship with central authorities, but also because they are active in different policy domains. Notwithstanding the fact that this study is primarily about political actors, there is still the need to look at relevant

policy areas where the EU and its member states exert varying degrees of legal competencies. In fact, the Treaty of Lisbon clarifies the division of competences between the EU and member states.[5] For example in the case of all regulatory affairs relating to competition and monetary union, as well as the functioning of the single market, the EU enjoys exclusive competence. This means that the EU alone is able to legislate and adopt binding acts in these fields, whereas the member states' role is limited to applying these acts. Since such policy areas are at the core of all the functions pertaining to trade unions and employers' associations, one would expect them to be more directly engaged with the EU.

Although falling under the category of shared competency, environmental policy is one of the most developed EU policy domains. By its very nature, the environment transcends political, legal and man-made boundaries. As a result, cooperation among EU member states and between the EU and the rest of the world is essential if common solutions are to be formulated for common challenges. After more than four decades of policymaking at EU level, much of our environment is protected by a body of European legislation. On the other hand, in many aspects of social policy, like human health, education, youth, sport and culture, the EU has a limited competence to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the member states. In other words, in these areas, the EU does not have the jurisdiction to adopt legally binding acts that require the member states to harmonise their laws and regulations. The asymmetries of powers of the EU in the environmental and social policies put environmental groups and social groups on different footings in the way they develop and manage their relationship with the EU. The former are more likely to be responsive to the multi-level governance structure of the EU than the latter.

The explanation above shows the intimate link between political actors and the public policy domains in which they are functional; a link that may have the potential to determine the extent of Europeanisation. This caveat shall be revisited in the conclusion

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[5] The Treaty of Lisbon introduces a precise classification for the first time in the founding Treaties, distinguishing among three main types of competence: exclusive competences, shared competences and supporting competences.

since it may partly explain the different primary findings relating to the four selected types of organised groups.

Additionally, the selection of the four kinds of organised groups also strengthens the focus on interest group actors, particularly their personal outlook towards the EU, given the high level of personalisation in the lobbying processes of small states. Since the number of groups that are active in any sector is relatively limited and stakeholders are in close proximity to one another, small states have the advantage that policy-makers, whether in government or civil society, are much more likely to know each other very well and be able to activate personal contacts. This 'exaggerated personalism', a theme remarked upon in nearly every research dealing with the politics of small states (*see* Baldacchino 2003:156, Clarke and Payne 1987), stresses 'the significance of personality' in institutionalised contexts where 'there is less aloofness traditionally associated with bureuacracy' (Sutton 1987: 15). The application of new institutionalist theory provides an excellent means of understanding the complexities and interdependencies between institutionalised and personalised negotations in Maltese and Irish traditions of governance and the way they are being remoulded in a Europeanised context.

1.9   Spatial dimension

This study is marshalled from the perspective and empirical experience of two small island member states, namely Malta and Ireland, at the fringes of an integrated continent. They share a common set of features in their geopolitical and geocultural profiling although, nonetheless, significant diverging attributes cannot be ignored. Their common British legacy after centuries of colonisation nurtured similar political thought and practice at home, based on the English Westminster model, though less so today than in the past (Pirotta 1996, Chubb 1992). From an economic perspective, the Maltese and Irish economies have undergone great transformations in the past three decades and, prior to the recent collapse of the Irish economy, they were favourably appraised by the international community for their knowledge-open-economies focusing on services and high-tech industries and dependent on international trade, niche markets and direct

foreign investment. Culturally, the two states have traditionally shared a Roman Catholic outlook, although their conservative societal fabric had already started to change in the 1960s due to strong processes of secularisation and consumerism (Borg 2009a, Mac Donald 2009, Bezzina 2004). More importantly for this study, they both offer an intriguing narrative of widespread volunteerism that helps to restrain the syndromes of anonymity and public indifference that characterise contemporary societies. Nonetheless significant diverging attributes cannot be ignored. For example, Ireland had a rather different narrative about the language question; its size is considerably larger and the EU has connections with Ireland in ways that lend no comparison with Malta, particularly in the resolution of its territorial dispute (Meehan 2011: 2).

Acknowledging the fact that there is substantial disagreement over what type of criteria, quantifiable or qualitative, is most appropriate to define a state as small (Olaffson 1998, Nugent 2003), the perennial polemic concerning the definition of a small state is, however, beside the scope of this study.[6] No lengthy methodological discussion of this nature is necessary here. On all counts, Malta is the smallest member state of the EU. Its micro size, resembling Plato's idealistic idea of a *city state*, with a population size of less than half a million has infact been its greatest obstacle during the lengthy accession negotiations with the European Commission (Busuttil et al. 1999: 86). Ireland, on the other hand, despite its vast territory is still considered 'small' on relative grounds (Chubb 1992, Laffan and O'Mahoney 2008, Falkner and Laffan 2005, Laffan and Tannam 2002). Although Ireland may exhibit absolute dimensions of gigantic proportions compared to tiny Malta, if the notion of relative power[7] is applied in

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[6] In traditional political thought, as pioneered by Jacques Rousseau and Charles de Montesquieu, the qualification of a state as 'small' in the context of international relations meant that such a state was perceived as no threat to neighbouring countries (Goetschel 1998). Comparative politics has also contributed its stake in defining smallness in terms of 'power' by applying absolute and relative characterisations. According to Nugent (2003), the absolute, or quantitative, approach defines small states on the bases of measurable criteria, including population size, Gross National Product statistics and land area. However the definitional dilemma becomes more complex as there are different benchmarks when decoding smallness in numbers. For example, Vital (1971) conceived a 15 million person threshold, whilst Goetschel (1998) takes a population of less than ten million, but the Commonwealth definition of a small states settles on two and half million. Further, Kelstrup (1993: 140) defines smallness in terms of 'very limited resource base'.

[7] The relative, or qualitative, approach considers power to be more fungible. Size still plays a role in defining a small state, but in this approach it is merely a variable, and furthermore is relative (Nugent

conjunction with historical pathways and geographical approximation to neighbouring countries, Ireland is definitely small compared to Great Britain. Hence the choice of Malta and Ireland as two small island member states of the EU avoids any controversy of a definitional nature.

1.9.1   Islandness

Besides the implications of smallness, Malta and Ireland have also to be comprehensively studied as peripheral island states on the borders of an integrated continent (see figure 1.4). 'Islandness' lends itself to metaphorical definition transcending the strictly geographical requirement of water boundaries, as Warrington and Milne (2007: 380) maintain that,

> 'Islandness' is also a state of mind, or a human condition of relative isolation and distinctiveness, expressed across almost the entire range of human experience, from economic activity to speech patterns, from belief systems to genetics.

Lying almost equidistant between Gibraltar and Lebanon, and 96 km south of Sicily and 240 km north of Libya, the Maltese archipelago, consisting chiefly of the islands of Malta and Gozo, lies at the crossroads of the Mediterranean, where the cultures of this inland sea meet and where its trade routes cross. Malta, as the smallest member state, which is just over 300 km^2 with an estimated population of 413,609[8] people, is the most densely populated among the current 28 states forming the EU and ranks at the sixth place of the world's most densely populated states.[9] On May 1, 2004 when the ten new member states were formally admitted to the EU, an event which incidentally took place in Dublin, Jean Claude Junker, Prime Minister of Luxembourg, made a toast with his

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2003). Jonathan Swift's reflection, quoted from his epic novel *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), that *'[u]ndoubtedly philosophers are in the right when they tell us that nothing is great or little otherwise than by comparison'* really hits the nail on the head. The relative approach evaluates the state's relationship to its wider-environment with possible considerations, including the amount of influence a state exercises and the extent to which it perceives itself, and is perceived by others, as being small (Nugent 2003). Many authors such as Wallerstein (1991), Armstrong and Anderson (2007), Clarke and Payne (1987) and Olaffson (1998) refer to the spatial dimension when decoding the power of influence of small states in integrated regional blocks.

[8] 2008 estimate (source: National Statistics Office, Malta)

[9] 1,298 persons per km^2

Maltese counterpart to celebrate the fact that from then onwards his country would no longer be the smallest member state (Gonzi 2011).

Figure 1.4: Malta and Ireland at the outer borders of the EU

One World – Nations Online   http://www.ezilon.com/european_maps.htm

At the other end, lying on the fringe of the British Isles, the Republic of Ireland occupies five-sixths of the island of Ireland which ranks as the third largest island in Europe. With a population of four and half million inhabitants, it is one of the least densely populated in the EU. Apart from its EU membership, Ireland's long history of mass emigration and more recent economic development have also led to strong links

with the United States, as well as important human and cultural ties with Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Adshead and Tonge 2009: 224).

In this context, this thesis sets out to explore how the elements of size and geography shape the ecology of the polity's landscape and the ethos of interdependencies among governmental and non-governmental actors. Any island, any islander, is a living contradiction between 'openness and closure', gripped by negotiating the anxious balance between 'roots and routes' and, thus, is not surprisingly nervous of 'bridges and tunnels' that presage attachment to mainlands (Baldacchino 2007: 5). In this vein of paradoxic features, a study on the effects of Europeanisation of interest groups originating from small island member states provides a fascinating and insightful narrative on the dichotomic tension between conservatism and modernity, stability and change, tradition and innovation, seclusion and exposure.

1.9.2 'Special cases'

The specific nature of Malta and Ireland as small states, incorporating the features of remoteness and islandness, has been strategically used in pre- and post-EU accession bargaining. Being small and resource-poor islands gave Maltese and Irish politicians and technical attachés considerable leverage in their negotiations with EU technocrats and senior representatives of the other member states. Former president of the European Commission and Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi reveals how he helped Malta's accession behind the scenes when,

> [In 2003] I was telling my friends in Europe if you double the engagement with Malta we wouldn't be changing the European budget. [By a few millions more] we could help Malta overcome the idea of insularity or being alone' (Grech 2014).

During that same period, Malta closed negotiations in the sensitive area of free movement of persons, securing a special safeguard[10] that may still be applied in the

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[10] For a period of seven years after membership (2004-2011), Malta was able to apply safeguards on the right of EU nationals to work on the island even if EU law clearly states that this should not be allowed. After this period of seven years, in the event of a disproportionate influx of EU workers, Malta may still seek a remedy, this time acting through the EU institutions, rather than unilaterally.

event of a big influx of EU workers into Malta (Zahra 2001). Rooting its claims for 'special treatment' because of innate vulnerability, Malta was the only candidate country that has sought and obtained an arrangement of this nature. Advocacy based on the special conditions of Malta pursued in the following years. For example, in 2012, Malta was 'struggling in EU budget talks' to retain its eligibility for Objective 1 status even though its GDP average surpassed the threshold of 75% of the EU average[11] (Camilleri 2012). In 2014 the Government of Malta once again played the tune of smallness vulnerability to go ahead with its financial and technical aid to Air Malta, Malta's national and only air carrier that had been experiencing financial turmoil for a number of years (Timesofmalta.com 2014).

The Irish narrative is very similar to that of Malta. During its first decades as a member state within the EU, Ireland always tried to punch beyond its weight by exploiting its own vulnerability, particularly smallness and lack of development, to negotiate preferential deals. Brennan's work (2008) on the EU negotiations that shaped modern Ireland is an authoritative account of the tough negotiations between determined Irish governments and the EU to bring about a series of generous financial packages that have contributed to Ireland's economic and social progress. Brennan recalls Ireland's early days of membership when it argued vociferously for the adoption of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), which was eventually established in 1975 during Ireland's first Presidency of the Council. Being a resource poor island, Ireland generated the highest per capita return in the first ERDF budget. In fact 'it got some €10.77 per capita which was more generous than the next less prosperous Member State (Italy) at €3.67 per capita (Brennan 2008: 83). The bargaining chip of smallness and belated development continued to ensure these above-average and high allocations for Ireland until the 1990s when the Irish economy started booming at unprecedented levels. But when the Celtic Tiger phenomenon suddenly faded away in 2008, Ireland was once again heard pleading for a 'special case'. In his strenuous efforts to steer Ireland out of the bail-out experience, the Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny took comfort and relief

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[11] This was due to the statistical effect that occurred with the entry of Romania and Bulgaria, the poorest EU member states, which lowered the EU's average GDP.

when he reiterated that 'The [German] chancellor confirmed that Ireland is a special case, which is also why Ireland should be treated differently' (Deutsche Welle 2012).

The Maltese and Irish geopolitical scenarios shaped their symbiotic relationship with the EU, one which has always been in search for the legitimisation of preferential treatments on the basis of 'specific challenges' (Pace 2001: 106).

1.10   Temporal dimension

Given that Ireland became a member of the EU 31 years before Malta, the temporal dimension of the research design covers the period between 2004 and 2011, that is, from the year of Malta's accession to the year when the data collection phase was completed. However, the state of domestic affairs prior to membership is of interest here only to the extent that it provides a better understanding of the forces which are unfolding at present while in the process of designing the future.

Although this study is clear about its 'time period' because it 'increases the probability of finding Europeanisation effects' (Exadaktylos and Radaelli 2009: 523), it does not include HI as part of the explanatory theoretical framework. The main focus of HI, according to Graziano and Vink (2013: 40) is 'the analysis of the sequences of domestic adaptations in connection to the evolution of European political discourses, strategies, institutions and policies'. Its exclusion can be explained in terms of a very practical reason. At the time when primary data were collected, barely eight years have passed since Malta's accession to the EU and this preliminary time window is too short to affirm any 'critical junctures' as a corollary of membership. Nonetheless since HI implications have direct relevance to the interpretation of empirical findings, there is a number of references to the factor of time disparity between the EU accession periods of the two states. Furthermore, the critical assessment of the concluding chapter embraces a series of reflections that are derived from the HI strand of new institutionalism.

1.11   The other small member states

Other small member states could have been selected to form part of this transnational comparative research but they have been dropped for distinct reasons. Cyprus would have presented the most similar case scenario for Malta, being itself a Mediterranean small island state that like Malta joined the EU in the 2004 enlargement. Although geographically speaking Cyprus exhibits the best match, its political landscape distinguished by the Greek-Turkish divide and the deep political, trade and cultural alignment to the Greek state makes the Cypriot case inadequate to serve as an ideal counterpart to the Maltese policy-making processes. In fact, its unique and problematic polity peculiarities proved to be the biggest stumbling block in the Cypriots' long road to accession (Stefanou 2005: 5, Yiangou 2002).

The Eastern European member states, namely, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Slovenia and Slovakia, were not considered a good match for Malta for two major reasons. Firstly, their political and historical background deeply rooted into what has been known as the Communist Block renders them inappropriate to be evaluated against the Maltese case which for more than 160 years has served as a 'fortress colony' of the British Empire. Secondly, all of them are part of mainland Europe and, thus, their geographical positioning offers a stark contrast to islandness. Malta must not be probed into solely for its smallness, but also for its islandness and remoteness.

Additionally, although Luxembourg's population is the closest to that of Malta, it presents a very different case. Firstly, it is one of the six founding members of the EU. Secondly, it is geographically located at the centre of mainland Europe. Thirdly, it is considered as being an integral part of the hub of European institutions. The Maltese case presents an inverse copy of these three distinct characteristics. Other member states which are considered 'small' by many scholars include Austria (Luif 2002, Rendl 1998, Katzenstein 1984), Denmark (Nielsen and Kesting 2003, Balslev 1998), Finland (Tiilikainen 2006, Romsloe 2005, Arter 2000) and Sweden (Ekengren and Sundelius 2002, Agrell 1998), which besides not being island states, have totally different national identity profiles due to their position in Central and Northern regions and, furthermore,

their geographical and trade proportions are immense when compared to those of Mediterranean Malta.

1.12   Reader's guide

The thesis is divided into nine chapters including the introduction. The theoretical framework of new institutionalism and its application to the concept of Europeanisation are both addressed in depth in **Chapter 2**. The ultimate objective of the appraisal is to expose the development and the different models of state-society relations in policy-making. It starts by elucidating corporatism, pluralism and elitism as behavioural paradigms of conceptualising the geometry of national governance. Their respective characteristics in shaping political outcomes through motives and actions of individual actors are discussed from the perspective of small states. As a reaction to such models where individual actors seek interest maximisation as if functioning in an institutional vacuum, political scientists rediscovered the crucial role of institutions that determine opportunities and constraints within which actors formulate their preferences. This is the point when the discussion heads towards the variants of the new institutionalist schools of thought where institutions are not necessarily formal and monolithic, as their contemporary understanding embraces norms, values, cultures and ideas embedded within political systems and landscapes. It is against this theoretical backdrop, stamped by RCI and SI, that the impact of European unification on domestic interest groups is assessed. Such an assessment is carried out by a closer look at the mediating factors that assert the nature of causality between EU influence and domestic change, and the identification of a set of dimensions through which the extent of Europeanisation can be measured.

Chapter 3 turns its focus on non-state actors as the research primacy of this study. A historical insight on the aggregation of interests and the formation of lobby groups is instrumental to map out the changing perspectives of classical and contemporary political thinkers on the merits and risks of organised interests as social constructs. The ensuing discussion portrays a series of contradictory waves of scepticism and trust that have dominated the scene of interest representation in these last 300 years. Moreover,

the chapter comprises a typology of interest groups that is differentiated across four major factors, namely their raisons d'être, functional basis, relationship with central government and the scale of their operations. Each of these factors has a direct effect on how organised groups are managed and the type of influence strategies they opt for. In this vein, the theme progresses to the sophistication of interest representation as traditional pressure groups are being transformed into potential agents of change. Old strategies of lobbying are being supplemented by the techniques of Public Affairs Management (PAM) that require extensive internal preparatory work and fieldwork activity. This strategic and tactical transformation of interest groups is a step in the right direction towards good governance and policy success at national and supranational levels. Finally, the chapter takes an inquisitive look at the flipside of the coin when citizens' engagement in public affairs leads to negative social capital that undermines democracy, legitimacy and accountability.

Any study making use of institutionalist theory incorporates an analysis of the terrain where, in this case, social partners and interest groups thrive to influence the corridors of power, their peers and the public at large. It is in this environment that their practices and preferences in the domestic arena are reoriented as a corollary of the EU system of governance. To this effect, **Chapter 4** reviews the political landscape of Malta and Ireland because, at the end, the confirmation or rejection of the initial hypotheses is subject to context specific realities. The chapter comprises a dual narrative of political institutions and systems, styles of governance and structural initiatives of social dialogue and public consultation that shape the Maltese and Irish political terrains. Apart from the configuration of the national sphere, the discussion also includes a brief commentary on intrastate regional differences, namely the case of Gozo's double insularity in the case of Malta and the traditional western region in the case of Ireland. Furthermore, the different stages that characterise the development of Maltese and Irish attitudes and relations with the EU are an essential feature of this narrative. The objective of detecting similarities and contradictions in the two polities is to provide a contextual backdrop that paves the way for a better understanding of the complexity of issues that are raised by research subjects in the empirical chapters.

The primary objective of **Chapter 5** is to provide an audit trail of the methodological and ethical implications of the study. It highlights the exploratory fieldwork that was undertaken in Malta, Dublin and Brussels in the initial stages of the investigation and explains why a mixed methods research design was employed to test the original set of hypotheses. The administration and application of self-completion questionnaires, elite interviewing and direct observation, together with the methods that have been used to analyse both quantitative and qualitative data streams, are meticulously illustrated. By ensuring completeness, the study shall fulfil the criteria of social research: validity and trustworthiness. Nonetheless, thematic methodological limitations are also brought to attention as some of them might have the potential to transform themselves into areas for further research.

The data compiled through the utilisation of the three data collection tools is presented in two consecutive chapters: **Chapter 6** and **Chapter 7**. The former rolls out results pertaining to trade unions and employers' associations, jointly called 'social partners', while the latter presents findings related to social and human rights groups, and environmental groups, amalgamated under the acronym 'SHEGs'. As a consequence of a research design characterised by multiple case studies and multiple research methods, a massive corpus of data emerges. To ease the analytical process, results are largely organised in accordance with the four dimensions that constitute the character of domestic interest groups, namely internal structures, domestic responsiveness, European involvement and attitudinal transformation. Qualitative narratives and statistical information are dealt with from a dual perspective, Maltese and Irish, to detect patterns of similarity and disparity between the two countries. The exposition of results in these two empirical chapters leads to the subsequent section where the exercise of hypothesis testing is carried out.

The hypothetical deductive model of inquiry reaches its apex in **Chapter 8** where each of the original set of hypotheses is tried and tested. Essentially the process of hypothesis testing is segmented into two parts. Firstly, it calls for the quantification of the extent of Europeanisation over social partners and interest groups in order to confirm or reject the null hypothesis. Statistical computations based on the Z-score technique of hypothesis

testing presents unequivocal evidence whether the extent of Europeanisation of each cohort of participants has been significant or not. Secondly, it seeks to decode the nature of Europeanisation, that is, whether it has been triggered by purely rationalist triggers or by wider sociological motivations. The answer is provided by a rigorous thematic analysis that revolves around the mediating variables of RCI and SI hypotheses. An understanding of the context specific circumstances is indispensable to comprehend the results obtained. The investigative part of this research is concluded by pondering upon the issue of causality, in other words, whether domestic change has been the result of Europeanisation or of some other global, regional or homegrown causes.

The final element, **Chapter 9**, attempts to blend the theoretical background provided in the literature review with the data analysis undertaken in the empirical chapters. Besides a synthesis demonstrating how empirical results fulfil the original scope of the study, it identifies a generous amount of knowledge claims that can be transferable to other polities that exhibit similar characteristics to those of Malta and Ireland. Furthermore the concluding chapter makes insightful reflections on the original contributions that this study has rendered in connection with the conceptual level of Europeanisation and the explanatory theoretical level of new institutionalism. It also embraces a critical assessment of the methodological level wherein the use of mixed data streams, particularly statistical results, are assessed on their capability of verifying or negating familiar grounds of Europeanisation that have been traditionally tried and tested by qualitative orthodoxy.

Chapter 2

The Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Chapter 2
The theoretical and conceptual framework

*Institutions insist not only upon their illusions of predictability,
but their systems of control by which they imagine
they can direct the world to their ends.*

Butler Shaffer (2002)
The Wizard of Ozymandias

2.1   Setting the agenda

This chapter seeks to portray the different modes of interest representation in explaining patterns of interaction between governmental and non-governmental actors in domestic and European policy matters. It commences with a discussion of how the 'traditional' approaches of corporatism, pluralism and elitism have been used as theories of political participation with their emphasis on explaining actors' behaviour across different policy domains. Their respective characteristics are discussed from the dual perspective of small states and the EU. The discussion will then lead to the re-launching of institutionalism in understanding policy dynamics and the ways how 'inherited' or 'acquired' institutional frameworks can constrain and/or stimulate interest groups to take action or to resolve to inertia. The two variants of new institutionalism, RCI and SI, are being given a privileged status to decipher Europeanisation processes in the light of the ontological and epistemological commitments derived from the adopted hypothetical models. Although the HI perspective will not be probed upon, nonetheless some references to it would still be required. The chapter ends with a closer look at the intermediary variables that decode the nature of causality between EU influence and domestic change, and the explanation of the set of dimensions through which the extent of Europeanisation of domestic interest groups can be measured.

2.2   Conceptualising the geometry of governance

For years the debate on corporatism and pluralism, together with their variant models, has been widely used by scholars as an attempt to systemise the correlation of state-society relations in policy-making. These models map out state-group relations by inquiring into interest groups and their functioning in the political system, how they seek political influence and the forms in which they participate in policy formation and implementation (Saurugger 2013, Wiseman 2001). Besides their impetus towards the quality of democracy, these two approaches, together with the contemporary organising frameworks of new institutionalism and governing networks, lay at the heart of modern governance which, according to Peters and Pierre (2006) is shorthand for the pursuit of collective interests and the steering and coordination of society. Governance goes beyond the mere study of skeleton institutional governing frameworks, since it also comprises an evaluation of the differing natures of relations and dealings that delineate state and non-state stakeholders' interactions (Rhodes 1999). After all, good governance is considered as one of the four fundamental pillars on which the resilience of small states, with inherent economic vulnerability, rests (Briguglio et al 2008).[12]

Given the complexity of today's public administration and decision-making processes, it is almost impossible to make effective policies without the specialised expertise which interest groups possess (Klijn 2003, Hollingsworth 1991, Miller 1987). Expertise is an important element of policy-making and, according to Chiles (1999: 1), the use of either scientific, technological or expert input is seen as a key ingredient in the success of policy formulations and outcomes; not least because of the prevailing dominance of technology, and complex and intertwined networks that define the nature of contemporary society. Understanding the geometrical parameters within which actors and institutions interact has long been on the agenda of political scholars who have created, discarded and reorientated various organisational models to take into account the ever evolving features of power constellations. 'Modern politics is about organisation. Modern citizens have demonstrated that they know how to organise'

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[12] The other three pillars being macroeconomic stability, microeconomic market efficiency and social development.

(Richardson 2004: 186). In the next series of sections, the typical features and inadequacies of corporatism, pluralism and elitism as three major modes of interest representation will be discussed in the context of small states and European governance.

2.3   Corporatism

The corporatist model has been extensively applied in academic circles to analyse the interplay of state and socio-economic interests in small states due to their paternalistic, yet benign, state-centric style of governance (Katzenstein 1985). Corporatism, in its classical sense, is a form of political organisation that brings together hierarchical and highly concentrated representations, namely labour, management and the self-employed together with the government to guarantee economic development and social stability. In more recent versions of corporatism, 'the existence of a broad, inclusive network of powerful persons with similar social origins, in different institutions, [has been termed] an important feature of this view of the power structure' (Evans 2006: 45).

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) of the EU has its origins in the corporatist institutions that were originally set up in Germany and France in the inter-war period (Bache and George 2006: 336). Later adaptations to corporatist theory by Schmitter (1974) and Lehmbruch (1977) started to refer to a tripartite system based on a social pact among employers' associations, worker unions' representatives and the government, although tripartism is not necessarily corporatist in its nature (Reutter 1996). This social pact finds its origins in the philosophical concept of *social contract*[13] as devised by classical political thinkers, namely, Hobbes (1651), Locke (1689) and Rousseau (1762). Such an elitist polity structure, distinguished by the so called 'social partners', comprises only peak associations that enjoy almost monopolistic representation in their respective sectoral domain. These are duly recognised by the state to take part in the national bargaining process of policy-making. This is typified

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[13] *Social contract* describes a broad class of theories that try to explain the ways in which people form states to maintain social order. The notion of the social contract implies that the people give up sovereignty to a government or other authority in order to receive or maintain social order through the rule of law. It can also be thought of as an agreement by the governed on a set of rules by which they are governed. The Social Contract was used in the Declaration of Independence as a sign of enforcing Democracy.

notably by collective wage agreements negotiated within the 'iron triangle pattern of governing',[14] the representation of capital and labour on key policy-making committees, the existence of one single dominant labour and employer association and that of closed shops[15] (Peters and Pierre 2006: 184).

The innate features of small states associated with a powerful unitary central government, a fragile open economy, high dependency on few external markets, a small number of large influential associations, and a proportionately large reliance of domestic economies on their public sector render them an ideal environment where corporatist approaches to governance can thrive. New corporatist arrangements, according to Katzenstein (1985), enable small open economies to effectively manage their relationship with the regional/global economy. The adjustment to trade shocks occurs through bargaining processes in which the costs of adjustment are supposed to be distributed evenly and 'fairly' among social partners.

2.3.1 Inadequacies of corporatism

'Most writers now accept that the policy process in Western democracies is a very long way from (the alleged but never proven) corporatism of the 1960s' (Richardson 2004: 172). Under this model, exclusivity is a key feature that starkly contrasts with the proliferation of interest groups across all policy sectors in contemporary times. Analysts need concepts that will catch a more complex political terrain characterised by increased 'webbing' among the various elements of multi-level governance (MLG) and the internationalisation of civil society. In many classically corporatist countries, like Sweden, Austria and Germany, traditional bargaining is on the retreat. This crisis is often attributed to the realisation of the Single Market in Europe and to globalization in general, with increasing labour mobility and competition from developing countries (Werner and Wilson 2008). The sheer mushrooming of multi-national corporations continued to weaken the power of unions and local employers' associations alike. At the

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[14] Formal bargaining process involving the state, employers' associations and trade unions.

[15] A *closed shop* is a form of union security agreement under which the employer agrees to only hire union members, and employees must remain members of the union at all times in order to remain employed (Pynes 2004).

same time small states have been extremely tactful in aligning economic and political dependencies to their own agendas and, at the same time, inflating the economic vulnerability to acquire special concessions from global and regional organisations.

Consequently dominant trade unions have lost much of their bargaining power, primarily because of legislative measures that limit their negotiation strategies and also because of the constant decline in the number of paid-up members, particularly in new sectors, including information technology, call centres, insurance and banking and international franchising. The employers' federations and individual firms alike, on the other hand, have spotted the signs of the times and have partially shifted their lobbying focus to the European level where they found a receptive Commission which, as a very open bureaucracy, has proved to be an attractive target not only for business interest groups, but also for non-producer groups such as women's organisations, environmentalists, the disabled and a whole network of voluntary organisations (Bache and George 2006, Richardson 2004, Greenwood 1997). Undoubtedly, '[t]he institutionalised pattern of linkage between social interests and the state implied in corporatism has been eroding and is being replaced by more loosely defined relationships such as networks' (Peters 2008: 51).

2.4   Pluralism

Scholarly discourse on small states started to show the complex, varying, asymmetrical arrangements applying to small sovereignties (Karatzogianni 2009, Baldacchino 2007). Such diversities are clearly evident in the European theatre where small states of varying sizes have pursued their own idiosyncratic paths within the complex evolving constitutional geometry of contemporary Europe (Warrington and Milne 2007: 388). The corporatist model did not remain the sole enticing framework on which political, economic and social interdependencies in small states are modelled. Priority policy domains started to encompass an ever increasing diverse array of sectoral themes, including environmental, social, health, educational, transport, energy and bio-ethical issues that all require specialised expertise. These developments in policy-settings were complemented by a proliferation of specialist and generic interest group formations, all

anxiously enthusiastic to stimulate and influence the corridors of power to their own advantage, though not necessarily having equal access to state institutions. Civil society became much more populated with a wide ranging multitude of interest organisations, associations, federations and umbrella groups that inject a competitive culture that contrasts with the hedged corporatist tri-partite system of governance.

In this scenario, pluralism took the lead in interpreting the character of power relationships in any democratic political system. Within the pluralist tradition, Dahl and Tufte (1974: 50-51) developed the theory of the state as a 'neutral arena' [or acting as a 'referee' (Hix 2005)] for contending interests or its agencies as simply another set of interest groups, although Dahl himself admitted that the reality of small countries might be inflicted by clientelism and partisanship that do not guarantee the state's neutrality in dealing with differing, most often conflicting interests (see Salib 2007: 42/43 on patron-client relationships in small states). Although pluralism has been conceptualised in numerous ways, its stable core rests on the premise of continued emphasis upon (a) the centrality of groups, (b) a belief in limiting the power of the state and (c) the understanding of power as diffuse (Hay and Lister 2006: 15). Rhodes (1999) maintains that the ultimate pluralist dream is 'governing without government', and hence, the development of a differentiated polity where no single interests is able to dominate the policy process. Such an avant-garde view is not plausible, given the empirical evidence demonstrating the high level of resource and authority that remains within the jurisdiction of the central state (Smith 2006: 32), not least in small states where government still retains an axial position in governance (Briguglio et al 2008, Pirotta 1996, Lockhart et al 1993).

2.4.1   Inadequacies of pluralism

The pluralist mode views the state as reacting to the competitive manoeuvres of interest groups within society. In this sense, it came under criticism for its 'society-centred' understanding of the state by scholars who emphasise the autonomy of the state with respect to social forces. Some political scientists have argued that pluralism takes a too optimistic approach in decoding state-group relations, and among interest groups

themselves. Pasquino (2004:191) argues that the assertion that 'all interests have a fair chance of getting organised, obtaining access to decision-makers process, and influencing decisions' is no more than an utopian view. Empirical research shows that in the public square there are both 'insiders' and 'outsiders' (Marsh et al. 2009, Eising 2003, Grant 1978). Essentially, there are a number of influential and elite interest groups that enjoy a long history of solid connotations established around key influential politicians and, the rest, who although are active in sensitising society on particular issues, are not given an opportunity to contribute towards policy formulation and implementation. The EU institutions can be an important alternative channel of access for those organisations that, as outsiders, find it difficult to access national political institutions (Eising 2003: 196).

The alleged failure of founding a real pluralist society is not solely targeted at nation states, but is also aimed towards the 'EU interest group system [which] is not broadly pluralist as the first sight might suggest' (Eising 2003: 200). Statistics constantly show that business lobby organisations by far outnumber non-business interests (Coen 2007, Charrad 2005, Burson-Marsteller 2005). According to Lee (2006), over 70% of known lobbyists based in Brussels work directly or indirectly for corporate interests, some 20% represent the interests of regions, cities and international institutions, while only 10% represent NGOs, including trade unions, equal opportunity movements and environmental groups. This inequality of influence is detrimental to the EU's quest to address its democratic and connectivity deficits (see Naurin 2007). However lobbying practitioners, like Guéguen (2005), express opposing views and maintain that 'NGOs are in fact mostly funded by the Commission and are extremely professional and well organised in Brussels, via the platform for civil society'. Contrastingly, Eising (2003: 203) cites leaders of social policy interest groups who fear that the support given by EU institutions is little more than a convenient way for the EU 'to give a human face to the Single Market'.

Nonetheless, pluralism like corporatism has proved to be insufficient to explain the authentic dynamics that characterise state-groups relations and interdependencies, both at the domestic and supranational levels of policy-making. Besides issues concerning

inequality of resources and uneven access to political power, pluralism has also been criticised by advocates of the Rational Choice Theory, including Oppenheimer 2012, Carley 1981, Richardson and Jordan 1979, Jabes 1978 who came up with the concept of 'free-riders'. People, for example, can simply reap the benefits of higher consumer protection without giving their fair share to a consumer lobby group. As a result, private interests, such as individual firms and industrial lobbies, are more able to organise than public interests, like labour unions, environmentalists, peace activists or civil rights movements. Automatically, this creates an imbalance in the system of interest representation.

2.5   From polarity to continuum to elitism

For decades, the corporatist/pluralist debate was built upon the basis of polar extremes with the consequence that no state or society would fit comfortably in either of these two concepts. It is likely that they will co-exist in some way with one possibly being more predominant at certain times. Cawson (1986) does not position one against the other as alternative systems but visualises them at either end of a continuum linked by an intermediate variable, which he named 'corporate pluralism'. This is the point where interest domains would be imperfectly defined and there would be no representational monopoly (Wiseman 2001: 25). A society will appear somewhere between corporatism and pluralism and changes which can vary in duration, will represent movements along the continuum. Figure 2.1 summarises Cawson's landmark in the evolutionary discourse on corporatism and pluralism.

Figure 2.1: State-group relations continuum model
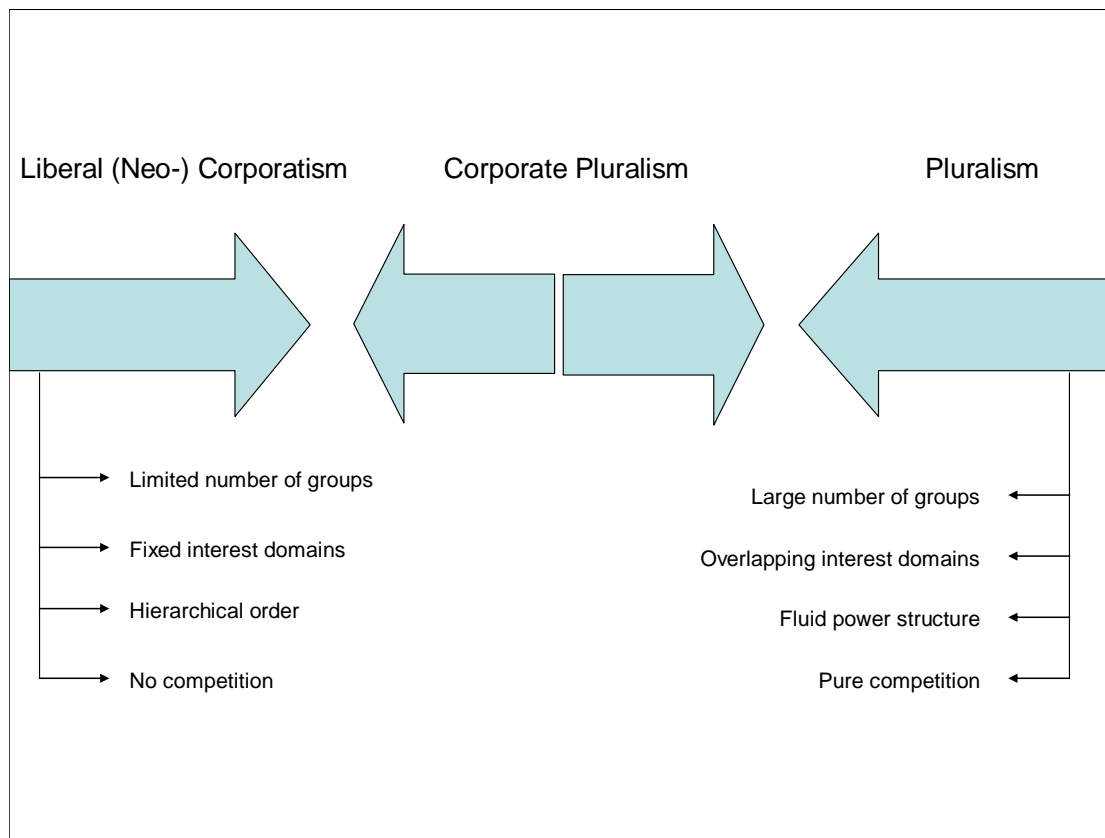
Cawson 1986: 42

Cawson's continuum model, however, is not applauded by all. Elitists, who believe in the existence of a broad, inclusive network of powerful persons with similar social origins in different institutions argue that both corporatism and pluralism contain the seeds of elitism where 'all pigs are equal, but some are more equal than others' (Orwell 1945). The power-elite literature identifies three key dimensions of political elite integration, namely, (a) social homogeneity which emphasis shared class and status origins, (b) value consensus that focuses on agreement among elites on 'the rules of the game' and (c) personal interaction among elites both informally and formally (Evans 2006: 45).

Dahrendorf (2004) labels MEPs as 'mediocre elites elected by mediocre peoples' whilst Andeweg (2004) examines the linkages between the elites and the common mass in Europe and probes on the issue whether the EU is seriously facing a crisis of political

legitimacy. When explaining the hyperglobalist thesis,[16] Held et al (2005: 4) maintain that 'among the elites and knowledge workers' of the new global economy tacit trans-national class allegiances have evolved, cemented by an ideological attachment to a neoliberal economic orthodoxy'.

Scholarly literature suggest that small states are more prone to elitist power structures due to various reasons, including the relatively small number of organised groups who can act as veto players, the proximity of politicians among business lobbies and community leaders, and the reliance on inherited modes of governance. Leading journalists, scholars and former politicians like Joe Mifsud (1995), Glenn Bedingfield (1999) and Lino Spiteri (2007) in Malta, together with Matt Cooper (2009) in Ireland, are highly critical of the official portrayal of domestic politics founded on the republican model where everybody is supposed to enjoy equal rights. In their investigative works, like Mifsud's *Bizzilla u Barunijiet*[17] (1995), Bedingfield's *Il-Ġurament*[18] and Cooper's *Who Really Runs Ireland?* (2009), they give evidence of how certain political decisions are taken to advance the interests of the privileged few. Such processes coordinated behind closed doors lead to serious accusations of institutional corruption, power abuse and invisible manoeuvres guaranteeing the award of public contracts worth millions of euro to the commercial interests of a handful of influential people. When interpreting social transitions in Maltese society, Cutajar and Cassar (2009) assert that in spite of the numbing rhetoric, social inequality renders some people 'more equal than others'.

Elitism[19] is not solely confined to small states, but is also a reality at every level of governance, including the studying of policy-making in European political science which is dominated by the paradigm of *policy networks* (Peters and Pierre 2006, Rhodes

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[16] For the hyperglobalisers, globalisation defines a new epoch of human history in which traditional nation-states have become unnatural, even impossible business units in a global economy (Held et al 2005: 3)

[17] Trans. *Lace and Barons*

[18] Trans. *The Oath*

[19] The term *elitism* or the title *elitist* are sometimes used resentfully by people who are (or claim to be) not a member of an elite. In politics, the terms are often used to describe people as out of touch with the rest of common society. The implication is that the alleged elitist person or group thinks they are superior to everyone else, and therefore put themselves before others. An elitist is not always seen as truly elite, but only privileged.

1999). The concept of policy network is employed as a generic term to categorise the relationship between groups, third sector organisations and government agencies (Evans 2003). When such functional networks become more adhesive over time, they tend to block other outsider groups from penetrating their domain, and thus their networks will be transformed into exclusive *policy communities* that resemble the corporatist approach but with more versatile interests represented at the core of the decision-making mechanism. Policy communities which are tight-knit decision-making structures characterised by a limited number of privileged participants in a resource dependent relationship are numerous at domestic and European levels, thus constituting an elite system of governance.

2.6   New institutionalism

Scholars started to depart from the behavioural revolution in political science to really understand the polity and its actors (Hix 2005: 9) and re-launched a new version of institutionalism with a 'focus on the central role of structures in shaping politics and also in shaping individual behaviour' (Peters 2008: 48). Whilst corporatists, pluralists and elitists seek to explain political outcomes through the interests, motives and actions of actors, the latter brought back in the power of institutions and tried to integrate theories and assumptions about both actors and institutions in a single analytical framework. Using this logic, Hix (2005: 9) affirms that 'actors and institutions [constitute] the basics of modern political science'. As a paradigm, institutionalism rests on the rejection of 'rational' and 'efficiency' explanations of social behaviour and, instead, rests on an assumption that social action (the behaviour of individuals, organisations and states) can be understood by reference to 'institutions'.

2.6.1   The 'forgotten' role of institutions

The inadequacies of the corporatist, pluralist and elitist schools of thought, the removal of the state in explaining behavioural and relationship patterns in politics and society, together with the mounting commitments on European member states to coordinate EU wide policies across vertical and lateral layers of authority according to prescribed schemas, norms and standard procedures (Gualini 2004) led to a revival of interest in

institutionalism. It involves 'bringing institutions back in' to the explanation of politics and society, emphasising the extent to which political conduct is shaped by the institutional landscape in which it occurs, the importance of historical legacies and the range of diversity of actors' strategies (Hay 2002: 14-15). 'Institutions are seen as determining the opportunity structures and the limits within which individuals formulate preferences' (Caramani 2008: 10, Schmidt 2006: 98). Hence, as Pollack (2005: 19) asserts, the rise of institutionalist analysis did not develop in isolation, but 'reflected a gradual and widespread re-introduction of institutions into a large body of theories'. Institutional analysis once again was positioned under the limelight to interpret the logic of political action exerted within and outside the state in the midst of a whole range of domestic and supranational governing structures through which political actors, governmental as well as non-governmental, interact.

Empiricism shows that 'actors do not perform their preferences and choose their strategies in isolation' (Hix 2005: 12): like chess players they have to predict their competitors' tactics whilst manoeuvring their knights and bishops within the rules of the game. It brought back in the vitality of institutions to understand how they shape actors' options and behaviours. Although still acting rationally, the resulting moves and ploys may not constitute an optimal outcome for all the stakeholders concerned. If one includes the institutional platform that embraces both formal institutions such as constitutions and rules of procedures, as well as informal institutions such as behavioural norms and personal and collective ideologies (North 1990), these institutions become 'constraints' on actors' behaviour (Hix 2005: 12) and lead to outcomes that may be termed as 'collectively suboptimal', in the sense that another outcome could be found that would make at least one of the actors better off without making any of the others worse off (Hall and Taylor 1996).

The institutional environment is not a mere neutral arena where political forces interact but, according to Svečias 2009, Caramani 2008, Schmidt 2006 and Risse 2001, it enjoys a considerable degree of autonomy. March and Olsen (1984), in their seminal work about the regeneration of interest in new institutionalism, stress the relative autonomy of

political institutions. Institutions are neither a mirror of society (the behavioural critique), nor merely the site for individual strategies (as in the rational actor paradigm).

2.6.2   The 'old' and 'new' versions of institutionalism

Having clarified the *institutional* part of the concept, the next question naturally follows: what is specifically *new* about the approach? The best way to answer this question is to compare the 'old' with the 'new'. Samuel Huntington, the proposer of *The Clash of Civilisations* (1993), defines institutions as 'stable, valued and recurring patterns of behaviour' that have always been central to the discipline of political science since its inception (Huntington 1968).

'Old' institutionalism studied government as a set of formal institutions, legally defined roles and positions, and according to Giuliani (2003) it lies at the very root of 'comparative politics' as it developed in the Anglo-American tradition in the late nineteenth century. From the 1960s onwards it was the behavioural revolution which shifted attention away from institutions towards actors, behaviour and processes. New institutionalists seek to re-emphasise the 'forgotten' centrality of political institutions and the polity. However there are crucial differences between the old and new institutionalisms. New institutionalism decodes the behaviour of actors and the formulation of political outcomes through a much broader definition of institutions (Rosamond 2003: 114). Institutions are seen as persistent and connected sets of rules - both formal and informal - that prescribe behavioural roles, constraint and shape expectations, whilst old institutionalists were interested only in legal, constitutional and formal structures ignoring the role of informal structures. The other great novelty of new institutionalism is its concern with norms, values and cultures embedded within institutions. Lowndes (2009) spells out the criteria to be used when evaluating the institutional platform whilst, at the same time, invites political researchers to study the institutional paradox.

> One of the current characteristics of research on the theme is to study the double face of institutions – this central paradox that institutions constrain human behaviour, but, at the same time, they are also human creations. Biophysical factors and contexts constrain

agencies' strategies. The material world constrains us, but as political scientists we are particularly interested in how humanly constructed institutions both constrain and also encourage certain courses of action (Lowndes 2009).[20]

The core idea that governmental and non-governmental organisations are deeply embedded in social and political environments, according to Powell (2007), suggests that structures and practices are often either reflections or responses to rules, beliefs and conventions built into the wider environment. Early works identified institutional effects as concerned principally with social stability, drawing attention to reproductive processes that function as stable patterns for sequences that were routinely enacted (Cerny 1990, Thomas et al 1987). More contemporary institutionalist accounts devote more attention to institutional changes and reforms, addressing how changes in rules, normative systems and cognitive beliefs reshape organisational fields (Bulmer and Burch 2009, Powell 2007, Börzel and Risse 2003). This is the focal paradox that this work is concerned with: the inverted dualism between continuation and change, traditional pathways and new avenues. Notwithstanding this ongoing tension, "[i]nstitutions by definition are the more enduring features of social life… giving solidity to social systems across time and space' (Scott 2001: 49).

2.7   Stripes of institutionalisms

As indicated earlier, new institutionalism is not a unitary theory but an umbrella term for many variants of new institutionalisms. Hall and Taylor (1996) identify the three major variants that they label as historical (HI), sociological (SI) and rational choice institutionalism (RCI). Peters (1999) goes further and identifies seven varieties of new institutionalism.[21] More recently, a 'discursive institutionalism' has emerged which sees institutions as shaping behaviour through frames of meaning – the ideas and narratives that are used to explain, deliberate or legitimise political action (Schmidt 2006: 99). However, the labels change from author to author: what March and Olsen or Hall and Taylor label as SI, for example, is more accurately branded as normative

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[20] Quotation from Vivien Lowndes' lecture, entitled '*Institutionalist Challenges: Diversity, Dynamics and Design*', delivered at the University of Sheffield on December 10, 2009 attended by the author.
[21] (a) Normative Institutionalism, (b) Rational Choice Institutionalism, (c) Historical Institutionalism, (d) Empirical Institutionalism, (e) Sociological Institutionalism, (f) Institutions of Interest Representation and (g) International Institutionalism.

institutionalism by Peters. Furthermore Schmidt's new addition concerning the discursive variant has been called constructivist institutionalism by others, like Sedelmeier (2006). This is itself a major shortcoming of the new-institutionalist approach since its various branches are united by little but common scepticism toward atomistic accounts of social processes and a common conviction that institutional arrangements and social processes matter (Svečias 2009).

This thesis calls for the elucidation of two of the most known and widely used variants, RCI and SI. It ponders upon how these theoretical frameworks can be applied to confirm or negate the two alternative hypotheses set in the introduction. Since the key characteristics of each of the selected variants have already been exposed in the previous chapter, what follows is an analytical and concise account of each of them.

2.7.1 Rational choice institutionalism

RCI draws heavily from rational choice theory, but is not identical to it. [22] Proponents of this theory argue that political actors' rational choices are indeed constrained (*bounded rationality*); however individuals need institutions to realise their goals. In other words, institutions are systems of rules and inducements to behaviour in which individuals attempt to maximise their own utilities. RCI attempts to marry methodological individualism and institutional design (Ostrom 1997) and, thus, to understand institutions we need first and foremost to understand individual interactions.

Politicians, senior bureaucrats and NGO leaders behave in a strategic manner to maximize the attainment of their fixed preferences, and do so in a highly strategic manner that presumes extensive calculation (Beichelt 2007). According to Bulmer (2008: 50), RCI is typically concerned with two particular issues. Firstly, it explores the ways in which actors' preferences are oriented towards institutional settings and rules:

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[22] Rational choice theory is a framework for understanding and often formally modelling social and economic behaviour. It is the dominant theoretical paradigm in microeconomics. It is also central to modern political science and is used by scholars in other disciplines such as sociology and philosophy. In Rational Choice Theory 'rationality' simply means that a person reasons before taking an action. A person balances costs against benefits before taking any action. In rational choice theory all decisions, crazy or sane, are arrived at by a 'rational' process of weighing costs against benefits (Scruton 2007).

institutions are regarded as opportunity structures or veto points; actors seize the available opportunities or are blocked by veto points. Secondly, RCI analysis is interested in the design of institutions in connection with desired policy objectives. Beichelt (2007) advocates that the existence of any institution is explained by reference to the value its functions have for the actors involved, that is, the benefits they gain from the existence of the institution. Actors create institutions in order to realise such value and/or benefits and, likewise institutions are chosen because of their functional consequences for those who create or choose them. In Gorges' own words (1997: 2), 'RC institutionalists argue that institutions are established to help self-interested actors maximise utility, stabilise relations and facilitate cooperative behaviour'. Within this context, Hix (2005: 12) affirms that political outcomes are seen as the result of 'strategic' interaction' between competing actors.

When the theoretical perspectives of RCI are applied to small states governance, a number of interesting insights crop up concerning the competitive nature of groups' interactions. Dahl and Tufte (1974), Clarke and Payne (1987) and Sutton (1987) conclude that, in smaller political systems, it is likely that:

- there is a higher chance that conflicts among groups will be translated into personal conflicts among individuals,
- conflicts among organisations are less frequent since political cartels are as numerous as economic ones,
- processes for dealing with organised group conflict are less institutionalised due to the familiarity and proximity of actors,
- group conflicts are infrequent but explosive,
- conflicts are more likely to polarise the whole community.

These characteristics expose the imperfections of formal institutions in small polities where personal contacts can be stronger than conventional authority procedures.

2.7.2 Sociological institutionalism

Reacting to the Weberian perspectives on bureaucratic structures, the new institutionalists in sociology began to argue that many of the institutional forms and procedures used by modern organisations are not adopted simply because they are most efficient for the tasks at hand (Schmidt 2006, Hall and Taylor 1996). Instead, they argued that many of these forms and procedures should be seen as culturally specific practices and assimilated into organisations, not necessarily to enhance their formal means-ends efficiency but as a result of the kind of processes associated with the transmission of cultural practices more generally. Thus even the most seemingly bureaucratic of practices can be explained in cultural terms. In essence, SI refers to the codes of appropriate behaviour that imbue actors in organisations. Public officials and NGO leaders act upon their perceptions of what is the correct code of behaviour; they are bound by common values, which explain not only their propensity to frustrate change, but also the capacity for organisations to reproduce themselves. In turn this indicates a 'logic of appropriateness',

> Rationality for sociological institutionalists is socially constructed and culturally and historically contingent. It is defined by cultural institutions which set the limits of the imagination, establishing basic preferences and identity and setting the context within which purposive, goal-oriented action is deemed acceptable according to the 'logic of appropriateness'... (Schmidt 2006: 107).

Hall and Taylor (1996) identified three features of SI that render it relatively distinctive in the context of the other 'new institutionalisms.' Fundamentally, sociological institutionalists tend to define institutions much more broadly than political scientists do to include not just formal rules, procedures or norms but the symbol systems, cognitive scripts, ideas and moral templates that provide the 'frames of meaning' guiding human action. Such a definition breaks down the conceptual divide between 'institutions' and 'culture.' The two can in fact intermingle. This assertion challenges the distinction that many political scientists like to draw between 'institutional explanations' based on organisational structures and 'cultural explanations' based on an understanding of culture as shared attitudes or values.

Moreover, the new institutionalists in sociology also have a distinctive understanding of the relationship between institutions and individual action: institutions influence behaviour not simply by specifying what one should do but also by specifying what one can imagine oneself doing in a given context. In many cases, institutions are said to provide the very terms through which meaning is assigned in social life. It follows that institutions do not simply affect the strategic calculations of individuals, as RCI contend, but also their most basic preferences and very identity. Self-images and identities of social actors are said to be constituted from institutional forms, images and signs provided by social life. This is particularly true for the people of Malta and Ireland. The Catholic Church has not only been an influential institution in policy-making processes but for centuries it moulded the raison d'être of the majority of organised interest organisations and the public at large (Friggieri 2009b, Mifsud Bonnici 2009, Chubb 1992, Boissevain 1993, Koster 1988). 'Christian heritage in Malta is particularly equivalent to national heritage. Eliminate that and you have a desert" (Friggieri 2008b). Christian values served as a common transcendental yardstick of the degree of appropriateness. However contemporary narrative dictates a contrasting scenario. Secular society is becoming increasingly intolerant of religious beliefs which are stated in public, evidently leading to the 'privatisation of religion' (Vassallo, E. 2011: 58-64, Vassallo, M.T. 2009b).

2.8 Bridging the variant stripes

Although capped under the same umbrella, institutionalist discourse has been characterised not only by differing fundamental views, but most often by conflicting outlooks towards the constituents of its ontological and epistemological elements. In these circumstances, we ask whether it is possible to bring together common insights to what has been traditionally seen as separate scores of political science. For example, Lowndes (2009) observes that the two definitions below, concerning institutions, show convergence on RCI and SI:

> [RCI refers to] prescriptions that define what actions (or outcomes) are required, prohibited or permitted, and the sanctions authorised if the rules are not followed (Ostrom 1997).

> [SI refers to] sets of regularised practices with a rule-like quality in the sense that the actors expect the practices to be observed; and which, in some but not all cases, are supported by formal sanction (Hall and Thelen 2008).

According to Lowndes, 'these two definitions are not really that far apart'. Institutionalism is an organising framework that prioritises institutions in developing explanatory accounts of political phenomena, whether that is political behaviour or political outcomes. Institutionalism, in its current forms, is concerned not only with formal rules and structures, but with informal conventions that shape political behaviour. The researcher does not take political institutions at face value but takes a critical look at the way they embody values and power. The real scholarly debate of this stance is not just about institutions, but the complex relations between institutional designers, institutionalised subjects (those who work within the constraints of institutions) and institutional environments which are made up of other institutions. This results in a mosaic compound policy terrain that continually regenerates concatenations of synergies, tensions and creative forces.

Moreover, Olsen (2003: 342) sustains that the processes of institutional change discussed so far, namely argumentation and choice (RCI), and experiential learning through socialisation (SI) are seen as complimentary rather than mutually exclusive. Hix (2008, 2005) asserts that actors, contexts and rules are the basics of modern political science. They cannot be dichotomised and probed on their own as was the practice in the old days of state-centric institutions and society-centric theories, but they need to be investigated on the same continuum. If the investigation at hand is to reconfigure changes in institutions, the researcher needs to work with the actors – he needs to ask them about the rules (RCI). He also needs to observe who is in action (SI) and by what constraints they are restricted.

The hypotheses at the core of this research are designed on the triangle marking the three protagonists behind the narrative, namely actors, rules/culture and context. They are primarily interested in the interaction between state and non-state actors. Furthermore, they also take into consideration the two loci of polity, domestic and European, that govern actors' choices and behaviour through rules, procedures, norms

and values, whilst the underlying context is delineated by the 'special circumstances' of small island states.

2.9   Theorising Europeanisation

This chapter now proceeds with the application of the new institutionalist perspective to the theorising debate of Europeanisation. Vink and Graziano (2008: 12/13) affirm that 'Europeanisation scholars have reverted almost without exception to the broad spectrum of theories that fall under the umbrella of the so called "new institutionalism"'. At this point, it is logical to ask what is being meant by the term Europeanisation. How did it develop over the decades and what are its current trends in scholarly literature? In what ways have the variants of institutionalism contributed towards the understanding of domestic transformations, or the persistence of the status quo, as a consequence of European forces of change? Providing insightful answers to these pertinent questions is remarkably challenging, as the Europeanisation of domestic interest organisations and interest intermediation is a fairly recent research topic in EU studies and so there are several research gaps as well as areas of controversy and ambiguity (Eising 2008: 177).

Since the late 1990s, Europeanisation has gained widespread currency amongst scholars as a 'new fashionable term to denote a variety of changes within European politics, domestic affairs and international relations' (Featherstone 2003: 3). Different scholars understand Europeanisation in different ways. Some think of it as a 'historic phenomenon' that describes the export of cultural norms and patterns through territorial expansion of the EU's borders. Others explain it in terms of intensifying trans-nationalism through the diffusion of cultural norms, ideas, identities and patterns of behaviour on a cross-national basis within Europe. Knill (2001: 10) observes that the 'traditional' concepts of Europeanisation research were basically concerned with developments at the supranational level, basically the evolution of the EU's institutional architecture in Brussels and Luxembourg. In this context, Goldsmith (2003: 117) states that Europeanisation was used to describe the process of regulation by which a wide variety of policy areas became subject to regulations and directives agreed in Brussels and accepted by member states.

Over the years, as the EU became more *institutionalised* in the sociological sense (Caporaso 2008: 25), it started to be referred to as a 'polity in its own right' (Cini 2003: 2), a 'political system'[23] that could be analysed with the tools of most domestic systems without having to be a 'state' (Hix 2005: 2). The basic focus of these earlier strands of research on supranational institution-building and policy-making eventually proved to be inadequate to provide sufficient insights when it comes to the impact of European integration at the domestic level. Furthermore, this led to a gradual decline in the scholarly interest of refining the 'grand theories' of European integration based on the visions of eminent European politicians like Schuman, De Gasperi, Spaak, Monnet, Adenauer and Hallstein (see Bond et al 1996). These 'grand theories' were positioned across the two polar extremes of *neo-functionalism,*[24] as advocated by the pioneering works of Haas (1958) and Lindberg (1963); and *intergovernmentalism,*[25] as promulgated by Hoffmann (1966) and Taylor (1982), among others.

Subsequent generations of researchers have adapted these frameworks to take into consideration the signs of times. One of them was Moravcsik (1988) who developed a theory named *liberal-intergovernmentalism* that attempts to explain why sovereign governments in Europe have repeatedly chosen to coordinate their core economic policies[26] and surrender sovereign prerogatives within an international institution (Nelsen and Stubb 2003: 240). Other scholars like Pierson (1996) and Sandholtz and Stone Sweet (1998) have moved beyond vague supranationalism and explicitly

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[23] If we think of the EU as a policy system, then it follows that scholarship needs to explore the ways in which policy agendas are set set, policies are formulated, decisions are made and legislation is implemented (Rosamond 2003: 118).

[24] The neofunctionalist approach (introduced by Haas in the preface of his seminal work *The Uniting of Europe*), views the integration process as group driven. Federal institutions are established because important political groups see tangible benefits from joint governance in specific areas. The integration process pushes forward when federal institutions affect the interests of groups that respond by organising across national boundaries, rendering the concept of the nation state as almost obsolete (Nelson and Stubb 2003: 145/6).

[25] Intergovernmentalism, with its emphasis on the strength of the nation state, provides a theoretical counter to neofunctionalism. Hoffmann, as one of the first intergovernmentalists to challenge the core assumptions of the neofunctionalists, laid the foundation for the great theoretical debate of the early 1990s (Nelsen and Stubb 2003: 163).

[26] Moravcsik argues that state preferences are driven by economic rather than political interests, that state preferences are not fixed (because different groups can win the domestic political contest), and that inter-state bargaining can produce positive sum outcomes (Hix 2005: 15).

developed a modern neofunctionalist account of the institutional development of the EU (Nelsen and Stubb 2003: 215), which is based on the principle of *path-dependence theory* that lies at the heart of the historical approach.[27] This 'lock-in' theory of integration has much in common with the new institutionalism of Pollack (1997) and the governance approach of Marks and Hooghe (2001). But as Sweet and Sandholtz make clear, this theory stands in sharp contrast to the intergovernmentalism of Moravcsik (1988). Weiler (2004) expresses his sceptic sentiments when he insists that despite its notable success in attaining its historical objectives of consolidating post-war peace and contributing to new-found European prosperity, 'today's Union, bereft of its original transcendent ideals, risks becoming the perfect incarnation of bread-and-circus fin-de-siècle politics'.

2.10   Applied new institutionalism to Europeanisation

The decline of 'grand theories' has multiplied the number of schools of thought, prominently, the proliferation of 'institutionalisms' of various stripes and the rise of the 'governance approach' (Nelsen and Stubb 2003: x) that sequentially led to the ever-evolving discourse on the domestic impact of Europeanisation. A fast growing number of scholars (Quinn 2008, Bulmer 2008, Bulmer and Lequesne 2005, Graziano and Vink 2008, Featherstone and Radaelli 2003, Knill 2001, Alexander 1998, Baillie 1998, Gorges 1997, DiMaggio and Powell 1991) started to adopt institutional analysis as a tool for studying the governance of the EU and also the domestic governance of its ever growing number of member states. The adoption of this approach reflects the general trend of employing the theories of comparative politics to the analysis of the EU. The attention was shifting away from the attempts to predict the final destiny of European integration process towards the analysis of day-to-day decision-making processes (Svečias 2009, Nelson and Stubb 2003, Cini 2003).

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[27] "In response to path dependency, a body of theory developed around 'punctuated equilibrium' – in normal times there are small adaptations, but every so often there is a moment of primary selection that maybe genetic. These are called moments of critical junctures where no ideas come forward, championed by strategic actors and instigate the agenda for institutional change. Colin Hay states 'this is basically a discontinuous conception of political time in which periods of modest institutional change are interrupted by more rapid moments of change and transformation'" (Lowndes 2009).

Recent trends in Europeanisation literature started to focus on the impact of European unification on domestic political and cultural processes of member states and beyond (Börzel and Risse 2003: 57). Notwithstanding the emphasis on 'bottom-up' initiatives on policy processes, the conceptual scope of Europeanisation started to incorporate 'top-down' and 'horizontal' initiatives in favour of the European regional integration, together with an accentuation on national and sub-national structures and actors (Vink and Graziano 2008). Europeanisation, in its contemporary meaning, involves a 360^0 approach to interpret the implications of EU polity, politics and preferences across supranational, national and sub-national politics and policies. This implies the vertical[28] and horizontal[29] dimensions of MLG that portrays the EU as a political system with interconnected institutions, operating at multiple levels and having unique policy features (Bache 2008, Bache and Flinders 2004, Gualini 2004). The EU is a political system with a European layer (Commission, Council and EP), a national layer (Cabinet, Parliament, Courts and national interest organisations) and a regional layer (sub-national authorities, local NGOs, business communities). These layers interact with each other in two ways: first, across different levels of government (vertical dimension) and second, with other relevant actors within the same level (horizontal dimension). But the idea of MLG, according to Rosamond (2003: 120) 'goes beyond this, as it also emphasises fluidity between tiers, so that policy actors may move between different levels of action'. Moreover, dispersion of authority is uneven across different policy domains.

With this growing interest in Europeanisation as a process of domestic change in the face of European integration, greater attempts have been made to establish a far more rigorous definition, prominent amongst which has been that by Radaelli. He maintains that Europeanisation is taken to be the 'processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion and

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[28] The 'vertical' dimension refers to the linkages between higher and lower levels of government, including their institutional, financial, and informational aspects. Here, local capacity building and incentives for effectiveness of sub-national levels of government are crucial issues for improving the quality and coherence of public policy.

[29] The 'horizontal' dimension refers to co-operation arrangements between regions or between state and non-state organisations. These agreements are increasingly common as a means by which to improve the effectiveness of public service delivery and implementation of development strategies.

(c) institutionalisation of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things' and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU decisions and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies' (Radaelli 2003: 30). But while such a definition highlights the very broad domestic impact of European integration, some scholars have questioned whether such 'catch-all' annotations can have any real, practical and useful application (Harwood 2009: 6).

2.10.1 The EU as an enabler of domestic change

Börzel (2005: 61) leaves no doubt that the widening and deepening of the European model is not always the only source that stimulates domestic change, as there might be other driving forces and, thus, 'we have to employ counterfactuals and test for alternative explanations'. The null hypothesis in this thesis serves this purpose.

On the other hand, academic literature provides ample evidence that the EU is in fact a major incentive orbit that explains domestic changes in terms of processes, policies and institutions. In these studies, the EU polity is considered to be the independent variable that is motorised by three factors: *polity* (administrative adjustments, change in processes and institutions), *politics* (ideas, beliefs, interests, strategies), and *policy* (priorities, agendas, content, implementation). Figure 2.2 helps to simplify further the relation between the EU, as the independent variable, and the domestic political landscape, as the dependent variable.

Figure 2.2: The effects of the independent variable on the dependent variable
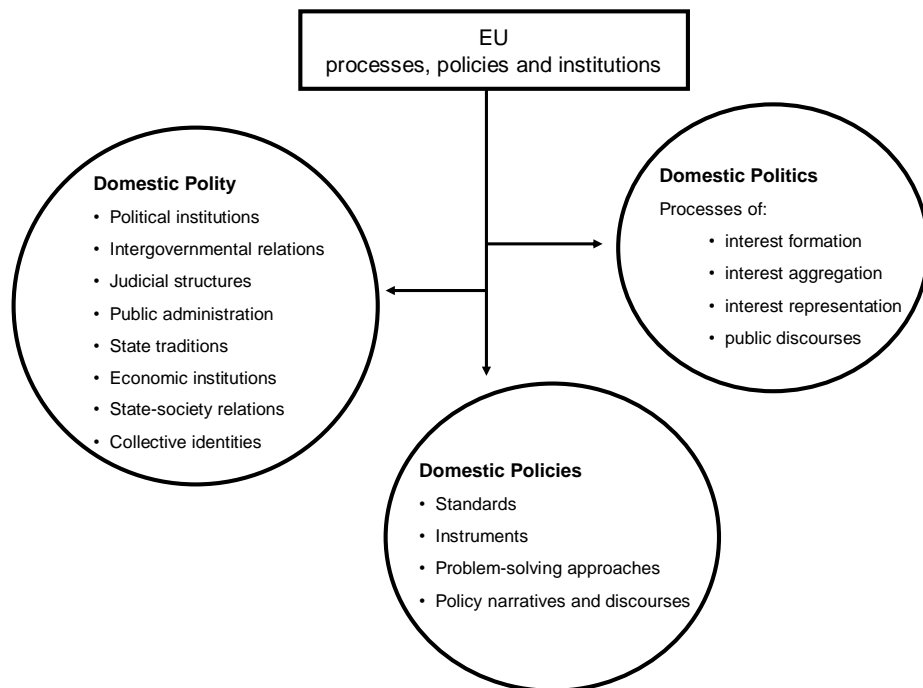
adapted from Börzel and Risse 2003: 60

The issue is no longer whether Europe matters but how it matters, to what degree, in what direction, at what pace, and at what point in time (Börzel and Risse 2003). Answering these queries is not a straightforward exercise as it is highly dependent on the institutionalist perspective that has been adopted (Börzel 2005). Bulmer and Burch (2001: 73-76) develop a scheme of insights how Europeanisation can be examined from the different institutionalist variants. Those advocating RCI would most likely be concerned with examining a succession of insistent impacts: a sequence of snapshot-analyses of the EU's impact upon the institutional arrangements for policy-making in the member states. They would regard the wider context of national governance, including the interplay of state and interest groups, as exogenous to the explanation, which would be actor-centred.

SI would share some of these concerns but would factor in a much greater cognitive and cultural component. SI, like HI, tends to adopt a rather long term approach to make

changes visible in the domestic public square, which would be decoded in reflexive terms in the state's culture (Bulmer and Burch 2009, 2001: 74). Domestically, the important thing about institutions would not be 'that they enhance efficiency but that they offer a normative context that constitutes actors and provides a set of norms in which the reputation of actors acquires meaning and value' (Katzenstein 1997 as quoted in Bulmer and Burch 2001). It is through the internalisation of norms that actors acquire their identities and establish what their interests are (Rosamond 2003: 122).

2.10.2 The role of mediating factors

The Europeanisation process of domestic interest groups, however, is not so straightforward a phenomenon as one might expect. Empirical research suggests that organisations are not uniformly affected by external stimuli: a number of intervening factors mitigate their effects. Ultimately, these mediating variables determine the true nature of Europeanisation. In other words, these variables are crucial in deciphering the cause and effect relationship between, on the one hand, Europeanisation as a consequence of new opportunities and constraints implying an RCI understanding and, on the other hand, Europeanisation as a result of wider socialisation and collective learning implying an SI understanding. The process chart drafted by Börzel and Risse (figure 2.3) provides a synthesis of RCI and SI understandings of the cause and effect correlation that have a bearing on domestic change.

Policy and institutional misfit or the incompatibility between European and member states' scenarios is the starting point in the analysis of domestic change. The lower the compatibility between European and domestic processes, policies and institutions, the higher the need of adaptational pressure (Börzel and Risse 2003). However, misfit on its own is not a sufficient condition to instigate change. In this model RCI and SI set parallel mechanisms of institutional change and, consequently, stress different factors facilitating domestic adaptation in response to Europeanisation.

Figure 2.3: Conceptualising the domestic impact
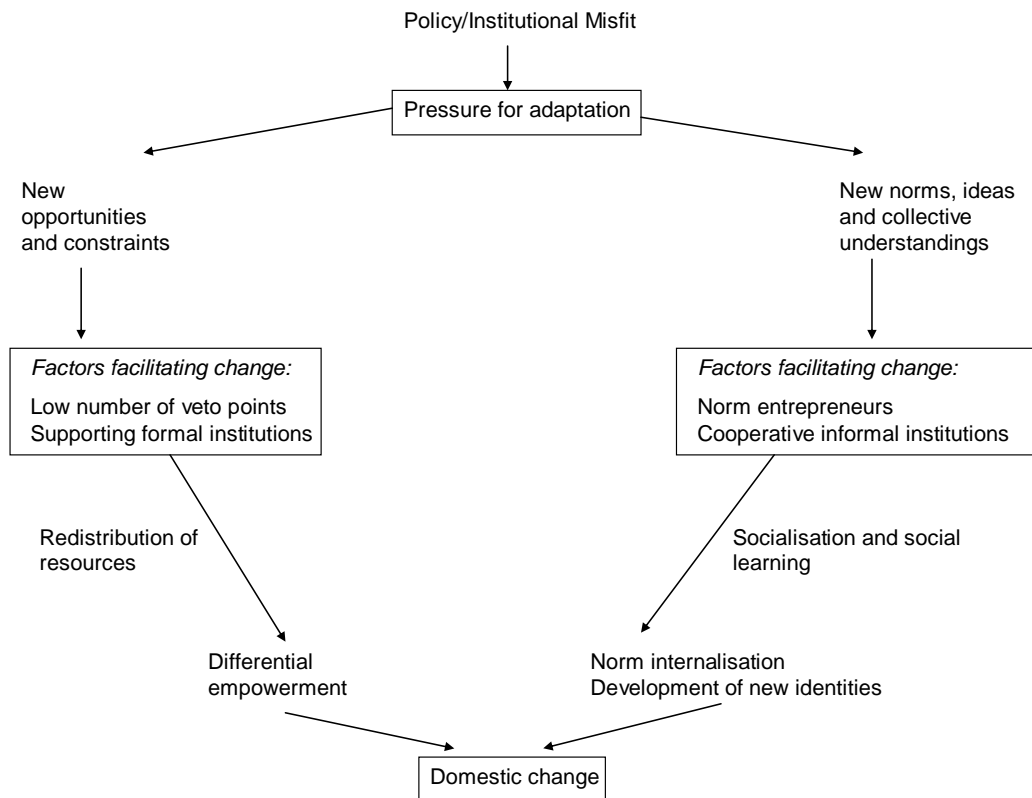
Börzel and Risse 2003: 69

Following the logic of RCI (left side), Europeanisation is largely conceived as an emerging opportunity structure which offers some actors additional resources to exert influence (funding and legislation, for instance), while severely constraining the ability of others (strict adherence to rules of procedures and new designed parameters that regulate action points, for example) to pursue their goals (Börzel and Risse 2003: 63). The action capacities of actors to exploit opportunities and restrain constraints are subject to two mediating factors: *multiple veto points* and *formal institutions*. The former implies that the more the dispersion of power across the polity and the more actors have rigid and polarised positions, the more difficult it is to introduce changes. The (in-) existence of supporting formal institutions which provide actors with material and ideational resources is also a determining factor in assessing whether Europeanisation does indeed lead to differential empowerment of actors or not. Member

states have built their own systems of interest intermediation based on inherited legacies (Saurugger 2013, Reiter 1994, Pirotta 1996, Lowenthal 1987). Privileged interest groups may choose to ignore or, at least, soften influence from Brussels to uphold the status-quo. Small states are traditionally synonymous with 'partisan-friendly' national governments which are more likely to exhibit 'conservative' features and protect their domestic political architecture from seismic external shocks.

On the other hand, Europeanisation from the perspective of SI (right side) is understood as the emergence of new norms, practices and standards of behaviour to which member states are exposed and which they have to incorporate into their domestic practices and cultures. The internalisation of new norms and the development of new identities through socialisation and learning is subject to two mediating factors: *norm entrepreneurs* (or change agents) *and informal institutions* (or political culture). Change agents use moral arguments to persuade actors to redefine their interests and identities. A political culture oriented on consensus and cooperative decision-making helps change agents to bring about domestic change as a result of EU membership.

Pondering on the mitigating factors that facilitate or hinder the effects of Europeanisation on interest groups, Eising concludes that these are the result of:

> the interest representation system (especially the differences in countries with pluralistic or corporatist systems); the type of group being studied (promotional groups, like environmentalists, find it easier to cooperate at a European level while protectionist groups, such as trade unions, often have to compete with unions in other member states); resources and geography (groups located far from Brussels find travel depletes limited financial and human resources) as well as the political compatibility of the national government and the group concerned (Eising 2008: 168).

Through the use of empirical data encompassing Malta and Ireland, this study strives to map out the competing relationship between the RCI and SI conceptual frameworks of change. Thus, this study adopts a differentiated approach to Börzel and Risse's model of Europeanisation. Whereas the latter treat RCI and SI as complementary forces of change leading to a transformation of domestic public affairs, this thesis investigates the two stripes of institutionalisms as competing or standing concepts in rivalry. So far, it has been established that the true nature of Europeanisation of Maltese and Irish groups

is to be decoded in terms of the mediating variables of the two competing theoretical variants.

The next step is to identify a set of dimensions across which the extent of impact of EU influence on interest groups is to be measured.

2.10.3 Assessing the impact on the dependent variables

Ultimately, the whole discussion has to find its apex at this point. It is the ultimate stage wherein the null hypotheses is ratified, rejected or qualified. This is where one can determine if the Europeanisation impact on interest groups in Malta and Ireland has been marginal or significant between 2004 and 2011. The introductory chapter has identified the four dimensions through which the extent of Europeanisation is to be measured, namely: (i) internal structures, (ii) domestic responsiveness, (iii) European involvement and (iv) leaders' attitude. Figure 2.4 defines each of these dimensions that are to be further expanded in the next couple of sections.

2.10.3.1   Change in internal structures

The first batch of changes due to Europeanisation can be visible within the internal organisational set-up of interest groups, wherein structures, resources and working practices are reshaped to take into account a wider spectrum. Structural transformations may include a change in the groups' vision/mission to include a European perspective in addition to the domestic context, as well as designating key committee members to be exclusively in charge of EU affairs, or to do EU business in conjunction with other jobs. More resourceful groups may go even further and establish a fixed or fluid contact in Brussels. Enriching the resource base may also entail the acquisition of EU funding and participation in training programmes aimed to enhance EU knowledge.

Change may also manifest itself in their working practices which may start to incorporate participation in EU related activities, engagement in transnational projects and a different typography of influence stratagems. It may also be the case that local

projects will start to embrace a European dimension through the use of statistical data, guest speakers and success stories.

Figure 2.4: The effects of Europeanisation on domestic interest groups

Changes in internal structures
- organisational set-up
- access to resources
- training and development
- coordination of EU affairs
- participation in EU related activities

Increased domestic responsiveness
- participation in central coordinating agencies
- formation of group alliances
- participation in public/private partnerships
- domestic system of social/civil dialogue
- disposition of central government to interact

Greater European Involvement
- direct contribution to the EU (consultation)
- indirect access to the EU (lobbying)
- liaison with the EESC
- engagement with European groups
- affiliation to European federations

Attitudinal transformation
- leaders' outlook towards the EU
- individual values and norms
- working culture
- personal and organisational identity
- change stimuli

Reconfiguration of domestic interest groups due to Europeanisation

Mario Vassallo 2014

2.10.3.2   Increased domestic responsiveness

One of the key areas to look for change or elasticity, according to Ladrech (2005), is the degree of responsiveness and authoritativeness in relation to the domestic environment. Have the contributions of interest groups at the home front been enhanced as a result of membership? Are they any less or more significant and legitimate as interlocutors between society and government? Europeanisation may have also induced a new institutional challenge for the national coordination of EU policy by promoting the inclusion and engagement of the third sector in governance processes (Cassar 2008; Knill 2001; Kassim et al 2001). In this stance, it is pertinent to explore to what extent interest groups are responding to national mediating bodies.

Responsiveness to new institutional opportunities calls for the functioning of supportive formal institutions as well as norm entrepreneurs to instigate a mentality change in favour of cooperation and consensus building. EU membership might have brought about the need for networking or more permanent federations among interest groups to better address evolving trends. Such an evolution in the system of interest representation may have been experienced due to the growing competency of the EU in an increasing number of policy areas (Scharpf 1999). EU institutions acquiring or sharing competences over previously nationally determined policy areas may cause deterioration in special policy communities, as any change in the number of actors may alter the competitive edge for some groups (Ladrech 2005: 325). This would in turn create the need for interest groups to team with fellow domestic NGOs to solidify their voice. It is also valuable to investigate if organised groups have responded positively to the emerging concept of 'PPPs which are considered crucial for both EU-funded and independent actions to be sustainable and effective' (*MEUSACnews* 2011b: 4).

2.10.3.3 Greater European involvement

In terms of involvement in the wider European polity, Harwood (2009: 340) identifies three distinct levels. The first relates to those groups which actually make a direct contribution in EU institutions, including participation in Commission working groups, submission of feedback on Green and White Papers and engagement in EESC consultation processes. A second level applies to the impact of membership on the access of interest groups to EU institutions indirectly, through lobbying the Commission and the EP, including national MEPs. A third level of involvement is decoded in terms of links with other European groups, including membership in Euro umbrella groups, attainment of executive responsibilities within Euro federations and grasping networking opportunities with their European partners.

Evidence suggests that whilst business lobbies have the human and financial capital to make a direct contribution at the EU arena, the more resource-humble NGOs prefer to exert pressure on their national governments which may, in turn, be in a position to

affect positions in the deliberations of the Council of Ministers (Pace 2006, 2008). Otherwise, domestic groups may choose to delegate European affairs to their parent organisations that are functional either on the national or European level.

2.10.3.4   Attitudinal transformation

If we extend the anatomical metaphor used by Van Schendelen (2005: 56), decoding change does not only involve the organisational set-up or *skeleton* and the working practices in home and European affairs or *flesh and blood*, but must also include values and identity or *attitude* as the fourth dimension of Europeanisation among organised groups. Working with attitudes or 'habits of mind formed by past experience' (Harper 2010), means examining the motivation for specific behaviour that might change and/or improve over time. Given the personalisation of the lobbying processes in small states, it is crucial to assess leaders' attachment to inherited praxis and their potential to change their outlook for a more active EU engagement. The interwoven matrix of norms and values have been formed over years of interaction among group members and leaders, and changing the accepted ethnographic identity can feel like rolling rocks uphill. Values are heartfelt beliefs about the appropriate way to behave and constitute the 'should' and 'shouldn't' of both individuals and organisations (Allen 2006). Related to values is the concept of norms. These are implicit or explicit standards of behaviour agreed upon by group members which exert a powerful influence on social interaction (Morgan et al. 1986). The cultural dimension of any entity is one of the most stable and enduring features of organisational design. It calls for 'the collective mental programming of the mind' which is synchronised to the institutionalised context where individual actors interact (Steers and Black 1994). A significant change due to Europeanisation should manifest itself in the reconfiguration of the *attitude* of group leaders wherein the leaders themselves motivate the rest of their members to make a better use of the EU as a structure of opportunities and as a source of wider socialisation among European peers and beyond.

2.11   The next step

This chapter provided a holistic review of the theoretical and conceptual framework that is being adopted in this study. It started by providing an insightful synopsis of the various models that try to explain the dynamics between state and non-state actors, namely, corporatism, pluralism, elitism and policy network/communities. After a brief discussion on their respective merits and inadequacies from the outlook of small states governance, the discussion proceeded to institutionalist theory that constitutes the theoretical backbone of this research. A great deal of the analysis concerned the diversity and vigour of its variants whilst, at the same time, every effort was exerted to single out their composite grassroots and common pivots. This thorough examination on the geometry of governance, eventually, shifted its focus on the effects of Europeanisation at member state level. At this point, the independent, dependent and mediating variables of the hypotheses were clearly illustrated and a detailed explanation was provided on how the extent and nature of Europeanisation are to be decoded in the empirical chapters.

The next step is to turn attention on interest groups as the research primacy of this scientific investigation. Chapter 3 embraces the contradictory views of various political thinkers on the roles played by interest groups in society and governing institutions. Moreover, this part revolves around the typography of interest groups and the different types of strategies that they can resort to in accomplishing their objectives. Being key actors in contemporary democracies, these organisational issues and fieldwork activities are de facto important determinants of good governance and policy success.

Chapter 3

Character and Typology of Interest Groups

Chapter 3
The character and typology of interest groups

We talk on principle, but we act on interest.

Walter Savage Landor
(1775-1864)
English writer and poet

3.1   Introduction

Having laid out the theoretical and conceptual framework on solid ground in the previous sections, this chapter turns its focus on the research primacy of the study which rests on the character and role of interest groups involved in domestic policy-making and their interplay with governmental actors, as well as their participation in EU affairs. More specifically, it sets out to explore the structures and strategies of interest groups as intermediary actors between state and society. Such groups are deemed by the EU as generators of social capital and good governance, although one cannot discount their dark side which will also be discussed towards the end of this chapter. A comparative politics approach is being adopted to configure their different typologies which, ultimately, determine their stratagems to engage in public affairs. The major thrust of this chapter is to introduce in greater detail the nature of domestic interest groups, and the different methods and avenues of influence at their disposal. The inquiry commences with the complexity of multiple terminology associated with this field of analysis, together with a concise evaluation of how political thinkers assess the role of interest groups in the attainment of the common good. At the end of the chapter the correlation between interest groups and policy success is investigated, and consequently, groups' input towards good and legitimate governance is also scrutinised. The chapter, moreover, features the variables that are eventually to be used when analysing change, if any, in internal structures, fieldwork interactivity and attitudinal formation of domestic organised groups as a consequence of EU impact.

3.2   Dealing with multiple terminology

As indicated in the introductory chapter, the research field of interest representation is abundant not only with a long and versatile list of components including consumer groups, environmental movements, business lobbies, human rights groups, faith organisations, churches, professional associations, trade unions, think-tanks, universities, foundations and many more but, above all, with different terminologies to which a number of scholars attach specific semantics while others treat them as interchangeable. Figure 3.1 shows a compilation of such a versatile array of terms.

Figure 3.1: Multiple terminology
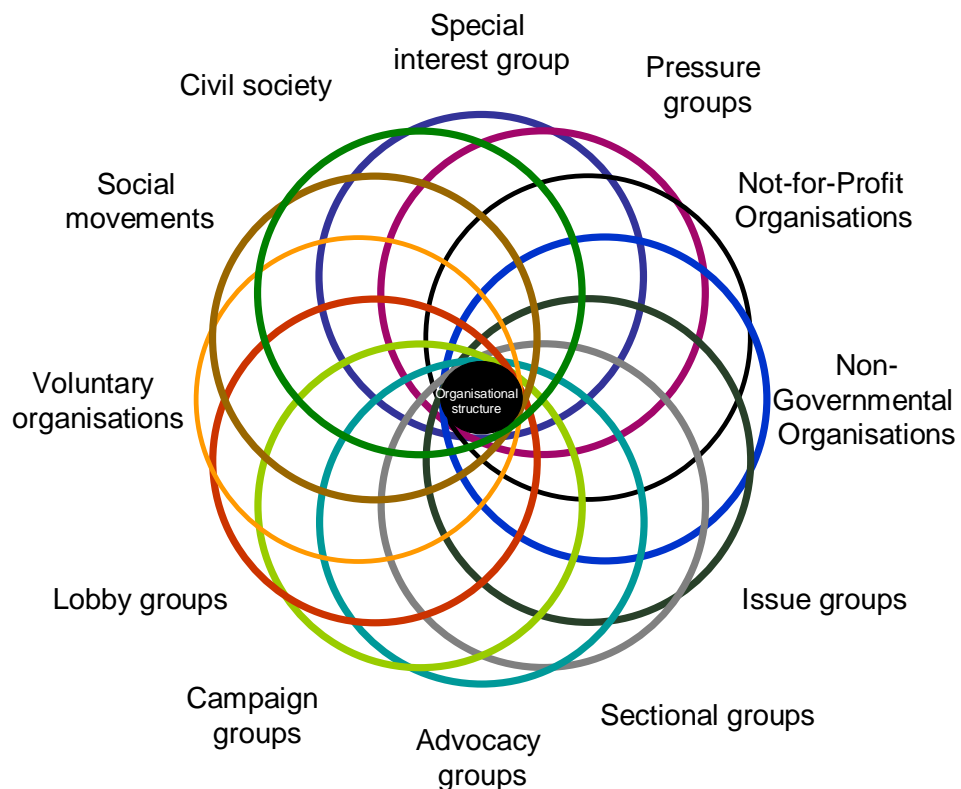
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The cost of this diversity is ambiguity in terms, ambiguity even about what the term 'interest group' means and whether it is preferable or inferior to alternative terms. However, the complete picture is not as dull as it seems as 'the benefit of this diversity is the existence of a large number of impressive studies that contribute much to our

understanding of politics, government and society' (Werner and Wilson 2008: 349). Moreover all terms are united under the premise that they strive 'to push public policy in a specific direction on behalf of the constituencies or a general political idea' (Beyers at al. 2008: 1106). At the basis of them all, there is some sort of an organisational structure, represented in the black circle in figure 3.1, which is responsible for the set-up, operations and collective identity of each organised group. From its starting point, this study has adopted the term interest groups not only because it seems to be one of the most widely used term in academic literature but, more importantly, because its definitional connotations embrace almost all of the respective characteristics related to the rest. This work supports Saurugger's definition stating that,

> Interest groups and social movements are entities whose aim is to represent the interests of a specific section of society. Their action strategies and degree of organisation must be placed on a continuum from loose to very organised, and from informal to formal consultation to protest movements (Saurugger 2013: 336).

Relying on Rush's assertion, the common thread that runs through the literature on interest groups, and other related terminology, is the process by which public policy [and public opinion] are formulated (Rush 1990: 7). The history of citizens' engagement in the running of democracies and governance structures goes back, at least, to classical civilisations; however they were not always considered to be benign by everyone. In the next couple of sections, a historical insight of organised groups as interlocutors between state and society is to be provided, highlighting the contribution of interest formation towards participative democracies.

3.3   An evolutionary insight

The notion of civil society dates back at least to the ancient Roman notion of *jus civile* (Camilleri 1995: 216). In the more recent Western tradition, the formation of the first organised interests is unearthed during the Middle Ages. As towns grew larger and urban life became more competitive, the residents formed associations, called *guilds*, to protect their special interests. Guilds served as representative and philanthropic organisations of skilled labourers and craftsmen concerned with promoting the social, professional and religious aspirations of their members, to help those in need and to

stimulate their education and welfare (Matthews and Platt 2008: 250). Although the industrial revolution dealt a fatal blow to the guild movement, the gothic style, as the most dominant medieval architectural imprint, was propagandised in the nineteenth century as the symbol of a civil society which neither required nor tolerated the decrees of an absolute ruling power, but which arose organically out of common expectations, common beliefs and a shared experience of labour (Scruton 2007:35). These long-established pluralist elements still constitute the very essence of modern interest groups in their quest to influence and contribute towards contemporary governance.

3.3.1   Etymological connotations

Interest groups flourish when governments have to listen to the people, and the slow spread of democracy from the eighteenth century has seen a sharp rise in their number, importance and variety. Campaigns have been fought over a bewildering range of issues, from the abolition of slavery to an ending of the trade in ivory and animal furs, from the outcry for women's suffrage to resistance to the building of a by-pass around a rural town (Downing 2002: 8). Much of the organised interaction between state institutions and the numerous interests in society takes place through interest groups; the study of interest groups is thus of major importance in understanding the relationship between state and society (Smismans 2006, Magnette 2006, Smith 1993, Wilson 1990). In fact their attributed role as 'democracy by proxy' (Hudock 2005) is manifested through the etymological definition of the term *interest* which literally means 'to be between', derived from two Latin words: *inter* – 'between' and *esse* – 'to be' (Online Etymology Dictionary). In line with this etymological meaning, Berry (1977: 5) defines 'an interest group as an intermediary between citizens and government, and it is the task of the organisation to convert what it perceives to be the desires of its constituents into specific policies and goals'.

The idea of go-between entities is also promulgated by the Roman Catholic Church as the existence and operations of interest groups are considered safeguards against the hegemony, or 'tyranny' of the economic and political upper crust. Pope Benedict XVI, inspired by the social teachings of the Church, emphasises the importance of

subsidiary which in a globalised world has to be considered as a key guaranteeing factor to delegate and stratify authority. In his encyclical letter *Caritas in Veritate* (2009: 57), Benedict XVI declares that 'subsidiary is first and foremost a form of assistance to the human person via the autonomy of intermediate bodies'. The betterment of representative democracy, the further inclusion of participative democracy and the achievement of the greater common good can all be attained by the vitality and autonomy of interest groups as intermediary bodies within the political system.

Almost all organised interests contribute in different, and sometimes conflicting, ways to enlarging social participation. Groups have often been credited with the ability to counteract the anonymity and indifference of mass society, and, as a consequence, provide individual citizens with the necessary scope and tools to transform passive and representative democracies, or even 'totalitarian and authoritarian dictatorships', to 'truly' engaging and participatory democratic societies' (Werner and Wilson 2008: 363).

Given the versatile array of democratic credentials associated with interest groups, one cannot assume that political discourse has always been positive in their regard. Over the last three centuries, political thinkers have developed different paradigms of how to judge the 'power' of intermediary bodies in the art of governing. In the next section we shall explore how swings of apprehension and trust characterise the general outlook towards interest groups.

3.4   The changing perspectives of political thinkers

Classical and contemporary political scholars have been fascinated by the intermediary role of interest groups as they tried to evaluate their effectiveness in the public sphere; yet there is a shared concern that it is difficult to calculate their true impact due to the 'shrouded' nature of campaigning and lobbying (Cigler and Loomis 1995: 25/27). Leaders of organised groups tend to 'exaggerate' their degree of leverage (Jordan and Maloney 1997, Zeller 1938). For example, both politicians and bureaucrats present 'vociferous claims of freedom from any outside influence' in designing and implementing policies. On the other hand, interest groups, including trade unions and

employers' associations of very high profile, are usually reluctant to communicate their latest figures in terms of paid-up members and tend to overestimate the unanimity and the size of their membership. In sum, the measurement of group influence is, as one American lobbyist put it, 'like finding a black cat in a coal bin at midnight' (Wilson 1987: 221). Contemplating the extent that interest groups exert in politics, Lowi concludes that their importance differs from one policy domain to another (Lowi as quoted by Wilson 1990). Notwithstanding these default limitations, the idea of interest representation has underpinned the works of great European and American thinkers with 'more passion' than the study of other political institutions such as parliamentary or congressional committees (Wilson 1990: 2).

3.4.1   Waves of scepticism and trust

Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-78) was sceptical of interest groups as he feared that they would hijack public policy by asserting minority rights against the interests of the majority. In his *Social Contract* (1762), Rousseau maintains that if groups cannot be hampered, then they should be as numerous as possible in order to limit their potential impact. This is in effect the crux of multiple veto points which are at the focal point of the rationalist approach on which the second hypothesis of this thesis is founded. James Madison (1751-1836), one of the principal architects of the US constitution, agrees with Rousseau when he argues that there should be many interest groups in the system of governance so as to hold each other in check. Although Madison is attributed as being an enthusiast of interest groups, in reality his insistence on the promulgation of abundant factions was based on the hope that selfish interest groups would counterbalance each other in the ultimate quest for the common good (Wilson 1990: 3)

The French observer of the US in the 1830s, Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859) warned against the possibility of a '*tyranny of the majority*' in democratic systems under which the views or interests of minorities will be sacrificed. He finds consolation in the American genius for *association*, which leads to a proliferation of clubs, churches and societies that will serve the cause of the marginalised, the outnumbered and the voiceless (Scruton 2007: 691). When Robert Dahl (b.1915), clarifies his view about

democracy, he calls politically advanced countries 'polyarchies' where there are elected officials, free and fair elections, inclusive suffrage, rights to run for office, freedom of expression, alternative information and associational autonomy (Dahl 1989). Like de Tocqueville, Dahl trusts interest groups as creators of multiple centres of political power and thus they are an effective remedy to the de facto defects of democratic politics.

However, Mancur Olson (1932-1998) and Theodore Lowi (b.1931) illustrate the weakness of much interest group analysis that does not account properly for the reasons groups form for, persist and accumulate their resource base (Cigler and Loomis 1995: 2). In particular, Olson focuses on the logical basis of interest group membership and participation. He theorises that 'only a separate and selective incentive will stimulate a rational individual in a latent group to act in a group-oriented way' (Olson 2002: 51). This means that individuals will act collectively to provide private goods, but not to provide public goods. In his later works he continued to elaborate his logic to the point where interest groups are attributed with the fall of the state,

> Groups will have the incentives to form lobby groups and influence policies in their favour. These policies will tend to be protectionist and anti-technology, and will therefore hurt economic growth; but since the benefits of these policies are selective incentives[30] concentrated amongst the few coalitions' members, while the costs are diffused throughout the whole population, the 'logic' dictates that there will be little public resistance to them. Hence as time goes on, and these distributional coalitions accumulate in greater and greater numbers, the nation burdened by them will fall into economic decline (Olson 1982).

Olson's prediction appears to hold the theoretical explanation of the downfall of Social Partnership (SP) in Ireland, as is later highlighted in the empirical chapters. In parallel, Lowi's antipathy against interest groups finds its roots in the reality of patronage where interest groups tighten on the machinery of governance leading to policy formulation to the advantage of the resourceful and clamorous few. This mechanism undermines the fundamental trajectory of democracy.

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[30] Benefits which are available only to members such as cheaper insurances, gift vouchers, glossy calendars and diaries, and a psychological satisfaction from belonging. Only if compelled to join or if an interest group offers selective incentives to join is it rational for an individual to join an interest group.

The government expanded by responding to the demands of all major organized interests, by assuming responsibility for programs sought by those interests, and by assigning that responsibility to administrative agencies. Through the process of accommodation, the agencies became captives of the interest groups, a tendency [that can be] described as clientelism (Lowi 1979).

Such an antagonist rationale against interest groups has brought stagnation in the field of research. Frequently, interest groups remained 'unimpressive organisations deserving little and receiving little respect from politicians' (Wilson 1990: 14). Simultaneously, society at large looked with suspicion at the 'veiled' activities of interest groups, but these sceptical attitudes were about to change. For example, Marsh et al (2006: 2) show that the combined membership of British political parties is little more than half that of the largest UK interest group, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. Politicians, civil servants and journalists spend a significant proportion of their time communicating with interest groups. A new breed of researchers have changed their goalpost and, instead of pursuing their research to investigate the notoriously difficult question of the power of interest groups, they started to adopt a comparative perspective through which they can demonstrate the modes of integrating interests in society with the state.

Such a comparative approach entails the classification of different types of interest groups under umbrella terminologies so as clusters of groups could be compared and contrasted across a number of factors, including their organisational mission, target audience, lobbying methods and scale of operations. A detailed analysis of the typology of interest groups follows.

3.5   Typology of interest groups

There have been many different attempts by numerous scholars to classify interest groups into a coherent typology, but the ambiguity of terminology referred to earlier often resulted in ambiguity of categorisation. Figure 3.2 constitutes an original attempt by the author to integrate the different widely accepted typologies of interest groups into one blueprint. This typology can be considered as a distillation of the distinct yet interrelated concepts which academics and practitioners have used to differentiate among various forms of interest formations and operations.

Before closely examining each of the typological concepts, it is crucial to note that interest groups do not operate in a vacuum, but their very nature and character depend on the system and culture of social and civil dialogue within the polity they operate in. The analysis of political terrain has been exposed in the preceding chapter, however, at this stage it would be appropriate to differentiate between social and civil dialogue. Whereas the former can be described in short as that communication activity involving social partners [on a tripartite basis] intended to influence the arrangement and development of social relations, the latter represents the ongoing and structured conversation that policy-makers maintain with the established organisations of civil society (Pierre and Peters 2000). In a nutshell, this notion refers to the three traditional models of the relationships between government and society, that is corporatism, pluralism and corporate pluralism that were discussed in Chapter 2.

Figure 3.2: Typology of interest groups
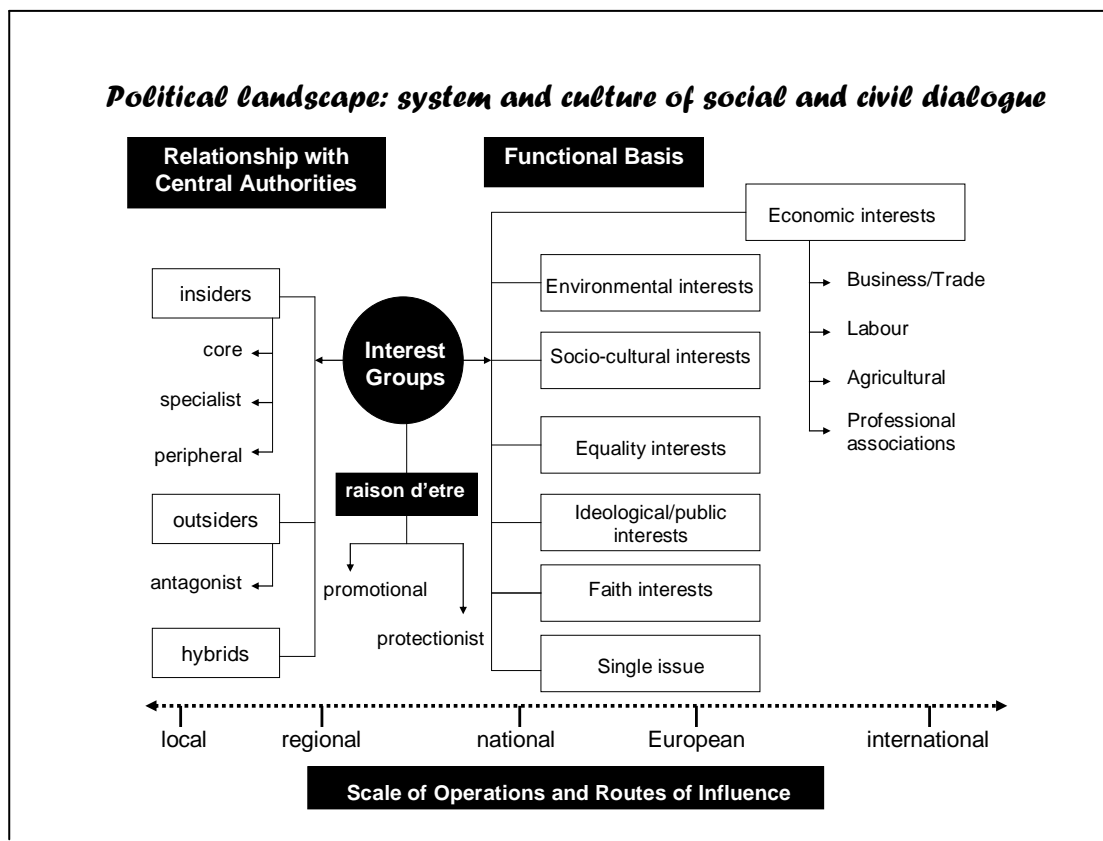
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3.5.1   Functional basis

Perhaps the most widely used criterion for categorising interest groups is the *functional*, or representational, basis. In this regard, groups are classified according to the policy domain in which they are active such as economic, socio-cultural, environmental, equality and justice, faith and public interests. Their functional basis could also be of a temporary nature. In this case, the collective representation of interests are promoted or defended by single issue groups. Once case is closed, such groups cease to exist. The problem with this type of classification is that not all groups fit comfortably into one of these functional domains, or it may also be the case that a group would belong to more than one category.

5.2   Raison d'être

Groups can also be differentiated in accordance with their core missions, or *raison d' être*, which can be categorised into two broad sections: *protectionist*, sometimes referred to as sectional, and *promotional*. Jean Blondel, according to Rush (1990: 9), is accredited with being the person who first distinguished between those groups created for the defence of some particular section of the population and those for the promotion of a cause.

The former includes trade unions, professional associations, agricultural lobbies and employers chambers which are specifically founded to protect their sectional interests, while the latter encompasses those groups that have been formed to promote a 'cause' of public interest such as the environmentalists, human rights movements and single issue groups. Compared to promotional ones, groups of a protectionist nature have more sufficient political access to formal institutions of power, including the executive, legislative and judiciary bodies, because they are likely to be recognised as legitimate representatives of certain sections of the population.

3.5.3 Relationship with central authorities

An important variation on this theme, although by no means synonymous with it, has been developed by Wyn Grant (2000), who divides groups into *insider* and *outsider* groups, depending on the their relationship with central executive authorities.

Insider groups are seen as having political legitimacy with the government of the day, and consequently they are valued for their policy credibility. They are able to take advantage of regular access to and consultation with the senior echelons of Government and the Civil Service machinery. Insider groups are normally content with operating within the existing 'rules of the game'. They tend to be sectional but over the last couple of years some causal groups have achieved a degree of insider status, particularly some green organisations. On a supranational level, the European Commission tends to attribute interest groups with an insider character wherein they are invited to send their delegates to participate in the various policy committees. Consequently, civil society has become entrenched into the complex policy-making mechanisms of the EU. Insider groups can be further dissected into a more refined distinction, that is, *core*, *specialist* and *peripheral insiders*. Firstly, groups that are involved in collective bargaining processes, thanks to their close relationships with decision-makers over a broad range of issues, are called core insiders, such as general workers unions and chambers of commerce. Secondly, specialist insider groups are regarded as reliable and authoritative, but in a much narrower policy niches, for example, farmers associations and specialised unions like the ones that cater for midwives and nurses, teachers, engineers, etc. Thirdly, there are peripheral insiders who are often consulted but carry little real political influence and authority.

In contrast, outsider groups are largely excluded from political consultation and contact. They may lack resources and political clout, implying that they have to work outside the governmental decision-making process. Some groups are ideologically opposed to political systems, notably anti-conformists and radical minorities and, thus, are termed antagonists. They choose to exert pressure by circumventing existing political institutions which they regard as lacking legitimacy and credibility. Such groups prefer

to retain their independence from any state interference and choose to lobby outside the perimeters of government, for example the *Moviment Graffitti*[31] in Malta. In the Irish case, one can mention a number of antagonist or radical groups, like Revolutionary Anarchafeminist Group[32], the Workers' Solidarity Movement[33] and Seomra Spraoi.[34]

In forming his insider/outsider typology, Grant was also aware of some interest groups tending to switch their relationship from one mode to another in accordance to changing situational circumstances. He also agrees with Maloney, Jordan and McLaughlin (1994: 32-6) that 'the choice of strategies by interest groups is constrained rather than being an entirely free one' (Grant 2000: 28). Moreover, there are instances where groups tend to 'oscillate' between insider and outsider strategies, thus creating a sense of ambiguity in the real nature of their relationship with the state and its agencies. These *hybrid groups* pursue a 'good cop/bad cop' strategy in which insider strategies of reasoned argument are combined with the mobilisation of public support (Page as quoted by Grant 2000: 30). Many scholars cite the case of Greenpeace[35] as a typical example of this kind. Over the years, Greenpeace has shifted towards more dialogue with government and business while maintaining the direct and militant action approach that still attracts the pure green hardliners.

Contemporary experience may be portraying an inverse relationship between central authorities and interest groups to that envisaged by Grant. As governments are

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[31] *Moviment Graffitti* is active against oppression and exploitation of people, environment and animals; with a vision of freedom and radical democracy. Its activism consists primarily of two strategies: (i) direct action in various areas such as social justice and protection of the environment and (ii) ideological action as it considers ideology as having a vital role in order that leftitst and progressive visions may be proposed within social formations (Moviment Graffitti website – accessed May 3, 2011).
[32] Members of the *Revolutionary Anarchafeminist Group* call themselves anarchists, united in their belief for the need to create alternatives to the capitalistic, patriarchal society wherein all women are dominated and exploited.
[33] The *Workers Solidarity Movement* was founded in Dublin, Ireland in 1984 following discussions by a number of local anarchist groups on the need for a national anarchist organisation. Its members share a fundamental belief that capitalism is the problem.
[34] *Seomra Spraoi* is a collective that came together in 2004 to set up a radical social centre in Dublin. This idea is an attempt to rebuild some of the things that have been lost to the Irish in the modern world: the sense of community, an atmosphere of tolerance and respect, a safe and secure environment and a non-commercial space for political, arts, cultural, community and other events.
[35] *Greenpeace* is an independent, campaigning organisation which uses non-violent, creative confrontation to expose global environmental problems, and to force the solutions which are essential to a green and peaceful future. Greenpeace's goal is to ensure the ability of the earth to nurture life in all its diversity (Greenpeace International website – accessed May 3, 2011).

increasingly becoming resource-constrained actors, the dependencies between the state and powerful societal interests have changed direction. As Pierre and Peters (2000) clearly claim, nowadays it is as if governments want to be accepted by the other actors as insiders in policy communities,

> In the heyday of corporatism, organised interests were eager to secure access and participation in the state's decision-making processes. Today, it is the state which seeks to engage the third sector in public service delivery (Pierre and Peters 2000: 83).

Having laid out the different kinds of relationships between the state and non-state actors, the discussion shall now turn to the various scales of operations and alternative routes of influence that are available for organised groups to get their message through.

3.5.4   Scale of operations and routes of influence

The speeding up of regionalism and globalisation that are incrementally constituting a new world order, while reshaping domestic political space, has rendered the insider/outsider typology of interest groups less useful and dogmatic. The 'new politics' paradigm based on 'a multi-level, multi-arena game' offers a political scenario which is not necessarily confined to the traditional Westphalian system of nation-states. Contemporary times are characterised by powerful transformative forces responsible for a massive shake-out of societies, economies and the institutions of governance.   States still retain the ultimate legal claim to effective supremacy over what occurs within their territories, but this is carried out in the light of expanding jurisdiction of institutions of international governance and the parameters of international law (Held et al 2005). The new world order is no longer conceived as 'state-centric', as regionalism and globalisation are associated with the emergence of powerful new non-territorial forms of economic and political organisations in the global domain, such as multinational corporations, international/regional regulatory agencies and transnational social movements. The creation of 'a kind of global politics' has implications for sovereignty and democracy (Anheier et al 2005) and, if given time and opportunity, global civil society can 'strengthen and reinvigorate' the credentials of democratic institutions (Wainwright 2005). These epoch-making developments led to a different configuration

of interest groups, one which takes into account the *scale of operations and the preferred routes of influence*.

The scale of operations can range from local scenarios, wherein local authorities are targeted, to international arenas characterised by global and regional civil organised interests operating beyond and across national borders. The concept of MLG, as managed by the EU, gives expression to the idea that there are many interacting authority structures at work in the emergent global political economy. It illuminates the intimate entanglement between the domestic and European levels of state and non-state authorities. In the words of Wonka and Warntjen (2004: 10), 'MLG shifts the focus from politics about the EU to politics in the EU' and stresses the governance aspect by highlighting the relatively equal (horizontal) distribution of power in EU and member states' politics among private interest groups and public actors (Kohler-Koch and Eising 1999). In a similar vein, Bache and Flinders (2004: 197) observe that this mode of decision-making at various territorial levels is characterised by the increased participation of non-state actors, which are not necessarily Euro federations, but also interest groups operating at the national, regional and local levels. Bache and George's hypothesis that the changing contexts and roles of the state are stimulating state actors to 'develop new strategies of coordination, steering and networking with other non-state actors' (Bache and George 2006: 36), has been probed into by later researchers (Saurugger 2013, Harwood 2010, Adshead and Tonge 2009, Bache 2008, Cassar 2008). Empirical evidence from these studies seems to indicate a positive relationship between public service reform and MLG as part of the Europeanisation process.

A reconfiguration in the scale of operations leads to diversified routes of influence. Traditionally, interest groups were effectively geared to target national bodies, above all, ministers and central national bureaucracies. However, as the reality of the EU with its concepts of MLG and multi-access points became more immersed in public policy processes and in the actors' mindset, a 'European', sometimes referred to as 'Brussels', route of influence emerged to complement, not substitute, the older national route,

> At its most simple level, the 'national route' refers to the use of national contacts and national governments to influence the EU decision-making, whereas the 'European route' involves seeking to exert influence by representation direct to the European institutions themselves (Greenwood 2003: 32).

If they choose the 'European route', interest groups have to take into account that the fundamental relationship between them and the European institutions is one of exchange: EU institutions seek information, interest groups seek influence. If the latter want to exert influence, they have to provide information (Charrad 2005: 14). Lobbying is a difficult task, and requires not only financial and personnel resources but also a profound knowledge of the EU institutions. Each institution has different ways of dealing with external input, and according to numerous commentators (Said 2006, Van Schendelen 2005, Fazi and Petrescu 2003, Flynn 2000), national and supranational umbrella organisations, together with their commissioned lobbyists, need to adapt their strategies to the constantly changing settings they find themselves in. Rapid advancement in communication technologies has extended the geographical public square to cyber political space where the potential of domestic groups to go beyond their national borders has increased dramatically. Empiricism is confirming Hill and Hughes' claim (1998: 181-184) that the more internet penetration spreads, the more it will change the nature of political action and discourse.

As we have seen, the task of categorising interest groups into a typology which best suits particular polities is not a straightforward task since there are various variables at play. Nonetheless groups are all eager to find some space in the corridors of power where they can exert pressure among politicians and bureaucrats. Or else they can occupy the public square or utilise the cyber platform to sensitise the public about their concerns on policy issues. Whether engaged in physical or virtual activities, interest groups need to understand the art of lobbying and the management of public affairs in order to move and shake the status quo of institutional arrangements. In the next section, the discussion shall revolve round the different techniques used in exercising influence over policy processes and the public at large.

3.6 Lobbying and corrupt practices

An essential part of the work performed by interest groups involves influence over policy decisions and public attitude through lobbying stratagems. Etymologically, the political meaning of the word 'lobby' refers to 'those who seek to influence legislation' in reference to the custom of influence-seekers gathering in large entrance-halls outside legislative chambers (Online Etymology Dictionary 2011). There are politicians and legislators who accept lobbyists and allow them space to manoeuvre around public policy domains, while many others tend to be extremely suspicious and raise ethical questions on their coercion tactics which sometimes, they argue, have a hint of political blackmailing and bribery.

At the European level, there has been the new voluntary *Transparency Register* (a joint effort of the EC and the EP) which was launched in 2011. It replaces the *Register of Interest Representatives 2008*, which followed the *European Transparency Initiative* launched 2005 to ensure that the European Union is 'open to public scrutiny'. When interviewed by the author in 2009, Charles McCreevy, Commissioner for Internal Market and Services (2004-2010), maintained that in future, the success of such transparency drives depends on whether there will be agreement on a working definition of who shall be incorporated in this register or not. 'Everybody should know who the lobby groups are and in whose interests they are lobbying'. [36] Nonetheless, interconnections between lobbying and corruption are not alien to EU institutions. In March 2011, three MEPs were charged with corrupt practices and, eventually, two of them resigned. According to BBC online (2011), *Sunday Times* reporters posed as lobbyists looking to hire politicians to amend EU legislation. They said the three MEPs[37] agreed to take up the role for up to 100,000 euros per year each. A far more serious case is the one involving John Dalli, Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy (2010-2012), who was ordered to resign by the President of the European Commission following a report by the European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF) in 2012

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[36] Interview conducted by the author on July 8, 2009 in Brussels.
[37] Zoran Thalen (Slovenian MEP), Ernst Stasser (Austrian MEP) and Adrian Severin (Romanian MEP).

which claimed that a Maltese lobbyist had approached a Swedish tobacco producer and proposed to make use of his contacts with Dalli to lift the EU export ban on snus[38].

Political legitimacy of interest representation can only be realised through the attainment of the principles of transparency and accountability (Wilson 1990, Smith 1993). Lobbying tactics need to be ethically correct, although the demarcation line of what is ethically correct or what is not is not always clear and categorical. Attention shall now shift to discuss the various forms that lobbying strategies can take. An interest group wanting to influence the domestic and European arenas can choose from a variety of 'old' and 'new' lobbying techniques. According to Van Schendelen (2005: 44) the traditional methods are four, namely *coercion*, *encapsulation*, *advocacy* and *argumentation*, while the new (and better) stratagems involve the practice of *Public Affairs Management* (PAM). The latter entails a more holistic approach, starting from making internal choices and restructuring, and then proceeding to executing fieldwork. Figure 3.3 illustrates the components of both the old and new influence techniques.

3.6.1 'Old' strategies of lobbying

The first among the traditional influence techniques is *coercive action*. Business lobbyists and pressure groups may set up a blockade or an audacious campaign, such as the 'tuna wars' promoted by fishermen groups[39] and green interests like Greenpeace.[40] In 2002, during a parliamentary debate that was discussing amendments to the Referendum Act in preparation for the referendum on EU accession, the Maltese Prime Minister claimed that 'some of the existing investors had made it clear to him that

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[38] Snus is a moist powder tobacco product originating from a variant of dry snuff in the early 18th century in Sweden. The sale of snus is illegal in the EU but due to special exemptions, it is still manufactured and consumed primarily in Sweden and Norway.

[39] The hard-line protest campaigns by French fishermen in 2006 are a case in point. French tuna fishermen angry at a campaign by Greenpeace ship Rainbow Warrior II for a moratorium on tuna fishing blocked access to the port of Marseille on August 23, forcing ferries and cargo ships to suspend journeys (Reuters 2006).

[40] On June 22, 2009 scuffles broke out in Malta as Greenpeace protesters tried to board a fishing boat in the Grand Harbour during a protest against unsustainable fishing. The incident happened when activists blocked access to the boats soon after they arrived from Libyan waters. The protest was held by activists from the UK, Australia, the US and Lebanon. One of the Americans said that when he tried to get on board one of the boats, he was punched, pulled by the hair and thrown overboard. Further scuffles broke out as another Greenpeace member tried to board a boat (timesofmalta.com 2009).

unless Malta became a member of the EU they would transfer their investment to other countries within the EU' (Pirotta 2006: 283). It was a clear case of political blackmailing, or coercive pressure to use more ethically correct terminology.

Figure 3.3: Old and new influence techniques

		Homework: Analysing	Fieldwork: Organising
	Who acts?	the internal organisation	improving the organisation
	Why?	threats and opportunities	choosing the strategy
	For what?	deliberate various options	determining the targets
	To whom?	crucial actors	making relations, networks
	Where?	domestic and European arenas	forming coalitions
	On what?	dossiers and issues	bargaining
	When?	time and agenda-phase	timing, agenda-building
	How?	methods, techniques, routes	LOBBYING
	& result?	process evaluation	learning

Influence strategies used by interest groups

New — Old

Coercion
Encapsulation
Advocacy
Argumentative

Public Affairs Management

Adapted from Van Schendelen 2005

Encapsulation, a second technique, can be exploited by state and non-state actors alike. Interest groups can formalise their influence by accepting a leadership position in a joint scheme and/or by applying for state or EU funding. For sceptics, the price of becoming an integral part of the policy process is that NGOs will be wrapped within the state's institutional framework with the probability of losing their independence. A subtler variant is the establishment of procedures of decision-making which make them subordinate to state authorities. Both the EU and individual member states are nowadays relying more heavily on partnership programmes and subsidy allocations to get NGOs on board in tandem with formal institutions.

The third traditional stratagem is *advocacy* which can never go out of usage since it is the bread and butter of any interest group, particularly when they detect an opportunity or fear a threat. Most often this technique manifests itself in public relations campaigns and other propaganda drives. Berry (1977: 213) identifies three categories of tactical advocacy: (a) techniques that are characterised by direct communication between lobbyists and governmental officials, (b) methods through which groups stimulate lobbying by citizens towards their government, and (c) tactics that groups may use to try to change governmental policy by influencing elections or altering public opinion. The referendum campaign on the introduction of divorce in Malta in May 2011 is a case in point. Pro and anti divorce pressure groups were formed which, together with political parties and the Church, engaged themselves in various public activities to get their message through to the electorate. The Church, together with the anti-divorce movements, defended the indissolubility of marriage and the stability of the family for the greater common good, while those in favour advocated that divorce is a civil right and that the interests of suffering citizens should not be sacrificed to the moral beliefs of the Catholic majority. Moreover the pro campaigners referred to the EU context where, they said, every citizen, except the Maltese, has the right of divorce. Their plea was to give the Maltese the same rights as those enjoyed by the rest of Europeans.

Argumentation, according to Van Schendelen, is the fourth 'old' influence strategy. Here, self-interest is hidden behind seemingly intellectual reasoning based on logically sound inferences and empirically credible references. The idea is to present the cause in a way that the changes being lobbied for are to the benefit of society as a whole (Downing 2002: 6). A sizzling debate started in the last quarter of 2008 and was pursued in the following years when the Maltese government announced a reform in the utility tariffs pertaining to water, gas and electricity.[41] Considering the higher tariff system as a drastic austerity measure, both the employers' and workers' representatives embarked on a long series of disputations that involved diverse arguments. They relied

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[41] The announcement generated a chorus of disapproval from the social partners, who highlighted that the procedure adopted for the revision of the tariffs was not based on consultation; moreover, the trade unions and employer organisations were concerned about the adverse effects that the higher prices would have on the economy. On October 29, 2008, the MCESD issued a short statement noting that it had not been properly consulted by the government on the tariffs issue. Furthermore, MCESD insisted that the government should take the necessary measures to alleviate the burden of the new tariffs (Debono 2009).

on macro economic and social pleas to mobilise greater and wider public support in order to try and safeguard their members' interests.

Each of the four old lobbying strategies is still practised in the public square and within the corridors of power, yet these customary techniques have a limited, and frequently even decreasing effectiveness and efficiency. These stratagems seem to be unfit to match the challenging, ever changing national and EU playing fields where pragmatism, alliance formation and cross-cultural/sectorial interactivity are much more crucial than rigidity, protecting one's own local ivory tower or simply isolating oneself through forcible action or encapsulation. In this context, Van Schendelen (2005) makes his case in favour of the 'new' strategies of lobbying based on PAM.

3.6.2 'New' strategies of lobbying

PAM has become the new dictum. Interest groups need to improve their organisations continuously, identify alternative strategies and not stick to prescribed ones, determine their targets (which local, national, regional or international institutions to steer) and invest more time and energy to sustain their relations with partner organisations and establish new networks through the use of social media. In addition, PAM entails the detection of those policy arenas where interest groups need to form coalitions and bargain collectively, build a workable agenda, set appropriate timing when to intervene and opt for the optimum tailored lobbying methods, techniques and routes. This is a complex process involving a simultaneous matrix constituted of 'internal preparatory work' and 'fieldwork interactivity'. Groups need not only be rational in their choices to maximise their interests in the arena, but they must also be eager to learn through constant processes of evaluation and socialisation. It represents a practical way where RCI and SI become intertwined to offer a more holistic and pragmatic approach. When correlating the old and new influence strategies, Van Schendelen concludes that,

> The new techniques are, in contrast, based on the belief that the domain and the scope of influence are always limited and fragile. The domain has to be scanned by going window-out and the scope has to be enlarged by acting window-in. The popular catchword for both is *lobbying*. A lobby group, thus, is a pressure group acting window-

out [external fieldwork] and window-in [home organisation and strategy formulation] (Van Schendelen 2005: 47).

The set of questions, exhibited in Figure 3.3, absorbs the two logics of RCI and SI: calculation and appropriateness. Groups activists have to take into account the codes of appropriate behaviour and the contextual values of their calculated actions within the political arena. Concurrently, they seek to achieve their aspirations through methodological processes in the games people play. Thus, the PAM approach is conducive to the theoretical framework of new institutionalism as applied in this study. The transition from the old to the new patterns of lobbying can be considered an indication of Europeanisation. PAM is definitely more in line with the norms and values of power-sharing, negotiation, compromise, solidarity, coalition building and networking as promoted by the EU polity.

The approach proposed by the PAM, together with its underlying institutional back-up and organisational norms, is considered by many as a core constituent of good governance not only within organised groups structures but, more importantly, in securing more legitimate processes of policy-making at the national and European levels. The theme of good governance shall be discussed in the next section.

3.7   Towards good governance and policy success

Good governance has already been referred to in Chapter 2 as one of the four fundamental pillars on which the economic resilience of small states rests. It was also implied throughout this chapter, particularly when reference was made to the social teachings of the Catholic Church and the principle of MLG as promoted by the EU. Although still a contested term with a high normative content, Hyden et al (2008) present one of the more important and recent elaborations of the concept of governance. Their approach is very broad defining governance as 'the formation and stewardship of the formal and informal rules that regulate the public realm, the arena in which state as well as economic and social actors interact to make decisions'. This definition, echoing the underlying principles of RCI and SI, epitomises the role and contribution of civil

society towards public policy where citizens and interest groups raise and become aware of political issues and participate in ensuing political debate.

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP 1997a: iv), good governance 'comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups can articulate their interests, mediate their differences and exercise their legal rights and obligations'. It presents a positive corollary between policy legitimacy and policy success: the greater the degree of policy legitimacy through public participation, fairness, accountability and transparency, the better the chance to achieve policy success. Figure 3.4 presents the eight fundamental values of good governance as identified by the UNDP.

Figure 3.4: The core values of good governance
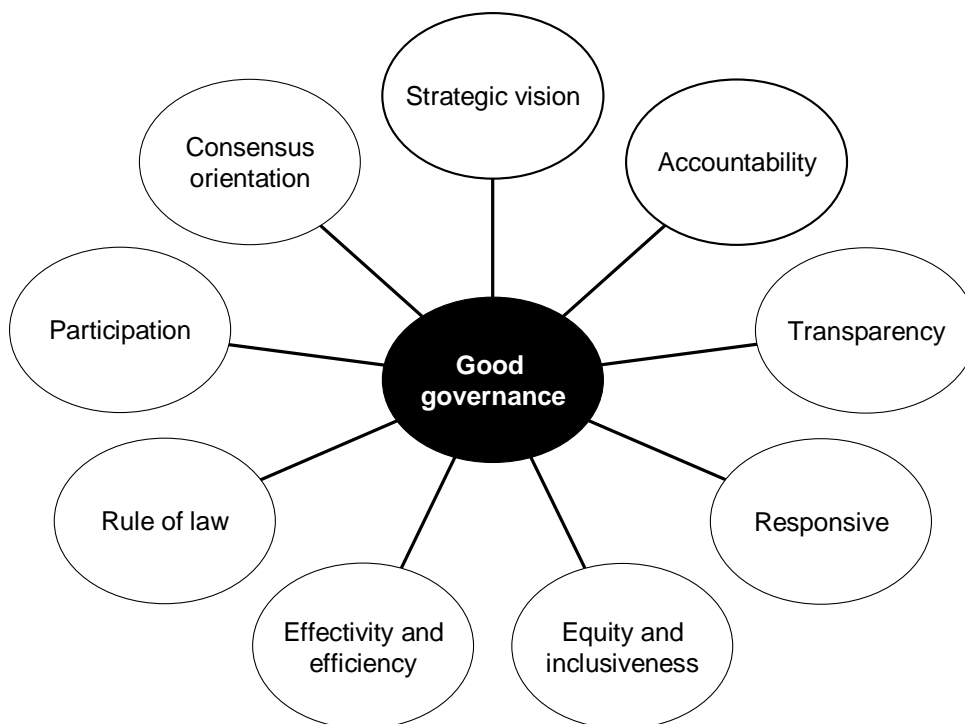
UNDP 1997

Of all the nine characteristics of good governance, *strategic vision* deserves a special mention since the rest have more or less been treated in previous sections and chapters. Strategic vision refers to the broad and long-term perspective that the state and the

public ought to develop to realise the benefits of good governance. This entails an understanding of the historical, cultural and social complexities in which public policy is grounded. In other words, good governance needs to be interwoven within the existing political culture. It builds on the social and economic fabric of the polity and strives to change those realities that are in conflict with any of its core characteristics. Interest groups do have important roles in policy processes and they stand to contribute best when there exists a political culture that is highly consultative. This aspect of governance, relating to *voice and accountability*, often articulated in terms of freedom of expression and association, is one of the six fundamental components of the Kaufmann Index of good governance (Kaufmann et al. 2009). [42]

The consultative style of governance is deemed important to simplify the decision-making process (Smith 1993), ensuring the legitimacy of political decisions (Jordan and Richardson 1987) and lead to policy success (McConnell 2010). Green (quoted by Deakin 2001: 109) comments that 'any conception of civil society and its role in democracy must incorporate a more sophisticated understanding of policy-making'. Actors operating outside the state must, therefore, have a contributing voice in any of the five stages of the policy cycle as figure 3.5 suggests.

In this context, Gorges (1997: 4) asserts that it is impossible to make policy in an advanced industrial economy without active participation or, at least, acquiescence (passive or forced) of important interest groups. Rhodes (1996) speaks about *game-like interactions* between state and non-state actors, rooted in trust and regulated by rules of the game negotiated and agreed by network participants. Although policy networks have a significant degree of autonomy within the state, the latter can indirectly and imperfectly steer networks. In part, this urge to involve a greater spectrum of actors in making public policy explains why state bureaucracies seem to be constantly reinventing themselves.

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[42] The Kaufmann Index, or The Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) project reports aggregate and individual governance indicators for 215 economies for six dimensions of governance: (a) voice and accountability, (b) political stability and absence of violence, (c) government effectiveness, (d) regulatory quality, (e) rule of law, and (f) control of corruption.

Figure 3.5: The policy cycle
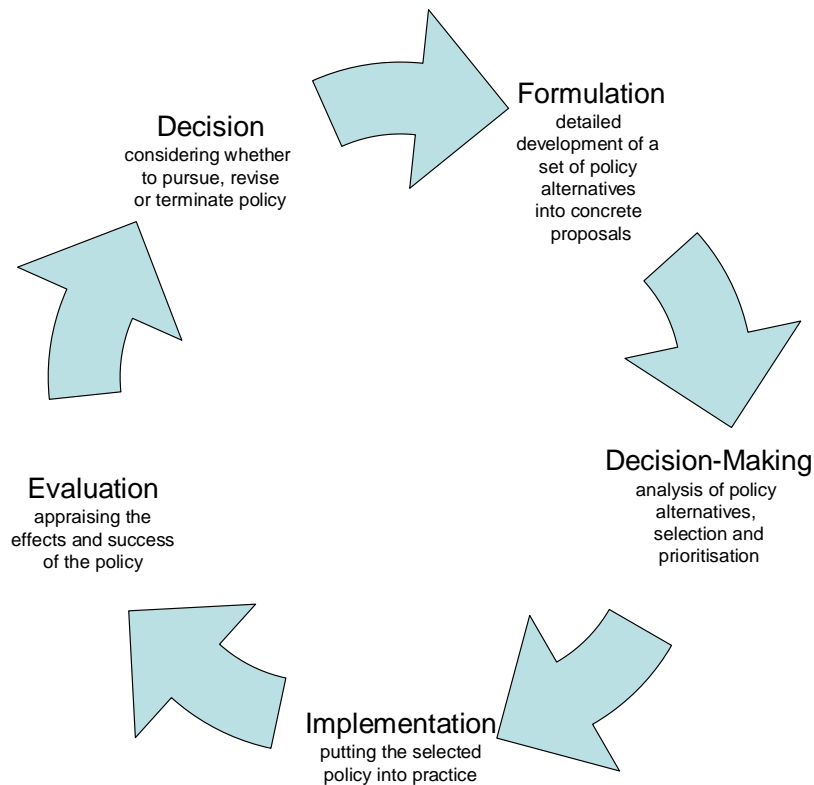
Adapted from Hague et al. 1998: 262

New public management calls for two distinct yet interrelated values – *openness*[43] and *inclusion*[44] – in its quest to improve public policy. These two elements, highly recommended by OECD, led to the setting up of supporting formal and informal institutions that address the missing link that traditionally characterised the relationship between state and non-state actors. Figure 3.6 presents a continuum identifying the different steps of involvement of interest groups at all stages of the policy cycle. Except for exclusion and indifference, the other steps can be legitimate in the circumstances, for example partnerships are not always desirable, especially in times of economic decline or when NGOs persist in considering themselves as mere protest groups (Farrell 2011: 10).

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[43] Openness means providing citizens with information and making the policy process accessible and responsive (OECD 2009: 13).
[44] Inclusion means including as wide a variety of citizens' voices in the policy making process as much as possible (ibid.).

Figure 3.6: A scale of involvement of civil society organisations in policy processes

| -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Exclusion | **Indifference** | **One-way dissemination** | **Consultation** | **Dialogue** | **Participation** | **Partnership**

- Public authorities provide information (one-way info channel)
- Public authorities tell NGOs what happens and ask for feedback (two-way info channel)
- Both public authorities & NGOs are able to set the agenda, & authorities may respond to NGOs' concerns
- Ideas put forward by NGOs are incorporated into policy design, dossiers & programs
- A strong term denoting that NGOs are taken as partners, and play real role in all stages of policy-making

Social Platform 2009

The impetus of civil society is, thus, at the very core of good governance. Rizzo (1989: 96) maintains that governments may jeopardise their position by being oblivious to well-deserved causes and demands. Policy practitioners recognise the fact that 'public engagement is not just desirable' but 'it is a condition of effective governance' (Lenihan 2009: 208); 'a matter of survival for open, democratic government' (OECD 2005d). While Minogue et al (1998) ponder on the challenge of converting changing ideas into practice, Andersson and Wilson (2009: 58) stress the need to 'increase the focus on doing better rather than just more participation'. Think-tanks, policy practitioners and NGO leaders are not impressed by high levels of eloquent rhetoric but are more interested in translating the elements of good governance into 'standard practice, especially at the national level' (Lukensmeyer 2009: 232). This entails commitment to finding ways to institutionalise deliberative practices which is most prevalent in small

states where governance, according to Sutton (2006: 13), is characterised by 'exaggerated personalism'.[45]

3.8   Negative social capital

Although the inclusion of interest groups in the complex matrix of national and international policy-making is most often considered as a positive step towards greater legitimacy, better democracy, stronger accountability and an enhanced propensity for 'world peace and prosperity' (Annan 2005), empirical evidence has also suggested a sinister side of citizens' engagement.

Depending on the intentions of their leaders, interest groups can either serve as a positive force to strengthen social capital [defined by Putman et al. (1993) as 'features of social organisation, such as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated action'], or a damaging impetus that produces negative social capital. Monga (2009) dwells on the menacing nature of 'uncivil societies' and refers to mafia style organisations, secretive masonic lodges, extremist schools, terrorist groups, hate groups and dictators' sponsored NGOs that seem to have a 'monopoly over morals and ethics' within their sphere of influence. Seligman (1992: 60) also binds 'morality' with the 'idea of civil society'.

> [B]ecause civil society leaders are often political entrepreneurs, some NGOs are hijacked by and serve as Trojan horses to people who are motivated by the quest for political power… [I]t is also undeniable that some organisations that pretend to work under the civil society umbrella do not adhere to national laws and regulations. Far from contributing to the emergence of a collective social compact, their actions can actually generate negative social capital (Monga 2009: 14/15).

The *Moviment Azzjoni Xellug*[46] (MAX) goes further than this as it considers NGOs as '*saħta*' (curse), in the sense that the majority of such organisations are apolitical and,

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[45] Usually the public service of a small state is stongly influenced by ministers and senior public officials and may therefore be open to personal favour and patronage (Curmi 2011: 48).
[46] Left Action Movement. MAX is a movement made up of individuals and associations who hold left-wing principles and consider them relevant to today's realities. It intends to be pro-active in promoting the concepts of equality, liberty, social justice and environmental vigilance through public debate and, where necessary, direct action.

thus, do not adopt holistic approaches wherein they propose alternative models in running society, economy and politics to solve existing problems (MAX 2011). Unfortunately their actions, according to MAX, can have a contrary effect. For example, when they organise fund raising activities for a good cause, they are implying that nobody is responsible for problems concerning poverty and social exclusion, and the solution can be found in charitable donations. Furthermore, their autonomy and independence from state institutions are seriously challenged whenever they obtain funding aids and/or participate as partners with national and/or European institutions.

As a consequence, the field of interest groups does not only present an ambiguity of phraseological and semantic nature as argued earlier on but, above all, it constitutes an ethical dilemma: does it strengthen or debilitate the foundations of democracy? These troubling notions stress the need 'to shift the debates about civil society away from formal structures and organisations and towards an investigation of beliefs, values and everyday practices' (Hann 1996: 14). Albeit the overall perspective of this thesis is based on the belief that interest groups lead to better governance, nonetheless it would be a mistake to assume that all interest representations are benign in their true nature and character.

3.9   Conclusion

Interest groups are a diverse bunch. The arena of interest representation is populated with multiple terminologies, definitions and typologies. In mainstream literature organised groups are considered as a nursery for social capital and a core characteristic of good governance. Yet they can also lead to negative consequences if the intentions of the actors are of a sinister nature. The result of this high variability is the lack of a common attitude among political scholars towards the role of interest groups in public affairs and a missing overarching classification which would be accepted by all.

The wide array of influencing techniques at the disposal of interest groups gives them an impetus to deal with different situations using, what they think to be the most effective tactics. Some are subtle and remain unnoticed by the media, while others tend

to be bold and loud. Some are collaborative, inducing a partnership culture with state actors, while others are extremely hostile and antagonistic to the establishment. Pragmatism is the underlying principle of success as groups need to constantly monitor their external environment and align their internal structures and strategy formulation to ever changing circumstances.

The examination of the different variables relating to interest groups in this chapter is a crucial prerequisite to the presentation and analysis of primary findings in the empirical chapters. The nature and extent of Europeanisation are to be determined by these same variables. In fact the homework and fieldwork manoeuvres associated with PAM give a solid theoretical background to the selected four dimensions against which the impact of Europeanisation is to be measured and decoded. The next step is to start analysing the political terrains of Malta and Ireland so as to detect points of similarities and disparities concerning context specific realities. The aim of detecting these tensions of synergies and conflicts is to provide a contextual setting that paves the way for a better appreciation of the complexity of issues when examining the impact of Europeanisation on domestic interest groups. Chapter 4, in essence, comprises a dual narrative of political institutions, modes of governance and strategic initiatives of social dialogue that shape the political terrains of the two selected member states.

Chapter 4

Maltese and Irish Soil: Configuring Small Polity Terrain

Chapter 4
Maltese and Irish soil: configuring small polity terrain

Those who do not know the lay of the land cannot manoeuvre their forces.

Sun Tzu
Chinese military commander
The Art of War

4.1   Outlining the narratives

This chapter outlines the changing scenarios of the two small island states under study. Malta and Ireland present interesting case studies on how Europeanisation can be accommodated within existent territorial politics signalled by the distinctive features of smallness, islandness and periphery. Primarily, the chapter has two major sections involving two parallel narratives elucidating the Maltese and Irish identities and the series of transformations they have gone through, particularly, over the last five decades. In particular, it tries to explore the narratives from the perspective of contemporary state-society relationship. This is in line with the school of institutionalist thought which, according to Schmidt (2006: 98), is characterised by its emphasis on the institutional terrain where political events occur and for the outcomes and effects they generate. The major aim is to lay out the political landscape where state and non-state actors are involved in the act of governance. Decoding the various elements that constitute the terrain through which political actions sprout and spread is the first step in understanding how and why interest groups in small island polities behave and act in specific ways. Furthermore, as Olsen (2002) maintains, the impact of the EU on territorial politics is classified as one of the many faces of Europeanisation. The discussion in this chapter stimulates the presentation and analysis of primary data in the next three chapters generated through fieldwork in Valletta, Dublin and Brussels.

4.2   Contrasts and contradictions

The analysis of Maltese and Irish terrains reveals a hybridised model of governance based on idiosyncratic features and differing degrees of polarisation and pragmatism. Central governments still hold extensive powers in these small polities, as the concept of regional and local governance is much less defined and activated than in large states (Laffan and O'Mahony 2008: 137). In a similar vein, Warrington (1993: 167) concludes that small states seem to 'remain complacent about big government'. Viewed from one perspective, Maltese and Irish interest groups are fragmented and competitive. Civil society is characterised by a cacophony of voices which have gained more momentum through the exploitation of old and new media sources. Nonetheless the 'hegemonic power of the Church' (Briguglio 2009) still raises eyebrows at the true nature of pluralism in an 'almost monolithically Catholic' environment (Garvin 1988: 96), even though interest in religion and the church in general has dwindled among the younger generations (Ellul 2009, Frendo 2009). In the beginning of the 1990s, Chubb did not hesitate to deduce that Ireland's political and societal terrain was to be 'configured in pluralist terminology, although [in order to be truly so] it would have to change a great deal more than it has so far done' (Chubb 1992: 29). Time proved Chubb right. Malta seems to be following the same direction as its traditional value system has already made way for more differentiated lifestyle cultures and disparate interest activism in domestic and European politics (Briguglio 2009, Agius 2009, Abela 1991).

However the two polities, if viewed from another perspective, display elements of neocorporatism, particularly in the engagement of tripartite mechanisms. Social partnerships (SP) do not come uncontested either, as the majority of Ireland's intelligentsia advocate a form of SP which purports to give a voice to the excluded and the marginalised (Muscat Josie 2011, Allen 2000: 35). In Malta, the Social Pact could not be realised due to political polarisation. Moreover, parochialism – 'a grid of strong and close personal connections resembling parish divisions' (Friggieri 2009, Koster 1988) – and personalism – 'a pattern of relations in which people are valued for who they are and whom they know' (Laffan and O'Mahoney 2008: 137, Chubb 1992: 13) – suggest an elitist presence in the two island states. The combined characteristic of

smallness, periphery and insularity make for a particularly intense social experience. Nonetheless, one of the paradoxes of small and intimate societies is that the social distance between the top and the grassroots seems to be the same – in relative terms – as one might find in larger, more complex and pluralistic societies (Ciorbaru et al 2005: 29, Friggieri 2008).

4.3   Bio-diversity in polity terrain

The sheer mushrooming of interest groups across all policy domains in Malta and Ireland does not automatically constitute a pluralistic state, as some groups are more privileged than others in inner power circles due to well preserved personal links. Elite governance is further sustained by the formation of policy networks, together with emergent and exclusive policy communities that bring about an aggregate of actors sharing homogeneous interests while vetoing any alternative voices. During observation sessions specifically conducted for this research, it was deduced that consultation meetings in Malta are almost always attended and dominated by a small circle of representatives who know each other well and know well how to marginalise dissenting voices.

The process of decoding the performance of interest groups entails a configuration of the political terrain in which they are functioning. It is through an understanding of the composition of the nation's soil and its political climate that we can really figure out the bio-diversity of actors and their webs of interconnectedness. On the one hand, the governance of small island polities tends to present a unique scenario. On the other hand, their experiences are composed of some elements that are distinctive and many others that are shared with numerous states, large and small, developed and developing (Warrington 1997). It is this blend of shared and distinctive factors that merits examination and perhaps holds some lessons that could be applied elsewhere, bearing in mind that 'the roads to good governance are not paved in a linear or identical fashion' (Koranteng 2010). In a nutshell, small polities are as complex as very large ones; small size does not automatically imply simplicity and uniformity.

The discussion will now devolve into two parallel narratives, starting with the case of Malta followed by the Irish one. Each narrative is activated by an official political profile, which is eventually qualified by a critical appraisal of key national features including the economic, social and cultural fabric that shape the contemporary political landscape.

4.4   The Maltese narrative

Malta became independent in 1964, having been under British rule since 1800. The Constitution established Malta as a liberal parliamentary democracy, guaranteeing separation between executive, judicial and legislative powers with regular elections based on universal suffrage. The country is divided into thirteen electoral districts, each electing five members to a unicameral House of Representatives[47] on the basis of a Single Transferable Vote (STV) system of proportional representation, a system which is used by only one other state in the world - Ireland. The Cabinet, headed by the Prime Minister, exercises executive power and is accountable to Parliament. Since independence, it has been the norm for the government to run its full term of office spread over five years, thus guaranteeing political stability which is deemed as one of the most crucial prerequisites to attract foreign investment. In fact in only one of the eight post-independence legislatures (1996-1997) has the incumbent party failed to complete its full term.

Eight days after independence, Malta submitted its application to join the United Nations (UN).[48] Once its request was approved three months later by the UN General Assembly, the then Prime Minister, Ġorġ Borg Oliver, declared that the UN membership represented 'the ultimate guarantor of our survival – the gesture of this Assembly has now set a permanent and indestructible seal on the sovereignty of Malta'

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[47] An indispensable characteristic of the Independence Constitution is the substitution of the bicameral system, which was no longer practicable, by a system of only one Government, the Government of Malta, with full legislative and executive powers

[48] Malta's constant contribution to the UN has been flagshipped by three major achievements, namely: the reformation of the Law of the Seas (1967), the issue of an ageing population in western societies (1969), the inclusion of climate change on the agenda of the 43rd session of the UN General Assembly (1988) and the election of Prof. Guido De Marco, one of Malta's most renowned politicians, as President of the UN General Assembly in 1990. During his term of office, De Marco initiated an open-ended committee on the revitalisation of UN (for detailed insights on Malta's contribution to the UN see Gauci 2005)

(Attard 2009). Furthermore, Malta remains a member of the Commonwealth and is a keen participant in the Euro-Med process. On defence matters, Malta usually allies itself with its fellow neutral EU member states, including Ireland, Sweden and Finland.

In 1974 the Constitution was modified to make Malta a republic. The Head of State is the President whose duties are largely ceremonial. The change did not create a presidential style of government. The President is nominated for a five-year term by the House of Representatives.

The principle of the separation of powers is safeguarded by the judiciary system which operates in an independent manner. The pluralistic elements that constitute Maltese Law are a reflection of the island's millennial history characterised by foreign domination. It is initially based on Roman Law[49] and eventually progressed to the Code de Rohan,[50] Code Napoleon[51] with influences from Italian Civil Law.[52] English common law,[53] however, is also a source of Maltese Law, most notably in Public Law.

4.4.1 The power of the Church

The role of the Catholic Church in the evolution of interest representation in Malta is of paramount importance. Christian credentials go back to the times of the apostles when Saint Paul, on his way to Rome in 64 A.D. onboard a Roman vessel, was shipwrecked on Maltese shores (Acts xxxviii). Prior to the foundation of local councils in the 1990s by an Act of Parliament, the Church was at the heart of village life. Its priests were influential men, and in the absence of elected mayors, they were the spokesmen of the village, the advisors and the organisers of civic affairs (ABC 1968). This was an

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[49] Roman law is the legal system of ancient Rome, and the legal developments which occurred before the seventh century AD — when the Roman–Byzantine state adopted Greek as the language of government.
[50] Emmanuel de Rohan-Polduc (1725-1797) was a member of the wealthy and influential Rohan family of France and Grand Master of the Knights of Malta from 1775 to 1797. He authored the *Code de Rohan*, a constitutional law book published in two volumes titled *Saint John of Jerusalem of Rhodes of Malta* in 1782 and was also responsible for the publication of the *Codice Municipale di Malta* in 1784.
[51] Code Napoleon is the French civil code, established under Napoléon I in 1804. The code forbade privileges based on birth, allowed freedom of religion, and specified that government jobs go to the most qualified.
[52] Civil law is a legal system inspired by Roman law, the primary feature of which is that laws are written into a collection, codified, and not (as in common law) determined by judges.
[53] The essence of English common law is that it is made by judges sitting in courts, applying their common sense and knowledge of legal precedent to the facts before them.

isolated island of simple Catholic faith – old-fashioned in its rituals, fervent in its expression. For centuries the Church has been the focus of national identity as it is symbolised by the national anthem; a prayer to God to defend and promote a collective spirit based on faith, work and peace written by a priest[54] in the 1920s. Contemplating on religion and social change, Vassallo (1979) concludes that in many respects the Church had been almost a 'surrogate form of political expression and nationalism'.

For centuries, all the developments that occurred in crafts and guilds in Malta were steered by priests or by some other authoritative forms as delegated by the Church (Fino 1983: 13). This semi-religious mode of representing artisans' and workers' interests was pursued during the British colonisation (1800-1964). Moreover, Frendo (2009: 95) states that the influence of the church as an institution was probably consolidated by British occupation in an age of secularisation. A case in point involves the *Societá Operaia*, founded in 1885 as a workers association, which had to change its name to *Societá Operaia Cattolica* to pursue its mission (A.A. and E.C. 1971). The practice of appointing priests as spiritual directors is still a remnant norm of the good old glorious days of *religio e patria* for Maltese organisations. The Malta Union of Teachers (MUT)[55] and the Union Ħaddiema Magħqudin (UĦM)[56] still retain the post of a Spiritual Director within their organigrams while this practice was discontinued by the General Workers Union (GWU) in the late 1960s.[57]

In recent times, as the Synod of the Archdiocese of Malta (1999-2003) admits, the Church has lost much of its power and cultural supremacy due to various external as

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[54] Dun Karm Psaila (1871-1961) who is also attributed as the national poet of Malta.

[55] 'Rev. Thomas Moore is the present spiritual director of MUT who is responsible for the organisation of religious functions, including the celebration of mass in commemoration of the demised members and the celebration of union's anniversaries' (interview with MUT General Secretary on November 5, 2010).

[56] According to Gejtu Vella, UĦM General Secretary, the Union is proud of having the services of a spiritual director and 'hopes that this post is retained in the years to come' (interview with UĦM Secretary on November 6, 2010)

[57] The GWU, which has dominated the industrial relations field in Malta as the largest workers' representative ever since its foundation in 1943, also maintained the tradition of engaging a spiritual director. The first spiritual director was Rev Paris who was succeeded by Rev Albert Busuttil. In 1951 Archbishop Gonzi nominated Rev. Prof. Edoardo Coleiro. Rev Benny Tonna was the last priest to hold this post until the 1960s when this practice was discontinued (interview with Charles Vella, Public Relations Officer on November 5, 2010)

well as local factors (Synod 2003).[58] Apart from the purely folkloristic aspect which the Catholic religion still evokes, it appears that, on an individual and private level, 'concrete decisions that affect the social and moral life of the majority of the Maltese are taken distinctly from, and sometimes in opposition to, Catholic teaching' (Montebello 2009: 119). The yes majority vote[59] in the divorce referendum in 2011 confirms a definite pattern of secularisation at least in Malta, if not in Gozo[60]. Eddie Fenech Adami, *President Emeritus*, solemnises the introduction of the divorce bill as 'it is the very first time since the inception of Maltese parliament that it went directly against one of the Ten Commandments' (interview with the author, 2012).

4.4.2   Post-colonial changes

As an island characterised by lack of natural resources and limited administrative expertise, the Maltese economy, often claimed as a 'miracle economy', had to be one based on labour. Its small internal market makes economies of scale very difficult to attain, with the consequence that export-orientated growth appears to be the only viable development policy. Baldacchino (1988: 80) maintains that domestic 'populist governments' subsequently subscribed to 'nationalistic appeals and corporatist tactics' to control the labour force.[61] Labour reacted by either consenting to the tactics or rejecting them, hence, consolidating the partisan political divide that has penetrated every sector of Maltese society.

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[58] The Vatican Council II and the politico-religious struggle (between the PL and the Church), both 1960s events, can be considered as the main external and local sources of changes. The author participated in all of the Synod sessions between 2000 and 2003 as he was representing his parish.

[59] The official tally showed that 52.67 per cent voted in favour of divorce but 46.4 per cent opposed the change. According to Dive.com 'although the two political parties took a step back in the run up to the referendum, by and large voting patterns in the electoral districts respected the traditional voting patterns of a general election'.

[60] Gozo saw almost all of its 70 per cent turnout vote No. Furthermore, four of the five Gozitan MPs declared that they were against the introduction of divorce and the fifth one did not commit himself until the draft legislation was discussed in Parliament.

[61] The labour movement was consolidated in May 1978 when the GWU's National Council and the PL's Executive Committee signed a socio-political pact leading to the fusion of the two organisations. The pact was based on three principles: (a) a union-party liaison structure; (b) representation on each other's executive committees and (c) representation of the GWU in the Cabinet of Ministers during Labour Governments. One has to note that the offer of a seat in the Cabinet of Ministers was made to all trade unions, however it was the GWU only that accepted the offer (GWU online). The PL-GWU pact was dissolved in 1992.

Pondering on Malta's recent development, Sultana (1997: 9) asserts that 'the island… has its own specific character, one marked by scale, late industrial – and educational – development, and its own particular history of dependency'. Economic changes in Malta started shortly after independence with the expansion of the manufacturing industry and tourism. Consequently, Malta's dependence on the British defence system started dwindling and from the last decade of the twentieth century it embarked on a holistic economic diversification programme based more on services. Although heavy state intervention as practised under Labour governments of the 1970s and the 1980s was dismantled by the Nationalist government since 1987, Malta's welfare system still retained its central and dominant orbit of power. It is responsible for the redistribution of wealth,[62] yet its relationship with interest groups tends to vary across different policy domains and in accordance with the party in government. A number of voluntary organisations have close partnership relationships with the State, often depending on statutory funding for survival. Others challenge the State through vigorous social movements (such as those involved in environmental, peace, gay and lesbian, civil rights and anti-racist causes) that some see as 'a people's opposition' (Powell 2002). Undoubtedly, the mainstream of the voluntary sector in Malta is clearly shaped by its symbiotic relationship with the State (Baldacchino 2013).

4.4.3   Gozo's double insularity

With one-twelfth of the country's overall population on one-third of the country's overall landmass,[63] *Għawdex* (Gozo) is more rural and traditional. Despite the fact that the two islands are really compact geographically, yet differentiated territorial politics do play a part. Gozo's mainly agricultural economy ensures a sense of pastoral calm and rustic quiet. Unscathed by the winds of moral relativism blowing across the European

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[62] The welfare state emerged historically as a top-down solution to the problem of how to secure social protection and security in the context of an urbanised self-contained capitalist economy with a comodified labour market (Bertram 2008). Malta's elaborate welfare state system developed over a fifty year period does not conform to Bertram's presumptions that this system of wealth redistribution is most prominent in societies of 3-4 million, losing importance as population size falls from that level.

[63] The population of Gozo is approximately 31,000. It has an area of 67 square kms, is 14 kms long and 7 kms wide. Politically, Gozo and Comino form one of the thirteen electoral districts of Malta. Five representatives are elected to the Maltese Parliament, and each of the fourteen localities or village communities have their own local council and therefore their own mayor.

continent, Gozo emerges as an island of churchgoers, where divorce and gay marriages are still considered anathema (Debono 2006).

Conscious of its rural characteristics, the Government in its Vision 2015[64] aims to make an 'ecological island' of Gozo to serve as a 'model of sustainable development'. However the social and economic situation of Gozitans is far from idyllic. The specific problems faced by islands such as Gozo, which depend on another country which itself is an island, have been capped under the 'double insularity' syndrome. Mercieca (2011) shares the viewpoint of many other stakeholders when he attributes double insularity as 'the certificate for lack of progress or regress in comparison to other communities'. Gozo's double insularity works against the island in many ways, and has often been touted as a huge disincentive for businesses to invest in the island. Moreover, Gozitans who have to commute to Malta on a daily basis to study or earn a living have to face additional hardships.

Gozo has had its own ministry since 1987, an institutional element that helped speed up the identification of problems and the formulation of solutions. In addition, since Malta acceded to the EU, Gozo's position of double insularity has allowed it to benefit from targeted funding as a region with special needs.[65] 'These funds are being used in key development areas, primarily transport infrastructure and education' (*World Report* para. 5).

While lamenting that Gozo's social and economic development was never truly high on the politicians' agenda, a Gozitan citizen writes to the editor of *The Sunday Times* that,

> What we need … is a properly functioning [independent] pressure group with brave and innovative vision, who will articulate our case in a coherent and structured way; but also, one with some clout, able to put pressure on the powers that be, which is essential (Camilleri 2011).

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[64] The document, entitled *Viżjoni 2015*, identifies seven sectors for development which will give the Maltese islands a comparative advantage by 2015. Besides establishing Gozo as an ecological island, the other six sectors are Financial Services, Information and Communications Technology, Tourism, Manufacturing, Health and Education.

[65] With regards to the Structural Funds allocated to Malta and Gozo for the financial period 2007-2013, it was agreed with the Commission, that in recognition of the specific needs of Gozo arising from the double insularity aspect, 10% of the Structural Funds would be specifically earmarked for projects in Gozo. The rest of the Structural Funds can be allocated to projects in Malta as well as in Gozo.

Camilleri's raging tone reflects the lack of trust in political parties by a growing segment of the local population. Many are becoming more and more 'tired of rhetoric from whatever quarter'. Lobby groups who owe allegiance to no one are deemed to be more representative when taking initiatives in the interest of the common good. The Gozitan University Group (GUG)[66] is perhaps filling this gap for the younger islanders and in these last years has been bold and ambitious to bring about significant changes that had been long awaited.

4.4.4 'The purest two-party system'

Despite the increase of widespread neo-liberal measures, particularly during Malta's long road to EU accession and afterwards, political clout retained pivotal positions over business interests, as the two main parties – the *Partit Nazzjonalista* (PN) and the *Partit Laburista* (PL) have transformed into 'catch-all' parties with strong media apparatus, 'acting like total institutions' (Baldacchino 2002). The former adheres to traditional European Christian Democratic ideals, while the latter followed the trend of other European socialist parties by shifting more towards the centre of the political spectrum and is lately labelling itself as a 'new political movement for progressives and moderates' (Zahra 2009). The failure on the part of a third party[67] to score electoral success is remarkable both at national level and at European level, although it did manage to get a handful of seats in local elections; but even there, the already limited number of its councillors has decreased over the years.

Domestic politics remain rife with divisive discourse. It is the only nation state in the world celebrating not less than five national days annually;[68] a kind of compromise

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[66] GUG was established in the 1980s and later, in 1987, it was formally recognized as a student organization. Since its inception GUG has evolved into a better organized, stronger organization and continuously strives to make its voice heard by undertaking a number of ambitious projects. Its main aim is to represent Gozitan students at University and to promote their interest in the transition to university life.

[67] The major third party in Malta is the *Alternattiva Demokratika* (AD) which in the last election national election in 2008 managed to secure only 1.31 per cent of the first preference votes nationwide. Since the initiation process of Malta's accession to the EU, it started rebranding itself as the Green Party.

[68] The five national days in Malta are: September 21 (Independence Day, independence from the United Kingdom 1964), March 31 (Freedom Day, withdrawal of British troops from Malta 1979), December 13 (Republic Day, republican constitution of 1974), June 7 (*Sette Giugno*, bread riot of 1919), September 8 (Victory Day, victory over Turkish besiegers in the Great Siege of 1565 and the allies over Nazis in 1943).

protocol to accommodate conflicting political views that divide the nation over the single most predominant symbol of Maltese nationhood.

Deemed to be 'the purest two-party system in the developed world' (Cini 2002), Malta is necessarily bound to go on being 'politically divided, floating between two mutually exclusive concepts' (Friggieri 2008: 57). With one of the highest voter turnout rates in the world, invariably over 90 per cent, Malta's population is habitually highly politically aware, participating enthusiastically in debates, elections and political manifestations (Corporate Village 2010: 61). However there are scattered signs, though still very significant, suggesting that the status quo has encountered a critical juncture. The fact that both the PN and the PL now seem to share a common view on European unification can be considered as a significant step towards a new level of maturity reached in Malta's international policy. However their outlook towards the EU is significantly different. Whereas the Nationalist government always treated the EU as the 'natural home' and the 'true vocation' of Malta, the new Labour government since 2013[69] started to adopt a utilitarian approach wherein the EU is only one of the various avenues that Malta can take in a globalised world. Using the terminology of institutionalist theory, one can observe that the PN's discourse on the EU follows a logic of appropriateness whereas the narrative of the PL is founded within a logic of calculation.

4.4.5   Local governance

Local governance is a relatively new concept in Malta. It was established in 1993 following Parliament's approval of the Local Councils Act. Today, Malta has 68 Local Councils - 54 in Malta and 14 in Gozo. A decisive step to consolidate local government in Malta was made when the system of local government was entrenched in the Constitution of Malta in 2001. From their inception, the Government adopted a policy of devolution of power and responsibilities to local authorities, although they have never been granted the power to raise taxes (Magro 2008). Over the years the objectives

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[69] The PL won the general election in 2013 with a margin of 35,000 votes or 54.83% of the electorate which is considered by all political analysts as the largest landslide victory in Malta.

of Local Councils have been widened and investment in this sector has increased both through national budgets' allocations and European funds.

Local governance is deemed to be a successful experiment by all political actors. Furthermore, there are many instances where local councils have teamed up with interest groups to lead various schemes, programmes and initiatives. Although there are visible and encouraging elements of mutual collaboration, the 'frequent use of sarcastic politically-loaded comments' that feature frequently and prominently on news-bulletins of parties' radio and TV stations indicate that 'staunch political bi-polarism' is still dominating the public square (Agius 2011: 20).

4.4.6   Dogmatic and unswerving dualism

Considering this heavily polarised political backdrop that cuts deep into the identity and cultural credentials of this Lilliputian nation, it comes as no surprise that the Maltese have an innate dilemma when it comes to accepting a unifying platform on which their contemporary nationalism could rest and regenerate its mould. In one of their pastoral letters of 2014, the bishops of Malta called for a 'greater sense of the state' among the Maltese in order to dismantle 'the screw-vice of partisan politics' (Cremona et al. 2014). Studies of this phenomenon memorably described the Maltese as 'ambivalent Europeans' (Mitchell 2002) and Malta as 'a state without a nation' (Baldacchino 2002). Prior to the EP election in 2004, Pat Cox, the Irish president of the EP (1989-2004) remarked that 'the Maltese style of polarisation where everything is black or white' is a doomed mentality as it would not reach up to people's expectations through their participation in the EU processes (Fenech 2004). Friggieri (2002: 16) concludes that 'the problem of Malta is Malta' where 'all things in life are always only divisible into two'. Having been a servitude colony for centuries, the Maltese have logically nurtured a divide between 'ġewwieni-barrani' (local-foreigner) and, since the cultivation of the domestic political class in the mid-nineteenth century, this native divide has evolved into 'aħna-huma' (us-them), where every domestic political development has been managed by confrontation and 'internecine rivalry' (Warrington 2010, Frendo 1993: 154).

The debate on EU membership was not spared from such a polarised straightjacket. The PN was the pioneer of Malta's European vocation, while the PL advocated a partnership pact with the EU, a sort of a half-way house between staying out and getting in. The nation was once again divided into its endemic two tribes. Ever since the prospect of Malta's membership of the EU was raised in the 1990s, complaints about aspects of local life and government have habitually made similar references to dichotomous discord. Warrington (2005) regards this discourse as odd, but significant: 'it confirms Maltese insecurities – insecurities associated with Mediterranean geo-politics, a long history of subjugation, the small size and vulnerability of the island and its economy, and our contested identity'. These insecurities were at play in every choice of a strategic external relationship confronting the Maltese since the eighteenth century (De Marco 2009, Spiteri 2007, Pirotta 2006).

4.4.7   Quasi-tribal politics

Operating in a political landscape divided into two 'tribal cages that segregated people from each other' (Serracino Inglott 2011, Mintoff 2010, Sansone 2008) Maltese interest groups are not free from political undertones and always run the risk of having their actions misinterpreted due to visible or alleged political connotations. Over the decades, trade unions, employers' associations, social movements, environmentalists and even religious organisations have all gone through experiences where their missions and causes have metamorphosed and/or been hijacked by partisan politics. Reflecting on the implications of a divided nation, Sant Cassia claims that civil society in Malta is truly divested of all power unless it falls within the parameters of big party agendas' (Vella 2003).

Alfred Sant, Prime Minister (1996-1998) who tried unsuccessfully to lessen the endemic divide, maintains that the people who should be making things shake and move are 'too bound by ties of friendship, tactical allegiance and political orthodoxy'. He maintains that,

> The pool of talented people available to the government comes from only a half of the political spectrum. People believed to favour the other half are shunted, no matter how able they might be (Sant 2005).

Evidence points to a great deal of hegemony of Maltese political parties and, ironically, their power has been compounded further through the launch of media pluralism when the two parties equipped themselves with radio and television stations, eventually even with mobile communications, adding further patronage and paternalism to the political elite,

> In 1991, Malta became the only European democracy allowing political parties to privately own radio and television stations. Radio licences to private companies were only granted after the main political parties and the Roman Catholic Church had established their media (Sammut 2009: 81).

In Malta, the media has actually been politicised rather than pluralised. Strong politicisation in highly dense communities often brings with it elements of clientelism and nepotism. Retired and respected politician, Lino Spiteri, confirms that clientelism and patronage are more acute and tangible in small states, but there is more to it. 'Our southern Mediterranean mentality, and (a false) dependence on the 'above' – expecting government to play god – make for and also fuel further patronage' (Salib 2007: 43). Party loyalty that transcends generations (Lane 1994) also contributes towards the persistence of a national culture based on political guardianship 'which, is often blind to the conflicts of interest that are inevitable in a small, densely-networked society' (Warrington 2010). Notwithstanding this entrenched feature of a 'politically polarised society where politics penetrate almost every sphere of social, communal and interpersonal life' (Zammit and Baldacchino 1989: 80), over the years, the Maltese have adopted a love-hate attitude towards their politicians and glimpses of 'extreme scepticism' towards their political elites have been on the rise (Mitchell 2002).

4.4.8   Creation of national coordinating institutions

Although Malta is still in the early stages of its European learning curve, according to a senior officer at *Dar Malta*,[70] there is ample evidence that the domestic institutions are being re-engineered to become Europeanised in both their structures and in the ways they devise policy (interview with the author, 2010). The institutional structures of the Government, including Parliament[71] and the Judiciary,[72] during both pre- and post-accession periods, have been 'greatly and radically reshaped to better adapt to the reality of the EU'. For example, the setting up of Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC) and Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD) is at the core of the whole Europeanisation process in Malta. Through MEUSAC, the Government is now obliged to coordinate with civil society and social partners in drafting the official position of Malta concerning proposed legislation by the European Commission. Such consultation is carried out both at MEUSAC core group and also in its nine sectoral committees.[73]

Of significant mention is the fact that MEUSAC's sectoral umbrella committees have been designed to correspond exactly to the different formations of the EU Council of Ministers, with the exception of consumer affairs rather than reflecting the portfolios of domestic ministries. Vanni Xuereb, chairman, in an interview with the author, said that MEUSAC is responsible for information related to the EU while providing assistance to interest groups and local councils in all possible ways in order to exploit EU opportunities and its funding programmes. 'My mandate, in particular, is to harness all

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[70] The nine-storey building that houses Malta's Permanent Representation in Brussels.

[71] Within the Maltese Parliament, it is the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs that started assuming responsibility for European Affairs as well. Notwithstanding these developments, Malta has still not established a parliamentary permanent representation in Brussels.

[72] The Europeanisation process has also left its mark on the domestic Judicial System wherein Maltese Courts are bound to observe the primacy of EU legislation and the principles of mutual recognition and judicial cooperation.

[73] MEUSAC's core group brings together representatives of Government, the political parties, constituted bodies, civil society and experts. Complementarily, MEUSAC's structure also incorporates various committees formed by representatives of different organisations, grouped under nine sectoral umbrellas, namely: (a) General Affairs, (b) Economic and Financial Affairs, (c) Justice and Home Affairs, (d) Employment, Social Policy and Health, (e) Competitiveness and Consumer Affairs, (f) Transport, Telecommunication and Energy, (g) Agriculture and Fisheries, (h) Environment and (i) Education, Youth and Culture.

the different energies, primarily for civil society to own the process of accession in the sense that it is not only the government to be doing the business...' (Micallef 2008). Likewise, MEUSAC's role is nonetheless crucial in the transposition process wherein interest groups are once again informed and consulted in policy cycles involving implementation and enforcement.

On its part, the MCESD, established in 2001, is rather geared towards domestic policy-making solidified through social dialogue and acts as an advisory council that issues opinions and recommendations to the Maltese government on matters of economic and social relevance. The formation of MCESD is the second best option that could be pursued after the failure of several attempts to set up a Social Pact. EU membership gave an impetus to obtaining a better perspective of what is going on in other member states within similar areas of interest. Through socialisation and learning, the Maltese representatives on the EESC have contributed further towards the development of socio-economic affairs, both at the domestic and European levels. Through information sharing and the establishment of best standards on a European scale, MCESD has been central in the deliberations pertaining to high profile dossiers, including Malta's National Reform Programme, Annual National Budgets, and the Sustainable Development Strategy. However MCESD does not come out uncontested. A number of social partners, both from the unions' and employers' sides, often express their disappointment that the true nature of such coordinating bodies is not consultative, but rather vehicles of state imposition of ready-made decisions.[74]

The creation of supporting formal coordinating institutions in domestic polity is a sign of breaking away from the past, branded by fragmentation, personalism and patronage, and an embarquement on a new pathway characterised by reconciliation and a greater sense of institutionalism. These developments may involve new power configurations

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[74] Many a time, the MCESD was marked by serious accusations of pseudo-dialogue regarding the 'imposition' by Government of the proposed utility retail tariffs. Eventually, trade unions have joined forces and in an unprecedented effort have called the people to the streets on November 14, 2008 to protest against the imposed regime of higher tariffs on water and electricity (Vassallo 2009). Allegations of state bullying erupt from time to time, particularly during the annual budget period, as social partners feel that they are not 'really consulted' and their suggestions are almost never taken on board.

resulting from a distortion in the number of veto points and the internalisation of new norms of conduct. Laurence Gonzi, Prime Minister (2004-2013), affirms that the first seven years of membership (2004-2011) have been marked by two essential features for political maturity and economic growth: 'normality' and 'stability' (Gonzi 2011). He argues that the general mode of the people is 'as if we have been there for fifty years'.

> The Maltese have learnt the rules of the game at a rapid pace, and policymakers, social partners and civil society alike have explored and exploited the new opportunities as a result of membership. EU funding has been used to correct the domestic infrastructural deficit in terms of urban environment embellishment, natural environment protection, power generation, road infrastructure, water management, new educational facilities and the modernisation of public transport (Gonzi 2011).

Notwithstanding a widespread reform programme across almost all policy domains, membership also meant the consolidation of domestic stability within an unstable Mediterranean region. The adoption of the euro was strategic to Malta's efforts to weather the negative implications of the latest global recession.

Contrastingly, behind the official archetype scenario, there is always a chorus of voices that tend to tell different, if not conflicting, narratives.

> The truth is that, especially in the last years, government politicians have strengthened their personal grip on those areas of decision making which they consider crucial to their political standing. The official rhetoric of course proclaims the opposite. Though well-camouflaged, recruitment and promotions in the public service and in government agencies have come under tighter political control than ever before (Sant 2005).

4.4.9   A more omnipotent Auberge de Castille[75]

Joe Borg, former Maltese Commissioner responsible for Fisheries Policy (2004-2011), confirmed with the author that the great majority of interest groups in Malta were in favour of accession because they have been directly involved, and constantly informed,

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[75] Auberge de Castille, in Valletta, became the Office of the Prime Minister on March 4, 1972. In this building the Prime Minister leads the business of government and every Monday he convenes his cabinet of ministers there. Auberge de Castille was the official seat of the knights of the Langue of Castille, León and Portugal – one of the most powerful of the Order, its head being the Grand Chancellor. The Knights of this Langue were responsible for the defence of part of the fortifications of Valletta, known as the St Barbara Bastion. The Auberge is situated at the highest point of Valletta and originally looked out on the rolling countryside beyond, giving it a unique vantage-point unsurpassed by any other building in the city.

throughout the negotiation period and, thus, their yes to Europe was out of conviction not convenience.[76] But this has not led to power decentralisation as many practitioners in the voluntary sector had hoped for.

In fact NGOs' representatives often complain about the lack of consultation at the national level and that the degree of responsiveness of the public sector to their main preoccupations and queries is regularly low and belated[77] (Pace 2008, 2006). Although things have improved with regards to the volume and content of public consultation, many activists admit that political power has even 'become more highly centralised' and 'we have to move a long way' to have a real devolution of power beyond that which is required by the EU in the administration of European funds (different interviews with the author, 2011). Over the last two decades, the Government of Malta has embarked on an ongoing change management project to re-engineer its public sector in order to enhance service quality, efficiency and productivity within its national administrative set-up. However, the EU itself has contributed to further enhance the centralisation feature of the Maltese system of governance, as the Office of the Prime Minister has been made responsible for all the structures that relate to European affairs (Harwood 2009, Camilleri 2009, Cassar 2008). In 2010 Nick Clegg, the UK's Deputy Prime Minister, labelled Malta 'the most centralised country in Europe' (*The Times*, May 20, 2010). The different structures and networks that work in tandem in the coordination of EU affairs in Malta are mapped out in figure 4.1. The new Labour administration which came into power in 2013 retained the same structures and networks, with the exception of the Cabinet Committee on EU Affairs which had still not been appointed at the time when this research was completed. Its role is being performed by the Cabinet as a whole.

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[76] Interview with Dr Joe Borg was held on April 7, 2011 at the University of Malta.
[77] This feedback was put forward by numerous NGOs leaders during a national conference called *L-Ewropa Tagħti Widen* organised by the European Commission Representation in Malta with the participation of Maltese civil society representatives in April 2006. In general, the same kind of problems cropped up during the second edition of the Conference in 2008, during which the author took a participant observer role.

Figure 4.1: Coordination of EU affairs in Malta
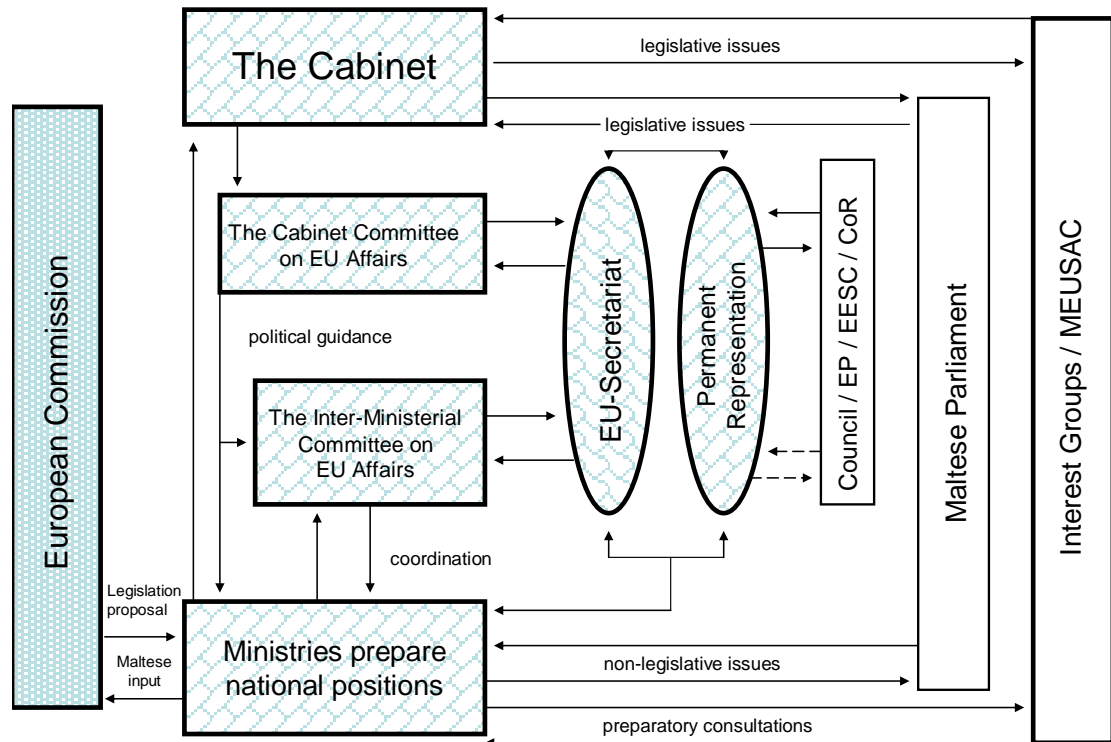
Dar Malta 2011

Discussing the impact of Europeanisation on national administrations is besides the scope of this work, yet it could be revealing to highlight that the EU Secretariat which coordinates the preparatory work for the Cabinet Committee on EU Affairs and the Inter-Ministerial Committee for EU Affairs, the EU Secretariat and the Planning Priorities Coordination Department (PPCD) which 'aims to ensure the efficient absorption and management of European assistance, EU and bilateral' have all been interwoven within the epitome of Auberge de Castille. Of particular interest to the theme of this study is the inclusion of Maltese interest groups, through MEUSAC platform, as part of the consultative process in drafting the Maltese input to legislative proposals issued by the European Commission.

4.4.10 Nexus platform organisations

Maltese groups are conscious of the benefits of EU membership within their respective sectors. The larger organisations[78] have been successful in obtaining EU funding and in identifying partner organisations from other EU member states. The smaller ones,[79] which rely almost exclusively on volunteers, even if they represent professionals or sub-sectors of the business sector, tend to be less successful and they point to the lack of administrative competence as the main reason for this (Pace 2006: 8). To mitigate such negative conditions, a number of domestic NGOs have discontinued their fragmented style of operations and, instead, have come together to follow a synergy strategy based on network formations (Wain 2009). This is done through the setting up of nexus platform organisations providing a forum for sharing good and useful practices, provision of training and consultation, research, projects development, technical assistance for applying and managing EU funding, and the promotion and development of corporate social responsibility.[80]

4.4.11 The EU's mark on Malta's terrain

The long years towards EU accession, the bitterly contested referendum and the first ten years of membership (2004-2014) as the smallest member state have all left their mark on Malta's terrain but, borrowing Saviour Rizzo's sense of restraint, Maltese actors and institutions are still 'not quite there' (Rizzo 2009: 19). Conversely, Grima (2009: 61) concludes that 'the potential of civil society organisations in Malta has increased substantially as a result of the opportunities that they currently enjoy to form part of European networks'. The two empirical chapters that follow help to better understand the nature and extent of Europeanisation that is being experienced by domestic social partners and interest groups.

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[78] Such as the Malta Bankers Association, the General Retailers and Traders Union, the Federation of Industry, the Chamber of Commerce, the General Workers' Union, the major political parties, *Flimkien għal Ambjent Aħjar* and various QUANGOES organisations including the Malta Environmental and Planning Authority (MEPA), the Central Bank of Malta, the Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority, the Communications Authority and so on.

[79] Such as Down Syndrome Association, Centre for Independent Living, Association of Farmers, *Koperattiva tat-Trobbija tal-Fniek*, *Dar il-Kaptan*, the Malta Union of Tourist Guides, the Malta Cycling Association and Local Councils.

[80] http://www.mrc.org.mt (accessed on December 29, 2008).

Prior to the presentation of the primary data, it is important to first portray the political landscape of Ireland so as to have a complete picture of the two member states under scrutiny.

4.5   The Irish narrative

The sovereign state of the Republic of Ireland, comprising 26 counties, is a parliamentary democracy. Its law is based on Common Law as modified by subsequent legislation and by the Constitution of 1937. Legislation is enacted by the *Oireachtas* (Irish Parliament) under the Constitution. Its Constitution sets out the form of Government and defines the powers and functions of the President, both Houses of the *Oireachtas* and the Government. It also defines the structures and the power of the Courts and outlines the fundamental rights of the citizen.[81]

Through the Republic of Ireland Act 1948, Ireland renounced the sovereignty of the Crown and, thus left the Commonwealth. Consequently the President is the Head of State and is elected by direct vote for a seven-year term. Executive power is exercised by or on the authority of the Government which is responsible to the *Dàil* (House of Representatives). The Head of the Government is the *Taoiseach* (Prime Minister). There are two Houses of Parliament, known as *Dàil Èireann* (House of Representatives) and *Seanad Èireann* (Senate). The *Dàil* has 166 members known as *Teachtaì Dàla* (TD). TDs are elected on a system of proportional representation by universal suffrage. Elections take place at least once every five years. The *Seanad* has sixty members, eleven of whom are nominated by the *Taoiseach* while the rest are elected from a number of vocational panels and by graduates of universities (*Ireland in Brief* 2007).

As a small country in a changing world, Ireland's foreign policy, similarly to that of Malta, remains firmly committed to the ideal of peace and friendly cooperation amongst nations founded on international justice and morality (Borg 2011). Thirty-three years after its painful and blood-soaked acquisition of independence, Ireland joined the UN in

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[81] The definition of rights covers five broad headings: Personal Rights, The Family, Education, Private Property and Religion.

1955 'with a wish to safeguard [its] status as militarily neutral or non-aligned' (Laffan and O'Mahoney 2008: 176). Within the UN, Ireland has sought to promote effective international action on global issues such as disarmament, peace-keeping, human rights and development.

4.5.1 A highly centralised state

The local government system is administered by 114 local authorities and regularly undergoes processes of renewal and reform.[82] It is a weak form of local governance,[83] largely funded by central government and partly by local sources including motor tax proceeds and local charges such as environmental waste charges and rents. As a small state, Ireland represents a highly centralised administration and, consequently, the focus of its development was steered on the national scale rather than treated from a regional perspective. Ireland was initially designated as one whole region for the purposes of structural funding; the introduction of regional governance was launched much later in the 1990s.[84] Furthermore, the reform introduced by the EU for cohesion purposes, particularly the elements of 'partnership and programming, did not succeed to reorganise central-local relations in Irish politics but it did manifest itself in innovative policy style and practice through community activism and area-based partnerships' (Laffan and O'Mahoney 2008: 149, Adshead and Tonge 2009). MLG did not challenge the Irish central government which remained the most powerful strategic actor in cohesion and development policy.

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[82] The services provided by the local authorities include housing and building, road transportation and safety, water supply and sewerage, development incentives and controls, environmental protection, recreation and amenity, education, health and welfare, and miscellaneous services.
[83] Interview with Hermann Schiavone, political observer specialising on electoral systems (Malta: March 21, 2001)
[84] In the early 1990s the Government opted to divide the country into seven regions in order to introduce a regional layer in accordance with the principle of MLG. Furthermore, in connection with the EU's Structural Funds, the Government divided the country into two regions: the Border, Midlands and Western Region (BMW) and the Southern and Eastern Region (S&E). From a national perspective, the establishment of the two regions had the benefit of ensuring that the BMW region retained Objective One status whereas the Objective One status of the S&E region was phased out by 2005 (Laffan and O'Mahoney 2008: 142/145).

Employing a 'distinctive strategic-relational network framework', James (2010: 930) attempts to capture 'the fluidity, dynamism and wider significance of domestic change'. Figure 4.2 maps the interconnections that exist within the Irish core executive, that between sectoral departments and the five 'network managers': the Department of the Taoiseach, the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Finance, the Office of the Attorney General and the Irish Permanent Representation in Brussels. This network system has reinforced, and in some cases accelerated, existing developmental trajectories towards the further strengthening of the Department of the Taoiseach and the use of increasingly formal coordinating committees, both of which are mirrored across the core executive (James 2010: 947). The eventual catastrophic collapse of the Irish economy has proved that Scott might have been right when he concluded that 'the risk of augmenting the dependency of departmental policy to an already overburdened Department of Taoiseach' would ultimately lead to 'expectations which are raised beyond those that can be met' (James 2010: 949).

Figure 4.2: The Irish-EU Network since 1997
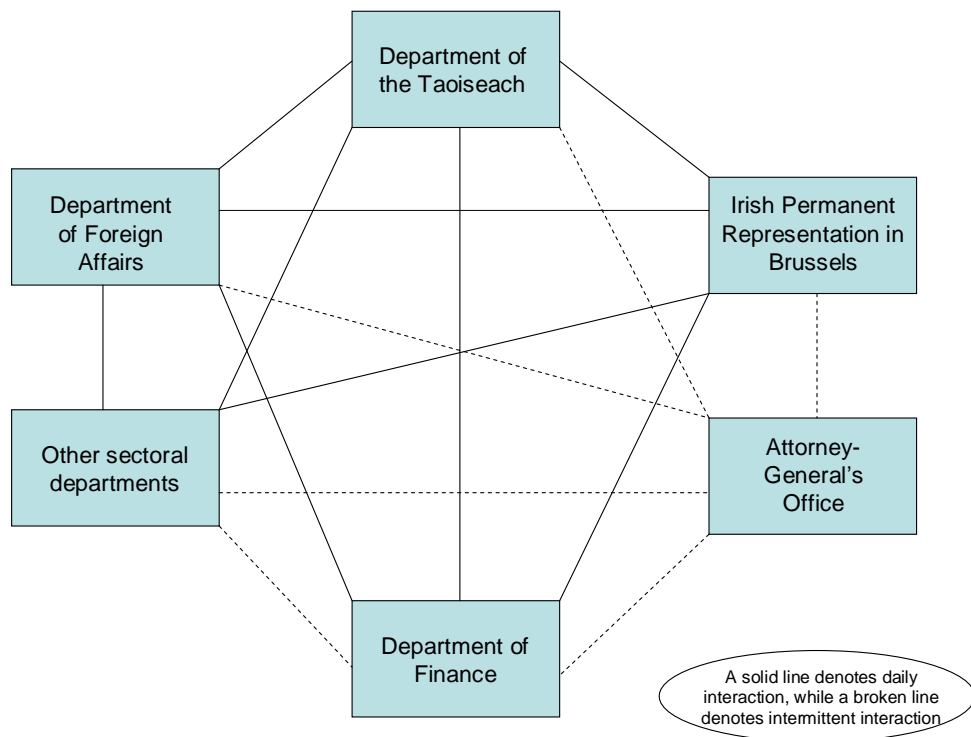
James 2010: 935

The Social Welfare system covers all of the internationally recognised forms of social protection. Incorporating a mix of both social insurance and social assistance programmes, it provides financial support to people in certain situations such as unemployment, illness and old-age. Spending on social welfare accounts for approximately one quarter of gross current Government expenditure and provides benefits to more than 1.5 million persons (*Ireland in Brief* 2007: 25). Civil society has teamed up with the state and the Church in providing joint services. This trend led to a substantial increase in the number and diversity of PPPs.

4.5.2   The traditional Western region

Although 'a centralised administration and a highly localised political culture ensured that Irish regions would not develop as meaningful political and administrative arenas' (Falkner and Laffan 2005: 215), nonetheless one cannot ignore regional asymmetries by focusing uniquely on the capital city and its affluent surrounding localities. Like the island of Gozo in Malta's case, the west of Ireland provides different shades in the identity kit of territorial politics. According to the 2006 report of the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI),[85] Ireland was the second most unequal country in Europe as the generated, new wealth is not evenly distributed across the country (Krishnani 2011 para 15)

Cúige Chonnacht (Connacht), encompasses the West of Ireland. In this part of the island, people tend to be more dependent on farming and animal husbandry, and many still use the Irish language in everyday life. Being largely a Dublin phenomenon, the ripple effects of economic and social diversification associated with the Celtic Tiger have hardly left their mark on the western region. Today Connacht relies mainly on tourism and agriculture, Galway City being a notable exception with several high-tech-industries and a university.

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[85]The ESRI produces research that contributes to understanding economic and social change and that informs public policymaking and civil society in Ireland and throughout the EU. For further information visit ESRI website at http://www.esri.ie

The west part of Ireland is crucially important to understand the earlier period of Irish membership when the Irish farmers' groups exploited every opportunity to reap considerable financial benefits through the CAP. Farmers' organisations established their representation in Brussels well before Ireland's formal accession (Chubb 1992: 114) and it did not take them too long to become expert lobbyists at the supranational level. Eventually agriculture pressure groups became more Brussels orientated (Jackson 2002: 385).

4.5.3 The Church and the Irish state

'The chief characteristics of nationalism in Ireland', which succeeded in persisting even throughout the two decades after EU accession, 'have been race, religion and a strong sense of territorial unity and integrity; and in all its modes it had been profoundly influenced by the power and proximity of Britain' (George Boyce 1991: 19). Traditionally the discourse of Irish politics was a conservative one, searching for precedents, seeking to find the justification for their political behaviour in Ireland's past. The Republic, according to Galvin (1998: 96/7), developed a 'political liturgy emphasising Anglophobia, pseudo-Gaelic, peasant and Catholic themes[86]' which had reached a climax of sorts in 1966 during the public celebrations of the fiftieth anniversary of the Easter Rising.[87] 'Events in Ireland are usually interpreted from an Irish nationalist perspective' (Pringle 1985: 3) and it seems that such a trend is to persist in the future, particularly at the time of writing when the nation has lost its 'tiger' brand.

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[86] Catholic doctrine and moral values have found their way into state legislation with little consideration given to the civil liberties of the non-Catholic minority (Pringle 1985: 11).

[87] The Easter Rising was an insurrection staged in Ireland during Easter Week, 1916. The Rising was mounted by Irish republicans with the aims of ending British rule in Ireland and of establishing the Irish Republic. According to Townshend (2006), it was the most significant uprising in Ireland since the rebellion of 1798. Incidentally, the two Irish uprisings match almost exactly two of the most troubled periods in Maltese history: in 1798 the Maltese revolted against the tyranny of their French occupiers and eventually requested the British navy to help them in their sudden uprising, while three years after the Easter Rising in Ireland, the Maltese rioted against the British regime in 1919. During the 1919 riots to be granted home rule as part of their constitutional development, five Maltese men paid with their lives. Today, June 7 is one of the five national days in Malta.

While Malta was experiencing its second politico-religious struggle of the century,[88] when prior to the 1962 election the Malta Labour Party (MLP) promised the electorate to reduce the overwhelming power of the Church by a reasonable secularisation (Pirotta 2010, Friggieri 2008, Vassallo 2009), the traditional and religious outlook of the Irish nation started to change as well. Garvin (1988: 97) maintains that 'the [Irish] liturgical edifice' began to be eroded of relative affluence by the influence of the mass media and the Vatican Council II. For centuries the Catholic Church was the only corporate institution in Irish society that might seem to rival the institutions of the political system. During the 1960s, however, the Catholic-romantic view of Irish history started diluting… Changes in the status of the Catholic Church in the Irish constitution and changes in the law on contraception were put through against tepid opposition (Garvin 1988: 100). The closure of the Irish embassy to the Vatican in 2011 to slash spending in line with its international bail-out has been acclaimed as a 'stunning decision' that liquidates the old 'ironclad' relationship between the two states (Pullella 2011). As a result, Ireland has become the first and only major country of ancient Catholic tradition without an embassy to the Holy See.

Although the Church in Ireland has been sidelined and almost confined to a defensive strategy, Lee (1989) observes that 'Catholic thinking, or assumed Catholic thinking, or selected Catholic thinking', still has an important influence on social policymaking. The Irish referenda on abortion and divorce in the 1980s represent a resurgence of the older tradition. Though they have been disarmed of many of their former temporal powers, elite circles of ecclesiastical authorities still hold a 'unique position' in civil society (Chubb 1992: 116). In spite of a straightforward case of secularisation – 'a wholesale exchange of agrarian Catholic nationalism for high-tech European cosmopolitanism' (Tobin 2007) - it is 'a mistake to conclude that the Church in Ireland is just another interest group' (Chubb 1992: 119).

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[88] The first political-religious dispute in Malta erupted in 1930 between Lord Strickland (Prime Minister and Leader of the Constitutional Party) and the Church, during which the Self-Government Constitution was suspended by the Crown.

4.5.4 'Civil war politics'

Like Malta, Ireland is considered a polarised polity, however for totally different reasons. The state is unusual as a developed nation, in that politics is not primarily characterised by the left-right political divide. This is because the two traditional and largest political parties, *Fianna Fáil* (FF) and *Fine Gael* (FG), do not identify themselves first and foremost as either centre-right or centre-left parties. Rather, both parties arose from the great split that occurred in Irish politics at the time of the 1922–1923 Civil War that followed the foundation of the state. Both descended from factions of the original *Sinn Féin* (SF) party. By keeping the national question to the fore in southern Irish politics (to produce what is sometimes referred to as 'civil war politics', the two major conservative parties have effectively prevented serious political opposition along class lines (Pringle 1985: 231). George Boyce (1999) insists that the rise of the Labour Party has been decoded in terms of pressure groups and vested interests particularly trade unions, rather than with a strong ideology.

The Irish political spectrum embraces the Green Party, the Progressive Democrats and the SF who are not alien to the formation of coalition governments. The Irish political system characterised by the so called 'two-and-a-half-party system' (Bowman 2010, Siaroff 2003) is, to a certain extent, more colourful than its Maltese counterpart but, nonetheless, the split of SF polarised Irish politics ever since (Chubb 1992). The present political scenario in Ireland has long been dominated by two basically conservative parties which are now virtually indistinguishable (Pringle 1985: 277). However the 2011 election, which was instigated by the downfall of the Brian Cowan administration (2008-2011) due to the collapse of the Irish economy, brought about a new geometry of party power as the FF suffered its worst result in its 85-year history. The party's first preference vote plunged to 17.4% at the expense of a sharp rise in Labour popularity which made a very strong showing, almost doubling its share of the vote to become the second-largest party in the Dáil.

4.5.5 Looking beyond Irish shores

Wisely reading the signs of the times, in the early 1970s, the Irish political establishment was convinced that accession to the EU was essential for Irish prosperity, particularly because the UK opted to join the EU as well. Small countries, unless they are exceptionally rich in natural resources, must rely heavily on the quality of their thinking to adapt to changing international circumstances. The problem with Ireland, according to Lee (1990: 638) is that the Irish have proven themselves talented as individuals in many areas of endeavour but less so on a collective platform. Many observers hoped that accession to the European trading block at the time would change the distinctive fabric of the Irish nation based on 'fragmentation, localism, clientelism and brokerage' (Laffan and O'Mahoney 2008: 137) to a new one built on 'consensus, power-sharing and resilience' (Darby 1988, Trimble 1988, Townshend 1988).

According to George Boyce (1991: 387), Irish nationalism offered an illusory vision of 'a core national unity' which for many decades hid its true identity underpinned by pluralism.[89] The value of 'modern scholarship was that it explored the complexity and diversity of Irish society' (George Boyce 1991: 400). Accession to the EU dismantled this inherited paradigm of Irish 'unity' and, consequently, another national archetype emerged shaped by a cacophony of voices, ideas and perspectives and a grid network embracing all Europe, America and beyond.

4.5.6 Acquaintance with Brussels

The decision of the Irish state to become a member of the European Community marked a new way of doing politics, although the shift in attitude and strategies did not occur overnight. Accession had the effect of superimposing on the state both a new body of law, including the *acquis communautaire*, and a set of decision-making institutions (Chubb 1992: 307). This strategic turn in the Irish political destiny had to be

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[89] George Boyce maintains that Irish nationalism is paradoxical, self-contradictory and guided by its own internal logic. In fact it is not peculiarly 'Irish'; on the contrary, its many paradoxes and self contradictions arise from the close and permanent relationship between Ireland and her former neighbouring coloniser.

complemented by a series of Constitutional amendments through public referenda, which at times brought tremendous agitation and frustration not only in Dublin but in Brussels and other European capital cities alike (Laffan and O'Mahoney 2008: 105).

Henceforth, Irish politicians and administrators, together with other political activists including interest groups, had to become acquainted with governance structures at another level. The importance of joining the EU is best synthesised by O'Rourke (2001) when she asserts that 'it is very generally accepted that Ireland's membership of the EU which began in 1973, has been critical to Irish economic success, and indeed the complete regeneration of Irish society as well'. EU membership was important as it gave not only financial support through regional policy but the timing was right as it helped Ireland prepare for the Single Market, while it was able to invest its own funds into infrastructure, human resources and nation rebranding. Cooper (2009) concludes that 'whereas once Ireland looked to Rome... it now looked to Brussels'.

The initial three decades since EU accession have not brought automatic changes to the domestic political landscape for the stuff of politics in Ireland remained local concerns, local problems, or, as its politicians would have claimed, 'national' concerns, 'national' problems, such as jobs, unemployment, prices and the managing of the nation's resources (George Boyce 1991: 369). Considered as a poor and dependent country across all standard criteria at the time of entry right up to the late 1980s, Ireland reaped abundant fruits of an economical, infrastructural and social nature as a result of being a net beneficiary of EU funds. Entry into the EU has provided a major boost for the Republic's very large agricultural sector, especially for beef and dairy farmers. However since the early 1960s the Republic has pursued a very active and successful policy of industrialisation by offering concessions to foreign industrialists.[90] Pringle (1985: 13) attributes the rapid expansion of the welfare system to the overall growth in the economy.

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[90] From the first Economic Programme (1958-1963) industrial policies offered tax concessions and capital grants to encourage export-oriented foreign companies to locate in Ireland. The Industrial Development Authority (IDA), a government agency established in 1950, became a key player in this strategy.

4.5.6.1 Sponger syndrome

The distant mammoth figure of the EU doubling itself as a milking cow, through which 'grants' and 'subsidies' pour, intensified the old Irish instinctive response to demand 'more'. From then on, Ireland was said to be suffering from a 'sponger syndrome' (Laffan and O'Mahoney 2008: 31, Meehan 2011). The prospects of milking money from Europe fostered the spread of envy and jealousy among domestic organisations,

> Pressure groups became, if not more insidious, certainly more blatant, expressing their demands more stridently, more self-righteously, and more avariciously, as they launched demand after demand for 'our' money from a growing but ineffectual state… Entry to the EEC in 1973 reinforced this tendency… The begrudger mode of discourse the pressure groups chose to cultivate in connection with the EEC scarcely elevated the level of public discussion in Ireland! (Lee 1990: 648).

4.5.6.2 Initial cold shower

Laffan and O'Mahoney (2008) classify the Irish experience within the EU into three consecutive phases. The first phase (1973-86) was characterised by learning to live within the European system, or the 'apprenticeship' phase as defined by Meehan (2011). Irish companies were caught on the wrong foot as they felt the cold shower effects of competition stemming from the common market. Apart from the impact in social and agricultural spheres, the initial impact was for the most part disappointing. EU funding, be it through the CAP or the Structural and Cohesion Funds were contributing factors in helping successive Irish governments turn the economy around after the early years of economic mismanagement (Jackson 2002, O'Donnell 1991).

The holistic regeneration of the agri-sector mitigated the economic crises of the 1970s and 1980s and helped to sustain Irish living standards (Jackson 2002: 386). By this time, a new era of unprecedented economic growth was building up in Dublin, however the strategic decision to divide the country into two regions in 2000 ensured that the Western region, together with the Border and Midlands (BMW) retained their Objective One status entitling them to more Structural, Regional and Cohesion funding.

4.5.6.3   The roar of the Celtic Tiger

The emergence of the Celtic Tiger marked the second phase between 1987 and 1997 of Irish membership, or 'catch-up' phase in Meehan's terms (2011), as a result of unprecedented economic growth in the 1990s and the success in achieving economic convergence. In a euphoric tone the then Finance minister, Charles McCeevey (1997-2004) was reported to exclaim that 'economic theory doesn't apply to Ireland' (Hayes 2011). Using his typical sarcastic tone, Cooper (2009: xxiv) ponders on that '[i]ndeed things went so well that we thought that we had it made, that we had become an example to the rest of Europe, even the world, in how to become prosperous in a short space of time'. It was at the same time when Malta, Cyprus and eight other Eastern European states started looking at Ireland for inspiration and to disseminate the much needed 'feel good factor' among their anxious populations on the road to EU accession.

4.5.7   A unique model of Social Partnership

The third phase, starting in 1998 and lasting till the collapse of the Tiger phenomenon, revealed a new Ireland living in a re-engineered EU. Ireland has turned around full circle and, from a net beneficiary status as a poor member state, it became a net contributor as an affluent state. Surely, this was the triumphant moment of the triumvirate process through the joint contribution of state, trade unions and employers' associations, and eventually civil society groups. It was the process that led to good governance through economic and social cohesion.[91] According to Minister of the State, Dick Roche (2003), 'necessity forced Government to recognise the need for better economic policies. The same necessity forced the evolution of a rather unique SP

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[91] The social partnership process, which began in 1987, institutionalised wage bargaining between the social partners and involved an explicit trade-off of tax cuts for wage moderation, thus contributing to a positive economic environment for foreign and indigenous investment (Healy and Reynolds 2001). It is to be noted that industrial stability and consensus-building through a neo-corporatist approach was not the only factor that contributed to the Irish 'miracle'. From the various studies on the theme, one can identify, without ranking in any particular order, nine other major contributory factors, namely: (a) membership of the EU, (b) significant subventions from the EU, (c) favourable regulatory and investment climate, (d) the English language and a lack of cultural barriers, (e) openness to trade, (f) stability of political and legal institutions, (g) industry clustering, technology transfer and supply chains, (h) human resources development and flexibility and (i) heavy investment in education.

approach to resolving 'big issues' which very often impede the evolution and more importantly the implementation of sound economic and social policies'. This is essentially a space in which the state interacts in a structured way with 'selected' representatives of society[92] through a four pillar structure, founded on economic, agricultural and social/community interests. Just before the semi-disintegration of the SP a new environmental pillar was added in 2009. Figure 4.3 represents the five pillar model of Irish SP in its heyday.

Figure 4.3: The pillar model of Irish Social Partnership
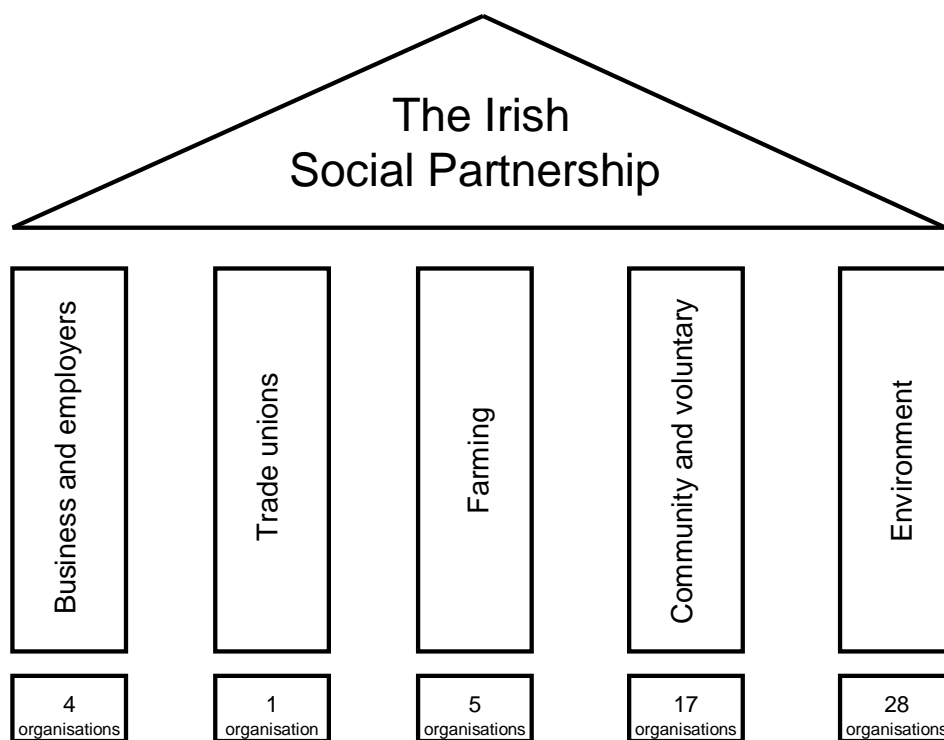
Adapted from Garvey 2009: 252

Irish social partners and other non-state actors still prioritise national, rather than European affairs. However, both the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) and Irish Business Employers Confederation (IBEC) assert their perception that the EU has

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[92] Many organisations in various spheres of life have sought to become members of a particular pillar (that is to become Social Partners), but it is only the Government which chooses the social partners from its own analysis as to which organisation(s) provides the best representation in the various areas (Garvey 2009: 252).

strengthened their bargaining power during negotiation sessions with their government (Sciortino 2008, Barry 1999), particularly in drafting, implementing and monitoring a series of National Development Plans (NDPs). The created system of governance allowed for compromise and agreement, although there are those who argue that this is only applicable to insider groups. Nonetheless, the number of strategic and single-issue driven alliances in policy domains, where few links existed before, started growing fast, 'thus strengthening interest groups' bargaining position vis-à-vis national government' (Laffan and Tannam 1998: 81).

Furthermore size was particularly instrumental in Ireland's strategic adaptation to the EU because its small size of national administration certainly helped to get things done more quickly (McCreevy interviewed by the author, 2010). Many small states scholars seem to agree that the lack of dense bureaucratic foliage and an administrative culture characterised by informality and personalism are key advantageous determinants of adapting relatively easily to home-grown and imported pressures of change. Although Laffan and Tannam (1998) and Laffan and O'Mahoney (2008) share this view and do not hesitate to apply it to their homeland, a deeper analysis of the institutional evolution of the Irish state administration tends to narrate an alternative storyline. Hardiman and MacCarthaigh (2010: 7) maintain that 'the relatively ad hoc manner in which government agencies have been created in Ireland, the wide variety of accountability and communication mechanisms and the absence of performance framework' have rendered the system of Irish governance more complex and awkward. The true story that lies behind the official print is less straightforward in determining the correlation between state size and state success.

4.5.8 The collapse of the Celtic Tiger

With the collapse of the Celtic Tiger, sober talk on the unspotted deficiencies of the Irish administration has become more bold and widespread. Therefore, a fourth phase of Irish membership in the EU has to be added to the original tripod suggested by Laffan and O'Mahoney. This latest phase is characterised by a 'dizzying plunge' that led Ireland 'back to bust' and 'a return to something approaching the relative poverty of the recent decades' (Cooper 2009: xxiv). Ireland is 'back to square one and worse' (Meehan

2011). The lack of prudence by banks, property developers and the construction industry, coupled with the ineffectiveness of regulators and the inability of policymakers to incubate new domestic business opportunities led to the final downfall (Hayes 2011). On its part, the interest representation system through the formation of the SP was like 'a good marriage turned bad: the end had become inevitable' (Cooper 2009). The crucial aspect, from the perspective of this study, is the way the government strived to steer the economy through the impetus of unions, employers and civil society groups and, yet still, 'the miracle was turned into a curse'. Although in its early years the Irish SP had 'undoubted merits', it eventually transformed itself into a fortified elitist circle where no alternative voices were allowed to be heard,

> SP instilled the false confidence that we were planning our economy properly, whereas we were only dividing the proceeds of the illusory boom according to who, apparently, had the most influence. It was a cosy relationship between government, business and trade unions that meant hard decisions weren't made because trade-offs and compromises prevailed instead, it was another variation of crony capitalism, but this time the unions were the willing participants (Cooper 2009: 372/3).

Hayes (2011) is more categorical in her judgement. She denounces the Irish SP as a 'disaster' because over the years it had created a 'social divide' between public and private sector employees that led to an 'economic civil war'.

The narrative of contemporary Ireland under the scrutiny of the IMF, ECB, fellow member states and the international community is still unfolding at the time of writing. The latest news bulletins indicate that once again Ireland started showing progressive signs of economic expansion in the last quarter of 2013 (independent.ie 2014, OECD 2013). The Irish-EU timeline in the first years of the 21st century presents an exceptional narrative of great transformations in a very short period.

4.6   Factors built into confrontation and unity

So far this chapter has set out to provide two parallel narratives. In each case the description and analysis were broadly – and hopefully not over-rigidly – structured around institutions and actors who have been protagonists in the two small polities The narratives' main thrust rests on the in-built factor of duality expressed across a diversified array of ideologies, situations and projections, left and right, polarisation and

consensus, unity and tribalism, tradition and modernisation, religion and secularism, pluralism and corporatism, centralisation and devolution, isolation and connectivity, Europeanisation and nationalism, nationalism and localism, clientelism and detachment, insiders and outsiders, grudge and solidarity, economic peaks and lows, confrontation and unity, us and them.

Research has revealed that despite strategic similarities in the geopolitical, socio-cultural and economic fabric of Malta and Ireland, a number of asymmetries do stand out as indicated in Table 4.1. These asymmetries are justified due to pragmatic circumstances and may have the potential to explain the empirical findings that shall be treated in the next two chapters.

Table 4.1: Malta's and Ireland's comparative template

		Malta	Ireland
Constitutional and political issues			
	Constitution	Republican polities based on parliamentary democracy	
	The President	nominated by the House of Representatives	elected by the people
	The Executive	a highly centralised executive power vested to the Cabinet and headed by the Prime Minister	
	The Legislative	unicameral House of Representatives	two Houses of Parliament: House of Representatives and Senate
	Legal System	pluralistic system incorporating Civil Law and Common Law	based on Common Law and modified through subsequent legislation and Constitution
	Electoral System	single transferable vote system (STV) of proportional representation (PR)	TDs elected by PR (STV version). Senators elected from sectoral panels and universities. Some nominated by the Taoiseach
	Type of Government	camouflagic framework encompassing a social democratic orientation (welfare society) as well as a neo-liberal dimension	
	Regional and local Governance	relatively weak local governance and an unelected regional tier	

	Political Parties	two party system	traditionally a 'two and a half party system' but the 2011 early elections brought about a new geometry of power where the Labour Party became the second largest party
	International Policy	military neutral and non-aligned with a strong call for international peace and cooperation	

Socio-cultural issues

	Religion	traditionally 'almost monolithically Roman Catholic'	
	Secularisation	secular trends are evident, particularly among the younger generations - the Catholic hierarchy is now more on the defensive side	
	Language	Maltese widely used by the people and the media but English is the predominant language of the administration and the business community	English used predominately in all spheres of private and public life, with the exception of some rural areas in the west where the Irish language is still spoken.
	Political discourse	highly polarised	consensus seeking among social partners
	Socio-political fabric	parochial, clientelistic and personalised politics	
	Civil society	diverse in its forms and structures, deeply rooted in Catholicism and in representative democracy	
	Interest representation system	pluralistic, yet hindered by tacit elitism	neo-corporatist in a pluralistic environment
	National Identity	ambivalent due to deep political polarisation	Strong
	National Holidays	Freedom Day – March 31 *Sette Giugno* – June 7 Victory Day – September 8 Independence Day – Sept 21 Republic Day – December13	Saint Patrick's Day – March 17
		five national days reflecting an ambivalent nationhood	one national day signifying a tenacious nationhood

Economic issues

	Economy type	small, open, trade-dependent economy	
	Natural Resources	none, except limestone.	agriculture, forestry and mining

		Flexible and knowledgeable human resources	but, above all, flexible and knowledgeable human resources
	Economic diversification	Traditionally based on the British military services and manufacturing	traditionally based on agriculture, animal husbandry and fisheries
		eventually transformed into knowledgeable open economies focusing on services and high-tech industries	
	Geographical competitive advantage	Being a MS on the southern frontier, it can exploit the markets of the north African region	being a MS on the western frontier, it attracts investment from the USA and other global partners
	Social partners' relations	fragmented and rife, echoing deep political polarisation	consensus building and compromise seeking yet it started to change again after the international bailout
	Regional differences	an affluent northern region and a relatively less well-off South and Gozo	an affluent southern and Eastern region and a relatively less well-off Western region
	Economic resilience during global economic crises	high resilience due to strong banking system and financial regulation	low resilience followed by the collapse of the Celtic Tiger. Recovering from 2013 onwards
EU membership			
	Accession	2004	1973
	Regional designation	single region	Phase 1 (1973-1999) single region Phase 2 (1999 – today) two regions, BMW and S&E
	Phases of experience within	Phase 1 (2004-2013) Learning period dictated by the logic of appropriateness as devised by the PN government Phase 2 (2013 -) Utilitarian approach dictated by the logic of consequences as devised by the PL government	Phase 1 (1973-1986) apprenticeship period focused on maximising receipts from EC funds and seeking derogations on difficult issues Phase 2 (1987-1997) unprecedented economic growth Phase 3 (1998-2008) consolidation of the SP

			Phase 4 (2008 - 2012) setbacks for Irish economy. Discussions held with the EU and IMF on rebuilding an export led recovery

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These are the troubled, yet exciting terrains where Maltese and Irish interest groups strive to influence the corridors of power, their peers, the public at large and the European multi-layered institutional architecture. Interest groups' preferences are primarily shaped by institutional settings and culture. They have to work consciously at lobbying institutions, designing stratagems and nurturing a collective forma mentis to foster strategic thinking.

So far, the theoretical and conceptual framework, together with the different types of interest groups and the political landscapes of the two selected states have all been exposed and discussed at length. The next step is to introduce the methodology that has been employed to collect and analyse primary data so that original hypotheses can be tested and questions answered. In the next chapter, an audit trail of the methodological and ethical implications of the study is thoroughly explained prior to the presentation of data relating to the four selected types of interest groups.

Chapter 5

Research Design and Methodology

Chapter 5
Research design and methodology

All research is a practical activity requiring the exercise of judgement in context; it is not a matter of simply following methodological rules.

Hammersley and Atkinson, 1994: 23

5.1   Introductory note

This study adopts a comparative approach involving Malta and Ireland as two small island member states within the EU. This approach uses four case studies, namely employers' associations and trade unions, environmental groups and, social and human rights groups, in order to assess the relevance of new institutionalism in understanding the Europeanisation of domestic interest groups. 'Multiple-case studies follow a replication logic' (Tellis 1997) so as to better assess the application of theory to different situational contexts. The evidence from carefully selected 'multisite' polities, politics and policies is often considered more compelling, and the overall study is therefore regarded as being more robust (Burnham et al 2008, Herriot and Firestone 1983). The nature of policy processes is a complex area for political analysis and many scholars maintain that mixed methods research is most appropriate not only as a means to triangulate results but, more importantly for this study, it offers the best equipped strategy to investigate a multifaceted research enquiry. Whilst quantitative data gives an aggregate overview of the phenomenon under scrutiny, the use of qualitative research is 'underpinned by the persistent requirement… to understand complex behaviours, needs, systems and cultures' (Ritchie and Spencer 1994: 173).

This chapter deals with the motivation behind the particular methodological position that is being taken and with the variety of methods that have been employed to collect and analyse quantitative and qualitative data. Then it surveys how the study attempts to respond to the key criteria of quality craftsmanship by ascertaining validity, reliability and credibility. It concludes by elucidating the ethical standards that have guided all

stages of the research cycle and the methodological and thematic limitations that set constraints on the study.

5.2   The comparative method

This thesis adheres to a research design based on a comparative case study. According to Yin (1994: 1) case studies are the preferred strategy when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context. For the purposes of this research, such an approach enjoys all the right credentials, not only to answer the set of key research questions proposed in the introduction, but it is also crucially important 'to provide a better understanding of the circumstances in which the hypotheses will and will not hold' (Bryman 2008: 55). In this thesis, the relationship between theory and research is a deductive one, since the research design and the collection of data are guided by specific research questions and hypotheses that derive from theoretical concerns. Although many a time case studies have been considered as a weak sibling among social science methods, yet they too can provide a sound basis for scientific generalisation. In fact they are generalisable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes. Flyvbjerg (2004: 419) maintains that case studies cannot be of value in and of themselves; they need to be linked to hypotheses, following the well-known hypothetico-deductive model[93] of epistemological stance. The use of theory in doing case studies is not only an immense aid in defining the appropriate research design and data collection, but also becomes the main vehicle for transferability of results (Yin 1994; Flinders and Mills 1993).

One of the strengths of the case study approach is that it allows the researcher to use a variety of sources, a variety of types of data and a variety of research methods as part of the investigation (Denscombe 2005: 31). Thus, the idea of a case study can be

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[93] Within a deductive study, political researchers take theory as their starting point. The research progresses from the adoption of a theoretical position and the prediction of what ought to be found in the empirical world. The researcher will then proceed to investigate the empirical world in which they find both themselves and their problem in order to test the theory and to draw conclusions about its explanatory value (Silbergh 2001: 17).

considered as an 'umbrella term' since it utilises a mix of data gathering techniques (Bell 1999: 10). Its reliance on multiple sources of evidence secures a competitive advantage over other research designs to explore complex issues from different perspectives. It is particularly suitable to *gauge the extent* of causality in a cause and effect relationship, in this case between EU influence and domestic change/preservation, as well as to understand *how this process is being comprehended* by the stakeholders, in this case social partners and interest groups.

The four case scenarios featuring in this study have been purposely selected due to their critical contribution towards different policy areas of significant importance and their ability to provide rich narratives. The rationale behind the choice of the four cases has been discussed in Chapter 1. This type of multiple-case scenarios automatically entails multiple narratives, including statistical results, for both selected polities which shall be presented in the next two chapters: Chapter 6 relating to trade unions and employers' associations and Chapter 7 featuring social and human rights groups, and environmental groups. Most political science is comparative, even if not explicitly so. Comparison in its broadest sense, according to Warwick and Osherson (1973: 7), 'is the process of discovering similarities and differences among phenomena'. Comparativists 'examine a case to reveal what it tells us about a larger set of political phenomena' (Lichbach and Zuckerman 1997: 4).

> Comparative design presents the researcher with considerable challenges, especially when different countries are being compared. The researcher must select a theoretical problem that is best illuminated by comparative research… Relevant and equivalent data should then be collected and hypotheses tested…, and appropriate conclusions drawn. Comparative analysis sharpens our understanding of the context… (Burnham et al 2008: 68).

The process illustrated by Burnham and his colleagues explains in a nutshell the process of inquiry as employed in this study.

5.3   Preliminary feedback

Prior to embarking on a fully-fledged investigation, an exploratory study was conducted in the initial stages when unstructured interviews were held with key protagonists so as

to better understand the contextual and theoretical implications. This preliminary fieldwork proved to be crucial in formulating the conceptual framework and in devising a holistic research design that addresses theoretical inferences on the dynamics of domestic civil society. Dexter (2006) argues that interviewing persons who have specialised information or who have involvement with any social or political processes, is different from standard interviewing. In elite interviewing the investigator must be willing to let the interviewee teach him what the problem, the question, or the situation is. The research exploration stage was conducted in Malta, Brussels and Ireland. A conscious attempt was made to obtain a variety of personal accounts and expert opinions from purposively selected respondents for an early identification of key issues and interdependencies. Ten interviews were conducted in Malta, two in Ireland and three in Brussels between 2009 and 2011 (see Appendix A). Among those interviewed there were national and European politicians and technocrats, academics, senior bureaucrats and key leaders of non-state organisations. Their feedback was instrumental in devising the set of questions for both questionnaires and interviews, as well as to gain organisational access for fieldwork purposes.

Besides the information accumulated through non-anonymous interviews, the initial exploration stage also incorporated participation in a substantial number of conferences, seminars, public lectures, master classes, business breakfasts and workshops held in Malta, Gozo, Dublin, Sheffield, Rome, Istanbul and London. Some of these events concerned theoretical matters regarding the interplay between institutionalism and Europeanisation, while others pondered upon the nature and contribution of interest groups in policy-making. During these events I had the opportunity to present my opinions and workings either in writing through academic papers or verbally through presentations. This early involvement in fieldwork research was extremely beneficial to become more sensitive to political contexts and dynamics of interplay between state and non-state actors against an EU backdrop. Attendance in these types of activities was pursued during the remaining years of the doctorate programme.

5.4   Data collection toolkit

The methodology that characterises research designs based on a case study approach entails the application of multiple data sources. In contrast to the conventional usage of mixed data which is often manifested through vigorous triangulation exercise to corroborate findings, this study assigns distinct investigative roles to the quantitative and qualitative data streams. The former is applied to determine the extent of Europeanisation that is, whether it has been statistically significant or not among Maltese and Irish groups in the selected time period (2004-2011), whereas the latter is used to figure out which mediating factors are at play to understand the nature of Europeanisation. However, within the qualitative part of the study, there is still an element of triangulation as two instruments of data collection are utilised to validate results. The discussion will now focus on each of the instruments that forms part of the data collection toolkit, namely self-completion questionnaires, elite interviewing and direct observation. They will be thoroughly analysed wherein their individual characteristics, advantages and limitations are highlighted.

5.4.1   Self-completion questionnaires

The quantitative contribution of this study is provided through the administration of self-completion questionnaires. It is specifically applied to verify the null hypothesis by measuring the degree of change due to Europeanisation through statistical computations. The questionnaire is composed of four separate sections, namely internal structures, domestic responsiveness, European involvement and attitudinal transformation. These four distinct, yet interlinked, dimensions portray the character of interest groups and their performance in domestic and European policy arenas. Besides an overall score that confirms or otherwise the null hypothesis, results also show if any of these dimensions has been significantly reconfigured as a consequence of Europeanisation (see Figure 5.1). Such dimensions have been introduced in Chapter 1 and were thoroughly explained in Chapter 2. Refer to Appendix D for the English and Maltese versions of the questionnaire.

Figure 5.1: The four dimensions constituting the questionnaire
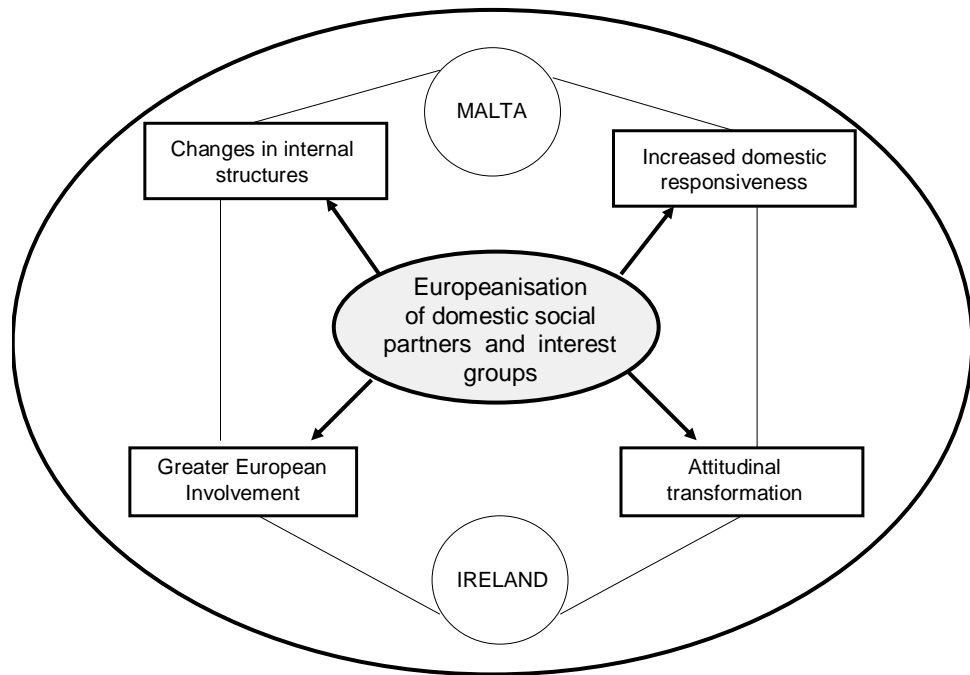
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In the Maltese case, all registered groups under the four selected categories have been included in the exercise, thus no sampling technique was applied. Trade unions and employers' associations were identified through the Registrar of Trade Unions (*Gazzetta tal-Gvern ta' Malta,* 30/09/2011), while the list of registered social and human rights groups and environmental organisations was provided by the Commissioner of Voluntary Organisations (CVO)[94] during the same time period. In the

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[94] The Office of the CVO was set up by the Voluntary Organisations Act 2007 with the task to strengthen the voluntary sector through various initiatives with the specific aim of promoting the work of interest groups as well as encouraging their role as partners with the government in various initiatives. The ultimate mission of the Commissioner's office is to give more visibility to the voluntary sector as well as to guarantee transparency and accountability of the organisations that compose it in the carrying out of their important work. In view of this, the Office of the CVO is also the regulatory authority responsible for this sector with the aim of monitoring and supervising the activities of these organisations as well as supporting them (CVO Annual Report 2012).

latter case, whenever a particular organisation was registered under both categories, it has been categorised under the one in which it is most active.

The Irish case presents a slightly different strategy. In the case of trade unions and employers' organisations, research subjects were identified through the list of member organisations within the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) and the Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC), respectively. Unions that are solely active in Northern Ireland or are based in the UK have been eliminated, while other workers' and employers' representative bodies that do not form part of the two confederations were added. Irish environmental groups that function on a national level have all been included in the research exercise, thanks to the information provided by the Irish Environmental Policy Unit. Random sampling was applied in the case of social and human rights groups. Unlike the situation in Malta, in Ireland there is no single official register of NGOs and voluntary organisations. Many are enrolled as charities, others are registered with the Companies' Registration Office, and the whole context is rife with myriad umbrella organisations. Upon the advice of Irish officers who form part of the Community and Voluntary Pillar of Social Partnership, the register of The Wheel[95] was used as the sample frame. Considering the limited resources available in terms of time, finance and people, 18% of the 800 organisations that are registered within The Wheel have been randomly selected, thus, obtaining a sample of 144 entities which more or less resembles the number of social groups in Malta. Table 5.1 shows the classification of population sizes and response rates in both countries.

Appendix B exhibits the complete list of organisations that have participated in the questionnaire exercise.

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[95] The Wheel is a support and representative body connecting community and voluntary organisations and charities across Ireland. Established in 1999, The Wheel has evolved to become a resource centre and forum for the community and voluntary sector.

Table 5.1: Population sizes and response rates

Sector	Country	Population Size	Questionnaires received	Response rate
Trade Unions	Malta	34	24	70.6%
	Ireland	30	14	46.6 %
Employers' associations	Malta	20	14	70.6%
	Ireland	32	20	62.5%
Social and Human rights Groups	Malta	130	96	73.8%
	Ireland	144*	64	44.4%
Environmental Groups	Malta	26	20	76.9%
	Ireland	47	20	42.5%

* This is the only exception where the whole population was not targeted and a random sample was used instead.

Questionnaires in Malta were distributed during the last quarter of 2011, while the Irish subjects participated in the exercise during the first quarter of 2012. Participation was strictly on voluntary basis, yet subjects were duly encouraged to take part by gentle email reminders half way through the data collection period and two weeks prior to the expiry of submission date. The submission deadline in both countries was extended by further fifteen days. Although the whole exercise was initially online based, a need was instantly felt to supplement efforts through telephone calls and on-site visits with the hope of obtaining decent response rates. A research assistant was eventually commissioned to start phoning both Maltese and Irish NGOs, while maintaining online communication with them. Guaranteeing a good response rate from Irish subjects was far more challenging. The real drive to enhance the number of returned questionnaires was the fieldtrip in Dublin between February and March 2012. Originally it was a seven week period intended to conduct interviews but, as things turned out to be, it became necessary to visit a considerable number of Irish groups and assisted them in filling-in the questionnaire. In addition ICTU, IBEC, The Wheel and the two Irish umbrella environmental groups, Sustainable Water Network Ireland (SWAN) [96] and Irish

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[96] Sustainable Water Network (SWAN) is an umbrella network of twenty-five of Ireland's leading environmental groups working together to protect Ireland's waters by participating in the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) in Ireland.

Environmental Network (IEN)[97] took the lead to reinforce the appeal by advising their affiliated member organisations to take part in this 'important research considered to be the first of its kind in Ireland'.

An introductory note complemented the questionnaire, stating the scope of the research exercise and the ways through which the collected data would be used (see Appendix C). Respondents were assured that organisational and personal details were not to be disclosed to third parties. Research subjects were presented with the researcher's contact details so as to have a point of reference in case further clarifications or assistance were required. The questionnaire format has been kept simple and as short as possible since simplicity and conciseness are considered to be two major characteristics that ensure a high response rate. A small scale pilot study was conducted in Malta and, as a result, appropriate amendments were made.

5.4.2   Elite interviewing

Measuring the extent of Europeanisation using quantitative data is not the only objective of the initial set of hypotheses. Equally important is the understanding of which type of Europeanisation is being experienced by domestic interest groups. In other words, the 'how' is just as crucial as 'to what level' groups are Europeanised. Qualitative instruments are well suited to decode the nature of Europeanisation, that is, if it is best understood in terms of rational interest promotion or in terms of wider social conscience.

One of the dominant tools through which empirical data have been collected has been the semi-structured, in-depth, elite interviewing. Ware and Sánchez-Jankowski (2006: 5) firmly assert that elites are often willing to provide information because they are able

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[97] Irish Environmental Network (IEN) represents to government the capacity building and funding needs of its member organisations, all of whom are involved in one way or another in the well-being, protection and enhancement of the environment. All these individual organisations attempt to achieve these aims through practical conservation work, raising public awareness of environmental and conservation needs, campaigning and lobbying.

to expound on a topic of which they believe they are the only experts. They are often the only persons to know specific information on a particular issue or topic. According to Rapley (2004: 15), '[i]nterviewing is currently *the* central resource through which contemporary social science engages with issues that concern it'.

Interviewing sessions were first carried out in Ireland, mainly during the third fieldwork trip to Dublin that took place between February and March 2012 whereas Maltese protagonists were interviewed immediately afterwards. Besides interviewing high representatives of the four selected sectors of organised groups, other protagonists were also included in the exercise, including formal mediating bodies that bring in state and non-state actors round the table of discussions, politicians, scholars and think-tanks, thus, attempting to give as complete a picture as possible of the multi-faceted relationship between Europeanisation and domestic change. As exhibited in Table 5.2, a total of forty-two interviews were carried out among six distinct sectors of stakeholders.

All interviews were carried out at the premises indicated by research subjects. In particular, interview questions draw their inspiration from the set of intermediate variables that characterise the selected variants of new institutionalism, RCI and SI, and, moreover, they provided an invaluable means of probing further into the contextual environment in which participants are active. The interview guide, together with the letter of invitation in both English and Maltese, is in Appendix E. On average, each interview was spread over sixty minutes. The great majority were audio-recorded, after obtaining the necessary authorisations, so as to concentrate on the flow and direction of the interviewing session. In accordance with the guidance provided by the University of Sheffield's Ethics Committee, interviewees were reassured of anonymity, although some of them confirmed that they find no objection in being mentioned by name. However, at the end, it was decided to rule out all personal names and use a coding system instead. Appendix F shows the full list of organisations that participated during interviews.

Table 5.2: Classification of interviews in Malta and Ireland

Sector	Country	Codification[98]	Number of interviewees
Trade Unions	Malta	MTU	3
	Ireland	ITU	3
Employers' Associations	Malta	MEA	3
	Ireland	IEA	2
Social and Human rights Groups	Malta	MSHG	5
	Ireland	ISHG	6
Environmental Groups	Malta	MEG	3
	Ireland	IEG	7
Mediating Bodies	Malta	MMB	4
	Ireland	IMB	1
Political Observers, scholars and think-tanks	Malta	MPO	3
	Ireland	IPO	2
TOTAL number of interviews	Malta		**21**
	Ireland		**21**

A major problem that almost automatically crops up in elite interviewing is the issue of access. In general, access to elites can be hindered due to their busy schedules. Moreover, interviews can demand a substantial amount of time on their already overflowing commitments. Gaining access to Maltese elites was possible thanks to effective contact points that I had established over the years as an NGO leader,[99] human resources practitioner [100] and, eventually, an academic. [101] Interviews with Maltese

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[98] Each organisation/person that has been interviewed was given a code in order to secure anonymity. The coding process works as follows. The first letter corresponds to the country of origin, the next set of letters defines the nature of the organisation whilst the number at the end represents the interview number, e.g. MTU1 refers to a Maltese Trade Union (interview 1) and ISHG3 refers to an Irish Social and Human rights Group (interview 3). This is the pattern of codification that is used in Chapters 6 and 7 where primary findings are presented.

[99] Over a span of 20 years (1988-2007), I occupied leading roles in local and national voluntary organisations, particularly in the fields of youth work, religion and culture.

[100] Between 1996 and 2008 I was responsible for Training and Development and other related human resource matters at Malta's telecommunications incumbent which since 1997 had become partly privatised and eventually fully privatised ten years later.

protagonists were conducted in Maltese and, thus, findings had to be translated into English. As for the Irish counterparts, I used the services of the Irish Embassy in Malta and the exploratory fieldwork in Dublin to set the ball rolling for making the preliminary networking.

5.4.3   Direct observation

No research method is without bias. Interviews and questionnaires must be supplemented by methods testing the same social science variables but which have *different* methodological weaknesses (Webb et al. 1966:1). Direct observation can fill this void, as it refers to:

> a set of methods of generating data which involve the researcher immersing himself or herself in a research setting, and systematically observing dimensions of that setting, interactions, relationships, actions, events and so on, within it… (Mason 1997: 60/3).

Mason's notion explains precisely the major advantage of observation over the first two methods, as observation calls for an investigation of real life data as it develops during changing contextual situations. I took on board Becker's and Geer's (1970) advice that since people do not often write/tell an interviewer all the things he might want to know,[102] he will address such gaps in his information by observing actual changes in behaviour over a period of time and note the events which precede and follow them. In this way, 'we add to the accuracy of our data when we substitute observable fact for inference'[103] (Becker and Geer 1970: 140).

For the period between 2009 and 2012, I was granted an informal observer status on four sectoral committees within the Malta-EU Action and Steering Committee (MEUSAC), namely (a) the Justice and Home Affairs Committee, (b) the Employment,

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[101] In December 2008 I joined the University of Malta as a member of the academic staff at the Department of Public Policy within the Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy.
[102] This may be because interviewees did not want to. They feel that to speak of some particular subject would be impolitic, impolite, or insensitive, the interviewer does not have enough information to inquire into the matter and they are not able to (Becker and Geer 1970: 136)
[103] The act or process of deriving logical conclusions from premises assumed to be true (http://www.thefreedictionary.com/inference).

Social Policy and Health Committee, (c) the Competitiveness and Consumer Affairs Committee and (d) the Environment Committee. [104] These Sectoral Committees, constituted by representatives of interest groups and senior civil servants from the respective fields, allow interest groups to participate in the formulation of Malta's position on legislative developments in the EU. They generate constructive discussion on the impact that proposed EU measures could have on Malta, its institutions, its specific sectors and ordinary citizens.

The adopted approach was of an unobtrusive nature. After securing the necessary permits to attend these meetings, MEUSAC's secretariat started to inform me of the dates of the committees meetings and the agenda for discussion. All members of the committees were advised by MEUSAC of my role as a 'research-observer' (Webb et al. 1966: 112) and although I never concealed my visibility, at no time did I ever join in the ensuing discussions or in any way interrupted the flow of any session.

In addition, I spent additional hours of observation during other fora wherein state and non-state actors are involved, like those organised by the MCESD, [105] public consultations managed by the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA) and other public events organised by social partners and interest groups in Malta and, to a lesser extent, in Ireland. (see Appendix G for a full list of observation sessions).

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[104] MEUSAC's sectoral umbrellas have been designed to correspond exactly to the different formations of the EU Council of Ministers with the exception of consumer affairs. It is interesting that MEUSAC chose to organise itself in this manner, as most national governments stick to their pre-existing ministerial structures which do not always coincide with the Council formations (Vassallo 2009: 68). This development can be considered part of the Europeanisation process of interest representation in Malta.

[105] Between 2011 and 2012, I participated as an observer in the MCESD project 'Closer to Europe: Social and Civil Dialogue' which was co-financed by funds from the European Social Fund. The project's major aim was to enhance the process of social and civil dialogue in Malta by (a) encouraging and sustaining the development of a more effective social and civil dialogue in Malta and Gozo, and (b) supporting social partners and civil society organisations to increase their knowledge on EU and local policy developments. See Appendix G for a complete list of MCESD events that I have observed.

5.5   Data analysis

The strategy of data analysis adopted in this thesis moves along the hypothetical-deductive model. The researcher, on the basis of what is known about in a particular domain and of theoretical considerations in relation to that domain, deduces a set of hypotheses that must then be subjected to empirical scrutiny (Bryman 2008: 9).

Figure 5.2 exhibits the logical process of deduction as employed in this study. As clearly demonstrated, the hypotheses testing exercise is divided into two major parts. The first, characterised by a quantitative element, seeks to confirm or reject the null hypothesis by calculating the impact of Europeanisation in statistical terms derived from questionnaires' results. The second part, composed of qualitative data, is specifically designed to decode the nature of Europeanisation in terms of rationalist or sociological underpinnings. Moreover, the two phases of this model of data analysis is encased within a cross examination of Malta and Ireland. The introductory section of Chapter 8 gives a more detailed explanation of the hypotheses testing exercise, elucidating the various steps involved in the processing of a large corpus of data in order to reach definitive conclusions.

5.5.1   Analysing quantitative data

The great majority of questions in the questionnaire involve a categorical or nominal scale where participants had to select between a yes or no answer. For such questions, where only one option is possible, the *Chi Square Test* has been used. This is used to determine if there exists an association between two categorical variables, in this case Malta and Ireland. The null hypothesis specifies that there is no association between the two categorical variables and is accepted if the p value exceeds the 0.05 level of significance. The alternative hypothesis specifies that there is a significant association between the two categorical variables and is accepted if the p value is less than the 0.05 criterion. In other words, the null hypothesis specifies no contrast between the two categorical variables and the alternative hypothesis indicates a significant contrast between categories that can be generalised over the population.

Figure 5.2: Process of deduction
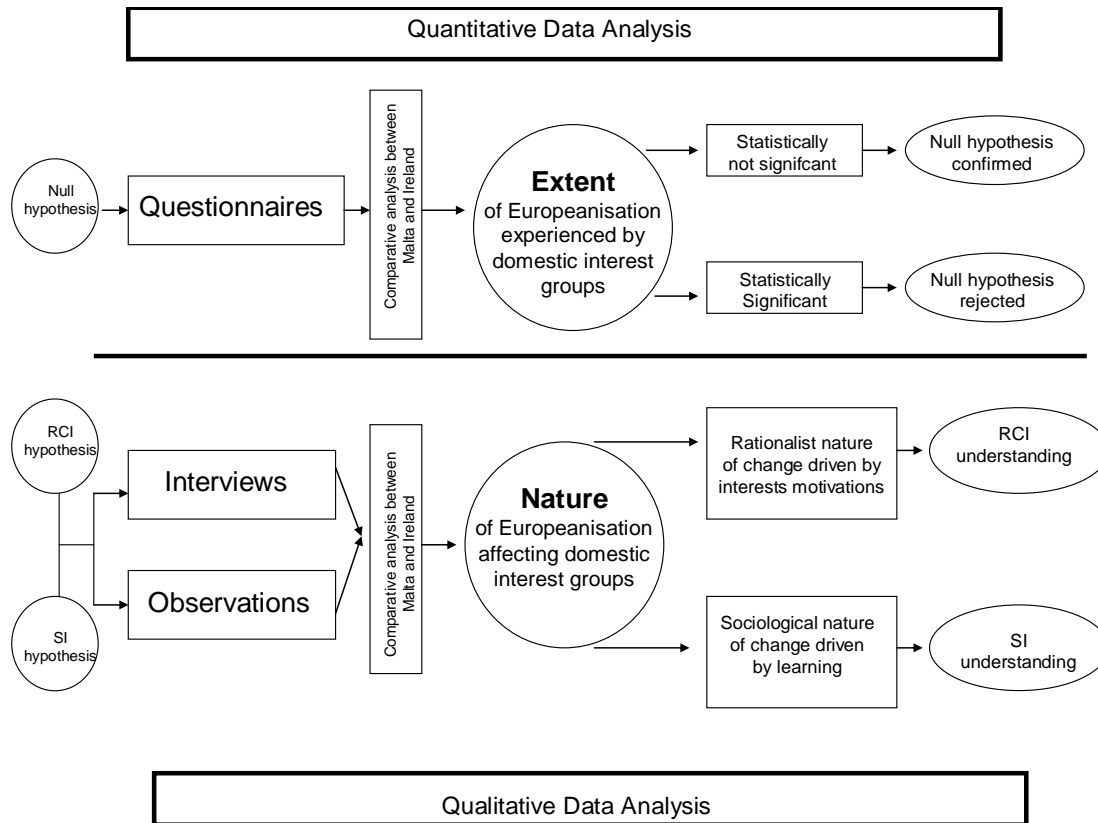
Mario Vassallo 2014

For questions where respondents had the option of selecting more than one response (see questions 6, 8, 13, 31, 35, 36, 38 and 49), the *Multiple Response Analysis* was used. At the end of the process the Chi Square Test was also computed in order to determine the level of significance of the respective findings.

For questions where participants were asked to rate their answer on a likert scale or rank their options on a priority ranking scheme, a nonparametric test was applied, namely the *Mann Witney Test,* since this time an ordinal scale is involved. This Test has been used to compare the mean rating scores for questions where participants were asked for their own perspective regarding a particular statement (see questions 23, 24, 25, 26, 43, 44, 48 and 50). The null hypothesis specifies that the mean rating scores elicited by Maltese and Irish respondents, as the two independent variables, for a particular statement are

comparable and is accepted if the p value exceeds the 0.05 level of significance. The alternative hypothesis specifies that the mean rating scores elicited by the two groups differ significantly and is accepted if the p value is less than the 0.05 criterion. It should be noted that a 4 point likert scale has been used, thus eliminating the possibility of a neutral position, where the possibilities for respondents were as follows:

1 corresponds to	No, not at all
2 corresponds to	Yes to a minor extent
3 corresponds to	Yes to some extent
4 corresponds to	Yes to a great extent

The higher the mean rating score for a particular statement, the higher is the agreement for that particular statement. It will be assumed that these categories have equal scale spacing such that a rating score expresses the intensity of an effect and measure it on a numbered scale.

It is to be noted that the absolute numbers of three of the selected sectors in both Malta and Ireland, namely trade unions, employers' associations and environmental groups, are limited due to small populations. When computing findings, preferably all the *expected counts* should not be less than 5. However, in a number of instances, some of the expected counts were infact less than 5. Where this is the case, such findings in Chapters 6 and 7 have been marked by the letter *u*, signifying the unreliability factor. Although this is a limitation in itself, the cross tab and the p values are still displayed. Furthermore, the criterion of unreliability has been relaxed by a number of scientists like Yates, Moore and McCabe (1999: 734) who confirm that it is generally acceptable to have some expected counts less than 5, provided none are less than 1, and at least 80% of the expected counts are equal to or greater than 5.

In the end the Z-score technique is used to test the viability of the original null hypothesis. Chapter 8 includes a detailed explanation of the process involved in calculating the extent of Europeanisation, thus determining its degree of statistical significance.

5.5.2   Analysing qualitative data

The assessment of 42 interviews and 260 hours of observations was performed using thematic analysis which is a technique that aims at 'identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data', thereby organising and facilitating its interpretation (Braun and Clarke 2006: 79). Thematic analysis provides researchers the opportunity to understand the correlations between concepts and to replicate the study using clear themes and guidelines for interpretation. This technique, according to Alhojailan (2012: 10), grants researchers flexibility whilst simultaneously providing a degree of structure to qualitative research.

The coding of certain prompts and themes in this study were pre-defined by literature review, theory and the intermediate variables of the hypotheses, whereas others were constructed inductively. For instance, in the case of social partners, a very interesting topic cropped up during interviewing about the contemporary European and domestic economic scenario. This theme had not been coded prior to conducting the interviews, but would emerge as one of the key discussions coded selectively as a core category of discussion in Chapter 6.

The thematic analysis of interviews and observations follows the six-step model proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006: 87). The first step is to get immersed in the data collected by reading repeatedly and actively searching for meaning and patterns. Phase two involves the confirmation of pre-determined initial codes or the identification of new ones which is the first step towards an overall conceptualisation of the data patterns and relationships between them. I did the same with the scratch notes that were composed during direct observation. In the third stage, the different codes are sorted into potential themes so that by the end of this phase one would start to have a sense of the significance of individual themes and sub-themes. This process is further refined in stage four. Some themes might be dropped because there is not enough data to support them, while others might collapse into each other or, alternatively, might need to be broken down into separate themes. By the time stage 5 is reached, the overall blueprint of the story is already in good shape. Figure 5.3 shows the resulting thematic map for

trade unions and employers' associations, identifying the main themes represented by black circles and the sub-themes represented by white circles. Figure 5.4 uses the same rationale for social, human rights and environmental groups. Finally, the last task in phase 6 is reserved for the empirical chapters where 'you want to tell the complicated story of your data in a way which convinces the reader of the merit and validity of your analysis' (Braun and Clarke 2006: 93).

Figure 5.3: Thematic map for trade unions and employers' associations
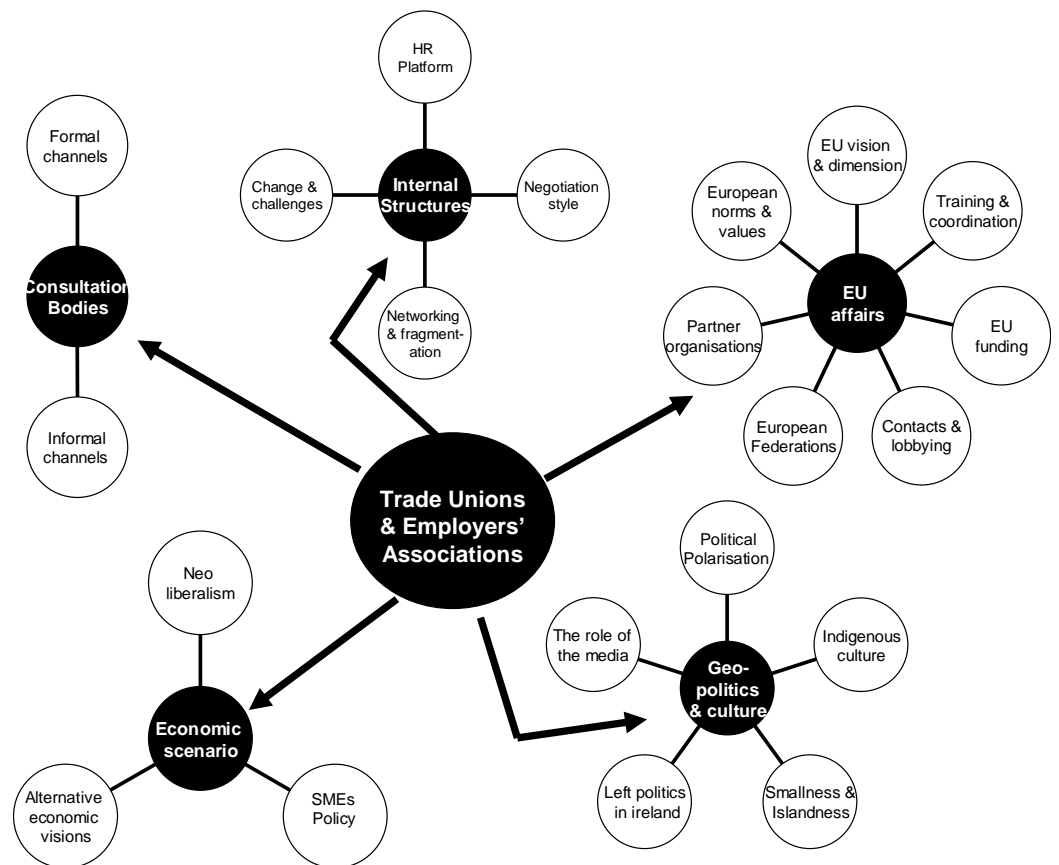
Mario Vassallo 2014

Figure 5.4: Thematic map for social, human rights and environmental groups
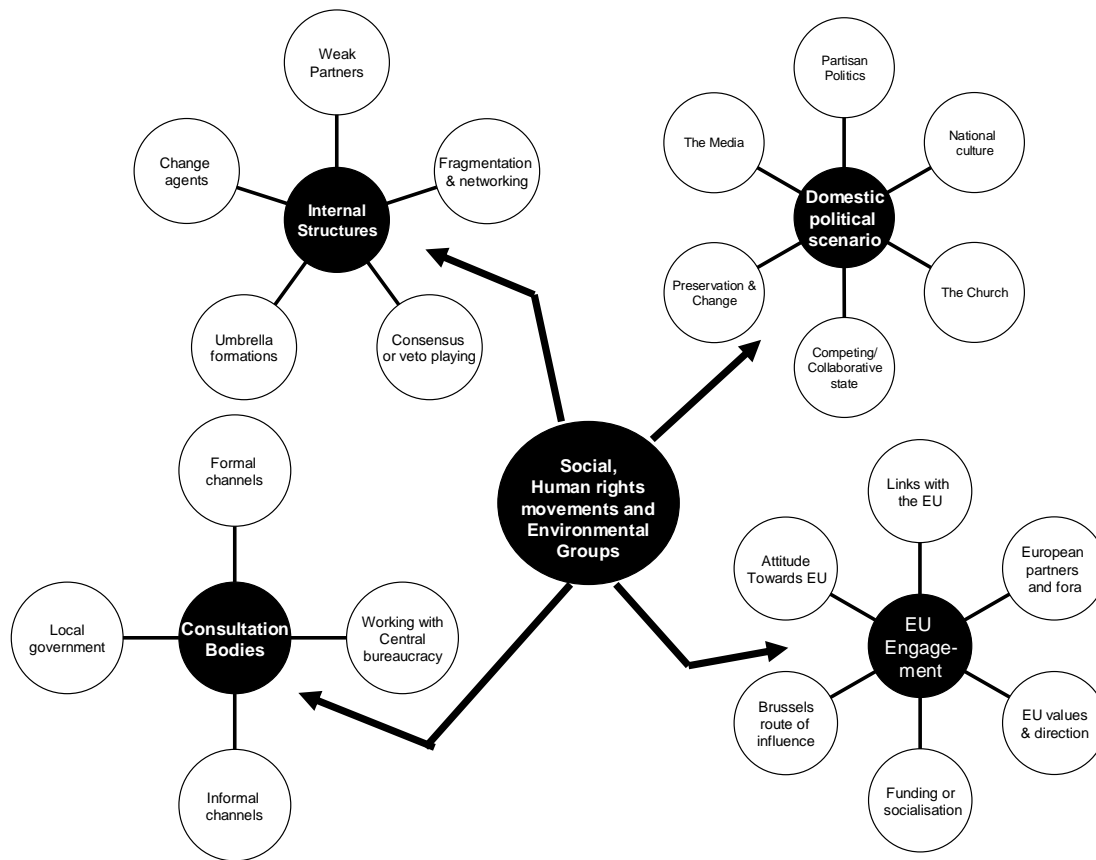
Mario Vassallo 2014

5.6   Quality of craftsmanship

Validity and reliability are fundamental concepts of an efficacious mixed methods research strategy. Hesse-Biber (2010: 86) maintains that a discussion on the validity or otherwise of a mixed methods research exercise must be 'methods-centric' in nature. In other words, it must focus on the 'correctness' of application of the selected tools of data collection and on whether these tools adequately address the research question or hypothesis. In fact, mixed methods research was selected as a strategy due to the need for completeness of research arising out of the original set of hypotheses. The guarantee of credible conclusions is the quality of craftsmanship which ultimately depends on the rigour of methods used (Kvale 1996 as quoted by Herrera 2013: 58). The discussion will now be segmented into two parts to illustrate how rigour was ensured, firstly, in the quantitative and, secondly, in the qualitative components of the study.

5.6.1 Validity, reliability and objectivity

Rigour of quantitative research is based on three basic principles, namely validity, reliability and objectivity that safeguard the veracity of results. A *valid* measure is one that is actually measuring what you think you are measuring (McIntyre 2005 as quoted by Burnham et al. 2008: 39). Academia differentiates between *internal and external validity*. The former refers to the extent to which a causal conclusion based on a study is warranted. Such warrant is constituted by the extent to which a study minimizes systematic error or bias in measurement. The latter refers to the extent to which the results of a study can be generalized to other situations. Besides ensuring validity, a measure must also be *reliable* in the sense that it gives consistent results. The measure itself must be capable of being used in other studies, even though it may yield different readings because the conditions or timing are different (Burnham et al. 2008: 39). Finally, *objectivity* is often attributed to value free measurement, as the accuracy of a measurement can be tested independently from the individual scientist who first reports it. Table 5.3 outlines the methods to ensure rigour in the application of the quantitative component in this study.

Table 5.3: Rigour criteria in quantitative data

Rigour criteria	Methods to ensure veracity	
Internal validity	i.	The questionnaire design was developed on the causal relationships expressed in the conceptual framework of this study.
	ii.	A pilot study was held wherein a number of questions were amended to enhance clarity and motivate response.
	iii.	The questionnaire was vetted by two independent statisticians and their suggestions in the workings and interpretations of results were taken onboard.
External validity	iv.	The questionnaire was projected on probabilistic reasoning to render results generalisable using p values, Z-scores and other inferential statistics.
	v.	The quantitative exercise was based on the inclusion of whole populations except for the case of Irish social and human rights groups where a random sampling had to be used.

Reliability	vi.	The research design is characterised by multiple-case studies that follow a replication logic.
	vii.	Such a design has great potential to be replicated along a much wider spectrum of discussion, in this case, other different sectors of interest groups as well as other states.
Objectivity	viii.	The quantitative part of the study is purely deductive in the sense that it only seeks precise measurements and analysis of concepts to verify the null hypothesis.
	ix.	The concept was compromised because I had to interact with participants either through telephone or face-to-face meetings to encourage subjects to fill-in questionnaires in order to increase response rates.
	x.	This violation of objectivity was mitigated by being neutral in my verbal and non-verbal communication so as not to bias respondents in any way.

5.6.2   Credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability

Validity, reliability and objectivity are conceptualized as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability in qualitative paradigm (Lincoln and Guba 1985). *Credibility* replaces the idea of internal validity, by which researchers seek to establish confidence in the 'sense' of their findings. *Transferability* replaces the concept of external validity. Instead of aiming for probabilistic reasoning, qualitative researchers are encouraged to provide a detailed portrait of the setting in which the research is conducted**.** *Dependability* and *confirmability* replace the ideas of reliability and objectivity. They encourage researchers to provide an audit trail which can be laid open to external scrutiny. Table 5.4 is a self-explanatory check list of measures to ensure the highest scientific standards in the application of qualitative methods in this study.

Table 5.4: Rigour criteria in qualitative data

Rigour criteria	Methods to ensure quality	
Credibility	i.	Interviewees were given their interview transcripts for their approval and asked to suggest any changes.
	ii.	Eventually, all research subjects that participated in questionnaires and interviews were presented with the two empirical chapters where findings are rolled out. They were given the opportunity

	iii.	to comment on the findings in January 2013. The whole study is the result of a prolonged engagement in the field incorporating 260 hours of direct observation in Malta, two study visits in Ireland and another two in Brussels.
Transferability	iv. v.	Thick description of the context was provided in terms of political landscaping, so as knowledge claims that are generated by this study can be transferable to other similar contexts. Primary findings are discussed and interpreted within the context specific environments, giving readers enough information for them to judge the applicability of the findings to other settings.
Dependability	vi. vii.	The research design and methodology are explained in great detail to serve as an audit trail. A generous Appendix section identifying participant organisations, results and guidelines is made available to ease external scrutiny.
Confirmability	viii. ix. x.	Triangulation between interview and observation findings has been a useful tool of confirmability in the case of Malta. The continuous comparative method used in presenting empirical findings originating from Malta and Ireland sustains confirmability. In the final chapter, a reflexive assessment of the design and methodology is provided.

5.7   Ethical considerations

How much does one need to think about ethics when conducting an extensive qualitative exercise that employs a multiple number of research tools for the collection of fieldwork data? Bronfenbrenner (quoted in Burgess 1997) provides a rather dogmatic answer when he asserts that 'the only safe way to avoid violating principles of professional ethics is to refrain from doing social research altogether'. A more positive, yet idealistic, approach is suggested by Sieber.

> [W]e study ethics to learn how to make social research "work" for all concerned. The ethical researcher creates a mutually respectful, win-win relationship with the research population; this is a relationship in which subjects are pleased to participate candidly, and the community at large regards the conclusions as constructive (Sieber 1992: 3).

Quite frankly, Sieber's line of thought is easier said than done. Although codes of ethical standards work best as guidelines, fieldwork ethical dilemmas have to be resolved situationally, and often, spontaneously (Bryman 2008; Ryen 2004). Notwithstanding this, Bryman, Ryen and Sieber agree on the principle that ethics is not restricted to fieldwork, but refers to all stages in the research process, including access to organisations and people, and writing the report. Clearly, sound ethics and sound methodology go hand in hand (Sieber 1992: 4). In accordance with the regulations stipulated by the University of Sheffield and the University of Malta, I have rigorously complied by their research ethical standards throughout the whole investigative process. Table 5.5 outlines the ethical check-list pertaining to each instrument used as part of the data collection toolkit.

Figure 5.5: Ethical standards

Research Tool	Ethical standards	
Context analysis (literature review and initial exploratory fieldwork)	i.	Accurate and recent publications are used.
	ii.	As far as possible, reference was made to primary sources of data.
	iii.	Data providers' consent was sought, when necessary.
	iv.	Data were collected for explicit academic purpose.
	v.	Sources are duly acknowledged and referenced.
Self-completion questionnaires	vi.	Participation was purely on a voluntarily basis upon an informed consent.
	vii.	Cultural sensitivity was shown through the use of the Maltese language in questionnaires circulated in Malta.
	viii.	Findings are presented in aggregate form.
	ix.	A pilot study was carried out to test effectiveness.
Elite interviewing	x.	Informed consent was obtained in writing.
	xi.	Respondents were briefed again on research scope before start of interviews.
	xii.	Respondents' identity remains anonymous.
	xiii.	Maltese participants were interviewed in Maltese.
	xiv.	Authorisation was solicited prior to audio-recording.
Direct observation	xv.	Authorisation in writing was given by MEUSAC to perform the role of an academic observer on selected sectoral committees.
	xvi.	Members of selected committees were informed by MEUSAC of the author's role
	xvii.	Covert observation was never used. Presence as an observer was always known and visible to all.
	xviii.	Results derived from observations were shared with MEUSAC officers.

Adherence to ethical obligations, not only ensures the application of best practices in search for truth and objectivity, but it also guarantees a holistic investigation of high quality craftsmanship. Such obligations have a direct impact on the fundamental dimensions of reliability, validity, completeness and trustworthiness which in turn assure the transferability and credibility of conclusions.

5.8   Methodological and thematic limitations

Every research investigation, including this one, has its own limitations, no matter how complete the methodology might have been. Methodological and thematic limitations set constraints on the application or interpretation of results, restrict transferability and dilute the utility of findings (McKenzie et al. 1997, Miller 1991).

For instance, although the research design is composed of four case scenarios, namely (a) trade unions, (b) employers' associations, (c) social and human rights groups and (d) environmental groups, quantitative results are presented in two aggregates. The former two (a+b) have been grouped together under a common umbrella, *social partners*, and the latter two (c+d) have likewise been amalgamated under a common acronym, *SHEGs*. Consequently it is not possible to manifest the impact of Europeanisation on each of the four sectors for a better assessment of how this phenomenon affects different types of organised interests. This methodological compromise was inevitable because the absolute numbers in three of the four selected sectors, namely trade unions, employers' associations and environmental groups in both Malta and Ireland are small, and thus they had to be combined together in order to achieve a critical mass for statistical computations.

Moreover, the response rate of Irish organisations for the questionnaire remained relatively low at an aggregate of 49.0% compared to the staggering aggregate rate of 73.0% in the Maltese case. Considering all the efforts that have been exerted, the Irish response can still be considered reasonable. Nonetheless it had negative ramifications

on a number of insignificant p values and the incidence of the unreliability criterion in some statistics.

Another constraint in methodological terms is the element of time asymmetries. The accession periods of the two selected member states occur in very different timeframes: Ireland joined the EU thirty-one years before Malta. A temporal disparity of three decades in the accession timeline makes comparative analysis between the two polities even more challenging. This caveat will be revisited in the final chapter because its crucial implications merit a closer look in the critical assessment of the study.

The last set of potential limitations embraces thematic ones. Certain lobbying and influencing tactics are never written or recorded by practitioners. Some stratagems are considered as tricks of the trade for the lobbying profession and, hence, they are never shared with others to retain competitive advantage in the public square. In fact, as the influence of civil society groups in EU policy-making increases, calls are growing for them to become more transparent about their objectives and sources of funding (EurActive.com 2008). This is the reason why lobbying is sometimes referred to as a *veiled area* of politics. Such a lack of transparency could have negatively affected the results obtained from data collection tools as participants might have exaggerated or minimised their grassroots input, according to their reserved intentions, thus increasing the risk of the incompleteness of data. This was mitigated by the inclusion of observation in the data toolset, at least in the case of Malta.

Finally, the notion that hired lobbyists are not included in this research deserves a remark. Although primary data embraces direct references to their existence and roles in civil society, they do not form part of the analysis and conclusions. The important topic of hired lobbyists may in itself serve as the basis for further research in the future.

5.9   Introducing the empirical chapters

This chapter, in essence, discussed the different methods of inquiry that have been applied in this project. In the present climate of methodology renewal, and in line with

Polkinghorne's line of thought (1983: ix), a thorough analysis of the selected research approach has been provided not only to understand the 'why' of the adopted design, but also the 'how' of carrying it out. A mixed methodology strategy involves a large volume of statistical and researcher-generated data, including sampling, hypothesis testing, methodological decisions, notes about the context and data analysis procedures. Such data are important to document, particularly in the 'development of an audit trail to substantiate trustworthiness' and replication (Rodgers and Cowles 2007: 219).

Focus will now be directed to the presentation of empirical findings in the next two chapters. In Chapter 6 the results pertaining to trade unions and employers' associations, jointly called *social partners*, are presented and discussed, while Chapter 7 incorporates the findings related to social and human rights groups, and environmental groups, jointly named *SHEGs*. The two narratives and statistical packages are dealt with from a dual perspective, Maltese and Irish, to detect patterns of similarity and disparity between the two countries. These two empirical chapters pave the way for the subsequent part where the exercise of hypothesis testing shall be carried out.

Chapter 6

Maltese and Irish Social Partners: Presentation of Findings

Chapter 6
Maltese and Irish social partners: presentation of findings

A mutual arrangement, I repeat,
is the only satisfactory medium whereby the present system
can be carried on with any degree of satisfaction,
and in such an arrangement the employers have more to gain than the workers.

James Larkin
(1876-1947)
Irish trade union leader

6.1   Introduction

This chapter presents the major qualitative and statistical findings related to trade unions and employers' associations in both Malta and Ireland. Together with representatives of social partners, there are also heads of mediating organisations, think-tanks' chiefs and political observers who took part in the interviewing part, whereas only registered unions and employers' associations participated in the questionnaire. Relying on elite interviewing does not infer that some general accounts beyond the sample are not possible to retrieve, since their advantageous roles give research subjects a high degree of credibility, trustworthiness and transferability to the data they generate. Moreover, the application of quantitative data strengthens the validity of findings when it comes to frequency and variety of practices and ideological preferences that can go beyond the parameters of the samples.

The first section presents the findings concerning aspects of internal organisational structures and fieldwork practices of social partners, including their human resource potential, preferred modes of negotiation, network capabilities and their potential to instigate change. The second section introduces the results concerning the implications of the political and cultural scenarios in which they function. It covers such themes as political polarisation and diversity, smallness and islandness, together with the role of domestic media to forge public opinion. This is followed by another round of results pertaining to the paramount role of mediating institutions. In this section, findings will

reveal whether Maltese and Irish social partners prefer to rely on informal channels of consultation rather than being active through formal ones. The fourth set of findings revolves around contemporary economic issues characterised by a deep economic and financial crisis in the Irish case and an economic slowdown in Malta. Workers' and employers' representatives share their thoughts on whether alternative political ideologies or more bold emphasis on SME policies can indeed regenerate domestic and regional economies. The last section incorporates the majority of the statistical findings dealing more specifically with EU affairs. Among others, results reveal social partners' exposure to EU funding, lobbying in Brussels, European federations and partners together with European norms and values.

Each section encompasses comparable, sometimes contrasting, rich and in-depth narratives of the interviewees. Relevant statistical data are entwined around specific points in the text so as to complement or supplement interviewees' expressive portrayals, figures of speech and metaphors. Besides the numeric tables presented in this chapter, the reader is also referred to the whole list of cross-tabs in appendix H.

6.2   Internal organisational affairs

The starting point to trace any transformations in rational choices and normative formations in any organisation is analysing its internal organisational structures, resource base, working practices and change potential. The findings expose the internal characteristics of Maltese and Irish social partners with particular emphasis on their thinking and actions within the fragmented sectors they work in, their preferred negotiation practices and the inner capability to render themselves into change agents.

6.2.1   Human resource platform

From the fieldwork undertaken in Valletta and Dublin, it transpires that Irish trade unions and employers' associations are much more resourceful, particularly in possessing adequate headquarters, suitable logistics and full-time staff. Their Maltese counterparts, in particular trade unions, are much more modest and, in most cases, visits

had to be arranged strictly by appointment since offices are manned by part-timers who work irregular hours. Such observations are further corroborated by statistical data.

For example, there is a significant difference in the type of personnel engaged by Maltese and Irish social partners (Chi^2=26.88, p<0.0005). Table 6.1 shows that none of the Irish workers' or employers' representative bodies base their operations solely on volunteers while more than half of their Maltese counterparts (54.1%) depend solely on volunteers. The praxis of exclusively hiring paid personnel is remarkably more widespread in Ireland than in Malta (47.5% and 13.5% respectively), as is the hybridisation of volunteers and paid staff (52.9% and 32.4% respectively). The substantial number of small and fragmented in-house unions in Malta that rely on company officers who opt to undertake union matters on a voluntary basis contributes to this manpower imbalance between the two countries. For more than twenty years, the Maltese government has been running a scheme to assist trade unions by releasing public officers to perform trade union activities.[106] This is a direct contribution by the government to address problems related to lack of administrative capacity.

Table 6.1: Social partners' human resource platform

Type of personnel engaged by organisations		Trade Unions and Employers' associations		
		Malta	Ireland	Total
volunteers only	Count	20	0	20
	Percentage	54.1%	.0%	28.2%
paid personnel only	Count	5	16	21
	Percentage	13.5%	47.1%	29.6%
mix of volunteers & paid personnel	Count	12	18	30
	Percentage	32.4%	52.9%	42.3%
Total	Count	37	34	71
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 26.88$, v = 2, $p < 0.0005$

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[106] The maximum number of officers assigned per union and whether on a full-time or else on a part-time basis, depends on the number of union members (*Public Service Management Code*, 2011). This scheme has also been extended to voluntary organisations as well.

6.2.2   Negotiation styles

An integral part of the internal set-up of any organisation is its preferred style of negotiations. Maltese participants exert a lot of emphasis on personality rather than institutional set-up to determine whether negotiations can be fruitful for all or lead to the advantage of the 'selected few'. MTU3 affirms that 'bullying' and 'negative discourse' poison the relationships among and within social partners. This induces an ambience where polarisation takes the lead wherein stakeholders adopt more rigid positions and can only show signs of flexibility if they deem that this would eventually result in favour of their partisan interests.

We are Maltese. We defend our territory. Everyone sticks to his position around the discussion table and no one concedes anything if he doesn't get any compensation. If you wear a hat and then you concede it once, you will never get it back. This is a symptom of our smallness (MEA4).

There is a lot of bad blood amongst us, not only among unions and employers' associations but also within. There are some individuals whose personalities cause a lot of tension because they show strong political nuances. Although there have been many initiatives to move closer to each other, we are still a long way from inducing a consensus feeling (MTU1).

In contrast, Irish actors are more used to a culture based on consensus-seeking, not only in negotiations involving interactions with government and other 'rival partners', but also when discussing within their internal structures. This climate helps to speed processes of decision-making and is more receptive to change.

The way we work has always been by consensus. We rarely have votes, apart from conferences where people are voting on motions… Our executive council works by consensus. They very rarely vote. That's just the way we work. It is our tradition. We always try to forge consensus (ITU1).

The predominant culture is consensus-seeking in the end. Veto is not institutionalised. If you have problems in conforming to the rest, you state that you are finding difficulties and you will have a separate response which is then documented in the final version of the document (IEA6).

Table 6.2 strengthens the validity of the interviewees' experiences since its Chi^2 analysis reveals a significant difference in the preferred mode of negotiation between the two islands (Chi^2=16.258, p=0.001). While the majority of both Maltese and Irish partners formulate their negotiation strategy according to situational needs (44.7% and

66.7% respectively), the Irish are by far characterised by a consensus strategy (27.3%) when compared to a meagre 7.9% of the Maltese. On their part, Maltese social partners rely heavily on a compromise strategy (42.1%); a strategy that moves in tandem with the polarised scenario within which they function.

Table 6.2: Preferred style of negotiation strategy (social partners)

Preferred style of negotiations		Trade Unions and Employers' associations		
		Malta	Ireland	Total
Competitive	Count	2	0	2
	Percentage	5.3%	.0%	2.8%
Consensus	Count	3	9	12
	Percentage	7.9%	27.3%	16.9%
Compromise	Count	16	2	18
	Percentage	42.1%	6.1%	25.4%
Depends on the situation	Count	17	22	39
	Percentage	44.7%	66.7%	54.9%
Total	Count	38	33	71
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 16.258$, v = 3, $p = 0.001$, u

Some of the Maltese stakeholders are not satisfied with the prevailing mode of negotiation in their sector. A leading figure of one of the trade unions' confederations believes that whilst unions have to protect their members' interest, at the same time, they 'cannot ignore the common good'. 'A consensus style is the best strategy we can aim for in industrial relations' (MTU2). This ideal is also supported by another confederation leader, this time from the employers' side, 'To move forward we have to find the consensus' formula' (MEA5). He is confident that the EU has the expertise to help the Maltese find and apply this formula.

6.2.3   Networking and fragmentation

The willingness and ability to act together, or their mere absence, is an indication of how social partners react to their domestic environment. Networking, on the one hand, would imply a louder and more solid voice, resource sharing, cross-fertilisation of knowledge and, perhaps, a more legitimate cause. On the other hand, a fragmented system connotes disconcerted efforts, duplication of resources, resistance to change and

the takeover of factional interests over the greater common good. There is no doubt that the Maltese narrative recounts countless stories of the latter style.

When we came together to protest against the new gas and electricity tariffs [in 2008], some thought that this event was going to mark the start of a new era of inter-union relations. I was very cautious and told them 'that we must first learn how to walk together before we start to run'! Since then, whenever occasions arise, we failed miserably to combine our forces again. It is very difficult to bring about synergy among unions that compete for members in the same market (MTU3).

Even within our specific sector, it is difficult to come together. I don't remember that there was a time when every interested entity came to sit round the same table. Partisan politics has nothing to do with this. It is a question that involves personal interests. Although everybody is represented by some sort of entity, this is only done as long as everyone gains or is in need of something, be it funds, legal advice, logistical support and so on (MEA4).

Such an individualistic scenario does not exclude any effort of joining forces under umbrella formations. Both workers' and employers' representative organisations in Malta have their own confederations; the model adopted resembling the Italian version rather than the Anglo-Saxon one. 'The latter have one umbrella in trade unionism, whilst the former have three big umbrella confederations. Ideally I would prefer the British or Irish model but, given our circumstances, the Italian system works better for us' (MTU1). Infact, nowadays, the Maltese scenario embraces three distinct trade union confederations[107] and three major employers' federations.[108]

Statistical data shows that the highly compartmentalised Maltese scenario might start to change as Maltese actors have been more prone to EU influence to act more cohesively at national level when compared to their Irish counterparts (Table 6.3). Using a four-point likert scale, the mean rating scores represent a significant difference between Malta (2.76) and Ireland (2.00) (p=0.003).

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[107] These are the Confederation of Malta Trade Unions (CMTU), the Forum Unions Maltin (ForUM) and the General Workers Union (GWU). The latter does not strictly abide by the accepted definition of a confederation but is lately calling itself such.

[108] These are the Malta Employers Association (MEA), the Association of General Retailers and Traders (GRTU) and the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry (MCCEI).

Table 6.3: The EU induces social partners to act more cohesively at the national level

Trade Unions and Employers' associations	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U test	p value
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Malta	2.76	0.971	2.44	3.08	397.500	0.003
Ireland	2.00	1.073	1.63	2.37		

As already hinted, the Irish narrative tends to portray an alternative style based on togetherness. The fact that there is only one congress of trade unions, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), with a long outstanding history that predates the establishment of the Irish state, contributes to a greater sense of unity. The fact that ICTU is organised in Northern Ireland as well 'increases our legitimacy as well as the complexity of our organisation'. Many unions that left the Congress over the years 'did eventually return'. With 800,000 registered members, 'ICTU is the largest civil society organisation on the entire island of Ireland'. Yet their system of interest representation is not immune to fragmentation. ITU1 and ITU2 sustain that 'having 53 unions for two million workers' is not viable at all. 'A huge process of reorganisation is being undertaken to consolidate ICTU in five years' time'.

On their part, the majority of Irish employers' representatives are also confederated under one strong umbrella, the Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC), where 'each affiliated member has its own voice when it comes to sectoral interests and, at the same time, a better chance to bring about collective achievements by acting together'. However dissenting voices claim that their sectoral interests have been jeopardised by IBEC due to its alleged preference to 'big employers' who have more 'political clout'. Two defunct voices, farmers and small firms, eventually resigned from affiliated membership within IBEC and established their own independent representative bodies.

From a statistical point of view, results show high comparability between the two islands on issues involving networking over joint campaigns and partnership initiatives over the last eight years (2004-2011). Chi^2 analysis in Table 6.4 reveals no significant

difference between Maltese and Irish social partners teaming up with other domestic organisations to solidify their voice over common issues (Chi^2=0.003, p=0.958). More than 55% of both Maltese and Irish partners have invested time and energy to take part in group formations to campaign on a mutual cause while the rest simply resist such an opportunity.

Table 6.4: Teaming up of social partners with other domestic organisations in these last eight years

Teaming up with other domestic organisations to solidify voice		Trade Unions and Employers' associations		
		Malta	Ireland	Total
Yes	Count	21	19	40
	Percentage	55.3%	55.9%	55.6%
No	Count	17	15	32
	Percentage	44.7%	44.1%	44.4%
Total	Count	38	34	72
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 0.003$, v = 1, $p = 0.958$

Furthermore Table 6.5 shows a high degree of reluctance to take part in joint projects involving PPPs. More than 70% of social partners in Malta and Ireland have never involved themselves in such joint ventures. Due to high levels of comparability, there is no significant difference between the two cohorts of participants (Chi^2=1.886, p=0.596).

Table 6.5: Social partners' involvement in public-private partnership in these last eight years

Involvement in Private-Public Partnerships		Trade Unions and Employers' associations		
		Malta	Ireland	Total
Yes, on 1 occasion	Count	1	0	1
	Percentage	2.6%	.0%	1.4%
Yes, in more than 1 but less than 5 occasions	Count	7	8	15
	Percentage	18.4%	25.0%	21.4%
Yes, in 5 occasions or more	Count	3	1	4
	Percentage	7.9%	3.1%	5.7%
No	Count	27	23	50
	Percentage	71.1%	71.9%	71.4%
Total	Count	38	32	70
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 1.886$, v = 3, $p = 0.596$, u

6.2.4   Change and challenges

Being able to initiate, manage and consolidate change is fundamental in today's dynamic world. It is considered by many as an inner energy that secures survival. Although traditionally defined as protectionist groups, trade unions and employers' associations are becoming more aware of their need to transform themselves into change agents. Otherwise there is the possibility of losing their relevance. Maltese trade unions and mediating bodies are very sensitive of their ability to change in order to meet unprecedented challenges. Some are very confident, others are more cautious and, then, there are those who argue that persons, rather than organisations, are the real change entrepreneurs.

Of course we are! I am a member of the Industrial Relations Board that proposes legislative amendments to the minister. If you look at these last ten years, just prior to our accession to the EU, our union has always been proactive in recommending changes. Change is an ongoing item in our everyday agenda. Since we became EU members, my mentality on social dialogue changed dramatically. At first I used to go to Brussels with a Maltese mentality based on the antagonistic dictum of 'us and them'. When in Brussels, I had to change my mentality completely. Up there it is not sword fighting anymore, but it is all about negotiations to find common grounds. Brussels is a place where one can learn a lot and benefit from others' expertise (MTU1).

Our organisation has been instrumental in bringing about big changes in the evolution of social dialogue. Suggestions brought up by our social partners are being more and more reflected in national budgets. Besides effective institutional design, real change can only happen when key people – politicians and group leaders – champion the process and are enthusiastic to bring about meaningful transformations (MMB6).

The public has become rather indifferent to unions and many do no longer see the need to become a union member. In a period when individual performance contracts are becoming more numerous than collective agreements, we need to seriously address our relevance in today's society (MTU2).

The Irish show a higher degree of scepticism than their Maltese counterparts. Trade unionists claim that twenty years of SP have rendered them out of touch with the people. It seems that they are now reinstating themselves but it would take years to crystallise a new vision. Employers' associations are likewise sceptical because Irish political and bureaucratic elites are not steered by 'whitebait' but by 'big fish'.

The downside of SP was that everything became centralised. You did not have to involve yourself at grass-roots level because everything was done in Dublin and this meant that unions became lazy. The opposite of being lazy is being visible and relevant. Trade unions need to read and understand what members have to say. These are the signals that trigger change. Unfortunately we lost this core value in Ireland because everybody became caught in a centralised bargaining system (ITU3).

In Ireland we don't have any potential for change. We have no vision. Unions are becoming less relevant to today's workers. Workers see unions like a kind of insurance policy and not as vehicles of change (ITU2).

The big employers are the ones who bring about huge changes because they are heeded to by our government. Very often, they don't need their representative organisations to lobby government. They have direct access to whoever is in power (IEA6).

The stimulus for change does not depend solely on the composite culture of an entity or is it uniquely reliant on the skills-set and charisma of a leader, but it can also be a consequential effect of intermingling with other organisations, especially when this is done to share best practices. When asked whether benchmarking exercises have transformation effects within participant organisations (see Table 6.6), the Maltese and Irish mean scores stand slightly higher than the middling position on a four-point likert scale (2.67 and 2.71 respectively). Due to their comparability, there is no statistical difference since the p value (0.584) exceeds the 0.05 criterion.

Table 6.6: Benchmarking exercises have transformation effects on the culture of social partners

Trade Unions and Employers' associations	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U test	p value
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Malta	2.67	0.784	2.36	2.98	259.500	0.584
Ireland	2.71	0.561	2.46	2.97		

Having explored some of the characteristics that shape the internal structures and processes of social partners in Malta and Ireland, we can now proceed to present the qualitative and quantitative findings related to the implications of the politico-cultural landscaping on their strategies and tactics.

6.3   Geopolitical and cultural affairs

An understanding of the process of Europeanisation and its implications on the ideologies and practices of social partners has to take into account the national political

and cultural context as well. This domestic context dictates the level of elasticity of institutions and individual actors who have to face a continuous struggle between homegrown dogmas and new ways of imported thinking and practices. The Maltese and Irish participants express different views of how their geopolitical scenario is affecting their development and the consequential internalisation of new norms and values originating from a wider European experience.

6.3.1 Getting used to polarised Malta

On their part, all Maltese interviewees share their preoccupation with the heavy polarised political environment which seems to infiltrate all walks of life, not least, the industrial relations field.

The next step in our national agenda is to tone down the level of political polarisation that is still evident. Since we only have two parties, there is always going to be a blue tribe and a red tribe. Although agitation has diminished and everyone talks to each other, partisan seals are still there and probably they will remain with us for long (MMB6).

Political parties, with their own radio and TV stations are not in the interest of the common good because society cannot develop through objective argumentation. All arguments are adjusted from a partisan perspective. Leakages in the media and political polarisation were the two main issues that led to failure in negotiating the Social Pact (MTU3).

MEA5's opinion is contrastingly more optimistic when he states that 'political polarisation… is no longer unswerving and divisive, possibly due to the PL's acceptance of EU membership after a hard fought referendum and election campaign in 2004'. Others have a different interpretation of the current situation as they deem that although domestic parties seem to be no longer ideologically divided, fierce attacks concentrated on issue politics are still being plotted on the battleground. Today, it is a question of 'strong personalities and not staunch ideologies that dictate field tactics' (MTU3). Such battles characterised by the personification of politics could be, nonetheless, deadly ground, not devoid of 'character assassinations and jubilations' fuelled by dominant party media (MMB7).

6.3.2 Party media in Malta

Once again the idea of party media pops up. It is a phenomenon of the last two decades that is continuing to shape the social and political fabric of the Maltese. It can either break or make a deal among social partners and it has the power to camouflage any action matters with political innuendoes. Some participants consider it a 'bonus' if they are let free by the media.

The mentality of the people is not going to change easily because of the wrong role being played by party media… In Malta we don't have pluralism but the politicisation of the media. Political parties give their interpretations on every mundane story through their media channels. Even cases involving murders and drug trafficking are tagged with subtle political connotations (MTU3)!

Our institution does not handle controversial issues and, thus, it is not normally covered by the media as is the case of other mediating bodies. To a certain extent, this is an advantage because we are left alone to do our business well (MMB7).

The robust nature of party media in Malta is so far unchallenged. However various dissenting voices are today being heard that 'something needs to be done to change this unique situation of ours'. This would certainly imply changes of a legislative nature.

6.3.3 The weakness of the left in Irish politics

On their part, Irish trade unions are also weary of their political landscaping. They feel particularly frustrated with not having a strong Labour Party to champion their social agenda and, furthermore, they miserably failed in sustaining authentic leftist politics across the state.

There is no real left politics here but we all got used to it. The political life of this seventy-year-old state has been dominated by two conservative parties (ITU1).

Ultimately we have not delivered via the trade union movement a strong left political party that is regularly in government. And they [the governing institutions] don't see the need for it (ITU3).

There is no clear left or right in Irish politics due to our national struggle that goes back to the early decades of the 20th century. We really haven't developed left or right axis in Irish politics. So a lot of workers vote for a Conservative type of parties, not because they conceive them as conservative, but they see them as historical national parties (ITU2).

The status quo in Irish politics that has dominated the scenes for generations seems to have met a critical juncture in the election result of 2011 when FF failed miserably at the expense of notable increases by the Labour Party, SF and independent candidates. Reflecting on the magnitude of the latest election result, IMB4 observes that 'ironically the biggest seismic effect in the system of domestic politics was the result of domestic issues, not imported through some European political or economic vehicle'. One trade union leader (ITU1) is aware that '[the Irish] are living through hugely transformative times and many changes can happen in the future'. Others share the same dream…

If you want me to be optimistic, the rush to satisfy the insatiable markets and the lust for profits will actually bring about that change over a generation or two. People will say 'this is not a society I want to live in'. We need to respect each other more and need to have laws which give us [union] rights' (ITU3).

The 2011 election brought about drastic changes in the way the Irish normally vote… These changes led to a redefinition of the 'two and half party system'. Notwithstanding a long standing tradition based on clientelism, many voters opted to reject their traditional party. Widespread public anger against the dramatic downfall of the economy was actually the major change breeder (IPO7).

Irish employers' associations, on their part, seem less preoccupied with party politics. Their only concern is the lack of attention given to SMEs which are greatly disadvantaged when compared to the gigantic foreign corporations that have a plethora of connections within the inner circles of government. A representative of small businesses (IEA6) laments that 'SMEs have never been included in any political consideration, including SP'. The issue of SMEs will be dealt with in greater detail in the section concerning the economic scenario.

6.3.4   Investigative media in Ireland

Like their Maltese counterparts, Irish social partners do feel threatened by the influence of the media but for different reasons. The Irish media are deemed to be independent and investigative. However their latter function is seriously crippled by libel laws, which although softened, personal reputation is still protected by the Constitution. Consequently,

> [T]here are many programmes on current affairs that it is all talk and opinion and not a lot of analysis and evidence. In this way we don't necessarily make any progress in terms of our understanding of an issue, or facts and figures (ITT8).

Trade unions are convinced that they have been victimised and stigmatised by the Irish media as there has been a 'very sophisticated and nasty campaign' against unions in the last four years' (ITU2). Small businesses also have their own complaints about the media.

> The general perception, primarily the media, is that trade unions are dinosaurs and that they act against progress and flexible workforces (ITU3).

> It is the media that makes overemphasis on the multinational companies (IEA5).

Thus, despite its independent and investigative character, Irish media does not come out uncontested.

6.3.5 Smallness and islandness

Geographical smallness and islandness have a direct imprint on indigenous culture that can either facilitate or inhibit Maltese and Irish social partners in their quest to protect the rights of their members and/or to promote new interests as part of their programme of change. An Irish trade unionist is totally blunt against the 'curse of smallness' as this in itself propagates corruption.

> The powerful institutions and the people in a small country have countless interconnections. That led to a lot of the corruption charges, a lot of bad planning... We have three or four tribunals investigating politicians, what happened to financial grants and who was really influencing decisions. It all became incestuous. A lot of the trade union movement was funded by this sort of behaviour such as meetings on the side at racehorses in Galway and in pubs. All this goes against transparency and inclusiveness (ITU2).

Maltese participants have a much more positive view of their microsize and to many such a compact geographical area is considered as a 'blessing' since 'it gives the possibility of repositioning our economy in a matter of hours, not days, because all of the senior officers within governments, unions and employers' associations can be

contacted instantly and be able to meet on that same evening, if need be' (MTU3). Others share similar thoughts,

We have an advantage because we are extra small. The government can commit itself to having full employment by implementing a number of schemes and this can be done because our numbers are also small. But other states cannot do it because of their sheer size where the number of individuals is also large (MTU1).

A small state [with a concentrated population] finds the task of informing its citizens much easier and cost-effective... Other leverages come into play as well, including a small and centralised national administrative structure... This will ultimately lead to the speedy transposition and implementation of European legislation (MMB8).

A representative of an employers' association presents the case from another perspective. Islandness, not smallness, is his actual preoccupation.

Success is size inelastic. What matters is the validity and reasonableness of the argument. From a business perspective, islandness rather than smallness is a concern. The main problems are the additional costs associated with commercial freight handling and accessibility as a tourist destination (MEA9).

6.3.6 Indigenous culture

Findings show that another geopolitical factor, indigenous culture, is a crucial mediating force that accommodates or resists changes stemming from a wider European experience. In the questionnaire, respondents were specifically asked whether national culture inhibits the adoption of European norms. The mean rating scores in Table 6.7 are 2.42 for Malta and 2.07 for Ireland, implying comparability as they lay around the middling position of a four-point likert scale (p=0.169). This implies that both states believe that their national culture tends to be fairly elastic at times and fairly inelastic in other times or across different sectoral interests. Thus, the elasticity factor of national culture is dependent on two fundamental asymmetries: time and sectoral areas.

Table 6.7: National culture and the wider European experience among social partners

Trade Unions and Employers' associations	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U test	p value
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Malta	2.42	1.004	2.09	2.75	448.500	0.169
Ireland	2.07	0.923	1.72	2.42		

When asked about which features distinguish the Maltese people, the idea of '*dakkir*' (pollination), in other words the innate ability to adapt and absorb new ideas without necessarily loosening ties with the past, came out very strongly during interviewing sessions.

> Pollination is our key characteristic. In the past we were pollinated by the English. They gave us a great sense of discipline. In the manufacturing industry and management skills, we were influenced by the Germans. The Maltese have this priceless skill. The Maltese don't form ghettos of their own neither in Brussels nor in any country to which they emigrated. You can always see them mingling and socialising with anyone (MEA6).

MTU2 continues to ponder on this collective feature and observes a paradoxical composition of the Maltese culture. On the one hand it is 'rooted in conservatism' and on the other hand it is 'flexible and open to new challenges'. Although the 'Maltese still cling to their colonial mentality', at the same time everyone becomes 'quickly acquainted' with the new reality of forming part of the EU. MEA9 reaffirms that 'restructuring policies were the result of domestic policy choices that were heavily calculated by the long-term goal posts of EU membership'. However some of the deep roots might not bear the constant pressures coming from overseas and will one day break loose.

> Some of our cultural characteristics will be lost in the future. Our language may be one. The other is surely our Catholic faith. Religion will no longer define our nation. This is what happened in the continent and it will happen here just the same. Our set of values that have been dear to us for millennia will be negatively affected (MMB6).

Insularity, observance to age-old traditions and obsession with secrecy have been singled out by Irish interviewees as the three major characteristics that still describe contemporary Ireland.

We are very insular and because of our economic recession we are becoming even more so, even though we now need even more help from outside (ITU2).

We have a problem in relation to openness and transparency. Ireland has a problem about secrecy and it is certainly identified in the Irish state… Secrecy is part of our culture and it tends to be excessive. We prefer not to put things on paper in some policy areas (ITT8).

Notwithstanding EU influence in all sectors of Irish life, including public administration, policy networks and regulatory affairs, our traditional culture of making our own politics and preserving old-aged patronage intricacies still persists. This must be, perhaps, the only area where EU influence was consciously not allowed (IMB4).

Findings have shown that political and cultural connotations do influence the strategies and tactics of representative organisations. Results reveal a number of similarities and differences in the two islands which, in turn, affect the in/elastic capability of domestic culture to adapt or resist new norms stemming from beyond their shores. In the next section, the discussion will revolve around the in/effectiveness of formal and informal channels that liaise interaction between state and non-state actors.

6.4   Institutional participative affairs

Academic literature reveals that formal institutions of coordination enjoy paramount importance in decoding the dynamics of trust and scepticism between state and non-state actors. Furthermore, theory and practice embrace informal channels of communication as well which sometimes move in parallel with the former and, at other times, they shun or replace them. This section presents the findings on the effectiveness and productivity of such channels which are deemed as powerful interlocutors between European influences and domestic politics. The findings pertaining to formal consultative institutions will be presented first, followed by those on informal channels.

6.4.1   Setting the scene for formal institutions

Much of the debate among Maltese social partners revolves primarily around the MCESD which enjoys centre stage in tripartite style dialogue and, to a lesser extent, the MEUSAC that incorporates a more pluralistic list of stakeholders due to the direct

involvement of civil society. The latter will be exclusively analysed in the next chapter where the findings of environmental, as well as social and human rights groups, will be presented. Much of the discussion focuses on the merits and in-built deficiencies of these formal channels of consultation, together with recent initiatives concerning their institutional regeneration to better reflect the evolving third sector in Malta. Besides these coordinating institutions, whenever the government issues a legal notice on a new project, the public sector is duty bound to identify which are the stakeholders that are affected in order to formulate a mitigation plan. An influential employers' representative laments that 'sometimes we are overdoing these ongoing one-to-one consultations which, in turn, slow every new business or economic opportunity' (MEA5).

The Irish case is totally dominated by the unofficial termination of the SP that characterised the scene from 1987 to 2008. Some participants look back nostalgically towards the peak periods of SP when it was perceived that the 'dramatic increase in the Irish economy would never have happened if it wasn't for SP' (IEA5). Others show no apologies in identifying the serious wrongdoings of SP and believe that 'the role it played in the boom period was overstated' (ITU3). An overabundance of other coordinating institutions chaired by the state was simply discarded by the new coalition government after the 2011 election. Many, today, are sceptical about the effectiveness of the only remaining fully functional body that brings together state and non-state actors, namely the NESC[109] since this 'is no more than a research production house' (IEA6).

6.4.2 Significant quantitative results

As expected since the aftermath of SP in Ireland, Chi^2 analysis in Table 6.8 reveals significant difference between the disposition of Maltese and Irish social partners to

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[109] The National Economic and Social Council (NESC) was established in 1973 and advises the Taoiseach (Prime Minister) on strategic issues for Ireland's economic and social development. The members of the Council are appointed by the Taoiseach, for a three year term. These members are representatives of business and employers' organisations, trade unions, agricultural and farming organisations, community and voluntary organisations, and environmental organisations; as well as heads of Government departments and independent experts (see http://www.nesc.ie/).

participate in consultative bodies (Chi^2=0.659, p=0.010). Maltese unions and employers' associations are more involved in formal channels of consultation than their Irish counterparts (68% and 38% respectively). The difference is further reinforced when the non-participative ones were then asked if they intended to join a coordinating entity in the future. 95% of Irish respondents affirm that this option is out of question, whilst almost 31% of the Maltese think that they will grab the opportunity if it arises.

Table 6.8: Participation of social partners in consultation entities

Participation in any coordination entities that bring together governmental and non-governmental bodies		Trade Unions and Employers' associations		
		Malta	Ireland	Total
Yes	Count	26	13	39
	Percentage	68.4%	38.2%	54.2%
No	Count	12	21	33
	Percentage	31.6%	61.8%	45.8%
Total	Count	38	34	72
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 0.659$, $v = 1$, $p = 0.010$

When asked if the EU has been instrumental in accentuating the culture of social dialogue in domestic affairs (Table 6.9), the resulting mean rating scores lead to a significant difference between Malta and Ireland (p=0.031). Using a four-point likert scale, the mean rating scores are 3.05 for Malta and 2.55 for Ireland. This means that whereas the Irish perceive the EU's impetus as minor, the Maltese think that its drive has been more forceful in emphasising social dialogue in national politics.

Table 6.9: The EU's instrumentality in accentuating social dialogue in domestic affairs

Trade Unions and Employers' associations	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U test	p value
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Malta	3.05	0.868	2.77	3.34	448.000	0.031
Ireland	2.55	1.063	2.17	2.92		

Furthermore, another score of significant difference is revealed in Table 6.10. It shows the Maltese and Irish perspectives of whether or not the EU has been effective in compelling national governments to seek more consultation. Respondents rated their opinion on a four-point likert scale. The mean rating scores are 2.76 for Malta and 2.33

for Ireland (p=0.032). This implies that Maltese social partners, when compared to their Irish counterparts, consider the EU as having been more effective in inducing their government to be more consultative in policy-making. MTU3 affirms that 'since Malta applied to join the EU, social dialogue has become more central to our economic and social activity. It has certainly become more institutionalised'. MMB6 adds that social dialogue has become even more 'critical' when 'Malta joined the eurozone'.

Table 6.10: Pressure by the EU on national government to seek more participation

Trade Unions and Employers' associations	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U test	p value
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Malta	2.76	0.971	2.44	3.08	451.500	0.032
Ireland	2.33	0.736	2.07	2.59		

This section will now be segmented into two narratives, the Maltese case and the Irish one, wherein statistical data presented so far will be corroborated by individual experiences.

6.4.3   The Maltese scenario

6.4.3.1   Formal institutions of participation

The formation of consultative bodies by the Maltese government started within the same period when the country submitted its application to join the EU in 1990. Traditionally, Maltese stakeholders have been very intransigent, defending their own territory and extremely rigid in their polarised positions. Smallness and claustrophobic density render islanders sentinels guarding 'the little they have'. The laying of foundations of innovative mediating institutions and instilling a more positive attitude among the people involved, directed matters differently.

MCSED was set up prior to EU accession. Since the 1990s, the government introduced new rhetoric in Maltese politics, including such words as dialogue, subsidiarity and participation. It wanted to move away from a hostile environment where stakeholders fought each other. At the end, workers and employers have to be seen as partners, not antagonists anymore (MMB6).	I always believed that structural social dialogue among government, unions and employers is the key to resolve problems. The most important thing in such a set-up is not what I have to say but the need to understand what the others have to say. Any industrial dispute can be solved by argumentation and persuasion round a common table (MTU3).

Although recognised by all as a 'quantum leap that everybody was waiting for' (MTU1), MCESD and other formal processes of consultation do not come uncontested. Those expecting a seat round the discussion table but remaining without one complained, as did others saying MCESD is still a far cry from the EESC due to 'our style of doing politics where everyone is devoted to his own niche' (MTU2). Maltese social partners 'do not collaborate together, form common study groups on certain issues and produce joint proposals to government' (MEA5). There is no doubt that the homegrown institutional framework of MCESD needs to undergo a thorough transformative process which will ultimately render it similar to the more pluralistic format of the EESC.

Others still have reservations as MCESD is still considered a government vehicle for information download which then does too little to upload suggestions and researched opinions from the rest of the 'partners'. MTU1 asserts that real progress cannot be achieved unless Government ceases its chairing seat over MCESD and its officers taking their seats only whenever invited to address specific issues. In 2012, less than a year before a general election, the government took heed of the frequent calls to regenerate MCESD by broadening its official list of stakeholders, incorporating a new platform of small trade unions,[110] representatives of civil society[111] and Gozo as a

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[110] This is the third union grouping, known as Forum Unions Maltin (ForUM). Initially set up with eight unions in 2004, with the MUMN – nurses and midwives – playing a key role, the group was strengthened when the MUT joined it after leaving the CMTU in 2008. A major reason for the creation of ForUM was to obtain seats in the tripartite Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD), on which the GWU, the UHM and the CMTU are represented.

[111] In effect, MCESD already has a functional Civil Society Committee but this has been kept completely separate from its core group where only social partners had the right to participate. Through legal amendments, representatives of civil society are being promoted to the first tier Council, although the major problem in such situation always remain on the selection of who is best to represent a cacophony of different, sometimes conflicting, interests (MTU3).

region. Many think that this is the only way forward; shaping MCESD on the lines of the EU's governance structures, not least, the EESC.

6.4.3.2 Informal channels of influence

Parallel to the supporting formal institutions, Maltese corporatist interdependencies are also characterised by informal channels of influence, which processes are expected in a country where the involved stakeholders' headquarters are only a few minutes' walk from each other, mostly in Valletta. Workers and employers' associations, including government, can opt to go directly to those entities considered appropriate in certain cases, implying bilateral, often informal, meetings. Despite the legalisms characterising formal institutions and processes of social dialogue, informal options of influence are most often deemed to be more practical and easily available. 'We invest a lot in informal networks as this is actually our job', maintains one trade unionist (MTU1). Another union leader confirms that '[m]uch of our negotiations are done informally. We know each other since we are not too numerous in the field' (MTU3). The head of an official mediating body goes as far as to say that 'sometimes big problems are solved during a funeral service or a wedding reception' (MMB7). However, being more practical and accessible does not necessarily entail that informal consultations are more effective or desirable than formal ones. In fact there are those who beg to differ.

Informal meetings are not enough. We need to conduct such meetings on issues that are important at a particular moment in time. However by relying solely on informality, you will not be able to change power structures and processes in the long term (MTU1).	We don't believe in the potential of informal networks. In fact we want to change the current clientelistic system wherein our members petition their politicians on an individual basis. In our sector there is a lot of untapped tension because we don't have a formal structure where we can upload our concerns (MEA4).

Contrary to common perception, although informal contacts are widespread and exercised on a day-to-day basis across the Maltese islands, they are not envisaged as superior to well-organised formal mediating structures where all parts are represented and power games are subject to ground rules and transparency.

6.4.4   The Irish scenario

6.4.4.1   Formal institutions of participation

The Irish narrative promulgates a divergent case since its state and non-state actors' relationship goes beyond the consultative mode; it created a unique style of bond which brought long-term consensus among government and its social and civil partners through SP that contained a multi-tier set-up of consultative units spreading across different spheres. Here, we will only focus on its 'corporatist economic tier through which trade unions, employers' associations and the government met in the form of tripartite model to establish national pay agreements' (ITT8). It was presented to Europe, particularly to the candidate Eastern countries at the time, as a unique winning formula that brings economic prosperity. While admitting that during its first years, SP was a must in bringing about the much needed industrial peace to attract foreign investment, the system became degenerative from 2000 onwards and the stakeholders could not pull out of the system until the rapid plunge back to economic bust dismantled the whole institutional framework.

Employers representatives' interpretations of what really went wrong are not in tandem with each other.

Originally it served its purpose well. Then it became part of our structural problems. It did affect negatively our wage competitive edge. Wages kept rising to an overdose level… [Then] many things went wrong in this country (IEA5).

SMEs did not have a voice at the partnership table. This was its real flaw. The employers' group was mainly a representative group of the multinationals. We were always doomed to be outsiders because nobody wanted us in (IEA6).

On their part, trade unions' leaders have a different version of a 'unique' story that went 'terribly fallacious'.

The system was sustainable as long as the economy was booming. When the hard decisions had to be made, the people reverted back to the politicians. So, for example, employers' associations are now on an aggressive mode on a number of issues, not least the minimum wage… What we didn't do is that we didn't identify problem issues and we didn't try to sort them out… We became lazy… in a model that became elitist (ITU2).

The trade union movement contributed hugely to the genuine boom. [However] [f]rom 1998 a clear policy choice was made. Government wanted to move one way and this was hugely supported by the business community. They went to Boston [the American economic model]. We want something a bit more like Berlin [Social Europe model]. It is from this point on that the trade union movement began to loose its ideological argument (ITU1).

6.4.4.2 Informal channels of influence

In the post-SP period 'the system has become much more informal' (IEA5), although some stakeholders maintain that within the foregoing model 'the relationship between trade unions and government was a strong mix of both formal and informal contact' (ITU3). The negotiations leading to the renewal of national agreements were certainly formal but otherwise 'week in, week out it was more informal than formal'. Nonetheless, since the collapse of many official coordinating bodies, except for NESC and the advisory board called the National Competitive Council (NCC) that 'is doing some very good work in identifying difficulties and barriers for businesses' (IEA6), personal contacts and inconspicuous lobbying have mushroomed among electoral as well as non-electoral forms of representation. Notwithstanding widespread support for informality in influence stratagems, certain representative bodies still think that formal coordinating bodies are nevertheless desirable, as long as they are more pluralistic in their composition, that is, they would be open to all interested stakeholders and not exclusively available to the ones that have always enjoyed an insider status.

We are now requesting the set-up of a national representative forum which would bring together not just big businesses but also small businesses. Not just big trade unions but also smaller ones and people who are not organised into trade unions. It would bring farmers, community groups, the Opposition spokespersons and the Central Bank. It would be an advisory forum for government, unlike the SP model which was the government itself (IEA6).

Lots of business in Ireland is done because people know people… People go to the same sporting places. Irish politicians are very accessible. I can meet them within a week by going to local clinics where they make themselves available. It is quite an open political system in some ways… [But] there is still plenty of scope for corporatist type of tripartite partnership agreements to continue in the future in some form or other (ITT8).

It can be concluded that although the two polities provide a different historical narrative concerning the formation and functions of central mediating bodies, at the same time, they both present an earnest plea to make their channels of mediation more open and transparent in terms of representation and, perhaps, resembling more the EU model of negotiation both in terms of structures and processes. Economic affairs will form the basis of the third section which is exclusively composed of qualitative data.

6.5   Economic affairs

A thorough examination of economic interests groups is not complete without the inclusion of the regional and domestic economic dimension. Furthermore, economic discourse has a direct impact on the stakeholders' outlook towards the Europeanisation process.

Despite the negative effects of the global economic downturn, including slower economic growth, deterioration of public finances and a downgrading of its sovereign credit rating by Moody's, Malta is still considered by the European Commission as one of its best eurozone performers (*EC Interim Economic Forecast 2012*). Ireland's story presents a case of a failed economy. In late 2010, the Irish Government agreed to a \$112 billion loan package from the EU and IMF to help Dublin further increase the capitalisation of its banking sector and avoid defaulting on its sovereign debt (*CIA World Factbook* 2012). This led to an intensification of austerity measures to meet the deficit targets stipulated in the bail-out agreement. Participants' feedback has to be interpreted against this severe economic backdrop that goes beyond domestic borders.

6.5.1   The scars of neo-liberalism

Trade unionists in both states agree that the financial and economic crisis is 'deeply rooted in neo-liberalism to which the EU now adheres'. This is eventually leading to their lack of trust in the European project, although they admit that a change in political leadership may lead to an alternative policy choice. Most Maltese interviewees tackled the issues of political economy from an ideological point of view.

The current economic and financial problems are alienating the EU from its original and clear direction, that is, to bring harmony across member states and to renew their style of governance through the principles of MLG and subsidiarity… Today, power is being centralised and transferred to its supranational institutions to such an extent that the founding fathers would not recognise it anymore (MTU2).

We favour a fairer capitalist system but are against violent aggression when it comes to anti-globalisation. Unfortunately, our European federation representing small agri-businesses started using violent campaigning. We don't consent to this. We stand against multinationals that dictate decisions for the rest. Participation in economic decision-making should be more accessible and inclusive (MEA4).

Feedback by the Irish shares a similar line of thought and Irish trade unions, in particular, are ferocious against the 'dictatorship of the neo-liberal agenda' driven by the powerful member states.

What I would fear is that Europe becomes the lowest denominator. It becomes the big free market. It has always been the core of the integration project. So this would mean that the green and social European agenda becomes weak… Europe needs to be more idealistic and move beyond narrow economic interests. Then they can push us with targets through norms, penalties and so on (ITT8).

What has changed the values of Europe is not the enlargement; it is the fact that at its inner core (the Germans and the French) feels absolutely compelled to comply with what markets want. As long as you are chasing the markets and try to satisfy their level profits – which you can never satisfy – you would neglect the needs of the people… It's a seismic shift from social Europe to a market-driven Europe (ITU3).

6.5.2   Regenerating an alternative vision

Irish trade unionists feel strong about the 'battle of ideas' that will one day re-emerge in Europe. This can happen if the people wake-up from their apathetic indifference and a new 'socialist' leadership takes on the driving-seat. At the time of conducting the interviews in Ireland, there was much anticipation about the Presidential elections in France that were due a few weeks later. [112] A new French socialist president was seen, at the time, by many as the one who will show Europe that neo-liberalism is not the

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[112] The presidential election was held in France on 22 April 2012, with a second round run-off held on 6 May to elect the President of France. The incumbent Nicolas Sarkozy was running for a second successive. The first round ended with the selection of Nicolas Sarkozy and François Hollande as second round participants, as neither of them received a majority of votes cast in the first round. Hollande won the run-off with 51.63% of the vote to Sarkozy's 48.37%.

only viable alternative to steer stagnant economies. For the Irish workers' representatives this will be the time when a more solid and positive future will be redeemed for the benefit of 'all Europeans'.

It's all about ideology. It has to do with ideas. A battle of ideas will someday take place. The real left has been absent from the European scene for at least a decade. People who are offering a countervailing view might find their way a bit more on the airwaves to put their case (ITU1).

There is a growing, yet latent, disharmony between the people of Ireland and Europe, not because the EU is bad but its austerity measures are insistently being imposed as a result of what was primarily a banking meltdown. This can only be reversed by an alternative political clout at both national and European levels (ITU3).

6.5.3   The centrality of a strong SMEs policy

Contrastingly, Maltese and Irish employers' associations do not invest their confidence in an ideological shift of political leadership but, instead, are vociferous about the need to place SMEs at the heart of the economic agenda. Their plea is to make their governments and the European institutions more proactive in nurturing home-grown industries based on micro, small and medium businesses. The comments below by Maltese partners are very clear.

The Maltese government has enacted the Small Business Act (SBA). It is a legislative answer that created new forms of participation and consultation whenever SMEs are affected by new projects and laws. We have lobbied for this as we wanted to ensure that the European version of SBA is transposed to our own laws. SMEs are the solution of the current crises and they need to be promoted by those in power (MEA5).

Small states are the ones that suffer the most from one size fits all approaches, particularly in an economic environment dominated by SMEs and micro-business… The EU's SME definition is inadequate as it doesn't properly take into account concerns and mind-set of micro-businesses. Malta needs a boost to its micro home grown business sector to guarantee sustainable economic growth (MEA9).

Representatives of small businesses in Ireland seem divided in the way they assess how SMEs were treated by domestic authorities. Some say the 'SMEs sector has never been ignored' even though Ireland had been largely dependent on Foreign Direct Investments (FDI). Their sheer numbers are always a reminder of their presence and pressures. Other

associations insist that this is totally false. They ponder that 'SMEs were never given their due importance by politicians, were excluded from being part of formal institutions like SP and did not benefit from any grants specifically designed for them'. When the Irish economy hit its lowest ebb, the new government nominated a junior minister responsible for SMEs. It is a step in the right direction which every employer organisation cherishes but it needs to be backed up by some robust policy structures.

More than half of the private sector workers are employed by SMEs and if you look at business demography, 95% of firms in Ireland are SMEs. Naturally, these have different needs from those of large operators. If you look to our policy initiatives to government, most of them are SME related. SMEs have the potential to help Ireland go back on the right economic tracks (IEA5).

From an SME perspective, the EU impact had been weak. Regulatory impact assessments, wherein we conduct analysis how new things are to affect SMEs, are not common practice here. In the past, it was the Taoiseach office responsible for this, but now it has all gone. So new regulations coming in from the EU are rarely assessed from an SME point of view (IEA6).

One can conclude that the discourse of trade union leaders is, principally, of an ideological nature to reverse the casualties of neo-liberalism. Alternatively, employers' associations seem to be more resolute on immediate corrective actions by lobbying for the introduction or strengthening of a better policy architecture that specifically seeks the development of SMEs. The last round of findings in this chapter is primarily of a statistical nature and deals more thoroughly with EU related concerns.

6.6   European affairs

The fifth set of results is primarily of a statistical nature. In this last section, findings are more directly related to EU affairs to gauge how social partners in Malta and Ireland are reacting to incentives and values emanating from an integrated continent, as well as their propensity to socialise and engage in collective learning.

6.6.1 European vision and dimension

The first set of statistical findings reveal whether the European dimension has filtered within the organisation's vision/mission statements and to what extent has it been incorporated in its endeavours.

Chi^2 analysis in Table 6.11 reveals no significant difference between Maltese and Irish social partners in incorporating a European dimension within their vision/mission statements. Workers' and employers' representatives in Malta and Ireland secure a comfortable majority in favour of having their raison d'être encapsulated within a wider European context (60.5% and 70.6% respectively).

Table 6.11: Inclusion of European dimension in the vision/mission statements of social partners

The vision/mission statement incorporates a European dimension		Trade Unions and Employers' associations		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	23	24	47
	Percentage	60.5%	70.6%	65.3%
No	Count	15	10	25
	Percentage	39.5%	29.4%	34.7%
Total	Count	38	34	72
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 0.802$, $v = 1$, $p = 0.371$

On the other hand, significant difference is then registered in the follow-up question (Table 6.12) when respondents were asked whether the incorporation of the European dimension occurred as a consequence of EU accession (Chi^2=5.248, p=0.022). The vast majority of Irish social partners (83.3%) confirm that the change was institutionalised due to EU accession. At the other end of the spectrum, almost half of the Maltese respondents (47.8%) express an opposite view which might imply a more proactive and persuasive drive towards the EU.

Table 6.12: Inclusion of European dimension occurred because of EU accession

The inclusion of the EU dimension in the vision/mission statement occurred as a consequence of EU accession		Trade Unions and Employers' associations		
		Malta	Ireland	Total
Yes	Count	12	20	32
	Percentage	52.2%	83.3%	68.1%
No	Count	11	4	15
	Percentage	47.8%	16.7%	31.9%
Total	Count	23	24	47
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 5.248$, v = 1, $p = 0.022$

Participation in EU related activities both domestically and abroad, as Table 6.13 reveals, is significantly different for social partners in the two islands ($Chi^2=3.925$, p=0.048). More than nine tenths of Irish trade unions and employers' groups take part in such activities, while Maltese counterparts lag behind by 20%. Consequently 27% of Maltese social partners are still not active in initiatives which are EU-related.

Table 6.13: Participation of social partners in EU activities domestically and abroad

Participation in EU related activities both domestically and abroad		Trade Unions and Employers' associations		
		Malta	Ireland	Total
Yes	Count	27	31	58
	Percentage	73.0%	91.2%	81.7%
No	Count	10	3	13
	Percentage	27.0%	8.8%	18.3%
Total	Count	37	34	71
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 3.925$, v = 1, $p = 0.048$, u

The Irish are more vociferous in European fora, particularly since the take over by the Troika, that is the ECB, the IMF and the EU.

> Member states need to be more active and vigorous to upload their agenda. There has been so much top-down Europeanisation. There is presumption and arrogance in the way EU deals with its nation states. From a trade union perspective we are trying to upload our concerns but our government adopted a strategy of 'let's do whatever they tell us and get a reward for it' (ITU1).

This heightened participation in EU affairs from the part of the Irish does not mean that they are now feeling closer to an integrated continent. On the contrary, 'the general

feeling, in a strange way, is that the IMF is treating the Irish better than the ECB. There is now a sense of greater alienation towards the European project' (ITU2).

Table 6.14 rounds up these findings by defining the trend of participation in EU-related activities over these last eight years (2004-2011). The trend of Maltese activation in EU affairs is experiencing an apparently lower rate of expansion compared to the Irish (28.9% and 41.2% respectively), in addition to almost a third of Maltese social partners who are still indifferent to the European reality (28.9%). On their part, 44.1% of Irish organisations are going through a stabilisation mode where their rate of engagement in EU related activities is neither increasing nor decreasing. Given these trends, the Chi^2 test provides an almost significant difference between the two states (Chi^2=6.631, p=0.085).

Table 6.14: Social partners' rate of participation in EU related activities

The rate of participation in EU related activities		Trade Unions and Employers' associations		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Increased	Count	11	14	25
	Percentage	28.9%	41.2%	34.7%
Remained Stable	Count	11	15	26
	Percentage	28.9%	44.1%	36.1%
Decreased	Count	5	2	7
	Percentage	13.2%	5.9%	9.7%
Not Applicable	Count	11	3	14
	Percentage	28.9%	8.8%	19.4%
Total	Count	38	34	72
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 6.631$, $v = 3$, $p = 0.085$

6.6.2   Training and coordination of EU matters

Almost half of the trade unions and employers' associations in Malta and Ireland have taken the initiative to participate in training programmes to enhance their skills in dealing with EU matters (44.7% and 47.1% respectively). Statistically, there is no significant difference between the two cohorts in this regard (see Table 6.15).

Table 6.15: Training of social partners' officers in EU affairs

Participation in training programmes to acquire necessary skills in EU affairs		Trade Unions and Employers' associations		Total
		Malta	Ireland	Total
Yes	Count	17	16	33
	Percentage	44.7%	47.1%	45.8%
No	Count	21	18	39
	Percentage	55.3%	52.9%	54.2%
Total	Count	38	34	72
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 0.039$, v = 1, $p = 0.844$

Table 6.16 reveals that almost 40% of Maltese unions and employers' associations do not appoint any officer/s to deal with EU matters. This represents a significant contrast to the Irish situation where only 6% of the organisations do likewise ($Chi^2=21.801$, p<0.0005). In contrast, Maltese social partners make a predominant use of the practice where EU matters fall under the responsibility of one officer who simultaneously executes other duties (28.9%), whilst the second most used praxis involves the appointment of one exclusive officer to coordinate EU affairs (18.4%). The majority of their Irish counterparts prefer a system of having a team of persons who share the responsibility of EU affairs (52.9%) instead of appointing one exclusive or joint officer (2.9% + 38.2% = 41.1%). Results have to be treated with caution due to the unreliability factor.

Table 6.16: Responsibility of EU affairs within social partners

Responsibility of EU affairs within organisations		Trade Unions and Employers' associations		Total
		Malta	Ireland	Total
Yes, one person who is solely responsible	Count	7	1	8
	Percentage	18.4%	2.9%	11.1%
Yes, one who performs other tasks as well	Count	11	13	24
	Percentage	28.9%	38.2%	33.3%
More than one person responsible	Count	5	18	23
	Percentage	13.2%	52.9%	31.9%
No	Count	15	2	17
	Percentage	39.5%	5.9%	23.6%
Total	Count	38	34	72
	% within Social	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 21.801$, v = 3, $p < 0.0005$, u

6.6.3 EU funding

As can be seen in Table 6.17, there is a significant difference between social partners in Malta and Ireland in their attempts to access EU funding under different schemes and projects. In fact the vast majority of Maltese unions and employers' associations (60.5%) have presented their case for EU funding, whilst the overwhelming majority of their Irish counterparts (79.4%) have not.

Table 6.17: Attempts by social partners to access EU funds

Attempts to access EU funds			Trade Unions and Employers' associations		Total
			Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes		Count	23	7	30
		Percentage	60.5%	20.6%	41.7%
No		Count	15	27	42
		Percentage	39.5%	79.4%	58.3%
Total		Count	38	34	72
		Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 11.776$, $v = 1$, $p = 0.001$

Upon further investigation, it is to be noted that almost all of IBEC's federations have halted their attempts to attain EU funding during this last decade. An IBEC spokesperson confirmed that they do not currently apply for any EU funds, but 'we have done so in the past when we were involved in quite a number of projects, in particular European Social Fund (ESF) funded projects'.

Table 6.18 indicates that the majority of Maltese unions and employers' associations (64%) state that they do use external advice to help them have a better chance of accessing EU funding, while the situation in Ireland is somewhat different as only 38.9% declare to have the same need. Nonetheless, the Chi^2 test still reveals no significant difference between Malta and Ireland in the usage of external consultancy (Chi^2=2.652, p=0.103). The most popular sources of external advice in both Malta and Ireland are government agencies and confederate organisations (see Appendix H).

Table 6.18: Use of external expertise to access EU funds

Use of external advice to access EU funds		Trade Unions and Employers' associations		Total
		Malta	Ireland	
Yes	Count	16	7	23
	Percentage	64.0%	38.9%	53.5%
No	Count	9	11	20
	Percentage	36.0%	61.1%	46.5%
Total	Count	25	18	43
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 2.652$, v = 1, $p = 0.103$

6.6.4 Contacts and lobbying in Brussels

In this part, statistical findings are focused on the type of contacts that have been established by social partners in Brussels and their preferences as to whom they address their lobbying at the supranational level.

Although the Chi^2 test in Table 6.19 reveals a significant difference in the way Maltese and Irish organisations have dealt with their contacts in Brussels (Chi^2=18.511, p=0.002), the result is to be treated with caution due to the unreliability factor. Many organisations have invested in more than one type of communication channel. A couple of divergences are easily detected. The Irish rely more on umbrella Euro-groups based in Brussels (48.2%) than do the Maltese (25.8%). On their part, 16.1% of Maltese rely on online networking when compared to the 10.7% of Irish social partners, maybe because it is the cheapest option. Contrastingly, since specific funds are allocated for members' overseas travelling by their respective Euro federations,[113] the two of them share approximately the same segment (22%) when it comes to sending officers to Brussels from time to time. However the most significant difference between the two states is apparent in the last item, that is where no contact has been established so far. A staggering 29% of Maltese social partners fall under this category when compared to the almost negligible figure of 3.6% on the Irish side.

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[113] Such as the European Trade Unions Congress (ETUC) and Business Europe

Table 6.19: Types of contact with Brussels established by social partners

The type of contact that has already been established in Brussels, if any		Trade Unions & Employers' associations		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	
Permanent Office in Brussels	Count	3	6	9
	Percentage	4.8%	10.7%	7.6%
Relying on umbrella Euro-group based in Brussels	Count	16	27	43
	Percentage	25.8%	48.2%	36.4%
Sending members to Brussels periodically	Count	14	12	26
	Percentage	22.6%	21.4%	22.0%
Online networking	Count	10	6	16
	Percentage	16.1%	10.7%	13.6%
Other means	Count	1	3	4
	Percentage	1.6%	5.4%	3.4%
no contact	Count	18	2	20
	Percentage	29.0%	3.6%	16.9%
Total	Count	62	56	118
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 18.511$, v = 5, $p = 0.002$, u

Lobbying in Brussels is another opportunity open for Maltese and Irish trade unions and employers' association. The EU provides a plethora of different institutions with multi-access points at different levels and at different locations and, thus, it attracts lobbyists from all member states. Almost all of the Irish social partners (88.2%) are engaged in some sort of lobbying at the EU level (see Table 6.20). This presents a significant difference when compared to the Maltese case where less than half of the organisations concerned are engaged (44.7%) (Chi^2=14.98, p<0.0005).

Table 6.20: Lobbying at EU level

Engagement in lobbying with any institution of the EU		Trade Unions and Employers' associations		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	
Yes	Count	17	30	47
	Percentage	44.7%	88.2%	65.3%
No	Count	21	4	25
	Percentage	55.3%	11.8%	34.7%
Total	Count	38	34	72
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 14.98$, v = 1, $p < 0.0005$

When probed as to why they feel reluctant to lobby EU institutions, 48.8% of Maltese social partners mentioned that their primary obstacle is lack of administrative capacity.

Then they referred to three other reasons that carry equal percentage weight (14.8%), namely too costly financial burden, little knowledge of EU institutional set-up and preference of the domestic route of influence (see appendix H).

Table 6.21 shows there is no significant difference among the preferences of Maltese and Irish organisations as to whom they lobby at the European level (Chi^2=7.287, p=0.200). Findings are to be treated with caution because of the unreliability factor due to small frequencies. National MEPs and the national members of EESC share the top lobbying rank for Maltese social partners with 30.3% each, followed by the European Commission at 15.2%. The Irish response shows a slightly different order of merit. The Commission and national MEPs are most lobbied by the Irish at 32.1%, followed by EESC at 14.3%. Both the Commissioner of the home country and the member state holding the Presidency of the Council show low levels of lobbying in both countries. In most cases, respondents who marked 'other means' are referring to their European federations that in turn voice their concerns at the supranational level.

Table 6.21: Types of lobbying in Brussels

European institutions targeted for lobbying purposes		Trade Unions and Employers' associations		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
European Commission	Count	5	27	32
	Percentage	15.2%	32.1%	27.4%
National members of EESC	Count	10	12	22
	Percentage	30.3%	14.3%	18.8%
National MEPs	Count	10	27	37
	Percentage	30.3%	32.1%	31.6%
Commissioner of home country	Count	3	11	14
	Percentage	9.1%	13.1%	12.0%
Member State holding Presidency of Council	Count	1	2	3
	Percentage	3.0%	2.4%	2.6%
Other means	Count	4	5	9
	Percentage	12.1%	6.0%	7.7%
Total	Count	33	84	117
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 7.287$, v = 5, $p = 0.200$, u

The EESC deserves a special mention in these findings as it is the official consultative body at European level composed of representatives of social partners and civil society from all member states. Figure 6.22 shows that only a sizeable minority of trade unions and employers' associations in Malta and Ireland is engaged in consultation processes

led by the EESC (32.4% and 45.5% respectively). Inferential statistics do not reveal any significant difference between the two (Chi^2=1.248, p=0.264).

Table 6.22: Engagement with the EESC

Engagement in consultation processes led by the European Economic and Social Committee		Trade Unions and Employers' associations		
		Malta	Ireland	Total
Yes	Count	12	15	27
	Percentage	32.4%	45.5%	38.6%
No	Count	25	18	43
	Percentage	67.6%	54.5%	61.4%
Total	Count	37	33	70
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 1.248$, v $= 1$, $p = 0.264$

According to a Maltese member of the EESC, there should be no surprises that the EESC's impact on domestic players is low.

> The government has never considered us seriously. We haven't been granted a secretariat in Malta like the one set-up for the Committee of the Regions. We have never been collectively consulted by government. Each one of us pulls his rope according to his partisan interest. The situation could only be improved when the government decides to start talking to us about Malta's position regarding the opinions issued by the Commission. It's only then that I will be the first one to act in the national interest when it comes to voting in the EESC (MTU1).

6.6.5 European federations

Almost all social partners in Ireland (94.1%) are affiliated to European federations compared to the 71.1% of Maltese social partners (see Table 6.23). Chi^2 analysis reveals that such a difference is considered significant (Chi^2=6.452 and p=0.011) and may be explained by the simple fact that the majority of Irish actors are annexed to their respective domestic confederation, ICTU or IBEC, which in turn are affiliated to European federations. The Maltese case, which is more segmented with a remarkable presence of very small in-house unions, presents a situation wherein almost third of the trade unions and employers' associations (28.9%) are affiliated neither to a domestic federation nor to a European federation. One union leader laments that 'we are a very small union with 150 members with all our business conducted in Malta'. The EU

seems too distant and irrelevant to us'. When asked for what reasons are they not interested in affiliating themselves to European federations, the two most scored reasons were (a) they feel no need to be part of any European federation [40%] and (b) focusing on domestic issues being a priority [40%].

Table 6.23: Affiliation of social partners to European federations

Affiliation to any European federation		Trade Unions and Employers' associations		Total
		Malta	Ireland	
Yes	Count	27	32	59
	Percentage	71.1%	94.1%	81.9%
No	Count	11	2	13
	Percentage	28.9%	5.9%	18.1%
Total	Count	38	34	72
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 6.452$, $v = 1$, $p = 0.011$

MEA4 is very critical of the current situation, 'If you do not have insider knowledge of what other countries are doing, you have already started your negotiations at a disadvantage. Affiliations to European federations do cost a lot of money but, undoubtedly, it is money well spent'. An Irish counterpart, ITU3, shares a similar idea, 'We can learn from what other unions in other countries are doing. To do this we have to maintain a very strong connection with central Europe. Brussels, Strasbourg and Luxembourg will continue to loom very large in the lives of every European. We have to accept that and deal with it'.

Table 6.24 presents another insightful determinant of the degree of European involvement, as it specifically asks whether any member of domestic organisations was nominated or elected to start assuming an executive position within a European federation. Chi^2 analysis reveals no significant difference between the Maltese and Irish partners (Chi^2=0.006, p=0.938) as the two of them exhibit highly comparable results (34.2% and 33.3%). Considering all of the adverse geographical factors, including smallness, islandness and periphery location, the finding is very encouraging.

Table 6.24: Executive responsibilities within European federations

Members of domestic organisations holding executive responsibilities within European federations		Trade Unions and Employers' associations		
		Malta	Ireland	Total
Yes	Count	13	11	24
	Percentage	34.2%	33.3%	33.8%
No	Count	25	22	47
	Percentage	65.8%	66.7%	66.2%
Total	Count	38	33	71
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 0.006$, v = 1, $p = 0.938$

6.6.6   European partner organisations

One of the tangible effects relating to EU membership is the identification of partner organisations from any other European member states. Through working relationships with European partners, domestic organisations can grow, learn and collaborate over joint projects. Table 6.25 shows that social partners in Malta are significantly less likely to identify European partners than the Irish (34.2% and 87.9% respectively) (Chi2=21.054, p<0.0005).

Table 6.25: Cooperation with European partners

Identification of European partner organisations to cooperate over joint projects		Trade Unions and Employers' associations		
		Malta	Ireland	Total
Yes	Count	13	29	42
	Percentage	34.2%	87.9%	59.2%
No	Count	25	4	29
	Percentage	65.8%	12.1%	40.8%
Total	Count	38	33	71
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 21.054$, v = 1, $p < 0.0005$

Another significant difference between Maltese and Irish social partners is evident with regards to the European regions from which their partner organisations originate (Chi^2=18.663, p<0.0005). Table 6.26 shows that the Irish have partner organisations from the five regions[114] of the EU but the preferred one seems to be the Eastern cluster

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[114] For the purposes of this study, the five regional clusters of the EU have been devised on a geographical rationale and are composed of the following member states:
Southern and Mediterranean cluster: Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain

with 35.3%. This may be explained by the fact that during the boom period, many Eastern member states, which at the time were applicant countries, were befriending Ireland to learn from its 'outstanding' experience in the EU (ITU1+ITU3). Otherwise the Irish look to the North (22.4%) for inspiration and learning. Contrastingly the Maltese concentrate on their own region, that is the Southern and Mediterranean countries, with 40.6%. While Eastern partners are totally absent from the Maltese scene, it is worth mentioning the northern region which at 35.5% comes only second to the Southern and Mediterranean cluster. Like the Irish, the Maltese see the Northern region as the one to aspire to because of its high standards, particularly in welfare state provisions, education, job creation and environmental policies.

Table 6.26: Regional origins of European partners

The European regions from which partner organisations originate		Trade Unions and Employers' associations		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Southern & Mediterranean cluster	Count	13	94	107
	Percentage	40.6%	22.0%	23.3%
Central cluster	Count	7	87	94
	Percentage	21.9%	20.3%	20.4%
Northern cluster	Count	12	96	108
	Percentage	37.5%	22.4%	23.5%
Eastern cluster	Count	0	151	151
	Percentage	.0%	35.3%	32.8%
Total	Count	32	428	460
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 18.663$, v = 3, $p < 0.0005$

These statistical findings are corroborated by experiential accounts resulting from interviews. For instance, excellent relations between the Maltese and the Italians are well known and go back to hundreds of years.

Central cluster: Austria, Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg and Netherlands
Northern cluster: Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Sweden and United Kingdom
Eastern cluster: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia
At the time when data was being collected, Croatia was still an acceding country and, thus, it was not included in the exercise

We mingle with everyone. But the Italians are our best partners. We share almost the same culture. The Mediterranean Sea unites us (MTU1).

When we started attending European fora prior to accession, the Italians took the lead to guide us. They taught us a lot. There was a time when we could use their premises in Brussels. But then this special relationship had to stop because we became aware that our concerns are of a different sort (MEA4).

On a different wavelength, the Maltese look towards the Northerners as if they represent the ideal state of EU membership. Others maintain that Malta and its organisations need to collaborate with anyone as long they share common causes. The nil hit on Eastern countries is also explained.

The Maltese measure themselves with those who are superior to them. The Maltese want to be measured against the Germans, the Swedes and the Finns. Their high standards are actually our expectations. The Maltese are not happy with their pensions because the Greeks have dropped theirs. We say, 'we want to be like the Swedes who have the best safety nets within their welfare system'. All these cross comparisons are creating unprecedented pressures on our welfare system (MMB6).

We are prepared to collaborate with anyone who thinks that his position and concerns match ours. Although there is the impression that small member states tend to form alliances with other small states, yet this is not always the norm because they might have different political, economic, social and cultural scenarios. This is the case of the Eastern countries which although relatively small, their innate characteristics are vividly distinct from ours (MMB8).

Like the Maltese, the Irish aspire to achieve the higher standards of living that are evident in the European Northern region and this explains their preference to identify northern partners. 'Their model', according to ITU1, 'is cohesive and egalitarian in terms of society and very efficient on an economic scale'. Furthermore, Northern countries are a bit easier to access because they produce a lot of work in English (ITT8). However the nature of their relationship is changing fast. ITU2 laments that 'since our economic downfall, we noticed a certain amount of arrogance from Nordic countries. They are the ones who put the house in order and we are the bad children who have to take our medicine'.

But the real Irish partners are the ones who speak English and may originate from beyond European borders.

We are not focused on Europe. We are more focused on the UK and us. Remember we have language difficulties. When we talk about the single market, Irish business doesn't see this in Europe but they see it in the UK (IEA6).

We are more attached to the Anglo-Saxon countries because our skills-set is more required in America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The construction industry is one of these areas (IEA5).

Although they might not publicly admit it, the Irish feel more comfortable as part of the Anglo-Saxon culture which incorporates the political, economic and social dimensions as well. ITT8 concludes that 'we would see ourselves as normal in that context and Europe is the distant continent. Europe is this other place where things are organised differently'.

6.6.7 European norms and values

The infiltration of European norms and values is of paramount importance when looking at the degree of attitudinal transformation, implying changes to an old-rooted set of attitudes, culture and identity. In this part, attention is devoted to domestic change as a consequence of vertical and lateral agencies of Europeanisation.

The first of three consecutive results that gauge the extent of change is the one in Table 6.27 which measures the extent of EU influence on members' mindset. The mean rating scores for Malta and Ireland are almost identical (2.97 and 2.94 respectively). This signifies a considerable amount of influence on a four-point likert scale. Consequently the p value (0.432) exceeds the 0.05 criterion and, thus, it implies no statistical difference between Malta and Ireland.

Table 6.27: The extent of EU influence on the mindset of members within social partners

Trade Unions and Employers' associations	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U test	p value
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Malta	2.97	0.944	2.66	3.28	586.500	0.432
Ireland	2.94	0.489	2.77	3.11		

On a similar benchmark, Table 6.28 exhibits the findings concerning the extent of influence by European federations on the norms and practices of domestic social partners. The mean rating scores are 2.58 for Malta and 2.36 for Ireland. These two mean rating scores are comparable and lie almost in the middle of four-point likert scale. This implies that both groups have a middling opinion of whether European federations did influence their prescribed set of norms and practices or not. Like the previous result, the p value (0.196) exceeds the 0.05 criterion, thus, implying no significant difference.

Table 6.28: The extent of influence on social partners by norms and practices of European federations

Trade Unions and Employers' associations	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U test	p value
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Malta	2.58	1.030	2.24	2.92	521.500	0.196
Ireland	2.36	0.603	2.15	2.58		

The third result in this series shows the respondents' perspective of whether the internal changes that have been experienced can be attributed to new ideas brought in by European partners (see Table 6.29). The Maltese are much more categorical than their Irish counterparts. 40.5% believe that such internal changes can be attributed to European partners and 48.6% deny any cause and effect syndrome. The Irish, on the other hand, show a greater degree of ambivalence. Although 44.1% of them agree that changes were instigated by European partners, a compelling portion (38.2%) 'do not know' and, consequently, did not commit themselves on either side. Such an imbalance in the percentage distribution renders the result significant in the difference between the two islands (Chi^2=10.657, p=0.005).

Table 6.29: Internal changes attributed to new ideas brought about by European partners

There have been changes within the organisation that are attributed to new ideas brought about by European partners		Trade Unions and Employers' associations		Total
		Malta	Ireland	
Yes	Count	15	15	30
	Percentage	40.5%	44.1%	42.3%
No	Count	18	6	24
	Percentage	48.6%	17.6%	33.8%
Don't Know	Count	4	13	17
	Percentage	10.8%	38.2%	23.9%
Total	Count	37	34	71
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 10.657$, v = 2, $p = 0.005$

After presenting a series of results showing the extent of influence through vertical and lateral agents, it is now pertinent to know the proper stimuli that trigger change. Table 6.30 shows the ranking of five major stimuli emanating from the EU's pattern and style of governance. In the case of Maltese social partners it is evident that they are primarily equally motivated by the opportunity to socialise with European partners and the value of consensus seeking (3.26 mean and 3.21 mean respectively), followed equally again by training opportunities and European funding (3.05 mean and 3.00 mean respectively). In the case of social partners in Ireland, the major stimulus of change is the opportunity to socialise with European partners (3.9 mean), followed almost equally by the availability of training opportunities and the attainment of a positive attitude (3.40 mean and 3.10 mean respectively). The fact that the p value in all cases goes beyond the 0.05 criterion of significance is an indication that the Maltese and Irish scores are comparable.

Table 6.30: Sources of stimulus that instigate change in the organisation's tactics and strategies

Trade Unions and Employers' associations		Mean	Standard Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U test	p value
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
European Funds	Malta	3.0000	1.44914	2.3404	3.6596	32.500	0.189
	Ireland	2.1000	1.47479	.2688	3.9312		
Consensus Value	Malta	3.2143	1.44544	2.5563	3.8722	37.500	0.324
	Ireland	2.5000	.79057	1.5184	3.4816		
Socialisation with partners	Malta	3.2619	1.18974	2.7203	3.8035	36.000	0.276
	Ireland	3.9000	.96177	2.7058	5.0942		
Positive Attitude	Malta	2.4762	.87287	2.0789	2.8735	36.000	0.276
	Ireland	3.1000	1.24499	1.5541	4.6459		
Training Opportunities	Malta	3.0476	1.04767	2.5707	3.5245	44.000	0.574
	Ireland	3.4000	1.19373	1.9178	4.8822		

Statistical figures in Table 6.30 are very close to each other and this is indication that all stimuli are considered important by stakeholders. Although ranked fourth, Maltese

participants still consider EU funding as a crucial stimulus in making a success out of membership.

Monies are attractive and important. But if we have accessed the EU solely to pump money, we will be committing a mistake. Europe is giving us new opportunities to socialise and learn from benchmarking exercises (MTU3).	We believe in the potential of all stimuli but to realise our potential we still need money. It is only through the availability of funding that we can extend our chances of extending our contacts with European partners and to enhance our skills-set through training opportunities (MTU1).

The Irish, in some sense resembling Maltese aspirations, want to shorten the psychological distance between them and the rest of the continent. This has never been their priority so far. The current economic crisis is a paradox since it embraces both elements of attraction and retraction from the EU.

We need to invest more in socialisation and collective learning. We have done this but not as much as we should be… The level of socialisation is low because of lack of resources and the fact that we are different from the rest. (IEA6)	The Irish trade union movement doesn't have an international officer. We use our international links on a bilateral binary and not as part of the European project… We should have established more solid links at the European level (ITU2).

6.7   Concluding remarks

Social dialogue in Malta and Ireland takes place in fragmented sectors, even though many have the impression that the Irish are less fragmented because of being organised within large, unifying congresses. Social partners are aware of the need to continually change and be changed but, sometimes, inertia takes the lead over pro-activeness in change management. Social partners in Malta are subject to a lot of veto playing, while consensus seeking is the most widespread norm characterising negotiation strategies in Ireland.

The degree of domestic responsiveness has been measured in terms of social partners' participation in formal mediating institutions. The rise and downfall of SP dominates the discourse among Irish participants whereas the reorganisation of MCESD features prominently among Maltese protagonists. The EESC format and style of negotiation is

motivating Maltese stakeholders in their quest to render their formal system of interest representation more pluralistic and constructive. On their part, though still interested, the Irish are wary of reinventing new consultative structures. Informal channels of communication, though widely spread, are not seen as ideal to fix long-term solutions and as a contributor towards the common good.

On economic affairs, much of the trade unions' discourse is of an ideological nature that probes into a sustainable political vision which will provide an alternative to the 'tyranny' and 'austerity' of neo-liberalism. Employers' associations, on their part, are resolute to lobby for the strengthening of better policy measures that seek the development of SMEs.

The general outlook towards the EU seems ambivalent for the Irish. More than thirty years of membership have not been enough for the Irish to feel a sense of belonging within the EU. They feel much more comfortable with the English speaking world than with the rest of the continent. At the same time, they are facing one of their deepest economic crises which they are trying to solve by making systematic connections to the EU and the rest of its member states. Contrastingly, social partners in Malta feel 'at home' within European borders, have integrated a European dimension within their vision and activities, and have immersed themselves into the identification of new European partners. Notwithstanding various setbacks in their home environment, Maltese social partners show a higher propensity towards attitudinal transformation through the diffusion of European standards and values than their Irish counterparts.

The next step is to discuss and interpret these findings in the context of the conceptual framework selected for this thesis. In particular, the results will be evaluated in terms of the mediating variables pertaining to RCI and SI models, thus testing the suitability of the original hypotheses. This will be dealt with in Chapter 8, but prior to such an evaluation, it is pertinent to present the qualitative and quantitative findings pertaining to SHEGs in the next chapter.

Chapter 7

Maltese and Irish Social, Human Rights and Environmental Groups: Presentation of Findings

Chapter 7
Maltese and Irish Social, Human Rights and Environmental Groups: presentation of findings

Civil society is essentially collective action,
providing an essential counterweight to individualism;
and creative action*,*
presenting a much-needed antidote to the cynicism that infects
so much of contemporary politics.

Michael Edwards (2004)
Scholar and civil society activist

7.1   Introduction

Following the presentation of results concerning trade unions and employers' associations in the previous chapter, the next logical step is to deal with the remaining case studies that form an integral part of this thesis' research design. More specifically this chapter will uncover the findings pertaining to Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups (SHEGs). According to a conservative estimate, in Malta there are more than 2,500 voluntary groups operating at national and local levels (MMB15), whereas in Ireland there are 30,000 groups embracing a million and a half volunteers (ISHG14). Given these immense proportions, it is crucial to be scientifically selective so as to produce valid, reliable and credible results that, if possible, go beyond the samples used. In line with the rationale in the previous chapter, the two types of groups, that is, social and environmental, have been compounded for statistical analysis in order to decipher points of significant difference and comparability between the two selected states, while their distinctive characteristics and reactions are still made evident through qualitative findings.

Findings in this chapter are grouped under similar cohorts that were used in the first set of results, with the exception of economic issues which were not considered of primary relevance by research subjects. As a result, findings are mapped out across four dimensions, namely (a) internal capabilities and limitations, (b) cultural and political dynamics, (c) domestic mediating institutions and (d) European influences. These four

dimensions reflect the criteria that were determined in Chapter 2 to decode the effects of Europeanisation on interest groups. In other words these four dimensions will show whether EU membership may have enriched the resources-base of interest groups and changed their internal organisational structures, enhanced their responsiveness to domestic interest intermediation and diversified the attitudinal formation of their leaders by embracing a wider European identity.

Like its predecessor, this chapter is loaded with rich narratives that are corroborated by statistical results and inquisitive commentary resulting from observation.

7.2   Internal potentials and limitations

The first set of variables to be uncovered is related to internal organisational potentials and attitudes that have a direct impact on groups' interactions within their sectoral landscapes in Malta and Ireland. Findings in this part will enlighten three main internal facets, namely the marginality of civil groups, the fragmentation of the sector and the potential for change. Quantitative and qualitative results disclose organisational trends, meanings behind choices made and ongoing transformations that may have the potential to change age-old paradigms of rationality and normativeness.

7.2.1   Weak partners

A common feature that crops up as soon as one starts talking to SHEGs' leaders is the widely believed idea that their organisations are of a second-class status when compared to labour and business interests. The latter are equipped with more resources and better links to the corridors of power, while the former are weak and enjoy only a superficial treatment by politicians and top civil servants. Having experienced the ups and downs of SP and NESC, Irish social and human rights groups have no doubt that 'some partners are more equal than others in their power to make proposals and the power that makes sure some things don't get prioritised' (IEG20).

The real power of SP rested within government as the largest employer, the unions and the business sector. The farmers, and the community pillar and environmental pillar were the weak partners (ISHG1).

Our pillar in SP was not involved in such things as wage negotiations and conditions of employment. That stuff was very much reserved to unions and employers. Although we could have contributed significantly to the debate, we were simply excluded (ISHG11).

Their Maltese counterparts share the same preoccupation and often complain about the institutional inadequacies to voice their concerns and recommendations. Although they acknowledge that social dialogue has been greatly improved thanks to the input of formal mediating bodies like the MCESD and the MEUSAC, civil society groups still suffer from what they call 'inequity of opportunities' as they seem to be 'children of a lesser God' when compared to social partners.

We have fruitful dialogue with ministers but our status is still of a sub-committee within MCESD. For eleven years we have tried to make government understand that European models do not differentiate between the classical social partners and the rest of civil society groups. Now change seems to start moving on (MSHG11).

As the third sector, we still feel that we are not being sufficiently involved at grassroots level in policy design and formulation. The greatest disadvantage for our sector is that we do not have a solid representation in mediating bodies. Very often, we are simply absent, or appointed members are not truly representative (MSHG13).

This representational imbalance started being addressed by the Maltese parliament in 2010 by enacting a new legislation to render the MCESD more inclusive. Civil society is now formally represented on the core group of the Council, yet SHEGs' leaders are still lamenting that their Council representatives are not truly representative of all their interests. This issue will be dealt with in greater detail later on in this chapter.

Environmental groups in both countries face an additional obstacle that continues to weaken their position in the domestic arena, that is, public apathy. In many cases, the numbers of subscribed members is minimal and, in turn, this affects their legitimacy, resourcefulness and lobbying strategies negatively. The economic recession has made matters even worse. A number of professional staff had to be laid off and, from an administrative capacity perspective, many 'are still in need of the most basic requirements and, [thus], are not coping even with basic work' (IEG21).

It is difficult to mobilise the Irish public on green issues. This is because we don't have the level of professionalism in this sector. You can only do it if you have full-time officers who are trained in communications, advocacy and policy development (IEG16).

In Malta we try to do the impossible. Our manpower is extremely scarce and funds are very limited. Yet we have the energy of our volunteers. Not swarms of them but a handful that are hard-working, committed and enthusiastic. They keep us going (MEG18).

Statistical findings indicate that the challenge of human resource deficit is more precarious in the Maltese context. Table 7.1 shows that there is a significant difference between the type of personnel engaged by SHEGs in Malta and Ireland (Chi^2=38.91, p<0.0005). While more than half of Maltese interest groups employ volunteers only (54.8%), the vast majority of their Irish counterparts employ a mix of volunteers and paid staff (82.1%). The practice of complementing volunteers with paid personnel in Malta has currently reached a level of 43.5% and indications show that this trend is becoming more widespread since EU accession.

Table 7.1: SHEGs' human resource platform

Type of personnel engaged by interest groups		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	
Volunteers only	Count	63	10	73
	Percentage	54.8%	11.9%	36.7%
paid personnel only	Count	2	5	7
	Percentage	1.7%	6.0%	3.5%
mix of volunteers & paid personnel	Count	50	69	119
	Percentage	43.5%	82.1%	59.8%
Total	Count	115	84	199
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 38.91$, v = 2, p < 0.0005

7.2.2   Fragmented sectors

Besides being considered as weak partners, social and environmental groups in Malta and Ireland can also be regarded as fragmented, a feature that was practically confirmed by all interviewees. When conducting observations and interviews in Malta, much subtle, sometimes fierce, cross firing among group leaders could easily be detected.

There exists a high level of mistrust not only between government entities and civil society groups but, most importantly, among groups themselves.

We are our own worst enemies (MSHG13).

The climate characterising discussions around the table is highly polarised. Everyone is interested solely in gaining his part (MSHG12).

Our groups are territorial. The island state mentality is a limitation factor. One of the greatest issues in Malta is that umbrella organisations are still at an inception stage (MMB15).

However signs of change are evident. In these last years, particularly since the run-up years for EU accession, there have been a number of success stories where different Maltese groups that work for similar causes have come together to form federations in order to solidify their voices. This is the case of those involved in pyrotechnics, band clubs, health, humanitarian aid and fair trade. However institutional building is not the only requirement to promote synergy through umbrella organisations. At the base of it all, it requires a change in attitude. In the Maltese environmental sector there is a high level of parochial rivalry among groups, particularly among those that are engaged in similar causes. Dissenting voices, uncooperative behaviour and reluctance to form umbrella formations are the result of this kind of competitive environment.

I remember nine attempts in my lifetime to set up an [environmental] federation. They all failed. We also had problems when we tried to appoint our representative on MCESD's Civil Society Core Group. As a consequence, the environment is the only sector which is still not represented on the core group (MEG19).

There was a time when there was genuine dialogue among the different environment groups. We have even reached an agreement not to criticize each other in public. But in these last years we have moved away from this collaborative spirit. Leaders changed over time and the agreement fell flat. It all depends on the willingness of the people involved (MEG17).

Although not immune to the threat of fragmentation, the Irish case presents a more coherent narrative favouring collaboration, compromise and consensus-seeking. Many leaders maintain that their 'approach is to try and collaborate with others' (ISHG10) while others 'consider [themselves] as insiders' as they 'strive to build a political consensus' over their cause (ISHG13). Others were sceptical about the over-reliance on

consensus building through SP. 'Such a mechanism was ill-suited when things started going wrong' (ISHG11).

All in all, the Irish case presents a solid institutionalised response to make the transition from fragmentation to cooperation. In mid-2009, the Environmental Pillar (EnvP) was created within the SP framework which by that time was already being phased out. It brought about a new sense of consensus-seeking strategy among 26 environmental groups which traditionally were characterised by deep divisions. However not all green interests accepted to be represented on the Pillar as the process of decision-making tends to be cumbersome and slow.

[The environment] was a fragmented sector and is becoming less so… There was bad blood among groups… The role of the Pillar is to bring them together in such a way that they work collectively and effectively (IEG15).

The Pillar is relatively slow in moving because they try to reach common position. We know how the Pillar works but we don't want to get involved in all this. From my perspective, the sector is still fragmented (IEG17).

These personal experiences are triangulated by statistical findings. For example, findings in Table 7.2 show that Irish groups have slightly more zeal than their Maltese counterparts to join forces with other entities over joint campaigns (57.3% and 48.7% respectively). However Chi^2 analysis reveals no significant difference between the two countries as statistical figures are comparable (Chi^2=1.426, p=0.232).

Table 7.2: Teaming up of SHEGs with other domestic organisations in these last eight years

Teaming up with other domestic organisations to solidify voice		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	56	47	103
	Percentage	48.7%	57.3%	52.3%
No	Count	59	35	94
	Percentage	51.3%	42.7%	47.7%
Total	Count	115	82	197
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 1.426$, v = 1, $p = 0.232$

Negotiation styles tell a lot about the character of interest groups, that is, whether they are collaborative, competitive, isolationists, rigid or flexible. Although the predominant mode of negotiation style in Table 7.3 differs in accordance with *situational needs* (56.0% in Malta and 60.8% in Ireland), the next widely used strategy by the Irish is *consensus* (33.8%). *Consensus* is still the second widely used strategy by Maltese groups (21.1%) although it falls behind the Irish score by more than 12%. It is then closely followed by *compromise* at 18.3%. Chi^2 analysis fails to reveal a significant difference between Malta and Ireland (Chi^2=16.258, p=0.021) and the result is to be treated with caution due to low frequencies.

Table 7.3: SHEGs' preferred style of negotiation strategy

Preferred style of negotiations		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	
Competitive	Count	4	1	5
	Percentage	3.7%	1.4%	2.7%
Consensus	Count	23	25	48
	Percentage	21.1%	33.8%	26.2%
Compromise	Count	20	3	23
	Percentage	18.3%	4.1%	12.6%
Laissez-Faire	Count	1	0	1
	Percentage	.9%	.0%	.5%
Depends on the situation	Count	61	45	106
	Percentage	56.0%	60.8%	57.9%
Total	Count	109	74	183
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 11.594$, v = 4, $p = 0.021$, u

Respondents were then asked to rate to what extent the EU enables domestic interest groups to act more cohesively in their home country (see Table 7.4). Rating their answers on a four point likert scale, SHEGs in Malta and Ireland have anchored their mean rating score in a middling position (2.62 and 2.47 respectively). This means that the degree of EU influence for greater cohesiveness among SHEGs ranges in between *minor* to *moderate* limits. Result show a high levels of statistical comparability (p=0.331).

Table 7.4: The EU induces SHEGs to act more cohesively at national level

Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U test	p value
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Malta	2.62	0.933	2.45	2.79	4187.00	0.331
Ireland	2.47	0.985	2.25	2.69		

7.2.3   Change catalysts

Notwithstanding such adverse characteristics, namely poor resource-base, internal rivalry, fragmentation and weak leverage position, there is optimism among Maltese and Irish SHEGs in that they are realising their potential to change the institutional status quo and public mentality. The following experiences express confidence that SHEGs are real change catalysts, although different methods are applied to activate transitions.

I believe we are [change agents]. The visibility and impact of our movement are far greater than our size. We have managed to enhance public awareness across all sectors of society and our pressure proved decisive to bring legislative changes that were long due in Malta (MSHG10).

We have brought change in Malta since we work at school levels. Through children we are also reaching out to their parents and entire communities. A radical change must first start with school children. We empower them. Indirectly, this would lead to a change in environmental policy-making (MEG19).

We have a tripartite strategy: (a) to change the rules, (b) the culture and (c) the experience of the people. We adopt a top down approach. We start by changing the rules and policies and out of that we will achieve a change in culture. People's lives would eventually change. This strategy is working at its highest potential (ISHG13).

Some Irish NGOs are realising their potential of being change agents. This is all about being continually aware of what your mission is. All too often, NGOs lose sight. The real change agents are those who achieve their mission. This is essentially the cultural ethos of civil society organisations (ISHG10).

Many others, particularly Irish, do not share their colleagues' enthusiasm. Some lament that 'due to austerity, some of our wins are being lost' (ISHG11) while others think that 'civil society in Ireland, perhaps in Europe and in the rest of the world, has failed to

drive an alternative narrative of what society can be like (ISHG14)'. They condemn themselves for allowing the 'craziness of the boom, individualism, the lack of community spirit and selfishness to be the winners' (ISHG9). The greatest portion of Irish environmental groups denounces their track record to bring about change for the greater common good.

There is probably a mismatch in what we are doing and in what we should be doing. At the moment, [Irish] NGOs score low on innovation and the pragmatic side of implementing theory (IEG21).	Environmental NGOs are capable of being change catalysts and we have done so in the past but, today, we are not doing it as well as we should. Certainly we could do it better (IEG15).

One Irish environmental group lost its trust completely in national authorities and domestic institutional processes and started to 'upload green concerns to the EC' (IEG17). Its leaders maintain that it is only 'through the application of infringement procedures' that they can 'instigate change in the way Irish authorities and people think and act'.

Our presentation of facts and figures concerning internal capabilities and limitations of SHEGs in Malta and Ireland ends here. Our next task is to bring forward the second cohort of results pertaining to the cultural and political dimension. These two are considered as another crucial element that can serve either as a motivator or as an impediment to European influences on domestic interest groups.

7.3   Cultural and political scenario

Interest groups do not function in a vacuum but they function within a context that is largely characterised by indigenous cultural and domestic political elements. Understanding how interest groups react to the environment that surrounds them is a key determinant to decode elements of adjustments in their modus operandi. Ultimately, it is the cultural and political landscape that renders the adaptation process to European influences more straightforward or more tiresome. In this section, Maltese and Irish leaders of interest groups express their views on whether their domestic political set-up is conducive to greater participation by civil society in policy processes and whether their deep-rooted cultures are protecting against, or open to, wider European

experiences. Findings about the central roles of the Catholic Church and the media are also included at a later stage in this part. The discussion starts by depicting the Maltese cultural narrative, followed by the Irish one, and then moves on to decode political implications in the two island states.

7.3.1 The Maltese culture

Pondering on the fate of Maltese culture, a local political observer maintains that the 'Maltese and their political and social structures have traditionally been pollinated by the European ethos at the expense of never seriously exploiting the opportunities presented by North Africa'. Furthermore, he maintains that the rate of European influence has been accelerated in these last thirty years. 'I believe that change is the result of ideas that are brought about by opening new apertures of thought. These ideas are transforming Malta from its very roots' (MPO21).

Maltese interest groups, while expressing doubts on the potential of Maltese mentality to absorb change, are more concerned by the idea of territoriality. Smallness has been perpetually aligned to vulnerability and, as a consequence, once groups have defined their domain, they do their utmost to defend it. Such a 'siege mentality' transforms the whole system of interest representation into a battleground arena where fierce conflicts are fought among friends and foes alike.

Domestic culture is miles apart from the European model. This is because of our insularity and the intransigent drive of our NGOs to create their own empires. We live in state of eternal conflict – conflicts among us and conflicts with foreigners as well. Many would tell us that the siege is coming from anywhere and from anyone. They can convince you without great effort (MSHG12).

Our culture is essentially Mediterranean and such rival competition among people and groups can be found in Cyprus, Sicily and Southern Spain. More than a barrier, this is a cultural phenomenon that needs to be addressed (MMB15).

The Maltese attitude is against any foreign influence. We love to insist that Malta presents a 'special case' and, thus, we have to be treated as an 'exception' (MEG18).

While emphasising that the Maltese frame of mind has traditionally been inward looking, Maltese SHEGs are likewise aware that things have started to change more rapidly in these last years.

In our sector, Maltese culture can be a barrier to adopt European norms. Religious beliefs render social transformations much more difficult, although Church discourse has already started to change. It is getting milder (MSHG10).

One of the greatest stumbling blocks to adopt European norms is our mentality. Living on an island makes us insular but we are now realising that we need to be more open and explore interdependencies with other countries (MSHG11).

The Church in Malta, in one of the quotes above, is being referred to as a strong conservative force. This aspect will be further investigated in the next part. As a conclusion, reference is to be made to one of the most innate features of Maltese culture, that is, its extremely competitive bi-partite politics. It seems that every single entity or issue on the island, social and green NGOs not excluded, is understood in terms of partisan politics.

Partisan politics is an essential component of our culture and, as a result, it is also present in our field. Our sector has been overwhelmingly entwined by political partisanship (MEG17).

We have suffered from a culture loaded with political camouflages. Since we have obtained funding and embarked on a series of new projects, we were labelled by other green NGOs as being pro-government. This is not true. We are apolitical and work with any party (MEG19).

7.3.2   The Irish culture

Many exponents of civil society in Ireland make reference to their colonial past when answering questions related to culture. This inherited feature implanted a collective spirit characterised by low self-esteem, scepticism and conservatism.

The dominant feature in our national identity is our inferiority complex. When we plunged again into the current recession, pessimism rolled in once again. Due to our colonial past we do not trust formal structures. We are too reliant on personalities to do things well (ISHG11).

One cannot ignore the post-colonial factor. There is a tendency to react against authority wherever it comes from. So it is very easy here to paint Europe as the new oppressor in terms of imposing rules on us… Whether we like it or not, our culture belongs to the Anglophone world (IEG15).

Culture does not intentionally preclude new ideas from beyond the shorelines but 'we can still be our own worst enemies' (IEG19). As islanders, the Irish tend 'to put blinkers on' and stay away from public talk on hot issues. The period during which data were collected in Dublin was hugely characterised by the Irish dramatic economic crash and, consequently, this phenomenon featured prominently during interview sessions. This does not create problems for the overall scope of the study as the temporal dimension of the research design covers the period between 2004 and 2011. In the words of Irish activists, the deep economic slump 'left no room for environmental issues to attain priority on national policy agenda' (IEG20) and 'now the people are to pay a hefty price for non-compliance with EU regulations' (IEG18). Environmental groups often complain that the value of protecting the natural habitat is dormant, if not non-existent, in Irish culture. Such a laissez-faire attitude by authorities and people alike is demoting their efforts.

At the same time of being proud, we are also in denial… a little too relaxed about not wanting to get involved in some areas of politics (IEG21).	There is a lot of suspicion about people from different countries and cultures. Insularity makes us happy with our own mediocrity (IEG16).

The Irish are aware that smallness breeds 'clientelism' (ISHG9), 'political blackmailing' (IEG17) and 'actor-centred institutions' (IEG11), even though it boosts a 'consensus-ethos' (ISHG13). One interviewee goes as far to say that 'we care more about our clan than we care about the Republic' (ISHG9). Notwithstanding such a doom and gloom configuration, the Irish culture has its brighter side as well.

Our culture is composed of a collective spirit. We have a great sense of volunteerism. It is alive but needs to be nurtured by better policies to allow it to thrive (ISHG9).	You know, sometimes you make one step forward, two steps back. So culture is not fixed. It contracts and expands… but we have continued to progress over the years (ISHG10).

From the accounts provided, one concludes that a number of cultural issues cut across the two island states, primarily due to their similar geographical, historical and social fabric. Quantitative data confirm this high degree of comparability. When specifically asked whether national culture acts as a barrier towards the acquisition of new norms

and values originating from a wider European experience, the result is almost identical in the two countries (p=0.812). Table 7.5 shows that the mean rating scores lie a bit lower than the middling position of a four-point likert scale (2.25 in Malta and 2.27 in Ireland), meaning that SHEGs' representatives feel that their indigenous culture is neither too open nor too insular to European influence.

Table 7.5: National culture and the wider European experience among SHEGs

Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U test	p value
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Malta	2.25	0.944	2.07	2.43	4228.000	0.812
Ireland	2.27	1.008	2.04	2.50		

7.3.3   The role of the Church

It is practically impossible to investigate the impetus of Maltese and Irish interest groups in public life without referring to the contribution of the Church. MPO21 insists that 'the Church is an essential component of Maltese civil society because it penetrates all strata within society'. Although times are tough for the Church in Malta, the Church 'still retains its relevance in setting moral standards and ethical measurements' both for the political class and society in general.

Nevertheless, Maltese interest groups that are active in social and human rights matters are seriously preoccupied by the fact that the Church is persistently positioning itself above the law. When one considers that a large plethora of Church organisations have been ordered by the Maltese and Gozitan dioceses not to get registered with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations, issues of good governance, transparency, accountability and submission to legitimate law become even more pertinent. According to MSHG13 this is a 'great problem' because there is no equal playing-field for everyone as some players are placing themselves outside the remit of law.

What worries me is the detached attitude of the Church not to be part of the rest of civil society. This attitude is counterproductive to its own organisations because they cannot benefit from governmental and European funds. It seems that that the Church in Malta is still interested in preserving its medieval rights by not subjecting itself to the laws of the state (MSHG12).

As an NGO founded by a religious order, we don't have any restrictions to register ourselves with the competent civil authorities. Our NGO is recognised by the state and enrolled with the NGOs' Regulatory Office. However the situation of the Diocese and its organisations is a completely different story. There are problems there, but discussions are still going on to find a solution (MSHG14).

One Irish interviewee sustains that 'civil society in Ireland is deeply rooted in Christianity' (ISHG14). For ages Ireland did not develop, and it still has not developed a sophisticated system of welfare safety-nets funded by the state and, consequently, the contribution of the Church has been 'truly brilliant and extremely positive' to the most vulnerable in society (ISHG9). Today, public perception has changed radically and many feel that the Church is now 'out of touch' and more on the 'defensive side' because of the children's abuse scandal that reached atrocious levels (ISHG10). Leaders of social and human rights groups think that the Church did not exert enough pressure to remedy its own wrongdoings and, at present, its potential to influence society has diminished extensively, particularly in the debate concerning civil rights.

The Irish Church, other than Bishop Martin, has not fully understood the consequences of what they have done. If they did, they would have changed practices. Apologies are not enough. [Nevertheless] faith is still important to us. At the moment, you can either be pro-Church, defending everything that it does, or you are anti-Church, condemning it from top to bottom! (ISHG10).

The Church is obviously a core factor that for many years gave voice to anti-gay feelings. The Church has now less and less control of authority in that area. What has superseded that is the increasing level of lesbian and gay people who decided to move out in public and they were [eventually] supported by families, friends and neighbours. That has superseded any moral authority (ISHG13).

Historically, the input of the Church in the environmental domain has been almost non existent and, today, it is still in its inception stage. As a result, green advocates in Malta and Ireland did not make any reference to the Church in their responses.

7.3.4   The political scenario

The composition of the domestic political scenario is another determining factor in this field of analysis. The receptivity potential of domestic politics to pressures brewing from within and overseas renders the whole polity together with its actors as being either elastic or inelastic to change. In this regard, four major factors are identified that can determine the in/elastic capability of the actors involved, namely the accessibility of politicians, parochialism and clientelism, politicisation and media coverage, and the compatibility of the state to work with civil society.

7.3.4.1   Easy access to politicians

The system of the STV using multi-seat constituencies, a British legacy that has remained in full force in Malta and Ireland, makes national politicians very accessible to people and group formations and, thus, politics tend to be heavily localised. Irish social and green groups show no hesitation when describing this reality.

If you want to speak to a minister, it should not be a problem. If an interest group is really focused on trying to influence something, and does not form part of any formal channel of mediation, it could still make strong lobbying and impact with politicians (ISGH9).

Politicians are very sensitive and aware of local concerns, and because we are a small country, we have very high level of access to our TDs. They are very responsive, and so if you ring them up, they will ring you back (IEG20).

The Maltese confirm that their chances of infiltrating the corridors of power are high as well because personal connections are abundant. However they are not satisfied with the current situation that has been in existence for ages. Maltese protagonists believe that effective progress in any policy domain can only be secured through an institutionalised model where relationships are not subject to privy acquaintances but to formal channels governed by fairness and transparency.

There were times when I went directly to the minister with my feedback. The Maltese have much more access to politicians and central bureaucracy than other Europeans who live in large states. But this is only effective when you have personal cases. In matters involving change in national policy, it is appropriate to establish formal institutions (MSHG10).

We access politicians through informal channels quite a lot. Institutional channels are infested with excessive bureaucracy. There were cases when we lost European funding due to bureaucratic procedures. To speed up matters, we have to request informal interventions. Sometimes the latter are the only option we have to get along with… It's a pity! (MEG19).

Maltese environment organisations also rely on informal networks of contact to promote or defend their interests. The following excerpts highlight issues of an ethical nature and the use of political blackmailing as a tool of last resort.

I am not that type of person that invests in personal contacts. It is good to build a working relationship with your stakeholders but there are ethical standards that have to be respected at all times (MEG18).

There are times when we start talking to bureaucrats who may give the impression that they understand your position but, ultimately, the issue has to be referred to the political level. And here we reach a dead end, unless a general election is close by! It is then that we are constrained to blackmail politicians with a powerful weapon – our votes! Sometimes it is the only way how we can get them to heed our concerns (MEG17).

Empirical data clearly show that formal mediating institutions in small states are characterised by a number of imperfections that originate from the political landscape of which they form part. As a result, reliance on informal channels is much greater. The latter are considered as a necessary evil that can secure quick wins while at the same time raise questions of an ethical nature.

7.3.4.2   Parochialism and clientelism

Very often, parochial politics are downgraded to amateurish statecraft which can only lead to clientelistic impulses. Maltese and Irish alike hate this inherited characteristic in their political portfolio, yet there are some who prefer the unbundling of the two concepts. Parochialism is an idiosyncrasy that is intimately embedded in history and collective identity, while clientelism involves power manipulation for the gratification of private interest at the expense of the common good. The former does not necessarily

propagate the latter, but policy actors in Malta and Ireland need to renew their structures and strategies in a political environment characterised by the two.

The parish structure has distinguished itself as a permanent feature in Maltese society, particularly Gozo. Parochial divisions have eventually been mirrored in our political set-up. This is not necessarily evil because it has constructed our identity as a nation. The real problem lies in the formation of elitist cliques that seize power and the personalisation of issues due to partisan interests (MSHG12).

[In Ireland] [w]e have a paternalistic style of government characterised by parish politics, particularly in rural areas. It has been very much personalised as well. All these fuel a clientelistic culture (IEG15).

It is terrible in Ireland. If a minister comes from a particular county, you are guaranteed to see that over five years a high portion of public money goes more to that county than to any other county (ISHG9).

The Irish are most vociferous about the intricacies of political influences. They seem to hint at a void in Irish governance wherein their elected representatives are either manoeuvred by supranational or subnational pressures and not by national priorities. In turn, this is impacting negatively on people's trust in their political class.

Our politicians are influenced by the EU level and then by the local level, rather than by national policies. All politics is local and politicians are more responsive to local constituencies. All too often, people play the man, not the ball (ISHG10).

We have no confidence in our politicians because they are prisoners of vested interests. Infact politicians are hostages of the [powerful] farmers' lobby and all main parties, including Labour, support them (IEG19).

Implicitly, Irish interviewees are saying that unless an issue gets the attention of politicians, it will never really make it to the agenda of national priorities. Additionally, clientelistic drives and underlying vested interests can corrode the whole system and deprive an issue of its due importance.

7.3.4.3 Politicisation and media coverage

Interviewees make ample references to politicisation which in simple terms is a process whereby a policy issue infiltrates the political agenda to become electorally salient and the subject of party competition. In the Maltese case, such matters stem from extreme competitive political polarisation. A policy dossier prepared by an interest group can

invariably end up as a hot and sensitive political issue. This is due to a deeply polarised political arena which, according to some, is no longer as staunch as it used to be.

In our sector there is always the shadow of partisan politics. Everything under the sun is politicised in Malta. We always pay special attention not to let civil society become politicised. But the risk is always there (MSHG11).	Political polarisation in our civil society is not alarming. However it is always going to be a bit higher than in other countries because our smallness renders the political scenario much more personalised (MPO16).

As already highlighted in previous chapters, the media in Malta are seldom a guardian of democracy, and despite protestations to the contrary, their operators wear their political allegiances on their sleeve (Pirotta 2012). News and current affairs programmes are hardly balanced or impartial, and Maltese SHEGs have to venture over a tight rope between two great adversaries whose appetite to spin stories is insatiable. The success rate of coming out unharmed (that is, apolitical) is very limited. The experience below says it all,

> Yesterday I addressed a press conference on behalf of my organisation wherein I indicated a number of policy deficiencies in the sector in which we are active. On that same evening, I ended up as first item on the news of the *Partit Laburista*'s TV station while no mention at all was made on the news bulletin belonging to the party in government. Then we got a short slot in mid-news on state television (MSHG14).

Contrastingly, if a policy issue does not attract the interest of politicians it is destined to be shelved and, eventually, forgotten. Irish environmental groups have all suffered from this syndrome because 'public apathy on green issues is due to the lack of politicisation of environmental matters' (IEG18). On the other hand, civil rights activists in Ireland attribute their policy gains to political patronage.

The problem we have in Ireland is that environmental issues are not politicised. Apart from the Greens, the environmental agenda doesn't feature in the manifestos. There might be very little, maybe some references to European laws… (IEG21).	Our success is partly due to a growing understanding by political class of the need to provide fairness to all citizens. Labour has always delivered a valuable input to our cause, even though it was always the junior coalition party (ISHG13).

At the same time, Irish activists recognise the potential of the media in transforming their organisations into household names, rendering them visible to the public and assisting them in their campaigns. ISHG13 claims that 'the media helped us very much because it was an early convert to our cause'. At the other end of the spectrum, IEG18 is concerned about the absence of environmental groups on social media where 'our impact is zero.' Another green activist expresses doubts on media efficacy to contribute towards lasting results.

> We have two bargains: (a) we can go to the media and make a fuss but this only works for a temporary period, or (b) we can exert pressure on our politicians by reminding them that they are not abiding by EU frameworks and fines will have to be paid if they do not make the changes. The second option has a better chance of setting the ball in motion (IEG16).

Media remain a centre point for interest groups. It can either make or break their campaigns within a political context that can be receptive, hostile or indifferent to groups' causes.

7.3.4.4   Collaborative or competitive state

Another essential political component that has been identified is the compatibility of the state to work collaboratively or in direct competition with interest groups. Maltese SHEGs expect 'decent funding' (MEG19), 'adequate resources' (MSHG14) and a 'partnering attitude' based on 'subsidiarity' (MSHG13) from their government. Many feel that the executive branch of the state is not only failing on many of these counts, but it is reinventing the wheel whenever it creates state-sponsored bodies in the form of commissions, foundations, councils and so on that are made responsible for specific policy domains wherein NGOs are already in operation. Besides duplicating resources, these 'anomalous entities', like QUANGOs, are creating an accountability dilemma when they sit on central mediating bodies. 'Are they to be considered part of civil society or do they represent the government?', asked MSHG11. Other cases affirming the Maltese government's competing approach are presented next.

There were cases where the Government competed with the NGOs and, in others, there was collaboration. There have been instances where a successful green scheme run by an NGO was hijacked by the government by setting up its own structures to run an identical scheme. Private enterprises opt to aid state schemes because the chances of getting something in return are higher than partnering an NGO. And finally we had to pull out (MEG19).

If civil society starts working on a new idea, the government very often replicates it. As a consequence, our initiative dies or gets weaker. Instead of forming a partnership, the government goes for a competitive strategy. The government wants to show its people that it is doing something. Civil society is still being seen as a threat and not as a partner for change and development. However state rhetoric tells a different story (MSHG13).

Although these negative experiences cannot be considered as one-offs, there are stories of mutual collaboration that lead to win-win results. The EU is most often cited as the stimulus that instigates synergy between governmental and non-governmental actors. Furthermore, many observers stress the importance of PPPs that should be the next quantum leap to good governance.

When government has a strong will to act collaboratively, then we can succeed, even though our past relationships have always been antagonistic. Ironically it was the EU that rendered us united. Malta was sued in the ECJ regarding infringement of some EU directives. It turned out to be a very interesting case for us because state authorities involved us from end to finish. The government always sought our approval prior to the formulation of defence strategies. We collaborated very well. But this was the only time that government worked in tandem with us. It never happened either before or after this case (MEG17).

Government policy on PPPs is still not quite well developed but we all agree to move in this direction. It is also a practice highly encouraged by the EU. In the future we are going to see PPPs in many other fields. In the social sphere, such as accommodation for the elderly, immigrants' integration and drug rehabilitation, the Church and civil society were pioneers for many years. Now it is time to extend PPPs in new fields, including culture, education and the economy. When partnering the private sector and civil society, we can achieve much more than what the state could do on its own (MPO16).

From a quantitative perspective, Table 7.6 shows a high degree of reluctance on the part of interest groups to take part in joint projects involving PPPs. Approximately, 70% of SHEGs in both countries have never involved themselves in joint initiatives with the public sector. Due to high levels of comparability, there is no significant difference between the two cohorts of participants (Chi^2=1.768, p=0.622). This result amplify the need to adopt a more collaborative attitude among stakeholders and to find common ground where civil society can truly become a supporting partner of the state and vice-versa.

Table 7.6: SHEG's involvement in public-private partnership in these last eight years

Involvement in Private-Public Partnerships		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	Ireland	
Yes, on 1 occasion	Count	9	5	14
	Percentage	7.8%	6.0%	7.1%
Yes, on more than 1 but less than 5 occasions	Count	19	10	29
	Percentage	16.5%	12.0%	14.6%
Yes, on 5 occasions or more	Count	8	9	17
	Percentage	7.0%	10.8%	8.6%
No	Count	79	59	138
	Percentage	68.7%	71.1%	69.7%
Total	Count	115	83	198
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 1.768$, v = 3, $p = 0.622$

In addition, Maltese SHEGs react more positively than the Irish when pondering upon the EU's potential to exert pressure on national government to seek more participation from domestic interest groups in policy-making. Table 7.7 reveals significant difference between the two (p=0.017). Rating their opinion on a four-point likert scale, the mean rating scores are 2.77 for Malta and 2.42 for Ireland, meaning that the Maltese rate EU pressure as being *considerable*, compared to the *minor* rating given by the Irish.

Table 7.7: Pressure by the EU on national government to seek more participation

Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U test	p value
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Malta	2.77	0.810	2.62	2.92	3597.500	0.017
Ireland	2.42	1.026	2.19	2.65		

The dimension of cultural and political affairs has provided a number of interesting revelations about how Maltese and Irish SHEGs are creatures of their own environment and, thus, their manoeuvrings and influences are subject to domestic affairs. Moreover, findings affirm a high degree of similarity between the two island states and an underlying understanding that many of the changes taking place in their cultural and political terrains are the result of European influence. This change stimulus, sometimes results out of conviction and at other times out of convenience. In the next section, the third dimension of findings will be put under scrutiny, that is, the responsiveness of

domestic interest groups to participate in institutions of mediation responsible for consultation and interest intermediation.

7.4 Institutions of mediation

This section looks more closely at Maltese and Irish central entities that are specifically designed to institutionalise civil dialogue and seeks ways and means to widen and deepen working relationships between governmental and non-governmental actors. The Maltese experience will be treated first, followed by the Irish one. Each narrative will first outline the national institutions of interest intermediation and then conduct a stakeholders' analysis to determine the institutions' contributions and limitations to the system of interest representation.

7.4.1 The Maltese experience

Civil dialogue has become a household term in Malta as the government consistently seeks to portray a governing structure open to civil society which is given space and opportunity to contribute towards policy formulation and implementation. Many unused state properties that have been left to deteriorate over the years have been transferred to interest groups to renew their usage in the interest of the community at large. The government calls such policies a tangible means of decentralising power through the principle of subsidiarity. To further enhance inclusivity in the art of governance, central mediating bodies, including the MCESD and the MEUSAC have been set-up to institutionalise consultation processes regarding domestic and European affairs.

7.4.1.1 The Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee

MCESD, as the major institution responsible for social dialogue, was discussed at length in the previous chapter. In this part, our attention shall focus on MEUSAC where extensive hours of observations were carried out during meetings organised by four of its sectoral committees. As indicated in Chapter 4, the three main components of MEUSAC are consultation, information and support on EU programmes and funds.

Hence, the first findings that are to be rolled out are the ones resulting from overt observations that have been carried out at MEUSAC sectoral committees that allow civil society organisations to participate in the formulation of Malta's position on legislative developments in the EU (see Table 7.8).

Table 7.8: Observations during MEUSAC sectoral meetings

Categories of observation	List of observations at MEUSAC consultative meetings	
Level and type of participation	i.	Although every registered NGO is invited to be represented on one of the sectoral committees, only a few accept to participate. The environmental NGOs are the least represented because their large majority does not see the need to attend such meetings.
	ii.	Due to the limited number of attendees, faces become familiar. The ones who attend regularly are either (a) pensioners, (b) officers who are allowed to attend by their employers or (c) people who work on their own, like consultants. There develops a situation of close encounters where input by stakeholders becomes rather predictable because their ideological and political alliances are well known and highly consistent.
	iii.	The practice of attending and voicing concerns from a federation perspective rather than from the stricter view of individual organisations is still not the norm. However there are indications that this trend is gradually increasing over time.
	iv.	Over a period of two years there has been an incremental rise in the level of frustration among civil society attendees because the whole consultative exercise, notwithstanding all the good intentions of MEUSAC, is superfluous.
Logistics and setup of meetings	v.	Meetings are normally conducted from Monday to Friday mornings or early afternoons. Many NGO leaders complain that such timings are not appropriate because they have to take time off from work in order to attend. The large majority of NGO leaders in Malta are volunteers.
	vi.	The agenda of the meetings is always formulated by the secretariat which is composed solely of government officials.
	vii.	Meetings usually span over two hours. Government officers take three quarters of the time allocated to introduce the theme and explain the draft position of Malta. The rest of the time is allocated for discussion. Proceedings are held in Maltese.

	viii.	The secretariat takes minutes of what is said while the whole session is audio-recorded. These are then forwarded to bureaucrats to take them into consideration when finalising Malta's official position.
	ix.	Seating arrangements do not help to motivate a more lively debate. Government officials are formally dressed, sit behind top tables and the rest are seated in a classroom style. As soon as one enters the room, he will instantly know who are the people vested with power.
Availability and relevance of feedback	x.	Only few NGO leaders voice their concerns and recommendations during the meetings. In many cases these are the better well-educated people who have done their homework well by reading the extensive material sent by e-mail prior to the meeting. Many of these are representatives of professional bodies.
	xi.	Many others simply voice concerns and complaints that are only relevant to their organisations, thus making little or no contribution to the sector at large. These kinds of comments seem to irritate the officers of the secretariat.
	xii.	It is very easy to detect partisan political connotations in the contributions made by NGOs' representatives.
	xiii.	Many participants complain that they rarely receive any feedback for their suggestions as if top civil servants are not accountable for taking into consideration civil society's contributions.
	xiv.	One of the greatest discontents among civil society groups is that they are never, or seldom, presented with the Maltese final version once all the inter-ministerial meetings and external consultations with civil society have been made.
Overall judgmental perceptions	xv.	The large majority of NGO leaders think that these events are essentially information sessions rather than consultative ones. Beyond the official fora, they express their feeling that the final version of the national position is done irrespective of their input and suggestions.
	xvi.	NGO leaders are not satisfied with the three representatives of civil society who sit on MEUSAC core group. They are all coming from professional bodies and know almost nothing on the realities of voluntary organisations. Professional bodies are not considered as true emissaries of civil society.
	xvii.	NGOs express very positive feedback for MEUSAC's commitment to help them identify suitable EU programmes,

	provide them with technical and legal expertise to access funds and assist them in the selection of European partners with whom they can work on joint projects.

7.4.1.2   Real dialogue and smokescreens

The above list of observations is corroborated by experiences conveyed during interviews. While acknowledging the good intentions of a number of politicians and bureaucrats who are involved in the process, many express their disappointment that their contribution is not being given its due weight in formulating policy decisions and priorities. Very often, Maltese environmental groups feel truly frustrated.

Civil dialogue does exist. We are invited to many meetings and consultation sessions but, at the end of the day, the decision is always taken prior to all this. It was always like this, here in Malta. Consultation is only done by the Government to legitimise its preconceived decisions (MEG17).

Very often we go for a dialogue and are presented with a strategy that is almost complete, ready to be published. There may be cosmetic touches as a result of consultation but the framework is already in place before we speak out… Sometimes the authorities adopt a take it or leave it attitude! (MEG19).

Maltese social and human rights groups complain that feedback on their proposals, research documents and policy dossiers is only significant by its absence (MSHG12+ MSHG14+MSHG10). This is creating a lot of frustration and may be one of the causes why some interest groups start attending consultative sessions on an irregular basis, or even halt their participation. Accusations of *kollox taparsi* (feigning processes), political innuendos and *paraventu* (smokescreen) to appease European authorities are rampant and widespread.

There are processes where we are genuinely being consulted and where our input is thoroughly analysed. Then there are consultations that are done out of convenience more than conviction. The government needs to show that it is including different stakeholders in its policy formulation, particularly to its European watchdogs (MSHG14).

We work fabulously with bureaucrats. There are many who believe in our potential as civil society and give us support. But then it all boils down to the minister. Decentralisation has not really occurred in Malta. Politicisation is always at play and NGOs are not immune to it. Do we need to be aligned politically to be safe and captured within the political environment? (MSHG13).

The issue of participation in mediating bodies is also investigated quantitatively. Chi^2 analysis in Table 7.9 does not reveal any significant difference between the disposition of Maltese and Irish interest groups to participate in consultative bodies (Chi^2=0.017, p=0.896). Only around 38% of SHEGs in both countries are involved in intermediary organisations that bring together governmental and non-governmental bodies. However significant difference emerges when non-participative SHEGs were asked if they intended to join a coordinating entity in the future. 86.3% of Irish respondents reiterate their negative response, while almost half of their Maltese counterparts (46.5%) think that they will grab the opportunity if it arises (see appendix I).

Table 7.9: SHEGs' participation in consultation entities

Participation in any coordination entities that bring together governmental and non-governmental bodies		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	44	31	75
	Percentage	38.3%	37.3%	37.9%
No	Count	71	52	123
	Percentage	61.7%	62.7%	62.1%
Total	Count	115	83	198
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 0.017$, v = 1, $p = 0.896$

7.4.1.3 Capacity-building and self-centredness

However state bureaucracy and politicians are not the only ones to blame for this lack of true and transparent civil dialogue. Interest groups have a great stake and they cannot always play victim of the situation. Many of them do not invest in their capacity building, are never adventurous to think outside the box, act egoistically in terms of succession planning and fail to work collectively towards a better representation of their sector. The next set of Maltese perceptions shifts accountability back to interest groups.

We need to start working together so as to address our greatest weakness in terms of capacity-building. If our representatives on core groups and other governmental councils are not trustworthy, that is our own fault. The institutions are there and the democratic principles of representation are there as well. It is only us who cannot get organised, join forces and elect members in whom we trust (MSHG13).

We do a lot of work but our efforts are deeply fragmented. There are many organisations that do the same work because everyone heads in different directions. This is also the case in MEUSAC committees as well. There is an urgency to change the style that characterises our leadership (MSHG11).

Civil society groups are dependent on their leader. Good governance is still an unknown word to the majority. When a leader leaves the group, the trend here is to *kisser u farrak kollox* (crush and smash everything), so as the next leader will have to start from scratch! (MSHG12).

The third quote above hints that there is also another important consideration that is part of the game: narcissistic behaviour or actor-centredness. This is the antithesis of teamwork which is at the heart of group formation and performance. It constitutes a culture where the actor is more important than the institution and thus progress depends on his/her self-interest and attitude. In most cases self-centredness proves to be catastrophic in building trust and long-term positive relationships but, in a few cases involving a benevolent actor, it can work miracles. However the latter cases tend to be short-lived as long as the person remains at the axis of the institution. The following experiences by social and human rights groups in Malta emphasise these risky dynamics.

Last year [2010] we agreed with the Minister on a programme of events. Then there was a cabinet reshuffle and the minister changed and all else changed as well. We protested against how things happened. The only way to rectify this is by establishing solid institutions so as to reduce the power of the individual (MSH14).

The only genuine dialogue that we have ever been involved in is the one led by Hon…. It is the person on the chair and not the institutional set-up that really champions change and find a way forward among conflictual interests. The actor is more important than the institution in a small island like ours (MSH10).

Two factors crop up instantly from such experiences. Firstly, interest groups need to invest in their own capacity building by being innovative, entrepreneurial and courageous to diversify their core missions. Secondly, individual power is to be restrained by more efficient organisational structures that have in-built mechanisms of checks and balances.

7.4.2 The Irish experience

The Irish system of representation is characterised by platform organisations that are members of the two non-economic pillars of what was then the SP, that is the Community and Social Pillar (CSP) and the Environmental Pillar (EnvP). In CSP various sectors and issues of the Irish society are represented, namely the unemployed, children and youth, older people, the poor, housing, gender, rural, social justice and voluntary networks. The EnvP is naturally constituted of Irish environmental groups that operate on a national level.

7.4.2.1 The Community and Social Pillar

Since the 'undeclared' downfall of SP, the institutional position of the CFP has become extremely ambiguous.

The current government did not officially say that SP is gone but it is truly finished. Our pillar made up of seventeen national organisations still has a little bit of status, not much, as it is disappearing every week, every month. It is only a matter of time before CSP will end (ISHG9).	Although our pillar still exists and meets on a quarterly basis, we are now organising bilateral meetings with government departments. In some ways this works better than the original pillar structure that was chaired by the Taoiseach. Government departments were shy of talking then (ISHG11).

It transpires that the formal mediating institutions are being transformed and, as a consequence, they are becoming less formal, less dependent on prescribed procedures and more actor-centred. Many agree that in its heydays, the CSP within SP was a great channel of communication to bring consensus among different interests but one radical organisation (ISHG13) claims that the pillar has never been supportive to its causes because 'many of the [represented bodies] grew out of religious organisations' and, thus were against progressive thinking and civil liberties.

Even at a time when institutional design of interest intermediation was at its best, wise interest groups in Ireland 'did not put their eggs into the SP bag' (ISHG10). Informal

channels both with politicians and bureaucrats are not only widely available but most often are deemed to be more effective than the formal ones, even though the formal versions are considered more transparent and accountable to good conduct.

Ireland is a sort of funny mix of formal and informal cultures. Our formal structures can be quite rigid and then lots of things happen informally by getting to know key officials or the minister. To achieve your cause, it all has to do with the person rather than the institutional structure (ISHG11).

A lot of organisations have gone back to the political route, engaging informally with political parties. Informal channels are harder and more time consuming. Because Ireland is a small country, it's all about chance and getting in contact with the people involved (ISH12).

7.4.2.2 The Environmental Pillar

In contrast to CSP, the EnvP seems to be still in full swing and its highly structured mechanisms of operations are continually being revised to render the whole system of interest mediation more effective, fairer and efficient. Notwithstanding the negative talk that nowadays characterises SP as having been an 'elitist circle whose only interest was forming a cosy consensus at the top' (ISHG12), the EnvP has not only emerged as a 'survival' of a 'disgraceful body' but, moreover, it became as institutional catalyst to promote green concerns. It has sprouted out of the ashes of SP in 2010 and, today, 26 environmental organisations are represented by the Pillar. It all started under the Green Party coalition government (2007-2011) and, from the very beginning, it was 'intended to be permanent and well-funded' (IEG17).

Our efficiency has increased. We now have five working groups within the pillar operating on different themes. They can put forward a programme of work on a particular issue and after describing what and how they are going to do it, then the voting mechanism would come in. If there is approval, then they can go on with their project without referring back. It is a highly institutionalised model but it is working because it is a trust builder (IEG15).

Although in a way it is a step back since we have relegated SP to social dialogue, the EnvP has developed internal processes to allow us to develop policy together as a unified entity and there are funding structures that support our groups through government funding. So environmental groups are actively encouraged to come together to develop policy… We can now be considered real civil partners (IEG21).

The EnvP, together with other initiatives like the Irish Environment Network (IEN), the formation of an umbrella organisation appealing to almost all Irish green groups, proved hugely successful to 'build trust among groups who were for years fighting each other like children' (IEG19). Yet there are still unresolved issues in the matrix of green interest representation. IEG17 stresses that membership in the EnvP would automatically impinge on the autonomy of the groups because they will then become duty bound to support the 'Government National Development Plan that speaks about the building of new motorways, airport expansions and lots of other things that environmental groups typically object to'. The NESC is also part of the deficit equation on behalf of environmental organisations because there are no environmentalists within its secretariat and, thus 'whatever they do or research, is executed in an environmental vacuum' (IEG15). Others claim it is true that there have been improvements by central bureaucracy 'to take our concerns on board' when drafting policy and, thus invitations to participate in forums, policy circles and participative councils are abundant. But experience has shown that 'this is all done because the 'EC is coming down very heavily on different departments to consult with different stakeholders' (IEG21). It is a typical example of mere 'tokenistic' action just to 'please the EC'.

Not surprisingly, when asked whether the EU has been instrumental in accentuating the culture of civil dialogue in domestic affairs (see Table 7.10), the resulting mean rating scores show a significant difference between Malta and Ireland ($p=0.005$). Using a four-point likert scale, the mean rating scores are 3.01 for Malta and 2.64 for Ireland, meaning that the EU's impetus towards the domestic process of civil dialogue is deemed *considerable* by Maltese SHEGs and *minor* by Irish ones. The temporal factor might be a determining factor here. After a one shot event in 1973 when Ireland joined the EU, one would expect that the imported stimuli to get weaker when they are passed down to successive generations.

Table 7.10: The EU's instrumentality in accentuating the culture of civil dialogue in domestic affairs

Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U test	p value
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Malta	3.01	0.907	2.84	3.18	2588.000	0.005
Ireland	2.64	0.885	2.45	2.84		

7.4.2.3   Informal channels of interest mediation

Informal channels of mediating interests are not unknown to Irish activists in the green sector. Many interviewees agree that informal avenues tend to work better than formal ones. People just behave more favourably to one's cause in an informal setting (IEG21). Apparently there is also a strategy called 'adopt a politician' where NGOs select a TD and go to his/her local offices to keep him/her abreast with developments about the organisation and the sector (IEG15).

Our organisation is not part of the Pillar but I know most of the people who sit on the Pillar and I would speak to them in a personal capacity. Informal channels are more effective in the domestic scenario. The biggest disadvantage is funding because in order to get it you must first be within the formal sphere (IEG17).

Absolutely! We use them [informal channels] all the way. Without them you wouldn't get anywhere. Some of it is earned. We help state actors and they help us. You need both favourable institutional arrangements as well as personalities who are ready to team up with others (IEG19).

Leaving the business of lobbying to informal channels alone can be very risky for environmental organisations because there are other stronger interest groups that can better exploit such avenues because they enjoy greater political clout due to bigger numbers of followers. One of the informants below makes reference to peat-cutting and sewage systems which at the time of the interviews were very hot issues. It was a period when public demonstrations were being organised by community groups in Dublin against the Irish government and the EC. It was a time when the Commission was bringing Ireland back to the ECJ on peat extraction and septic tanks. Peat is partly decomposed vegetable matter which, when burned as fuel, produces health hazard gases. Septic tanks are primitive, small-scale sewage treatment systems that are common in

rural areas. Discharges from septic tanks, of which there are more than 400,000 in Ireland, have contributed to pollution of groundwater.

In Ireland, informal influence has always been more important than formal structures. And that works best for powerful interests. Insiders who have political clout socialise together, play golf and go for horse racing in Galway. Those who are at the outside, like us, are always looking for stronger, formal structures, stronger transparent democratic procedures that in some sense create a level-playing-field. We don't favour informal structures (IEG20).

Informal channels of lobbying are open to us as well, but there are very few of us compared to the other side. There are thousands of people involved in peat-cutting and tens of thousands with substandard sewage systems. They are obviously louder in lobbying politicians. Our feeble voice is our difficulty and we don't have big numbers behind us when defending the environment. So politicians give in to greater numbers. That is why our groups prefer more formal institutions of interest mediation (IEG18).

From the extensive accounts and statistics provided, it seems that the two states' narratives move in parallel. Formal mediating institutions enjoy central positions in the two polities, although informal channels are nonetheless widespread and deemed to be more effective in the short term. Nevertheless, both Maltese and Irish protagonists stress the need to have more efficient and transparent institutions which serve as a common platform to all and, thus, ensure fairness and limit the power of strong individuals/groups that may have the power to dictate the scene. Having presented the findings of the first three dimensions, it is now the time to move on to the last round of findings which deal more exclusively with the EU.

7.5   European influences

The last batch of results is directly related to perceptions on issues that are more directly related to EU affairs. In particular qualitative and quantitative findings shed light on four key areas, namely interest groups' attitudes towards the EU, European funding and opportunities of socialisation, preference to the Brussels route over and above the domestic route of influence and, finally, transformation effects, if any, on organisational norms.

7.5.1 Attitude towards the EU

Public attitude towards the EU is a highly complex concept consisting of many individual parts that are continuously interlinked with one another. Many claim that 'antipathy toward other cultures' (McLaren 2002) is a crucial element when formulating public perception; others like Christin (2005) maintain that individual attitudes towards domestic economic and political reforms are good predictors of citizens' attitudes towards the EU. Most studies also seem to agree on the importance of 'cognitive mobilization', meaning that a higher level of information about the EU leads to a higher level of public support (Pölzlbauer 2011). Findings from this research confirm that interest groups' attitude towards the EU is affected by a combination of these factors.

For example, the great majority of Maltese social and human rights groups have a positive attitude because they have been supportive since the early days of the EU referendum campaign in 2004 (MSHG10+MPO16+MPO20). Some others, particularly Gozitans, are rather indifferent to the EU because the continent closest to them is Australia, not Europe, where family and cultural connections are abundant (MSHG12).

Ever since the EU referendum, we have always been active in the European sphere. We always thought that our EU membership would serve us as a push to realise our cause in favour of civil rights (MSHG10).

Many NGOs are still adapting to the EU's reality. Although an early converter to Malta's accession, NGOs still suffered from an initial shock. They are now going through a phase of strengthening their capacity, changing mentality and experimenting with a greater number of opportunities and institutions (MP016).

The fact that government collaborated with civil society during the negotiations for EU accession secured a greater sense of ownership and legitimisation among all civil society's stakeholders (MPO20).

For us, Melbourne is our first point of reference because it has the largest concentration of Gozitans living abroad. Europe does not influence our frame of mind, even though the yes vote for Europe was proportionately greater than the Maltese vote in the accession referendum (MSHG12).

On the other hand, their Irish counterparts stress the lack of information and proper education on EU matters that led to apathy and negativity among various sectors of the population. Furthermore attitude towards the EU is also highly dependent on the cyclical nature of domestic political and economic performance.

The Irish government used to tell its people that Europe is good for money. It has never told us that being part of the EU is about a sense of citizenship. Thus it doesn't motivate us, inspire us to get involved and to learn much, other than just getting the money grants. As a result, civil society organisations just don't realise the EU's relevance to them. This is the story behind our indifference to EU affairs (ISHG9).

During our first phase of membership we were going to Brussels with an inferiority complex. Then, after so many years, there came the Celtic Tiger era and we adopted a superiority attitude towards the EU. Then when our economy rapidly fell apart, inferiority plagued the nation once again. So people's attitudes towards the EU are determined by a series of contemporary and domestic circumstances (ISHG12).

In the environmental arena, Maltese and Irish groups express a high degree of confidence in being part of the EU because it is 'deemed as a leader of environmental legislation' (IEG15+MEG18). The following excerpts reveal a pro-EU sentiment among islanders, but one of them does raise eyebrows over spill-over effects.

Green NGOs in Malta cannot be indifferent to the EU. The fact that we are now members is very positive in terms of environmental issues. It is only through this way that the Maltese authorities are being forced to adopt more environment friendly measures (MEG18).

The degree of Europeanisation on Irish civil society has been strong, mainly for two reasons, namely EU funding and EU environmental law. [Nevertheless,] they still have had a negative impact like over-fishing because of the Common Fisheries Policy and uncontrolled infrastructural building through structural funding (IEG19).

Although the majority of environmental groups are very receptive to the European integration project, there are still some Maltese and Irish groups that are either hostile or indifferent to the EU for different reasons.

Our attitude used to be positive about the EU even during the referendum campaign. But today it turned upside down. The EU knew that the Maltese politicians were not honest [during the accession referendum]. There was a lot of double talk about our concerns, but the EU did nothing to clarify matters. Our members are amongst the most furious against the EU (MEG17).

Our geographical remoteness has to do with our indifference to EU affairs (IEG16).

We are an open culture and are able to adapt. With regards to the EU, there is a perception problem. What is it all about? What is it trying to do? This needs to be addressed. Ireland has not spent so much energy to get the European message across (IEG21).

Stakeholders' accounts suggest that it is very difficult to establish common trends in this field of analysis. Overall, Maltese SHEGs seem to have a more positive attitude towards

the EU. Their accession period occurred relatively recently and, hence, they can still compare the pre- and post-accession experiences. The Irish, contrastingly, are more sceptical although both social and environmental groups acknowledge that the EU did champion the great legal changes which they are now benefiting from.

A series of statistical findings that try to decode attitudes towards the EU from different standpoints follows. Such quantitative results are corroborating evidence that confirms the general orientation established qualitatively.

7.5.1.1   Vision, training, ownership and European participation

Interest groups were asked whether the European dimension has filtered within their organisational vision/mission statement. Table 7.11 indicates that almost 54% of Maltese SHEGs are significantly more proactive in incorporating a European dimension in their vision/mission statements when compared to 38% of their Irish counterparts (Chi^2=4.87, p=0.027). The time factor has to be brought in once again. Forty years of Irish membership might have rendered the Irish to become less enthusiastic about the European integration project and, consequently more disinclined to own the European vision and less responsive to training opportunity on EU affairs.

Table 7.11: The European dimension's inclusion in the vision/mission statements of SHEGs

The vision/mission statement incorporates a European dimension		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	62	32	94
	Percentage	53.9%	38.1%	47.2%
No	Count	53	52	105
	Percentage	46.1%	61.9%	52.8%
Total	Count	115	84	199
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 4.87$, v = 1, $p = 0.027$

The lack of training and knowledge claimed by Irish interviewees is confirmed in Table 7.12 which reveals a notable difference between Maltese and Irish SHEGs in terms of training opportunities (Chi^2=11.208, p=0.001). 46.1% of Maltese groups, as against

22.9% of Irish groups, have participated in training programmes to deepen and widen their knowledge on EU matters, whilst acquiring the necessary skills.

Table 7.12: Training of SHEGs' officers in EU affairs

Participation in training programmes to acquire necessary skills in EU affairs		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		
		Malta	Ireland	Total
Yes	Count	53	19	72
	Percentage	46.1%	22.9%	36.4%
No	Count	62	64	126
	Percentage	53.9%	77.1%	63.6%
Total	Count	115	83	198
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 11.208$, $v = 1$, $p = 0.001$

The way EU matters are owned and managed at interest groups' level is another indicator of groups' attitude towards the EU. To this effect, respondents were asked whether their organisation appoints a person/s to take care of EU related issues. Table 7.13 shows that there is no significant difference between the two states ($Chi^2=5.571$, $p=0.134$). Approximately half of the groups do not appoint any member/s to deal with EU affairs (46.1% in Malta and 54.2% in Ireland). The most widely used practice in Malta (27%) is that of appointing one person who, besides other matters, is also responsible for the coordination of EU affairs. In Ireland's case, the most preferred method is to delegate European matters to more than one committee officer (26.5%).

Table 7.13: Responsibility of EU affairs within SHEGs

Responsibility of EU affairs within organisations		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		
		Malta	Ireland	Total
Yes, one person who is solely responsible	Count	7	5	12
	Percentage	6.1%	6.0%	6.1%
Yes, one who performs other tasks as well	Count	31	11	42
	Percentage	27.0%	13.3%	21.2%
More than one person responsible	Count	24	22	46
	Percentage	20.9%	26.5%	23.2%
No	Count	53	45	98
	Percentage	46.1%	54.2%	49.5%
Total	Count	115	83	198
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 5.571$, $v = 3$, $p = 0.134$

Statistics resulting from Table 7.14 gauge the trend of domestic groups' participation in EU related activities over a span of eight years (2004-2011) wherein yet again Maltese and Irish results are comparable (Chi^2=3.648, p=0.302). The largest segment of SHEGs (36.8% in Malta and 37.4% in Ireland) register an accelerated trend of participation, while an approximate 28.6% have reached a plateau (27.2% and 30% respectively). Although those registering a decreasing rate account for less than 10% (3.5% in Malta and 8.8% in Ireland), concern arises for those who fall under the category of *not applicable* (32.5% in Malta and 23.8%) because they seem to be totally indifferent to the European reality since they are most probably exclusively engaged in local/parish issues.

Table 7.14: SHEGs' rate of participation in EU related activities

The rate of participation in EU related activities		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Increased	Count	42	30	72
	Percentage	36.8%	37.5%	37.1%
Remained Stable	Count	31	24	55
	Percentage	27.2%	30.0%	28.4%
Decreased	Count	4	7	11
	Percentage	3.5%	8.8%	5.7%
Not Applicable	Count	37	19	56
	Percentage	32.5%	23.8%	28.9%
Total	Count	114	80	194
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 3.648$, v = 3, $p = 0.302$

7.5.2   Links and lobbying in the EU

Qualitative findings in this section reinforce the normal praxis that the Brussels route of influence 'does not replace' the domestic route (Bache and George 2006). European institutions rigorously demand that interest groups must first address their concerns to institutions at member state level. Once all domestic efforts prove fruitless, and a decision is taken to present the case to the EC, then interest groups must roll out an evidence-based cause. Ideological or emotional appeals simply do not work at European level. If 'you have done your research well' (MSHG10) and 'with a bit of luck' (IEG17), the EC can eventually opt to bring your case forward.

Maltese SHEGs are well aware of how things should proceed to lobby at EU level if the need arises. Their comments show that they have learned fast the rules of the game.

Prior to venturing your concerns in Europe, an organisation must first exhaust all the [domestic] possibilities. Many of our discussions in Malta revolve around directives where the issues are related to implementation and time periods. However, there have been cases where we had to go to the EC. Then there are issues involving the EP where we were also active (MSHG11).

When we become aware that local authorities are not interested in getting things done, we start making pressure in Brussels. In addition, we always participate in meetings whenever the Environment Commissioner visits Malta. This is of great help, particularly to smaller NGOs, because it makes European institutions more reachable (MEG18).

The Maltese government does not seem to be bothered whenever any of the social or civil partners chooses to bypass its institutions and go directly to Brussels. There is almost certainty that the group will be referred back to make its submissions to the competent domestic authorities, as it should have done from the beginning, and then wait for the feedback. Nonetheless, even though the government has provided an institutional framework to facilitate national consultation, it would still be not annoyed if a Maltese NGO still opts to manoeuvre along the Brussels route of influence. However,

It would be better for all if the government is informed in advance about the NGOs' intention and position. In this way there will be a better chance for the government to support the cause being promoted by any NGO (MPO16).

The Irish government seems to be adopting a similar attitude, at least in the social and human rights field. Although it has instituted domestic structures responsible for civil dialogue, coordination of national policy and discussion of EU legislative measures, NGOs are nonetheless unrestrained to cross the ocean on their way to lobby for their interest in Brussels. They know that once they leave the Irish shoreline, they have left behind an informal and flexible model structured around the politics of clout and clientelistic webs. The model that awaits them on the other side is much more rationalised, involving negotiation, persuasion and persistence.

Most members of the CSP would also be engaged with the EU in their own right or through other networks… Some of our representatives in the Pillar sit on EESC. In some ways the Pillar opens doors and then the people have other mechanisms and ways of engaging with Europe (ISHG11).

Europe presents a completely different model to us. It is true that it is a slow and cumbersome process because there are 27 member states involved; but it is better [than the Irish model] as a result of that. Another good thing at European level is that once something is decided, then it should be implemented… The European model is a sort of Germanic [one]; we have decided on evidence, this is the law, and it should be respected by all (ISHG12).

Irish environmental groups have been more active in Brussels, primarily because their domestic political, administrative and judiciary institutions are highly ineffective on green terms (IEG17+IEG18). Uploading their concerns proved to be a more effective route to get things done. This explains why Ireland has by far the highest per capita number of infringement cases concerning environmental issues (IEG18). When things went from bad to worse, the Irish government invested in domestic institutional mechanisms by setting up the EnvP to coordinate the work of national environmental groups and, at the same time, started to adopt a more open door policy.

The EU does provide an alternative route to voice our concerns on green matters. It has become the most important countervailing power to Irish authorities. When NGOs made no progress with government agencies as had been the case for many years, then they had to bring the case to the EC. A lot of these cases ended up in front of the ECJ (IEG20).

In the past we had to go straight to the EC because the government adopted a closed door policy for us. Now, the government is turning to green NGOs and telling us that 'we need to talk to you first before you go to the EC with a complaint procedure'. The EC itself stressed the need that we have to try and resolve things before they go beyond the state (IEG21).

The situation in the two island member states seems to be very similar although Irish environmental groups came out as the more adventurous to reach out for Brussels whenever they sense a deadlock in their country. The discussion will now incorporate statistical findings that shed more light on the potentials and limitations of Maltese and Irish interest groups to maintain links with Brussels and to establish a network and lobby platform within the multi-layered system of European institutions.

7.5.2.1   Types of contacts and potential of lobbying

When asked about the nature of contact they have already established in Brussels (see Table 7.15), findings reveal a varied selection of contact types, yet statistically they are highly comparable (Chi^2=7.154, p=0.209). A substantial portion of interest groups utilise multiple channels of communication. Relying on umbrella Euro-groups proves to be the most widely used form of attachment both in Malta (21.2%) and Ireland (31.2%), followed by online networking in Malta (19.2%) and in Ireland by members travelling overseas (17.6%). The ones who scored *other means* (11.5% in Malta and 12.8% in Ireland) are referring to three major types of contacts: (a) delegating this task to their parent organisation that in turn has contacts in Brussels, (b) contacts with MEPs and (c) meetings with European commissioners when they visit the island. However there is still a substantial number of SHEGs (32.7% in Malta and 23.2% in Ireland) that have not yet established any contact of any sort in Brussels.

Table 7.15: Types of contact with Brussels established by SHEGs

The type of contact that has already been established in Brussels, if any		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Permanent Office in Brussels	Count	3	2	5
	Percentage	1.9%	1.6%	1.8%
Relying on umbrella Euro-groups based in Brussels	Count	33	39	72
	Percentage	21.2%	31.2%	25.6%
Sending members to Brussels periodically	Count	21	22	43
	Percentage	13.5%	17.6%	15.3%
Online networking	Count	30	17	47
	Percentage	19.2%	13.6%	16.7%
Other means	Count	18	16	34
	Percentage	11.5%	12.8%	12.1%
No contact	Count	51	29	80
	Percentage	32.7%	23.2%	28.5%
Total	Count	156	125	281
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 7.154$, v = 5, $p = 0.209$

When the latter were asked whether they intend to invest in any point of contact with Brussels in the future (see Table 7.16), the resulting figures are significant (Chi^2=5.590, p=0.018). Whilst 47.2% of Maltese groups answered in the affirmative, only 20.7% of Irish groups positioned themselves in favour of the idea.

Table 7.16: SHEGs' intention to establish contact in Brussels if this is not already the case

Intention to establish contact in Brussels if this is not already the case		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	Ireland	
Yes	Count	25	6	31
	Percentage	47.2%	20.7%	37.8%
No	Count	28	23	51
	Percentage	52.8%	79.3%	62.2%
Total	Count	53	29	82
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 5.590$, $v = 1$, $p = 0.018$

The next finding in Table 7.18 investigates whether interest groups are being engaged to promote and defend their interests at EU level. The majority of Maltese and Irish SHEGs are still not involved (64.3% and 57.8% respectively), indicating no significant difference between the two islands (Chi^2=5.590, p=0.018). The reasons behind this lack of participation at EU level are inquired in Table 7.19.

Table 7.18: SHEGs' lobbying at EU level

Engagement in lobbying with any institution of the EU		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	Ireland	
Yes	Count	41	35	76
	Percentage	35.7%	42.2%	38.4%
No	Count	74	48	122
	Percentage	64.3%	57.8%	61.6%
Total	Count	115	83	198
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 0.866$, $v = 1$, $p = 0.352$

Although Chi^2 analysis in Table 7.19 confirms that there is no significant difference between Malta and Ireland (Chi^2=3.702, p=0.717), the results are nonetheless interesting. While lack of administrative capacity is the most prominent reason that is debarring Maltese and Irish SHEGs from experimenting with the Brussels route of influence (36.3% and 27.0% respectively), the second most scored reason is that the domestic route of influence is still being preferred (19.5% and 24.0% respectively). The implied cost of lobbying at EU level has also been voted as a significant justification for staying out of the game (10.6% in Malta and 17.0% in Ireland). MSHG10 shows no hesitation in declaring that 'the biggest hurdles in participating more extensively in the European experience are essentially a lack of people and money'. While affirming the

inbuilt organisational limitations, some experienced leaders maintain that the key to access the Brussels route is not money but contacts.

> To access the EU, you just need one clever person who has good relationships up there. It all depends on the contacts you have. If you go to a couple of conferences in Brussels, put a face to a name, exchange cards, shake hands, you build a relationship with them. Then you will pick up the phone, they will take your call (IEG16).

MSHG10 agrees perfectly with IEG16. The two of them are specifically pointing to the centrality of establishing European partners, the need to socialise within the concentric circles of multilateral policy networks and, if possible, take 'leading positions' or secure a 'visible presence' in those places where decisions are taken.

Table 7.19: Reasons for not lobbying at EU level

Reasons why certain organisations do not engage with EU institutions for lobbying purposes		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	Ireland	
Domestic route of influence preferred	Count	22	24	46
	Percentage	19.5%	24.0%	21.6%
Targeting national ministers who in turn voice their opinion at the Council of Ministers	Count	13	10	23
	Percentage	11.5%	10.0%	10.8%
High cost of lobbying at EU level	Count	12	17	29
	Percentage	10.6%	17.0%	13.6%
No knowledge of EU institutional design	Count	9	8	17
	Percentage	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%
EU does not have relevance	Count	11	9	20
	Percentage	9.7%	9.0%	9.4%
Lack of administrative capacity	Count	41	27	68
	Percentage	36.3%	27.0%	31.9%
Other reasons	Count	5	5	10
	Percentage	4.4%	5.0%	4.7%
Total	Count	113	100	213
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 3.702$, v = 6, $p = 0.717$

The last statistical finding in this section (Table 7.20) shows that there is a significant difference among the preferences of Maltese and Irish SHEGs as to whom they lobby at the supranational level (Chi^2=17.717, p=0.003). As expected the EC and EP enjoy the top ranks in both countries (approximately 30% each). This is understandable in the context of small states where people feel more attached to their politicians, including those functioning at the supranational level. Access to the EESC is imbalanced; almost

16% of Irish SHEGs do relate to this consultative institution compared to barely 5% of their Maltese counterparts. Feedback from one of the Maltese delegates of the EESC explains the situation,

> As a member of the EESC, I don't have a secretariat to help me reach out [to domestic organisations]. Malta has the smallest delegation made up of five members. Only one of them represents the interests of the third sector, including social matters, environmental issues and consumer affairs; the other four represent unions and employers (MSHG11).

The last point of significant difference concerns the reliance on *other means* which in the case of Malta is substantial (20.3%), contrasted to barely 5% on the Irish part. In the majority of cases, respondents were either referring to their national parent organisation or to the European federation that in turn voice their concerns at the EU level.

Table 7.20: Lobbying institutions in Brussels

European institutions targeted for lobbying purposes		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
European Commission	Count	19	24	43
	Percentage	32.2%	29.3%	30.5%
National members of EESC	Count	3	13	16
	Percentage	5.1%	15.9%	11.3%
National MEPs	Count	21	25	46
	Percentage	35.6%	30.5%	32.6%
Commissioner of home country	Count	4	7	11
	Percentage	6.8%	8.5%	7.8%
Member State holding Presidency of Council	Count	0	9	9
	Percentage	.0%	11.0%	6.4%
Other means	Count	12	4	16
	Percentage	20.3%	4.9%	11.3%
Total	Count	59	82	141
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 17.717$, v = 5, $p = 0.003$

7.5.3 Funding and socialisation

The acquisition of EU funding is always a crucial element of paramount importance not only to governments, but also to interest groups that have been found to suffer chronically from poor resources and administrative capacity. On the other hand, accession to the EU led to a proliferation of networking opportunities with other

European partners, thus taking advantage of greater socialisation, collective learning and sharing of best practices. Qualitative findings show which of the two is most prized by Maltese and Irish interest groups and how priorities shifted over time. Afterwards, the discussion will incorporate statistical data to determine the take up of funding and networking opportunities over a period of eight years (2004-2011).

Maltese SHEGs seems not to differentiate between the two stimuli as they are both deemed 'necessary prerequisites to live the European vocation'. According to MPO16, the two major problems that groups face in Malta are 'smallness', leading to a limited resource base; and 'islandness' that can lock in stakeholders in geographical and mental isolation. To address these innate coercive restraints, the Maltese government felt that it is its obligation to set up a specialised agency (MEUSAC) to help interest groups apply for funds and identify European partners. Thus, funding and socialisation are not mutually exclusive but two indispensable elements for the smallest member state to realise its 'European dream'.

Feedback by Maltese interviewees is very similar and no difference results between the two cohorts of interest groups, that is, social and human rights groups on one hand, and environmental groups on the other.

If it weren't for the EU funds, our group couldn't have been able to flourish and increase its European and international connections. The sustainability of our organisation is based on government and EU funding. My dream is that we will not remain dependent on state funding, unless partnership projects are still on. Capacity building and financial management are the two most crucial elements in managing any organisation (MSHG13).

I would rate the two as having the same weighting. The EU gave us new opportunities to embark on good practice sharing with other groups in the EU. We started creating partnerships and exchange ideas beyond our shores. At the same time, we cannot seize opportunities unless we have the funds. Financial constraints led us to withdraw our membership in one of our European federations and cancel our participation in meetings abroad (MEG19).

In spite of this high level of equal understanding, one interviewee came up with a controversial allegation wherein he maintains that domestic and European authorities

use discriminatory criteria against certain interest groups, even though they abide by relevant legislation and are fully eligible for EU funding.

> We have tried to access EU funds many times, and spent a lot of money in consultancy fees, but to no avail. The Maltese government is behind this great barrier we have encountered. At the end of the day, funds are allocated on the guidelines provided by governments. This is our conviction because we do have documents to confirm it. If the Maltese government feels that an entity should not get any European funds, it has the power to do it. There is also an institutionalised bias even within the EU institutions against the sector we represent (MEG17).

While MPO16 categorically denies these allegations, MPO20 confirms that the EU technocrats do differentiate between civil society groups and paid lobbyists. The former are always welcomed, the latter are given the cold shoulder and successive shields are put in place not to let them come too close to the top corridors of the EC. However the Maltese environmental NGO in question is nothing of this sort, it is just a legitimate organisation representing sectoral interests.

The Irish narrative presents a completely different line-up, even though smallness and islandness still form part of its geopolitical profile. Having nurtured a framework that is heavily reliant on the Anglo-Saxon world, as was discussed in chapter 6, Irish social and human rights groups never really developed a need to Europeanise their circles of networks and contacts. The only need that they really strived hard for was money from Europe except, maybe, for the youth sector that has always been on the forefront in organising youth exchanges with mainland Europe. So the element of socialisation was non-existent for many Irish groups but, in these last years, things started moving in a different direction. Funding alone will not alter the mentality; collective learning through socialisation opportunities may start to take apart an insular culture dominantly attached to Britain and America.

[Irish] civil society organisations, if they think about Europe at all, would be more motivated by the socialisation effect. For example, we as an organisation have only introduced the international dimension in these last two years. We are guilty as everybody else. It has to do a bit with our national character. It has a little bit to do with how the government has always treated the EU: as a source of money (ISHG9).

Compared to other NGOs, our youth sector has always had a very strong focus on European issues. A lot of our members have direct connections with European groups (ISHG12).

The EU isn't really that important in terms of change in our sector. But Europe and EU membership have been critical, primarily, because it has increased the opportunities for engagement at an ordinary level across Europe. So, for a country that was focused on Britain and America only, it shifted to become focused on Europe as well. One of the great things that the European engagement delivered was a whole set of projects that could be worked out through our partner counterparts across Europe. But this is a recent development. Thus, so far, we haven't benefited hugely from opportunities of socialisation and cross fertilisation (ISHG13).

Irish green groups share the same narrative. Since Ireland's accession in 1973, funding always enjoyed a central and almost monolithic supremacy over all other considerations.

Quite definitely, for a long time funding was first priority. No socialisation at all (IEG15).

The process of Europeanisation has been motivated by the opportunity of obtaining funds for many years. In Ireland there is no government agency that helps NGOs exploit the opportunity that emanates from the EU. Now things have started to change (IEG21).

This one-sided outlook has taken its toll on the environment groups' ability to penetrate the 'rest of the continent' and intermingle with individuals, organisations and institutions that share common interest. The experience below by IEG16 is a prototype, whilst IEG18 provides an alternative account of a well-connected organisation, maybe, because it used to be substantially funded by the Irish government.

We are not very good at identifying partner organisations in other member states. We have not built rapport with other organisations and haven't been involved in sharing of best practices. Although we now network through online options, we are not really in touch (IEG16).

Laterally, we have been very active. We are very much in contact with other environmental NGOs in other states, particularly Germany, the Netherlands and Scandinavian countries, Maybe more recently with Spain as well. The Mediterranean is a bit far and, thus we haven't done any outreaches there (IEG18).

The next step is to present a number of quantitative findings that deal exclusively either with EU funding or with the cross fertilisation effect so as to formulate a more holistic depiction of the situation.

7.5.3.1   European funding, federations and partners

The selected series of statistical findings led to no significant differences between Malta and Ireland (that is p value is above the 0.05 criterion), thus confirming a high degree of comparability.

Table 7.21 shows that Maltese interest groups are slightly more adventurous than the Irish to try their best in accessing EU funding (60% and 51.8% respectively). Likewise, the rate of success is also comparable. Table 7.22 reveals that Maltese and Irish SHEGs have almost the same success rate (approximately 77%), with the two cohorts of financing between 1 and 5 projects being the most subscribed to (60% [22.9% + 37.1%] in Malta and 66% [20.5% + 45.5%] in Ireland). The percentage of unsuccessful applicants is also highly comparable, that is, 22.9% in Malta and 20.5% in Ireland. When the latter were probed to see if they intended to reapply for EU funding in the future, 74.6% of Maltese SHEGs answered in the affirmative, compared to 65% of their Irish counterpart (see Appendix I).

Table 7.21: Attempts by SHEGs to access EU funds

Attempts to access EU funds			Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		
			Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes		Count	69	43	112
		Percentage	60.0%	51.8%	56.6%
No		Count	46	40	86
		Percentage	40.0%	48.2%	43.4%
Total		Count	115	83	198
		Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 1.317$, $v = 1$, $p = 0.251$

Table 7.22: Success of SHEGs in obtaining EU funds

| Success achieved in obtaining EU funds | | Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups | | Total |
		Malta	Ireland	
Yes in 1 project	Count	16	9	25
	Percentage	22.9%	20.5%	21.9%
Yes in more than 1 less than 5 projects	Count	26	20	46
	Percentage	37.1%	45.5%	40.4%
Yes in 5 projects or more	Count	12	6	18
	Percentage	17.1%	13.6%	15.8%
No	Count	16	9	25
	Percentage	22.9%	20.5%	21.9%
Total	Count	70	44	114
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 0.815$, v = 3, $p = 0.846$

From further investigation, it results that 74% Maltese rely on external advice to apply for EU funding (see Appendix I) and, as Table 7.23 reveals, government agencies are the most widely used external expertise in this regard. It can be safely concluded that the majority of Maltese SHEGs had MEUSAC in mind when answering this question. On the other hand 53.3% of Irish groups (see Appendix I) rely on external advice when applying for funding. Their reliance is more fairly distributed among the four mentioned sources in Table 7.23.

Table 7.23: Sources of external advice

| The sources of external advice sought by organisations | | Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups | | Total |
		Malta	Ireland	
Government agencies	Count	45	14	59
	Percentage	43.3%	28.0%	38.3%
Independent experts	Count	17	12	29
	Percentage	16.3%	24.0%	18.8%
Other domestic NGOs	Count	16	11	27
	Percentage	15.4%	22.0%	17.5%
Other European NGOs	Count	21	11	32
	Percentage	20.2%	22.0%	20.8%
Other means	Count	5	2	7
	Percentage	4.8%	4.0%	4.5%
Total	Count	104	50	154
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 4.050$, v = 4, $p = 0.399$

The next set of data figures deal exclusively with the cross fertilisation effect, in particular the participation of domestic groups in European federations and their drive to

establish partners to work on joint projects and engage in mutual learning processes. Table 7.24 shows that almost half of SHEGs in Malta and Ireland are affiliated to European federations (43.0% and 47.0% respectively). However the number of non-affiliated organisations, most of which are only functional at local or parish level, is still significant. When the latter were asked why they do not feel the need to appertain to European federations, the most scored reason in the two countries is that actually such a need does not exist because they are entirely committed to domestic issues. Secondly, a third of SHEGs in Malta and Ireland declare that the cost of affiliation is too expensive (see Table 7.25).

Table 7.24: Affiliation of SHEGs to European federations

| Affiliation to any European federation | | Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups | | Total |
		Malta	Ireland	
Yes	Count	49	39	88
	Percentage	43.0%	47.0%	44.7%
No	Count	65	44	109
	Percentage	57.0%	53.0%	55.3%
Total	Count	114	83	197
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 0.312$, v = 1, $p = 0.577$

Table 7.25: Reasons for not affiliating to European federations

| Reasons why not to affiliate to a European federation | | Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups | | Total |
		Malta	Ireland	
No need to be part of a Euro federation	Count	15	4	19
	Percentage	34.1%	14.3%	26.4%
high monetary cost of affiliation	Count	13	8	21
	Percentage	29.5%	28.6%	29.2%
focusing on domestic issues is a priority	Count	12	14	26
	Percentage	27.3%	50.0%	36.1%
affiliation is against statute	Count	1	0	1
	Percentage	2.3%	.0%	1.4%
Other reasons	Count	3	2	5
	Percentage	6.8%	7.1%	6.9%
Total	Count	44	28	72
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 5.635$, v = 4, $p = 0.228$

Table 7.26 reveals another element of high comparability between the two states in the identification of European partner organisations to cooperate over joint projects. Half of

SHEGs in Malta and Ireland have established partner organisations across the EU[115] (49.6% and 54.8% respectively). When delving deeper, it transpires from Table 7.27 that there is no significant difference with regards to the regional origins of partner organisations. Percentage points are more or less evenly distributed among the four geographical clusters both within and across the two states. One can comment that history seems to be repeating itself here as well. The fact that the largest segment of Maltese SHEGs' partners originate from the Eastern cluster may indicate that the Easterners are now befriending Malta, just as they used to do with the Irish during their boom years, to learn 'quickly' from the Maltese experience in the EU.

Table 7.26: SHEGs' cooperation with European partners

Identification of European partner organisations to cooperate over joint projects		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		
		Malta	Ireland	Total
Yes	Count	57	46	103
	Percentage	49.6%	54.8%	51.8%
No	Count	58	38	96
	Percentage	50.4%	45.2%	48.2%
Total	Count	115	84	199
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 0.525$, v = 1, $p = 0.469$

Table 7.27: Regional origins of SHEGs' European partners

The European regions from which partner organisations originate		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		
		Malta	Ireland	Total
Southern & Mediterranean cluster	Count	95	67	162
	Percentage	26.5%	24.2%	25.5%
Central cluster	Count	68	63	131
	Percentage	18.9%	22.7%	20.6%
Northern cluster	Count	84	75	159
	Percentage	23.4%	27.1%	25.0%
Eastern cluster	Count	112	72	184
	Percentage	31.2%	26.0%	28.9%
Total	Count	359	277	636
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 3.725$, v = 3, $p = 0.293$

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[115] For the purposes of this study, the members states of the EU have been grouped into five geographical clusters and each cluster is composed as follows:
Southern and Mediterranean cluster: Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain
Central cluster: Austria, Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg and Netherlands
Northern cluster: Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Sweden and United Kingdom
Eastern cluster: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia
At the time when data was being collected, Croatia was still an acceding country and, thus, it was not included in the exercise

7.5.4   EU norms and values

Changes in attitudinal formations are a critical factor to determine whether European influences have infiltrated the mindset of interest groups. Compared to other factors that have already been examined, this is the most difficult one to analyse because of its intangibility nature. Nevertheless qualitative and quantitative data exhibit interesting and exploratory findings that will eventually be used in the testing phase of the original hypotheses.

Maltese interviewees are very optimistic that more changes in attitude, culture and perception are on the way as a result of EU membership because they believe that the ball has already started rolling at a faster pace than expected. However, one has to distinguish between two types of social and human rights groups. Firstly, there are peer support organisations of a small scale whose interest is entirely domestic but which can 'have the potential to reverse certain imported values that are gradually heading in' (MSH12). Secondly, there are the more robust representative groups that can be pioneers in initiating further substantial changes not only in Malta but also on a European scale by using smallness as an ideal prerequisite to undertake pilot projects.

Many Maltese NGOs are very small, offering peer support rather than being actual representative organisations. These are active within the Church and disability circles where the European dimension is not so relevant. However, those that are involved in minority rights are very much involved in European affairs. For us, the EU is a source to speed up change in [domestic] legislation through a fast track change in public mentality (MSHG10).

Through accession, we started looking beyond our shores more. We have already achieved a lot in terms of sharing of best practices but we can do a lot more. Our NGOs must be on the forefront to bring pilot studies to Malta and, when enough experience has been gained, they could be extended to other larger member states. I am thinking of capacity building, mentoring, partnerships, open mentality exercises and internal reengineering projects (MMB15).

Other Maltese protagonists emphasise that the need for change is already being realised, not only at structural and tactical levels, but most importantly, in terms of leadership transformation.

In 2004 we became aware of the various EU opportunities that are open to organisations like ours. We embarked on internal strategic changes to develop and diversify as an entity. At the base of it all, it involved a change in vision through a different leadership mentality (MSHG13).

We have brought a number of European group leaders to address our members who challenged our frame of mind and taught us how to look *'il barra minn żokortna* (beyond ourselves). It is all about being open to new ideas (MSHG14).

Optimism makes way for a more sarcastic tone when interviewing Irish leaders. Piaras Mac Éinrí, a respected Irish academic, diplomat and civil society activist, is unequivocal, 'I would be critical of the failure of the Irish NGO sector to fully understand the possibilities of a more proactive approach to EU, but then again most of these NGOs just don't have the knowledge, experience or resources to do this (Éinrí 2012). Irish social and human rights groups sustain the scholar's perception, although one of them expresses hope that mentality change is the only way forward.

As civil society, we need to have an impact on where Europe is going, not just continue to behave as if each country is on its own. We are now more and more federalised and we need to act like that. Organised like that… but we've barely started! (ISHG9).

Cohesive European norms and values exist only when you go for a conference in Brussels. There you meet people who are able to articulate such a vision, but if you talk to an Irish person in the streets, you wouldn't get an answer for this one! (ISHG12).

Although some of the Irish environmental groups acknowledge the valid contribution of the Green Party in government in Dublin (2007-2011), particularly in adopting a more positive attitude and active engagement with the EU, other organisations remain sceptic of domestic politics. IEG16 is the most pronounced among the latter, 'every green initiative that the government has ever embarked upon was not homegrown but forced by the EU' (IEG16). However they still do not feel 'a sense of belonging' to the rest of the continent (IEG15). The degree of Europeanisation on green NGOs has actually been strong, mainly because of two reasons: 'EU funds and EU legislation' (IEG19). The EU did not challenge innate norms and embedded values, and the bailout experience has made things much more difficult. But membership did provide green NGOs with an opportunity to seek remedy in Brussels when Irish institutions failed (IEG18).

7.5.3.1   Mentality change and transformation effects

Table 7.28 measures the extent of EU influence on members' mindset. The mean rating scores in both countries are almost congruent (2.65 in Malta and 2.69 in Ireland), signifying that respondents are closer to *considerable* limits of influence on a four point likert scale. Since the p value exceeds the 0.05 criterion, no statistical difference emerges between Malta and Ireland.

Table 7.28: The extent of EU influence on the mindset of SHEGs' members

Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups			95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	U test	p value
Malta	2.65	1.047	2.45	2.84	4485.500	0.840
Ireland	2.69	1.001	2.46	2.91		

Similarly, Table 7.29 reveals the extent of influence by European federations' norms and practices on the character of domestic interest groups. The mean rating score is the same for both countries (2.165 mean), implying a minor extent of influence on a four point likert scale. Since findings are highly comparable, no significant difference is affirmed.

Table 7.29: The extent of influence on SHEGs by norms and practices of European federations

Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups			95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	U test	p value
Malta	2.16	1.172	1.94	2.38	4469.000	0.804
Ireland	2.17	0.991	1.95	2.40		

Table 7.30 conveys a significant difference in the receptivity of Maltese and Irish SHEGs towards new ideas stemming from their European partners (Chi^2=13.122, p=0.001). While 42.5% of the Maltese believe that there have been changes within their organisations that are attributed to their European partners, 47.8% deny any causal relationship between internal changes and external influences. Contrastingly, the Irish show a greater sense of inconclusiveness. 39.8% confirm the causal relationship, 31.3%

deny it and a substantial segment 28.9% did not give a definite answer and preferred the 'don't know' category.

Table 7.30: Internal changes attributed to new ideas brought about by European partners

There have been changes within the organisation that are attributed to new ideas brought about by European partners		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	Ireland	
Yes	Count	48	33	81
	Percentage	42.5%	39.8%	41.3%
No	Count	54	26	80
	Percentage	47.8%	31.3%	40.8%
Don't Know	Count	11	24	35
	Percentage	9.7%	28.9%	17.9%
Total	Count	113	83	196
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 13.122$, v = 2, $p = 0.001$

While the three previous results showed the extent of European influence through vertical and lateral axis, the next one maps out the proper stimuli that trigger changes within domestic interest groups. Table 7.31 shows the ranking of five major stimuli emanating from the EU's pattern and style of governance. In the case of Maltese SHEGs it is clear that they are primarily motivated by *European funds* (3.84 mean), followed by *socialisation with European partners* (3.10 mean). In the case of Irish SHEGs, the major stimulus of change is almost spread equally among three sources, namely *socialisation with European partners* (3.32 mean), *European funds* (3.31 mean) and the *value of consensus* (3.12 mean). The fact that the p value in the case of European funding is just on the point of 0.05 criterion of significance indicates that that the Maltese and Irish scores are comparable.

Table 7.31: Sources of stimulus that instigate change in SHEGs' tactics & strategies

Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U Test	p value
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
European Funds	Malta	3.8396	1.26253	3.4916	4.1876	617.0000	0.050
	Ireland	3.3065	1.20884	2.8630	3.7499		
Consensus Value	Malta	2.6132	1.17523	2.2893	2.9371	661.0000	0.131
	Ireland	3.1129	1.37058	2.6102	3.6156		
Socialisation with Partners	Malta	3.1038	1.14924	2.7870	3.4205	739.0000	0.437
	Ireland	3.3226	1.30095	2.8454	3.7998		
Positive Attitude	Malta	2.4528	1.02029	2.1716	2.7341	689.0000	0.210
	Ireland	2.7097	.99812	2.3436	3.0758		
Training opportunities	Malta	2.9906	1.15813	2.6713	3.3098	632.5000	0.075
	Ireland	2.5484	.89773	2.2191	2.8777		

7.6   Concluding remarks

This chapter presented a tremendous amount of findings, digesting quantitative and qualitative data to provide contrasting and analogous impressions of Ireland and Malta. Maltese SHEGs are more resolute to live up to their 'European vocation' to the full, despite inbuilt coercive constraints that impose limits to European exposure. Many of their leaders, particularly those of peak organisations and mediating bodies, talk about 'the need for Europe' to reaffirm themselves, their organisation and for all they believe in. Contrastingly, the Irish are ambivalent to the European reality. Although they admit that their attitude, knowledge and experience towards European affairs are somehow limited, they are still vociferous to get from Brussels all that was denied by their government.

The four major categories under which results have been segmented, that is, internal capabilities and limitations, cultural and political dynamics, domestic mediating institutions, and European influences are the four pillars on which the codification and measurement of Europeanisation effects are to be manifested. The analysis and interpretation of results pertaining to the four types of interest groups that have been selected as case studies, that is, social partners as well as interest groups, will be dealt with in the next chapter. The inquiry will be marshalled within the parameters of the

original conceptual framework, particularly by investigating the intermediate variables of the original set of hypotheses against the primary findings. As a result, one can then put to test the feasibility of the null hypothesis, signifying no indication of Europeanisation, or the alternative one, signifying that European influence has been registered either through the rational choice or the sociological model of the institutionalist theory.

Chapter 8

Hypothesis Testing

Chapter 8
Hypothesis testing

You cannot open a window and expect the wind not to blow through.[116]

Joe Friggieri
Maltese philosopher, poet and playwright
(b.1946)

8.1   Revisiting the original hypotheses

This part discusses the major findings of the study as it brings together all the results that emerged from both quantitative and qualitative data streams that were presented in the previous two chapters. In particular, the analysis of findings is specifically marshalled to test the three original hypotheses presented in the introduction. The viability of the null hypothesis stating that:

> *due to the inelasticity of domestic polity and politics, EU membership has made no significant change to the character of interest groups' participation in the politics of Malta and/or Ireland*

depends on whether the resulting change is indeed statistically significant or not. In this case the result is to be determined by the Z-score model of hypothesis testing. If the null hypothesis is rejected, meaning that Europeanisation has indeed been statistically significant, then the two alternative hypotheses have to be put to test. Qualitative evidence is eventually brought in to decode whether Europeanisation has been caused by enablers of rational choice institutionalism (RCI):

> *through the emergence of new opportunities and constraints, EU membership has made a significant change to the character of interest groups' participation in the politics of Malta and/or Ireland*

or whether it is a case which is better portrayed by sociological institutionalism (SI):

> *through the provision of socialisation and collective learning processes, EU membership has made a significant change to the character of interest groups' participation in the politics of Malta and/or Ireland.*

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[116] *Patron*, 2013 (ed. 2) p.3.

Answers have to be provided for both categories of interest groups, that is, social partners and SHEGs in each of the two selected member states. Consequently, it may result that none of the hypotheses can be discarded completely because different segments of interest groups in any member state may subscribe to differing degrees and natures of Europeanisation.

8.2   Overview of the hypothesis testing process

At this introductory stage it is important to establish a clear blueprint of how the process of hypotheses testing is to unfold. As shown in Figure 8.1, the entire model is divided into two major parts. On the one hand, part A is crucial to determine the extent of Europeanisation, that is whether it has been statistically significant or not. Part B, on the other hand, is indispensable to decode the true nature of Europeanisation, in other words to decipher whether rational or sociological triggers are predominantly at play to initiate and maintain change at the domestic level.

The scope of part A is to test the first hypothesis, in other words to confirm or reject the null hypothesis which sustains that there is no significant relationship between EU membership and changes in the character of domestic interest groups. An affirmative answer can best be provided by a deductive approach that quantifies the extent of EU impact and, consequently demonstrates whether the resulting changes have been statistically significant or not. This is done, firstly, by bringing back in the results obtained in the questionnaires in order to establish the dimensional and global ratios between the number of scores that are greater than 50% and those that are less than 50% and, secondly, by computing the Z-scores to determine whether proportions differ significantly. The null hypothesis is accepted if the ensuing proportions do not differ significantly and this occurs when the estimated Z-score lies within the threshold of ± 1.96. An opposite result, in other words, where proportions differ significantly and go beyond the ± 1.96 limit, the null hypothesis is rejected. A more detailed explanation about this first part of the hypotheses testing model is provided immediately after this section.

Figure 8.1: Hypotheses Testing Model

Part A: Measuring extent of Europeanisation

Null Hypothesis
No significant Europeanisation of interest groups due to embedded structures, norms & constraints

To determine the extent of EU impact, i.e. whether impact has been statistically significant or not

Part A of Hypothesis Testing:
using quantitative analysis to determine extent of Europeanisation

Changes in internal structures

Increased domestic responsivenes

Greater European involvement

Attitudinal transformation

Summarise questionnaires' results, thus computing the ratios of non-significant scores to significant ones

Compute **Z-score** to test null hypothesis, i.e. to verify whether Europeanisation has been statistically significant or otherwise

Besides the overall statistical result, Z-scores are also computed for each dimension of domestic change: **internal structures**, **domestic responsiveness**, **European involvement** & **norm transformation**

If overall Z-score lies **within** ± 1.96 limit

Z-score threshold ± 1.96

If overall Z-score lies **beyond** ± 1.96 limit

Null hypothesis confirmed

Null hypothesis rejected

Part B: Decoding nature of Europeanisation

RCI Hypothesis
Significant Europeanisation of interest groups through new opportunties and constraints

In cases where the Null hypothesis is confirmed, the test to determine the nature of Europeanisation is still applied.

SI Hypothesis
Significant Europeanisation of interest groups through socialisation & collective learning

To decode the nature of EU impact: i.e. whether impact has been driven by rational or sociological triggers

Part B of Hypothesis Testing:
using qualitative analysis to decipher nature of Europeanisation

Testing RCI explanation

Testing SI explanation

Thematic Mapping Charts to define logic of change

Intermediate variables

Low number of veto points
Supporting formal institutions

Norm entrepreneurs
Cooperative informal institutions

supportive

resulting evidence

unfavourable

supportive

resulting evidence

unfavourable

RCI hypothesis appropriate

RCI hypothesis not appropriate

SI hypothesis appropriate

SI hypothesis not appropriate

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By the end of part A, the statistical extent of Europeanisation has been determined, hence confirming or eliminating the first hypothesis for each of the two cohorts of interest groups in both Malta and Ireland. The next step is to verify the two remaining hypotheses that both relate to the differing enablers of Europeanisation. Within a political environment characterised by institutions, one predicts that rational choice is the true driver for changes within and among domestic interest groups, while the other surmises that domestic transformations are the result of a set of sociologically-related factors. To this effect, part B is characterised by a qualitative model of analysis which puts each of these two hypotheses to test. Findings revealed in the previous two chapters, particularly those which are directly or indirectly related to the intermediate variables of the conceptual framework explained in the introduction, are once again brought up and interpreted in terms of their potential to instigate or resist changes as a consequence of EU membership. Resulting conclusions are mapped out in a series of thematic maps specifically designed to define the predominant logic of change in accordance with the most applauded hypothesis. This process of decoding the nature of Europeanisation is also applied to those cases where the null hypothesis is confirmed. In other words even when the extent of Europeanisation is statistically marginal, its nature is still explored using the same approach. More information about Part B of the hypotheses testing mechanism is provided in the second part of this chapter.

Immediately afterwards, the analysis moves on to explore if there is a relationship between the results of part A and those of part B of the hypothesis testing exercise, in other words, if there is an association between the magnitude of change and its true nature. In the end, the focus of the discussion is then directed towards answering the only remaining crucial question that has been flagged out in the introduction. This concerns the dilemma whether Europeanisation is the real source of domestic change or whether there are other prompters like globalisation and/or homegrown initiatives that are significant contributors of change within polities. The answer rests on a set of qualitative experiences that are derived directly from research participants.

8.3   Determining the extent of Europeanisation

Determining the extensiveness of EU influence on domestic interest groups is indeed the first conclusion that needs to be worked out. The computation of this pivotal finding

will either confirm or discredit the null hypothesis. The methodology adopted in this study leads to the quantification of European influence and thus, statistical models are to be introduced so as to determine whether the extent of Europeanisation has infact been statistically significant or not. The step-by-step process kicks in by compiling a rundown of all the results that have been derived from the questionnaires administered in Malta and Ireland. Once the proportions between minority and majority scores are presented, the application of the Z-score technique determines whether the difference between proportions has been statistically significant or not. Hence the null hypothesis will be tried and tested.

8.3.1 Questionnaires results: the ground rules

As already stated, part A of the hypothesis testing process starts by mapping out the quantitative findings of the questionnaires. Every questionnaire statement referring to a specific aspect related to Europeanisation is brought into two tabulations, each pertaining to the two cohorts of organised groups under study, where the reactions of research subjects are shown either as *exceeding the 50%* threshold or *not exceeding the 50%*. If we take Table 8.1 as an example, then with 68.4% of Maltese social partners answering in the affirmative, the result yields a majority score because it goes beyond the 50% threshold. The Irish case is a minority score because only 38.2% of social partners participate in central coordination bodies.

Table 8.1: Example of crosstab result

Participation in any coordination entities that bring together governmental and non-governmental bodies		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	26	13	39
	Percentage	68.4%	38.2%	54.2%
No	Count	12	21	33
	Percentage	31.6%	61.8%	45.8%
Total	Count	38	34	72
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Furthermore, in cases involving a four-point likert scale, a majority score signifies that the participants' reaction to a specific aspect has exceeded the mid-point position or median, that is, 2.5. If this is not surpassed, then the result is deemed to be a minority score. Table 8.2 presents us with a typical example. Since the mean for Maltese trade

unions and employers' associations is 2.76, thus surpassing the mid-point position, it is considered as *exceeding the 50%* threshold. Contrastingly the Irish result, at a mean value of 2.00, does *not exceed 50%* because it does not go beyond the median at a value of 2.5.

Table 8.2: Example of likert scale tab result

Trade Unions and Employers' Associations	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U test	p value
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Malta	2.76	0.971	2.44	3.08	397.500	0.003
Ireland	2.00	1.073	1.63	2.37		

When conducting the 'Difference between Proportions test' it is customary to assume, when specifying the null hypothesis, that there is no difference between the two population proportions ($p_1 - p_2 = 0$). Since in this thesis the two population proportions sum up to 1 ($p_1 + p_2 = 1$), then the null hypothesis formally specifies that $p_1 = p_2 = 0.5$. Although there are other forms of null hypotheses, the one described here is by far the most commonly used in statistics. In fact, most of the statistical packages and online software that conduct this test assume that the two population proportions are equal (*see* http://www.socscistatistics.com/tests/ztest/).

8.3.1.1 Elimination of borderline results

The simple concepts explained in this section constitute the ground rules for the compilation of the summaries of the questionnaires' results. However there is still one rule that needs a special mention as it concerns the elimination of certain results. This involves borderline cases, in other words where there has been an exact 50/50 percentage divide in crosstabs or 2.5/2.5 ratio split in likert scales. For the purposes of this exercise, such results have been eliminated from the calculation and thus, the aspects in question are not marked under any column in the summary of results. Consequently, score boxes are only labelled as 'borderline results'.[117]

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[117] In the questionnaire results summary concerning social partners, there are two borderline cases. One of them occurs under the Maltese section, corresponding to statement 23, and the other one occurs in statement 38 under the Irish section. In the questionnaire results summary pertaining to SHEGs, there is one case of a borderline score. This occurs under the Irish section and corresponds to statement 18.

8.3.2   Questionnaire results summary: social partners

Having explained the ground rules of how to interpret the results of the questionnaire, it is now appropriate to introduce the first of the two summary tables, that is, the one encapsulating the questionnaire scores of trade unions and employers' associations in Malta and Ireland (Table 8.3). The ratios between the two types of scores, that is between those exceeding 50% and the rest that do not exceed such limit, become evident not only at the end of the table (called the *global score ratio*) but are also expressed at each dimensional level.

After a brief exposition of the ensuing ratios, the second results summary is rolled-out in Table 8.5, this time incorporating the results of SHEGs' questionnaire in both states as well.

Table 8.3 gives a clear indication that at the time when this research exercise was conducted, social partners in both Malta and Ireland were indeed undergoing through a transformation phase because almost all of the resulting ratios favour the category of scores that exceed the 50% threshold. In fact, the global score ratio of minority scores to majority ones is 15:28 in Malta and 19:24 in Ireland. However a complete analysis of the elasticity of social partners with respect to European opportunities and values does not only take into consideration the overall picture but seeks to examine score ratios at of each of the four selected dimensions that match Van Schendelen's anatomical metaphor of interest groups (Van Schendelen 2005). To this effect, Table 8.4 presents a summary of results compiled in the previous table with the intention of rendering the comparative process among the four dimensions more straightforward.

Table 8.3: Questionnaire results summary – social partners

		Malta		Ireland	
		Scores *not* exceeding 50%	Scores exceeding 50%	Scores *not* exceeding 50%	Scores exceeding 50%
1	European dimension incorporated in the vision/mission statement of organisations		●		●
2	Intention to include a European dimension in the vision/mission statement if this is not already the case	●		●	
3	Inclusion of responsibility of EU affairs in the organisations' committees		●		●
4	Participation in training programmes to acquire skills in EU affairs	●		●	
5	Points of contact already established in Brussels		●		●
6	Intention to establish points of contact in Brussels if this is not already the case	●		●	
7	Attempts to access EU funds		●	●	
8	Success achieved in obtaining EU funds		●		●
9	Intention to try again to access EU funds if unsuccessful in the past		●	●	
10	Participation in EU related activities both domestically and abroad		●		●
11	Rate of participation in EU related activities has stabilised or is experiencing further increases in the past 8 years		●		●
12	The European dimension has been integrated within the events organised by domestic organisations		●		●
RATIO: INTERNAL STRUCTURES		**3**	**9**	**5**	**7**
13	Participation in domestic fora that discuss EU legislation		●		●
14	Participation in any coordination entities that bring together governmental and non-governmental entities on EU affairs		●	●	
15	Intention to start forming part of a coordinating entity if this is not already the case	●		●	
16	Teaming up with other domestic organisations to solidify voice		●		●
17	Involvement in private-public partnerships	●		●	
18	The EU enhanced the role of individual organisations in the process of domestic policy-making	●		●	
19	The EU has been instrumental in accentuating the culture of civil dialogue in domestic affairs		●		●
20	The EU induces domestic organisations to act more cohesively at the national level		●	●	
21	The EU exerts pressure on national government to seek more participation from domestic organisations in policy-making		●	●	
RATIO: DOMESTIC RESPONSIVENESS		**3**	**6**	**6**	**3**

		Malta		Ireland	
		Scores *not* exceeding 50%	Scores exceeding 50%	Scores *not* exceeding 50%	Scores exceeding 50%
22	Participation in any of the EC's working groups	❶		❶	
23	Submission of feedback concerning draft legislation issued by the European Commission	borderline result			❶
24	Engagement in consultation processes led by the EESC	❶		❶	
25	Affiliation to any European Federation		❶		❶
26	Intention of affiliation to any European federation if this is not already the case		❶	❶	
27	Members of domestic organisations holding executive responsibilities within European federations	❶		❶	
28	Engagement in lobbying with any institution of the EU	❶			❶
29	Identification of European partner organisations to cooperate over joint projects	❶			❶
30	Intention to work with other European partner organisations if this is not already the case		❶	❶	
31	Engagement with other European partners through members' exchanges	❶			❶
32	Engagement with European partners through online activity	❶			❶
RATIO: EUROPEAN INVOLVEMENT		**7**	**3**	**5**	**6**
33	EU membership affects the mind-set of organisations' members		❶		❶
34	The organisations' character has been influenced by norms and practices of European federations		❶	❶	
35	There have been changes within organisations that are attributed to new ideas brought about by European partners	❶			❶
36	Organisations are encouraged by the pattern of EU governance to change their tactics and strategy in domestic negotiations		❶	❶	
37	EU funds as change stimulus		❶	❶	
38	Consensus value as change stimulus		❶	borderline result	
39	Socialisation as change stimulus		❶		❶
40	Positive attitude as change stimulus	❶			❶
41	Training as change stimulus		❶		❶
42	National culture promotes the acquisition of new norms and values from a wider European experience		❶		❶
43	Participation in exercises involving sharing of best practices		❶		❶
44	Benchmarking exercises have transformation effects on the norms that shape the culture of organisations		❶		❶
RATIO: ATTITUDINAL TRANSFORMATION		**2**	**10**	**3**	**8**
GLOBAL SCORE RATIO		**15**	**28**	**19**	**24**

Change is evident in the great majority of aspects as Table 8.4 reveals, yet there are still specific pockets where the extent of change is still not evident. In the case of Maltese trade unions and employers' associations, this is most noticeable in the dimension of *European involvement* where the ratio of minority scores to majority ones is 7:3. Feedback by research subjects suggests that the slow pace of Maltese engagement with the European actors is a consequence of coercive constraints due to smallness and islandness, namely inadequate funding, lack of human resources and a self-centred psyche. However there are indications that such impediments will become less important in the future and, hence, more change is envisaged in this regard. In fact in the remaining dimensions, that is, *internal structures*, *domestic responsiveness* and *attitudinal transformation*, the ratios of the number of scores not exceeding 50% to the ones exceeding the threshold are 3:9, 3:6 and 2:10 respectively, implying that the fabric of domestic actors is becoming more receptive to changes emanating from the EU.

Table 8.4: Ratios at dimension levels – social partners

	Malta		Ireland	
	Scores *not* exceeding 50%	Scores exceeding 50%	Scores *not* exceeding 50%	Scores exceeding 50%
Internal structures	3	9	5	7
Domestic responsiveness	3	6	6	3
European involvement	7	3	5	6
Attitudinal transformation	2	10	3	8
Global Score Ratio	**15**	**28**	**19**	**24**

In the case of Ireland, trade unions and employers' associations registered a greater number of majority scores than minority ones in three dimensions, as well as in the overall result. Actually, the ratios of the number of scores not exceeding 50% to the ones that go beyond the threshold are 5:7 in *internal structures*, 5:6 in *European involvement* and 3:8 in *attitudinal transformation.* This positive trend is reversed in connection to *domestic responsiveness* where the ratio of minority to majority scores is 6:3. On a closer look at the ratios, one can conclude that the difference between Irish scores is not as wide as that revealed in the Maltese case, suggesting a more balanced score difference for trade unions and employers' representatives in Ireland. Such a discrepancy in the proportions obtained in the two member states will definitely have a direct repercussion in the final stage of the hypothesis testing process.

8.3.3 Questionnaire results summary: SHEGs

As hinted earlier, Table 8.5 shows a summary of questionnaire results relating to SHEGs in Malta and Ireland. Once again the ratios between the number of scores not exceeding 50% and those that exceed the threshold are highlighted not only on an overall basis but also across each of the four dimensions.

Like social partners, SHEGs in Malta and Ireland are also undergoing a transformation process because of Europeanisation as indicated by the global score ratios in Table 8.5. In fact the global ratio of minority scores to majority ones is 20:24 in Malta and 20:23 in Ireland. However, if one compares and contrasts the overall ratios obtained by SHEGS with the ones registered by social partners in Table 8.3, it can be concluded that in the case of SHEGs, ratios are much closer to each other in both member states, signifying that the extent of Europeanisation seems to be lower than the degree of change experienced by trade unions and employers' representativeness.

Having commented on overall comparisons, it is now appropriate to bring in the four dimensions across which Europeanisation is being calculated. Table 8.6 shows the resulting ratios between the two types of scores for each dimension, thus allowing for a more detailed classification among SHEGs.

Table 8.5: Questionnaire results summary – SHEGs

		Malta		Ireland	
		Scores *not* exceeding 50%	Scores exceeding 50%	Scores *not* exceeding 50%	Scores exceeding 50%
1	European dimension incorporated in the vision/mission statement of organisations		●	●	
2	Intention to include a European dimension in the vision/mission statement if this is not already the case	●		●	
3	Inclusion of responsibility of EU affairs in the organisations' committees		●	●	
4	Participation in training programmes to acquire skills in EU affairs	●		●	
5	Points of contact already established in Brussels		●		●
6	Intention to establish points of contact in Brussels if this is not already the case	●		●	
7	Attempts to access EU funds		●		●
8	Success achieved in obtaining EU funds		●		●
9	Intention to try again to access EU funds if unsuccessful in the past		●		●
10	Participation in EU related activities both domestically and abroad		●		●
11	Rate of participation in EU related activities has stabilised or is experiencing further increases over the past 8 years		●		●
12	The European dimension has been integrated within the events organised by domestic organisations		●		●
RATIO: INTERNAL STRUCTURES		**3**	**9**	**5**	**7**
13	Participation in domestic fora that discuss EU legislation	●			●
14	Participation in any coordination entities that bring together governmental and non-governmental entities on EU affairs	●		●	
15	Intention to start forming part of a coordinating entity if this is not already the case	●		●	
16	Teaming up with other domestic organisations to solidify voice	●			●
17	Involvement in private-public partnerships	●		●	
18	The EU enhanced the role of individual organisations in the process of domestic policy-making	●		borderline result	
19	The EU has been instrumental in accentuating the culture of civil dialogue in domestic affairs		●		●
20	The EU induces domestic organisations to act more cohesively at the national level		●	●	
21	The EU exerts pressure on national government to seek more participation from domestic organisations in policy-making		●	●	
RATIO: DOMESTIC RESPONSIVENESS		**6**	**3**	**5**	**3**

		Malta		Ireland	
		Scores *not* exceeding 50%	Scores exceeding 50%	Scores *not* exceeding 50%	Scores exceeding 50%
22	Participation in any of the EC's working groups	❶		❶	
23	Submission of feedback concerning draft legislation issued by the EC	❶		❶	
24	Engagement in consultation processes led by the EESC	❶		❶	
25	Affiliation to any European Federation	❶		❶	
26	Intention of affiliation to any European federation if this is not already the case		❶	❶	
27	Members of domestic organisations holding executive responsibilities within European federations	❶		❶	
28	Engagement in lobbying with any institution of the EU	❶		❶	
29	Identification of European partner organisations to cooperate over joint projects	❶			❶
30	Intention to work with European partner organisations if this is not already the case		❶		❶
31	Engagement with other European partners through members' exchanges	❶		❶	
32	Engagement with European partners through online activity		❶		❶
RATIO: EUROPEAN INVOLVEMENT		**8**	**3**	**8**	**3**
33	EU membership affects the mind-set of organisations' members		❶		❶
34	The organisations' character has been influenced by norms and practices of European federations	❶		❶	
35	There have been changes within organisations that are attributed to new ideas brought about by European partners	❶			❶
36	Organisations are encouraged by the pattern of EU governance to change their tactics and strategy in domestic negotiations		❶	❶	
37	EU funds as change stimulus		❶		❶
38	Consensus value as change stimulus		❶		❶
39	Socialisation as change stimulus		❶		❶
40	Positive attitude as change stimulus	❶			❶
41	Training as change stimulus		❶		❶
42	National culture promotes the acquisition of new norms and values from a wider European experience		❶		❶
43	Participation in exercises involving sharing of best practices		❶		❶
44	Benchmarking exercises have transformation effects on the norms that shape organisational culture		❶		❶
RATIO: ATTITUDINAL TRANSFORMATION		**3**	**9**	**2**	**10**
	GLOBAL SCORE RATIO	**20**	**24**	**20**	**23**

Table 8.6: Ratios at dimension levels – SHEGs

	Malta		Ireland	
	Scores not exceeding 50%	Scores exceeding 50%	Scores *not* exceeding 50%	Scores exceeding 50%
Internal structures	3	9	5	7
Domestic responsiveness	6	3	5	3
European involvement	8	3	8	3
Attitudinal transformation	3	9	2	10
Global Score Ratio	**20**	**24**	**20**	**23**

Ratios across dimensions show differing trends within and across the two member states. The case of Malta is to be treated first, followed by the Irish one. In relation to *domestic responsiveness* and *European involvement*, Maltese SHEGs exhibit a negative trend where the ratios of the number of scores not exceeding 50% to the ones that go beyond the threshold are 6:3 and 8:3, respectively. Meanwhile, in the remaining dimensions, the trend is reversed. The ratio of minority scores to majority ones is 3:9 both in *internal structures* and *attitudinal transformation*. Once again coercive constraints and embedded inward-looking structures are the major sources of inertia that hinder organised groups' ability to diversify their methods of interest representation and grasp European opportunities and routes of influence. However this inertia might start to lose ground in the future because the attitudes and mindset within the changing structures of interest groups are being reengineered to absorb European values.

Change is also manifested among Irish SHEGs. In two out of four dimensions, namely *internal structures* and *attitudinal transformation*, the ratios of minority scores to majority ones are 5:7 and 2:10 respectively. In terms of *domestic responsiveness* and *European involvement*, the ensuing ratio reveals a contrary drift (5:3 and 8:3 respectively). The reasons for the lack of Irish engagement with EU institutions and other fellow organisations from other member states are very similar to the ones brought up by their Maltese counterparts, most prominently, because of very limited resources, and for other reasons rooted in their political landscaping that has been treated extensively in chapter 3. Since the situation applies to both states, the reason might also be rooted in the lack of opportunities (or incentives) arising from the EU's structures. This last notion will be dealt in greater detail in the next chapter where asymmetries of EU power in different policy domains will share the centre stage.

The next step is to convert current ratios that have been discussed so far into outcomes of statistical significance, thus completing the testing process of the null hypotheses.

8.3.4   Statistical analysis

Having displayed the full range of ratios establishing relationships between the number of scores exceeding 50% and those that do not, the next final step is to conduct a scientific exercise of hypothesis testing to determine the statistical degree of discrepancy between minority and majority proportions in Malta and Ireland. If the discrepancy between proportions turns out to be statistically comparable or marginal, then the *null hypothesis* is confirmed, meaning that EU membership has made *no significant change* to the character of Maltese and/or Irish interest groups. If, on the other hand, the discrepancy between proportions comes out to be statistically significant, then the empirical situation can be interpreted in terms of the *alternative hypotheses*, meaning that EU membership has made *significant change* to the character of interest groups' participation in the public policy of Malta and/or Ireland.

Methodologically, the extent of Europeanisation is to be computed for each of the four dimensions across which domestic change is quantified. Hence the reader would be in a better position to measure the impact of EU membership upon each of the different, yet inter-related clusters of organised groups' composition, namely their *skeleton* (internal structures), *flesh and blood* (home and European fieldwork activity)*, and *attitude* (norms and values).

Hypothesis testing is to be carried out using the Z-score technique for each cluster of statements and for all statements combined. [118] Since we are testing whether two proportions differ significantly, the Z-score is the test to be used to confirm or reject the null hypothesis. The explanation of the statistical computations, together with relevant examples, is provided in the next two sections.

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[118] For a complete mathematical explanation and citings of examples, access
http://stattrek.com/sampling/difference-in-proportion.aspx

8.3.4.1 Computation of Z-score

Suppose that Maltese trade unions and employers' associations were assessed on n_1 aspects of scores exceeding 50% and n_2 aspects of scores not exceeding 50%. Let X_1 be the number of aspects in which Maltese social partners exhibited a score exceeding 50% and let X_2 be the number of aspects in which they scored less than the selected threshold. The sample proportions $\bar{p}_1$ and $\bar{p}_2$ are:

$$\bar{p}_1 = X_1 \big/ n_1 \quad \text{and} \quad \bar{p}_2 = X_2 \big/ n_2$$

The central limit theorem states that the random variable z (Z-score) has an approximate standard Normal distribution where:

$$z = \frac{(\bar{p}_1 - \bar{p}_2) - (p_1 - p_2)}{\sqrt{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p})\left(\dfrac{1}{n_1} + \dfrac{1}{n_2}\right)}}$$

$$\text{and } \hat{p} = \frac{X_1 + X_2}{n_1 + n_2}$$

If we assume that trade unions and employers' associations in Malta can be assessed on a very larger number of aspects, then the actual proportions (p_1 and p_2) of aspects in which they score more or less than the 50% threshold are unknown. In order to test whether the actual proportion p_1 (actual proportion of aspects in which Maltese actors scored more than 50%) differs significantly from the actual proportion p_2 (actual proportion of aspects in which Maltese actors scored less than 50%), we specify the following hypotheses:

$H_0 : p_1 - p_2 = 0$
$H_1 : p_1 - p_2 \neq 0$

$$z = \frac{(\bar{p}_1 - \bar{p}_2)}{\sqrt{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p})\left(\dfrac{1}{n_1} + \dfrac{1}{n_2}\right)}}$$

If we test for H_0, the variable z becomes $\qquad\qquad$ since $p_1 - p_2 = 0$.

Figure 8.2: Normal distribution
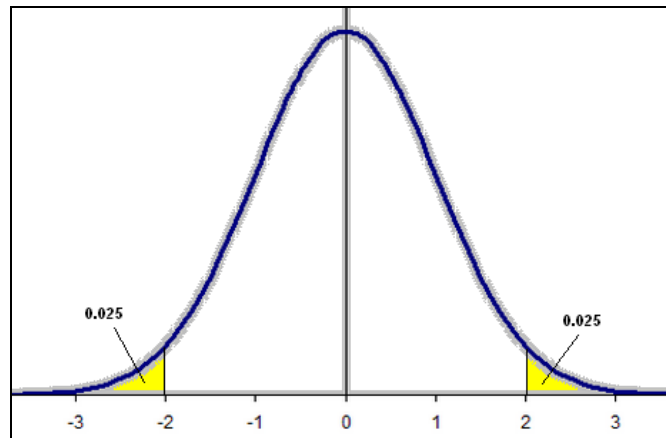
The shaded area in figure 8.2 under the standard Normal curve beyond ± 1.96 is 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis (actual proportions do not differ significantly) is accepted if the estimated value of z lies between ± 1.96. On the other hand, the alternative hypothesis (proportions differ significantly) is accepted if the estimated value of z lies beyond ± 1.96.

8.3.4.2   Example of a statistical computation

In 28 out of a total of 43 aspects social partners in Malta displayed a score greater than 50%, whereas in 15 out of a total of 43 aspects they score less than 50%. For Maltese social partners, the sample proportion of aspects in which a score beyond 50% was exhibited is 65.11% and the sample proportion of aspects in which a score less than the threshold was exhibited is 34.89%.

So $n_1 = 43$, $X_1 = 28$, $n_2 = 43$ and $X_2 = 15$

$$\bar{p}_1 = X_1 \Big/ n_1 = \frac{28}{43} = 0.6511 \text{ and } \bar{p}_2 = X_2 \Big/ n_2 = \frac{15}{43} = 0.3489$$

$$\hat{p} = \frac{X_1 + X_2}{n_1 + n_2} = \frac{28 + 15}{43 + 43} = 0.5$$

$$\text{Standard error} = \sqrt{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p})\left(\frac{1}{n_1}+\frac{1}{n_2}\right)} = \sqrt{(0.5)(0.5)\left(\frac{1}{43}+\frac{1}{43}\right)} = 0.1078$$

$$z = \frac{(\bar{P}_1 - \bar{P}_2)}{\sqrt{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p})\left(\frac{1}{n_1}+\frac{1}{n_2}\right)}} = \frac{0.6511 - 0.3489}{0.1078} = 2.8033$$

Since $z = 2.8033$ exceeds 1.96 we accept the alternative hypothesis indicating that the proportion of aspects in which Maltese trade unions and employers' representatives generated a score greater than the threshold (65.11%) is significantly larger than the proportion of aspects in which they generated a score less than 50% (34.89%).

8.3.4.3   Testing the null hypotheses

The next set of five sub-sections show the Z-scores for social partners and SHEGs in Malta and Ireland in order to identify the level of significance of discrepancies between minority and majority proportions. Based on the computation shown in the example above, the outcomes will lead to the confirmation or rejection of the null hypothesis. Maltese trade unions and employers' associations are to be tackled first, followed by their Irish counterparts. Subsequently the hypothesis test will be applied to SHEGs, first in Malta and then in Ireland.

8.3.4.4   Null hypothesis rejected for Maltese social partners

This first case was originally worked out in the example above but this time is being reworked to show the statistical outcomes at dimension levels as well. The overall outcome in Table 8.7 presents scientific evidence that Maltese trade unions and employers' associations have experienced a significant degree of Europeanisation. The outcomes in two dimensions, namely *internal structures* (z = 2.4497) and *attitudinal transformation* (z = 3.2660) are statistically significant. Maltese social partners are indeed undergoing a strong transformation phase wherein their corporate set-up (*skeleton*) and their culture and identity (*attitude*) are being reshaped due to EU membership. The other two dimensions produce a non-significant outcome, where the Z-score of *domestic responsiveness* is 1.4145 and that of *European involvement* is

1.7889. These latter results imply a minor European influence on the domestic and supranational interactivity (*flesh and blood*) performed by social partners in Malta. Nonetheless, these marginal results are outmatched by the significant outcomes derived from the rest of the dimensions, thus confirming that the overall impact of change due to European triggers on trade unions and employers' associations in Malta has been significant in the 8 years period between 2004 and 2011 (z = 2.8052). This result leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Table 8.7: Z-scores of Maltese social partners

Dimension	Proportion of scores more than 50%	Proportion of scores less than 50%	Average of the two proportions	Standard Error	Z-score	Outcome
Internal Structure	0.75	0.25	0.5	0.2041	2.4497	Significant
Domestic Responsiveness	0.6667	0.3333	0.5	0.2357	1.4145	Marginal
European Involvement	0.3	0.7	0.5	0.2236	-1.7889	Marginal
Attitudinal Transformation	0.8333	0.1667	0.5	0.2041	3.2660	Significant
Overall outcome	**0.6512**	**0.3488**	**0.5**	**0.1078**	**2.8052**	**Significant**

8.3.4.5   Null hypothesis confirmed for Irish social partners

The Irish case involving social partners provides a different overall outcome as exhibited in Table 8.8. Since the overall Z-score does not go beyond the limit of ± 1.96, we accept the null hypothesis which confirms that the EU membership has made no significant change to the character of trade unions and employers' associations in Irish politics. This trend is reflected across three dimensions, namely *internal structure* (z = 0.8163), *domestic responsiveness* (z = 1.4141) and *European involvement* (z = -0.4264). The only significant outcome is in terms of *attitudinal transformation* where z = 2.1318 but its impact is overshadowed by the previous three outcomes. Consequently, since the overall Z-value of 1.078 does not exceed the threshold, we accept the null hypothesis indicating that the number of proportions of aspects in which the representatives of Irish social partners exhibited a majority score (55.81%) is *not* significantly larger than the proportion of aspects in which they exhibited a minority score (44.19%).

Table 8.8: Z-scores of Irish social partners

Dimension	Proportion of scores more than 50%	Proportion of scores less than 50%	Average of the two proportions	Standard Error	Z-score	Outcome
Internal Structure	0.5833	0.4167	0.5	0.2041	0.8163	Marginal
Domestic Responsiveness	0.33333	0.6666	0.5	0.2357	1.4145	Marginal
European Involvement	0.4545	0.5454	0.5	0.2132	-0.4264	Marginal
Attitudinal Transformation	0.7272	0.2727	0.5	0.2132	2.1318	Significant
Overall Outcome	**0.5581**	**0.4419**	**0.5**	**0.1078**	**1.0779**	**Marginal**

8.3.4.6   Null hypothesis confirmed for Maltese SHEGs

So far hypothesis testing has been carried out with respect to social partners. The next round of computations revolves around SHEGs in Malta and Ireland. Table 8.9 represents the scenario of Maltese SHEGs. Since the overall Z-score of 0.8536 lies between the ±1.96 limit, we can once again confirm the sustainability of the null hypothesis. The overall outcome indicates that the proportion of aspects in which Maltese SHEGs representatives registered a score greater than 50% (54.55%) is *not* significantly larger than the proportion of aspects in which they obtained a score less than 50% (45.45%). This does not mean there is no substantial EU impact on any of the dimensions forming the character of SHEGs in Malta. In fact, two dimensions registered a significant outcome, namely *internal structures* and *attitudinal transformation* that both displayed a Z-value of 2.4498. This means that Europeanisation has been significant in terms of changes experienced within their organisational set-ups embracing committee formations, training, funding and disposition to participate in EU related activities, as well as the acquisition of new norms and values from a wider European experience. But this significant impact is completely reversed in the remaining dimensions, in particular direct *European involvement* where the outcome is highly marginal (z = -2.1318) meaning that the proportion of aspects in which Maltese groups displayed a minority score (72.73%) is significantly larger than the proportion of aspects where they registered a majority score (27.27%). In addition, the dimension of *domestic responsiveness* generated a non-

significant result (z = 1.4145). The overall outcome, therefore, leads to the confirmation of the null hypothesis.

Table 8.9: Z-scores of Maltese SHEGs

Dimension	Proportion of scores more than 50%	Proportion of scores less than 50%	Average of the two proportions	Standard Error	Z-score	Outcome
Internal Structure	0.75	0.25	0.5	0.2041	2.4498	Significant
Domestic Responsiveness	0.3333	0.6667	0.5	0.2357	-1.4145	Marginal
European Involvement	0.2727	0.7273	0.5	0.2132	-2.1318	Highly marginal
Attitudinal Transformation	0.75	0.25	0.5	0.2041	2.4498	Significant
Overall Outcome	**0.5455**	**0.4545**	**0.5**	**0.1066**	**0.8536**	**Marginal**

8.3.4.7   Null hypothesis confirmed for Irish SHEGs

The null hypothesis is reaffirmed in the case of Irish SHEGs as indicated by the overall Z-score (0.6473) in Table 8.10 which lies within ±1.96 limit. This means that the proportion of aspects in which Irish interest groups generated a score greater than 50% (53.49%) is not statistically larger than the proportion of aspects in which Irish actors generated a score less than 50% (46.51%). When analysing this case from a dimensional perspective, a number of interesting outcomes emerges. In contrast to the overall result, *attitudinal transformation* stands out very prominently since it is the only dimension in this case that defies the null hypothesis with a Z-value of 3.2665. However this trend is completely reversed by the rest of the dimensions, particularly *internal structure* (z = 0.8163) and *domestic involvement* (z = -1.0) that both testify for an insignificant evidence of EU impact. Furthermore, in the case of direct *European involvement*, the outcome is highly marginal (z = -2.1318) meaning that the proportion of aspects in which Irish groups registered a minority score (72.73%) is significantly larger than the proportion of aspects where they registered a majority score (27.27%). Considering all evidence, the null hypothesis is confirmed, implying that EU membership has made no significant contribution to the overall character of Irish interest groups.

Table 8.10: Z-score of Irish SHEGs

Dimension	Proportion of scores more than 50%	Proportion of scores less than 50%	Average of the two proportions	Standard Error	Z-score	Outcome
Internal Structure	0.5833	0.4167	0.5	0.2041	0.8163	Marginal
Domestic Responsiveness	0.375	0.625	0.5	0.25	-1.0	Marginal
European Involvement	0.2727	0.7272	0.5	0.2132	-2.1318	Highly marginal
Attitudinal Transformation	0.8333	0.1667	0.5	0.2041	3.2665	Significant
Overall Outcome	**0.5349**	**0.4651**	**0.5**	**0.1078**	**0.6473**	**Marginal**

8.3.5 Concluding the verification process of the null hypothesis

We have reached the end of the verification process of the null hypothesis. Table 8.11 displays the complete scenario derived from such an extensive deductive analysis. The only instance where the null hypothesis has been rejected is in the case of Maltese trade unions and employers' associations, indicating that the alternative hypothesis built on the premise that the extent of Europeanisation is statistically significant has been confirmed. To this effect, EU membership did have a significant impact on the internal structure and attitudinal transformation of Maltese social partners, but failed to change significantly their 'laid-back' approach in terms of home fieldwork and direct engagement with European institutions.

In the remaining three instances, the null hypothesis has been confirmed with respect to Irish trade unions and employers, together with Maltese and Irish SHEGs. In these cases, the results verify that EU membership has made no significant change to the overall character of the organised groups involved, in other words the extent of Europeanisation has not been statistically significant. Despite this assertion, there are certain specific dimensions within such organisations which have been significantly impacted by stimuli sprouting from the EU and the rest of its member states. For example in the case of Maltese SHEGs, organisational structure and culture challenge the overall result as it is statistically proven that they have been significantly changed because of EU influence.

Likewise, attitudinal transformation is the only dimension within Irish social partners and SHEGs that is experiencing a significant degree of Europeanisation.

Table 8.11: Confirmation or rejection of null hypotheses

Cohort of interest groups	Member State	Overall statistical difference between proportions	Null hypothesis	Specific dimensions of interest groups that are significantly impacted by Europeanisation
Trade unions and employers' associations	Malta	Significant	**Rejected**	*Internal structures* and *attitudinal transformation*
Trade unions and employers' associations	Ireland	Marginal	**Confirmed**	*Attitudinal transformation*
Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups	Malta	Marginal	**Confirmed**	*Internal structures and attitudinal transformation*
Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups	Ireland	Marginal	**Confirmed**	*Attitudinal transformation*

In conclusion, the results in Table 8.11 show that although the null hypothesis dominates in three out of the four cohorts of interest groups, there are elements of gradual change currents that are silently reconfiguring the anatomical chart of domestic interests groups. In Van Schendelen's terms, their *skeleton, flesh, blood*, as well a attitude are being remoulded against a political backdrop which is becoming less and less capable of delineating between domestic and European politics. Notwithstanding this way forward, the results point out that there is a major setback that is slowing down the degree of Europeanisation in all four instances: *very weak direct European involvement*. From previous tables, we know that in this specific dimension, social partners in Malta and Ireland Maltese registered insignificant Z-values, meaning that the majority of unions and employers remain disengaged with the institutional architecture of the EU. The situation is even more severe in the case of SHEGs in both member states where Z-scores produced outcomes of high marginality meaning that they are almost totally inactive vis-à-vis direct contribution (in the form of consultation and participation) and indirect access (in the form of lobbying) to the EU.

The analysis of the results concerned with the extent of Europeanisation comes to an end here. In the next section, a new analysis relating to the nature of Europeanisation opens up.

8.4   Decoding the nature of Europeanisation

So far we have established by definite quantitative evidence which cohorts of interest groups in Malta and Ireland have experienced a significant or a marginal degree of Europeanisation. However, the typology of Europeanisation is still not yet established. This information is crucial to test the other two original alternative hypotheses, the first based on RCI's and the second based on SI's explanations. The process of decoding the nature of Europeanisation will not be applied to the only instance where EU impact has been found to be significant. As explained in the Hypotheses Testing Model (Figure 8.1), even in those instances where the extent of EU impact is found to be marginal will also be put to test in order to determine whether the roots of their marginal change are diffused in RCI or SI logics. Thus, whether marginal or significant in its extent, the process of Europeanisation still needs to be decoded in terms of its typology to achieve the overall scope of this study.

The first endeavour is to establish which change triggers are at play for each cohort of interest groups in the two polities. In particular we have to decipher the cause and effect relationship between, on the one hand, Europeanisation as a result of opportunities and constraints (RCI understanding) and, on the other hand, Europeanisation as a result of socialisation and norm entrepreneurship (SI understanding).

8.4.1   Bringing in the intermediate variables

Distinguishing between the two parallel explanations of Europeanisation can only be determined by analysing the intermediate variables that act as mediating factors between the independent and dependent variables as explained in the hypotheses models in chapter 1. For ease of reference the two alternative hypotheses, together with their respective sets of variables, are reproduced in Figure 8.2. The answer is provided through a qualitative process of analysis by collating all the relevant coded findings that portray the intermediate (mediating) variables, thus assessing how different extracts combine to form an overarching theme. In this line of thought, the use of thematic maps

is crucial to sort the different codes into themes and to visualise the relationships between them (Braun and Clarke 2006).

Figure 8.3: The two alternative hypotheses
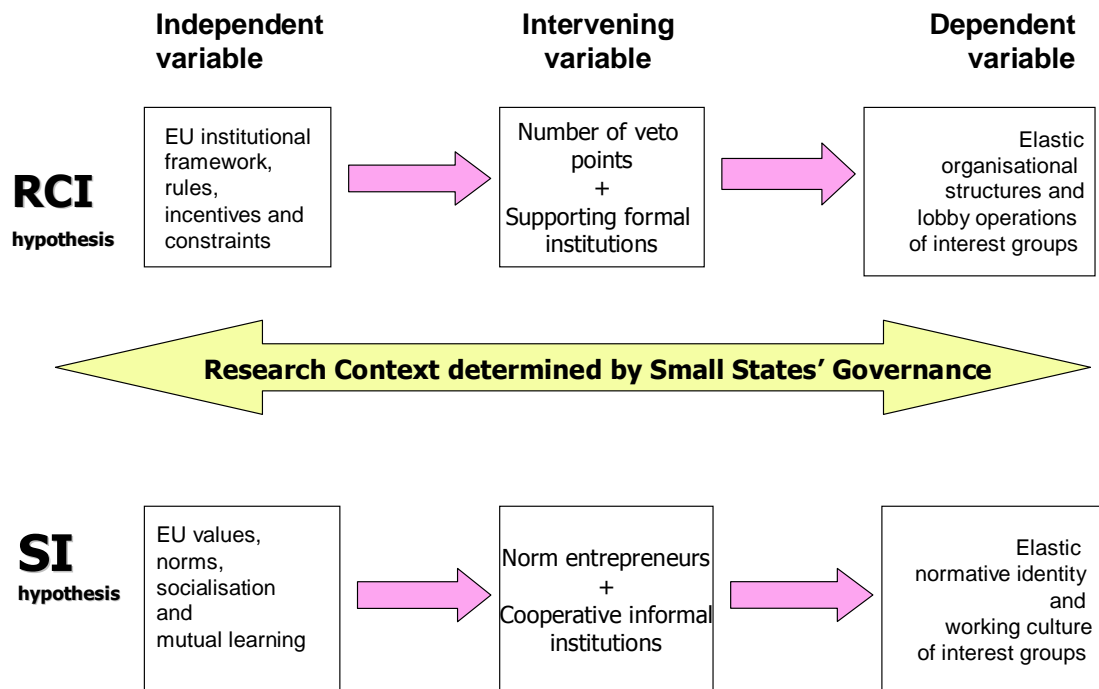
In particular, direct reference is to be made to the set of intermediate variables that characterise RCI and SI hypotheses. In the case of RCI, the process of Europeanisation is facilitated or hindered through the dynamics of veto playing and formal institutions. Veto playing refers to the number of players in the sector and looks specifically to their ability to capitalise on strategies of synergy or rivalry. Supporting formal institutions, on their part, are indeed pivotal in providing interest groups with resources and ideas that will ultimately lead to new configurations of empowerment. The intermediate variables shaping the SI hypothesis are also two, namely norm entrepreneurship and informal institutions. Whereas the first variable connotes to the existence of change agents that defy the status quo, the second one implies a political culture distinguished by informality and pragmatism. Qualitative data rolled out in the previous two chapters are now to be filtered through these four intermediate variables so as to determine which explanation of Europeanisation is best suited to decode the true typology of transformation that is happening among social partners and SHEGs in Malta and Ireland.

8.4.1.1 A sociological Europeanisation of Maltese social partners

Thematic mapping will first be applied to social partners, starting first with Maltese actors and then analysing the Irish ones. Figure 8.4 gives comprehensive evidence that Maltese trade unions and employers' associations are being Europeanised through a process predominantly understood by a logic of appropriateness, hence the SI hypothesis provides the most appropriate explanation.

The intermediate variables of RCI hypothesis work against change because domestic politics is highly polarised and, consequently, contagiously divisive. The sector is fragmented among various umbrella group formations whose voices are not normally consensual. Although centralised, tripartite and consultative institutions are in place and participation in formal social dialogue is the general norm, claims of partisan politics are numerous, regular and many often bitterly debated. Additionally, dialogue initiatives are often labelled as mere smokescreens by non-state stakeholders. SI's mediating factors, on the other hand, are more appropriate to facilitate change due to Europeanisation. Culture is being gradually changed by a number of individual change agents from among civil society itself, and sometimes also from the political sphere, who do not play a victim's role within inherited systems and polarised paradigms. Instead they strive to transform the mindset of their fellows. Informal contacts are ample though they are not necessarily deemed as most fair and effective in the long run. Additionally workers' and employers' representatives in Malta aim to render their institutions and processes of decision-making closer to the European model as this is considered desirable and legitimate.

These forces have opened the way for greater socialisation with European partners and the internalisation of European values based on pluralism and common grounds that are challenging inherited practices, characterised by delicate matters dictated by personal as much as corporate conflicts. The logic of appropriateness, thus, explains the process of Europeanisation of Maltese social partners. Such logic promotes the need for civil dialogue, consensus-seeking culture, alliance formation, cross sectoral interactivity and sharing of best practices.

Figure 8.4: The sociological nature of Europeanisation of Maltese social partners


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              ┌───────────────────────────────────────────────┐
              │  Maltese Trade Unions and Employers' Associations │
              └───────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                                    │
                      ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                      │ Assessment of Intermediate variables │
                      └─────────────────────────────┘
              ┌────────────┴────────────┐
         (RCI variables)          (SI variables)
```

Veto Points

• Fragmented sector & lack of concerted voices

• Arena of interest representation characterised by partisan political nuances

• Inherited polarised culture

Supporting formal institutions

• Centralised mediating structures are being reorganised to resemble EU model that is deemed more pluralistic & constructive

• Claims of party politics are numerous & regular

Norm entrepreneurs

• Individual leaders rather than organisations are the real change agents

• Wide agreement that these leaders do exist in the Maltese scenario

• Mentality is changing gradually

Cooperative informal institutions

• Informal options of influence are most often deemed to be more practical & easily available

• Europe is seen as the epitome of social dialogue

Process of Europeanisation
predominantly understood by a **logic of appropriateness** leading to:

1. an extensive exposure to their counterparts in other member states and to Euro-groups based in Brussels from whom they learn and continue to develop their methods of domestic fieldwork

2. new individual values and corporate identities as a result of more socialisation within EU fora and across member states

3. the internalisation of European norms that are often in conflict with inherited paradigms and traditional culture

Mario Vassallo 2014

8.4.1.2   A rationalist Europeanisation of Irish social partners

The Irish case presents a totally different narrative because there are a number of fundamental differences between Maltese and Irish political structures and cultures. The mediating variables pertaining to RCI hypothesis facilitate domestic change as a result of low incidence of veto playing and a strong history of institutions based on the principle of consensus-seeking (see Figure 8.5). These dynamics instigate a top-down logic of consequences wherein transformations are caused as a result of European regulations, directives, funding and impingement procedures, rather than by horizontal enablers of change like interactivity with other European partners and participation in sharing of best practices exercises. The existence of a legitimate and powerful Congress of Irish Trade Unions, and likewise an Irish Business and Economic Confederation, secures synergies among players and, hence, limiting the element of veto playing.

Furthermore, the concept of Social Partnership, even if it is now defunct among social partners, has cemented a national culture based on consensus-seeking.

In contrast, the sociological aspect of Europeanisation is downplayed by a lack of norm entrepreneurs and a political culture that does not hold Europe as a reference point. Reflecting on the dramatic downfall of the Irish economy, stakeholders declined the claim of being change agents because they proved ineffective in not letting this collapse happen. In addition, due to their emotional and economic attachment to the Anglo-Saxon world, primarily the UK, USA and Australia, the Irish feel sociologically detached from 'the rest of the European continent'. The combination of these factors leads to a process of Europeanisation among Irish social partners based on the logic of calculation, even when adapting organisational norms, thus, rendering the RCI hypothesis more appropriate to determine the nature of change for the period under review.

Figure 8.5: The rationalist nature of Europeanisation of Irish social partners
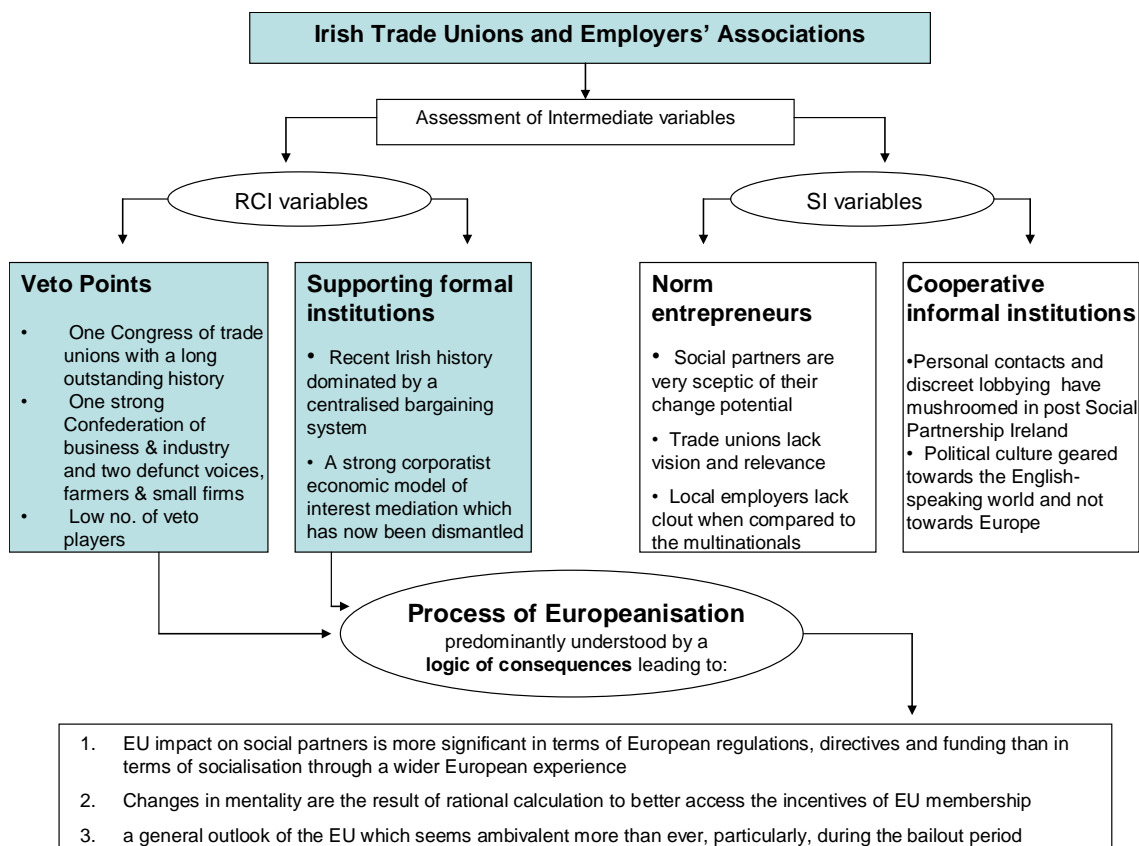
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8.4.1.3   A sociological and rationalist Europeanisation of Maltese SHEGs

Having decoded the type of Europeanisation being experienced by social partners, attention will now shift to decipher the situation of other sectors within civil society, namely interest groups involved in social, human rights and environmental work. Maltese SHEGs are more resolute to live up to their 'European vocation' to the full, despite inbuilt coercive constraints that impose limits to European exposure. Many of their leaders, particularly those of peak interest groups and mediating bodies, talk about 'the need for Europe' to reaffirm themselves, their organisation and all they believe in (see Figure 8.6). Consensus among the two political parties on EU membership, after an extremely bitter, divisive and polarised referendum campaign in 2004, brought a shared commitment towards the Europeanisation of Malta. Experience on the ground is indicating that the insular culture and behavioural attitudes of interest groups are likewise being gradually transformed through a process of normativeness and interaction among a wider network of European political communities.

Figure 8.6: The rationalist and sociological natures of Europeanisation of Maltese SHEGs

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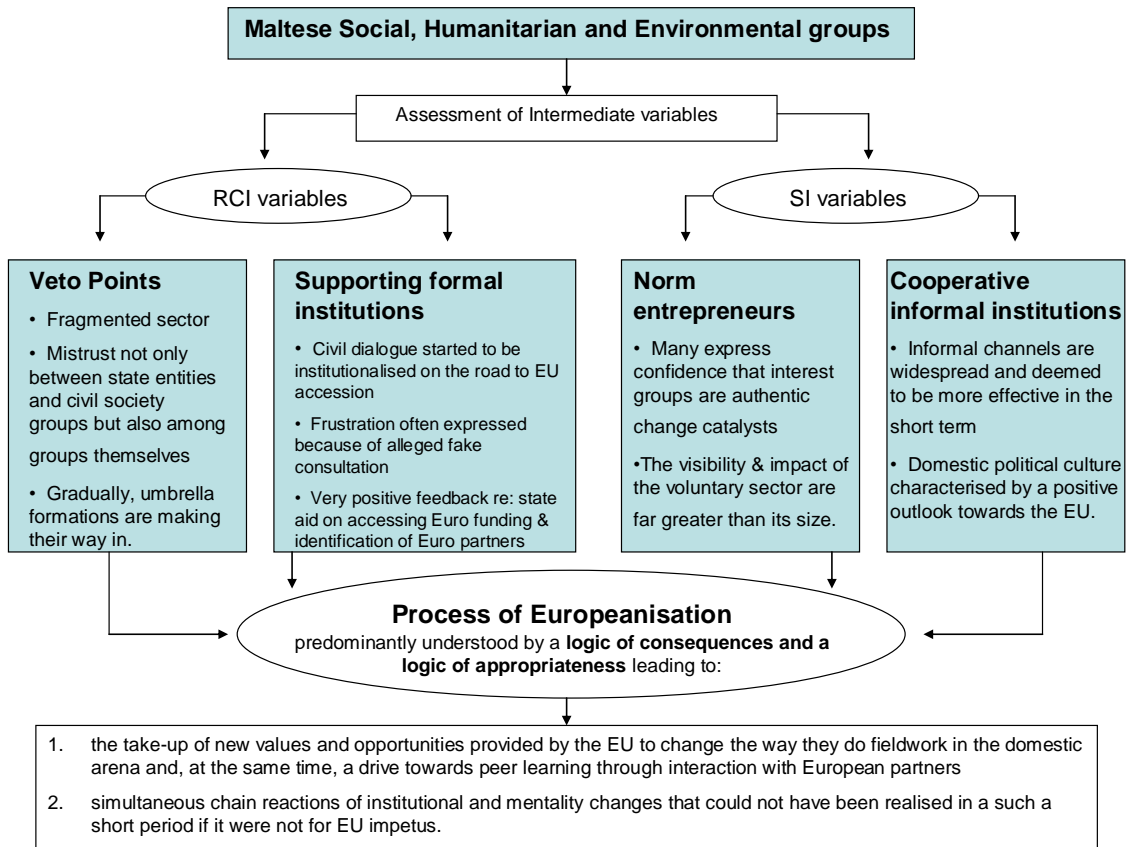
This is clear evidence that the SI hypothesis is the preferred explanation of the nature of Europeanisation in this case; however the story does not end here. The intermediate variables within RCI hypothesis also work in tandem, thus suggesting that Europeanisation of Maltese interest groups is made possible by both logics of appropriateness and consequences. Although certain sectors of civil society are considerably fragmented where lack of trust characterises inter-groups' relations, there are many indications that groups have started to look for better ways of interest representation, not least by joining forces and forming networks and partnerships. From their end, centralised institutions of civil dialogue benefit from a positive legacy dating back to pre-EU membership, even though they are still not free from political controversy like everything else in Malta. These institutions are extremely important in providing interest groups with free expertise on European funding and the identification of European partners. This ultimately leads to an enriched resource base which traditionally has been very poor both for national and local NGOs. All in all, Maltese interest groups are learning fast the rules of the game at the European level and, simultaneously, socialising with a more diversified platform of European organisations to which they did not have access in the past.

As a result of the synchronous interplay between the two set of intermediate variables pertaining to the two alternative hypotheses, which theory holds to be mutually exclusive, the marginal Europeanisation of SHEGs in Malta is to be understood by both logics of the two major stripes of new institutionalism.

8.4.1.4   A rationalist Europeanisation of Irish SHEGs

Like Irish trade unions and employers' associations, SHEGs in Ireland are ambivalent to the European reality. Although they publicly admit that their attitude, knowledge and experience of European affairs are somehow limited, they are still vociferous in getting from Brussels all that is being denied by their government in the social and environmental policy domains (see Figure 8.7). Accession to the EU provided them with an increased number of opportunities and incentives, in particular legislative measures, lobbying avenues and funding resources, to exercise their influence in more pragmatic ways, always in search of optimum results to maximise the attainment of

their respective interests. Again, there are low numbers of veto points within the Irish system of interest representation, hence, fostering a culture of consensus-seeking and compromise. Social Partnership structures are still functional or quasi-functional for SHEGs. Informal channels of communication and lobbying exist in abundance in Ireland but they are not necessarily to the advantage of 'small' interest groups. In their words, 'they work best for business interests'.

At the same time, over a span of forty years of membership, very little improvement has been registered in terms of socialisation with other European partners. Indifference was the norm rather than the exception because priority was always given to British, American and other counterparts that use English as their first language of communication. Furthermore Irish SHEGs do not consider themselves as change agents. Reflecting once again on the Irish economic downfall, they lament about their failure to present an alternative and more sustainable narrative to greed and selfishness promulgated throughout the years of economic boom. When taking stock of all the factors at play, it transpires that the type of Europeanisation characterising Irish interest groups finds its roots in RCI understanding. The low number of veto points and the long established culture of supporting formal institutions facilitate a series of gradual changes based on consequential rationale.

Figure 8.7: The rationalist nature of Europeanisation of Irish SHEGs
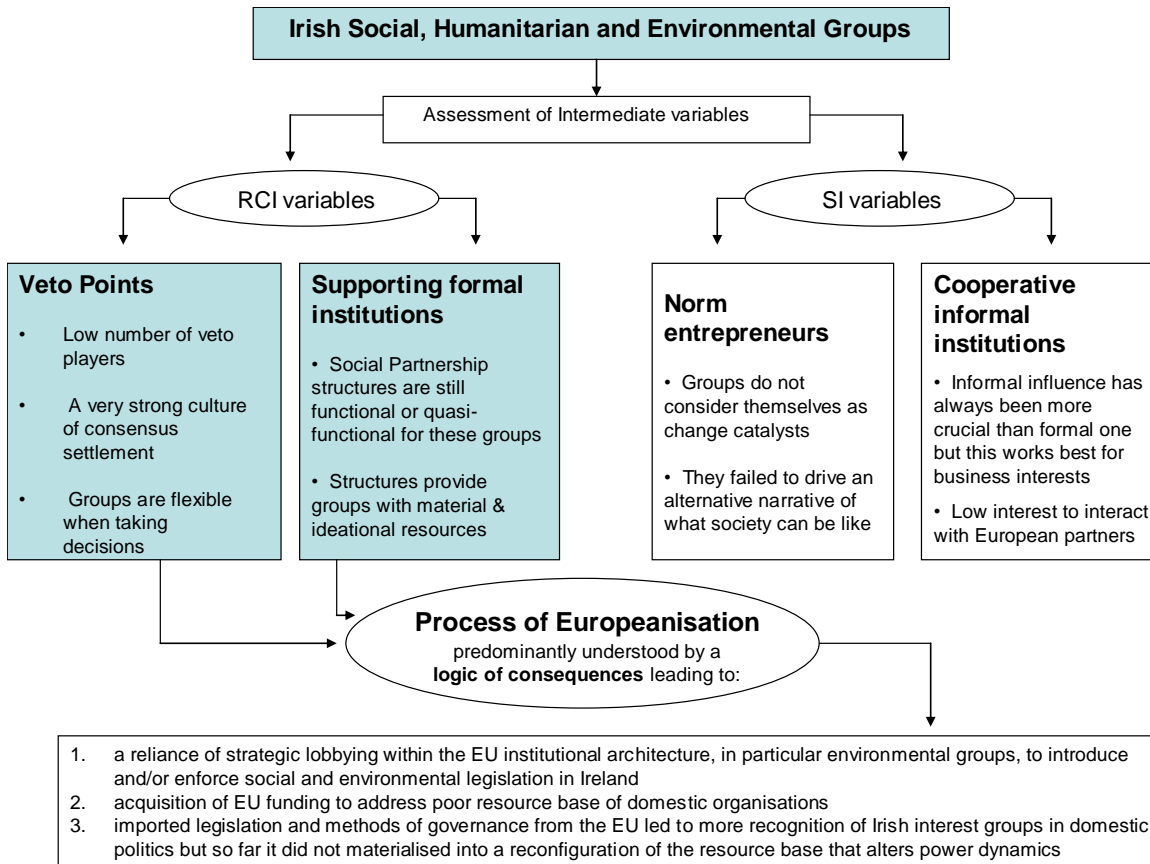
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8.5   Putting it all together

The four thematic maps have decoded which of the two fundamental natures of Europeanisation applies to each category of interest groups. The extent of these processes, whether marginal or significant, has already been established using statistical computations. Therefore this is the point where a comprehensive answer can be provided with respect to the original set composed of three hypotheses. Table 8.14 summarises the concluding results by integrating the statistical and qualitative analyses that have been used and, in the end, proposes amended hypotheses on the basis of the findings.

Table 8.12: Amendments of the original set of hypotheses

Category of interest groups	Member State	Extent of Europeanisation - dimension level - dimension	Extent	Extent of Europeanisation - overall level -	Nature of Europeanisation	Amended hypothesis
Trade unions and employers' associations	Malta	Internal structure Domestic responsiveness European involvement Attitudinal transformation	Significant Marginal Marginal Significant	Significant	Sociological Institutionalism	Through the provision of socialisation and collective learning processes, EU membership has made a significant change to the overall character of social partners in Malta, in particular their internal structure and attitude formation.
Trade unions and employers' associations	Ireland	Internal structure Domestic responsiveness European involvement Attitudinal transformation	Marginal Marginal Marginal Significant	Marginal	Rational Choice Institutionalism	Although calculative rationale brought about a substantial attitudinal transformation among leaders of Irish social partners, EU membership has made no significant change to the partners' overall character.
Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups	Malta	Internal structure Domestic responsiveness European involvement Attitudinal transformation	Significant Marginal Highly marginal Significant	Marginal	Rational Choice Institutionalism and Sociological Institutionalism	Although rational and sociological motivations brought about substantial change in the organisational and attitude formation of interest groups in Malta, EU membership has made no significant change to their overall character.
Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups	Ireland	Internal structure Domestic responsiveness European involvement Attitudinal transformation	Marginal Marginal Highly marginal Significant	Marginal	Rational Choice Institutionalism	Although calculative rationale brought about a substantial attitudinal transformation among leaders of Irish interest groups, EU membership has made no significant change to the groups' overall character.

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Europeanisation led to a significant impact on Maltese trade unions and employers' associations, primarily, because of a number of stimuli associated with SI. Hence the SI hypothesis is confirmed in this case. Contrastingly their Irish counterparts have been marginally influenced by the process of Europeanisation. Such marginal changes have been prompted by factors attributed to RCI. In the circumstances, since Europeanisation did not cause a significant change in the overall character of Irish unions and employers, the null hypothesis is approved. There is one important proviso, however: the EU managed to transform substantially their leaders' attitude formation. The null hypothesis has also been confirmed with respect to SHEGs in both Malta and Ireland with the proviso that substantial change was registered in the attitude of groups' leaders in both Malta and Ireland. However the typography of Europeanisation varies from one member state to the other. Whereas changes among Maltese SHEGs are triggered by stimuli pertaining to both RCI and SI, SHEGs in Ireland are predominantly affected by RCI's mediating factors.

8.5.1   An unusual finding

The amendments of the original set of hypotheses produce an unusual finding, namely that substantial attitudinal change seems to have arisen from rationalist interpretation in both cases involving Irish actors. This distinctive conclusion resulting from a systematic investigation challenges academic literature which postulates that a change in the set of organisational norms and values is motivated by sociological rather than rationalist impelling forces. This surprising contribution originating from the testing of two parallel interpretations and, in particular, the application of statistical measurements merits an explanation.

In this case, qualitative narrative is the key to understand quantitative results. Irish interviewees confirm that over the years they have mirrored their government approach of treating the EU as a source of money. Consequentially, they were stimulated to gradually change their attitude because of rational calculation rather than out of conviction. Their level of socialisation on a European platform was low because of two major reasons: (a) lack of resources and (b) insular mentality. However this scenario started being challenged only recently when Irish unions, employers and interest groups began to realise that the EU's paradigm is not necessarily that of a cash cow. They

became attracted to the idea that, above all, the EU can also be about active citizenship. Ironically this fresh attitude within the Irish psyche towards the European project coincided with the bail out experience which in itself provoked Euroscepticism on a grand scale. Such a trade off between EU citizenship and scepticism in the collective mind-set of the Irish nation requires further research in the future.

8.5.2   Relation between extent and nature of Europeanisation

The stimulus of attitudinal transformation in the two Irish cases may not be the only unusual finding, as there may be other atypical findings. At this point, it is logical to address one of the two remaining questions, that is, whether the statistical and narrative results exhibit a direct relation between the nature and extent of Europeanisation or not. However there is a point of theoretical connotation that is worth explaining before providing the answer.

Some scholars assume that the extent of the EU effect is determined by the nature of EU triggers. For instance, Börzel and Risse (2003) claim that the EU's transformative power is rather limited when only formal EU rules, regulations and institutional conditionalities are at play. Consequently the RCI approach tends to see and imply adaptation as skin deep because the logic is one of calculation, and calculation could change over time. Contrastingly, the SI approach embraces ideational, learning and normative factors to the definition of EU institutions and sees the EU as a model or promoter of socialisation and norm diffusion (Jupille at al. 2003, Risse 2001, Hall and Taylor 1996). This distinction led Vink (2003) to propose two types of Europeanisation, namely *thin* (or shallow) and *thick* (or deep) Europeanisation. Thin Europeanisation follows the RCI and demonstrates a limited and behavioural change under the EU pressures while thick Europeanisation reinforces SI that allows for substantial and long-term EU effect, together with deeply embedded changes related to identity and collective culture at domestic level (Buhari 2009: 111/2).

The statistical and narrative results obtained through this research comply with the distinction elucidated by Vink. In this line of thought, statistical significance relates to profound and thick EU effect, whereas statistical insignificance refers to marginal and thin Europeanisation. In the case of social partners in Malta, on the one hand, the impact

of Europeanisation is deemed to be significant because of SI stimuli. On the other hand, the Europeanisation of social partners and SHEGs in Ireland has been driven by factors largely attributed to RCI and, as a matter of fact, the impact of change is of statistical insignificance. In the end, the case of SHEGs in Malta where marginal Europeanisation is caused by both RCI and SI triggers seems to be atypical because it neither conforms to the thin/thick typography of Europeanisation nor to the traditional theoretical dichotomy between RCI and SI frameworks. The first anomaly may be explained in terms of context specific reasons, where coercive constraints because of smallness and islandness preclude Maltese SHEGs from a more direct and interactive engagement at the EU level. Statistical results showing high marginality in the dimension of European involvement (refer to Tables 8.4 and 8.6) support this explanation. The second anomaly is explained by more recent literature works on Europeanisation that favour a 'synthetic approach' of the two logics of political action, despite their conflicting and epistemological attributes. The issue of the complimentary nature between RCI and SI will be revisited in the concluding chapter.

8.5.3   Europeanisation or not?

The only remaining unanswered question concerns the dilemma if we are giving too much importance to Europeanisation as the instigator of change. Is Europeanisation the true cause of domestic changes within the system of interest representation or are there other causes that trigger change due to globalisation and/or homegrown initiatives? In other words, are we attributing excessive importance to Europeanisation, particularly if there are other factors at play that are not necessarily confined to the European integration model? These questions merit a definitive answer that wipes out any misconceptions and unrealistic assumptions.

Europeanisation shares the same approach of globalisation[119] in the sense that it obliges states to embrace international competition, open their markets and, at the same time,

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[119] The processes and structures of globalisation rest on a theoretically contested sphere. Simply put, globalisation denotes the expanding scale, growing magnitude, speeding up and deepening impact of transcontinental flows and patterns of economic activity and social interaction. It refers to a shift or transformation in the scale of human organisation that links distant communities and expands the reach of power relations across the world's regions and continents (Held and McGrew 2005: 1). Capitalism, information technology and travel industries are deemed to be the major driving forces of globalisation.

depoliticise decisions and issues. However there are key differences between the two. Firstly, Castells (2000), Delanty and Rumford (2005) and Ladrech (2010) maintain that Europeanisation is acting both as a guarantor of global forces and as a protector against the negative impacts of globalisation. Secondly, Europeanisation is not only encouraging market liberalisation and states' interdependence but is transferring central funds to states, regions and non-state actors in order to become more economically competitive and socially cohesive. This is surely not the case of globalisation which is often singled out as the major cause of increasing the gap between the rich and the poor, not only across countries but within developed states as well (Stiglitz 2002, Held and McGrew 2005).

For the purpose of this work, qualitative findings are to be employed to answer this question. Stakeholders' feedback during interviews favours the premise that the true cause of domestic change is the EU rather than globalisation. However interest group leaders in Malta and Ireland, including trade unionists, do not negate the influence of globalisation but, at the same time, affirm that Europe is the biggest motivator for change.

Europe is the true stimulus of change, but because of Malta's strategic position in relation to North Africa, we shall be looking towards a global perspective as well (MSHG13).

Globalisation plays a very important part but the reality is that Malta forms part of the European region. We have to learn how to live within this reality (MTU3).

Changes in trade-unionism are the effect of globalisation but Europe brought a stronger fellowship among our unions (MTU1).

Europe is the major cause of our change in mentality in environmental matters, although the global platform exists as well (MEG19).

Globalisation does have an effect, but in social policy matters Europeanisation stimulus is more tangible (ISHG10).

Notwithstanding Social Partnership, many of the significant developments on behalf of the workers in the last 25 years emerged from Europe. The EU was the real impetus (ITU3).

The only exception is in the case of LGBT rights and other civil rights movements where 'change goes beyond Europe' (MSHG10), meaning that globalisation is a more prevalent force than Europeanisation. Another Irish trade unionist seems to imply that homegrown and global forces are the cause of their economic downfall when he states that 'we are in this economic doom, firstly, because of our internal deficiencies and, secondly, because of the global neoliberal ideology' (ITU2).

The majority of environmental groups and some of the social and human rights groups in Ireland are more categorical in their affirmation of the European impact in their sphere of operations.

The European institutions, in particular the EC and the ECJ are the source of change in environmental terms. It is more of an EU thing rather than globalisation (IEG17).

[Social] change in Ireland occurred because of Europe. We have learned about wealth generation from the Americans but we have imported our social democratic values from Europe (ISHG9).

I cannot think of one incidence of environmental legislation [in Ireland] that came from any other continent, except from Europe (IEG16).

The source of change in the environment is Europe because the world is not following Europe (IEG18).

Other Maltese and Irish leaders do not agree that the EU is the cause of change because the true source of transition is not an external factor but comes from within the individual who is motivated to do something good for the benefit of society. However the EU still plays a crucial role because it is regarded as a toolkit to assist people to bring about change, as well as a platform of democratic and pluralist values to maintain such change.

The interest in environmental issues comes from within the individual. However Europe gives us empowerment in terms of legislation, institutions and partnerships to pursue our interests (MEG18).

The motor of change are Maltese citizens themselves. But we are all hungry to bring the tools for change from Europe (MSHG11).

Europe is not the stimulus of change... Stimulus is all about being awake in society. We [green NGOs] use Europe as our ally, our toolset (IEG19).

From a total of 42 interviewees, there were only two who ruled out completely the idea of considering the EU as a major source, or an effective tool, of change. Both of them, one Gozitan and the other Irish, agree that because of Europeanisation the impact of change is low since the national mindset is largely influenced by emigrated communities abroad.

| Most of our groups have close contacts in places where our nationals have emigrated, particularly Melbourne in Australia. For us Melbourne is our second Gozo (MSHG12). | Our [Irish] mentality is not one that thinks of Europe. Philosophically there was debate about whether we are closer to Boston or to Berlin. Of course the great majority of Irish people said Boston (ISHG12). |

Qualitative data suggest that the great majority of leaders of interest groups in Malta and Ireland consider the EU either as the source or the tool through which changes in the domestic scenario are activated or managed. Among others, EU change triggers include its multi-access point institutional architecture, directives and regulations, court decisions, public awareness campaigns, comradeships among partner organisations from different member states, and the learning and sharing of best practices. Nonetheless, the evidence confirms that Europeanisation as a strong source of change by no means eliminates the existence of other forces of innovation and transformation that are not necessarily European by nature. They may find their roots either from within the nation states through active citizenship and the modernisation of the state, or from specific geopolitical regions like the Mediterranean in the case of Malta and the Anglo-Saxon world in the Irish case, or in global trends and pressures.

8.6   Conclusion

The backbone of this chapter has been rooted in the logic of hypothesis testing that ultimately affirmed or discredited the original hypotheses. Rigorous statistical and qualitative analyses led to a set of concrete results determining the quantification and nature of Europeanisation. The first set of conclusions embrace the sustainability of the null hypothesis that rests on the premise that the extent of EU overall impact on domestic interest groups has not been significant, however a number of provisos apply. It has been confirmed with respect to Irish social partners, Maltese SHEGs and Irish SHEGs but was rejected in the case of Maltese social partners. The second set of conclusions was determined by a qualitative process, whereby the true nature of Europeanisation was revealed, in other words, whether Europeanisation is a phenomenon predominantly explained by RCI or SI. The significant Europeanisation of Maltese social partners is predominantly driven by sociological triggers while the marginal Europeanisation of their Irish counterparts is better explained by RCI logic.

On their part, Maltese SHEGs proved to be of a different breed because their marginal Europeanisation could be explained by a dual logic, thus rendering both RCI and SI as appropriate hypotheses. Lastly, Irish SHEGs have also experienced marginal Europeanisation that can be largely defined by the logic of consequences promoted by RCI. In this way, each of the three original hypotheses has now been confirmed or rejected.

At the end of the hypothesis testing exercise, qualitative findings established the prevalence of Europeanisation to initiate change in the domestic polities of Malta and Ireland, yet other forces of innovation and transformation from within states themselves or through globalisation have not been excluded.

The next chapter provides the overall conclusion to the study. In particular it embraces a synopsis of the research process that has been undertaken and attempts to interpret the outcomes in the light of scholarly debates revolving around small states' governance, Europeanisation and new institutionalism. Moreover chapter 9 delivers a critical reflection of the research design while noting its limitations. At the end, it outlines potential ventures for further research that can be embarked upon to deepen and widen existing knowledge of Europeanisation and the performance of interest groups in small island states.

Chapter 9

Critical Assessment and Conclusion

Chapter 9
Critical assessment and conclusion

What we find changes who we become.[120]

Peter Morville
British computer and internet expert
President of Semantics Studio and founding father of Information Architecture

9.1   Outlining the critical assessment

The research cycle has turned full circle. Now that the rigorous research design has been marshalled right to the end and the empirical results have been revealed, it is appropriate to frame the findings into a wider literature perspective, thus elucidating the empirical, conceptual, methodological and theoretical contributions of this work. The critical assessment of the empirical observations starts by revisiting the original scope and initial questions, including a synthesis of the results obtained. It then makes reference to the literature on small states governance in its attempt to generalise the findings beyond case selection. The second level of assessment concerns the conceptual level. It looks into the mechanisms and choices that have been employed by this work to turn the notion of Europeanisation from an 'attention-directing device' (Olsen 2002) into an 'operationalisable concept' (Goetz and Meyer-Sahling 2008) capable of guiding empirical investigations. The evaluation process eventually proceeds to the methodological level wherein the use of mixed data streams, particularly statistical results, are assessed on their capability of verifying or negating familiar grounds of Europeanisation that have been traditionally tried and tested by qualitative orthodoxy. The scrutiny of the explanatory-theoretical level follows soon after, wherein the competing/complementary logics of Rational Choice Institutionalism (RCI) and Sociological Institutionalism (SI) are critically assessed in the light of bridging ontological and epistemological considerations. Furthermore, the conclusion ponders on the major caveats of this research, namely asymmetries of time and power that may have had the potential to explain or twist some of the results. Finally, these same caveats pave the way for future research by identifying related and emerging themes,

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[120] Retrieved on 21 September 2013 from http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/research

including Historical Institutionalism (HI) and Euroscepticism that require further scholarly attention.

9.2 The empirical level of small island states

Gauging the empirical results is the most tangible of all the other levels that have been selected for critical assessment. The main focus in this first section revolves around social partners and interest groups in Malta and Ireland and the different adaptation techniques they had to resort to in order to come to terms with EU membership. Major results are presented in brief, followed by a concise commentary that contextualises them within the larger picture of small states governance. This section ends with the identification of a set of knowledge claims that have significance to other similar states.

9.2.1 Revisiting the original scope and questions

This thesis has set out to explore the concept of Europeanisation in terms of elasticity measures employed by Maltese and Irish non-state actors and has determined the magnitude and nature of the twin forces of continuity and change in the field of interest representation. Relying on lessons drawn by a large cohort of Europeanisation scholars, this study has utilised the theoretical framework of new institutionalism, in particular RCI and SI, to identify incentives and norms for the preservation or transformation of Maltese and Irish politics. Without ever losing its primary research focus on social partners and interest groups, it has investigated the dichotomy between the embedded traditions of national polity and politics and the continuous series of calls for change and diversification promulgated by the EU's style of governance and the lateral pressures exerted by the rest of member states. The implications of these endogenous and imported forces, which many a time are contradictory, are mapped out across four distinct, yet complementary, features that make up the character of organised groups, namely their internal organisational structures, actions and strategies within the domestic arena, engagement in European affairs and the pro- or anti-EU attitude of their leaders. Such a schematic model was instrumental in unravelling which dimensions act as pockets of resistance or inertia and which are rather predisposed to change and adaptability.

Methodologically, the thesis rests on four broad case scenarios replicated in Malta and Ireland, namely trade unions, employers' associations, social and human rights groups and environmental groups. The adoption of a hypothetical-deductive research design, making use of quantitative and qualitative data, has produced unequivocal scientific evidence that demonstrates empirically the dependency of Europeanisation on specific factors that are relevant to distinct political territories and typologies of interest groups. In this vein, findings support Eising's and Lehmkuhl's argument that responses to European integration may very well be differential as the effects on interest representation are very much embedded in specific domestic contexts (Eising 2008: 180, Lehmkuhl 2008: 340, Quaglia et al. 2007: 414). Besides the validation process of the original set of hypotheses, the overall scope of this research work has been successfully achieved by answering the following three fundamental questions:

- Has the impact of Europeanisation of Maltese and Irish interest groups been significant or marginal in the period between 2004 and 2011?
- Independently of its extent, has Europeanisation among Maltese and Irish groups within the period in question been predominantly triggered by rationalist or sociological explanations?
- Is Europeanisation the major stimulus of domestic change or are there other prevalent forces that shake the status quo?

9.2.2   Empirical results

The main empirical results are chapter specific and are summarised within the respective empirical chapters: Chapter 6 relating to trade unions and employers' representatives and Chapter 7 featuring social, human rights and environmental groups, whereas the exercise of hypothesis testing was immediately carried out in the subsequent chapter. This section synthesises the empirical results that answer the study's three fundamental questions.

Trade unions and employers' associations in Malta are the only ones to have registered a statistically significant degree of Europeanisation between 2004 and 2011. The Europeanisation impact left its mark on their organisational set-up and normative

archetype. Although they remain rational actors that are always keen to advance their interests given the additional opportunities and influence avenues of EU membership, Maltese workers' and employers' representatives expose a prevailing disposition to change rooted within an SI understanding. Research suggests that they are trying to reinvent themselves and reconstitute their domestic reality as a direct consequence of their socialisation in European fora and participation in collective learning exercises. Their desire for change may be considered as a reaction to the claustrophobic and polarised ambience in their domestic polity where political patronage and clientelism are very high.

Contrastingly, all Irish actors that have been analysed, that is, trade unions, employers' associations, together with social and human rights groups, as well as environmental groups, have generated an extent of Europeanisation of non-statistical significance. Social partners' inelasticity or indifference to European influence came out to be very stout wherein their organisational structures together with their national and European interactivity showed no significant degree of receptivity. On their part Irish social groups, and to a lesser extent environmental groups, also proved to be insular and ambivalent towards the EU, although their attitude and sense of identity exhibited signs of transformation of statistical significance, thus opening a window for more potential changes in the future. Irish actors' preferences and styles, in line with mainstream political discourse in their national arena, are deeply entrenched within an RCI loaded environment. Like their politicians, they regard European resources, mainly funding, lobbying outlets and legislative measures, as a means to support and promote their predefined interests. Conversely, they have invested very little to reconfigure their character and reengineer the Irish political terrain as a result of EU membership.

Finally, in the first eight years since accession in 2004, Maltese social, human rights and environmental groups have undergone marginal Europeanisation, in other words the extent of change is of no statistical significance. Elements of coercive constraints, like inadequate human, financial and expertise resources, and the easy access to national politicians, induce a sense of alienation and estrangement from the EU's integration project. However significant Europeanisation marks are manifested in their internal organisational structure and culture wherein they have strived to induce a European

dimension within their corporate vision, coordination of EU affairs, participation in training and funding opportunities, as well as the internalisation of European norms and values. Interestingly from a theoretical point of view, the nature of their marginal Europeanisation impact comprises a dual explanation: both RCI and SI stimuli share the limelight here. Maltese interest groups are interested in adapting their organisations and strategies to profit from the multilevel power structure of the EU but, at the same time, gradual change is also transforming the mental framework of their leaders through the construction and diffusion of innovative ideas stemming out of the EU and its member states.

Although globalisation and home-grown initiatives do play a role in instigating change and transformation, the majority of research subjects in both selected countries emphasised that Europeanisation is the prevalent stimulus to challenge state traditions in polity formation, politics of interest representation and sectoral policymaking. Environmental groups in both countries are the most vociferous advocates of Europeanisation as they consider it the *force majeure* that can bring change to domestic policy and legislation rather than to polity and politics. Although clear cut causal mechanisms are very difficult to establish beyond any reasonable doubt, there is widespread consensus among the majority of Maltese subjects that the EU is the dominant external provider of both scope and tools to motivate institutional and social innovation back home. The Irish agree, but to a lesser extent, because of their attachments to the English-speaking world which embraces the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand as well as the UK. Their frame of mind is conditioned by the Irish diaspora in all walks of life from commerce to culture and from job opportunities to innovation and benchmarking. Moreover, their knowledge of foreign languages is also weak, a factor that significantly hinders Irish interaction with other Europeans who do not speak English.

9.2.3   Territorial creatures

In spite of the plethora of additional opportunities and new norms made possible by EU membership, this empirical research illustrates that non-state actors are essentially creatures of their own territory. National politicians and senior bureaucrats remain the

preferred targets for lobbying, not only because they are easy to access and the cost of embarking on the Brussels route is exorbitant, but primarily because of the embeddedness of social partners and interest groups in domestic politics. Moreover in policy fields where neocorporatist structures prevail for long, such as in the 'unique' case of SP in Ireland and, to a lesser extent, the MCESD and the MEUSAC in Malta, non-state actors find it almost useless to engage directly with the EU's institutional framework, since they are already well connected at the domestic level. These assertions confirm conclusions made by numerous scholars of civil society who maintain that European institutions and avenues are a 'bonus' rather than an 'alternative' as interest group continue to promote and defend their interests within their national political arena (Saurugger 2013, Klüver 2010, Eising 2008, Bache and George 2006).

9.2.4   Potential for better organisational structures

European influence is most visible not in terms of direct engagement with the supranational institutions and processes of decision making, but in the way non-state actors react to the challenges in domestic environment. Indeed, research results have confirmed that in all four case scenarios, the dimension of direct European involvement never obtained a score of statistical significance. On the other hand, domestic adjustments were numerous and took many shapes. As the findings reveal, they entailed continuous improvement in internal organisational structures to solidify voice, diversification of operations and adaptation to European pressures. In more concrete terms, adaptability processes include growing interest in the formation of partnerships with other state and private actors, the set-up of umbrella organisations, the development of European profiling through affiliation in Euro federations as well as the identification of partner organisations from other member states, the provision of training and funding opportunities, together with gradual changes in their collective mentality and identity.

These sets of findings contextualise Van Schendelen's model (2005) of 'window-in and window-out', as outlined in Chapter 4. Interest groups need to *look out* at the EU arena and, concurrently, *look in* to manage their homefront. This research presents ample evidence that contemporary organised groups in Malta and Ireland are not simply

engaged in 'pressure politics' but are rather involved in Public Affairs Management (PAM) which requires complex processes of 'internal preparatory work' and 'fieldwork interactivity'. Saurugger (2013: 350) refers to the 'professionalisation' of voluntary organisations by means of training seminars largely sponsored by the EC, either set up by international, regional or national organisations, or by partnership with existing university training schemes.[121] These learning opportunities open new avenues for domestic groups, as is the case of social partners and interest groups in Malta. The Irish seem to realise that, although they have invested very little in this regard over forty years of membership, this is the time to start engaging more with their counterparts in other member states. The people who work within organisational structures become, not only better equipped to maximise their groups' interests in a multilevel political arena but, above all, more eager to learn through constant processes of evaluation and socialisation. Besides being more conducive to norms and values that embrace power-sharing, negotiation, solidarity, coalition building and networking as promoted by the EU system of governance, PAM postulates a complementary, rather than conflicting, relationship between the rationalist and sociological understandings of Europeanisation. The nature of the duality of RCI and SI shall be dealt with in greater detail in the subsection dedicated to the theoretical level.

9.2.5   Transferability of results

The case selection of Malta and Ireland contextualises this study within a specialised field of scholarly literature: the politics of small island states. This is prominently indicated in the introductory chapter where the justification of the two countries was intrinsically tied to their absolute or relative smallness, as well as their islandness, exhibiting similar political, social and economic profiling. At the end of this research exercise, one would legitimately expect the empirical findings to go beyond case selection, thus attempting generalisability among other small states within the EU and, possibly, beyond.

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[121] The EC has financed a number of these programmes such as the one attended by the present writer, entitled *Closer to Europe Training Programme* which was held in Malta between 2011and 2012 with the aim of improving domestic social and civil dialogue and at the same time to improve the quality of proposals submitted by interest groups to the Commission. The CONCORD network (*Confederation d'ONG pour l'aide d'urgence et le development)* develops very similar courses on capacity building, resource management, influence strategies and funding.

Although there is a growing literature on the issue of how small states experience EU membership in terms of Europeanisation and more specifically its effects on polity, research has barely started. Harwood (2012) argues that what limited investigation has been made has either lacked a framework to differentiate the Europeanisation experience of large and small states (Hanf and Soetendorp 2002) or has focused on a specific set of small states, primarily Scandinavian, and Central and Eastern countries where specific regional factors, like political traditions, may account for some of the conclusions drawn (Thorhallson 2000, Laegreid et al. 2002).

This study does not have the primary intention of generating results that could be generalised across other member states that can be considered small by any kind of measurement or concept. Its understandings of Europeanisation defined by research subjects are specifically bound to the political terrain in which they are active and to the time band covered by the study. Moreover, attitudes towards the EU are highly dependent on the cyclical nature of domestic political and economic performance, thus accentuating a high dependency on the time element. Consequently, the extension of this research's findings and conclusions to wider populations could be unsustainable because each member state, whether of small, medium or large proportions, has its unique narrative that, invariably, leads to different experiences of Europeanisation.

Nevertheless, the peculiar factors that have been treated in this study do not adhere to what Silverman (2001: 223) has referred to as *anecdotalism.*[122] Warrington (2012: 25) disclaims the idea of 'unique governance experience' as each country's profile is compounded of 'some elements that are distinctive' and 'many others that are shared with numerous states', small and large, developed and developing. Since academic literature is interested in revealing implicit models that have the potential to explain phenomena in similar environments, there is still scope for 'knowledge claims' prompted by this work that can be applied beyond the two selected countries (Marsh and Furlong 2010). In scientific terms this is normally called *transferability*. Unlike generalisability, transferability does not involve broad claims, but invites readers of

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[122] This occurs when research presents a good and interesting story that may blind the researcher to the fact that the anecdote is actually far from typical and possibly unique. There is a real danger that such memorable and distinct phenomena may come to influence and even bias the interpretation.

research to make connections between elements of a study and other analogous situations. In the context of small states' governance and their Europeanisation experience, this thesis postulates or confirms a set of knowledge claims that are transferable to similar polities that share the following traits in full or partly:

- *smallness*, whether absolute or relative, in the context of a dominant colonial legacy,
- *islandness*, whether geographical or psychological, that generates a contradictory sense of isolation and openness,
- *gateway position* between two opposing geopolitical realities - north and south, east and west, centre and periphery, island and mainland, insider and outsider, traditionalism and modernism – constraining the people in the centre to live within a paradoxical duality creating both tensions and synergies,
- *embedded religious tradition* that induces a transcendental dimension to the interpretation of everyday affairs (Friggieri, O. 2013).

Thus the analyses and findings of this research have an appeal to a wider group of EU member states, including candidate and applicant countries, provided that they share at least some of the mentioned traits. In such countries, non-state actors tend to suffer from chronic administrative capacity deficit which is manifested in manpower shortage, heavy reliance on volunteers, fragmentation and lack of adequate funding from independent sources. In turn, these internal limitations render organised groups more dependent on the state for funding, information and policy processes. This trend injects elements of rivalry among different organisations because each of them tries to negotiate the best deal which often comes at the expense of others due to limited resources. Very often, in situations where the elites are few and know each other very well, real negotiations do not occur during formal fora, but are rather the consequence of one-to-one informal bargaining processes. This is a direct symptom of small size where people and groups are obsessed by power that, many a time, has to be seized by intense, but brief, infighting. Besides providing little incentive to solidify the voice of non-state actors through inter-groups partnerships and umbrella organisations, this scenario also uncovers the imperfections of small states' institutions. In contrast to the developed and impersonal apparatus of a large state, there is more scope for individuals

to serve as norm entrepreneurs within the existing institutional structures of small states. Although the EU constrains national governments to launch and develop structures and processes of consultation for more inclusivity in political activity, empirical research showed that these are often perceived as being tokenistic to please Brussels. Domestic dynamics continue to cement the centralisation of the public administration of small states where real power is exclusively reserved for the political elite.

Structural embeddedness within domestic power dynamics requires interest groups and social partners to prioritise in favour of a 'window-in' model, that is, to concentrate mainly on the national level, generally achieving low levels of Europeanisation. However such a low extent of Europeanisation is also a consequence of coercive constraints, including geographical remoteness and lack of sufficient resources to cope with the bureaucratic requirements of EU programmes. On the other hand, there may be a minority of organised groups that treat themselves as outsiders to the system of interest representation as devised by the state. Due to their lack of dependence on state funds and non-participation in centralised systems of interest intermediation, they are more likely to adopt a 'window-out' approach to get from Brussels that which was consciously rejected locally for reasons of autonomy from state patronage. They are the ones that challenge embedded systems and norms, and continuously work to change domestic culture through their direct involvement in European affairs. The nature of Europeanisation, that is whether generated by RCI or SI motivators, largely depends on the dimensions of space and time. Research is suggesting that the greater the level of dissatisfaction by non-state actors of the domestic system and culture of interest representation, the greater their drive to transform the ingrained status-quo.

One might argue that these knowledge claims concerning polity formation and political innuendos have been more a consequence of political tradition characterised by centralisation and statist approach to policy-making than a consequence of size. However smallness, islandness and remoteness tend to accentuate the claims' effects and implications (Baldacchino 2013, Pirotta 2012, Warrington 2012, 1997, 1994; Thorhallsson 2000, Boissevain 1993, Katzenstein 1984). Yet knowledge claims revolving around the low levels of Europeanisation experienced by non-state actors, primarily interest groups, are determined by the resources as well as the domestic

national institutional context in which they operationalise their homefront and European strategies (Saurugger 2013, Klüver 2010).

9.3 The conceptual level of Europeanisation

By designating the EU as the independent variable in its conceptual framework, this work endorses the widely-used definition where Europeanisation is understood as 'the reorientation or reshaping of politics (and governance) in the domestic arena in ways that reflect policies, practices or preferences advanced through the EU system of governance' (Bache and Jordan 2006: 30). However *the EU system of governance* is not exclusively interpreted in its traditional top-down dimension as if the only mode of European influence is the downloading of legislation and court decisions from Brussels and Luxembourg, but it also embraces the horizontal dimension stemming from cross-country experiences (Bache 2010: 114, Lehmkuhl 2008: 340). In addition, this research investigates the bottom-up dimension as well, particularly when direct reference is made to statistics and instances when domestic groups use surrogates to voice their concerns in the EU arena. These surrogates can take many forms but, most prominently, they are the European federations in which domestic groups are affiliated, MEPs and national politicians.

However causal explanations go beyond the directionality of EU interference since they encompass methodological choices that affect correlations between variables (Exadaktylos and Radaelli 2009). The first part of this section assesses the thesis' contribution in the applied directionality and dimensionality of Europeanisation while the second part focuses on the new impetus resulting from geographical and timing choices.

9.3.1 New impetus I: directionality and dimensionality

In this vein, the thesis answers a series of calls for new research agendas as it manages to propose and work out a conceptual scope of Europeanisation that incorporates three of the innovative factors recommended by Vink and Graziano (2008: 8), namely:

1. There is *nothing necessarily 'top-down'* in Europeanisation as multi-directional forms of pressures are included.

2. The research scope and the definition of Europeanisation coined for this study includes both *vertical (direct) effects*, like EU funding, lobbying, regulation and legislation, as well as *lateral (indirect) effects*, like socialisation and sharing of good practices among member states.

3. With the research primacy focused on *interest groups*, the scope is not restricted to the 'usual changing policy domains as a result of EU influence,' but allows for a 'wider potential domain of impact encompassing *polity and politics' dimensions'*.

In view of the first and second points, the thesis looks at the different directions that Europeanisation can take and, therefore, its vertical direction embraces both top-down and bottom-up dimensions, or as Vink and Graziano (2008: 10) coined it a 'bottom-up-down design'. The vertical dimension in itself is not exclusive either, as the thesis looks at the 'horizontal' directions as well where Europeanisation effects are understood as a corollary of both increased interdependency between member states and also of heightened exchange of information and mutual learning. In empirical terms, the vertical forces (in particular downloading) produce tangible and 'direct effects' as a result of 'legalistic' mechanisms (Lavenex 2008: 319), whereas the lateral forces, or crossloading, are more subtle, 'indirect' and 'soft' in their sociological nature (Vink and Graziano 2008). In this sense, this thesis endorses a 'dominant constructive discourse' (Lehmkuhl 2008: 337), or a sociological oriented design, that seems to characterise more recent works on Europeanisation (Blavoukos and Oikonomou 2012). In this sense, this work relates to Warleigh's vision (2001) which considers 'NGOs as agents of political socialisation'. Although these latest trends open new avenues in applying the concept of Europeanisation, they raise problems relating to concept stretching, methodology and research design. Consequently, in order to sustain the conceptual framework where the EU is deemed to be the independent variable, this work subscribes to the 'pragmatic solution' proposed by Bulmer and Lequesne (2013: 21) which upholds the 'top–down understanding of Europeanisation as the core focus of the research design, while keeping other directionalities in mind as the research context'.

In view of the third point, the thesis addresses Bulmer's reflection that in the realm of political forces, Europeanisation literature is arguably at an early stage of development (Bulmer 2008: 55). In their methodological study that maps out the usage of concepts and methods in Europeanisation, Exadaktylos and Radaelli (2009: 514) agree with Bulmer when they observe that 'there is definitively less intellectual appetite for appraising the politics dimension'. Originally, it was all about policy effects, but recent projects started to incorporate polity and political actors, including domestic political parties, interest groups, parliaments, executives, courts and public opinion (see Bulmer and Lequesne 2013). By centre-staging interest groups in the investigative process, this thesis responds to the lack of 'comprehensive' and 'systematic' information in scholarly literature about the effects of the domestic adaptation of interest groups to 'European regional integration' (Exadaktylos and Radaelli 2009, Harwood 2009, Eising 2008, Vink and Graziano 2008). Furthermore, the contribution in this regard is even bolder when one takes into consideration the contextualisation of the study: Malta and Ireland. Apart from a series of works edited by Xuereb (2004-2009),[123] the Europeanisation of non-state actors in Malta is still at its inception, while in Ireland it has barely started to feature in scholarly literature as pointed out by the *Study on Volunteering in the EU: Country Report Ireland,* 2010. Ó Broin and Murphy (2013) did not feel the need to include the concept of Europeanisation in a collection of papers featuring the latest trends in civil society and public policy in Ireland. The *Irish Political Studies* (2009) journal did, however, publish a special edition on the Europeanisation of Irish party politics but interest groups hardly featured at all. In the circumstances, one can then better understand why many research subjects in both countries expressed their view that this research was 'the first of its kind' that they had ever participated in.

9.3.2   New impetus II: geographical and timing dispersion

Furthermore the choice of Malta and Ireland responds to Schimmelfennig's and Sedelmeier's (2008: 97) appeal to diversify the composition of country selection by including 'old and new members' because, as Exadaktylos and Radaelli (2009) observe,

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[123] The series, called *Civil Society Project Report*, provided the opportunity for experts to take stock of Malta's experience of 'Malta after Membership' with the citizen at the centre and taking the political, the economic, the social and anthropological and the religious together, all feeding into the central question: What has changed for Malta and the Maltese?

'some countries are more systematically studied, and others neglected'. Vink and Graziano (2008) name Germany, France and the UK as the 'usual suspects', whereas the perpetuation of this 'within-region' design has moved to Central and Eastern countries where comparisons are 'confined among accession countries' of the big bang enlargement (Blavoukos and Oikonomou 2012, Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2008). This work follows Goetz's (2008) advice to pay attention to variations in 'broader territorial patterns' and moves beyond geographical clustering. Besides venturing within different geographical zones, this thesis also experiments with contrasting temporal elements since it rests on two selected states with a very different EU timeline. In fact Ireland joined the EU more than 30 years before Malta. Such an unusual comparative study addresses the needs for new research pastures recommended by many scholars. Bache et al. (2011) establish new standards of comparative analysis on these lines when they compared Greece to Croatia, FYR Macedonia and Slovenia to assess the domestic impact of EU cohesion policy and pre-accession aid. Disparities in time and geography have the potential to widen and deepen our knowledge of the great variety of Europeanisation processes and mechanisms and about the conditions under which they are observable and effective. However it does come at a cost. A time disparity of three decades in the accession timeline of Malta and Ireland renders comparative analysis more problematic because of 'time, timing and sequencing' asymmetries (Bache 2010, Bulmer and Burch 2009). This brings us face to face with Bulmer's call for more explicit HI theorising which is conspicuous by its absence in this study (Bulmer 2008: 56). The issue of HI will be tackled in greater detail in the caveats section.

9.4   The methodological level of mixed data streams

Measuring Europeanisation remains a contested matter where the magnitude of change is of an interpretive nature, often based on 'thick descriptive work' (Vink and Graziano 2008: 17). Although subscribing to a familiar conceptual framework that has been extensively used by many scholars, this thesis breaks a long and strong tradition of framing Europeanisation within a *sui generis* qualitative methodology (Exadaktylos and Radaelli 2009, Haverland 2008). Thus it comes as no big surprise that 'most studies focus on the question of *how* the EU matters, rather than to *what extent* it matters' (Haverland 2008: 67).

9.4.1 Simultaneous large-N and small-N analyses

Since its initiation stages, this thesis was already constructing a mixed methodological model to address this gap in mainstream Europeanisation literature. To this end it utilised three data collections tools (surveys, interviews and observations) that criss-cross the qualitative-quantitative divide. Alongside the merit of triangulating results, the research design looked further ahead and assigned specific tasks to the qualitative and quantitative streams of data. The latter, for example, was not used to test the two competing theoretical alternatives, RCI and SI, as is usually the case (Haverland 2008: 61) but was strategically brought in to measure the extent of Europeanisation. Thus when outcomes point to *significant* or *marginal* degrees of Europeanisation, the attributed magnitudes of change are not the result of judgement and interpretation based on small-N qualitative analysis but are based on statistical tests that make use of large-N quantitative analysis. The term *significance* in this work is fundamentally rooted in its statistical sense. Besides gaining confidence that the identified patterns can be generalised to the population at large in the selected countries, this methodological option has ample potential for both longitudinal studies as well as cross-comparisons with other countries, given that the same variables are used in new research cycles. This is the reason why the conceptual and methodological frameworks have been thoroughly explained in Chapters 2 and 5 so as to create a detailed audit trail for replication studies in the future.

On the other hand, qualitative data are not only used as an integral part of the comparative analysis between Malta and Ireland but, more importantly, they lead to the identification of the nature of Europeanisation. In Haverland's terms, this study responds to 'the question of *how* EU matters'. The intermediate variables belonging to the two schools of institutionalist thought, RCI and SI, are used as filters to determine which of them are acting as enablers of change or as pockets of resistance to pressures stemming from the EU and its member states. The nature of change, that is whether predominantly rationalist, sociological or both, is decoded through a stringent narrative analysis that ends the process of investigation with a series of thematic maps.

9.4.2   Methodological contributions

In the end both the quantitative and qualitative parts of this work offer their fair share of original contribution to the scholarly debate on Europeanisation. The quantitative component expands on the emerging practice of injecting quantitative methods in Europeanisation literature which, according to Exadaktylos and Radaelli (2009), have only been used by less than a handful of studies. Statistical data presents a novelty to the academic community in the way it understands familiar paradigms of Europeanisation that have been traditionally explored from a quasi-monopolistic qualitative orthodoxy. Nevertheless, the qualitative component still played a crucial role in the study. The variety of outcomes concerning the codification of the nature of Europeanisation suggests that the rationalist and sociological logics need not be considered as the occurrence of one precludes the occurrence of the other, but may be seen as part of a synthetic theoretical framework for Europeanisation research (Börzel and Risse 2003, Checkel 2001, Schimmelfennig 2001, Risse et al. 1999).

9.5   The theoretical level of new institutionalism

The last notion of the previous section introduces the next level for critical assessment: explanatory-theory. As the outcomes suggest, there is one case scenario involving Maltese SHEGs wherein the nature of Europeanisation has been predominantly decoded in terms of both RCI and SI understandings. To this effect, the empirical findings of this thesis contribute to a growing literature which argues that the two logics of political action are not mutually exclusive, despite their conflicting ontological and epistemological attributes. This section is essentially divided into two parts. Firstly, it assesses the nature of the relationship between RCI and SI and, secondly it reflects on the contribution of this work in terms of pairing ontological and epistemological considerations.

9.5.1   Challenging the traditional dichotomy

In a way, the outcomes challenge the foundations of the initial set of hypotheses as devised in Chapter 1. This was based on the traditional dichotomy between the two

brands of new institutionalism. In fact, the hypotheses' formation of this work can be differentiated against the classical model of Europeanisation developed by Börzel and Risse in 2003 which treats RCI and SI as compatible and takes a synthetic approach in their investigation. Conversely, using the same set of independent, mediating and dependent variables, this study probed RCI and SI as contending or standing hypotheses in rivalry. After all, 'the prerequisite for a well equipped research strategy is to mobilise competitive, sometimes counterfactual, explanations of possible change' (Haverland as quoted by Graziano and Vink 2013). Accordingly the qualitative data analysis was intended to be marshalled from this perspective but participants' feedback began to show from the early stages of data collection that, at times, the two logics often occur simultaneously, or characterise different phases in processes of adaptational change (Bache 2010). This is the reason why the nature of Europeanisation in Chapter 8 has been decoded in all instances in terms of *predominance*, meaning that, for example, the SI explanation of domestic transformation is more likely to be the case without, however, excluding the presence of the RCI variant.

In reality, political action cannot generally be explained either as based exclusively on a logic of consequences or as entirely based on a logic of appropriateness but probably involves essential features of both. The findings presented in this work view the relationship between structures and personalities as closely interrelated. Strategically acting agents shape their environment even as they are being formed by it. This interdependence between institutions and actors is even more acute in small island polities as it has been argued both in the theoretical and empirical chapters. Political actors are constituted both by their interests, by which they evaluate their anticipations of consequences, and by the norms embedded in their identities and political institutions (Thielemann 2001). They calculate consequences and follow norms, and the relation between the two is often subtle (March and Olsen 1989: 10).

9.5.2 Ontological and epistemological contributions

Like any other social science research project, this thesis has been subjected to its ontological [124] and epistemological [125] positions. Although these remain implicit throughout the different phases of the research cycle, they still shaped the approach to theory and choice of methods. These positions are more like a 'skin' than a 'sweater' in this research: they were *not* put on and taken off whenever it was fit for the researcher (Marsh and Furlong 2010: 17).

The formulation of a conceptual framework based on hypotheses that seek a cause and effect relationship and the application of a mixed methodology based on the hypothetical deductive model point out to a critical realist stance [126]. In fact critical realism, according to Zachariadis et al. (2010), offers a sound theoretical foundation for mixed-method information systems research. This strand of philosophical resonance shares an ontological position with positivism, meaning that in our case processes of Europeanisation exist independently of our knowledge and, consequently, it is possible to draw and test causal statements. However in epistemological terms, critical realism has more in common with the interpretist tradition, in the sense that outcomes are shaped by the way Europeanisation is socially constructed by people, groups and institutions. In this vein, critical realists need to identify and understand both the external 'reality' and the social construction of that reality if their research is to explain the relationships between social phenomena. Methodologically, this rationale has clear implications as it acknowledges the utility of both quantitative and qualitative data.

Grounded within these parameters of realism, this thesis uses quantitative methods to identify the extent to which social partners and interest groups have become

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[124] Ontology is essentially the nature of knowledge. The central question is whether social entities have a reality external to social actors (objectivism) and thus it is fixed; or whether they can and should be considered as social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors (constructionism) and thus it is always in the making (Bryman 2008).

[125] Epistemology lays out the ways how we can arrive to acceptable knowledge. The central question is whether it is appropriate to apply the methods of the natural sciences (i.e. quantitative) to social science research. If so, then it is either a case of positivist epistomology executed by a value free researcher or a realist epistemology that believes in a reality independent of our perceptions. If not, then we have to use qualitative data that attempts to see world from the actor's perspective, in other words relying on interpretivism (Bryman 2008).

[126] Sometimes referred to 'contemporary realism'.

'Europeanised'. Simultaneously, it was equally committed to analyse qualitatively how Europeanisation is perceived, or discursively constructed, around the logics of appropriateness and consequences by interest groups and social partners. According to Bache, Bulmer and Gunay (2012), these two logics that 'are usually used as proxies of SI and RCI respectively within Europeanization literature are bridged by such a critical realist ontology'. The two parallel lines of investigation are crucial because the realist argument would be that both the 'reality' and the discursive construction affect what domestic actors do in response to the triggers of Europeanisation. Whereas the quantitative investigation produces 'objective' and 'transferable' findings as in positivist approaches; the qualitative part, as in interpretivism, generates an understanding or narrative which is particular to that time and space, and partial, being based on a subjective interpretation of the views of the research subjects involved (Marsh and Furlong 2010). To this end, critical realism advocates methodological pluralism within a framed ontological and epistemological setting.

This is the metatheoretical design that has been utilised throughout the whole thesis: from the setting of its initial objectives down to the presentation of its empirical findings. One of the major criticisms of the realist school has been that 'it is not easy, indeed many would see as it as impossible, to combine scientific [positivism] and interpretivist positions' because of their conflicting philosophical underpinnings (Bryman 2008). However, Bache (2010) and Burnham et. al (2008: 30) notice the trend towards more dialogue between competing ontological and methodological approaches, typically between rationalist and sociological analyses. They claim that insights could be utilised in this endeavour from a critical realist ontology and epistemology. Their suggestion has been put to test in this thesis wherein critical realism proved to be practical, suitable and flexible for the purposes of this research. This could only be achieved by a rather complex research design and an intricate hypotheses testing exercise.

9.6   Caveats and areas for further research

The study has offered an empirical perspective of the impact of Europeanisation on domestic non-state actors. As a direct consequence of the methodology employed, the

study encountered a number of methodological and thematic limitations which were exposed in Chapter 5. Nonetheless at this stage it is important to focus on the major caveats of the study which may in turn serve as the basis for further research.

9.6.1   Asymmetries of time

The most serious caveat of this research is the absence of HI as the third major variant of new institutionalism which has the potential of decoding processes of Europeanisation as a corollary of time. Although this research identified a clear time-period (2004-2011) for appraising the effects of Europeanisation processes on the dependent variables, it did not incorporate 'path-dependency' as a lever of change. Preference was, instead, given to institutional opportunities and sociological impetus as stimuli of Europeanisation. However the exclusion of HI from the explanatory theoretical framework, for reasons of practicality, was compensated by innumerable occasions where its logical underpinnings were implicit throughout the thesis, particularly in Chapter 3 where the political landscaping of the two selected countries depicted various insights of locked-in pathways and critical junctions. Furthermore, a great number of differences between Malta and Ireland that emerged out of the quantitative results and qualitative narratives could be understood in terms of the different timing of their accession to membership. Finally the confirmation of the null hypothesis in three out of four case scenarios highlights the 'stickiness' of endogenous institutional and political arrangements in small states' governance. The results confirm that besides the complexity of policy processes and the need to be contingent in order to respond to the ever changing scenario, continuity is the third essential component of institutional stability. This resembles the principle of 'incremental change', as advocated by HI, with no hint of any 'punctuating' events that could have distorted the pre-existing equilibrium (Bulmer 2008: 50).

According to Graziano and Vink (2013: 40), 'the main focus of this strand of research was – and still is – the analysis of the sequences of domestic adaptations in connection to the evolution of European political discourses, strategies, institutions, and policies'. HI is considered by pioneering scholars in the field as a key component of Europeanisation research. As an approach, it incorporates both rationalist and

sociological elements, but emphasises the importance of practices embedded over time in explaining how actors and institutions react to external pressures for change (Bache 2010). The case of this thesis matches the experience of most contemporary social scientists who unconsciously take a momentary view of the social world. Indeed, the methodological decisions constrained this 'momentary view' as survey research is run at intervals and, thus, producing an instant snapshot at a fixed time. Yet the meaning of social events or processes is frequently distorted when they are ripped from their temporal context. Pierson (2004), the pioneer of 'politics in time', maintains that constructing 'moving pictures' rather than 'snapshots' can vastly enrich the understanding of complex social dynamics, and greatly improve the theories and methods that are used to explain them.

The importance of HI becomes even more crucial when one takes into account the case selection for this research where a disparity of more than 30 years marks the different accession periods of Malta and Ireland. The research falls short of assessing how the different length of the two states' membership could have potentially affected the results obtained. The enthusiasm and high hopes shared by a number of research subjects in Malta who were experiencing the first years of EU membership was totally out of synch in the context of the great majority of Irish subjects who have become accustomed, if not disillusioned, by the European experience. Moreover such a disparity of accession time has a direct effect on the tempo of change suggesting that the acceleration of change in Malta had to be more rapid than in Ireland. In other words, the uneven Europeanisation experiences in Malta and Ireland can be attributed to asymmetries of time that go beyond the mediatory roles of RCI's and SI's explanations. A more comprehensive understanding of the extent and nature of Europeanisation would have included issues of time, timing and tempo, given the focus on two states whose engagement with the EU varies substantially across these dimensions. This presents an opportunity for further research in the future which would entail a longitudinal element in its design to account for change over longer periods of time. It may seek to explore, as suggested by Bulmer (2008: 56), the way in which non-state actors were obliged at different times to adjust to the impact of the EU upon their country and, thereby, identifying how the tempo and sequence of developments triggered adjustment processes. Such a study will be ideal for Malta in a couple of years' time, in particular,

as it would have further matured its performance and attitude over the EU's learning curve.

9.6.2   Asymmetries of power

Another important caveat that needs to be flagged is the asymmetries of powers of the EU in different categories of policy sectors. In other words, the impact of European integration on the behaviour of non-state actors is not uniform, partly, because it varies in accordance with the specific policy domains that they are active in (Bulmer and Radaelli 2013: 357, Magone 2011, Bache and George 2006: 354, Pollack 2005a: 46). For example the EU's competency in the social policy areas, like health care and education, is rather weak when compared to policies comprising trade and labour regulation that have been systematically developed over time (Quaglia et al. 2007: 415). This explains why trade unions and employers' associations are more prone to EU pressures, not necessarily because they are better resourced or informed than the rest of interest groups, but mainly because their core policy domains are largely influenced by EU institutions, mechanisms and processes. Such an assertion might explain the significant extent of Europeanisation experienced by Maltese social partners but falls short of accounting for the minor extent registered by their Irish counterparts. It is here that the asymmetries of time become crucial once again because HI undoubtedly has great potential in explaining such a discrepancy in terms of differing temporal elements.

In line with the rationale above, the commonality of results concerning the low extent of Europeanisation shared by Maltese and Irish SHEGs can also be explained in terms of asymmetrical EU competencies in different policy domains. Since EU responsibilities are rather weak and diffused in many of the areas concerning social and community policies, interest groups are less inclined to Europeanise because they are still able to fulfil many of their political goals at the domestic level. Consequently, instead of pursuing a 'logic of influence', in other words looking for influence at the EU level, or *window out* in Van Schendelen's terms; interest groups follow a 'logic of the immediate environment' and remain concentrated on their activities at the domestic level (Beyers and Kerremans 2007 as quoted by Saurugger 2013: 342) or *window in* Van Schendelen's terms.

However one might legitimately ask whether the inclusion of environmental groups with social and human rights ones was effectively a good idea, given that the two sets of groups appertain to different policy domains. Whereas, as we have seen earlier, EU competencies are rather insubstantial in the case of the latter, they are very strong and well established in the case of the former. Thus, one would have expected a different adjustment process by the two sets of groups. The fact that they were amalgamated, particularly in the quantitative analysis, can be regarded as a structural weakness because their individual performance in the survey was not highlighted. However this methodological flaw was consciously inevitable from the very start. Since the numbers of environmental groups in both Malta and Ireland are very limited as indicated in the methodology chapter, their numbers had to be incorporated with the ones that are active in social affairs, so as to achieve a critical mass for statistical purposes. Otherwise the whole scope of quantitative analysis would have lost its appeal because of small absolute figures that would invariably lead to unreliable statistical results. Likewise the trade unions and employers' organisations were also amalgamated, even though they normally maintain opposing standpoints, not least on EU affairs. This is an inbuilt limitation imposed by the reality of small states where the number of actors is small, yet differences between merged actors are still made evident through qualitative data that treated each set of the four groupings on a separate basis.

9.6.3   Euroscepticism

Research findings, particularly resulting from elite interviewing, suggest another important and emerging trend in Europeanisation studies which is hardly discussed in this thesis: Euroscepticism among non-state actors. Trade union leaders in Malta, but more aggressively in Ireland, air their frustrations against 'exhaustive' austerity measures promulgated by a neoliberal EU which, according to them, is being led by an inner core (Germany in particular, and France to a lesser extent) that seems to enjoy hegemonic power over the rest. As argued by Bulmer and Lequesne (2013: 21), a 'prolonged period of economic austerity', such as the one experienced by the Irish during the time of this research, is definitely directly related to a growth of criticism of the EU. Resistance and inertia against the European integration process is not only

manifested by militant trade unionists alone. Some of the leaders of environmental groups, as well as social and human rights groups, also share their reservations. For example, the Maltese hunters' lobby speaks of a sort of 'conspiracy theory' mastered by both national and European authorities which is putting them at a disadvantage to more mainstream green groups. In addition, a number of Irish and Maltese social groups lament the ceasing of Social Europe and of the alleged loss of the democratic credentials of the EU that had to make way for the dictum of the austerity programme as devised by the EC, the ECB and the IMF.

These sceptic reactions need further investigation in the future as they may offer a potential challenge to some of the tenets of Europeanisation literature. For many years, Europeanisation has been regarded as a benign force of domestic change but the economic and financial crises since 2007 have taken their toll not only on failed member states like Greece, Portugal, Ireland and Spain but also on strong ones that are bound to lend money to the former as part of the rescue of the single currency. For example, when the Maltese Finance Minister spoke in Parliament that Malta's share in the Greek bailout amounted to 3% of its GDP, making Malta the largest contributor out of the EU member states (Balzan 2013), there was an outcry of public discontent among the Maltese who were already aware that the EC had cast its eyes on their country because its deficit exceeded 3% of GDP in 2012 and again in 2013 (*The Malta Independent* 2013). Europeanisation, as many commentators opine, did not remain as a sort of an 'ideal' to aspire to but it has become a sort of 'flaw' to stay away from. Criticism of neoliberal European integration has been used by a large number of non-state actors either to boost their appeal with a disgruntled population or to establish themselves in the national arena (Saurugger 2013: 346). Taking Ireland as their focus of study, Hayward and Murphy (2010) and Laffan and Mahoney (2008: 82) refer to various instances in Irish politics when 'audible voices critical to the EU' seemed to override 'the strong consensus that exists amongst mainstream parties' on EU affairs.

The answer to Blavoukos and Oikonomou's hypothesised question on whether 'Europeanisation is still in academic fashion' must include deeper and wider studies of the impact of an increasing eurosceptic psyche if Europeanisation literature is to go beyond its 'current regional and country-based focus', particularly featuring the Central

and Eastern member states and others that, at present, have an accession perspective (Blavoukos and Oikonomou 2012: 12). Goetz (2008: 77) suggest that Eurosceptism outstrips territorial proximity as it is 'widespread' across the different regions of the EU and beyond. Referring to political parties and party systems, Mair (2008: 155) contends that there is growing work in the politics of Euroscepticism, however it needs to adopt a comparative stance rather than remain inevitably nationally oriented if it really wants to set the terms of reference for later work.

This thesis exposes Euroscepticism as an area that deserves greater attention in Europeanisation studies not only when the focus is on political parties but, equally important, when social partners and interest groups are involved. Research in this direction can illustrate how this negative form of Europeanisation can be used as a tool by certain domestic groups to legitimise their stratagems at the domestic level within an integrative region which is transforming itself on an ongoing basis.

9.7   Final reflections

Oscar Wilde once said, 'The truth is rarely pure and never simple'[127]. This statement sums up the challenges that had to be faced throughout all the stages of this work right from the construction of a conceptual framework through the adaptation of explanatory theories to the formulation of a comparative methodology that produces meaningful empirical results. This research has evidently shown that there are various areas where social partners and interest groups in Malta and Ireland, as two small island polities at the frontiers of an integrated regional block, share a similar narrative but, in others, they contradict each other. In spite of the great emphasis on size which has been made in this work, there are other factors that can have a direct effect on the extent and nature of Europeanisation of domestic non-state actors. Supranational developments at the EU level, time bands, policy domains, political culture and the typography of organised groups can all be mediators of the domestication of European politics. As the reflections on the findings reveal, these can possibly be more influential than size in itself.

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[127] Quoted from *The Importance of Being Earnest, A Trivial Comedy for Serious People*, a play by Oscar Wilde which was first performed on 14 February 1895 in London.

On a more general note, the critical realist stance of this work attempted to generate a rich and extensive corpus of data that provides contrasting and complementary understandings of the case scenarios in Malta and Ireland. On methodological grounds, it stands out in forging a workable statistical method to measure the extent of Europeanisation with the potential of replication in future studies. The formulation of a set of knowledge claims that can be transferable to other states which share similar socio-political profiling is a significant addition to the merits of the ambitious methodology of the study. At the end of it all by focusing exclusively on domestic organised interests and the political dynamics that shape small states' governance, this work constitutes an original contribution to the body of knowledge concerning the Europeanisation of polities and politics.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Preliminary Fieldwork

Preliminary fieldwork 2009-2011

Date	Interviewee	Interviewee Position	Interview Scope	Venue
13/01/09	Prof Roderick Pace	Director of European Documentation & Research Centre	To explore issues of Europeanisation	University of Malta
18/02/09	Dr Joanna Drake	Head, Permanent European Commission Representation in Malta	To identify potential policy domains to serve as case studies and establish contacts for fieldwork in Brussels	Malta
23/02/09	Dr Vanni Xuereb	Head, Malta EU Steering & Action Committee (MEUSAC)	To obtain an observatory status on MEUSAC sectoral committees	MEUSAC, Malta
Multiple meetings	Dr Edward Warrington	Head, Department of Public Policy	To explore issues of institutionalism in small states	University of Malta
Multiple meetings	Prof Godfrey A Pirotta	Head, Institute of Public Admin. & Management	To discuss nature and character of Maltese civil society	University of Malta
21/04/09	Mr Saviour Rizzo	Assistant Head, Labour Studies Institute	To research social partners' role in Maltese and European contexts	University of Malta
19/05/09	Prof Kenneth Wain	Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations	To explore developments of Maltese legislation for voluntary organisations	Malta
21/05/09	Mr Julian Farrugia	Consultation Executive, MEUSAC	To map consultation processes among state and non-state actors	MEUSAC, Malta
28/05/09	H.E. Gerald O'Connor	Irish High Commissioner for Malta	To establish networking contacts with Irish counterparts	Irish Embassy, Malta
07/07/9	Anonymous on the request of the interviewee	Attachè – Malta Desk	To get first hand info about the operations of the Maltese permanent representation in Brussels	*Dar Malta* Brussels
08/07/09	Mr Charles McCreevy	EU Commissioner for the Internal Market and Services	To interview him about the performance of small states in the EU	Berlaymont Building Brussels
09/07/09	Mr Omar Cutajar	Malta Business Bureau, Permanent Representative in Brussels	To learn about Maltese business lobby in the EU context	Brussels

12/10/09	Dr Manwel Debono	Head, Department of Labour Studies	To discuss issues pertaining to statistical analysis	University of Malta
20/6/11	Ms Marzia Baldassari	Executive, Volunteering Ireland	To seek assistance in managing fieldwork in Ireland	Dublin
21/6/11	Dr Rory O'Connell	Director, National Economic & Social Council	To seek assistance in managing fieldwork in Ireland	NESC, Dublin

Appendix B

Maltese and Irish participants in the Questionnaire

Malta

Trade unions

Association of Airline Engineers Malta (AAEM)
Confederated Maltese Trade Unions (CMTU)
Emergency Nurses Union (ENU)
Enemalta Professional Officers Union (EPOU)
Enemalta Senior Staff Union
Forum Unions Maltin (ForUM)
General Workers Union (GWU)
Għaqda Professjonisti tal-Korporazzjoni għas-Servizzi tal-Ilma
Malta Air Traffic Controllers Association
Malta Union of Bank Employees (MUBE)
Malta Union of Midwives and Nurses (MUMN)
Malta Union of Teachers (MUT)
Malta Union of Tourist Guides (MUTG)
Musicians and Entertainers Union
Rampa Union
The Lotto Receivers Union
The Medical Association of Malta (MAM)
Union Ħaddiema Bank Ċentrali
Union Ħaddiema Magħqudin (UĦM)
Union Ħaddiema Università ta' Malta (UĦUM)
Union of Cabin Crew
Union Professjonisti - l-Awtorità tal-Ippjanar u Ambjent (UPAP)
Union Technical and Clerical MEPA (UTAC)
University of Malta Academic Staff Association (UMASA)

Employers' associations

Assoċjazzjoni tal-Bdiewa
Assoċjazzjoni tal-Bejjiegħa tal-Laħam
Association of Car Importers Malta (ACIM)
Association of General Retailers and Traders (GRTU)
Association of Ship Agents
Federated Association of Travel and Tourism Agents (FATTA)
Federation of Malta Hotels, Pensions and Catering Establishments
Għaqda Bdiewa Progressivi
Għaqda tal-Pitkala
Gozo Tourism Association
Malta Chamber of Commerce
Malta Chamber of Small and Medium enterprises
Malta Employers Association (MEA)
Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association (MHRA)

Social and Human rights Groups

AEGEE - Valletta
Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat Malta
Amplify
Arab European Forum for Development and Dialogue
Arabic Culture Information Society
Armenian Community of Malta
Assoċjazzjoni Kunsilli Lokali
Assoċjazzjoni tas-Sidien Caravans u Bangalows Għadira Site Mellieħa
Balluta Residents Association
Ċentru Tbexbix (*Sunrise Centre)*
CycleSafe Malta
Domus Pius IX
Don Bosco House
Down Syndrome Association
Equal Partners
European Movement (Malta)
Fondazzjoni AŻAD - Ċentru ta' Studji Politiċi
Fondazzjoni Kenn u Tama
Fondazzjoni Temi Zammit
Fondazzjoni Soċjo-Kulturali Ambjentali Augustina
Fondazzjoni U (Xandir Soċju Reliġjuż)
Fondazzjoni Ulied Ħal Qormi
Forum for Justice and Cooperation
Fostering Social Technological Economic Renewal Foundation (FOSTER)
Foundation for Respite Care Centre (Dar il-Kaptan)
Foundation for Shelter and Support for Migrants
Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (Malta)
GetUpStandUp!
Gift of Life Foundation
Good Shepherd Sisters (Dar Merħba Bik)
Gozo Association for the Deaf
Gozo NGOs Association
Grupp Flimkien Naslu
Għaqda Mużikali San Ġużepp, Għajnsielem
Għaqda Persuni Neqsin mis-Smigħ – Malta
Għaxaq Folk Group (a.k.a. Għaxaq Folk Ensemble)
Happy Moments Kenya
Home Economics in Action
Ignatian Youth Network – Malta Foundation
Inħobbu l-Munxar u x-Xlendi
Inspire Foundation
Islamic Community Malta
Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice Foundation
Koperattiva Kummerċ Ġust
Koperazzjoni Internazzjonali - Malta (Kopin)

Kunsill Nazzjonali taż-Żgħażagħ
Lions Club Mdina
Lions Club Sliema
Living Ability Not Disability (LAND Group)
Living with Dignity Group
Malta Association of Women in Business
Malta Federation of Organisations of Persons with Disability
Malta Gay Right Movement
Malta Girl Guides
Malta Humanist Association
Malta Parkinsons Disease Foundation
Malta Red Cross Society
Malta Regional Development and Dialogue Foundation
Malta Society of the Blind
Malta UNESCO Youth Association
Mental Health Association Malta
Mid-Dlam Għad-Dawl
Mission Fund
Mission of Mercy
Mothers' Union
Moviment Graffitti
Muscular Dystrophy Group
National Association of Pensioners
National Council of Women
National Foster Care Association
National Parents Society of Persons with Disability
Noise Abatement Society
Pamper the World
Paulo Freire Institute Foundation
Pope John XXIII, Peace Laboratory
Richmond Foundation
SKOP (Solidarjetà u Koperazzjoni)
Sliema Residents Association
Soċjetà Storika, Kulturali, Amjentali Vittoriosa
Solidarity and Overseas Service Malta (SOS Malta)
S.T.A.R.S. (Shock Trauma Acceptance Reality Situations)
St. John Rescue Corp
Ta' Klula Foundation
The Anglican Church in Malta and Gozo
The Military & Hospitaller Order of St, Lazarus of Jerusalem Grand Prior of the Maltese Islands
The Millenium Chapel Foundation
The Multiple Sclerosis Society of Malta
The Today Public Policy Charitable Trust
Touring Club Malta
TROUPE 18:45
Valletta Alive Foiundation

Victim Support Malta
Vodafone Malta Foundation
YMCA Valletta
Young European Federalists (JEF Malta)
Żminijietna – Leħen ix-Xellug *(Voice of the Left)*

Environmental Groups

Alternattiva Demokratika Żgħażagħ - Green Youth Malta
Animal Rights Group
BirdLife Malta
Din L-Art Helwa
Federazzjoni Kaċċaturi, Nassaba u Konservazzjonisti (FKNK)
Flimkien Ghal Ambjent Ahjar
Friends of the Earth Malta (FOE MALTA)
Genista Research Foundation
Greenhouse - Malta
Għaqda Produtturi tal-Għasel
Malta Horticultural Society (The)
Malta Organic Agricultural Movement
Nature Trust (Malta)
Permaculture Research Foundation Malta
Share Malta Association
Sharklab
Soċjetà Agrarja
The Entomological Society of Malta
The Heritage Parks Foundation
Wirt Għawdex

Republic of Ireland

Association of Higher Civil & Public Servants
Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland
Building and Allied Trades Unions
Communications Workers' Union
Electricity Supply Board's Officer's Association
Irish Bank Officials' Association
Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Irish Federation of University Teachers
Irish Medical Organisation
Irish Municipal, Public and Civil Trade Union
Irish National Bus and Rail Union
Irish National Teacher's Organisation
Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation
Mandate Trade Union

Employers' Associations

Alcohol Beverage Federation of Ireland
Building Materials Federation
Cement Manufacturers Ireland
Concrete Manufacturers Association of Ireland
Federation of Aerospace Enterprises in Ireland (FAEI)
Industrial Products and Services Group (IPSG)
Industry Construction Federation
Irish Brewers Association
Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC)
Irish Cider Association
Irish Decorative Surface Coatings Association
Irish Engineering Enterprises Federation
Irish Marine Federation
Irish Plastic Pipe Manufacturers Association
Irish Proshare Association
Irish Small and Medium Enterprises Association (ISME)
Irish Spirits Association
Plastics Ireland
Retail, Grocery, Diary and Allied Trades Association (RGDATA)
The Irish Farmers Association (IFA)

Active Retirement Ireland
Age Action Ireland Ltd

ALFA (Active Learning For Adolescents)

Angelman Syndrome Ireland

Aspire

Barnardos

Bedford Row Family Project

Business in the Community Ireland

Campaign for Children
Carers Association

Centre for Independent Living

Changing Ireland
Children's Rights Alliance

Comber Foundation
Congress Centres Network

Crime Victims Helpline

Doras Luimni

Drimnagh Community Network

Dublin Aids Alliance

Dublin Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgendered Queer Pride Ltd

Dublin Rape Crisis Centre

Endometriosis Association of Ireland

European Anti-Poverty Network Ireland

Extern Ireland

FLAC

Front Line Defenders

Galway Hospice Foundation Ltd

GLEN

Irish Council for Civil Liberties
Irish Council for Social Housing

Irish Heart Foundation
Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed

Irish Rural Link

Irish Senior Citizens Parliament

Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice

Kildare Youth Services

Kilkenny LEADER Partnership

Knockanrawley Resource Centre

L'Arche Ireland

Le Cheile Schools Trust

LIR Anti-Racism Training

MACRO Senior Citizens Project Ltd
Migraine Association of Ireland
Migrants Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI)
My Mind Centre
NASC Irish Immigrant Support Centre
National Association of Building Cooperatives
National Traveller MABS
National Youth Council of Ireland
One in Four
Protestant Aid
Respond! Voluntary Housing Association
Retrieve Foundation
Society of St Vincent de Paul
Sunbeam House Services
TASC (Thinktank for Action on Social Change)
The Hanly Centre
The SNUG Counselling Services (Dublin)
The Wheel
Third Age Foundation
Tipperary Regional Youth Service
TRUST for homeless people
USPI (Unmarried and Separated Parents of Ireland)
Volunteering Ireland

Environmental Associations

An Taisce - The National Trust for Ireland
Birdwatch Ireland
Carra/Mask/Corrib Water Protection Group
Coastwatch
Crann
Friends of the Earth
Friends of the Irish Environment
Golden Eagle Trust
Green Sod Land Trust
IEN (Irish Environment Network)
Irish Doctors Environment Association
Irish Peatland Conservation Council
Irish Seal Sanctuary
Irish Whale and Dolphin Group
Irish Wildlife Trust
Longford Environmental Alliance

Save Our Lough Ree
Sustainable Ireland Cooperative
SWAN (Sustainable Water Network Ireland)
VOICE (Voice of Irish Concern for the Environment)

Appendix C

Accompanying Letter to the Questionnaire
(English and Maltese versions)

To the person responsible for the organisation,

I am a Maltese academic who am presently reading for a PhD degree at the Department of Politics of the University of Sheffield (UK). My research theme revolves around the process of Europeanisation and how is it affecting the character and contribution of domestic interest groups. In particular, I will be analysing this theme from the perspective of small island member states at the periphery of an integrated continent, thus, embracing Malta and the Republic of Ireland as the two major case studies.

Your organisation has been selected to take part in the data collection phase and, to this effect, I am kindly asking you to fill-in the questionnaire attached.

Although the participation of your organisation in this research project is voluntary, I would be grateful if you choose to fill it in wherein you may opt to remain anonymous by not writing your name and role within the organisation you are representing. Responses will remain confidential at all times. All the data that will be generated will be presented in aggregate format and will only be used for academic purposes. **Kindly** **return** **the** **filled** **questionnaire** **either** **by** **email (mario.t.vassallo@um.edu.mt) or by post (Mario Thomas Vassallo, The University of Malta, Department of Public Policy, Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy, l-Imsida, Malta) by not later than Monday 13th February 2012.** The questionnaire will only take a few minutes of your time to be completed as most questions involve just a Yes or No answer.

Thank you for your kind attention and hope to have a positive response from your end.

Your participation is very much appreciated.

Mario Thomas Vassallo
Assistant Lecturer – University of Malta
PhD Student – University of Sheffield (UK)

Home Telephone: (00356) 21 468 400
Office Telephone: (00356) 2340 2728
Mobile Number: (00356) 7973 4543
email: mario.t.vassallo@um.edu.mt

Lill-persuna responsabbli mill-organizzazzjoni,

Jiena akkademiku fl-Università ta' Malta u fil-prezent qiegħed insegwi kors ta' PhD fid-Dipartiment tal-Politika fl-Università ta' Sheffield (UK). It-tema tar-riċerka tiegħi tinkwadra l-proċess ta' Ewropeanizzazzjoni u kif din qiegħda taffettwa l-karattru u l-kontribuzzjoni tas-soċjetà ċivili b'risq it-tfassil tal-politika. B'mod partikolari se nkun qiegħed nistħarreġ din it-tema mill-perspettiva ta' pajjiżi zgħar fl-UE, b'mod partikolari Malta u r-Repubblika tal-Irlanda.

L-organizzazzjoni li inti tirrapreżenta ġiet magħżula biex tieħu sehem f'dan l-eżerċizzju ta' ġbir ta' informazzjoni u, għaldaqstant, qiegħed nibgħatlek il-kwestjonarju li jinsab anness. Għandek issib verżjoni bil-Malti u oħra bl-Ingliż biex tirrispondi l-aktar waħda komda għalik.

Għalkemm il-parteċipazzjoni tiegħek f'din ir-riċerka hija fuq bażi volontarja imma, fl-istess waqt, inkun obbligat jekk taċċetta li tieħu sehem għax tkun qiegħed tgħini ħafna għad-Dottorat.

Jekk jogħġbok ibgħat il-kwestjonarju mimli fuq mario.t.vassallo@um.edu.mt jew inkella bil-posta fl-indirizz (Mario Thomas Vassallo, L-Università ta' Malta, Dipartiment tal-Public Policy, Fakultà tal-Ekonomija, l-Management u l-Accountancy, l-Imsida, Malta) sa mhux aktar tard minn nhar it-Tnejn 10 t'Ottubru 2011. Il-kollega tiegħi, is-Sur Andrè Debattista, se jkun qiegħed jagħmel kuntatt miegħek sabiex, jekk ikun hemm ħtieġa, il-kwestjonarju jimtela minn fuq it-telefown.

Grazzi tal-attenzjoni ġentili tiegħek u nittama li jkolli rispons pożittiv min-naħa tiegħek. Hija l-intenzjoni tiegħi li nkompli nkattar l-involviment tas-soċjetà ċivili fit-tfassil tal-politika permezz tar-riċerka li qiegħed nagħmel.

Il-parteċipazzjoni tiegħek hija wisq apprezzata

Mario Thomas Vassallo
Membru tal-istaff akkademiku, l-Università ta' Malta
Student tad-Dottorat, Università ta' Sheffield

Telefown tad-dar: 21 46 84 00
Telefown tal-uffiċċju: 2340 2728
Mowbajl: 7973 4543
email: mario.t.vassallo@um.edu.mt

Appendix D

Questionnaire Guide (English and Maltese versions)

The implications of membership in the European Union (EU) on domestic interest groups

Structured Questionnaire Guide

Officer's name: *(optional)*_____   Date : _____

Role of officer in the organisation: *(optional)* _____

Organisation's name: _____

Policy domain of the organisation: [ ]   Employers' Association [ ] Trade Union

[ ]   Social/Human rights   [ ] Environment

Country of origin: [ ]   Malta   [ ]   Rep. of Ireland

The organisation engages   [ ]   volunteers only   [ ]   paid personnel only

[ ]   a mix of volunteers and paid personnel

Changes in internal structure

Q1   **Does the organisation's vision/mission statement include a European dimension?**

[ ]   Yes   [ ]   No

Q2   **If yes to Q1, did this occur because of EU membership?**

[ ]   Yes   [ ]   No

Q3   **If no to Q1, does your organisation intend to include a European dimension in its vision/mission statement?**

[ ]   Yes   [ ]   No

Q4   **Is there a member/s within your organisation that is responsible for EU affairs?**

[ ]   Yes, one person who is solely responsible for EU affairs

[ ]   Yes, one person who performs other tasks as well as EU affairs

[ ]   Yes, there is more than one person responsible for EU affairs as part of their jobs

[ ]   No

Q5   **Have any of your personnel undergone training to acquire the necessary skills in EU affairs (e.g. application for funds, identifying partners, lobbying strategies, consultation procedures, EU institutional set-up, etc)**

[ ]   Yes   [ ]   No

Q6   **Did your organisation establish any contacts in Brussels?** *(you can tick more than one option)*

[ ]   Yes, by establishing a permanent office in Brussels

[ ]   Yes, by relying on an umbrella Euro-group based in Brussels

[ ]   Yes, by sending any of our members to Brussels from time-to-time

[ ]   Yes, by online networking

[ ]   Yes, by other means [*please specify*] _____

[ ]   No

Q7   **If no to Q6, does your organisation intend to establish any contacts in Brussels?**

[ ]   Yes   [ ]   No

Q8   **If yes to Q7, which of the following means of contact is your organisation likely to opt for?** *(you can tick more than one option)*

[ ]   Establish a permanent office in Brussels

[ ]   Rely on an umbrella Euro-group based in Brussels

[ ]   Sending any of our members to Brussels from time-to-time

[ ]   Online networking

[ ]   Other means [please specify] _____

Q9   **Does your organisation try to access EU funds?**

[ ]   Yes   [ ]   No

Q10   **If yes to Q9**, **was the organisation successful in obtaining EU funds?**

[ ] Yes, in 1 project   [ ] Yes, in more than 1 but less than 5 projects

[ ] Yes, in 5 projects or more   [ ] No

Q11   **If not successful so far, does your organisation intend to try to access EU funds in the future?**

[ ]   Yes   [ ]   No

Q12   **Does your organisation seek external advice to access EU funds?**

[ ]   Yes   [ ]   No   [ ]   not applicable

Q13   **If yes to Q12, which sources does your organisation seek external advice from?** *(you can tick more than one option)*

[ ]   government agencies   [ ]   independent experts

[ ]   other domestic NGOs   [ ]   other European NGOs

[ ]   Others [*please specify*] _____

Q14   **Did your organisation participate in EU related activities in these last 8 years?**

[ ]   Yes   [ ]   No

Q15 **Did your organisation's participation in EU related activities increase or decrease over the years?**

[ ] increased   [ ] remained stable   [ ] decreased   [ ] not applicable

Q16 **Has the European dimension been integrated in any of your domestic events?**

[ ]   Yes   [ ]   No

Domestic responsiveness

Q17 **Does your organisation participate in domestic fora that discuss prospective EU legislation?**

[ ]   Yes   [ ]   No

Q18 **Is your organisation part of any state body that brings together governmental and non-governmental bodies to debate policy domains?**

[ ]   Yes   [ ]   No

Q19 **If no to Q18, does your organisation consider to start forming part of any state body responsible for social and civil dialogue?**

[ ]   Yes   [ ]   No

Q20 **In fora involving social and civil dialogue, which of the following strategies is adopted by your organisation?**

[ ]   competitive   [ ]   consensus

[ ]   compromise   [ ]   laissez faire   [ ]   depends on the situation

Q21 **Did your organisation team-up with other Irish NGOs to solidify its voice in these last 8 years?**

[ ]   Yes   [ ]   No

Q22 **Did your organisation involve itself in private/public partnerships to administer joint projects in these last 8 years?**

[ ] Yes, on 1 occasion   [ ] Yes, in more than 1 but less than 5 occasions

[ ] Yes, in 5 occasions or more   [ ] No

Q23 **Do you think that the EU enhanced the role of your organisation in the process of domestic policy-making?**

[ ]   Yes, to a great extent   [ ]   Yes, to some extent

[ ]   Yes, to a minor extent   [ ]   No, not at all

Q24 **Do you think that the EU has been instrumental to accentuate the culture of civil dialogue in domestic affairs?**

[ ]   Yes, to a great extent   [ ]   Yes, to some extent

[ ]   Yes, to a minor extent [ ]   No, not at all

Q25   **Do you think that the EU has induced domestic NGOs to act more cohesively at the national level?**

        [ ]   Yes, to a great extent   [ ]   Yes, to some extent

        [ ]   Yes, to a minor extent [ ]   No, not at all

Q26   **Do you think that the EU has exerted pressure on national government to seek more participation from domestic NGOs in policy-making?**

        [ ]   Yes, to a great extent   [ ]   Yes, to some extent

        [ ]   Yes, to a minor extent [ ]   No, not at all

European involvement

Q27   **Does your organisation participate in any of the European Commission's working groups?**

        [ ]   Yes   [ ]   No

Q28   **Does your organisation submit any feedback to draft legislation, including Green and White papers, issued by the European Commission?**

        [ ]   Yes   [ ]   No

Q29   **Does your organisation engage in any consultation processes led by the European Economic and Social Committee?**

        [ ]   Yes   [ ]   No

Q30   **Is your organisation an affiliated member of any European federation?**

        [ ]   Yes   [ ]   No

Q31   **If no to Q30, would your organisation consider to be part of any European federation in the future**?

        [ ]   Yes   [ ]   No

Q32   **If no to Q31, why?** *(you can tick more than one option)*

        [ ] no need to be part of a European federation   [ ]high monetary cost of affiliation

        [ ] focusing on domestic issues is a priority   [ ] affiliation is against statute

        [ ] other reasons (*please specify*)_____

Q33   **Do any members of your organisation hold any executive responsibilities within the European federation which your organisation is part of?**

        [ ]   Yes   [ ]   No

Q34   **Does your organisation engage itself in any lobbying with any institution of the EU?**

[ ]   Yes   [ ]   No

Q35   **If yes to Q34, which of the following institutions/personnel did your organisation lobby?** *(you can tick more than one option)*

[ ] The European Commission   [ ] National members of EESC

[ ] National members of European Parliament   [   ] The Commissioner of your country

[ ] The member state holding the Presidency of the Council

[ ] Others (*please specify*) _____

Q36   **If not, why?** *(you can tick more than one option)*

[ ] Preference for the domestic route of influence among national politicians

[ ] Preference for targeting national ministers who will in turn voice their opinion at the Council of Ministers

[ ] High cost involved in lobbying at EU level

[ ] No knowledge of how the EU institutional arrangement works

[ ] The EU does not have any relevance to the domestic scenario

[ ] Lack of administrative capacity

[ ] Other reasons (*please specify*) _____

Q37   **Does your organisation identify European partner organisations with whom you can cooperate over joint projects?**

[ ]   Yes   [ ]   No

Q38   **If yes to Q37, from which member states do your organisation's partners originate?** *(tick the names of respective member states)*

Austria	Belgium	Bulgaria	Cyprus	Czech Rep.	Denmark
Estonia	Finland	France	Germany	Greece	Hungary
Italy	Latvia	Lithuania	Luxembourg	Malta	Netherlands
Poland	Portugal	Romania	Slovakia	Slovenia	Spain
Sweden	U.K.				

Q39   **If no to Q37, does your organisation consider to work with European partners in the future?**

[ ]   Yes   [ ]   No

Q40 **Is your organisation engaged in physical networking with other European partners?**

[ ]   Yes   [ ]   No

Q41 **Is your organisation engaged in virtual networking with other European partners?**

[ ]   Yes   [ ]   No

Attitudinal transformation

Q42 **Does membership in the EU affect the mind-set of members within your organisation?**

[ ]   Yes, to a great extent   [ ]   Yes, to some extent

[ ]   Yes, to a minor extent   [ ]   No, not at all

Q43 **Is the character of your organisation influenced by the norms and practices of European federations?**

[ ]   Yes, to a great extent   [ ]   Yes, to some extent

[ ]   Yes, to a minor extent   [ ]   No, not at all

Q44 **Have there been any changes within your organisation that are attributed to new ideas brought about by European partner organisations?**

[ ]   Yes   [ ]   No   [ ]   Don't know

Q45 **Is your organisation encouraged by the pattern of EU governance to change its tactics and strategy in domestic negotiations?**

[ ]   Yes   [ ]   No   [ ]   Don't know

Q46 **If yes to Q46, what is the source of stimulus for the change in your organisation's tactics and strategies?** *(If you opt for more than one reason, **rank** them on a priority order; **1 being the least important**)*

[ ] The opportunity to gain EU funds   [ ] The value of consensus-seeking

[ ] The socialisation effect with other partners   [ ] Positive attitude towards each other

[ ] The acquisition of new skills through training

Q47 **Does the national culture inhibit the acquisition of new norms and values originating from the wider European experience?**

[ ]   Yes, to a great extent   [ ]   Yes, to some extent

[ ]   Yes, to a minor extent   [ ]   No, not at all

Q48 **Does your organisation participate in exercises involving the sharing of best practices with other organisations?**

[ ] Yes, only with domestic organisations

[ ] Yes, only with European organisations

[ ] Yes, only with foreign organisation beyond the EU

[ ] Yes, both with domestic and European organisations

[ ] Yes, with domestic, European and other foreign organisations

[ ] No, not at all

Q49 **If yes, do these exercises have transformation effects on the norms that shape the culture within your organisation?**

[ ] Yes, to a great extent   [ ] Yes, to some extent

[ ] Yes, to a minor extent   [ ] No, not at all   [ ] not applicable

Q50 **Any additional comments**   _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
Your assistance has been appreciated.
Mario Thomas Vassallo, PhD student
Department of Politics, University of Sheffield (UK)
Telephone: (356) 79 73 45 43   E-mail: mario.t.vassallo@um.edu.mt
You can email the filled in questionnaire on the email address provided
or print it and send by traditional post to:
Mario Thomas Vassallo, Department of Public Policy, FEMA, University of Malta,
L-Imsida, Malta.

Gwida għall-Kwestjonarju

Isem min qed iwieġeb: _____ Data tal-intervista:_____

Rwol tal-persuna fl-organizzazzjoni: _____

Isem tal-organizzazzjoni: _____

Qasam li fih l-organizzazzjoni hi attiva   [ ]   Assoċjazzjoni ta' min iħaddem

                                                      [ ]   Trade Union   [ ] Ambjent

                                                      [ ]   Soċjali/Drittijiet tal-Bniedem

Stat li fih taħdem l-organizzazzjoni   [ ]   Malta   [ ]   Rep. tal-Irlanda

L-organizzazzjoni tħaddem   [ ]   voluntiera biss   [ ]   uffiċjali mħallsa

                                          [ ]   taħlita ta' voluntiera u uffiċjali mħallsa

Tibdil fl-istrutturi Interni

M1   **Il-viżjoni/missjoni tal-organizzazzjoni tinkludi d-dimensjoni Ewropea?**

    [ ]   Iva   [ ]   Le

M2   **Jekk iva, dan ġara minħabba s-sħubija fl-UE?**

    [ ]   Iva   [ ]   Le

M3   **Jekk le, l-organizzazzjoni tiegħek tinsab interessat li tibda tinkludi d-dimensjoni Ewropea fl-istqarrija tal-viżjoni/missjoni tagħha?**

    [ ]   Iva   [ ]   Le

M4   **Jeżisti membru/i fl-organizzazzjoni tiegħek li huwa responsabbli minn affarijiet tal-UE?**

    [ ]   Iva, persuna waħda li esklussivament tieħu ħsieb l-affarijiet tal-UE

    [ ]   Iva, persuna waħda li fost responsabbiltajiet oħrajn, tieħu ħsieb l-affarijiet tal-UE

    [ ]   Iva, hemm iżjed minn persuna waħda responsabbi mill-affarijiet tal-UE bħala parti mix-xogħol tagħhom fi ħdan l-għaqda

    [ ]   Le

M5   **Kien hemm membri mill-organizzazzjoni tiegħek li rċivew taħriġ biex jakkwistaw ħiliet fl-affarijiet tal-UE (eż. applikazzjoni għall-fondi, identifikazzjoni ta' partners, proċeduri ta' konsultazzjoni, l-qafas istituzzjonali tal-UE, eċċ)?**

[ ]   Iva   [ ]   Le

M6   **L-organizzazzjoni tiegħek stabbiliet xi forom ta' kuntatt ma' Brussell?**

     [ ]   Iva, permezz ta' ftuħ ta' uffiċċju permanenti fi Brussell

     [ ]   Iva, billi nikkomunikaw ma' Euro-group bbażat fi Brussell

     [ ]   Iva, billi nibagħtu lil xi wieħed mill-membri fi Brussell minn żmien għal ieħor

     [ ]   Iva, permezz ta' netweking online

     [ ]   Iva, b'mezzi oħrajn [*jekk jogħġbok speċifika*] _____

     [ ]   Le

M7   **Jekk le, l-organizzazzjoni tiegħek hija mħajra biex tistabilixxi kuntatt ma' Brussell?**

     [ ]   Iva   [ ]   Le

M8   **Jekk iva, liema wieħed minn dawn il-forom ta' kuntatt huwa l-aktar probabbli li jingħażel mill-organizzazzjoni tiegħek ?**

     [ ]   Iva, permezz ta' ftuħ ta' uffiċċju permanenti fi Brussell

     [ ]   Iva, billi nikkomunikaw ma' Euro-group bbażat fi Brussell

     [ ]   Iva, billi nibagħtu lil xi wieħed mill-membri fi Brussell minn żmien għal ieħor

     [ ]   Iva, permezz ta' netweking online

     [ ]   Iva, b'mezzi oħrajn [*jekk jogħġbok speċifika*] _____

M9   **L-organizzazzjoni tiegħek ippruvat taċċessa fondi mill-UE?**

     [ ]   Iva   [ ]   Le

M10   **Jekk iva**, **l-organizzazzjoni kellha suċċess fil-kisba ta' fondi mill-UE?**

     [ ] Iva, fi proġett wieħed   [ ] Iva, f'aktar minn proġett 1 imma f'anqas minn 5

     [ ] Iva, f'5 proġetti jew iżjed   [ ] Le

M11   **Jekk le għal M9, l-organizzazzjoni tiegħek hija interessata li tipprova taċċessa fondi mill-UE fil-futur?**

     [ ]   Iva   [ ]   Le

M12   **L-organizzazzjoni tiegħek tipprova ssib għajnuna esterna biex tikseb fondi mill-UE?**

     [ ]   Iva   [ ]   Le   [ ]   Mhux applikabbli

M13   **Jekk iva, minn liema sorsi tikseb l-għajnuna esterna l-organizzazzjoni tiegħek?**

     [ ]   aġenziji tal-gvern   [ ]   esperti indipendenti

     [ ]   għaqdiet oħrajn Maltin   [ ]   għaqdiet oħrajn Ewropej

[ ]   Oħrjan [*jekk jogħġbok speċifika*] _____

M14   **L-organizzazzjoni tiegħek ipparteċipat f'attivitajiet relatati mal-UE f'dawn l-aħħar 8 snin?**

[ ]   Iva   [ ]   Le

M15   **Ir-rata ta' parteċipazzjoni tal-organizzazzjoni tiegħek's f'attivitajiet relatati mal-UE żdiedet jew naqset matul is-snin?**

[ ] żdiedet   [ ] baqgħet stabbli   [ ] naqqset   [ ] mhux applikabbli

M16   **Id-dimensjoni Ewropea ġiet integrata fl-attivitajiet li torganizzaw f'Malta?**

[ ]   Iva   [ ]   Le

Involviment fl-Arena Domestika

M17   **L-organizzazzjoni tiegħek tipparteċipa f'diskussjonijiet f'Malta fejn ikunu ttrattati liġijiet prospettivi tal-UE?**

[ ]   Iva   [ ]   Le

M18   **L-organizzazzjoni tiegħek tagħmel parti minn istituzzjoni ċentrali li ġġib flimkien lis-settur pubbliku u lis-soċjetà ċivili biex jiddibattu t-tfassil tal-politika?**

[ ]   Iva   [ ]   Le

M19   **Jekk le, l-organizzazzjoni tiegħek tikkunsidra li tibda tifforma parti minn istituzzjoni ċentrali li tkun responsabbli mid-djalogu soċjali u ċivili?**

[ ]   Iva   [ ]   Le

M20   **F'diskussjonijiet li jkunu jinvolvu d-djalogu soċjali u ċivili, liema minn dawn l-istrateġiji normalment tkun addottata mill-organizzazzjoni tiegħek?**

[ ]   kompetittiva   [ ]   konsensus

[ ]   ta' kompromess   [ ]   laissez faire   [ ] jiddependi skont il-każ

M21   **L-organizzazzjoni tiegħek issieħbet ma' għaqdiet Maltin oħra biex issaħħaħ il-vuċi tagħha f'dawn l-aħħar 8 snin?**

[ ]   Iva   [ ]   Le

M22   **L-organizzazzjoni tiegħek tinvolvi ruħha f'public-private partnerships biex tamministra proġetti konġunti f'dawn l-aħħar 8 snin?**

[ ] Iva, f'okkażjoni 1   [ ] Iva, f'aktar minn okkażjoni 1 imma anqas minn 5

[ ] Iva, f'ħames okkażjonijiet jew aktar   [ ] Le

M23   **Taħseb li l-UE saħħet ir-rwol tal-organizzazzjoni tiegħek fil-proċess tat-tfassil tal-politika f'Malta?**

[ ]   Iva, ħafna   [ ]   Iva, mhux ħażin

[ ]   Iva, xi ftit   [ ]   Le, xejn affattu

M24   **Taħseb li l-UE kienet strumentali biex ssaħħaħ il-kultura tad-djalogu ċivili fl-affarijiet fil-pajjiż?**

[ ]   Iva, ħafna   [ ]   Iva, mhux ħażin

[ ]   Iva, xi ftit   [ ]   Le, xejn affattu

M25   **Taħseb li l-UE ħajret lill-għaqdiet Maltin biex jaġixxu iżjed bħala forza flimkien fil-livell nazzjonali?**

[ ]   Iva, ħafna   [ ]   Iva, mhux ħażin

[ ]   Iva, xi ftit   [ ]   Le, xejn affattu

M26   **Taħseb li l-UE ppressat lill-Gvern Malti biex jinvolvi aktar lill-għaqdiet Maltin fit-tfassil tal-politika?**

[ ]   Iva, ħafna   [ ]   Iva, mhux ħażin

[ ]   Iva, xi ftit jew wisq   [ ]   Le, xejn affattu

Involvilment fl-Arena Ewropea

M27   **L-organizzazzjoni tiegħek pparteċipat f'xi wieħed mill-working groups tal-Kummissjoni Ewropea (KE)?**

[ ]   Iva   [ ]   Le

M28   **L-organizzazzjoni tiegħek tissottometti l-fehmiet tagħha fil-konfront ta' leġiżlazzjoni ġdida, inkluż Green u White Papers maħruġa mill-KE?**

[ ]   Iva   [ ]   Le

M29   **L-organizzazzjoni tiegħek tipparteċipa fi proċessi ta' konsultazzjoni mmexxija mill-Kumitat Ekonomiku u Soċjali Ewropew?**

[ ]   Iva   [ ]   Le

M30   **L-organizzazzjoni tiegħek hija affiljata ma' xi federazzjoni Ewropea?**

[ ]   Iva   [ ]   Le

M31   **Jekk le, l-organizzazzjoni tiegħek tikkunsidra li taffilja ruħha ma' xi federazzjoni Ewropea fil-futur?**

[ ]   Iva   [ ]   Le

Q32   **Jekk le , għaliex?**

[ ] m'hemmx bżonn ta' affiljazzjoni ma' federazzjoni Ewropea

[ ] il-ħlas ta' sħubija huwa għoli wisq għalina

[ ] nippreferu niffukaw fuq materji lokali

[ ] affiljazzjoni ma' Federazzjoni Ewropea hija kontra l-istatut tal-għaqda tagħna

[ ] raġuni oħra (*jekk jogħġbok speċifika*) _____

M 33 **Hemm membri fl-organizzazzjoni tiegħek li jokkupaw xi responsabbiltà eżekuttiva f'xi federazzjoni Ewropea li l-organizzazzjoni tiegħek tifforma parti minnha?**

[ ] Iva [ ] Le

M34 **L-organizzazzjoni tiegħek tagħmel lobbying mal-istituzzjonijiet tal-UE?**

[ ] Iva [ ] Le

M35 **Jekk iva, ma' liema minn dawn l-organizzazzjoni tiegħek tagħmel il-lobbying?**

[ ] Il-Kummissjoni Ewropea [ ] Il-membri Maltin tal-Kumitat Soċjali u Ekonomiku Ewropew

[ ] Il-politiċi Maltin fil-Parlament Ewropew [ ] Il-Kummissarju Malti

[ ] L-istat membru li jkun qiegħed jokkupa l-Presidenza tal-Kunsill

[ ] Oħrajn (*jekk jogħġbok speċifika*) _____

M36 **Jekk le, għaliex?**

[ ] Nippreferu nagħmlu l-lobbying tagħna fix-xena politika Maltija

[ ] Nippreferu li navviċinaw lill-Ministri Maltin biex min-naħa tagħhom iwasslu l-interessi tagħna fil-Kunsill tal-Ministri

[ ] L-ispejjeż biex tagħmel lobbying fil-livell tal-UE huma kbar wisq

[ ] M'għandniex għarfien ta' kif jaħdmu l-istitituzzjonijiet tal-UE

[ ] L-UE m'għandhiex rilevanza fil-kamp fejn taħdem l-organizzazzjoni tagħna

[ ] Limitazzjoni ta' kapaċità amministrattiva

[ ] Raġuni oħra (*jekk jogħġbok*) _____

M37 **L-organizzazzjoni tiegħek tidentifika għaqdiet Ewropej oħra bħala partners biex magħhom tikkopera fuq proġetti bi sħab?**

[ ] Iva [ ] Le

M38 **Jekk iva, minn liema stati membri ssibu dawn il-partners?** *(immarka l-ismijiet tal-istati partners skont l-għażla tiegħek)*

L-Awstrija	Il-Belġju	Il-Bulgarija	Ċipru	Ir-Rep. Ċeka	Id-Danimarka
L-Estonja	Il-Fillandja	Franza	Il-Ġermanja	Il-Greċja	L-Ungerija
L-Italja	Il-Latvija	Il-Litwanja	Il-Lussemburgu	L-Irlanda	L-Olanda

Il-Polanja	Il-Portugall	Ir-Rumanija	Is-Slovakja	Is-Slovenja	Spanja
L-Iżvezja	Renju Unit				

M39 **Jekk le, l-organizzazzjoni tiegħek tikkunsidra li taħdem ma' partners Ewropej fil-furur?**

[ ] Iva [ ] Le

M40 **l-organizzazzjoni tiegħek hija involuta f'networking fiżiku (skambji ta' membri) ma' partners oħrajn Ewropej?**

[ ] Iva [ ] Le

M41 **L-organizzazzjoni tiegħek hija involuta f'netweking virtwali (bl-internet) ma' partners oħrajn Ewropej?**

[ ] Iva [ ] Le

Trasformazzjoni fl-Attitudni

M42 **Is-sħubija fl-UE affettwat il-mod ta' ħsieb tal-membri fl-organizzazzjoni tiegħek?**

[ ] Iva, ħafna [ ] Iva, mhux ħażin

[ ] Iva, xi ftit [ ] Le, xejn affattu

M43 **Il-karattru tal-organizzazzjoni tiegħek ġie influwenzat min-normi u l-prattiċi tal-federazzjonijiet Ewropej?**

[ ] Iva, ħafna [ ] Iva, mhux ħażin

[ ] Iva, xi ftit [ ] Le, xejn affattu

M44 **Kien hemm tibdil fl-organizzazzjoni tiegħek li huwa attribwit għal ideat ġodda miġjuba minn organizzazzjonijiet oħrajn Ewropej li kienu partners tagħkom?**

[ ] Iva [ ] Le [ ] Ma nafx

M45 **L-istil ta' governanza Ewropea jinkoraġġixxi lill-organizzazzjoni tiegħek biex tbiddel it-tattiċi u l-istrateġiji tagħha fin-negozjar li tkunu involuti fih f'Malta?**

[ ] Iva [ ] Le [ ] Ma nafx

M46 **Jekk iva, liema huwa s-sors tal-istimulu li jġiegħel lill-organizzazzjoni tiegħek's tbiddel it-tattiċi u l-istrateġiji tagħha?** *(Jekk tagħżel iżjed minn sors wieħed, ppreżentahom f'lista ta' priorità; 1 huwa l-INQAS sors importanti għall-bidla))*

[ ] L-opportunità li tikseb l-fondi Ewropej [ ] Il-valur li nsibu ftehim b'kunsens

[ ] Is-soċjalizzazzjoni ma' partners Ewropej [ ] Aktar attitudni pożittiva lejn xulxin

[ ] L-akkwist ta' ħiliet ġodda bit-taħriġ [ ] Oħrajn _____

M47 **Taħseb li l-istil tal-kultura Maltija jtellef mill-akkwist ta' normi u valuri ġodda li joriġinaw mill-esperjenza Ewropea?**

[ ] Iva, ħafna [ ] Iva, mhux ħażin

[ ] Iva, xi ftit [ ] Le, xejn affattu

M48 **L-organizzazzjoni tiegħek tipparteċipa f'eżerċizzji li jinvolvu l-qsim tal-aħjar prattiċi ma' organizzazzjonijiet oħrajn?**

[ ] Iva, ma' organizzazzjonijiet Maltin biss

[ ] Iva, ma' organizzazzjonijiet Ewropej biss

[ ] Iva ma' organizzazzjonijiet li mhumiex parti mill-UE

[ ] Iva, kemm ma' organizzazzjonijiet Maltin u Ewropej

[ ] Iva, kemm ma' organizzazzjonijiet Maltin, Ewropej u lil hinn

[ ] Le, ma nipparteċipawx

M49 **Jekk iva, dawn l-eżerċizzji jħallu effetti ta' bidla fil-karattru tal-organizzazzjoni tiegħek?**

[ ] Iva, ħafna [ ] Iva, mhux ħażin

[ ] Iva, xi ftit [ ] Le, xejn affattu [ ] mhux applikabbli

M50 **Għandek xi kummenti addizzjonali oħrajn** _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix E

Interview Guide together with Inviting Letter (English and Maltese versions)

Dear Sir/Madam,

Hope you are well.

You have already helped me a lot in my research regarding interest groups by filling in the questionnaire on behalf of your organisation.

In order to investigate further, I am going to conduct a number of elite interviewing sessions both in Malta and Ireland to enquiry further the extent of EU impact on interest groups originating from small island member states.

Your organisation, _____, has been selected to take part in this part of data collection as well.

I am going to take the lead and suggest a date and time when I can come to your office and have a conversational interview with you or with another officer who represents your organisation. I am suggesting the following date _____ *(date)* at _____ *(time).* You are free to change the time or date, or both, to fit your timetable. When the time draws more near, I will forward you the set of questions that will guide our interview. Essentially we will be talking about the impact of the EU on your organisation and other interest groups that are engaged in the same policy domain.

Anonymity is guaranteed as no names are to be divulged in my thesis. However, if consent is given, the name of your organisation will appear in one of the appendices highlighting the organisations that participated in this research exercise. If you do not have any reservations, it is my intention to audio-record the interview for transcription purposes.

Looking forward to have your confirmation or otherwise.

Wish you the very best.

Kindest wishes,

Mario Thomas Vassallo
Assistant Lecturer – University of Malta
PhD Student – University of Sheffield (UK)

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Mario Thomas Vassallo
PhD in Politics
February & March 2012

Meetings with peak Irish interest groups
Fieldwork research visit in Dublin, Ireland

Interview Guide

1. How do you describe the process of interest representation in Ireland today?

2. How much really open are government officials to take onboard recommendations put forward by Irish civil and social partners? Does your organisation receive any feedback from government for its dossiers/research/suggestions?

3. There are those who complain that although today there is more space for consultation between state and non-state actors, the real fact is that it is part of a cosmetic exercise? What is opinion of your organisation about the state of true consultation in Ireland today?

4. Do Irish and civil partners opt for a consensus based approach when dealing with central government entities or do they resort to veto playing so as to suppress potential agreement among the different stakeholders? Does your organisation use veto playing in its lobbying strategies?

5. Besides the formation of formal consultation structures, like the Social Partnership, do informal channels of cooperation exist in Ireland?

6. Does your organisation engage itself in any public-private partnership to lead or participate in a number of joint-projects? How was the experience so far?

7. From among the representatives of the Irish civil society, are there any who can be called social entrepreneurs in the sense that they advocate change in mentality and governance? What qualities do they usually have to bring about change in the systems and institutions?

8. Have there been any instances wherein your organisation bypassed national authorities and lobbied directly with EU institutions through European federations or on its own?

9. What do you understand by the term 'process of Europeanisation'?

10. From your experience, do you think that your organisation has undergone a process of Europeanisation or are there any barriers (including fragmentation, lack of administrative capacity and sectoral rivalry) that preclude it?

11. What are the major barriers that impact negatively on the Europeanisation potential of Irish interest groups? Or better still, why do Irish interest groups opt to remain indifferent to the influences flowing from the EU mode of governance?

12. Does the national culture inhibit the acquisition of new norms and values originating from the wider European experience?

13. Is a process of Europeanisation motivated by the opportunity to acquire additional funding through the EU or by the socialisation effects with other European partner organisation?

14. If you are of the opinion that your organisation has been Europeanised in some way or in another, does it manifest itself in tangible effects? Eg: mentality, culture, management processes, lobbying strategies, etc

15. From your experience, were the changes that occurred within your organisation the result of the Irish membership in the EU or because of a wider globalisation experience?

16. Which are those specific Irish characteristics that should be preserved notwithstanding the influences for change emanating from the EU and other member states?

17. All in all, do you think that the process of Europeanisation has been significant within your organisation and the Irish civil society in general?

———————————————

Għażiż Sinjur/a,

Nittama li tinsab tajjeb

Nibda biex ngħid li int diġà tajtni ħafna għajnuna fir-riċerka li qiegħed nagħmel dwar l-organizzazzjonijiet mhux governattivi meta ġentilment imlejt il-kwestjonarju f'isem l-għaqda li inti tirrappreżenta.

Bl-iskop li nissokta nistħarreġ iżjed fil-fond it-tema tar-riċerka tiegħek, se nkun qiegħed nikkordina numru ta' intervisti kemm f'Malta kemm fl-Irlanda biex hekk niskopri iżjed fil-fond l-impatt tal-Unjoni Ewropea fuq l-organizzazzjonijiet li joriġinaw fl-Istati Membri li huma żgħar u gżejjer.

L-organizzazzjoni li inti tirrappreżenta, _____, ġiet magħżula biex tipparteċipa wkoll f'dan l-istadju tal-ġabra tad-data.

Ippermettili nieħu l-inizjattiva u nissuġġerixxi data u ħin meta nkun nista' niġi l-uffiċċju tiegħek u nagħmlu din l-intervista flimkien, jew ma' xi uffiċjal ieħor li jirrappreżenta lill-għaqda tiegħek. Qiegħed nissuġġerixxi id-data _____ *(data)* fil-_____ *(ħin)*. Ħossok liberu li tbiddel il-ħin jew id-data, jew it-tnejn, jekk dan ikun ta' ħtieġa. Meta joqrob iżjed iż-żmien, nibgħatlek ukoll is-sett ta' mistoqsijiet li għandhom jiggwidawna waqt l-intervista. Essenzjalment se nkunu qegħdin nitħaddtudwar l-impatt tal-UE fuq l-organizzazzjoni tiegħek u organizzazzjonijiet simili li jaħdmu fl-istess għalqa.

L-anonimità hija garantita għax ebda isem ta' persuni mhu se jkun imsemmi fit-teżi. Jekk inti taqbel, l-isem tal-organizzazzjoni tiegħek ikun jidher f'wieħed mill-appendiċi li jelenka dawk l-organizzazzjonijiet li jkunu pparteċipaw fir-riċerka. Jekk inti ma jkollox riżervi, huwa l-ħsieb tiegħi li nirrekordja l-intervista bl-iskop li nkunu nista' nagħmel traskizzjoni ta' dak li jkun intqal.

Nittama li jkolli risposta mingħandek fil-pożittiv jew mod ieħor.

Nixtieqlek l-aħjar u l-aqwa fil-ħidma tal-organizzazzjoni tiegħek.

Inselli ħafna għalik,

Mario Thomas Vassallo
Membru tal-istaff akkademiku, l-Università ta' Malta
Student tad-Dottorat, l-Università ta' Sheffield

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Mario Thomas Vassallo
Riċerka li twassal għal Dottorat fil-Politika

Sensiela ta' intervisti ma' uffiċjali li jirrappreżentaw is-soċjetà ċivili f'Malta
April u Mejju 2012

Gwida għall-mistoqsijiet matul l-intervisti

1. Kif tiddeskrivi l-proċess ta' djalogu mas-soċjetà ċivili f'Malta kif inhu llum?

2. Kemm tabilħaqq huma disponibbli l-uffiċjali tal-gvern biex jilqgħu rakkomandazzjonijiet suġġeriti mill-imsieħba soċjali u s-soċjetà ċivili? L-organizzazzjoni tiegħek tirċievi rispons mill-gvern għas-suġġerimenti u r-riċerka li tissottometti lill-awtoritajiet?

3. Hemm min jilmenta li għalkemm illum hawn aktar spazju għall-konsultazzjoni pubblika bejn il-gvern u s-soċjetà ċivili, imma fil-fatt dan jagħmel parti minn eżerċizzju kożmetiku. X'inhi l-opinjoni tiegħek dwar l-istat ta' konsultazzjoni ta' veru f'Malta llum?

4. Meta tkunu madwar il-mejda tad-diskussjoni, x'inhi l-klima tad-djalogu li jkun għaddej – klima mnissla minn spirtu ta' kunsens jew inkella klima mdakkra mid-dissens (veto-playing) minħabba pożizzjonijiet riġidi u polarizzati?

5. Minbarra l-istrutturi formali tad-djalogu bħal MCESD u MEUSAC, jeżistu kuntatti informali f'Malta fejn l-istat jikkomunika mas-soċjetà ċivili?

6. Jekk l-organizzazzjoni pparteċipat fi proġetti bi sħab mal-istat jew mas-settur privat, kif kienet l-esperjenza? Pożittiva jew negattiva?

7. Is-soċjetà ċivili f'Malta tista' tiġi msejħa bħala aġent tal-bidla, kemm fil-mentalità u kif ukoll fil-politika settorjali (policies)? X'inhuma l-kwalitajiet li organizzazzjoni għandu jkollha biex iġġib bidla fis-sistemi u l-kultura?

8. Kien hemm sitwazzjonijiet fejn l-organizzazzjoni tiegħek injorat lill-awtoritajiet Maltin u marret twassal il-vuċi tagħha direttament fi Brussell permezz ta' federazzjonijiet Ewropej jew inkella fuq il-merti tagħha biss?

9. X'tifhem bit-terminu 'proċess ta' Ewropeanizzazzjoni'?

10. Mill-esperjenza tiegħek, taħseb li l-organizzazzjoni tiegħek għaddejja minn proċess ta' Ewropeanizzazzjoni jew minħabba ċertu xkiel (eż. frammentazzjoni fis-settur, nuqqas ta' kapaċità amministrattiva, nuqqas ta' fondi) dan mhux qed issir?

11. Il-proċess ta' Ewropeanizzazzjoni huwa mmotivat mill-opportunità li jkunu akkwistati l-fondi jew inkella minħabba l-effetti ta' soċjalizzazzjoni ma' msieħba Ewropej oħra?

12. Taħseb li hemm xi raġunijiet partikolari għalfejn numru ta' organizzazzjonijiet non-governattivi f'Malta baqgħu indifferenti għar-realtà tal-Unjoni Ewropea?

13. Taħseb li l-kultura Maltija hija ta' xkiel biex ikunu addottati normi u valuri ġodda li joriġinaw mill-esperjenza Ewropea?

14. Jekk l-organizzazzjoni tiegħek qiegħda b'xi mod tkun affettwata mill-proċess ta' Ewropeanizzazzjoni, hemm xi effetti tanġibbli ta' dan? (fil-mentalità, il-kultura, proċessi ta' tmexxija, strateġiji ta' lobbying, eċċ).

15. Inti taħseb li l-bidliet li qegħdin iseħħu fl-organizzazzjoni tiegħek u fis-settur fejn topera huma riżultat tas-sħubija ta' Malta fl-UE jew minħabba l-globalizzazzjoni?

16. Taħseb li hemm karatteristiċi Maltin li jeħtieġ li jkunu ppreservati minkejja l-influwenzi qawwija u kostanti ta' bidla li jiġu minn barra minn xtutna?

17. Kollox ma' kollox, taħseb li l-proċess ta' Ewropeanizzazzjoni kien wieħed sinifikattiv għall-organizzazzjoni tiegħek u għas-soċjetà ċivili f'Malta?

———————————

Appendix F

Maltese and Irish Participants
in Elite Interviewing

Maltese organisation/personalities that participated in elite interverviewing

1. Assoċjazzjoni tal-Bdiewa
2. Bird Life Malta
3. Ċentru Fidi u Ġustizzja
4. Confederation of Maltese Trade Unions (CMTU)
5. Federazzjoni Kaċċaturi, Nassaba u Konservazzjonisti (FKNK)
6. General Retailers' and Traders' Union (GRTU)
7. General Workers' Union
8. Gozo NGOs Association
9. Kunsill Nazzjonali tan-Nisa
10. Malta Business Bureau (MBB)
11. Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD)
12. Malta Council for Voluntary Organisations
13. Malta-EU Steering and Action Commitee (MEUSAC)
14. Malta Gay Rights Movement
15. Nature Trust Malta
16. Parliamentary Secretariat for Consumers, Fair Competition, Local Councils and Public Dialogue
17. Permanent Representation of Malta in Brussels
18. Resident academic of the University of Malta
19. Resident academic of University of Malta and former politician
20. SOS Malta
21. Union Ħaddiema Magħqudin

Irish organisations/personalities that participated in elite interverviewing

1. An Taische (National Trust of Ireland)
2. Birdwatch Ireland
3. Children's Rights Alliance
4. Coastwatch Europe
5. Friends of the Earth Ireland
6. Friends of the Irish Environment
7. Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN)
8. Ireland Environmental Network (IEN)
9. Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC)
10. Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)
11. Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed (INOU)
12. Irish National Youth Council
13. Irish Nurses and Midwives Trade Union (INMTU)
14. Irish Small and Medium Enterprises Association (ISME)
15. Maltese political observer on Irish politics
16. Mandate Trade Union
17. National Economic and Social Council (NESC)
18. Sustainable Water Network (SWAN)
19. The Wheel
20. Thinktank for Action on Social Change (TASC)
21. Volunteering Ireland

Appendix G

Observations Sessions in Malta and Ireland

No	Date	Event	Event Type	Organised/Delivered	Venue	Hours
		2008				
1	27 June 2008	Green Jobs: What Prospects?	National Seminar	ETC	St Julians, Malta	7
2	9/10/11/12 Dec 2008	Europe Listens: Dialogue with the Maltese Civil Society	Sectoral Workshops	MEUSAC and Commission Representation in Malta	Sliema, Malta	28
		2009				
3	28 Feb 2009	The Consultation Process with Civil Society	Seminar	MEUSAC	Sannat, Gozo	4
4	24 April 009	The Impact of EU legislation on Maltese Family Law	Discussion Seminar	National Family Commission	Valletta, Malta	3
5	6-9 May 2009	SME Fair	Convention	Maltese Government	Valletta, Malta	8
6	6 May 2009	Inġibu xogħol lin-negozji Maltin mill-Ewropa	Seminar	GRTU	Valletta, Malta	2
7	8 May 2009	Linking Enterprise	Networking Fora	Malta Chamber of Commerce	Valletta, Malta	2
8	14 May 2009	Micro Business... Big Ideas	National Conference	Ministry of Finance, Economy and Investment	Floriana, Malta	6

9	15 May 2009	Malta in the EU: 2004-2009. Reflection on the first 5 years of membership	Conference	EDRC, University of Malta	St Julians, Malta	7
10	29 May 2009	Safeguarding Today's Jobs for Tomorrow's Growth	Conference	Malta Chamber of Commerce + Trade Commissioner Catherine Ashton	Valletta, Malta	3
11	26 June 2009	Gender and the Renewed Social Agenda of the EU	Seminar	EDRC, University of Malta	San Giljan, Malta	2
12	28 July 2009	MEUSAC Sectoral Committee	Committee	MEUSAC and Social Partners	Valletta, Malta	2
13	4 August 2009	Civil Society and the European Union	Conference	MEUSAC	Valletta, Malta	6
14	30 September 2009	Work/Life Balance - Publication of Research Results	Conference	Employment & Training Corporation (ETC)	St Julians, Malta	2
15	3 November 2009	MEUSAC Sectoral Committee	Committee	MEUSAC and Social Partners	Valletta, Malta	2
16	20 November 2009	Pjan tal-Iżvilupp Rurali għal Malta 2007-2013	Consultation Seminar	BOV, MEUSAC, & Ministry for Resources & Rural Affairs	Santa Venera, Malta	2
17	24 November 2009	Mainstreaming Small States Studies in Higher Education	Workshop	Islands and Small States Institute	University, Malta	3

2010						
18	26 January 2010	Priorities and Programmes of the Spanish Presidency	Public Dialogue	Spanish Embassy in Malta and MEUSAC	Floriana, Malta	3
19	1 February 2010	The Future Competition Law Framework applicable to the Motor Vehicle sector	consultation session for stakeholders	MEUSAC	Valletta, Malta	2
20	18 March	Public Sector Effectiveness for Private Sector Efficiency	Business Breakfast	Malta Institute of Management	Saint Julians, Malta	4
21	27 March	*Caritas in Veritate* - The Pope Encylical on Global Realities	Public Seminar	Department of Public Policy and Faculty of Theology	Mosta, University of Malta	3
22	19-Apr	Joint Sectoral Committee Meeting on Europe 2020	MEUSAC Committee Meeting	Employ, Social & Health Com + Educ, Youth, Culture Com	Dar l-Ewropa, Valletta	2
23	3 May	Workers on the Move - Working in the EU	Business Breakfast	MEUSAC and the Malta Employers Association	Floriana, Malta	4
24	7 May	MEP Meeting with Maltese Business Community	Meeting	Prof Edward Scicluna MEP	Floriana, Malta	2
25	19 May	Making the Most of EU Membership for SMEs in Gozo	Business Breakfast	MEUSAC and MCESD	Mgarr, Gozo	4
26	21 May	The Management of Biodegradable Waste and the Directive on Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe	Consultation Session	MEUSAC	Valletta, Malta	2
27	25 May 2010	European SME Week	Enterprise meeting College students	SME Incubator Centre	MCAST, Mosta	2
28	3 July 2010	Europe 2020 - Maltese Perspectives	MEUSAC National Conference	MEUSAC	Floriana Malta	3
29	22 Sept 2010	Green Paper on Pensions Reform	MEUSAC Sectoral Committee - Empl, Social Policy & Health	MEUSAC	Valletta, Malta	2

30	10 Sept 2010	Draft Commission Regulation on Scrap Metal	Consultation session	MEUSAC	Valletta, Malta	2
31	17 -18 Sept 2010	Assemblea Djoċesana	Diocesan Assembly	Archbishop + religious organisations	B'Kara Malta	7
32	3 November	Caritas Exhibition at the Auberge of Castille	Art Exhibition	Caritas Malta	Valletta, Malta	1
33	10-Nov-10	Construction of new Road in Kalkara in connection with Smart City Project	Public Consultation	MEPA	Kalkara, Malta	2
34	14 Dec 2010	Poverty and Social Exclusion	Art Exhibition	Żminijietna	GWU, Valletta, Malta	1
		2011				
35	10-Jan	Commission Communication: Towards a Single Market Act - for a highly Competitive Market Economy	MEUSAC public consultation	MEUSAC	Valletta, Malta	2
36	12-Jan	The EU's Cohesion Policy: Consultation on the Conclusions of the 5th report on Econ, Social & Territorial Cohesion	Public Consultation	MEUSAC	Valletta, Malta	2
37	14-Jan	Dimostrazzjoni kontra l-Governanza bla Ruħ Soċjali	National Protest March	Partit Laburista	Valletta, Malta	2
38	18-Jan	A Strong Europe: Priorities and Programme of the Hungarian Presidency	Public Dialogue	Embassy of Hungary and MEUSAC	Valletta, Malta	2
39	26-Jan	Closer to Europe: Social and Civil Dialogue	National Conference	MCESD	Floriana, Malta	5
40	9-Feb	European Strategy for Disability 2010-2020	MEUSAC Sectoral Committee - Empl, Social Policy & Health	MEUSAC	Valletta, Malta	3
41	25 Feb	Inter-Faith Peace Conference	Faith conference	Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat Malta	Floriana, Malta	2

42	25 March	Fished Out...? The State of Our Fisheries	National Conference	Din l-Art Ħelwa	San Giljan, Malta	7
43	26 March	Volunteer! You Make a Difference!	National Conference	Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector	H'Attard, Malta	4
44	31 March	Il-Festi: Kultura u Identità	National Seminar	Soċjetà Mużikali Madonna tal-Ġilju	Ħal Luqa, Malta	4
45	09-Apr	Id-Divoluzzjoni tal-Poter: Bejn Ħolma u Realtà	National Seminar	Department of Public Policy and Association of Local Councils (Malta)	Birkirkara, Malta	4
46	27-Apr	Ħal Ilwien: Street Theatre	Community Theatre	Ħal Miftuħ - a community theatre project travelling to different localities to spread a strong message in favour of social inclusion at the workplace.	Ħaż-Żebbuġ, Malta	1
47	18 May	Protest Against Harmful Gay Conversion attempts and fairy-tale beliefs	Public Protest	Malta Gay Rights Movement	Ħaż-Żebbuġ, Malta	1
48	3 June	7 Years of EU Membership: Our achievements	Public Lecture	Organised by MEUSAC and delivered by Dr Lawrence Gonzi, Prime Minister	Valletta, Malta	2.5
49	4 June	Human Rights Walk to promote awareness on the rights of disabled persons and other minorities	Walk, public entertainment and exhibition stands by NGOs	Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni b'Dizabilità with the support of of the EU Programme for Employment and Social Responsability - Progress (2007-2013)	Valletta, Malta	1
50	5 June	Silent March Against Animal Cruelty	Silent March	Animal rights coalition and Police Assistant Commissioner Josie Brincat	Sliema and Ta' Xbiex, Malta	1
51	6 June	Waste Regulations 2011, Legal Notice 184/2011	Information Seminar	MEUSAC and MEPA	Valletta, Malta	2

52	13 June	Malta's Action Plan to Prevent and Reduce Ambient Noise	Consultation Session	MEUSAC and MEPA	Valletta, Malta	2
53	14 June	The Asylum Procedure…And Then What?	National Conference	Office of the Refugee Commissioner	Sliema, Malta	6
54	17 June	Re-launch of the Single Market and what it means for Business	Business meets MEPs	Malta Business Bureau and Louis Grech	Floriana, Malta	2
55	19 June	Protest against elected politicians and global/regional institutions (such as IMF, WTO and EU) for their economic failure leading to global recession	Sit-in street protest	Direct Democracy	O'Connel Str, Dublin	1
56	8 July	Oħloq Tbissima - Maratona ta' Xandir b'risq il-missjoni fil-Perù, il-Filippini u l-Pakistan	Fund raising marathon on TV	Missionary Society of Saint Paul	Santa Venera, Malta	1
57	15 July	Public Protest as a sign of solidarity with Air Malta workers who are ro suffer big job	Public Protest	ALPA (Pilots' union), General Workers Union and Forum of Trade Unions	Valletta, Malta	1
58	20 July	Consultation session on the European Platform Against Poverty and Social Exclusion	Consultation session	MEUSAC	Valletta, Malta	2
59	27 July	Evenings on Campus: Mirca Tour for Human Rights - 70 artists from 28 countries	Art Exhibition	University of Malta	University, Malta	1
60	28 July	Roadmap towards a Resource Efficient Europe under the Europe 2020 Strategy	Consultative session	MEUSAC	Valletta, Malta	2
61	13 September	Malta's actions in the fields of waste and noise management (directive 2002/96/EC and Directive 2002/49EC)	Public seminar	MEUSAC	L-Imġarr, Gozo	5
62	15 September	Use of Pesticides	Information and Public Consultation Session	MEUSAC and Consumer Affairs Authority	In-Naxxar, Malta	2
63	23, 24 September	The Church in Malta: social and political transformations since the end of the synod 2003	Diocesan Assembly	The Maltese diocese	Birkirkara, Malta	7

64	3 October	Freshers' Week - University of Malta	Info stands by Students' Associations and fun activities	Kunsill Studenti Universitarji (KSU)	University of Malta, Malta	2
65	12 October	Public Consultation Meeting on the Environment Impact Assessment regarding the extension of the Portomaso complex	Public Consultation Meeting	Malta Environment and Planning Authoity (MEPA)	Saint Julians, Malta	2
66	14 October	Pre-Budget Consultation Session	Working Breakfast	Ministry of Finance, Economy and Investment	San Lawrenz, Gozo	3
67	16 October	Intrapiża Malta - your appointment with the Maltese business community	Fun activities, info stands and public discussions	Ministry of Finance, Economy and Investment	Ta' Qali, Malta	3
68	22 October	Facebook people blocking the entrance of the National Bank of Ireland	Sit-in street protest	Facebook society	Dublin, Ireland	2
69	23 October	Mission Village wherein NGOs that are active in foreign mission in developing countries had the possibility to meet with people	Activity for the family	Moviment Missjunarju Malti flimkkien mal-għaqdiet tal-Missjoni	Ta' Qali, Malta	2
70	27 October	The Annual Assembly of Mosta Parish	Annual Parish Assembly	Mosta Parish	Mosta, Malta	4
71	30 October	Walk for Life (from Valletta to Sliema)	Activity for the masses	Gift of Life	Valletta to Sliema, Malta	3
72	4 November	Symbolic street protest against the failure of the Public Transport Reform	Street Protest	Reboot - single issue group	Valletta	1
73	21 November	The Annual Assembly of Floriana Parish	Annual Parish Assembly	Floriana Parish	Floriana, Malta	2
74	30 November	The Value of Volunteering and the Economy - Discussion session	European Year of Volunteering - National Exhibition	Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector	Floriana, Malta	2
75	7 December	Save Wied il-Għasel Petition Campaign	Collection of signatures of the general public	Grupp Patrimonju Mosti	Valletta, Malta	0.5

2012						
76	13 January	Social Enterprise - unleashing its potential	Breakfast meeting	Ministry of Finance, Economy and Investment	Floriana, Malta	2
77	11 February	Anti-ACTA Street Protest	Street Protest	The Malta Anti Acta Group	Valletta, Malta	1
78	29 February	Protest Picket at EU Commission Officesto mark European Trade Union Day of Action Against Austerity Measures	Protest Picket	Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)	Dublin, Ireland	1
79	29 February	Protest by the Irish Rural Communities against Household Tax and Septic Tank Charges	Protest walk against austerity cuts from the Spire in O'Connell Street to Leinster House	Rural Ireland Against Charges, mostly community groups - attended by 700 people	Dublin, Ireland	3
80	4 May	Public Consultation Meeting regarding an evironmental impact assessment on the establishment of 12 dairy farms in Siġġiewi	Public Consultation Meeting	Malta Environment and Planning Authoity (MEPA)	Siġġiewi, Malta	2
81	5 May	Malta Cannabis March as part of the 14th Annual Global Marijuana March	Cannabis March	Moviment Graffiti	Valletta, Malta	2
82	24, 25 May	Ethics and Values in Social and Civil Dialogue and the Role of the Media	Seminar and training	MCESD	Mgarr, Gozo	10

Total number of hours of observations: 260 hours

Number of observations sessions in Malta: 78

Number of observations sessions in Ireland: 4

Appendix H

Statistical findings pertaining to Trade Unions and Employers' Associations in Malta and Ireland

STATISTICAL CROSSTABS REGARDING
TRADE UNIONS AND EMPLOYERS' ASSSOCIATIONS
(a.k.a. SOCIAL PARTNERS)
IN MALTA AND IRELAND

Demographic question

Type of personnel engaged by organisations		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		Total
		Malta	Ireland	
volunteers only	Count	20	0	20
	Percentage	54.1%	.0%	28.2%
paid personnel only	Count	5	16	21
	Percentage	13.5%	47.1%	29.6%
mix of volunteers & paid personnel	Count	12	18	30
	Percentage	32.4%	52.9%	42.3%
Total	Count	37	34	71
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 26.88$, $v = 2$, $p < 0.0005$

Question 1

The vision/mission statement incorporate a European dimension		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		Total
		Malta	Ireland	
Yes	Count	23	24	47
	Percentage	60.5%	70.6%	65.3%
No	Count	15	10	25
	Percentage	39.5%	29.4%	34.7%
Total	Count	38	34	72
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 0.802$, $v = 1$, $p = 0.371$

Question 2

The inclusion of the EU dimension in the vision/mission statement occurred as a consequence of EU accession		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		Total
		Malta	Ireland	
Yes	Count	12	20	32
	Percentage	52.2%	83.3%	68.1%
No	Count	11	4	15
	Percentage	47.8%	16.7%	31.9%
Total	Count	23	24	47
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 5.248$, $v = 1$, $p = 0.022$,u

Question 3

Intention to include a European dimension in the vision/mission statement if this is not already the case		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	6	0	6
	Percentage	40.0%	.0%	24.0%
No	Count	9	10	19
	Percentage	60.0%	100.0%	76.0%
Total	Count	15	10	25
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 5.263$, $v = 1$, $p = 0.022$

Question 4

Responsibility of EU affairs within organisations		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes, one person who is solely responsible	Count	7	1	8
	Percentage	18.4%	2.9%	11.1%
Yes, one who performs other tasks as well	Count	11	13	24
	Percentage	28.9%	38.2%	33.3%
Yes, more than one person responsible	Count	5	18	23
	Percentage	13.2%	52.9%	31.9%
No	Count	15	2	17
	Percentage	39.5%	5.9%	23.6%
Total	Count	38	34	72
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 21.801$, $v = 3$, $p < 0.0005$, u

Question 5

Participation in training programmes to acquire necessary skills in EU affairs		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	17	16	33
	Percentage	44.7%	47.1%	45.8%
No	Count	21	18	39
	Percentage	55.3%	52.9%	54.2%
Total	Count	38	34	72
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 0.039$, $v = 1$, $p = 0.844$

Question 6

The type of contact that has already been established in Brussels, if any		Trade Unions & Employers' Associations		
		Malta	Ireland	Total
Permanent Office in Brussels	Count	3	6	9
	Percentage	4.8%	10.7%	7.6%
Relying on umbrella Euro-group based in Brussels	Count	16	27	43
	Percentage	25.8%	48.2%	36.4%
Sending members to Brussels periodically	Count	14	12	26
	Percentage	22.6%	21.4%	22.0%
Online networking	Count	10	6	16
	Percentage	16.1%	10.7%	13.6%
Other means	Count	1	3	4
	Percentage	1.6%	5.4%	3.4%
no contact	Count	18	2	20
	Percentage	29.0%	3.6%	16.9%
Total	Count	62	56	118
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 18.511$, v = 5, $p = 0.002$, u

Question 7

Intention to establish contact with Brussels if this is not already the case		Trade Unions & Employers' Associations		
		Malta	Ireland	Total
Yes	Count	6	0	6
	Percentage	33.3%	.0%	30.0%
No	Count	12	2	14
	Percentage	66.7%	100.0%	70.0%
Total	Count	18	2	20
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 0.952$, v = 1, $p = 0.329$, u

Question 8

Type of intended contact with Brussels		Trade Unions & Employers' Associations		
		Malta	Ireland	Total
Rely on umbrella group based in Brussels	Count	2	2	4
	Percentage	28.6%	28.6%	28.6%
Send members to Brussels periodically	Count	1	1	2
	Percentage	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%
Online networking	Count	3	3	6
	Percentage	42.9%	42.9%	42.9%
Other means	Count	1	1	2
	Percentage	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%
Total	Count	7	7	14
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 < 0.00005$, v = 3, $p = 1.000$, u

Question 9

Attempts to access EU funds		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	23	7	30
	Percentage	60.5%	20.6%	41.7%
No	Count	15	27	42
	Percentage	39.5%	79.4%	58.3%
Total	Count	38	34	72
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 11.776$, $v = 1$, $p = 0.001$

Question 10

Success achieved in obtaining EU funds		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes in 1 project	Count	6	2	8
	Percentage	25.0%	28.6%	25.8%
Yes in more than 1 less than 5 projects	Count	6	4	10
	Percentage	25.0%	57.1%	32.3%
Yes in 5 projects or more	Count	4	1	5
	Percentage	16.7%	14.3%	16.1%
No	Count	8	0	8
	Percentage	33.3%	.0%	25.8%
Total	Count	24	7	31
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 4.115$, $v = 3$, $p = 0.249$, u

Question 11

Intention to try again to access EU funds if unsuccessful in the past		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	17	3	20
	Percentage	70.8%	42.9%	64.5%
No	Count	7	4	11
	Percentage	29.2%	57.1%	35.5%
Total	Count	24	7	31
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 1.853$, $v = 1$, $p = 0.173$, u

Question 12

Use of external advice to access EU funds		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		
		Malta	Ireland	Total
Yes	Count	16	7	23
	Percentage	64.0%	38.9%	53.5%
No	Count	9	11	20
	Percentage	36.0%	61.1%	46.5%
Total	Count	25	18	43
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 2.652$, v = 1, $p = 0.103$

Question 13

Sources of external advice sought by organisations		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Government agencies	Count	12	4	16
	Percentage	30.8%	21.1%	27.6%
Independent experts	Count	5	3	8
	Percentage	12.8%	15.8%	13.8%
Other domestic NGOs	Count	1	3	4
	Percentage	2.6%	15.8%	6.9%
Other European NGOs	Count	5	2	7
	Percentage	12.8%	10.5%	12.1%
Other means	Count	16	7	23
	Percentage	41.0%	36.8%	39.7%
Total	Count	39	19	58
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 3.871$, v = 4, $p = 0.424$, u

Question 14

Participation in EU related activities both domestically and abroad		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	27	31	58
	Percentage	73.0%	91.2%	81.7%
No	Count	10	3	13
	Percentage	27.0%	8.8%	18.3%
Total	Count	37	34	71
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 3.925$, v = 1, $p = 0.048$, u

Question 15

The rate of participation in EU related activities		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Increased	Count	11	14	25
	Percentage	28.9%	41.2%	34.7%
Remained Stable	Count	11	15	26
	Percentage	28.9%	44.1%	36.1%
Decreased	Count	5	2	7
	Percentage	13.2%	5.9%	9.7%
Not Applicable	Count	11	3	14
	Percentage	28.9%	8.8%	19.4%
Total	Count	38	34	72
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 6.631$, v = 3, $p = 0.085$, u

Question 16

The European dimension has been integrated within the events of the organisation		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	24	30	54
	Percentage	63.2%	88.2%	75.0%
No	Count	14	4	18
	Percentage	36.8%	11.8%	25.0%
Total	Count	38	34	72
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 6.019$, v = 1, $p = 0.045$, u

Question 17

Participation in domestic for a that discuss EU legislation		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	31	23	54
	Percentage	81.6%	67.6%	75.0%
No	Count	7	11	18
	Percentage	18.4%	32.4%	25.0%
Total	Count	38	34	72
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 1.858$, v = 1, $p = 0.173$

Question 18

Participation in any coordination entities that bring together governmental and non-governmental bodies		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	
Yes	Count	26	13	39
	Percentage	68.4%	38.2%	54.2%
No	Count	12	21	33
	Percentage	31.6%	61.8%	45.8%
Total	Count	38	34	72
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 0.659$, v = 1, $p = 0.010$

Question 19

Intention to start forming part of a coordinating entity, if this is not already the case		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	
Yes	Count	4	1	5
	Percentage	30.8%	5.0%	15.2%
No	Count	9	19	28
	Percentage	69.2%	95.0%	84.8%
Total	Count	13	20	33
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 4.070$, v = 1, $p = 0.044$, u

Question 20

Preferred style of negotiations		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	
Competitive	Count	2	0	2
	Percentage	5.3%	.0%	2.8%
Consensus	Count	3	9	12
	Percentage	7.9%	27.3%	16.9%
Compromise	Count	16	2	18
	Percentage	42.1%	6.1%	25.4%
Depends on the situation	Count	17	22	39
	Percentage	44.7%	66.7%	54.9%
Total	Count	38	33	71
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 16.258$, v = 3, $p = 0.001$, u

Question 21

Teaming up with other domestic organisations to solidify voice		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	21	19	40
	Percentage	55.3%	55.9%	55.6%
No	Count	17	15	32
	Percentage	44.7%	44.1%	44.4%
Total	Count	38	34	72
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 0.003$, v = 1, $p = 0.958$

Question 22

Involvement in Private-Public Partnerships		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes, on 1 occasion	Count	1	0	1
	Percentage	2.6%	.0%	1.4%
Yes, in more than 1 but less than 5 occasions	Count	7	8	15
	Percentage	18.4%	25.0%	21.4%
Yes, in 5 occasions or more	Count	3	1	4
	Percentage	7.9%	3.1%	5.7%
No	Count	27	23	50
	Percentage	71.1%	71.9%	71.4%
Total	Count	38	32	70
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 1.886$, v = 3, $p = 0.596$, u

Question 23

The EU enhanced the role of the individual organisation in the process of domestic policy-making

Trade Unions and Employers' Associations	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U Test	p value
	Mean	Deviation	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	U Test	p value
Malta	2.34	1.097	1.98	2.70	644.000	0.981
Ireland	2.32	0.843	2.03	2.62		

Question 24

The EU has been instrumental in accentuating the culture of social dialogue in domestic affairs

Trade Unions and Employers' Associations	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U test	P value
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Malta	3.05	0.868	2.77	3.34	448.000	0.031
Ireland	2.55	1.063	2.17	2.92		

Question 25

The EU induces domestic organisations to act more cohesively at the national level

Trade Unions and Employers' Associations	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U test	p value
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Malta	2.76	0.971	2.44	3.08	397.500	0.003
Ireland	2.00	1.073	1.63	2.37		

Question 26

The EU exerts more pressure on national government to seek more participation from domestic groups in policy-making

Trade Unions and Employers' Associations	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U test	p value
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Malta	2.76	0.971	2.44	3.08	451.500	0.032
Ireland	2.33	0.736	2.07	2.59		

Question 27

Participation in any of the European Commission's working groups		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	
Yes	Count	15	13	28
	Percentage	39.5%	38.2%	38.9%
No	Count	23	21	44
	Percentage	60.5%	61.8%	61.1%
Total	Count	38	34	72
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 0.012$, v = 1, $p = 0.914$

Question 28

Submission of feedback to draft legislation issued by the European Commission		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	19	28	47
	Percentage	50.0%	82.4%	65.3%
No	Count	19	6	25
	Percentage	50.0%	17.6%	34.7%
Total	Count	38	34	72
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 8.287$, $v = 1$, $p = 0.004$

Question 29

Engagement in consultation processes led by the European Economic and Social Committee		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		
		Malta	Ireland	Total
Yes	Count	12	15	27
	Percentage	32.4%	45.5%	38.6%
No	Count	25	18	43
	Percentage	67.6%	54.5%	61.4%
Total	Count	37	33	70
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 1.248$, $v = 1$, $p = 0.264$

Question 30

Affiliation to any European federation		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	27	32	59
	Percentage	71.1%	94.1%	81.9%
No	Count	11	2	13
	Percentage	28.9%	5.9%	18.1%
Total	Count	38	34	72
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 6.452$, $v = 1$, $p = 0.011$

Question 31

Intention of affiliation to any European federation, if this is not already the case		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	6	0	6
	Percentage	54.5%	.0%	46.2%
No	Count	5	2	7
	Percentage	45.5%	100.0%	53.8%
Total	Count	11	2	13
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 2.026$, $v = 1$, $p = 0.155$

Question 32

Reasons why not to affiliate to a European federation		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
No need to be part of Euro federation	Count	2	1	3
	Percentage	40.0%	33.3%	37.5%
focusing on domestic issues is a priority	Count	2	2	4
	Percentage	40.0%	66.7%	50.0%
Other reasons	Count	1	0	1
	Percentage	20.0%	.0%	12.5%
Total	Count	5	3	8
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 0.889$, v = 2, $p = 0.641$

Question 33

Members of domestic organisations holding executive responsibilities within European federations		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	13	11	24
	Percentage	34.2%	33.3%	33.8%
No	Count	25	22	47
	Percentage	65.8%	66.7%	66.2%
Total	Count	38	33	71
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 0.006$, v = 1, $p = 0.938$

Question 34

Engagement in lobbying with any institution of the EU		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	17	30	47
	Percentage	44.7%	88.2%	65.3%
No	Count	21	4	25
	Percentage	55.3%	11.8%	34.7%
Total	Count	38	34	72
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 14.98$, v = 1, $p < 0.0005$

Question 35

European institutions targeted for lobbying purposes		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		
		Malta	Ireland	Total
European Commission	Count	5	27	32
	Percentage	15.2%	32.1%	27.4%
National members of EESC	Count	10	12	22
	Percentage	30.3%	14.3%	18.8%
National MEPs	Count	10	27	37
	Percentage	30.3%	32.1%	31.6%
Commissioner of home country	Count	3	11	14
	Percentage	9.1%	13.1%	12.0%
Member State holding Presidency of Council	Count	1	2	3
	Percentage	3.0%	2.4%	2.6%
Other means	Count	4	5	9
	Percentage	12.1%	6.0%	7.7%
Total	Count	33	84	117
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 7.287$, $v = 5$, $p = 0.200$

Question 36

Reasons why certain organisations do not engage with EU institutions for lobbying purposes		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		
		Malta	Ireland	Total
Domestic route of influence is preferred	Count	4	1	5
	Percentage	14.8%	14.3%	14.7%
Targeting national ministers who in turn voice their opinion at Council of Ministers	Count	1	3	4
	Percentage	3.7%	42.9%	11.8%
High cost of lobbying at EU level	Count	4	0	4
	Percentage	14.8%	.0%	11.8%
No knowledge of EU institutional design	Count	4	0	4
	Percentage	14.8%	.0%	11.8%
EU does not have relevance	Count	2	1	3
	Percentage	7.4%	14.3%	8.8%
Lack of administrative capacity	Count	12	1	13
	Percentage	44.4%	14.3%	38.2%
Other reasons	Count	0	1	1
	Percentage	.0%	14.3%	2.9%
Total	Count	27	7	34
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 14.796$, $v = 6$, $p = 0.022$

Question 37

Identification of European partner organisations to cooperate over joint projects		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	13	29	42
	Percentage	34.2%	87.9%	59.2%
No	Count	25	4	29
	Percentage	65.8%	12.1%	40.8%
Total	Count	38	33	71
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 21.054$, $v = 1$, $p < 0.0005$

Question 38

The European regions from which partner organisations originate		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Southern & Mediterranean cluster	Count	13	94	107
	Percentage	40.6%	22.0%	23.3%
Central cluster	Count	7	87	94
	Percentage	21.9%	20.3%	20.4%
Northern cluster	Count	12	96	108
	Percentage	37.5%	22.4%	23.5%
Eastern cluster	Count	0	151	151
	Percentage	.0%	35.3%	32.8%
Total	Count	32	428	460
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 18.663$, $v = 3$, $p < 0.0005$

Question 39

Intention to work with European partner organisations if this is not already the case		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	15	1	16
	Percentage	60.0%	33.3%	57.1%
No	Count	10	2	12
	Percentage	40.0%	66.7%	42.9%
Total	Count	25	3	28
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 0.778$, $v = 1$, $p = 0.378$

Question 40

Engagement with other European partners through physical networking (members' exchanges)		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	10	29	39
	Percentage	26.3%	85.3%	54.2%
No	Count	28	5	33
	Percentage	73.7%	14.7%	45.8%
Total	Count	38	34	72
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 25.142$, v = 1, $p < 0.0005$

Question 41

Engagement with European partners through virtual networking (online activity)		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	13	29	42
	Percentage	34.2%	85.3%	58.3%
No	Count	25	5	30
	Percentage	65.8%	14.7%	41.7%
Total	Count	38	34	72
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 19.266$, v = 1, $p < 0.0005$

Question 42

EU membership affects the mind-set of the members within the organisation

Trade Unions and Employers' Associations	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U test	p value
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Malta	2.97	0.944	2.66	3.28	586.500	0.432
Ireland	2.94	0.489	2.77	3.11		

Question 43

The character of the organisation has been influenced by norms and practices of European federations

Trade Unions and Employers' Associations	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U test	p value
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Malta	2.58	1.030	2.24	2.92	521.500	0.196
Ireland	2.36	0.603	2.15	2.58		

Question 44

There have been changes within the organisation that are attributed to new ideas brought about by European partners		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	15	15	30
	Percentage	40.5%	44.1%	42.3%
No	Count	18	6	24
	Percentage	48.6%	17.6%	33.8%
Don't Know	Count	4	13	17
	Percentage	10.8%	38.2%	23.9%
Total	Count	37	34	71
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 10.657$, v = 2, $p = 0.005$

Question 45

The organisation is encouraged by the pattern of EU governance to change its tactics and strategy in domestic negotiations		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	21	5	26
	Percentage	55.3%	14.7%	36.1%
No	Count	14	17	31
	Percentage	36.8%	50.0%	43.1%
Don't Know	Count	3	12	15
	Percentage	7.9%	35.3%	20.8%
Total	Count	38	34	72
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 15.362$, v = 2, $p < 0.0005$

Question 46

Source of stimulus that instigate change in the organisation's tactics & strategies

Trade Unions and Employers' Associations				95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U test	p value
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
European Funds	Malta	3.0000	1.44914	2.3404	3.6596	32.500	0.189
	Ireland	2.1000	1.47479	.2688	3.9312		
Consensus Value	Malta	3.2143	1.44544	2.5563	3.8722	37.500	0.324
	Ireland	2.5000	.79057	1.5184	3.4816		
Socialisation with partners	Malta	3.2619	1.18974	2.7203	3.8035	36.000	0.276
	Ireland	3.9000	.96177	2.7058	5.0942		
Positive Attitude	Malta	2.4762	.87287	2.0789	2.8735	36.000	0.276
	Ireland	3.1000	1.24499	1.5541	4.6459		
Training Opportunities	Malta	3.0476	1.04767	2.5707	3.5245	44.000	0.574
	Ireland	3.4000	1.19373	1.9178	4.8822		

Question 47
National culture inhibits the acquisition of new norms and values originating from a wider European experience

Trade Unions and Employers' Associations	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U test	p value
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Malta	2.42	1.004	2.09	2.75	448.500	0.169
Ireland	2.07	0.923	1.72	2.42		

Question 48

Participation in exercises involving sharing of best practices with other organisations		Trade Unions and Employers' Associations		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	
Domestic Organisations only	Count	12	1	13
	Percentage	31.6%	2.9%	18.1%
European Organisations only	Count	2	2	4
	Percentage	5.3%	5.9%	5.6%
Both Domestic & European Organisations	Count	10	14	24
	Percentage	26.3%	41.2%	33.3%
Domestic, European & beyond EU Organisations	Count	7	6	13
	Percentage	18.4%	17.6%	18.1%
Not at all	Count	7	11	18
	Percentage	18.4%	32.4%	25.0%
Total	Count	38	34	72
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 10.751$, v = 4, $p = 0.030$

Question 49

Benchmarking exercises have transformation effects on the norms that shape the culture of the organisation

Trade Unions and Employers' Associations	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U test	p value
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Malta	2.67	0.784	2.36	2.98	259.500	0.584
Ireland	2.71	0.561	2.46	2.97		

Appendix I

Statistical findings pertaining to Social, Human Rights and Environmental Groups in Malta and Ireland

STATISTICAL CROSSTABS REGARDING
SOCIAL/HUMAN RIGHTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS
(a.k.a. SHEGs)
IN MALTA AND IRELAND

Demographic question

Type of personnel engaged by interest groups		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	Ireland	
volunteers only	Count	63	10	73
	Percentage	54.8%	11.9%	36.7%
paid personnel only	Count	2	5	7
	Percentage	1.7%	6.0%	3.5%
mix of volunteers & paid personnel	Count	50	69	119
	Percentage	43.5%	82.1%	59.8%
Total	Count	115	84	199
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 38.91$, $v = 2$, $p < 0.0005$

Question 1

The vision/mission statement incorporate a European dimension		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	Ireland	
Yes	Count	62	32	94
	Percentage	53.9%	38.1%	47.2%
No	Count	53	52	105
	Percentage	46.1%	61.9%	52.8%
Total	Count	115	84	199
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 4.87$, $v = 1$, $p = 0.027$

Question 2

The inclusion of the EU dimension in the vision/mission statement occurred as a consequence of EU accession		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	Ireland	
Yes	Count	19	13	32
	Percentage	27.5%	38.2%	31.1%
No	Count	50	21	71
	Percentage	72.5%	61.8%	68.9%
Total	Count	69	34	103
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 1.217$, $v = 1$, $p = 0.270$

Question 3

Intention to include a European dimension in the vision/mission statement, if this is not already the case		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	18	8	26
	Percentage	33.3%	15.7%	24.8%
No	Count	36	43	79
	Percentage	66.7%	84.3%	75.2%
Total	Count	54	51	105
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 4.384$, v = 1, $p = 0.036$

Question 4

Responsibility of EU affairs within organisations		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes, one person who is solely responsible	Count	7	5	12
	Percentage	6.1%	6.0%	6.1%
Yes, one who performs other tasks as well	Count	31	11	42
	Percentage	27.0%	13.3%	21.2%
Yes, more than one person responsible	Count	24	22	46
	Percentage	20.9%	26.5%	23.2%
No	Count	53	45	98
	Percentage	46.1%	54.2%	49.5%
Total	Count	115	83	198
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 5.571$, v = 3, $p = 0.134$

Question 5

Participation in training programmes to acquire necessary skills in EU affairs		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	53	19	72
	Percentage	46.1%	22.9%	36.4%
No	Count	62	64	126
	Percentage	53.9%	77.1%	63.6%
Total	Count	115	83	198
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 11.208$, v = 1, $p = 0.001$

Question 6

The type of contact that has already been established in Brussels, if any		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Permanent Office in Brussels	Count	3	2	5
	Percentage	1.9%	1.6%	1.8%
Relying on umbrella Euro-groups based in Brussels	Count	33	39	72
	Percentage	21.2%	31.2%	25.6%
Sending members to Brussels periodically	Count	21	22	43
	Percentage	13.5%	17.6%	15.3%
Online networking	Count	30	17	47
	Percentage	19.2%	13.6%	16.7%
Other means	Count	18	16	34
	Percentage	11.5%	12.8%	12.1%
No contact	Count	51	29	80
	Percentage	32.7%	23.2%	28.5%
Total	Count	156	125	281
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 7.154$, v = 5, $p = 0.209$

Question 7

Intention to establish contact with Brussels if this is not already the case		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	25	6	31
	Percentage	47.2%	20.7%	37.8%
No	Count	28	23	51
	Percentage	52.8%	79.3%	62.2%
Total	Count	53	29	82
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 5.590$, v = 1, $p = 0.018$

Question 8

Type of intended contact with Brussels		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Rely on umbrella group based in Brussels	Count	5	1	6
	Percentage	17.2%	12.5%	16.2%
Send members to Brussels periodically	Count	4	1	5
	Percentage	13.8%	12.5%	13.5%
Online networking	Count	14	4	18
	Percentage	48.3%	50.0%	48.6%
Other means	Count	6	2	8
	Percentage	20.7%	25.0%	21.6%
Total	Count	29	8	37
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 0.152$, v = 3, $p = 0.985$, u

Question 9

Attempts to access EU funds		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	69	43	112
	Percentage	60.0%	51.8%	56.6%
No	Count	46	40	86
	Percentage	40.0%	48.2%	43.4%
Total	Count	115	83	198
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 1.317$, v = 1, $p = 0.251$

Question 10

Success achieved in obtaining EU funds		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes in 1 project	Count	16	9	25
	Percentage	22.9%	20.5%	21.9%
Yes in more than 1 less than 5 projects	Count	26	20	46
	Percentage	37.1%	45.5%	40.4%
Yes in 5 projects or more	Count	12	6	18
	Percentage	17.1%	13.6%	15.8%
No	Count	16	9	25
	Percentage	22.9%	20.5%	21.9%
Total	Count	70	44	114
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 0.815$, v = 3, $p = 0.846$

Question 11

Intention to try again to access EU funds if unsuccessful in the past		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	44	26	70
	Percentage	74.6%	65.0%	70.7%
No	Count	15	14	29
	Percentage	25.4%	35.0%	29.3%
Total	Count	59	40	99
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 1.055$, v = 1, $p = 0.304$

Question 12

Use of external advice to access EU funds		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	Ireland	
Yes	Count	70	33	103
	Percentage	73.7%	53.2%	65.6%
No	Count	25	29	54
	Percentage	26.3%	46.8%	34.4%
Total	Count	95	62	157
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 6.959$, v = 1, $p = 0.008$

Question 13

Sources of external advice sought by organisations		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	
Government agencies	Count	45	14	59
	Percentage	43.3%	28.0%	38.3%
Independent experts	Count	17	12	29
	Percentage	16.3%	24.0%	18.8%
Other domestic NGOs	Count	16	11	27
	Percentage	15.4%	22.0%	17.5%
Other European NGOs	Count	21	11	32
	Percentage	20.2%	22.0%	20.8%
Other means	Count	5	2	7
	Percentage	4.8%	4.0%	4.5%
Total	Count	104	50	154
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 4.050$, v = 4, $p = 0.399$, u

Question 14

Participation in EU related activities both domestically and abroad		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	
Yes	Count	76	57	133
	Percentage	67.3%	70.4%	68.6%
No	Count	37	24	61
	Percentage	32.7%	29.6%	31.4%
Total	Count	113	81	194
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 0.212$, v = 1, $p = 0.645$

Question 15

The rate of participation in EU related activities		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Increased	Count	42	30	72
	Percentage	36.8%	37.5%	37.1%
Remained Stable	Count	31	24	55
	Percentage	27.2%	30.0%	28.4%
Decreased	Count	4	7	11
	Percentage	3.5%	8.8%	5.7%
Not Applicable	Count	37	19	56
	Percentage	32.5%	23.8%	28.9%
Total	Count	114	80	194
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 3.648$, v = 3, $p = 0.302$, u

Question 16

The European dimension has been integrated within the events of the organisation		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	74	42	116
	Percentage	64.9%	53.2%	60.1%
No	Count	40	37	77
	Percentage	35.1%	46.8%	39.9%
Total	Count	114	79	193
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 2.686$, v = 1, $p = 0.101$

Question 17

Participation in domestic fora that discuss EU legislation		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	55	51	106
	Percentage	48.2%	60.7%	53.5%
No	Count	59	33	92
	Percentage	51.8%	39.3%	46.5%
Total	Count	114	84	198
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 3.023$, v = 1, $p = 0.082$

Question 18

Participation in any coordination entities that bring together governmental and non-governmental bodies		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	
Yes	Count	44	31	75
	Percentage	38.3%	37.3%	37.9%
No	Count	71	52	123
	Percentage	61.7%	62.7%	62.1%
Total	Count	115	83	198
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 0.017$, v = 1, $p = 0.896$

Question 19

Intention to start forming part of a coordinating entity, if this is not already the case		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	
Yes	Count	33	7	40
	Percentage	46.5%	13.7%	32.8%
No	Count	38	44	82
	Percentage	53.5%	86.3%	67.2%
Total	Count	71	51	122
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 14.45$, v = 1, $p < 0.0005$

Question 20

Preferred style of negotiations		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	
Competitive	Count	4	1	5
	Percentage	3.7%	1.4%	2.7%
Consensus	Count	23	25	48
	Percentage	21.1%	33.8%	26.2%
Compromise	Count	20	3	23
	Percentage	18.3%	4.1%	12.6%
Laissez-Faire	Count	1	0	1
	Percentage	.9%	.0%	.5%
Depends on the situation	Count	61	45	106
	Percentage	56.0%	60.8%	57.9%
Total	Count	109	74	183
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 11.594$, v = 4, $p = 0.021$, u

Question 21

Teaming up with other domestic organisations to solidify voice		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	56	47	103
	Percentage	48.7%	57.3%	52.3%
No	Count	59	35	94
	Percentage	51.3%	42.7%	47.7%
Total	Count	115	82	197
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 1.426$, v = 1, $p = 0.232$

Question 22

Involvement in Private-Public Partnerships		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes, on 1 occasion	Count	9	5	14
	Percentage	7.8%	6.0%	7.1%
Yes, in more than 1 but less than 5 occasions	Count	19	10	29
	Percentage	16.5%	12.0%	14.6%
Yes, in 5 occasions or more	Count	8	9	17
	Percentage	7.0%	10.8%	8.6%
No	Count	79	59	138
	Percentage	68.7%	71.1%	69.7%
Total	Count	115	83	198
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 1.768$, v = 3, $p = 0.622$

Question 23

The EU enhanced the role of the individual organisation in the process of domestic policy-making

Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U test	p value
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Malta	2.43	1.081	2.23	2.63	4396.000	0.658
Ireland	2.50	1.055	2.27	2.73		

Question 24

The EU has been instrumental in accentuating the culture of civil dialogue in domestic affairs

Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Std.	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U	
	Mean	Deviation	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	test	p value
Malta	3.01	0.907	2.84	3.18	2588.000	0.005
Ireland	2.64	0.885	2.45	2.84		

Question 25

The EU induces domestic organisations to act more cohesively at the national level

Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Std.	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U	
	Mean	Deviation	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	test	p value
Malta	2.62	0.933	2.45	2.79	4187.000	0.331
Ireland	2.47	0.985	2.25	2.69		

Question 26

The EU exerts more pressure on national government to seek more participation from domestic groups in policy-making

Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Std.	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U	
	Mean	Deviation	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	test	p value
Malta	2.77	0.810	2.62	2.92	3597.500	0.017
Ireland	2.42	1.026	2.19	2.65		

Question 27

Participation in any of the European Commission's working groups		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	16	15	31
	Percentage	13.9%	17.9%	15.6%
No	Count	99	69	168
	Percentage	86.1%	82.1%	84.4%
Total	Count	115	84	199
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 0.574$, v = 1, $p = 0.449$

Question 28

Submission of feedback to draft legislation issued by the European Commission		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	29	28	57
	Percentage	25.2%	33.3%	28.6%
No	Count	86	56	142
	Percentage	74.8%	66.7%	71.4%
Total	Count	115	84	199
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 1.564$, v = 1, $p = 0.211$

Question 29

Engagement in consultation processes led by the European Economic and Social Committee		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	**.Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	10	24	34
	Percentage	8.7%	28.6%	17.1%
No	Count	105	60	165
	Percentage	91.3%	71.4%	82.9%
Total	Count	115	84	199
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 13.537$, v = 1, $p < 0.0005$

Question 30

Affiliation to any European federation		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	49	39	88
	Percentage	43.0%	47.0%	44.7%
No	Count	65	44	109
	Percentage	57.0%	53.0%	55.3%
Total	Count	114	83	197
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 0.312$, v = 1, $p = 0.577$

Question 31

Intention of affiliation to any European federation, if this is not already the case		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	37	19	56
	Percentage	56.9%	45.2%	52.3%
No	Count	28	23	51
	Percentage	43.1%	54.8%	47.7%
Total	Count	65	42	107
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 1.397$, v = 1, $p = 0.237$

Question 32

Reasons why not to affiliate to a European federation		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
No need to be part of a Euro federation	Count	15	4	19
	Percentage	34.1%	14.3%	26.4%
high monetary cost of affiliation	Count	13	8	21
	Percentage	29.5%	28.6%	29.2%
focusing on domestic issues is a priority	Count	12	14	26
	Percentage	27.3%	50.0%	36.1%
affiliation is against statute	Count	1	0	1
	Percentage	2.3%	.0%	1.4%
Other reasons	Count	3	2	5
	Percentage	6.8%	7.1%	6.9%
Total	Count	44	28	72
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 5.635$, v = 4, $p = 0.228$

Question 33

Members of domestic organisations holding executive responsibilities within European federations		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	24	13	37
	Percentage	21.4%	17.1%	19.7%
No	Count	88	63	151
	Percentage	78.6%	82.9%	80.3%
Total	Count	112	76	188
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 0.535$, v = 1, $p = 0.464$

Question 34

Engagement in lobbying with any institution of the EU		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	41	35	76
	Percentage	35.7%	42.2%	38.4%
No	Count	74	48	122
	Percentage	64.3%	57.8%	61.6%
Total	Count	115	83	198
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 0.866$, v = 1, $p = 0.352$

Question 35

European institutions targeted for lobbying purposes		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	Ireland	
European Commission	Count	19	24	43
	Percentage	32.2%	29.3%	30.5%
National members of EESC	Count	3	13	16
	Percentage	5.1%	15.9%	11.3%
National MEPs	Count	21	25	46
	Percentage	35.6%	30.5%	32.6%
Commissioner of home country	Count	4	7	11
	Percentage	6.8%	8.5%	7.8%
Member State holding Presidency of Council	Count	0	9	9
	Percentage	.0%	11.0%	6.4%
Other means	Count	12	4	16
	Percentage	20.3%	4.9%	11.3%
Total	Count	59	82	141
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 17.717$, v = 5, $p = 0.003$

Question 36

Reasons why certain organisations do not engage with EU institutions for lobbying purposes		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	Ireland	
Domestic route of influence is preferred	Count	22	24	46
	Percentage	19.5%	24.0%	21.6%
Targeting national ministers who in turn voice their opinion at the Council of Ministers	Count	13	10	23
	Percentage	11.5%	10.0%	10.8%
High cost of lobbying at EU level	Count	12	17	29
	Percentage	10.6%	17.0%	13.6%
No knowledge of EU institutional design	Count	9	8	17
	Percentage	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%
EU does not have relevance	Count	11	9	20
	Percentage	9.7%	9.0%	9.4%
Lack of administrative capacity	Count	41	27	68
	Percentage	36.3%	27.0%	31.9%
Other reasons	Count	5	5	10
	Percentage	4.4%	5.0%	4.7%
Total	Count	113	100	213
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 3.702$, v = 6, $p = 0.717$

Question 37

Identification of European partner organisations to cooperate over joint projects		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	58	46	103
	Percentage	49.6%	54.8%	51.8%
No	Count	57	38	96
	Percentage	50.4%	45.2%	48.2%
Total	Count	115	84	199
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 0.525$, $v = 1$, $p = 0.469$

Question 38

The European regions from which partner organisations originate		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Southern & Mediterranean cluster	Count	95	67	162
	Percentage	26.5%	24.2%	25.5%
Central cluster	Count	68	63	131
	Percentage	18.9%	22.7%	20.6%
Northern cluster	Count	84	75	159
	Percentage	23.4%	27.1%	25.0%
Eastern cluster	Count	112	72	184
	Percentage	31.2%	26.0%	28.9%
Total	Count	359	277	636
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 3.725$, $v = 3$, $p = 0.293$

Question 39

Intention to work with European partner organisations if this is not already the case		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	47	24	71
	Percentage	79.7%	68.6%	75.5%
No	Count	12	11	23
	Percentage	20.3%	31.4%	24.5%
Total	Count	59	35	94
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 1.462$, $v = 1$, $p = 0.227$

Question 40

Engagement with other European partners through physical networking (members' exchanges)		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	43	33	76
	Percentage	38.1%	40.7%	39.2%
No	Count	70	48	118
	Percentage	61.9%	59.3%	60.8%
Total	Count	113	81	194
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 0.143$, $v = 1$, $p = 0.705$

Question 41

Engagement with European partners through virtual networking (online activity)		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		
		Malta	**Ireland**	Total
Yes	Count	57	46	101
	Percentage	50.9%	56.8%	52.3%
No	Count	55	35	92
	Percentage	49.6%	43.2%	47.7%
Total	Count	112	81	193
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 1.112$, $v = 1$, $p = 0.292$

Question 42

EU membership affects the mind-set of the members within the organisation

Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U test	P value
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Malta	2.65	1.047	2.45	2.84	4485.500	0.840
Ireland	2.69	1.001	2.46	2.91		

Question 43

The character of the organisation has been influenced by norms and practices of European federations

Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U test	p value
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Malta	2.16	1.172	1.94	2.38	4469.000	0.804
Ireland	2.17	0.991	1.95	2.40		

Question 44

There have been changes within the organisation that are attributed to new ideas brought about by European partners		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	
Yes	Count	48	33	81
	Percentage	42.5%	39.8%	41.3%
No	Count	54	26	80
	Percentage	47.8%	31.3%	40.8%
Don't Know	Count	11	24	35
	Percentage	9.7%	28.9%	17.9%
Total	Count	113	83	196
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 13.122$, v = 2, $p = 0.001$

Question 45

The organisation is encouraged by the pattern of EU governance to change its tactics and strategy in domestic negotiations		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	**Ireland**	
Yes	Count	50	31	81
	Percentage	43.9%	37.3%	41.1%
No	Count	43	36	79
	Percentage	37.7%	43.4%	40.1%
Don't Know	Count	21	16	37
	Percentage	18.4%	19.3%	18.8%
Total	Count	114	83	197
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 0.639$, v = 2, $p = 0.639$

Question 46

Sources of stimulus that instigate change in the organisation's tactics & strategies

Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U Test	p value
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
European Funds	Malta	3.8396	1.26253	3.4916	4.1876	617.0000	0.050
	Ireland	3.3065	1.20884	2.8630	3.7499		
Consensus Value	Malta	2.6132	1.17523	2.2893	2.9371	661.0000	0.131
	Ireland	3.1129	1.37058	2.6102	3.6156		
Socialisation with Partners	Malta	3.1038	1.14924	2.7870	3.4205	739.0000	0.437
	Ireland	3.3226	1.30095	2.8454	3.7998		
Positive Attitude	Malta	2.4528	1.02029	2.1716	2.7341	689.0000	0.210
	Ireland	2.7097	.99812	2.3436	3.0758		
Training opportunities	Malta	2.9906	1.15813	2.6713	3.3098	632.5000	0.075
	Ireland	2.5484	.89773	2.2191	2.8777		

Question 47

National culture inhibits the acquisition of new norms and values originating from a wider European Experience

Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U test	p value
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Malta	2.25	0.944	2.07	2.43	4228.000	0.812
Ireland	2.27	1.008	2.04	2.50		

Question 48

Participation in exercises involving sharing of best practices with other organisations		Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups		Total
		Malta	Ireland	
Domestic Organisations only	Count	22	28	50
	Percentage	19.3%	33.7%	25.4%
European Organisations only	Count	13	1	14
	Percentage	11.4%	1.2%	7.1%
Organisations beyond the EU only	Count	3	1	4
	Percentage	2.6%	1.2%	2.0%
Both Domestic & European Organisations	Count	26	17	43
	Percentage	22.8%	20.5%	21.8%
Domestic, European & beyond EU Organisations	Count	19	28	47
	Percentage	16.7%	33.7%	23.9%
Not at all	Count	31	8	39
	Percentage	27.2%	9.6%	19.8%
Total	Count	114	83	197
	Percentage	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$X^2 = 24.916, v = 5, p < 0.0005$

Question 49

Benchmarking exercises have transformation effects on the norms that shape the culture of the Organisation

Social, Human rights and Environmental Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mann-Whitney U test	p value
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Malta	2.90	0.744	2.73	3.07	2840.500	0.989
Ireland	2.89	0.815	2.70	3.08		