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Bridging the Politico-Administrative Divide

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Abstract

This thesis presents the findings and conclusions of research that was undertaken with the purpose of exploring the issues (or factors) that typically influence the successful, or unsuccessful, implementation of public policy initiatives in Malta.

The research, which followed an inductive enquiry and a case study approach, was undertaken in three sequential and progressive steps (or 'projects'). The objective of Projects 1 and 2 was to *elicit* the factors that are typically considered to influence failure and success in the implementation of policy initiatives in Malta. While Project 1 focused on a case study of failure, Project 2 considered a case study of successful policy implementation¹. Both studies were based upon data collected through documentary research (172 records)² and in-depth interviews (17)³ that were held with the key persons involved in the implementation of the policies under review. Twenty-six (26) factors of failure and twenty-one (21) factors of success were identified through the application of cognitive (causal) mapping techniques (Eden, Ackermann et al., 1992) and the general principles of data codification proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998). Using a survey of 136 persons⁴, Project 3 then established which of the factors elicited from the first two projects were generally considered to be critical for policy implementation in Malta. Focusing on these results, a number of propositions were then drawn with the objective of recommending measures that would improve the likelihood of successful policy implementation.

The research concludes that the decisive factors influencing the successful or unsuccessful outcome of policy implementation in Malta are a function of the type and degree of *commitment* and *leadership* that are shown to a policy initiative. The research further suggests that success can be improved if the approach to the management of policies is based on the application of the principles of *project management*. The research makes a number of contributions to both theory and practice. Most notably, it proposes two conceptual models for framing and representing success and failure in policy implementation; it ascribes meaning to a number of clichéd concepts, particularly that of '(policy) commitment'; it identifies eight dimensions or requisites for effective (public sector) leadership; and it suggests a tool for guiding the selection of policy implementation leaders.

¹ The policies selected for the case studies were chosen through an interview process.

² Several other documents were examined. The 172 records were short-listed as key documents (69 in Project 1 and 103 in Project 2) and included reports, minutes of meetings, Parliamentary debates and questions, legislation, internal memoranda, letters and circulars, correspondence files, and newspaper articles.

³ Nine (9) interviews in Project 1 and eight (8) interviews in Project 2.

⁴ This represents a 62% response rate from a census of 219 Politicians, senior Civil Servants and Consultants with the Government of Malta.

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Preface

The DBA

Like the Ph.D, the DBA is a research degree. Unlike the Ph.D, it is driven by the desire to address a specific management issue, rather than an academic research question arising from the identification of a 'gap' in current management theory. In this respect, it is the management issue that constitutes the research question.

Furthermore, the DBA research follows a more structured and modular approach. It is focused around three thematically linked 'projects' that explore and answer the management issue in successive 'steps', each one building on the findings of the previous, until all aspects of the research question (management issue) have been addressed. Each project concludes with a report that details the objective of the research undertaken, the methodology followed, and the findings and conclusions derived. In a final step, the work undertaken in the three projects is returned to and reflected upon, so that general conclusions and recommendations can be drawn. These are presented in a report referred to as the 'Linking Document', which also details the research contributions to both theory and practice.

Structure of this Thesis

This thesis brings together the research undertaken throughout the DBA programme. It is structured in five parts to reflect the research process described above.

Part 1 starts with a discussion of the management issue, the research aims and justification, and the research question addressed by the study. It then outlines the general literature guiding the study, presenting this as a precursor to the indicative and detailed literature reviews that were undertaken in Projects 1 and 3. The paradigm defining the research design is presented next, followed by a summary of the methodologies adopted in each of the three projects.

Parts 2, 3 and 4 of the thesis reproduce the research undertaken in Projects 1, 2 and 3 respectively. Projects 1 and 2 address the first aspect of the research question by (respectively) considering a representative example of failure and success in policy

implementation. Project 3 then focuses on the results obtained from these projects to address the second aspect of the research question.

Parts 2 and 3 of the thesis follow the same structure: after introducing the research objective for the project in question, each part describes the data subject of the research, it outlines the research methodology, and presents the data findings and observations.

Part 4 focuses on the work undertaken in Project 3. In this case, the emphasis of the discussion is on the methodology and choice of methods used (which differ from those adopted in Projects 1 and 2) and the development of propositions that consider both the findings of the first two projects and those arising from a detailed review of the relevant literature.

The last element of this thesis – Part 5 – then focuses on a holistic discussion of the research findings and propositions, the limitations of the study, and the contributions to knowledge and practice.

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The Management Issue and Research Question

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Overview of Part 1

This Part of the thesis introduces the management problem and research issue guiding the entire study, and is divided into three chapters.

Chapter 1 states the purpose of the research study, the background or context to the research, its perceived justification and rationale, and the objectives it sets to achieve. After a discussion of the aforesaid, the research question is defined as follows:

What issues (or factors) curtail the effective implementation of a given public policy, and how can these issues be overcome?

Chapter 2 grounds the research question in the literature and theoretical principles that inform the research issue. While the review cuts across a number of academic research domains, it is predominantly anchored in the strategy literature, drawing on aspects of this body of knowledge that pertains to both the private and public sectors. The Chapter presents and discusses those works considered to be the most relevant for this research and ends by drawing four conclusions to guide the study.

Finally, Chapter 3 provides an overview of the research methodology, structure and methods defining this study. The purpose of this Chapter is to provide the reader with a 'preview' of how the research unfolded and an insight into the logic, rationale and objective guiding each step of the study.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Statement of Purpose

This research is concerned with exploring the issues influencing the strategic implementation of public policy in the Republic of Malta⁵. In particular, it seeks to understand why policy that is established by the Executive of Government is not always successfully implemented by the Public Service.

1.2 Background

On the 27th May 1988, the Prime Minister of Malta appointed a Public Service Reform Commission “to examine the organisation of the Public Service, and to recommend means by which the Service can efficiently respond to the changing needs for effective government” (Public Service Reform Commission, 1989). Since then, Public Service reform has occupied a central position on the political and administrative agenda of the Government, and a number of change programmes were launched to address the strategic orientation of the Public Service. The aim of these initiatives was to explore new opportunities for improving the operations of the Administration and, in so doing, to ensure that the policies formulated by the Executive can be effectively and efficiently implemented for the benefit of the intended recipients and the nation at large.

A number of, at least partial, success stories emerged. Yet, in other instances, the momentum of change was not sustained. In some cases, the drive for change may have only partially succeeded, or may have altogether failed, because the reform was perceived to be an imposition and was therefore not supported by the people who ultimately were responsible for its implementation (Polidano, 1992). In others, it may not have been sustained because the organisations did not have the skills or

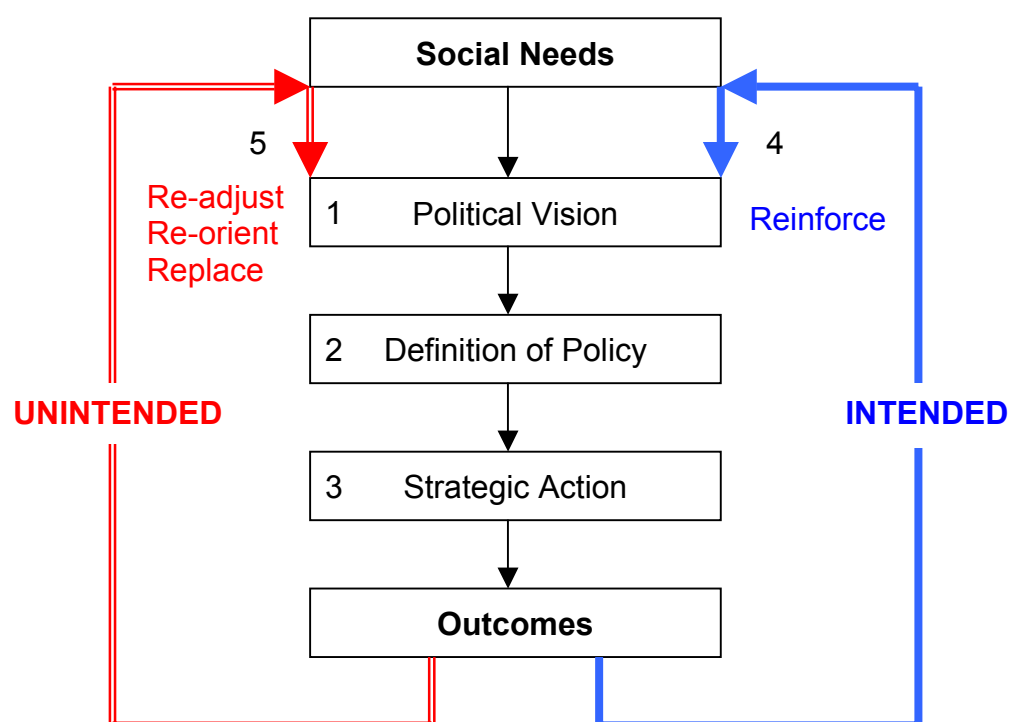
⁵ See **Appendix 1** for a profile of Malta and its Government.

appropriate capacity to do so⁶. Drawing parallels with similar situations in other jurisdictions, some organisations may also not have felt the need to change and/or were otherwise not faced with a crisis or the right pressure for change (Nutt and Backoff, 1987; Bowman, 1999). In these instances, the inability to drive change stifled the development of new or improved strategic management frameworks and, hence, the ability to effectively implement intended policies.

1.3 Research Issue

Figure 1 below is a STEP-BY-STEP representation of a typical cycle guiding the formulation and implementation of public policy.

Figure 1 – A Generic Model of the Public Policy Cycle



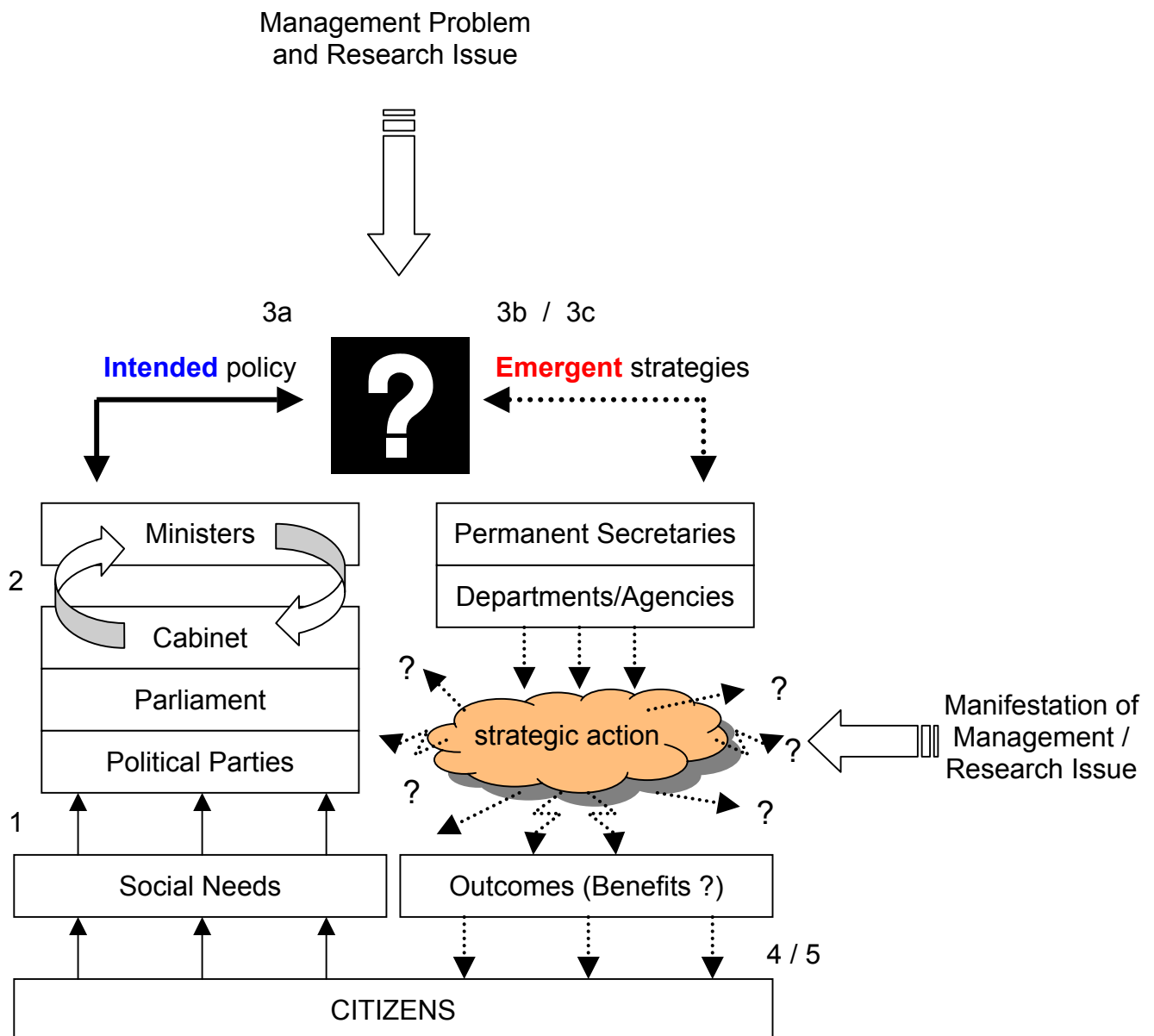
Source: Compiled by Author

⁶ Quoted from a discussion held on May 11, 2000 between the author and Dr Godfrey Pirota, then Senior Lecturer at the Department of Public Policy of the University of Malta.

At a macro-level, the public policy cycle can be thought of as consisting of five possible STEPS (marked 1-2-3-4-5 in Figure 1). In general, the public policy cycle is triggered by citizens' claims for action or inaction on some public issue made upon government officials and agencies (Anderson, 1990: 6). In response to these issues, described in Figure 1 as 'social needs', different political visions that have the potential to address and satisfy these needs are offered as alternative courses of action (STEP 1, Figure 1). On the basis of this, a Party is elected to Office. In turn, policy statements are defined (STEP 2). These statements are the formal expressions of the 'chosen' vision which, when acted upon (STEP 3), produce a set of outcomes that are expected to address the policy demands of citizens in a way that at best maximises, and at least satisfies, the anticipated return per unit of cost. Outcomes that positively address policy demands will act to reinforce the original vision and policy statements, so that more of the same benefits are produced (STEP 4), thereby sustaining the formulation of policy and the implementation of strategic action through successive, incremental cycles. On the other hand, outcomes that produce undesired results or unintended benefits are likely to cause the political vision, the policy statement, and/or the action taken earlier to be re-adjusted, re-oriented or replaced (STEP 5), so that Steps 1-2-3-4 are achieved instead.

While policy makers would ideally expect the policy cycle to evolve as depicted through Steps 1-2-3-4, occasionally (and maybe more often), public policies are not implemented as intended and/or fail to produce the outcomes anticipated to address the targeted social needs in the intended way, the first-time round. This failure may be caused by various 'breakdowns' in one or more of STEPS 1 to 3 of the policy cycle (Figure 1). The reasons for this are discussed next. Figure 2 on the following page expands on the general model presented in Figure 1, to support this discussion.

Figure 2 – The Public Policy Gap



Source: Compiled by Author

Firstly, citizens' felt deprivation of their social needs may be wrongly identified and interpreted by political parties, such that when fed into the policy development framework in the form of manifesto promises prior to election time, they do not adequately reflect citizens' needs (STEP 1, Figure 2). Two outcomes are possible at this stage. On the one hand, the political vision as expressed in the Party's manifesto fails to capture public interest and support and, consequently, the Party is not elected to Office. In such an event, STEPs 2 to 4 would be obviated. On the other hand, the Party may still be elected to Office, but the policy statements that are developed (STEP 2) are nonetheless ineffective because they are based on the expression of social needs that have been incorrectly diagnosed. If the problems (i.e., social needs) have been wrongly defined and the treatments (policies) are inadequate, it is almost certain that the delivered action and outcomes will fall short of expectations. This will create distrust among the electorate, causing the political vision expressed in the next manifesto to be less credible in the eyes of the public, and the chances for re-election more remote.

Secondly, the political vision (STEP 1) may correctly express citizens' needs, but Cabinet, as the policymaking body of Government, is ineffective in translating these needs into broad policy statements (STEP 2) that clearly establish the required scope and direction upon which the Administration can take effective strategic action.

However, assuming that;

1. a Party in Office is motivated to prolong its state of privilege as far into the future as possible; and that
2. a politically mature and democratic society will always tend to support the political vision that it feels will best serve its interests;

then, it can be held that considerable time, effort and attention will be spent by politicians to ensure that both the political vision and the formulated policy go straight to the heart of addressing citizens' needs. Therefore, while certainly possible, it is assumed that in the normal course of events, the probability of failing to produce an

outcome that satisfies citizens' needs in the intended way, is less than likely to be the result of a deficiency in STEPs 1 and 2 of the policy cycle.

This leads us to consider three other reasons why unintended outcomes may arise.

1. Cabinet is effective in establishing the required direction but, individually, Ministers of Government are ineffective in 'orchestrating' the required strategic administrative action (STEP 3 '*part a*', Figure 2); and/or
2. both Cabinet and individual Ministers are effective, but the established policy framework is incorrectly interpreted and acted upon by the administrative agencies of Government, and/or is otherwise not supported by them because of conflicting interests, resistance to change etc. (STEP 3 '*part b*'); and/or
3. both reasons '1' and '2' above are not an issue, but the management framework of Government lacks the skills, competence, and know-how to translate policy into effective strategies and concrete tactical action, or is otherwise limited to do so due to organisational, operational, procedural and structural impediments (STEP 3 '*part c*').

Considering the above, the core problem and management issue can therefore be defined as **the inability to TRANSLATE a given policy into effective strategic action**. The policy cycle is interrupted, and a 'gap' – the 'politico-administrative divide' – arises between the policymaking and strategy implementation arms of Government; i.e., the Executive and the Administration respectively. Because of this, Government policy fails to be implemented successfully.

1.4 Research Justification

From a management perspective, the need to bridge the policy formulation and implementation sides of government and, at least partially, overcome the issues curtailing the effective implementation of public policy is a necessity, not a choice. The inability to address the break-down in the politico-administrative framework of Government is likely to lead to, and sustain, a cascade of ineffective and undesired results, where the strategies developed by the Administration bear little relevance to

the policy formulated by the Executive; where the defined goals or objectives become obscure and immeasurable; where the plan becomes unachievable; and where the action taken in support of the planned goals becomes virtually pointless. Unless effectively addressed, the Public Service will continue to be beset with criticisms of resource wastage and under-utilisation, while the Government's efforts to contain the alarmingly high public deficit will be futile.

That something is wrong has long been perceived, and change management initiatives aimed at improving the situation continue to be the order of the day. However, the fact that results have been, at best, only partially successful, may indicate a failure to address the core problem. This research attempts to address this. It is believed that successful, sustainable change to the strategic management framework of government can only be achieved after the factors contributing to success and failure in policy implementation are examined and better understood. Political and administrative leaders may use the results obtained from this study so that future decisions do not replicate the mistakes of the past, while also ensuring that continued investment in change and strategic initiatives is effectively spent.

The difficulties of achieving and maintaining an effective and sustainable strategic management framework are by no means limited to the Maltese public sector. Indeed, when it comes to success stories, the record [in general] is not too impressive (Halachmi, 1993: 125). More to the point of this research, Halachmi (1993: 125) notes that:

“there are also very few accounts that chronicle what went wrong and why, [suggesting that] we need to be moving from theory to applications, [and that] what needs improvement is not the conceptual basis of strategic planning but the process of moving from abstract models to concrete considerations and instrumental steps”.

It is believed that a concrete step in this direction is the ability to understand the factors contributing to success and/or failure in policy implementation. By exploring these issues, academics and practitioners alike are a step closer to improving their ability to consider and implement effective strategic management frameworks for the public sector.

1.5 Research Aims and Objectives

It is probably fair to state that, in Malta, the majority of politicians and senior public officers would agree on the need for Government to change its paradigm so that the strategic action adopted by the Administration is a natural and effective reaction to the policies formulated by the Executive. Agreement on what needs to change to enable this to happen, and how such change should occur, however, is a different matter.

As the country continues on an ambitious restructuring effort to achieve compliance for European Union membership, the need for change and a strong strategic management framework for the Maltese Public Service are more critical than ever before. Determining what issues, or factors, influence success or failure in policy implementation would significantly contribute to further the Government's strategy and to overcome the politico-administrative divide.

Therefore, it was felt that searching for answers, or at least insights, to the following question, could make a contribution to this goal;

What issues (or factors) curtail the effective implementation of a given public policy, and how can these issues be overcome?

In addressing the above research question, the study sought to:

- identify and examine the issues, or factors, that influence success and failure in the implementation of policy; and to
- propose suitable recommendations for change, so that policy is implemented by the Public Service in a manner that is more likely to produce the outcomes intended by the Executive of Government and expected by beneficiaries.

2.0 Theoretical Positioning

“I went into IBM believing that its problems were primarily strategy...I realised the problems weren't strategy. They were: How do I execute that strategy?” (Sager, 2002: 88).

Lou Gerstner, IBM Chairman and CEO, in an interview with BusinessWeek Associate Editor, Ira Sager.

“Managers keep forgetting that it is what they do, not what they plan, that explains success. They keep giving credit to the wrong thing – namely, the plan – and having made this error, they then spend more time planning and less time acting. They are astonished when more planning improves nothing” (Weick, 1987: 222).

2.1 Locating the Literature

Implementation is about the execution of decisions and underscores the practice of management. It spans both public and private sectors, it influences every person in an organisation irrespective of title and position, and it is a topic of concern to leaders and managers in any and all spheres of organisational activity.

As a topic of academic study it is likewise without boundaries in that rather than being represented as a distinct body of knowledge, it is dispersed throughout the management literature. This does not mean that it is treated in depth. In fact, quite the opposite. Compared to other ‘topics’, the dimension of management that relates to implementation is only sporadically addressed by the various disciplines. For example, it is addressed in the *marketing literature* in relation to aspects such as the execution of product strategies or marketing plans (see Bonoma, 1989; Aaker, 1995); in the *OD literature* relating to aspects such as knowledge management and the implementation of performance appraisals (see Kiel, 1982; Brown, 1982); in the *operations literature*, particularly relating to project management (see Bowman and Pellegrinelli, 1994; Turner, Grude et al., 1996; Turner, 1999); and in the literature on *change management* and *administrative reform*, particularly in relation to ‘post-mortem’ studies of change initiatives (see Caiden, 1976; Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1980; Brooks and Bate, 1994; Kotter, 1996; Nash, Childe et al., 2001). In

comparison, the discussion on implementation is probably best considered in the *strategy literature*, where it seems to be addressed at a more holistic, integrated and cross-functional level. Even here, however, the literature tends to disappoint.

Alexander (1985: 91) notes that:

“although strategy implementation is viewed as an integral part of the strategic management process, little has been written or researched on it. The overwhelming majority of the literature so far has been on the long-range planning process itself or the actual content of the strategy being formulated”.

The review of the strategy literature conducted for the purpose of this research supports this claim. Besides a handful of books directly focused on strategy implementation (for example, Hrebiniak and Joyce, 1984; Galbraith and Kazanjian, 1986), nothing substantial seems to exist on this subject beyond the treatise that the topic receives in manuscripts that are commonly used as text-books (for example, Steiner and Miner, 1982; Asch and Bowman, 1989; Johnson and Scholes, 1999).

Although Alexander's (1985) reference was directed to the generic strategy literature, which by tradition has been oriented to the private sector, his comment applies equally well to the strategy literature directed to the public sector. The two streams have evolved in similar ways and, although the bulk of strategic management research is found in the private sector (Wiseman, 1993: 146), both streams seem to focus more on a treatise of the process, content and context of strategy, rather than its actual implementation.

For example, like its private sector counterpart, the discussion of strategic management in the public administration literature traces the origins and evolution of strategic planning and strategic management (Kaufman and Jacobs, 1987; Skok, 1989; Smith, 1994); it discusses different types, techniques and models of strategic planning and strategic management (Lindblom, 1959; Lindblom, 1979; Nutt and Backoff, 1987; Bryson, 1988; Poister and Streib, 1999); and it considers the stimuli that entice the adoption and initiation of such practice in public administration (Steiner and Miner, 1982; Bryson and Roering, 1988; Bowman, 1999).

A considerable element of the discussion also considers how differences between private and public organisations influence the utility of strategic management in a

public sector setting. Both the usefulness and uselessness of such practice are adequately presented. However, even though the application of generic models of strategic management is generally considered to be problematic in the public sector (Smith Ring and Perry, 1985: 276), primarily because of the difficulty in achieving some sort of consensus of goals except at high levels of abstraction (Steiner and Miner, 1982: 292), in the final analysis, many authors seem to agree that the benefits outweigh the costs and therefore argue in favour of its application (Cartwright, 1975; Eadie, 1983; Wechsler and Backoff, 1986; Bryson, 1988).

A further important 'conversation' in the literature, and one that is closer to the subject of this research, is the distinction between strategic planning and strategic management. Various definitions and arguments are presented (Nutt and Backoff, 1987; Bryson, 1988; Poister and Streib, 1999) but essentially, the difference between the two lies in the recognition that strategic management exists when organisations move beyond planning to developing mechanisms for the *implementation* of strategies (Vinzant and Vinzant, 1996; Smith, 1994).

Despite acknowledging this fundamental distinction, and the fact that organisations move into the future by decisions and actions, not by plans (Poister and Streib, 1999: 311), strategic management has by no means been as extensively addressed in the public administration literature as has the topic of strategic planning (Poister and Streib, 1999: 308). Consequently, the treatment of implementation itself has equally suffered and, in over a decade, nothing much in the literature seems to have changed since Alexander's observation in 1985. In fact, with implementation often being a neglected part of the study of policy (Hill, 1993: 9), the dominant references in the literature continue to pertain to just a handful of researchers, most of whom have already been cited in the preceding discussion.

Because of this lack of information, the literature review pertaining to this study was not limited to any specific domain of the management literature. Although anchored in the strategy literature, particularly that related to public administration, the implementation of policy was explored by considering research in different fields of discipline, and work conducted in both public and private sector settings. An overview of this is presented next (Section 2.2). It should be noted that while the preferred literature would have been that related to the application of strategic

management in a Westminster model of Government, particularly in small island states, the available literature is heavily based on studies originating in the United States of America, where the application of strategic management in public administration seems to have been most widely practised.

Furthermore, it should be noted that although this research is concerned with the implementation of policy, it is the issues that influence success or failure in implementation that specifically occupy the foreground of the study. As such, the emphasis of the literature review was oriented in this direction. This was examined in two steps – an indicative review of the literature that was carried out before initiating the research (i.e., beginning of Project 1), followed by a much more detailed evaluation of the specific literature relating to those factors that emerged from the research to be critical for the implementation of policy in Malta (i.e., beginning of Project 3).

2.2 Policy Implementation – An Exploration

The origin of the study of policy implementation is often attributed to the work conducted by Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) regarding the failed implementation of a federal employment program in Oakland, California (Anderson, 1990; Hill, 1993; Vinzant and Crothers, 1996).

Vinzant & Crothers (1996) label this work as representative of the thinking of early writers who supported a bureaucratic and linear view of policy implementation that consisted solely of the efficient administrative execution of politically determined goals. Also referred to as the top-down model, this approach was predicated on the assumption that policy directives ought to be translated into program activities with as little deviation as possible (Vinzant and Crothers, 1996: 461).

In contrast, later research portrayed policy implementation as much more complex and multifaceted. Typically referred to as the bottom-up models, and exemplified through the work of Lipsky (1980) and Linder & Peters (1987), this work suggested that program design must consider the needs and values of the implementers of policy and the influence that their 'street-level' decisions are likely to have on the outcome(s) of a policy (Vinzant and Crothers, 1996: 461). Viewed through this lens,

policy implementation was more dynamic in process and less predictable in outcome, as it was susceptible to a greater number of influences and stimuli.

A third type of policy implementation model (Nakamura, 1988) integrates the top-down and bottom-up models. It considers implementation as a circular policy process that is based on continuous adaptation (of the policy) and discretionary decision-making (by implementers) (Vinzant and Crothers, 1996: 462), rather than just a linear process characterised by no or little interaction between the political and administrative branches of Government (i.e., the top-down and bottom-up models respectively). This philosophy is akin to the view of 'logical incrementalism' espoused by Quinn (1978). According to this perspective, strategies are most effective when they are developed and implemented in an 'emergent' way. In contrast to the process followed in rational (top-down) models, where the act of formulation precedes all other activity, this view suggests that strategies and implementation evolve from the activities taking place throughout the organisation and according to a pattern of trial-and-error learning. As such, successful action develops through experience and experimentation. In this respect, Weick (1987) further suggests that action produces strategy and the act of formulation, as traditionally conceived, never really occurs. Instead "execution *is* analysis and implementation *is* formulation" (Weick, 1987: 230).

The top-down model reflects the dichotomy between politics and administration in classical political theory where, as typified in the thinking of Frank Goodnow (1900), policies, by necessity, are developed and moulded by the political branches of government and then automatically implemented by the Administration, without question. While policy development and implementation, more or less, do follow this responsibility path, in reality, the process is more complex and 'messy'. The strict delineation between politics and administration that is based on mindless conformist implementation is rare (Hill, 1993: 87). Instead, it is recognised that, like most organisational decision-making processes, the policy process is fraught with irrational behaviour (Cyert and March, 1963), is laden with value judgements (Boxx, Odom et al., 1991), and is affected by shifting power relations, by changes in leadership and operating policies, and by modifications in constituencies and the environment (Paul-Shaheen, 1990: 834).

Because of this, implementation is today typically viewed through the lens of bottom-up models and, possibly more frequently, from the viewpoint that considers the policy process as a continuous, adaptive cycle. In the former case, policy implementation (and development) emerges from an interaction of both the political and administrative branches of Government – a close example of this thinking is the conclusion of an assessment of reform implementation initiatives in Malta that, *inter alia*, recommended to:

“Let the government indicate what direction it wants reform to go: better policy advice, cost savings, higher standards of service? Let the top civil servants then get together and produce a framework for reform to operationalise that direction. Let the government take a critical look at that framework and remould it into a set of guidelines for action that it is genuinely willing to support. Let it then hold ministries and departments accountable for developing and implementing change initiatives in accordance with the framework” (Polidano, 1999: 13).

On the other hand, viewing the policy implementation process as a continuous cycle builds more heavily on open systems theory. Implementation is regarded as both a means to an end (the process output), as well as a feedback loop to the means (a process input), on the basis of which existing policy is either reinforced, is modified, or is replaced with the development of new and improved policies. The illustrations presented earlier in Figures 1 and 2 are an example of this thinking and form the basis of this research. By adopting this viewpoint of implementation, it was felt that the search for factors influencing success or failure would be broader in scope, more sensitive to various contextual elements and, more importantly, would consider the totality of the features and characteristics that affect implementation.

Unfortunately, the discussion in the literature does not seem to move much beyond such philosophical considerations of the process of policy implementation. No empirical studies that test the basis of the espoused theories have been encountered in the implementation literature. Furthermore, reference to these theories as ‘models’ of implementation is also misleading, given that detailed representations of the implementation element of the policy cycle do not seem to have been developed. In fact, rather than proposing frameworks that elaborate the make-up of implementation, the literature typically presents implementation as just one step in

the policy cycle⁷. What remains in the literature are a number of rather disparate studies that consider various dimensions of implementation from different philosophical perspectives (albeit predominantly related to organisation theory) and for different ends. For example, implementation is examined from the viewpoint of:

- *organisational design* – in relation to the contingency relationship between the strategy followed by an organisation and its social structure (Chandler, 1962; Burgelman, 1983; Fredrickson, 1986; Amburgey and Dacin, 1994), and the issues relating to the structural forms, systems and processes to choose from when implementing particular strategies (Galbraith and Kazanjian, 1986; de Wit and Meyer, 1998);
- *political systems* – in relation to the influences that issues such as organisational coalitions, control over resources etc. may have on shaping the direction and outcome of an implementation process, or vice-versa (Morgan, 1997); and
- *decision-making* – in relation to how different approaches to managing problems or opportunities can condition or shape an organisation, and its approach/adaptation to the implementation of strategic decisions (Child, 1972; Hrebiniak and Joyce, 1985; Hitt and Tyler, 1991; Noorderhaven, 1994).

Undoubtedly, some of these studies can be very informative to this research and these have been accounted for whenever encountered in the literature review. However, of more direct relevance to the object of this research are those studies that place direct or greater consideration on examining the reasons behind the success or failure of policy implementation initiatives.

⁷ As shall be outlined later (Part 5), this research makes a contribution in this regard by proposing two conceptual models that provide a framework for explaining *what* elements affect failure and success in policy implementation, and *how*.

2.3 The Factors Influencing Success and Failure in Policy Implementation

2.3.1 Introduction

The literature on strategy implementation does not carry a specific 'conversation' on the issues or factors perceived to influence success and failure. While some studies do, more or less, address implementation from this specific perspective, they are insignificant in number, are generally unrelated to one another, and are tackled in different ways. As such, there are no structured debates or positions, agreements or disagreements, on *what* contributes to success and failure, *how* and *why*. Instead, this discussion (if it can be described as such) seems to arise more as a by-product of studies whose foci lie on other interests or aspects of the management of policy/strategy. It is therefore difficult to present the literature along some argumentative or methodological axis.

An alternative could be to present the studies in the literature according to the factors that they identify as directly or indirectly influencing implementation in the various policy contexts in which they are explored. However, this is impractical and also pointless. The objective of the literature review was not to produce an exhaustive checklist of factors that influence success or failure. Rather, it was to support the researcher in developing an understanding of what is already known, so that the inductive search for factors and the development of proposals to address these in a Maltese policy context, could be better guided.

Consequently, what follows is a brief description of the main studies that were considered to be the most relevant to this research. These are presented individually. Comparisons between the findings of these studies and the DBA research are not drawn here, but are presented where necessary in the 'Discussion' and 'Contribution' sections of this report.

2.3.2 Outline of Relevant Studies

The earliest study encountered in the literature review that drew very close parallels to the objectives of this research, was a survey by **Alexander (1985)** of 93 private sector firms, of medium to large size, operating in the US. This survey sought to

determine which implementation problems occurred most frequently as companies tried to put strategic decisions into effect (p.91). The presidents of the companies surveyed were required to select a recent strategic decision that they were very familiar with, and then to evaluate the extent to which some 22 possible implementation problems (derived by Alexander from his literature review) actually were a problem in the implementation of that decision. These were rank-ordered by frequency count and the ten most frequent strategy implementation problems identified (p.92).

Alexander's work provides a useful introduction to anyone interested in understanding some factors that may influence implementation. Of particular interest are two observations: (i) that some of the more traditional issues that had been encountered by Alexander in his literature review (such as rewards and incentives, support and backing by top management, and availability of financial resources) were not short listed among the ten most important factors by the practitioners interviewed in the survey, and (ii) that successful implementation also involves doing the things that help promote success rather than just preventing problems from occurring (p.97). Unfortunately, Alexander falls short of discussing these observations, thereby leaving the reader unable to draw any significantly meaningful conclusions. In particular, he fails to explain his latter observation. Although his statement would suggest that the factors influencing success could be different from those influencing failure, Alexander does not distinguish between the two and groups all factors together. Contrary to his own observation, this would imply that if a factor is ill-managed, it would contribute to failure, while if the *same* factor is managed properly, it would contribute to success.

Another piece of work worthy of particular mention, and probably the most relevant to this research, is that carried out by **Morris and Hough (1987)**. Addressing their study from the perspective of project management, Morris and Hough (1987) examined the available literature for studies of projects that pointed to the factors leading to their success and failure. They then undertook a study of eight very large projects that had either succeeded or failed, with the objective of analysing the factors leading to their success or failure. Morris and Hough (1987) produced a very comprehensive list of factors influencing project success (p.265-266), classifying

these in various categories (project definition; planning, design and technology; politics/social factors; schedule duration; schedule urgency; finance; legal agreements; contracting; project implementation; human factors). They defined 22 hypotheses (p.283-285), which they concluded summarised the questions that should be examined in determining the likely success of a project, and they also drew a model identifying their perceived preconditions of project success (p.268). This model reflects the six major areas that they considered critical for the good management of projects. 'Project implementation' was one of these areas.

In contrast to other studies, Morris and Hough (1987) place significant emphasis on both 'hard' and 'soft' factors that are perceived to influence the outcome of a project. This is important to achieve a balanced approach to the management of projects; a consideration that is also reached by the DBA research in relation to the management of policies (addressed in Section 5 of this report). The data they collected and its presentation is also outstanding. However, a possible criticism that can be levied against this study is the narrow view that the authors seem to take on project implementation. Rather than viewing the management of a project as a function of implementation, they present implementation as just one discrete step of project management. This seems to imply that the authors perceive implementation to be separate from problem definition, planning and management. While it is true that the management of projects (like management in general) is composed of various stages⁸, project management is about fractal management, i.e.,

“each stage of the project is a little mini-project in its own right, and each part of each stage likewise. Hence, the initiation stage has to be planned, organised, implemented, controlled and conducted, and the planning of that stage is undertaken by applying the ten-step problem-solving cycle⁹” (Turner, 1999: 14).

By isolating 'implementation' from the project life cycle, and by treating implementation factors as separate from other factors, the relationship of the

⁸ Typically 'proposal and initiation', 'design and appraisal', 'execution and control' and 'finalization and close-out' (Turner, 1999: 14).

⁹ Typically, 'perceive problem', 'gather data', 'define problem', 'generate solutions', 'evaluate solutions', 'select solution', 'communicate', 'plan execution', 'implement', 'monitor' (Turner, 1999: 13).

preconditions influencing project success as depicted in the authors' suggested model might take on a different meaning and lose their significance.

Also of particular relevance to the DBA research are aspects of the work by **Bryson (1988)**. Bryson argues that, to be effective, the implementation of strategic management and change in the public sector must address four key barriers: the *human* problem of attention and commitment, the *process* problem of turning strategic ideas into good currency, the *structural* problem of linking internal and external environments in ways that are advantageous to the implementation process, and the *institutional* problem of appropriately exercising transformative leadership (1988: 197). Although these barriers (factors) are not directly applied to the implementation of public policy, it could be argued that, in so far as new or revised policies demand modifications to the status quo and act as an impetus for change, the four challenges of strategic management and change apply equally well to the discussion on policy implementation.

Looking at policy implementation also through the perspective of strategic change, **Pettigrew et al. (1992)** studied strategic service change in the British National Health Service and inductively identified eight factors that they claim underpin a receptive context and environment for successful change and implementation. While some are specific to the context examined, others are possibly more generic in nature and include:

1. the *quality and coherence of the policy*, arising from (i) thorough analysis and participative vision setting that encourages take-up by interest-groups and stimulates their commitment, and (ii) effective process planning that breaks policy and strategy into manageable pieces;
2. the *availability of key people leading change*, emphasising leadership as a subtle, pluralist function rather than an individualistic activity;
3. the intensity and scale of *long-term environmental pressure*, that generates a demand for implementation and encourages change;
4. a *supportive organisational culture*, that challenges beliefs about success and how to achieve it, with a view to combat inertia; and

5. the *simplicity and clarity of goals and priorities* to focus implementation efforts.

While it cannot be claimed that the above-mentioned studies provide an exhaustive list of all possible factors that can potentially influence the implementation of policy, they do provide a rather comprehensive picture. Other relevant studies include: from the *policy implementation literature*, Douglas (2000), Myers (2000), Traut (1999), Crews (1998), Eadie (1983), and Brown (1982); from the *strategy and change management literature*, Nash et al. (2001), Kotter (1996b), Quinn (1989), Guth and MacMillan (1989), Kotter and Schlesinger (1979), Quinn (1977); from the *public service/administrative reform literature*, Moshe (1999), Brooks and Bates (1994), Caiden (1999), Caiden (1976), Drucker (1973); and from the *public service / administrative reform literature specific to Malta*, Polidano (1999), Schick (1999), Polidano (1996), Spiteri Gingell (1992), Polidano (1992), Warrington (1987).

2.4 Policy Implementation in Context

In addition to the specific literature on policy implementation, it is also pertinent to consider some aspects of the sociological and political science literature on the Maltese policy environment that may suggest a number of contextual issues, or factors, that could have a bearing on the implementation of policy in Malta.

2.4.1 Size

When trying to explain to friends or visitors from overseas why things in Malta happen the way they do, the Maltese people will invariably direct their attention to the issue of size. The country's small size, they argue, is a determining factor that shapes the distinctive socio-economic, cultural and political life of its people. Indeed, the issue of size has also been presented in the scholarly literature as a main consideration conditioning the history and life of the Maltese (Pirota, 1996: 19), although it has also been recognised that "most researchers have failed to question whether the smallness condition engenders its own dynamics" (Sultana and Baldacchino, 1994: 15).

Maybe in response to such observation, Warrington (1997) examined whether the size of a micro-state is, in fact, of any consequence for government. Following a comparative assessment of the three island states of Malta, Barbados and Fiji (each

of which was a former British Colony), the author concluded that “a micro-state’s small size, and the acute vulnerability to external contingencies associated with this, creates a distinctive policy environment or setting for government” (Warrington, 1997: 427). However, rather than observing a direct cause and effect link between the countries’ small size and government, Warrington (1997: 431) identified size as “a conditioning factor [that] modifies the policy environment...[and] encourages certain behaviour patterns among politicians, civil servants and citizens”, such as political patronage (p.431) and paternal administration (p.427). Thus, one is led to believe to it is these consequential factors, rather than size itself, that have the power to influence government and policy implementation.

2.4.2 Trust, Patronage and Clientelism

Trust between politicians and civil servants, or the lack of it, is a factor that has considerable power in influencing the relationship between the political and administrative arms of government and, consequently, the ability to effectively implement its policies.

Christensen and Laegreid (1999) define the Norwegian experience as an example where mutual trust and cooperation between the political and administrative arms of government have a long tradition of coexistence. This, they argue, not only facilitates the daily effective administration of government, but also favours successful incremental administrative changes and reforms – events that, in a public sector setting, are normally resisted and tend to disappoint Caiden, 1999).

In contrast to the Norwegian example, the Maltese experience is riddled with a history, or tradition, of mistrust, probably dating back (most notably) to the late 1970s, when the then Labour Government, suspicious of the Public Service because of its past as handmaiden to colonial rule, asserted its control over the machinery of government in a direct and forceful way Portelli, 1992).

This situation was officially recognised in no uncertain terms by the Public Service Reform Commission in the opening pages of its 1989 report:

“Politicians, who are subjected to diverse pressures, have succumbed to the temptation to factor the Service into the strategies of power politics. Willingly, or unwillingly, the Public

Service came to be associated with the use of public resources for partisan or private gain. As a result, the trust between the political authorities and public officers on the one hand, and between the Service and its customers on the other, has been seriously eroded “ Public Service Reform Commission, 1989: 1).

Defining the relation of the Public Service with politicians as “marred by mutual mistrust and misunderstanding” Public Service Reform Commission, 1989: 2), the PSRC identified this as one of the major issues affecting the government and administration in Malta.

The issue of trust and its concomitant effect on the management of Government and the implementation of policy, is tightly linked to a consideration of the highly personalised and politicised nature of social relations in Malta, of which clientelism and patronage feature prominently (Boswell, 1994: 29). Indeed, claims of patronage and clientelism in Maltese politics and policy management have been made in both populist publications and the scholarly literature for decades. Although documented to have featured rampantly in the 1970s and 1980s (Public Service Reform Commission, 1989, 1990), this phenomenon is said to persist in contemporary government and policy management (Mangion, 2003) albeit, arguably, less prominently.

Political influence and partisan loyalties in the civil service have played, and continue to play, a role on the effectiveness and efficiency of the machinery of government. From the author’s own experience, working as a consultant with the civil service over the past eleven years, it has not been uncommon to come across situations wherein highly competent and motivated (even fairly senior) civil servants had a change of heart and turned their backs on an assignment or task, not because of a change in opinion or because the policy was not bearing results, but simply because of a change in “their” Government. Likewise, there have been situations in which new political leaders are diffident of competent civil servants because, prior to their election to Office, these civil servants were spearheading the implementation of a policy initiated under the previous Government. It is not uncommon to see these persons relegated to ‘second division’ tasks and non-priority assignments, to be replaced by others who share a common orthodoxy and who, they believe, can be trusted to steer the required administrative action. Invariably, such engagements are

seen as political appointments and, hence, explicit examples of patronage and clientelism.

2.4.3 Interference and Role Ambiguity

Another factor influencing policy management and implementation in Malta is an orientation to paternalistic administration, primarily based on interventionist practices by “politicians [who] seem incapable of refraining from interfering, even in the day-to-day routine of administration [of the Public Service]” (Pirota, G. as quoted in Mangion, 2003).

In part, such behaviour and practice can be linked and attributed to the effects of (lack of) trust, patronage and clientelism, mentioned above. On the other hand, it is also reflective of a situation of ambiguity between the roles and responsibilities of the political and administrative arms of Government.

In sharp contrast to the private sector, where a direct link between policy formulation and implementation is the norm for effective strategic management, the separation of functional responsibility in the public sector frequently contributes to vagueness and / or ambiguity as to who commands the right to initiate and control the formulation of policy and its implementation Smith Ring and Perry, 1985: 277). In fact, the tasks and responsibilities of politicians and administrators are at times so indistinct that “scholars of public administration have debated whether political decision making and the administration should be seen as two different realms of government or as de facto integrated processes” Moshe, 1999: 16).

The Constitution of Malta (1964), at Article 79 Subarticle (2), states that;

“The Cabinet shall have the general direction and control of the Government of Malta and shall be collectively responsible therefore to Parliament”

and, at Article 92 Subarticle (1), further states that;

“Where any Minister has been charged with responsibility for any department of government, he shall exercise general direction and control over that department; and, subject to such direction and control, the department may be under the supervision of a Permanent Secretary“.

It should be clear from the above that the Minister, both as a member and representative of Cabinet, is the policy formulator and is responsible to Parliament for the implementation of policy. In this context, the Permanent Secretary's role is to supervise the operations of the administrative arm of government and, as such, has more to do with the implementation of policy than with its formulation.

But are these roles clearly understood in practice? And does the use of the phrase 'general direction and control' in the Constitution mean that the Minister is expected to manage at arms' length, or should it be interpreted to mean full authority over the administrative arm of government? To some people it is the latter, but to others, Ministerial *intervention* in the operations of the Departments within his / her portfolio is deemed to be *interference* (Cachia Zammit, 1992). This ambiguity weakens the strategic framework of Government and it may be in response to this that, on February 5th 1991, the Prime Minister of Malta, in a Letter Circular to all Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries, Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Department, felt the need to clarify their respective roles and responsibilities (Fenech Adami, 1991). Unfortunately, considerable overlaps in the roles and responsibilities between Ministers and Permanent Secretaries were still evident in the position descriptions attached to the letter circular, and the possibility of detachment between the political and administrative roles in government has been described as a 'utopian concept' (Portelli, 1992). Despite efforts to address this issue, "the attempt to distinguish between the two sections...has been an exercise which by and large has remained only on paper" (Pirota, G. as quoted in Mangion, 2003).

2.5 Conclusions

Four conclusions are drawn from the literature review:

1. While a number of factors can be identified from the literature, there seems to be insufficient detail on, and explanation of, the meaning behind such factors. It is therefore possible that although different studies refer to the same factors, the only thing in common between these factors is their descriptive name or title. Their value or significance in terms of how they are perceived to influence success or failure in the different studies, and why, may be different.

2. Although the studies in the literature do a good job of uncovering a number of factors influencing implementation, they are less successful at explaining how these factors inter-relate to influence implementation. The order or criticality with which such factors influence implementation remains inadequately explained.
3. Although carrying different titles and presented in different ways, the nature of the factors derived from these studies can be classified into one of two basic categories – technical, or human. The technical category would include those factors that are predominantly concerned with matters of ‘process’ or ‘approach’, while the human category would include those factors that are predominantly concerned with the management of ‘intangibles’ such as behaviour, relationships etc.
4. No real distinction is made in the literature between the factors influencing failure and those influencing success. This would imply that (i) the process leading to one outcome is considered to be the inverse (mirror image) of the other, and (ii) managing the factors influencing failure is a prescription for success. This may not necessarily be the case.

The DBA research was guided by these observations and perceived omissions.

3.0 Research Design

3.1 Definining the Research Paradigm

In large measure, the choice and selection of a research methodology¹⁰ is based on the nature and content of the issue being investigated and on the objectives or outcomes that a study is seeking to achieve. Equally important is the need to give due consideration to the preferred philosophical perspective (Strauss and Corbin, 1998), the type and form of data that is available or that is being sought, and the scope of the study itself. These elements can come together in a number of different ways, with each different combination prescribing a different and unique paradigm. It is this paradigm, and not solely one of its constituent elements, that should guide decisions on the choice and selection of research methodologies.

Appendix 2 discusses the application of these various elements to the current research, as well as the relative strengths and weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative research methods. It concludes that a predominantly qualitative approach is more suitable for this research, and further discusses the relative merits of participant observation, action research and case studies as potential research methods. In the final analysis, the case study approach was selected as the most appropriate method to guide this study, primarily for the following reasons.

Firstly, case study research is applied in its approach and is practice-based. Thus, the managers who may ultimately review the results of the research are likely to evaluate its methodology favourably or, at least, with less scepticism than if reviewing some of the more traditional research methods. The probability of implementing one or more of the propositions that arise from the study is therefore higher.

¹⁰ Defined as “the analysis of how research should or does proceed, as opposed to *methods* of research, which are the actual techniques or procedures used to gather and analyse data” (Blaikie, 1995: 7) [*italics added for emphasis*].

Secondly, it allows a flexible approach to data collection, meaning that different people could be approached to contribute to the research in different ways, depending upon their different organisational commitments and personal preferences. This maximises feedback and enriches the study.

Thirdly, it provides for the use of multiple sources of evidence, which enable convergent lines of inquiry and improve the construct validity of the study.

Fourthly, involving different people in the organisation for data collection and analysis purposes, ensures that the results of the research have been correctly interpreted and reflect reality, thereby contributing to the study's internal validity. This is further improved through the use of different research techniques to achieve methodological triangulation.

3.2 Structure of the Research

The research study was divided into three parts, each of which constituted one of the three projects forming the bases on which the DBA programme was structured. The aim of each project was to address some aspect of the research question, progressively building data and knowledge on the issue under investigation and leading towards the development of an adequate response.

Projects 1 and 2 were intended to address the first part of the research question. Their objective was to identify what issues (or factors) curtail the effective implementation of public policy in Malta. To achieve this, Project 1 was designed to explore a case study of failed policy implementation, while Project 2 focused on exploring a case study of successful policy implementation.

Building on the findings of Projects 1 and 2, Project 3 was then to consider the second part of the research question. Its objective was to establish/develop adequate proposals that would address the elicited factors and improve the likelihood of successful policy implementation.

3.3 Summary of Methodology Used

3.3.1 Projects 1 and 2

The methodology followed in Projects 1 and 2 was identical. Both projects adopted a single case study approach; the collection of data in both instances was based on documentary and primary research; and the analysis and interpretation of the collected data was qualitatively driven. The fundamental difference between the two projects was the subject content of the research. Project 1 focused on examining an example of failed policy implementation, while Project 2 considered an example of successful implementation.

An overview of the research procedure and the activities undertaken at each step of the process is presented in **Figure 3** and summarised below. A detailed explanation can be found in Parts 2 and 3 of this report, for Projects 1 and 2 respectively. A discussion of the reliability and validity of the research is also presented in Project 1.

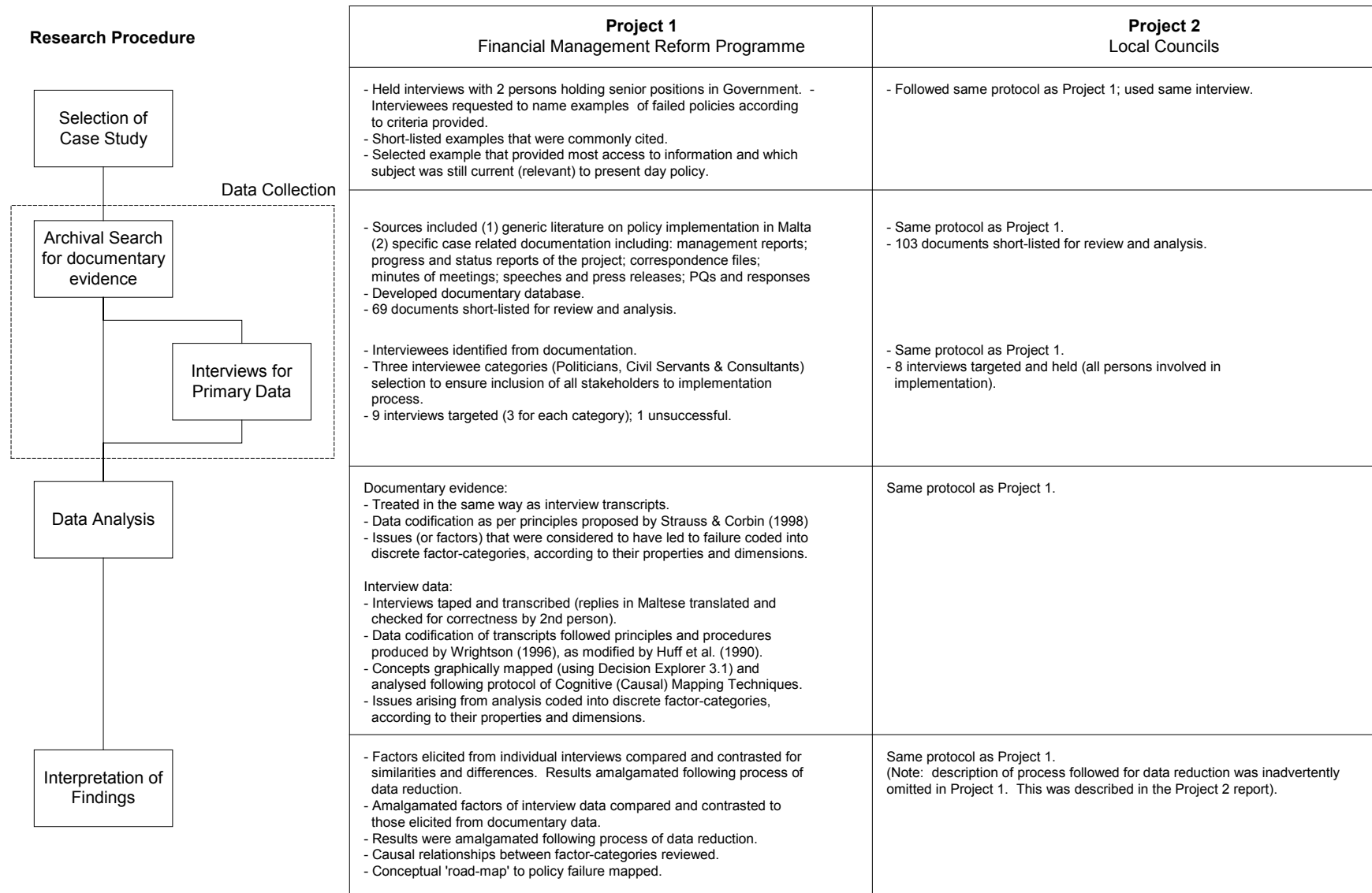
Selecting the subject of the case studies

The two policies chosen as the subjects for the case studies were determined following an interview process with two persons who for several years have occupied senior positions in Government. This procedure was followed to eliminate the potential of researcher bias.

Prior to these interviews and before initiating the actual research, it was necessary to define 'success' so that (i) the boundaries of the study could be clearly established, and (ii) guidelines could be presented to the interviewees selecting the examples of successful and unsuccessful policy implementation initiatives.

In the context of this research, success (or a case of successful policy implementation) was defined to mean a policy implementation initiative in which the strategic action adopted by the administrative arm of Government was considered to have delivered the *intended* policy decision, and to have achieved the *intended* outcomes. To qualify as an example of success, a policy decision must therefore have been delivered in a manner that addressed its terms of reference, as well as have achieved the expected functionality to the identified stakeholder(s).

Figure 3 - Summary of Research Methodology (Projects 1 and 2)



This definition may be criticised from the point of view that few policies ever manage to comprehensively achieve the original objectives and the intended outcomes. However, this is exactly why this definition was adopted. The seemingly inflexible approach to defining success was considered important so as to focus the research on those few initiatives that can be considered to be truly representative of best practice in government. These practices would be something worth aspiring to, while concurrently providing a baseline against which to plan, manage and measure future policy implementation initiatives.

It was also important to define the meaning of ‘success *factors*’, a term which may be mistakenly confused with ‘success *criteria*’. Given that the distinction between the two is widely described in the literature on project management, the terminology from this body of knowledge was borrowed and adapted for the purposes of this research.

The APM¹¹ Pathways Glossary of Terms defines ‘success criteria’ as:

“[the] qualitative and quantitative measures by which the success of a project is judged. If the value achieved for the measure during or after the project exceeds a predefined hurdle rate, the project can be judged to be a success against that criterion” (Turner, 2002).

According to this definition, the criteria for the interpretation of successful policy implementation in this study were, therefore, (1) the degree by which the terms of reference defined for a policy initiative were satisfactorily addressed, and (2) the degree by which the policy initiative delivered the expected ‘functionality’ to the identified stakeholder(s). Under both scenarios, a 100% compliance rate was required.

On the other hand, Turner (2002) defines ‘success factors’ as:

“[the] elements of the work of the project, or the management process, that can be **controlled** by the project manager or the project team so as to increase the chance of achieving a successful outcome. They are the levers that the project manager can pull to increase the chance of achieving the hurdle rate of the success criteria (emphasis added)”.

¹¹ Acronym for ‘Association for Project Management’

While agreeing with the essence of this definition, I find it difficult to accept that success factors are solely limited to those elements that can be **controlled** by the project manager. Believing that different contexts have the power to influence the same policy initiatives in different ways over time, this research reflects the viewpoint of population ecology theory which states that the environment wields considerable power over an organisation (Hatch, 1997: 81) and hence the outcome(s) of its efforts and endeavours. The selected definition of success factors therefore includes both *controllable* and *uncontrollable* factors that have the power to influence a successful outcome. The purpose for this was two-fold. First, it widens the scope of the research thereby providing the opportunity for a more holistic interpretation of the phenomena influencing policy implementation. Secondly, it provides an opportunity to 'bring out into the open' those hidden elements that have the potential to influence success, or failure. Once uncovered and made explicit, it is possible that managers can either influence/control their manifestation, or account for them when planning and managing the implementation of policy, or, at the very least, be cognizant of their existence and their potential to influence outcomes.

Definitions of success and failure were provided to each of the two interviewees prior to the interview.

Data Collection

The documentary sources of information that were drawn upon included generic literature on policy implementation and reform initiatives in Malta, as well as specific documents that were directly related to the policy initiatives under review. These included management reports produced by the Project Teams responsible for implementing the said policies, minutes of meetings, correspondence, progress and status reports of the two projects, speeches and press releases, newspaper articles, parliamentary debates and responses to parliamentary questions. Sixty nine (69) documents were examined in Project 1 and one hundred and three (103) documents were reviewed in Project 2.

Primary data was collected through the application of in-depth and semi-structured interviews with the key politicians, civil servants and consultants involved in the

implementation of the policy initiatives. These persons (nine in Project 1 and eight in Project 2) were identified from the documentary research. Besides serving to obtain first-hand data of the cases under review, the interviews were also a medium for corroborating, and/or elaborating upon, the information obtained from the documentary evidence.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The method of data collection and analysis adopted for the documentary research evolved in response to the content, quality and quantity of the documentation available. Nonetheless, the procedures and techniques developed by well-established qualitative research studies were rigorously followed. The data collected from the project-related documentary sources of evidence were analysed using the general principles of data codification proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998). Each document was examined in detail and all references to factors that were considered to have contributed to the successful implementation of the policy were extracted and analysed. These factors were then coded and organised into discrete categories according to their respective properties and dimensions (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 19). Using the resultant list of categories, and their respective properties/dimensions, it was possible to identify what factors were documented as being critical to the successful outcome of this implementation initiative, and to understand how these factors could influence failure and success in policy implementation in general. A total of 14 factors of failure and 13 success factors were identified from this process in Projects 1 and 2 respectively.

The data obtained from the interviews was analysed through the application of cognitive (causal) mapping techniques. Cognitive maps provide a frame within which experiences can be highlighted, understood, and appreciated in depth (Weick, 1990: 5) and allow one to move back and forth between an understanding of the whole and its reduction and analysis by parts (Huff and Fletcher, 1990: 404). Given that causality is the primary form of *post hoc* explanation of events (Huff, 1990: 28), and given also that causal mapping is concerned with representing cognition as a set of causal interactions (Jenkins, 1994: 2), it was considered appropriate and possible to apply this technique for examining the concepts that were perceived to lead to failure and success in policy implementation. While cognitive mapping could

also have been used for the analysis of the documentary sources of evidence, 'the latter is considered a surrogate for cognition and one-to-one interviews are likely to be the best method (source) for eliciting cognitive maps' (Eden, Ackermann et al., 1993: 2).

The actual process adopted for the collection and analysis of the primary data that was derived from the interviews followed the established techniques and mechanisms outlined by Wrightson (1976) as modified by Huff et al. (1990). As such, every statement made by an interviewee that reflected his/her perception of *what* factors led to success and *why*, was isolated and broken into its subject and cause concepts. Concepts were then labelled with a reference code and linked to one another according to pre-defined standard 'relationships' as produced by Huff et al. (1990: 315), and graphically 'mapped' using Decision Explorer 3.1. With its in-built macros and tools, the mapping software also proved to be valuable for exploring the make-up and structure of each map at different levels of analysis. Through a number of iterations, it was possible to identify the most dominant and central concepts, facilitating the conceptual ordering of various categories of factors influencing failure and success in the two examples of policy implementation. Where possible, the derived maps were shared with the interviewees so that their composition could be reviewed and validated by the 'owner'. A total of 26 factors of failure and 27 success factors were identified from the interviews relating to Projects 1 and 2 respectively.

As a final step in the data analysis stage, the results obtained from the sequential examination of the documentary sources of evidence, and those derived from the individual causal maps of interviewees, were compared to identify similar and contrasting conceptual relationships. Following a process of further data reduction and consolidation, 26 factors of failure and 21 success factors were considered to be critical to influencing the outcome of the policy initiatives examined in Projects 1 and 2 respectively. Conceptual 'road maps' of failure and success in policy implementation were drawn. These road maps illustrate the perceived ordering of the factors influencing failure and success and identify the stimuli (properties and dimensions) that explain their presence as derived by the documentary evidence and the interview data.

3.3.2 Project 3

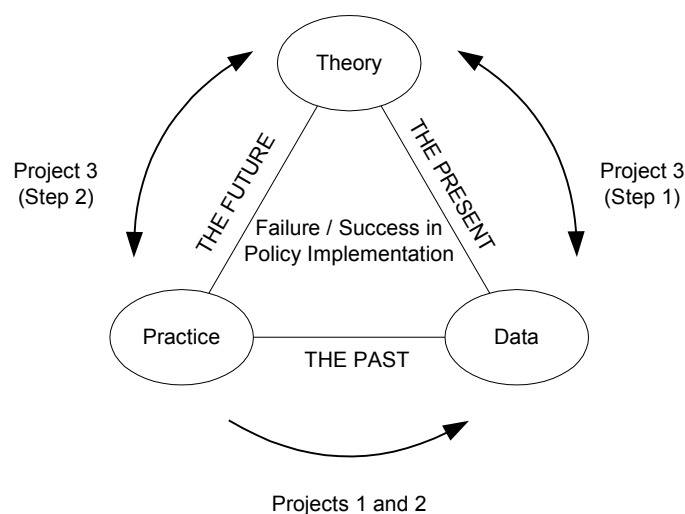
Having elicited the factors influencing failure and success, the objective of Project 3 was to develop proposals that would improve the likely success of future policy implementation initiatives.

To ensure that the study was in keeping with the guiding philosophy of the research programme, Project 3 had to be properly grounded in both theory and practice. This stage of the research therefore focused on:

- (i) an in-depth review of the relevant literature, so as to ensure that proposals are developed with due consideration to the richness of what is already known and tested, or what is unknown but hypothesised; and
- (ii) a second review of the data gathered from Projects 1 and 2, so that due consideration would be given to the practicalities of any recommendations or proposals identified in the documentation, or suggested by the interviewees.¹²

Figure 4 illustrates the perceived interplay between theory and practice and its application to this research. While Projects 1 and 2 focused on ‘extracting’ data from the ‘ground’, Project 3 considered how this data ‘fitted’ with current theories and their application to practice.

Figure 4 – Application of Theory and Practice to Research



¹² It should also be noted that in drawing proposals, due consideration was also given to my own personal experience in public administration.

The first step of Project 3 was therefore a detailed but guided exploration of the literature¹³. Given that a large number of success and failure factors had been elicited, it was important to focus on those factors considered to be more critical in terms of their potential to curtail or improve the effective implementation of policy. This would ensure that the research would not be spread thinly, but would rather give weight to the most urgent and demanding issues.

While it would have been possible to make a judgment call and identify the more salient of the elicited factors, preference was given to adopting a methodology that would foster participation by the persons likely to be affected by the research itself. Therefore, it was decided that the factors derived from Projects 1 and 2 should be examined and prioritised by representatives of the persons directly involved in the implementation of policy.

The application of a survey was chosen for this purpose. The objective of this survey, the methodology followed and the output achieved are summarised in **Figure 5**. A full account of the research process can be found in pages 133 to 155. This includes a detailed explanation of the decisions taken with respect to the design, development and administration of the questionnaire; the composition and size of the data sample; the analysis of the findings and the statistical verification of the results obtained and conclusions reached.

¹³ Although the literature on policy development and implementation was considered both before and during each of Projects 1 and 2, at that stage the review had been somewhat limited. In part, this was because the relevant aspects of the literature could not be consulted in depth until the results of the two Projects were known. Combining the literature before a proper identification of the causes of failure and success would be like searching for a needle in a haystack. In part, however, the limited literature review was also a conscious decision. During the very initial phases of Project 1, an attempt had been made to cross-reference data arising from the secondary and primary research with data available in the literature. It must be admitted that the result was a sense of confusion, and a tendency to question whether the data being elicited from the research was true to its source, or a biased interpretation on the basis of knowledge derived from the literature. This practice was therefore stopped.

Figure 5 – Summary of Methodology for Project 3 (Step 1).

	Step 1
Objective	Identify critical success / failure factors to focus the literature review.
Methodology	Quantitative. Application of Survey to prioritise the failure / success factors identified in Projects 1 and 2. Census of 219 Politicians, Civil Servants and Consultants. 62% response rate. 'Goodness-of-Fit' Test to determine statistical validity of results.
Results	Rank-ordered data (factors). Identification of the critical success and failure factors.

Of all the failure and success factors derived from Projects 1 and 2, interviewees identified 'Commitment' and 'Leadership'¹⁴ as the top two most critical factors that can potentially influence both failure and success. These two factors were the only ones that were identified as critical by all three interviewee categories (i.e., politicians, civil servants and consultants).

The second step of Project 3 then focused on a review of the literature on commitment and leadership, paying particular attention to those aspects that were directly related to the specific properties and characteristics defining the two factors. No specific method or technique was applied.

Following a familiarisation process, the literature was explored in detail with the objective of identifying any measures taken by foreign jurisdictions, or any proposals developed by academics or practitioners, to address similar issues. Particular effort was made to give specific attention to the literature directly relating to public

¹⁴ These, and all other factors, were properly defined in the questionnaire to ensure that their meaning was properly understood and that they were interpreted in the same manner by all interviewees.

administration and to Malta, and that drawing upon the experiences of small States. Unfortunately, the return on this investment proved to be insignificant.

Having established a good understanding of the literature, cross-references were then made to the findings of Projects 1 and 2 with the objective of drawing any similarities and differences between the two sources of information. Building on the knowledge imparted by the literature and the contributions made by the interviewees of Projects 1 and 2, it was possible to draw propositions for improved implementation practices.

3.4 Factors Influencing the Research Study

Given the inductive approach to the research, and the significant reliance on documentary evidence and in-depth interviews with persons in senior positions in Government, it may be important to highlight at least two factors that may have influenced the successful completion of this research study:

1. Knowledge of the Maltese Public Service

The author of this research has been in government service, as a consultant, for the past 11 years. When this research study commenced, the author held the position of Managing Consultant at the Management Efficiency Unit (MEU) in the Office of the Prime Minister. MEU is the Government's in-house management consultancy firm and is responsible for facilitating the implementation of policy and, particularly, the Government's agenda for reform. Towards the end of the research programme (in December 2002), the author was appointed Chief Executive Officer of the MEU. Throughout his career with the Government of Malta, the author has worked in all the Government's Ministries and in a large majority of its Departments. This has given him the opportunity to directly observe the implementation of policy in a number of different settings and contexts.

2. Accessibility

The positions held by the author, as well as his assignments over the years, have also brought him in direct contact with most, if not all, of the politicians serving in government (both current and those in opposition) as well as the senior and middle

managers in the civil service. The good working relationship with these key individuals made it possible for the author to gain access to information, whether in the form of documentary evidence, or appointments for interviews.

Summary of Part 1

This part of the thesis introduced the management problem and research issue guiding the study; it discussed the literature and theory informing the research question; and it summarised the methodology followed by the entire study.

The management problem was defined as the inability to translate a given policy into effective strategic action. The strategy literature, particularly that related to the public sector, provided the backdrop to the research, while studies that specifically examined the issues influencing success or failure in policy implementation occupied the foreground. After considering the literature, the objective of the study, the preferred philosophical perspective, the type and form of data available, and a variety of research methods, the chosen strategy was based on an inductive inquiry and the application of the case study technique. The research was to be undertaken in three sequential and progressive steps, each one constituting a 'project' aimed at addressing an aspect of the research question. Projects 1 and 2 were to focus on the selected case studies of policy implementation. Their objective was to elicit the issues that were considered to have influenced their failure and success, thereby addressing the first part of the research question. Project 3 was to achieve two objectives. First, it was to determine which of the factors elicited from the previous two Projects were generally considered by stakeholders to be critical for policy implementation in Malta. Then, it was to focus on developing propositions for addressing these critical factors, thereby answering the second aspect of the research question.

The rest of the thesis is divided into a further four parts. Parts 2, 3 and 4 present the research methodology, findings and conclusions arising from Projects 1, 2 and 3, respectively. Part 5 completes the thesis by summarising the research conclusions and the contributions to theory and practice.

Part 2

Understanding Failure (Project 1)

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Overview of Part 2

Part 2 discusses the first project of the research, which focuses on a case of failed policy implementation. The study is discussed in four Chapters.

Chapter 1 introduces the purpose and objectives of the project, and defines the meaning of policy implementation ‘failure’ in the context of this research.

Chapter 2 explains in detail the research procedure that was followed, the methodology adopted, the chosen data sources and the steps taken in data collection and analysis. It discusses the merits of documentary research and cognitive (causal) mapping techniques for the purposes of this research, and concludes by discussing the reliability and validity of the study.

Chapter 3 briefly discusses the policy that formed the subject of the case study (the Financial Management Reform Programme) and details the results of both the documentary and primary research.

The findings of the study are discussed in Chapter 4, which highlights the factors perceived to influence the failed outcome of this policy initiative, as elicited from the documentary evidence and perceived by interviewees. The Chapter concludes by presenting a consolidated ‘road map’ of failure that is intended to graphically illustrate what factors curtailed the effective implementation of this policy initiative (and how), thereby addressing (in part) the first aspect of the research question.

1.0 Overall Purpose and Project Objectives

This part of the thesis summarises the findings and conclusions of the first project of the research programme. It explores the issues influencing the implementation of public policy in Malta by examining a case of failed policy implementation.

The reason for choosing to start this research with a case of failure rather than success, is that the study of failure may sometimes be more revealing than the study of success and much more useful in stimulating the search for possible solutions and remedies (Caiden, 1976: 145).

In the context of this research, a case of failed policy implementation was defined as one wherein government policy:

- was not implemented as it had been intended; and/or
- did not achieve the intended outcomes; or
- was not implemented at all.

The project was guided by two primary objectives: to identify what issues or factors led to failure in the implementation of the policy under review, and to examine how the identified issues influence failure, so that a framework that gives context and meaning to these factors can eventually be developed.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Paradigm

The paradigm guiding this doctoral research is based upon an interpretivist philosophy that adopts an applied research approach and which is heavily reliant upon primary research investigation.

The reasons for adopting this position are explained at length in **Appendix 2**, which also provides a detailed explanation for the reasons behind the choice of research methods followed.

To summarise, this project has been based upon qualitative methods of research. As the objective is concerned with uncovering and explaining the issues that led to policy failure, it adopts an inductive approach for identifying the concepts that may potentially lead to the development of theoretical constructs, so that meaning can be given to the phenomenon under review.

A grounded theory approach, based on the application of case study research, was therefore followed, with the aim of generating knowledge within a context of application. This was found to be particularly apt for this study as, unlike other traditional research methodologies, case study research is flexible, typically combining different methods of data collection techniques such as archives, interviews, questionnaires and observation (Yin, 1994).

2.2 Research Methods

2.2.1 Data Collection

Two methods of data collection were used in this phase of the study, with documentary research being the first one to be applied.

“[Documents] can tell us a great deal about the way in which events were constructed at the time, the reasons employed, as well as providing materials upon which to base further research

investigation...They can tell us about the aspiration and intentions of the period to which they refer and describe places and social relationships at [that] time" (May, 1993: 133).

The documentary sources of information drawn upon can be divided into two categories: (a) generic literature on public policy implementation and reform in Malta, and (b) documentation that is directly related to the specific case of policy implementation identified for this part of the research.

Reference to the generic literature on policy implementation was intended to provide a background to the research issue. The documentation included;

- the Reports on the Organisation of the Public Service prepared by the Public Service Reform Commission in July 1989, January 1990, and February 1990;
- the Operations Review of the Public Service prepared by a Government-appointed Consultant in December 1989; and
- academic papers, and other reports, on public policy implementation and reform in Malta, prepared by local scholars and practitioners.

The second category of documentation covered an array of records and reports¹⁵ that specifically address the case of policy implementation under review, and included a variety of the following;

- management reports produced by the Project Team responsible for implementing the said policy;
- progress and status reports of the project;
- correspondence;
- minutes of meetings;
- speeches and press releases;
- newspaper articles; and
- responses to Parliamentary Questions.

¹⁵ The essential distinction between reports and records is the time when the documents were written. A record is primarily concerned with a translation taking place *now*. The report is usually written *after* an event has taken place (Mann, 1976: 59) [*italics added for emphasis*].

While serving as a key source of data on the factors influencing failure in policy implementation, these documents also served as a basis upon which key persons involved in the policy could be identified for follow-up research.

In fact, the second research method for data collection adopted in this phase of the study involved the application of in-depth and semi-structured interviews.

The objective for holding these interviews was primarily to obtain first-hand data of the case under review so as to corroborate the data obtained from the documentary evidence. Furthermore, the interviews were intended to provide the researcher with an opportunity to ask interviewees to elaborate upon specific issues identified during the documentary research and to clarify any inconsistencies or concerns arising from the documentation.

Recognising that group recollections may be more reliable than individual recollections (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe et al., 1991) consideration was initially given for the organisation of group consultations, after interviewees were interviewed on an individual basis. However, this proved unnecessary, as the information derived from the individual interviews was not inconsistent or contradictory.

All interviews were taped and were subsequently transcribed. The interviews were held with persons involved in initiating and implementing the policy under review, and with change agents hired to facilitate the process. The data from these interviews provided the main source of information for this phase of the research.

2.2.2 Data Analysis

Documentary research is one of the least explained research techniques in the literature (May, 1993: 133) and specific methodologies of data collection and analysis are limited.

While the method of data collection and analysis adopted by this research evolved in response to the content, quality and quantity of the documentation available, the procedures and techniques developed by well-established qualitative research studies were rigorously followed. In particular, the research treated documentary evidence in the same way as interview transcripts are treated. The data collected

from the documentary sources of evidence was analysed using the general principles of data codification proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998). By so doing, it was possible to organise the issues identified during the data collection process into discrete categories according to their respective properties and dimensions (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 19). This is explained further in Section 2.4.

On the other hand, the data obtained from the interviews were analysed through the application of cognitive (causal) mapping techniques. While this technique could also have been used for the analysis of the documentary sources of evidence, the latter is considered a surrogate for cognition and one-to-one interviews are likely to be the best method (source) for eliciting cognitive maps (Eden, Ackermann et al., 1993: 2). The process adopted during this part of the data collection and analysis followed the techniques and mechanisms outlined by Wrightson (1976), as modified by Huff, Narapareddy et al. (1990). This is explained further in Section 2.4. **Appendix 3** provides an account of the philosophical grounding and development of cognitive mapping as a research technique, and its application to this study.

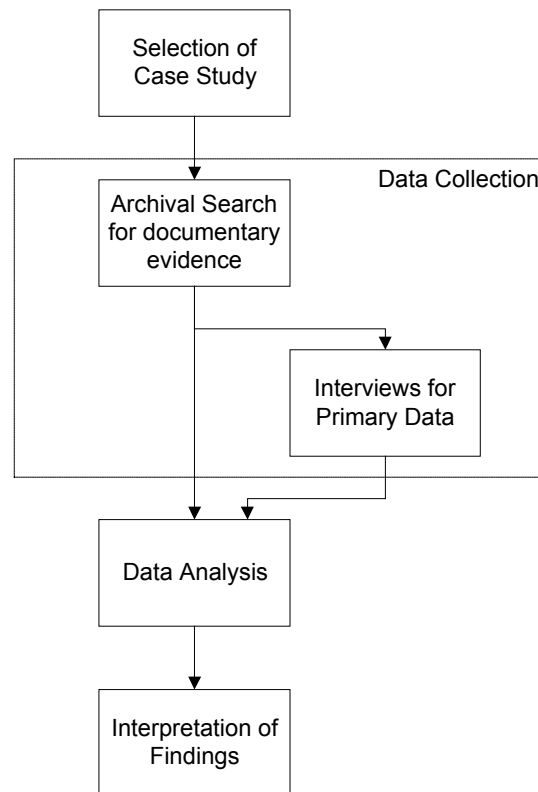
2.3 Research Procedure

Figure 6 overleaf outlines the process adopted during this part of the research.

Due to the confidentiality agreements that had to be undertaken in order to ensure access to certain documentation and the interviews, the above process had to be carried out without the help of research assistants.

Sections 2.4 and 2.5 elaborate on the steps taken to select the case study and the approach adopted for data collection and analysis.

Figure 6 – Outline of Research Procedure (Project 1).



Source: Compiled by Author

2.4 Selecting the Case Study

To overcome the potential of personal bias and to ensure sampling objectivity, it was decided that the example of failed policy that would be used as the case study for this phase of the research should not be directly chosen by the researcher. The preferred approach was to determine the example of failed policy implementation following adequate interviews with persons who, for a considerable number of years, have been directly involved in various positions at the highest levels of government.

Three interviews were targeted for this purpose. Initially, the first interview was intended to elicit a number of potential examples of failed policy implementation that would then be proposed to the other two interviewees for validation and/or refutation until a consensus was reached on one particular example of policy.

However, only two of the three persons that had been targeted for an interviewee accepted to be interviewed, and a change to the above protocol was necessary. In

the circumstances, it was decided that each of the two interviewees would independently be asked to identify a set of policies that they considered as examples of failed policy implementation. The results would be compared to isolate or short-list the example(s) cited in common. The researcher would then choose one of the common examples on the basis of some pre-established criteria. A different approach would have to be taken if no common example was cited. However, this latter approach proved to be unnecessary.

Prior to the actual interview, a copy of the 'Proposal Document' prepared during the first year of the DBA programme was sent to each of the interviewees. This was accompanied by a brief outline of the project for Phase 1 of the research, summarising the research issue, question, objectives and methodology. A summary of the purpose of the interview, including a definition of terms being used, and the criteria that were to be used by the interviewees in considering the examples of policy implementation was also enclosed (see **Appendix 4**). The purpose of these documents was to ensure that the interviewees would gain familiarity with the research being undertaken as well as an appreciation of the central importance of the interview to the rest of the research project.

Two of the examples of failed policy implementation mentioned by each interviewee were identical. Both examples concerned Cabinet policy decisions taken in the early 1990's on the basis of recommendations arising from two milestone reports on the management and organisation of the Civil Service - an 'Operations Review of the Public Service', and a further 'Report on the organisation of the Public Service' prepared by a specially appointed 'Public Service Reform Commission'. The two policy decisions taken by Cabinet concerned administrative measures leading to (1) a review of human resource management practices and capacity building for the Civil Service, and (2) a major initiative intended to reform and modernise the financial management framework of government.

After considering both examples, it was decided that the policy of Financial Management Reform would be selected for the first case study. This policy was chosen because:

1. considerable documentation on the subject was available;

2. some of the persons who were involved in the implementation of this policy were known by the researcher, therefore increasing the probability of appointments for interviews; and
3. the subject matter is still current today, with a number of new measures being undertaken in an attempt to achieve what was not gained 10 years ago.

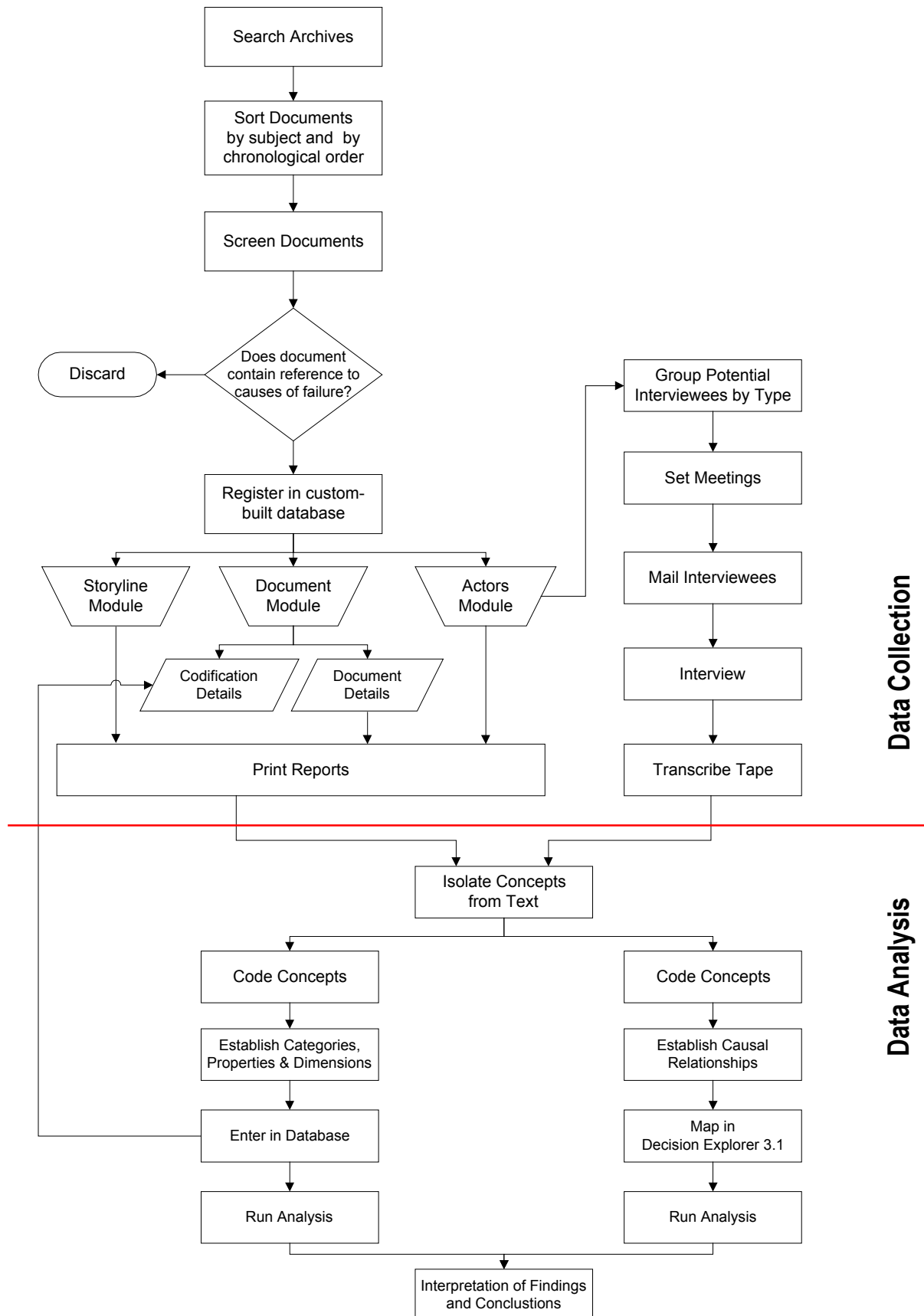
2.5 Steps taken in Data Collection and Analysis

The steps followed in the data collection and analysis process are outlined in **Figure 7**. The first part of the data collection process focused on documentary sources of evidence.

The process was initiated with a physical archival search in the libraries and registries of the Management Efficiency Unit (Office of the Prime Minister), and the Malta Information Technology and Training Services (MITTS) Limited. These two organisations had a common predecessor, the Management Systems Unit Limited, which had been responsible for providing consultancy services and project management support to the Ministry of Finance in the implementation of the financial management reform programme. A large number of records, including project-related documents and some newspaper articles, were found. As these were poorly archived, they had to be first sorted by subject and chronological order, following which, a 'screening' exercise was undertaken with the intention of separating those records containing direct or indirect reference to the possible causes of failure in the policy implementation process, from any other unnecessary documentation. Furthermore, as the policy under review was (at the time) under the scrutiny of a Cabinet Committee, reference to the records and minutes of meetings held at this level was also considered important.

In order to facilitate the process of analysing all the relevant documentation, a database was developed to log a short-listed number of key documents. Constructed using Microsoft Access, the database is composed of three core modules intended to register various details of the information contained in, and related to, the key documents. These include the following:

Figure 7: Steps in Data Collection and Analysis



Source: Compiled by Author

- An 'Actors' module – to register the base data (personal and career details) of persons who were either authors and/or recipients of the documents being reviewed, or who were denoted as key persons to a particular event or process.
- Every person registered on the system was automatically assigned a unique number to serve as the only reference key during the research process so that the person's identity was protected.
- A 'Document' module intended to create a 'stock register' of the documents deemed most important and relevant for analysis.
- Once again, every document registered into the system was automatically assigned a primary key as a unique reference number. The data stored in this module included the date and title of the document, a description of the type of document¹⁶, and a filing code according to where the document was stored. A 'notes' field was also created to register any comments or observations by the researcher.
- A 'Storyline' module intended to register and track any major events in chronological order.
- The data stored in this module included the date of the event, a brief description of the event, the intended objectives of the event, and its outcomes. A relationship was also created between this module and the 'Document' and 'Actor' modules so that every event could be linked with the relevant document and actor related to it.

Every document registered in the database was then examined in detail and all references to issues or factors that were considered to have led to failure in policy implementation were extracted and analysed. Following the approach adopted by Strauss and Corbin (1998), these factors were then coded into discrete categories (hereinafter referred to as 'factor-categories' to denote the relation to this research) according to their properties and dimensions.

In relation to this research, a ‘factor-category’ is defined as a unique **class** of factors (or issues) influencing the failure (or success) of policy implementation as perceived by the author(s) of the document under review. A factor-category may have multiple ‘properties’, each of which denotes a different **aspect** of that specific class of factors. On the other hand, dimensions represent the **polar ends** of a particular aspect (property) of a class of factors (factor-category).

The example below illustrates the approach adopted in the codification process.

Quotation (Doc. 40 p,7)

“It is also essential that the financial management reforms are seen as an integrated Government of Malta initiative and not as an appendage or one that is being driven or managed by external entities”.

Quotation with Concepts in bold and denoted by // //

“It is also essential that the financial management reforms // **are seen as an integrated Government of Malta initiative** // and // **not** as an appendage or one that is being **driven or managed by external entities** //”.

	Factor-Category	Property	Dimensions
// are seen as an integrated G.O.M initiative//	Ownership	Visibility	Seen...Unseen
// not...driven or managed by external entities //	Ownership	Location	Internal...External

To facilitate handling the emerging codification system, a fourth module was created in the database as a sub-set of the ‘Documents’ module. This made it possible to record, for every document, and according to their respective factor-categories, properties and dimensions, all references to issues or factors considered as potentially influencing failure in policy implementation.

¹⁶ Documents were classified under one of the following headings: Circular, Correspondence, Legislation, Letter, Minutes, Memorandum, Memo to Minutes, Presentation, and Report.

A number of standard reports were also created so that various forms of output on the information contained in the above modules could be generated to assist in the analysis. An outline of the above-mentioned modules and standard reports is contained in **Appendix 5**.

Once all of the documentary sources of evidence were collected and analysed, the next part of the process was to identify a number of suitable persons to be interviewed.

Using primarily the 'Actors' module of the database, it was possible to identify and list those persons who occupied a central role in one or more aspects of the policy under review. These persons were divided into three groups to reflect their position in Government – Politicians, Civil Servants and Consultants – and then listed in order of importance to reflect the role they fulfilled in the policy implementation.

Due to time and resource constraints, a total of nine (9) interviews were targeted. In order to overcome any potential bias in the identification of issues contributing to failure in policy implementation, it was decided that an equivalent number of interviewees from each group of 'actors' should be identified for an interview.

All the identified interviewees were contacted and appointments with eight (8) of them were established. The ninth interviewee was no longer resident in Malta and could not be reached for an interview. Another person from his same group was therefore identified and an interview established. Nine (9) interviews were therefore held.

Prior to each meeting, interviewees were sent a brief paper (see **Appendix 6**) outlining:

- the purpose of the research;
- the approach being undertaken;
- progress achieved to date;
- a brief overview of the policy decision that would be discussed during the interview; and
- the purpose of the interview and the proposed approach.

Every interview was audio-taped and later transcribed 'ad verbatim' except for those instances where the conversation, or rather parts of it, was held in Maltese. In the latter case, a direct translation was made as the tape was being transcribed. To ensure that these parts of the interview were translated correctly and accurately reflected the content and spirit of what had been said in Maltese, they were checked and confirmed by a person of trust. There were only a very few disagreements and, in these cases, a consensus position was reached following a suitable discussion.

Causal mapping was the technique that was selected to facilitate the analysis of the interviews. The principles and systematic coding procedures produced by Wrightson (1996), as modified by Huff, Narapareddy et al. (1990), were closely applied. As such, every statement made by an interviewee that reflected his/her perception of *what* factors led to failure and *why*, was isolated and broken into its subject and cause concepts. Concepts were then labelled with a reference code and linked to one another according to pre-defined standard 'relationships' as produced by Huff, Narapareddy et al. (1990: 315). Furthermore, the following protocol was observed:

- concepts were coded using the original wording in the transcript;
- concepts that served as 'examples' were nonetheless coded and retained for reference; and
- identical concepts referenced during different parts of the interview were merged. The wording of the concept that seemed to best explain the interviewee's frame of mind was retained.

The example below illustrates the approach described above. A full transcript of an interview, identifying the concepts codified for analysis, is included in **Appendix 7**.

Quotation (Doc 67)

"Interviewee: First of all, as I see it, for any policy or change or improvements that you want to do, you must start from the beginning, in the sense that you must have planning, good planning, a very comprehensive system, comprehensive and human system, in the sense, when I say human, I mean you don't just say 'this is what needs to be done'... who is going to do it? Are they capable of doing it? If they cannot do it, we get people from outside? If so then that is not a good system. And the third is enforcement".

Quotation with concepts in bold and denoted by // //

“Interviewee: First of all, as I see it, for any policy or change or improvements that you want to do, you must start from the beginning, in the sense that you must have planning, **//good planning//**, **//a very comprehensive system//**, comprehensive and **//human system//**, in the sense, when I say human, I mean you don’t just say **//‘this is what needs to be done’//...//who is going to do it? Are they capable of doing it?//** If they cannot do it, **//we get people from outside?//** If so then that is not good planning. And the third is **//enforcement//**”.

List of Coded Concepts and Causal Relationships

Code	Concept	Link	Code	Concept
[67,1A]	good planning	/-/		<i>GOAL Concept:</i> failure [in policy implementation] ... success
[67,1B]	A very comprehensive system	/-/		<i>GOAL Concept:</i> failure [in policy implementation] ... success
[67,1C]	A human system	/-/		<i>GOAL Concept:</i> failure [in policy implementation] ... success
[67,1D]	[saying] ‘this is what needs to be done’	/-e/	[67,1C]	A human system
[67,1E]	[asking] ‘who is going to do it? [and] are they capable of doing it?’	/e/	[67,1C]	A human system
[67,1F]	we get people from outside	/-/	[67,1A]	good planning
[67,1G]	Enforcement	/-/		<i>GOAL Concept:</i> failure [in policy implementation] ... success

Note:

- The concept labels, or code, represent the Document No (in this case 67), page number in the interview transcript (in this case 1), and sequential lettering of the concepts (in this case A to G).

- The *Goal Concept* does not feature in the quotation but is paraphrased by ‘failure [in policy implementation]...success’. The symbol ‘...’ means ‘rather than’.
- The words in square brackets are additions to complete the verbatim phrase from the transcript.
- /-/ denotes ‘negatively affects’.
- /e/ denotes ‘is an example of’.
- /-e/ denotes ‘is not an example of’.

The concepts were then graphically ‘mapped’ using Decision Explorer 3.1. With its in-built macros and tools, the software also proved to be a valuable resource for exploring the make-up and structure of each map at different levels of analysis. Through a number of iterations, it was possible to identify the most dominant and central concepts, facilitating the conceptual ordering of various categories of factors influencing failure in policy implementation. Where possible, the derived maps were shared with the interviewees so that their composition could be reviewed and validated by the ‘owner’.

As a final step in the data analysis, the results obtained from the sequential examination of the documentary sources of evidence and the individual causal maps of interviewees, were compared to identify similar and contrasting conceptual relationships.

The results and findings of the above-mentioned analysis are discussed in Section 3.0.

2.6 Reliability and Validity

One of the criticisms that this phase of the research may encounter is that it adopted a methodology that was only tested with one example, or case study, of failed policy implementation.

At first glance, this may score low in terms of the study’s reliability and external validity. However, considerable rigour was followed in determining and documenting every step and operation of the data collection and analysis process.

The objective was to develop a protocol of procedures that could be repeated by other researchers, with the intent of leading to the same results. The custom-built database also ensures that all documents used during the study can be easily traced. Furthermore, the analysis of the causal maps derived from each interview followed a sequential and reported logic and operation that can be easily replicated by other researchers using the same data set. The ability to create an audit trail of the procedures followed and a chain of evidence should therefore increase the study's reliability (Yin, 1994: 98).

While the adoption of a single case study methodology limits the possibility of generalising the results obtained beyond the strict domain of this example, such generalisation was never the intention of this phase of the project. Indeed, the object was to explore and develop an understanding of why a particular case of policy failed to be implemented as intended, so as to obtain a data set for comparing the results with a contrasting case of success at a subsequent stage of the research.

In contrast, the strongest aspects of the research methodology probably pertain to its internal and construct validity.

By following the tried and tested protocols of the causal mapping technique for analysing the interviews, it can be objectively stated that any inferences derived thereof, reflect the original perceptions and frame of mind of the interviewee. One possible cause for criticism in this respect lies in respect of the codification of concepts derived from the documentary sources of evidence, as these were subject to the researcher's interpretation and could not be validated by the original author(s) of the documents. However, as with the causal mapping protocol, the original wording contained in the documents was used during the coding process, and every concept was clearly referenced to establish authenticity. Furthermore, method triangulation itself should increase the internal validity of this phase of the study by counter-balancing the strengths and weaknesses of the different methods employed (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe et al., 1991: 133).

On the other hand, the construct validity of this phase of the research is primarily a function of the operational measures established to overcome elements of

subjectivity in data collection. The use of multiple sources of evidence was deliberate so that, to the extent possible, bias from a single source is overcome through evidence obtained from other sources (Yin, 1994: 90). Besides relying upon both secondary and primary sources of information, the study was also based upon various types of different documents and records prepared by different people, from different backgrounds and, possibly, with different interests. Similarly, a cross-section of persons from different backgrounds, possibly holding different perspectives of the problem under investigation, were also interviewed so as to overcome elements of bias. The construct validity of the study should also be reflected in the ability to clearly establish and record a chain of evidence supporting the achieved results (Yin, 1994: 34), although this could have been further strengthened if the research had been conducted with the assistance of other researchers. Unfortunately, because of confidentiality agreements, this was not possible. Nonetheless, it should be noted that when the cognitive maps were shared with interviewees, no alterations were requested.

3.0 Results / Findings

3.1 Background to Selected Case Study

In order to gain a better appreciation of the elements influencing the research issue, it is probably pertinent to outline the main events that led to the development of the policy under review. A brief overview of the context and reasons for which the policy was developed, and the operational structure within which it was managed and implemented, is presented below.

3.1.1 Context

In 1987, the Maltese Nationalist Party was returned to Office after having served for sixteen (16) years in Opposition. Their election manifesto underscored the need for a number of political and economic reform initiatives that were marketed under the slogan ‘Work, Justice and Liberty’ (Nationalist Party, 1987) – a slogan that is strongly reflective of a time of considerable social turmoil.

Recognising that success in the implementation of the Government’s economic and social programme was, to a great extent, dependent upon the efficiency and competence of the administrative machinery, the new Government established the reform of the Public Service as one of its key priorities.

Indeed, within a year of being elected into Office, the Government appointed a Public Service Reform Commission (PSRC) “to examine the organisation of the Public Service, and to recommend means by which the Service can efficiently respond to the changing needs for effective government” (Public Service Reform Commission, 1989). Concurrently, it also commissioned a Consultant to conduct an ‘Operations Review’ of the Public Service with the following terms of reference:

“to evaluate the existing organisational structures [of the Public Service] in light of the government's policy objectives and to recommend appropriate delineations, organisational structures and mandates; and

to develop a suitable Information Technology plan which will identify needs, opportunities and cost/benefits for the application of computer technology where applicable" (Tabone, 1988: 5).

3.1.2 Reasons behind the Financial Management Reform policy decision

The Operations Review presented its findings in two reports, each addressing one of the two terms of reference mentioned above. The first report, and the only one of direct relevance to this study, focused on the operational aspects of government, identifying those problems that were impeding it from functioning effectively and proposing areas for reform and recommendations for remedial action (Tabone, 1988).

The core problems were divided into three categories. Those relating to:

1. human resource management issues, in particular the mechanisms used for acquiring manpower and the conditions of service of public employees;
2. environmental support issues relating to the infrastructural, technological and expert support services available to the civil service; and
3. organisational issues, in particular those relating to (1) the manner in which government functions were structured; (2) the processes and mechanisms by which policy was developed; (3) the powers and functions of management to mould policies and resources into Public Services; and (4) the accountability measures to ensure that the government and the administration attained established goals.

Of particular relevance to the decision leading to the development of a policy of financial management reform, are the observations made in the report concerning the organisational issues of the Public Service. Among other things, the report noted that:

- there was “**no capability within government to conduct planning** of any sort...with the attendant research and analysis that this necessitates” such that it was “largely the job of Ministers to take the necessary steps to turn ideas into substantive initiatives” (p.20);

- there was little consultation between Departments and the Ministry of Finance (MOF) during the **Budget Allocations process** such that “allocations bear little relevance to the needs of Departments” (p.21). Submissions needed to “be more substantive, requests more realistic and expectations more moderate” (p.21). New roles and approaches to financial management were deemed essential;
- there were a number of legal and administrative measures that “pose a fundamental anachronism to management **accountability**” (p.24) and “a lack of **delegated powers** [that] could conceivably result in poor financial management aimed at getting around the constraints” (p.25). Rather than focusing on policies and measures for development, the “prevailing mode of administration is geared towards **control** in the two most critical areas of financial and human resources management” (p.25);
- **financial guidelines** were in dire need of upgrading “to reflect the realities and requirements of modern management” (p.26);
- the audit function was lacking in that it is focused on a review of expenditure as opposed to ensuring value for money (p.30). The creation of an **Internal Audit** function to re-align the auditing perception was deemed necessary.

The findings and conclusions reached by the Public Service Reform Commission echoed those reached by the Operations Review. In its first report (Public Service Reform Commission, 1989), the PSRC identified the need to restore the institutional fabric of the Public Service, to build its organisational capacity, and to safeguard employee rights, as the three over-arching objectives of government in its attempt to reform the Public Service. To guide the attainment of these objectives, the PSRC proposed eleven (11) goals, of which Goal Number 2 was of particular relevance to the domain of financial management.

Under Goal 2, 'Creating a culture of excellence and integrity' (p.16-18), the Commission recommended the compilation of departmental corporate plans, with the Ministry of Finance and the Department of Audit acting as lead players to set standards of performance; the development of reporting systems and standards to evaluate financial/operational performance; a review of the Financial Administration

and Audit Act (1962) to improve lines of accountability; a review of the allocations process to improve the distribution of funds and the establishment of economic priorities; and a review of the format and content of the Financial Estimates to provide more meaningful budget projections.

Complementing some of the findings and recommendations established by the Operations Review, the PSRC also identified a weakness in the Public Services' ability with respect to planning, policy analysis, design and advisory services. It identified role ambiguity as a key contributor to the loss of structure and the elaboration of central controls (p.25) and proposed delineation of accountability at various levels of Government (p.28) and the need for decentralising financial management (p.26). Furthermore, it proposed substantive changes to the budgetary process and the strengthening of auditing and accountability procedures that focus on a measurement of outcomes, as opposed to processes.

The findings of both the Operations Review and the PSRC led the Government to consider the need for a major reform programme for the Public Service with Financial Management Reform as a key policy priority.

3.1.3 Monitoring and Controlling Implementation

To introduce the vast program of reform contemplated in the above mentioned reports, the government organised itself to establish an operational set up to oversee, direct and implement the various policy decisions that were required.

While operational responsibility for policy implementation was to rest with individual line ministries and departments, the Government established a Cabinet Committee on Reform to provide direction to, and oversee, the implementation of all Public Service Reform initiatives¹⁷.

The Management and Personnel Office was established in the Office of the Prime Minister to assume overall responsibility for matters pertaining to human resource management, including the development of manpower plans and complementing

¹⁷ Source: Data.

exercises, on-going personnel administration (pending delegation to line departments at a later stage), collective bargaining and the development of human resource management capabilities in line departments (Public Service Reform Commission, 1990: 10).

The Staff Development Organisation was also established in the Office of the Prime Minister to identify the training needs of the Public Service, to develop suitable programmes to address these needs, and to provide the necessary training to furnish the skills and expertise required to implement the identified changes (Public Service Reform Commission, 1990: 10).

The Management Systems Unit (MSU), composed of a number of local and expatriate professionals, was also established within the Office of the Prime Minister to facilitate the ambitious reform programme. By providing expert advice in the various disciplines of management, MSU was to develop and implement new human resource management, financial management and technology management policies and assist in the development of human resource management capacities in departments (Public Service Reform Commission, 1990: 10).

Following the development of a Work Program and Strategy for Financial Management Reform by the MSU, and its subsequent presentation and endorsement by Government in late 1990, a 'Financial Management Group' was established in 1991 within the MSU to specifically assist the Ministry of Finance in delivering the Financial Management Policy Reform Programme. The Financial Management Group was led by an expatriate of Maltese origin and resourced by a number of expatriate experts in public finance.

In addition, a 'Steering Committee' was established chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, and with membership extended to the Ministry of Economic Services, the Ministry of Social Policy, the Ministry of Public Works and the Financial Management Group of MSU. The objectives of this committee were to translate the Work Program and Strategy developed by MSU into a prioritised programme of works for the financial management reform initiative, and to co-ordinate the work of the Financial Management Group.

Over a period of approximately 5 years, between 1991 and 1996, the financial reform programme addressed the following priority initiatives:

- the development of new Financial Policies, Procedures and Regulations;
- Financial Delegation and Accountability;
- the introduction of modern Financial Planning and Budgeting procedures;
- the establishment of a Department Accounting System (Chart of Accounts);
- the establishment of an Internal Auditing Function; and
- the development of a Financial Management Training Programme.

During the above-mentioned period:

- the country experienced one election in February of 1992 returning the same party to power;
- the Ministry of Finance experienced the leadership of two Ministers (the first between 1987 and 1992, and the second between 1992 and 1996) and two Permanent Secretaries (with the changeover taking place in 1994);
- the leadership of the MSU changed once in 1992;
- the Cabinet Committee on Reform commissioned a number of strategic reviews on the reform programme of the civil service, but only one on the Financial Management Reform Programme, and then only in 1996, prior to an election;
- the Steering Committee met only for a few times; and
- the Financial Management Group was disbanded as a separate group within the MSU in 1995, and merged with the Human Resource and General Management Group to create one Consultancy Division.

3.2 Results of Documentary Analysis ¹⁸

The archival search returned several documents that were related to the selected case of policy implementation. Sixty-nine (69) records were short-listed as key documents and logged into the purpose-built database mentioned earlier. **Table 1** below provides a break-down of these records by type of document.

Table 1: Key Records by 'Type' of Document

Type of Document	Number of Records
Minutes of Meetings	36
Reports	15
Legislation	6
Memoranda to Minutes	4
Letters	3
Correspondence Files	3
Presentations	1
Circulars	1

Every one of the records identified above was examined in detail. Any statements contained in them that identified factors affecting the implementation of policy were highlighted and subsequently recorded in the database. In some instances, the statements contained in the records specifically mentioned issues or events that led to failure in the implementation of the financial management reform programme¹⁹. In others, reference to such factors was less direct but nonetheless relevant to the policy under review²⁰.

¹⁸ This section is intended to summarise the findings arising from the documentary analysis. The interpretation of the results is discussed in Section 4.0.

¹⁹ For example, "[Some] of the financial management proposals had not yet been implemented because the Minister responsible had not yet become personally involved in their implementation" (Doc. 25, p5).

²⁰ For example, "Ministries and departments must first be fully equipped to receive such delegation" (Doc 64, p38).

Furthermore, while some statements made specific reference to factors or issues leading to failure (the specific object of this first Project), others referred to factors that were perceived to lead to successful implementation²¹. The former statements were extracted from records that provided an account of some past event, while the latter were obtained from records that were planning some future event. Both types of statements were considered important for the analysis as they each reflected a different side of the same coin.

These statements echoed the perceptions or concepts that various individuals felt were influencing the policy implementation process. A total of ninety-one (91) such concepts were identified from eighteen (18) of the key records mentioned above, as follows: fifty one (51) concepts were derived from three (3) Reports, thirty (30) concepts from ten (10) Minutes of Meetings, seven (7) concepts from three (3) Memoranda to Minutes, two (2) concepts from one (1) Letter, and one (1) concept from the Circular.

While an examination of the cause and effect relationships between various concepts may have enriched the findings, such relationships could not be determined with accuracy or to an acceptable level of confidence. The analysis of this data set was therefore approached reflecting the codification principles and techniques developed by Strauss and Corbin (1998). The concepts were examined and codified along their dimensions, properties and categories.

Fourteen (14) factor-categories were identified exhibiting, in total, twenty-eight (28) different properties and thirty-two (32) dimensions. These are listed in **Table 2** overleaf. The Table also lists the number of concepts per factor-category, property and dimension, and the number of records from where the concepts were derived. A direct quotation from the documentary data is also included to illustrate and add meaning to each factor-category, property and dimension.

²¹ For example, "A criteria for successful execution...is commitment from both the political as well as senior officials" (Doc 40, p7).

Table 2: Results of Documentary Data Codification (Project 1)

Factor-Category	Property	Dimension	No. of Concepts	No. of Records	Quotation from Documents
Authority	Freedom of Action	Delegated...Withheld	3	2	In implementing reforms...managers [must] be given authority commensurate with responsibility" (Doc 41, p3).
Environment (Context)	Expectations	Realistic...Unachievable	1	1	[A] critical success factor [is] realistic expectations of improvement which do not exceed any organisations' capacity to deliver and which are affordable (Doc 56, p3)
	Orientation (of Management)	Process...Results	1	1	[The] Ministry of Finance [is] process bound (Doc 60, p13)
	Reliability	Accountable...Unaccountable	1	1	One of the most important factors to the success of the projects...a well controlled and structured project management and accountability framework (Doc 40, p25).
External Support	Commitment	Consistent...Unsustained	1	1	The Committee agreed...on the continued need for sustained support (Doc 34, p3).
Management Involvement	Commitment	Active...Passive	1	1	To ensure successful implementation, all partners to the implementation plan must provide an active and fully committed role...(Doc 64, p44).
	Commitment	Committed...Uncommitted	13	10	The Ministry of Finance must make a total and completely unqualified commitment (Doc 64, p40).
	Co-operation	Co-operative...Unco-operative	2	2	[The] Ministry of Finance [is] uncooperative (Doc 60, p13).
Managerial Responsibility	Clarity	Clear...Unclear	1	1	Roles delineation and managerial responsibility are not always clearly defined and as a result there is lack of accountability (Doc 12, p2).
Methodology (of Implementation)	Approach	Gradual...Abrupt	2	1	Success was more likely to ensue by phasing-in the coverage of the complete business planning approach as against attempting full implementation as a goal (Doc 64, p37).
	Direction	Controlled...Uncontrolled	1	1	One of the most important factors to the success of the projects...a well controlled and structured project management and accountability framework (Doc 40, p25).
	Structure	Rigid...Liberal	1	1	One of the most important factors to the success of the projects...a well controlled and structured project management and accountability framework (Doc 40, p25).
Organisation	Resourcefulness	Adequate...Inadequate	2	2	[A] critical success factor [is] the provision of adequate departmental resources (Doc 56, p3).
	Structure	Effective...Ineffective	1	1	[A] critical success factor [is] the need to set up...effective structures (Doc 56, p3).
Ownership	Belief	Believe...Disbelieve	2	2	Permanent Secretaries still needed to be fully convinced (Doc 34, p3).
	Location	Internal...External	14	8	Management must assume ownership of their plans (Doc 64, p36).
	Visibility	Seen...Unseen	5	2	Ownership must be seen as well as stated (Doc 40, p31).
Performance Evaluation	Responsibilisation	Accountable...Unaccountable	2	2	[The] performance evaluation of Directors [is seen] as being of critical importance to the whole reform exercise (Doc 30, p4).
Personal Capabilities	Proficiency	Skilled...Inept	3	2	[A] critical success factor [is] the filling of senior posts in the Ministry of Finance with people of suitable quality, skills and experience (Doc 56, p3).
	Qualifications	Qualified...Unqualified	3	3	The major constraints in inhibiting reform have been...loss of qualified personnel (Doc 62, p5).
Planning	Approach	Co-ordinated...Unco-ordinated	1	1	[A] critical success factor [is] the establishment of effective mechanisms for co-ordination with other agencies engaged in the process of reform (Doc 56, p3).
	Approach	Holistic...Fragmented	1	1	The need was felt for an overall plan which would better integrate all the different components of the reform (Doc 34, p7).
	Approach	Incremental...Immediate	2	1	A planning approach [that] develops sequentially and incrementally...[will] result in continued measurable success (Doc 40, p11).
	Approach	Top-down...Bottom-up	1	1	Success will be achieved through a top-down approach to both planning as well as implementation (Doc 40, p11).
	Timing	Pre-defined...Emergent	2	1	A first essential step to success is the development of a strategy and plan (Doc 40, p2).

Category = Class of Factors/Issues influencing success/failure of policy implementation

Property = Aspect of a Class of Factors/Issues

Dimensions = Polar ends of a particular Aspect of a Class of Factors/Issues

Table 2: Results of Documentary Data Codification

Political Involvement	Commitment	Commitment...No Commitment	4	3	A criterion for successful execution...is commitment from both the political as well as senior officials (Doc 40, p2).
	Intervention	Direct...Indirect	3	3	[A] Ministry management committee...chaired by the Minister...is a vehicle for ensuring reforms are implemented in the Ministry (Doc 56, p3).
	Ownership	Own...Disown	3	3	It was important for every Minister and those around them as well as for the leadership in the Service to 'own' the reform initiatives (Doc 25, p9).
	Willingess	Willing...Unwilling	2	1	Political will...is the most important prerequisite for successful action (Doc 64, p38).
Results	Timeliness	Early...Late	5	2	There must be early demonstrable results (Doc 40, p2).
	Visibility	Visible...Not Visible	3	2	There must be visible change...demonstrable (Doc 40, p2).
Role Delineation	Clarity	Clear...Unclear	4	3	[Need for] clearer delineation of responsibilities (Doc 34, p7).

Category = Class of Factors/Issues influencing success/failure of policy implementation
Property = Aspect of a Class of Factors/Issues
Dimensions = Polar ends of a particular Aspect of a Class of Factors/Issues

If one were to consider the frequency of concepts per factor-category as a measure of the latter's importance, or centrality, as perceived by the actors to the policy implementation, 'Ownership', 'Management Involvement' and 'Political Involvement', would be identified as the most important or dominant factors influencing the implementation of policy. In total, the factor-category 'Ownership' was cited twenty-one (21) times in twelve (12) different records. 'Management Involvement' was cited sixteen (16) times in thirteen (13) different records, while 'Political Involvement' was cited twelve (12) times in ten (10) different records.

However, deciding on the centrality of factor-categories merely on the basis of a frequency count may be somewhat questionable. As previously stated, an examination of the cause and effect relationships between the various concepts would have enriched the findings and provided a better means for determining the relative importance of the concepts. However, from the data available, such causal relationships could not be properly determined.

Given the transparency and traceability of the data collection process, the same results should be obtained if the operations of the study are replicated. It is therefore probably safe to state that the study should score relatively high in terms of its reliability. Likewise, its construct validity, at least as measured through the establishment of a chain of evidence for the derived results, should also be relatively robust. However, the fact that the content of the data, and the conclusions of the codification process, could not be verified by the original authors of the documentation (to ascertain that they correctly reflect one's thoughts and perceptions) leaves something to be desired in terms of the analysis of the data and the internal validity of the study.

In view of this, it is felt that while the results of this part of the study can be considered to be indicative of both the situation prevailing at the time and the general issues and events that influenced the implementation of the financial management reform policy, they cannot, in and of themselves, be considered as conclusive findings.

As such, the results of the documentary analysis have been treated more as a 'backdrop' to the interviews that followed in the second part of the study's data

collection and analysis process, rather than as a ‘filter’ for identifying areas to guide and focus the proceedings of these interviews. Indeed, the interviews were approached as though no prior analysis of any kind had been made. They were intentionally left unstructured so as not to direct or influence the interviewees to necessarily discuss any particular categories that were obtained from the documentary analysis.

The results and findings of the interviews are summarised next in the following section.

3.3 Results of Interviews ²²

As mentioned earlier, a total of nine (9) semi-structured interviews were targeted with persons selected from among politicians, civil servants and consultants that were key to the policy under review. Three (3) persons from each group were interviewed.

Only one of the interviews was unsuccessfully completed. The interview in question was terminated soon after it had commenced, as the interviewee felt he could not make a valid contribution. Due to the role that this interviewee played in the policy under review, the choice of an alternative interviewee was limited to one other person. However, securing an interview with this person was not possible.

Table 3 summarises the results of the interviews per interviewee per group. The terms being used are defined in the notes below.

Notes:

1. A ‘concept’ is defined as an idea or mental image expressed by the interviewee in the form of a statement, to describe an issue, event, feeling or experience that the interviewee believes can explain a particular phenomenon in relation to the research issue. Concepts are derived from the transcript of the interview and represent the interviewee’s own choice of words.

²² This section summarises the findings of the interviews. The results are discussed in Section 4.0.

Table 3 – Results of Interviews (Project 1)

	Interview								
Interviewee Group	Civil Servants			Consultants			Politicians		
Interview Reference Number	65	68	72	66	70	67	71	73	74
Interview Duration	1hr 40 mins	4 hrs	1 hr	1 hr	1hr 40 mins	1hr 15mins	1hr 15 mins	15 mins	40 minutes
Total Number of Concepts ¹	110	75	63	68	96	97	69		72
Number of Heads ²	10	1	4	1	3	8	1		3
Number of Tails ³	36	22	28	23	4	45	24		18
Link-to-Node Ratio ⁴	1.22:1	1.16:1	1.19:1	1.12:1	1.11:1	1.3:1	1.1:1		1.18:1
Number of Clusters ⁵	3	3	4	3	4	3	3		3
Number of Factor-Categories ⁶	10	5	5	5	6	9	7		4
List of Factor-Categories	Context	Group dynamic	Accountability	Power Relations	Values/Customs	Planning	Conditioning		Customs
	Accountability	Role execution	Goal alignment	Role Fragmentation	Resistance	Employee participation	Customs		Accountability
	Power	Planning	Political intervention	Political Will	Leadership	Management involvement	Cloning		Capabilities
	Cloning	Politics	Group dynamic	Administrative Will	Capabilities	Control	Political maturity		Roles and responsibilities
	Leadership	Capabilities	Leadership	Interpersonal Relationships	Role Fragementaton	Cooperative enforcement	Politics		
	Organisational politics				Trust	Resistance	Collegiality		
	Trust					Ownership	Customisation		
	Participation					Accountability			
	Personal/Group dynamics					Comprehen-siveness			
	Customisation								

^{1,2,3,4,5,6} See ‘Notes’ on page 72

2. A 'head' is a concept that in cognitive mapping notation, has no out-going links (see Note 4 below) to other concepts in the interviewee's map. A head represents a terminal concept in a chain of argument and therefore has no perceived consequences.
3. A 'tail' is a concept that has no in-coming links from other concepts. As such, a tail has no supporting explanation and represents a starting point in a chain of argument.
4. A 'link' denotes a relationship between two concepts. A 'node' is the term used for the location of a concept in a map (Jenkins and Johnson, 1997: 901). The 'link-to-node' ratio represents the proportion of links to nodes within any given map (Jenkins and Johnson, 1997: 901).
5. The word 'cluster' is used to refer to a group of concepts that share some similar topic or theme and that together form a 'family' of related ideas.
6. 'Factor-categories' are sub-elements (or sub-groups) of a cluster, and in relation to the objective of this research, define classes of factors (or issues) influencing failure (or success) in policy implementation. They are compatible with the 'factor-categories' derived from the documentary research and illustrated in Table 2.

The data illustrated in Table 3 was obtained after each interview was transcribed, codified and graphically mapped. Every map is unique to the person interviewed but some comparisons can nonetheless be made.

A first difference between the interviews lies with respect to their duration. This was not pre-established prior to the meetings and interviews were concluded when the interviewee found that there was nothing new or more to add to what had already been said. While experience has shown that the number of concepts elicited during an interview is more dependent upon the length of the interview and the skills of the interviewer (Eden, Ackermann et al., 1992: 312) the results obtained in this research do not seem to support this view. Indeed, there is no immediately apparent relationship between the number of concepts elicited during the interviews and their respective durations.

The absolute number of nodes or concepts in a map, or their ratio per unit time (of the interview) is sometimes used as a measure of cognitive complexity. However, a better indicator is probably the link-to-node ratio, which is understood to suggest depth of thinking in consideration of the issue under review. A higher link-to-node ratio indicates a densely connected map and supposedly a higher level of cognitive complexity (Eden, Ackermann et al., 1992: 313). The reason behind higher levels of complexity cannot be determined from the data but, from observation, and with hindsight, it was noted that the interviewees with the most densely populated maps were those who seemed best prepared for the interview and who were the most involved. Indeed, in one instance, at the beginning of the interview, the interviewee provided the researcher with a six-page report of what he considered were the reasons that led to failure in policy implementation in the case under review.

Another measure of cognitive simplicity or complexity is the ratio of 'heads' and 'tails' to 'nodes'. Maps with a small number of 'heads' indicate a form of idealized thinking (Eden, Ackermann et al., 1992) where the interviewee's concepts are all pointing towards a common end or goal. The opposite applies with a large number of 'heads' indicating that the interviewee perceives multiple possible consequences in relation to the issue being researched. On the other hand, a large number of 'tails' indicate a flat hierarchy of concepts and a relatively simple hierarchy or chain of argumentation.

However, the purpose of this research is not to establish levels of cognitive complexity in relation to a research issue. The objective is to determine what factors are perceived by different individuals to have contributed to failure. Furthermore, the study aims to understand whether similarities exist between the factors elicited by the different interviewees and, if so, whether they are perceived to manifest themselves in similar or different ways. Equally important is the need to determine whether different 'groups' of interviewees (civil servants, consultants and politicians) elicit factors that are similar intra-group, but different between one group and another. These analyses will help establish a better understanding of the 'gap' between the policy-making and strategy implementation arms of government. The information can be used at a later phase of the research to propose a model for bridging the 'politico-administrative divide'.

Two techniques are widely used for analysing the emergent features of an individual's cognitive map. The first, called 'domain analysis', is a technique intended to identify the most dominant concepts in a map by calculating the intensity of relationships around concepts in their immediate vicinity. The higher the number of links going into, or flowing out of, a concept, the 'busier' the concept and hence the higher the probability of it being a key issue. The advantage of running this analysis on a cognitive map (especially one with a high number of concepts), is that it allows the researcher to progressively focus on those areas of the map that are most densely populated. In so doing, it also allows the gradual identification of 'clusters' of concepts that carry similar character or meaning in relation to the concepts to which they are inter-related. Common trends in ideology around particular issues can be identified and emerging themes symbolising the interviewee's cognitive process are elicited.

Supporting this approach is the second technique called 'central analysis'. This technique is similar in scope to the domain analysis, but as the name may suggest it is intended to calculate the centrality of concepts in the wider context of the entire cognitive map, rather than in the immediate vicinity of individual concepts. The resultant centrality scores are therefore measures of the relative dominance of concepts in the whole model.

Despite the utility of these two techniques to focus the analysis of a cognitive map, the examination of a large map [typically 30-120 nodes from a single one-hour interview (Eden, Ackermann et al., 1992: 310)] may nonetheless be a daunting task. As all the maps resulting from the interviews of this research fell into this category, another technique in addition to the two already discussed was used to facilitate the analysis process.

Termed 'stripping', this technique involves a process that enables a conceptual map to be collapsed to its barest elements by eliminating (hence the term 'stripping') all concepts in the map that have no branched explanations or consequences. These concepts only serve to further elaborate the argumentation of the model and, once removed, enable the researcher to more easily identify, and at a macro-level, the key chains of argument. Domain and central analysis can also be performed at this level of detail and a comparison of the most dominant concepts that are returned

both when the map is 'stripped', and when it is not, can help determine the level of importance of concepts at progressive levels of conceptual complexity.

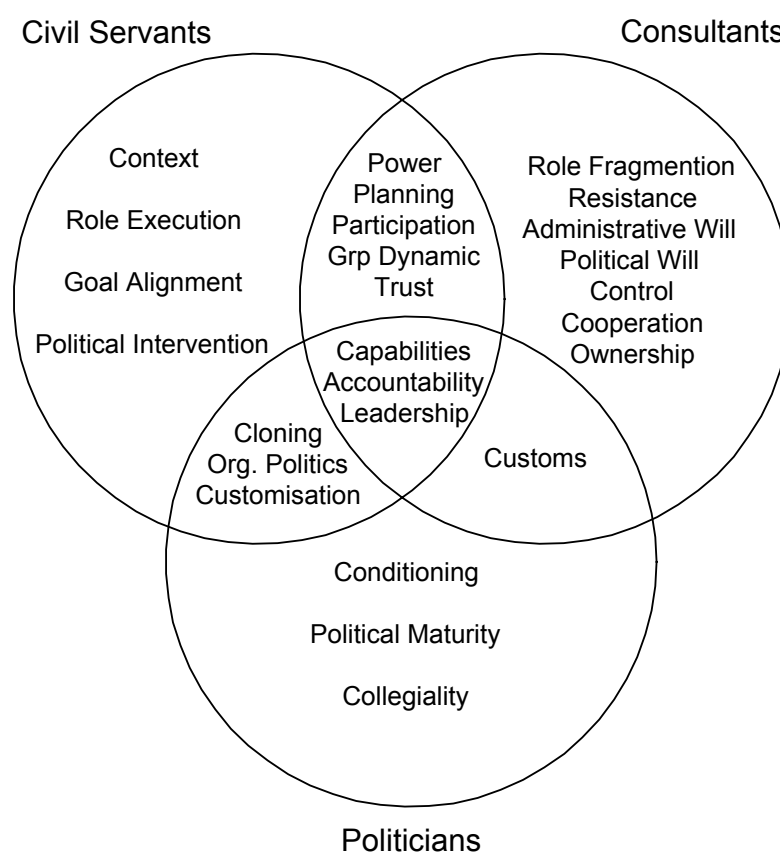
Switching between the stripped and un-stripped model of the cognitive map also helps to focus analysis at the level of clusters mentioned above. In certain instances, this enables clusters to be broken-down into further groups of composite concepts that, while still related to the overall theme of the cluster, manifest different variations of the same theme. The formation of specific groups of concepts as sub-elements of the clusters represent families of concepts that share similar characteristics and, in relation to this research, represent classes of factors that are perceived to influence failure or success in policy implementation. These sub-elements are what constitute 'factor-categories'. In some instances, the concepts that compose a factor-category may have different 'properties', each of which denotes a different aspect of that specific class of factors. An example from one of the interviews will serve to illustrate this point.

An analysis of the cognitive map of Interviewee 67 revealed three clusters of concepts each representing a particular theme. One of the clusters pertained to the interviewee's perception on the need of "a human system" guiding the implementation of policy. Further analysis allowed the concepts in the cluster to be divided into two groups each representing a somewhat different variation of the same theme. The first pertained to the interviewee's perception on the need for management to draw employees to participate in the planning and implementation of policy. The second reflects the interviewee's perception of the need for management to involve itself in the activities performed by their subordinates in the implementation of policy. The two factor-categories were therefore labelled 'employee participation' and 'management involvement'. In turn, the interviewee approached the principle of employee participation from two angles. One related to the need for participation to ensure the application of "just" policies, while the other concerned the need for participation as a means to an end. The properties of this factor-category could be fairness and deviousness respectively. In this case, both are seen to have the potential to overcome, or limit the possibility of, failure in policy implementation, albeit in different ways.

While each of the eight (8) interviews²³ were analysed using the same techniques mentioned above, and following the operational logic mentioned, not all clusters were necessarily broken-down into multiple factor-categories. Similarly, factor-categories did not necessarily exhibit multiple properties.

The resultant factor-categories per interviewee are listed in Table 3 and a detailed explanation of the rationale leading to the elicitation of these categories per interviewee is included in **Appendix 8**. **Figure 8** below summarises the elicited factor-categories per interviewee group, highlighting similarities and differences by distributing the elicited factors in sets across a Venn diagram.

Figure 8 – Factor-Categories by Interviewee Group



Source: Compiled by Author

²³ As mentioned earlier, one of the interviews had to be concluded abruptly and could not be replaced by interviewing another individual.

4.0 Summary and Conclusions

As one may have expected, some of the factor-categories elicited from the interviews are unique to specific individuals, while others are either common between all eight interviewees or similar to one another.

To arrive at a consolidated framework of factors influencing failure in policy implementation, it was necessary to compare and contrast the results of the individual interviews to draw out similarities, or differences, in the elicited factor-categories and their corresponding properties and dimensions. This was done in a two-stepped approach.

The first was to reduce the data of each individual interview by isolating, from the corresponding cognitive map, the factor-categories elicited by the interviewee and their corresponding properties and dimensions (see Charts in **Appendix 9**). The second step involved the grouping of these results into a consolidated list of factor-categories, properties and dimensions. This presents the sum total of all the issues identified by interviewees to have led to failure in the considered example of policy implementation.

Figure 9 presents a chart of the consolidated results of the reduced cognitive maps, illustrating the elicited factor-categories (denoted in a circle), their respective properties and dimensions, and the causal relationships between them.

The properties and dimensions have been divided into three groups – Enablers, denoted by the letter ‘E’; Inhibitors, denoted by the letter ‘I’; and Derivatives, denoted by the letter ‘D’. Enablers are those properties (or aspects) of a factor that ‘trigger’ or catalyse the manifestation of that factor. Inhibitors, are those properties of a factor that ‘restrain’ or hinder a factor from occurring, while derivatives are those properties of a factor that are consequential to its occurrence.

The numbers in square brackets refer to the identification key of the interview from which the factor-category and property/dimensions were derived.

Space for Figure 9

Space for Figure 10

The significance of dividing the properties and dimensions into three groups is two-fold. First, it helps facilitate the separation of those things influencing failure that can be controlled by policy implementers (enablers/inhibitors) from those that cannot be controlled by them (derivatives). Efforts can therefore be channelled where they are most effective. Secondly, by separating 'enablers' from 'inhibitors', policy implementers can distinguish between those aspects that need to be avoided, and those things that need to be encouraged, in order to prevent failure.

All of the factor-categories illustrated in Figure 9 have the potential to influence failure in policy implementation. However, some factor-categories are more significant than others because besides influencing failure in their own right, they also influence the occurrence of other factors, thereby potentially compounding the problem. Multiple 'routes' leading to failure are therefore possible.

Figure 10 contains the same information illustrated in Figure 9. However, the information is presented in a way that is intended to illustrate a hierarchical order of causal relationships between factor-categories. In this figure, factor-categories are shown in double-edged boxes, while their properties and dimensions are shown in single-edged boxes. The solid arrows indicate that each factor-category independently influences failure. The dotted arrows indicate a relationship between two or more factor-categories and their properties and dimensions. The type of relationship is denoted by the letter 'E', if it enables or amplifies the occurrence of that factor, or by the letter 'I', if it inhibits the factor from occurring.

The utility of Figure 10 is that it provides a 'road map' of the factors that are perceived to have influenced failure in the implementation of the financial reform programme. The most 'dangerous route' followed is probably the one represented by the tallest chain of argumentation in the map (that starting with 'Cloning'). Low, rather than high mobility in management turnover, coupled with a practice of internal, rather than external promotions, influenced failure by causing the 'cloning' of management behaviour and the replication of past failures. This practice also catalysed the formation of 'customs' and the propagation of old habits, which in turn had a 'conditioning' effect on people's attitudes, leading to 'resistance' and 'dis-ownership' of the policy.

To complete the road map, it is also important to consolidate the results obtained from the interviews with those derived from the documentary research. Once again, a number of similarities exist between the two data sets. Some factor-categories and their properties/dimensions are common, others are similar, and others still are different. **Table 4** highlights these similarities and differences, and illustrates how they have been treated.

Figure 11 presents the updated 'road map' to failure, after the factor-categories, properties and dimensions from the documentary data were merged with those derived from the interviews.

Text in blue colour refers to those factor-categories and/or properties and dimensions that were found to be common to both interview and documentary data. Text in red colour refers to those factor-categories and/or properties and dimensions that were unique to the documentary data set, while that in black is unique to the data derived from the interviews

Figure 11 concludes the results of this phase of the study. It addresses the research question by (1) identifying what factors curtailed the effective implementation of this policy, and (2) by examining how the factors influenced failure, both at an individual and collective level.

Table 4

Figure 11

Summary of Part 2

Part 2 summarises the findings and conclusions of the first stage of the research programme intended to explore the issues influencing the implementation of public policy in Malta. Specifically, this stage of the research focused on identifying the factors that influenced the failed implementation of a Cabinet policy decision that was aimed at reforming the financial management framework of Government.

The research paradigm was based upon an interpretivist philosophy and adopted an inductive approach based upon the application of case study research. Data was collected through both documentary research and personal interviews held with the key players involved in the implementation of the policy under review. Data analysis was qualitatively driven. Documentary evidence was analysed following the procedural norms of data codification as proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998), while the data derived from the interviews were analysed following the application of cognitive mapping techniques as outlined by Wrightson (1976) and modified by Huff et al. (1990). Twenty-six (26) factors were identified to have influenced the failed outcome of this policy initiative and the inter-relationships of the factors were 'mapped' to illustrate a hierarchical order of causal relationships between them. While all the factors played a different and important role, the three factors that all classes of stakeholders agreed were missing or ineffective were accountability, leadership and competent policy implementors.

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Part 3

Understanding Success (Project 2)

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Overview of Part 3

Part 3 of the thesis discusses the second project of the research. It is essentially identical to Part 2, except that rather than exploring a failed policy initiative, it focuses on a case study of successful policy implementation. The study is also presented in four Chapters.

Chapter 1 introduces the purpose and objectives of the project, and defines the meaning of *successful* policy implementation in the context of this research.

Given that Project 2 replicated the methodology followed in the first project, Chapter 2 does not repeat the research procedure that was followed. Instead, the focus of the discussion is on those aspects of the study that were different from the first project – that is, the rationale behind the selected case study and the data sources used.

Chapter 3 discusses the policy that was used as the subject of the case study (the introduction of a system of Local Government, through the establishment of Local Councils, and a Department for Local Councils), distinguishing between the political objectives that this policy decision sought to achieve, and the actual objectives relating to its implementation. It is the latter, not the former, that the study sought to examine.

The findings of the study are discussed in Chapter 4, which highlights the factors perceived to influence the successful outcome of the policy's implementation. As in the first project, these factors were derived from both documentary evidence and interviews with the key persons involved in the policy's implementation. The Chapter concludes by presenting a consolidated 'road map' of success, that illustrates what factors were considered (according to the evidence) to influence the successful implementation of the policy decision, and the manner in which these factors affected success.

1.0 Overall Purpose and Project Objectives

This part of the thesis presents the findings and conclusions of the second Phase of the DBA research programme. It explores the issues influencing the implementation of public policy in Malta by examining a case of **successful** policy implementation.

In the context of this research, a case of successful policy implementation was defined as one in which the strategic action adopted by the administrative arm of Government is considered to have delivered the intended policy and achieved the intended outcomes.

The project was guided by two primary objectives: to identify what issues or factors led to success in the implementation of the policy under review, and to examine how the identified issues influence success, so that a framework that gives context and meaning to these factors can eventually be developed.

2.0 Methodology

The methodology adopted in this part of the research follows the same operational logic as that of Project 1. The research paradigm, methods and procedures followed in Project 2 are identical to those adopted in the first project, as explained in Part 2.

The differences that exist lie in terms of the actual example of policy implementation that featured as the case study for this part of the research, and the data sources used. These are explained in Sections 2.1 and 2.2 below.

2.1 Selecting the Case Study for Project 2

The selection of an example of successful policy implementation followed the same steps as those followed for the selection of an example of failure for the case study in Project 1. Indeed, the examples of successful policy implementation that could be used as the case study for Project 2 had been elicited during the same interviews held with the objective of identifying a case study of failure for Project 1 (see pages 44 to 46).

Two of the examples of successful policy implementation that had been mentioned by each interviewee were identical. Both examples concerned Cabinet decisions taken in the early 1990s and concerned the development of the necessary legislative, institutional and operational frameworks leading to (1) the introduction of Value Added Taxation (VAT) and the establishment of a VAT Department, and (2) the introduction of a system of Local Government, through the establishment of Local Councils, and a Department for Local Councils.

After considering both examples, it was decided that the policy decision regarding the introduction of Local Government would be selected for the second case study. This policy was chosen because:

1. more documentation was available on this policy decision than that regarding VAT;

2. most of the persons who were involved in managing the implementation of this policy were known by the researcher and this, therefore, increased the probability of appointments for interviews; and
3. the subject matter is still current today, with new initiatives being in the pipeline for the introduction of a system of Regional Government.

2.2 Data Sources

As with Project 1, two methods of data collection were used in this phase of the study; namely, documentary research and interviews.

In addition to the documentary sources of information mentioned in page 41, the documentation reviewed for Project 2 also included Parliamentary Debates and a White Paper on the subject of the policy decision being studied. There was no such documentation relevant to the example of policy implementation examined in Project 1.

As regards primary data collection, interviews were targeted with Politicians, Civil Servants and Consultants so that the same approach followed in Project 1 would also be replicated in this phase of the research (see pages 46 to 53). Following the same logic presented in Project 1, an equivalent number of persons from each group of 'actors' should have been selected so as to overcome, or minimise, any potential bias in the identification of issues contributing to success. While this was achieved in Project 1, it was not possible in Project 2 because there were only eight (8) persons who were directly involved in the implementation of this particular policy and who were really key to its success. Four (4) of these were Consultants, three (3) were Civil Servants, and the last one (1) was a Politician. All the identified interviewees were contacted for appointments and, fortunately, all accepted to be interviewed.

Prior to each meeting, interviewees were sent a brief paper (see **Appendix 10**) outlining:

- the purpose of the research;

- the research methodology;
- the process followed in selecting the policy for the case study of success;
- a brief overview of the policy decision and implementation programme that would be discussed during the interview; and
- the purpose of the interview and the proposed approach.

2.3 Reliability and Validity

As with Project 1 of the research, one of the criticisms that this phase may encounter is that it adopted a methodology that was only tested with one example, or case study, of successful policy implementation.

Again, this may score low in terms of the study's reliability and external validity. However, as with Project 1 of the research, considerable rigour was followed in determining and documenting every step and operation of the data collection and analysis process. The protocol of procedures established in Project 1 was meticulously followed and could be easily repeated by other researchers. Use of the custom-built database once again ensures that all documents used during the study can be easily traced. Furthermore, the analysis of the causal maps derived from each interview followed a sequential and reported logic and operation that can be easily replicated by other researchers using the same data set. The ability to create an audit trail of the procedures followed and a chain of evidence should therefore increase the study's reliability (Yin, 1994: 98).

While the adoption of a single case study methodology limits the possibility of generalising the results obtained beyond the strict domain of this example, such generalisation was never the intention of this phase of the project. Indeed, the object was to explore and develop an understanding of why a particular case of policy was successfully implemented as intended, so as to obtain a data set for comparing the results with the contrasting case of failure examined earlier in the first phase of the research (i.e., Project 1), and to draw similarities and differences with comparable information in the literature. As shall be explained later, this comparison shall constitute the first part of the study to be undertaken in the next phase of the research.

In contrast to the aforesaid, the strongest aspects of the research methodology probably pertain to its internal and construct validity.

By following the tried and tested protocols of the causal mapping technique for analysing the interviews, it can be objectively stated that any inferences derived therefrom reflect the original perceptions and frame of mind of the interviewees. One possible cause for criticism in this respect lies in the codification of concepts derived from the documentary sources of evidence, as these were subject to the researcher's interpretation and could not be validated by the original author(s) of the documents. However, as with the causal mapping protocol, the original wording contained in the documents was used during the coding process, and every concept was clearly referenced to establish authenticity. Furthermore, method triangulation should itself increase the internal validity of this phase of the study by counterbalancing the strengths and weaknesses of the different methods employed (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe et al., 1991: 133).

On the other hand, the construct validity of this phase of the research is primarily a function of the operational measures established to overcome elements of subjectivity in data collection. The use of multiple sources of evidence was deliberate so that, to the extent possible, bias from a single source is overcome through evidence obtained from other sources (Yin, 1994: 90). Besides relying upon both secondary and primary sources of information, the study was also based upon various types of different documents and records prepared by different people, from different backgrounds and, likely, with different interests. Similarly, a cross-section of persons from different backgrounds were also interviewed so as to overcome elements of bias. The construct validity of the study should also be reflected in the ability to clearly establish and record a chain of evidence supporting the achieved results (Yin, 1994: 34), although this could have been further strengthened if the research had been conducted with the assistance of other researchers. Once again, this was not possible because of confidentiality agreements. Nonetheless, it should be noted that when the cognitive maps were shared with interviewees, no alterations were requested.

3.0 Background to the Selected Case Study

In order to gain a better appreciation of the elements influencing the research issue, it is pertinent to outline the main events that led to the development of the policy under review. A brief overview of the context and reasons for which the policy was developed, and, the operational structure within which it was managed and implemented, are presented below.

3.1 Historical Development and Context of Local Government

The concept of local government has a long history in the socio-political and cultural development of Maltese society.

The first form of local government can be traced back to the introduction of the Italian 'commune' system when the Maltese islands formed part of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. This system was somewhat devalued with the arrival of the Knights of St. John in the 16th Century, who were very careful to ensure their retention and administration of power.

The second 'wave' of local government can be traced to the French occupation of the islands, when Napoleon, through a proclamation dated 13th June 1798, ordered the division of Malta and Gozo into a number of cantons, each one to be administered by a municipal body composed of five (5) members (Schiavone, 1994: 1). These were short-lived as, in 1800, the administration of the Maltese Islands fell under the command of the British empire.

Between 1801 and 1896, other forms of local government were established. Most notably, during the period 1852 and 1857, was the introduction of a number of district councils by the then Governor Sir William Reid.

During the early to mid 1900s, the British administration was eager to maintain full control of Malta, due to its strategic location as a staging post for the trade route to the East and, later, as a major military base for its Navy. Due to this and the policy of centralised administration that followed, the concept of local government lost some of its momentum.

The movement for local government re-appeared with the establishment of Civic Councils between the late 1950s and early 1970s, followed later, with the development of voluntary Resident's Associations (Government of Malta, 1992: 8). In both cases, the principal objective of these organisations was to sustain and improve community life by keeping local customs and cultural activities alive, and by ensuring the protection of historical monuments and buildings that characterised the history of a town or village. However, the capacity of such organisations to achieve this objective was limited due to the absence of legislation that formally recognised and legitimised their existence, as well as the lack of human and financial resources to sustain their activities.

Recognising the strong sense of belonging and distinctiveness that the Maltese feel towards their hometown or village, political attention was given to this perceived need in the early 1980s. In the run-up to the 1981 general elections, both major political Parties made reference to the need for developing concrete policies for the promotion of local administration in their respective electoral manifestos. However, it was the Nationalist Party that specifically proposed that:

“a Nationalist Government, in accordance with its proposed plan to decentralise the exercise of administrative power wherever possible, will, after taking soundings of public opinion in the various districts of the Maltese Islands, set up Local Councils” (Nationalist Party, 1981: 18).

Notwithstanding that this perceived need was also recognised by the Labour Party, no particular action was taken by the Government during the Labour Party's term in Office between 1981 and 1987.

The establishment of Local Councils again occupied a prominent position in the 1987 electoral manifesto of the Nationalist Party. Although not implemented after the Party was elected to Office because of other priorities in the vast electoral programme (News Reporter, 1992: 1), the political agenda on Local Councils continued to develop and a White Paper outlining the principles, form and content for the proposed Local Councils was eventually published in January 1992. Specifically, it proposed the establishment of Local Councils as a vehicle for the decentralisation of power and the application of the principle of subsidiarity.

General elections were again held in February 1992 and the Nationalist Party was again returned to Office. It was during this term that the current system of local government was established in Malta, with the phased introduction of sixty-seven (67) Local Councils between November 1993 and May 1994 ²⁴.

3.2 Political Context

The policy regarding the establishment of a system of local government developed at a time when the 1987 Nationalist administration also identified the reform of the Public Service as one of its key priorities for ensuring the successful implementation of its economic and social programme. While the two initiatives probably occupied equal importance at a political level, it is the reform of the Public Service that received the Government's immediate attention.

Within a year of being elected, the Government appointed a Public Service Reform Commission (PSRC):

“to examine the organisation of the Public Service, and to recommend means by which the Service can efficiently respond to the changing needs for effective government” (Public Service Reform Commission, 1989).

Concurrently, it also commissioned a Consultant to conduct an ‘Operations Review’ of the Public Service so as to:

“evaluate the existing organisational structures [of the Public Service] in light of the government's policy objectives and to recommend appropriate delineations, organisational structures and mandates; and

develop a suitable Information Technology plan which will identify needs, opportunities and cost/benefits for the application of computer technology where applicable” (Tabone, 1988: 5).

²⁴ Today, there are sixty-eight (68) Local Councils in Malta and Gozo.

The findings and conclusions reached by the Public Service Reform Commission and by the Operations Review complemented one another. The problems with the Civil Service were identified as being wide and far-reaching and were defined as being both of a political and operational/organisational nature.

To introduce the vast program of reform contemplated in the above-mentioned reports, the Government organised itself to establish an operational set-up to oversee, direct and implement the various policy decisions that were required.

One of the decisions undertaken in this regard was the establishment of the Management Systems Unit (MSU), within the Office of the Prime Minister. This decision later turned out to be instrumental for the successful implementation of the Government's policy concerning the introduction of local government.

MSU was composed of a number of local and expatriate professionals, and was tasked with the responsibility for facilitating the ambitious reform programme. By providing expert advice in the various disciplines of management, MSU was to develop and implement new human resource management, financial management and technology management policies, and assist in the development of human resource management capacities in departments (Public Service Reform Commission, 1990: 10). As such, it was expected to fulfil a consultancy/advisory role, as well as to act as facilitator for the project management of administrative reform initiatives.

The Government also established a Cabinet Committee on Reform to provide direction to, and oversee, the implementation of all Public Service Reform initiatives.

A number of reform programmes were undertaken between mid-1989 and 1992. Most of these were intended to address those areas that were considered to require urgent attention and that could produce early, positive results for the reform initiative. One of these was the restructuring of the Works Division of what later became known as the Ministry for the Environment. This reform was a critical step for the introduction of local government, as road maintenance, street cleaning and

similar activities were identified as the primary functions that could be devolved in the phased introduction of a system of local government ²⁵.

3.3 Local Government Policy – Political Objectives

The Government's policy on local administration was made public through a White Paper published on the 10th January 1992. The White Paper clearly articulated the rationale behind this policy initiative and the objectives that the Government aimed to achieve.

As hinted in the title of the White Paper itself – 'Local Councils: the citizen closer to power'²⁶ – the principal aim behind the introduction of a system of local government was to provide a recognised and structured mechanism and framework that would provide citizens with greater access to, and control over, power.

Drawing upon its own political beliefs, the Government identified three key objectives for this policy initiative:

1. Subsidiarity – premised on the belief that decisions should not be taken at a high level whenever they can be taken by an authority at a lower level that is closer to the people to be directly affected by such decisions. As such, the introduction of local government was a measure that would devolve power and control over resources from the domain of central Government, to the hands of citizens.
2. Democratisation – the introduction of a system of local administration was to provide a further impetus to the democratisation of Government, so that private citizens would not need to depend upon the personal intervention of Ministers or Members of Parliament to ensure that their local needs are properly addressed.

²⁵ Source: Interview with former MSU Consultant and Project Manager for the 'Operations Review of the Works Division'.

²⁶ The White Paper was published in the Maltese language. Its exact title was – 'Kunsilli Lokali: Ic-cittadin jersaq izjed lejn il-poter'.

3. Depolarisation – based on the need to broaden and enrich discussions of the nation's resources beyond the agendas of the two main political parties. A system of local government would (1) provide individual citizens with the opportunity to directly participate in matters of public affairs, and (2) provide minority groups that did not command sufficient support for representation in Parliament, with the opportunity of sharing in public administration at local level.

Considering that the concept of Local Councils had featured in electoral manifestos for over a decade, the White Paper was perceived as a concrete step towards the establishment of a system of local government - a perception that was further strengthened by the fact that the White Paper was published on the eve of a general election.

Although the basic principles upon which it was premised obtained general support, a number of issues arose pertaining to the scope, composition, functions, obligations and resourcing of Local Councils. These became the focus of a healthy public debate and, after being returned to Office in February 1992, the Government organised itself to handle the response received and to prepare the ground for the effective implementation of this policy initiative.

3.4 Local Government Policy – Objectives for Implementation

Although the policy initiative originated as an offshoot of an Operations Review of the Works Division in the Ministry for the Environment, following the 1992 elections, the Government decided to transfer ownership and responsibility for this programme to the portfolio of the Office of the Prime Minister.

Specific **political responsibility** for managing, monitoring and controlling its implementation was immediately entrusted to the Personal Assistant to the Prime Minister who, since the Party's election to Office in 1987, had been heavily involved in the development of Government policy and regarded as the Prime Minister's mouthpiece and executive arm ²⁷.

²⁷ Source: Interview Document # 149, discussed later.

The Management Systems Unit Limited was requested to appoint a Project Manager to develop and co-ordinate the **technical aspects** of this policy initiative and facilitate its implementation. MSU's involvement increased over time, to an extent that, by 1993, some fifty (50) people (both MSU personnel and Civil Servants on secondment) were deployed on the project.

Administrative responsibility for the initiative, from a Public Service viewpoint, was entrusted to the Director General in the Office of the Prime Minister.

Considerable detailed technical preparation was required to lead to the establishment of Local Councils and the project was therefore divided into a number of discrete but inter-related sub-projects to reflect the terms of reference with which the initiative was established (**Appendix 11**). In essence, these activities constituted the objectives of the implementation programme, as summarised below:

Activity	Objective/Undertaking
1. Locality Boundaries	<p>To determine the geographical boundaries between Local Councils.</p> <p>This required tracing the traditional borders of Malta's towns and villages, and culminated in the plotting and digitising of these boundaries onto existing high quality digital base maps.</p>
2. Functions	<p>To determine what role the Local Councils would fulfil and how they would do it.</p> <p>This required the identification of those activities which, until then, had been performed by central government agencies but which would slowly be devolved to Local Councils.</p>
3. Migration Plan	<p>To determine a staged implementation for the transfer of responsibility from central Government to Local Councils.</p> <p>This required the preparation of a phased implementation programme for the functions identified above, that included the identification of organisational and resourcing requirements, the preparation of supporting administrative material (such as guidelines, procedures manuals etc.), training programmes, communication campaigns etc.</p>

4. Funding	<p>To determine an appropriate basis to guide the funding of Local Councils and ensure fairness and equity in the distribution of funds by central government.</p> <p>This required the development of a funding formula based on variables such as the locality's area and population, special needs etc. as well as extensive discussion/negotiation sessions to ensure perceived fairness and equity.</p>
5. Contract Preparation	<p>To prepare template contract agreements on the basis of which Local Councils would outsource the delivery of activities/functions.</p> <p>This required the collection of large amounts of demographic and physical information about each locality. As most of this information was not readily available at the time, it required the application of extensive work in the areas of work measurement, unit costs, work methods etc. and the development of geographical information systems.</p>
6. Regulations and Procedures	<p>To determine an appropriate regulatory and operational framework for Local Councils to ensure the effective execution of their functions.</p> <p>This required the preparation of a comprehensive package of regulations, procedures, guidelines and computerised templates, which documentation covered areas such as finance, audit, tendering, complaints handling, officer procedures etc.</p>

Another identified requisite for this initiative was the establishment of a Department of Local Councils to assist Local Councils in the initial phases of their introduction, to co-ordinate their activities, and to supervise the development of the policy initiative. However, this task was not established as an objective of the project as outlined in the Table above.

The project objectives/terms of reference, as outlined above, were implemented between 1992 and 1994. MSU's support to both the policy initiative and, eventually, to the Department of Local Councils, continued beyond that period, albeit at progressively reducing intensity. Today, the Management Efficiency Unit, MSU's

successor, also provides *ad hoc* consultancy support to the Department of Local Councils.

The major events and activities that occurred during the project's development between 1992 and 1994 are summarised in **Figure 12** below.

Figure 12 – Event Time Line



4.0 Results/Findings

4.1 Results of Documentary Research

An archival search for documentary sources of information returned several documents that were somehow related to the selected case of policy implementation. One hundred and three records (103) were short-listed as possible key documents and logged into the purpose-built database (see page 56). **Table 5** below provides a break-down of these records by type of document.

Table 5: Key Records by 'Type' of Document

Type of Document	Number of Records
Reports	42
Parliamentary Debates/Questions	14
Memoranda	11
Newspaper Articles	11
Letters	7
Correspondence Files	7
Legislation	5
Minutes of Meetings	5
Presentations	1

The records identified above were examined in detail and any statements contained in them that identified factors affecting the successful implementation of policy were highlighted and subsequently recorded in the database. In general, the statements were of one of two types. They were either retrospective, having been extracted from records that provided an account of some past event, or they were forward-looking, having been extracted from records that were planning some future event. Furthermore, some of the latter records occasionally referred to issues that were to be avoided to prevent failure. These statements were considered to be equally important for the analysis as they reflected the polar end of some success factor.

The statements derived from the records echoed the perceptions or concepts that various individuals felt were influencing the policy implementation process. Despite the large number of documents that were examined, only a total of thirty-seven (37) concepts were identified from twelve (12) of the records mentioned above. Twenty-eight (28) concepts were derived from six (6) Reports, four (4) concepts from two (2) Letters, three (3) concepts from three (3) Memoranda, and two (2) concepts from the Minutes of one (1) meeting.

The reason for such limited results cannot be determined with accuracy, but at least two observations are possible. Firstly, people may tend to criticise failure more than they laud success and, as such, the reasons behind success may go unaccounted for. Secondly, the methodology that was followed required the coding of concepts from statements that made direct reference to success (or failure). Had this protocol not been followed, a number of other statements would have been captured, but the derivation of concepts therefrom would not have been as objective as the research requires.

Despite the possible subjectivity in these observations it was noted that the documentation seemed to place considerable emphasis on the following factors: (1) clarity of direction, as evidenced in the on-going quest to update and refine the project's vision and terms of reference; (2) strong leadership and focused ownership, as evidenced by the choice of establishing a small project team composed of political, administrative and technical 'champions'; (3) clarity of roles, as evidenced by the distinct terms of reference established for each member of the team; (4) strong and sustained commitment, as evidenced through the deployment of a large number of resources and the holding of un-interrupted weekly meetings throughout the entire life cycle of the project (two years); (5) comprehensive planning, as evidenced through extensive research activities and the establishment of detailed plans; and (6) extensive consultation with numerous stakeholders, as evidenced through the communication plans and activities that were rolled out throughout the entire process.

More objectively, the identification and analysis of the thirty-seven concepts (37) mentioned above reflected the codification principles and techniques developed by Strauss and Corbin (1998).

The concepts were examined and codified along their dimensions, properties and categories. Thirteen (13) factor-categories were identified exhibiting, in total, eighteen (18) different properties and twenty (20) dimensions. These are listed in **Table 6** overleaf. The Table also lists the number of concepts per factor-category, property and dimension, and the number of records from where the concepts were derived. A direct quotation from the documentary data is also included to illustrate and add meaning to each factor-category, property and dimension.

If one were to consider the frequency of concepts per factor-category as a measure of the latter's importance or centrality to the policy implementation, as perceived by the actors, 'Planning', 'Ownership' and 'Personal Capabilities', would be identified as the most dominant factors. In total, the factor-category 'Planning' was cited nine (9) times in six (6) different records. 'Ownership' was cited five (5) times in four (4) different records, while 'Personal Capabilities' was cited three (3) times in three (3) different records.

However, deciding on the centrality of factor-categories merely on the basis of a frequency count is somewhat questionable especially when one considers the small number of records involved. An examination of the cause and effect relationships between the various concepts would have enriched the findings and provided a better means for determining the relative importance of the concepts. However, from the data available, such causal relationships could not be properly determined.

Given the transparency and traceability of the data collection process, the same results should be obtained if the operations of the study are replicated. It is therefore considered safe to state that the study should score relatively high in terms of its reliability. Likewise, its construct validity, at least as measured through the establishment of a chain of evidence for the derived results, should also be relatively robust. However, the fact that the content of the data, and the conclusions of the codification process, could not be verified by the original authors of the documentation (to ascertain that they correctly reflect one's thoughts and perceptions) leaves something to be desired in terms of the analysis of the data and the internal validity of the study.

Table 6: Results of Documentary Data Codification (Project 2)

Factor-Category	Property	Dimension	No. of Concepts	No. of Records	Quotation from Documents
Consultation	Reach	Broad...Limited	1	1	"...extensive consultation [should] be held with all interested parties" (Doc 137,p.3)
	Degree	Extensive...Limited	1	1	"...extensive consultation [should] be held with all interested parties" (Doc 137,p.3)
	Timing	Continuous...Inconstant	1	1	"...extensive consultation [should] be held with all interested parties" (Doc 137,p.3)
Environment (Context)	Structure	Centralised...Decentralised	1	1	"Introducing Local Government in a country which has had a centrally oriented administration for almost two centuries is bound to be a very complex process" (Doc 137,p.1)
External Support	Commitment	Consistent...Unsustained	1	1	"MSU's services to this Department have been a determining factor to the success of the subsidiarity exercise" (Doc 119,p.1)
Management Involvement	Commitment	Committed...Uncommitted	2	1	"Commitment to the project [must be] generated at the top and communicated to all levels" (Doc 137,p.4)
Managerial Responsibility	Scope	Focused...Unfocused	1	1	"A measure...which would not only contribute to the success of the project but also focus efforts of the various players would be the appointment of a person within OPM whose specific responsibility will be the setting up of the Local Government system in accordance with the Bill" (Doc 139,p.2).
Methodology (of Implementation)	Approach	Gradual...Abrupt	2	2	"The proposals envisage the transfer of far too much activity and...as drafted are a recipe for disaster." (Doc 132,p.2)
	Approach	Correct...Expedient	1	1	"...it [should] take how much it takes, but we want to do a good job" (Doc 115,p.1)
	Approach	Formal (structured)...Informal	1	1	"...the project will be run using formal Project Management techniques" (Doc 137,p.2)
Organisation	Resourcefulness	Adequate...Inadequate	1	1	"Lack of availability of staff from the effected departments / agencies will slow the pace at which the project can proceed" (Doc 137,p.4)
Ownership	Location	Internal...External	5	4	"OPM owns this project and MSU are working directly to OPM's agenda" (Doc 81,p.56)
Personal Capabilities	Proficiency	Skilled...Inept	2	2	"...to be done satisfactorily...we propose to train them in work management and work planning techniques" (Doc 112)
	Location	Internal...Outsourced	1	1	"[the] Chairman stressed that the long-term strategy should be that of developing in-house capabilities" (Doc 95,p.2)
Planning	Approach	Customised...Generic	3	2	"...as an important next step, a staged implementation plan should be developed to address the issues raised" (Doc 95,p.1)
	Approach	Co-ordinated...Unco-ordinated	5	3	"In order for this project to be a success, it should be consistent with the reform process currently taking place in Government" (Doc 132,p.5)
	Detail	Thorough...Superficial	1	1	"Introducing Local Government in a country which has had a very centrally oriented administration...requires very careful planning and preparation" (Doc 137,p.1)
Political Involvement	Commitment	Committed...Uncommitted	2	1	"Commitment to the project [must be] generated at the top and communicated to all levels" (Doc 137,p.4)
Results	Timeliness	Early...Late	2	2	"Critical early implementation [of the Local Councils Department is] essential to realize effective coordination" (Doc 82,p.36)
Role Delineation	Clarity	Clear...Unclear	3	3	"Each project team member will be assigned clear and specific duties" (Doc 137,p.2)

Legend:

Category = Class of Factors/Issues influencing success/failure of policy implementation

Property = Aspect of a Class of Factors/Issues

Dimensions = Polar ends of a particular Aspect of a Class of Factors/Issues

In view of this, it is felt that while the results of this part of the study can be considered to be indicative of both the situation prevailing at the time and the general issues and events that influenced the implementation of the local councils policy, they cannot be considered as conclusive findings.

As such, the results of the documentary analysis have been treated more as a 'backdrop' to the interviews that followed in the second part of the study's data collection and analysis process, rather than as a 'filter' for identifying areas to guide and focus the proceedings of these interviews. Indeed, the interviews were approached as though no prior analysis of any kind had been made. They were intentionally left unstructured so as not to direct or influence the interviewees to necessarily discuss any particular categories that were obtained from the documentary analysis.

The results and findings of the interviews are summarised in the following section.

4.2 Results of Interviews

As mentioned previously, a total of eight (8) semi-structured interviews were targeted and held with persons who were key to the policy under review. Four (4) Consultants, three (3) Civil Servants and one (1) Politician were interviewed. One of the interviews had to be stopped shortly after it had commenced because the interviewee had to attend another urgent meeting. Due to this, a second interview was scheduled. The transcript of both interviews were merged together and considered as one.

Table 7 summarises the results of the interviews. In Project 1, the results had been presented per interviewee group. Given that only one of the interviewees represents the politician group in this Project, the protocol established in Project 1 wherein interviewees were divided by 'actor' category was not followed so as to protect the person's identity. The terms used in the Table are defined in the notes below.

Table 7 – Results of Interviews

	Interview							
Interview Reference Number	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149
Interview Duration	1 hour	1 hour	1 hour	1 hour	1 hour	2 hours	50 minutes	1 hr 40 mins
Total Number of Concepts ¹	62	92	75	119	110	145	60	95
Number of Heads ²	3	4	2	2	1	3	1	4
Number of Tails ³	17	20	19	37	41	47	26	32
Link-to-Node Ratio ⁴	1.26:1	1.41:1	1.39:1	1.25:1	1.22:1	1.20:1	1.11:1	1.21:1
Number of Clusters ⁵	3	3	3	3	4	4	3	2
Number of Factor-Categories ⁶	5	8	6	7	6	6	4	6
List of Factor-Categories	Co-operation	Enabling Support Policies	Context	Experience	Context	Individual Qualities	Commitment	Planning
	Commitment	Context	Stakeholder Involvement	Management Style	Political Will	Collective Capabilities	Skills and Capabilities	Location of Responsibility
	Organisational Context	Values / Beliefs	Planning	Values / Beliefs	Location of Responsibility	Attitude	Planning	Co-ordination
	Choice of Strategy	Demand	Process	Political Commitment	Role Delineation	Location of Responsibility	Strategy	Trust
	Resourcing	Commitment	Resource Capabilities	Networks	Skills and Capabilities	Process		Leadership
		Individual Qualities	Commitment	Process	Motivation	Enthusiasm		Skills and Capabilities
		Collective Qualities		Attitudes				
		Approach						

^{1,2,3,4,5,6} See 'Notes' on following page.

Notes:

1. A 'concept' is defined as an idea or mental image expressed by the interviewee in the form of a statement, to describe an issue, event, feeling or experience that the interviewee believes can explain a particular phenomenon in relation to the research issue. Concepts are derived from the transcript of the interview and represent the interviewee's own choice of words.
2. A 'head' is a concept that, in cognitive mapping notation, has no out-going links (see Note 4 below) to other concepts in the interviewee's map. A head represents a terminal concept in a chain of argument and therefore has no perceived consequences.
3. A 'tail' is a concept that has no in-coming links from other concepts. As such, a tail has no supporting explanation and represents a starting point in a chain of argumentation.
4. A 'link' denotes a relationship between two concepts. A 'node' is the term used for the location of a concept in a map (Jenkins and Johnson, 1997: 901). The 'link-to-node' ratio represents the proportion of links to nodes within any given map (Jenkins and Johnson, 1997: 901).
5. The word 'cluster' is used to refer to a group of concepts that share some similar topic or theme and that together form a 'family' of related ideas.
6. 'Factor-categories' are sub-elements (or sub-groups) of a cluster, and in relation to the objective of this research, define classes of factors (or issues) influencing success in policy implementation. They are compatible with the 'factor-categories' derived from the documentary research and illustrated in Table 6.

The data illustrated in Table 7 were obtained after each interview was transcribed, codified and graphically mapped using Decision Explorer 3.1. While every cognitive map is unique to the person interviewed, some comparisons can nonetheless be made.

First, it could be noted that the duration of five of the interviews is identical. This is a coincidence, as interviews did not have a pre-established time limit. The interviews

were only concluded when the interviewee found that there was nothing new or more to add to what had already been said. Experience has shown that the number of concepts elicited during an interview is more dependent upon the length of the interview and the skills of the interviewer (Eden, Ackermann et al., 1992: 312). However, the results obtained in this Project do not seem to support this view. In this regard, a similar conclusion can be drawn to that reached by Project 1; that is, there is no immediately apparent relationship between the number of concepts elicited during the interviews and their respective durations.

The absolute number of nodes or concepts in a map, or their ratio per unit of time (of the interview) is sometimes used as a measure of cognitive complexity. However, a better indicator is probably the link-to-node ratio, which is understood to suggest depth of thinking in consideration of the issue under review. A higher link-to-node ratio indicates a densely connected map and, supposedly, a higher level of cognitive complexity (Eden, Ackermann et al., 1992: 313). The reason behind higher levels of complexity cannot be determined from the data but, from observation and with hindsight, it was noted that the interviewees with the most densely populated maps were those who seemed best prepared for the interview and who had been the most involved. In almost all these cases, the interviewees were guided by written notes that they had prepared prior to the interview.

Another measure of cognitive simplicity or complexity is the ratio of 'heads' and 'tails' to 'nodes'. Maps with a small number of 'heads' indicate a form of idealised thinking (Eden, Ackermann et al., 1992) where the interviewee's concepts are all pointing towards a common end or goal. The opposite applies with a large number of 'heads' indicating that the interviewee perceives multiple possible consequences in relation to the issue being researched. On the other hand, a large number of 'tails' indicates a flat hierarchy of concepts and a relatively simple hierarchy or chain of argumentation.

However, the purpose of this research is not to establish levels of cognitive complexity in relation to a research issue. The objective is to determine what factors are perceived by different individuals to have contributed to success. Furthermore, the study aims to understand whether similarities exist between the factors elicited by the different interviewees and, if so, whether they are perceived to manifest

themselves in similar or different ways. Equally important is the need to determine whether different 'groups' of interviewees (Civil Servants, Consultants and Politicians) elicit factors that are similar intra-group, but different between one group and another. These analyses will help establish a better understanding of the 'gap' between the policy-making and strategy implementation arms of government, which information can be used during the third phase of the research to propose a model for bridging the 'politico-administrative divide'.

Two techniques are widely used for analysing the emergent features of an individual's cognitive map. The first, called 'domain analysis', is a technique intended to identify the most dominant concepts in a map by calculating the intensity of relationships around concepts in their immediate vicinity. The higher the number of links going into, or flowing out of, a concept, the 'busier' the concept is said to be and, hence, the higher the probability of it being a key issue. The advantage of running this analysis on a cognitive map (especially one with a high number of concepts), is that it allows the researcher to progressively focus on those areas of the map that are most densely populated. In so doing, it also allows the gradual identification of 'clusters' of concepts that carry similar character or meaning in relation to the concepts to which they are inter-related. Common trends in ideology around particular issues can be identified and emerging themes symbolising the interviewee's cognitive process can be elicited.

Supporting this approach is a second technique called 'central analysis'. This technique is similar in scope to the domain analysis, but as the name may suggest, it is intended to calculate the centrality of concepts in the entire cognitive map, rather than in the immediate vicinity of individual concepts. The resultant centrality scores are therefore measures of the relative dominance of concepts in the whole model.

Despite the utility of these two techniques to focus the analysis of a cognitive map, the examination of a large map [typically 30-120 nodes from a single one-hour interview (Eden, Ackermann et al., 1992: 310)] may nonetheless be a daunting task. As all the maps resulting from the interviews of this research fell into this category, another technique in addition to the two already discussed was used to facilitate the analysis process.

Termed 'stripping', this technique involves a process that enables a conceptual map to be collapsed to its barest elements by eliminating (hence the term 'stripping') all concepts in the map that have no branched explanations or consequences. These concepts only serve to further elaborate the argumentation of the model and, once removed, enable the researcher to identify more easily, and at a macro-level, the key chains of argumentation. Domain and central analysis can also be performed at this level of detail and a comparison of the most dominant concepts that are returned both when the map is 'stripped', and when it is not, can help determine the level of importance of concepts at progressive levels of conceptual complexity.

Switching between the stripped and un-stripped model of the cognitive map also helps to focus analysis at the level of clusters mentioned above. In certain instances, this enables clusters to be further broken down into groups of composite concepts that, while still related to the overall theme of the cluster, manifest different variations of the same theme. The formation of specific groups of concepts as sub-elements of the clusters represent families of concepts that share similar characteristics and, in relation to this research, represent classes of factors that are perceived to influence success in policy implementation. These sub-elements are what constitute 'factor-categories'. In some instances, the concepts that compose a factor-category may have different 'properties', each of which denotes a different aspect of that specific class of factors. An example from one of the interviews will serve to illustrate this point.

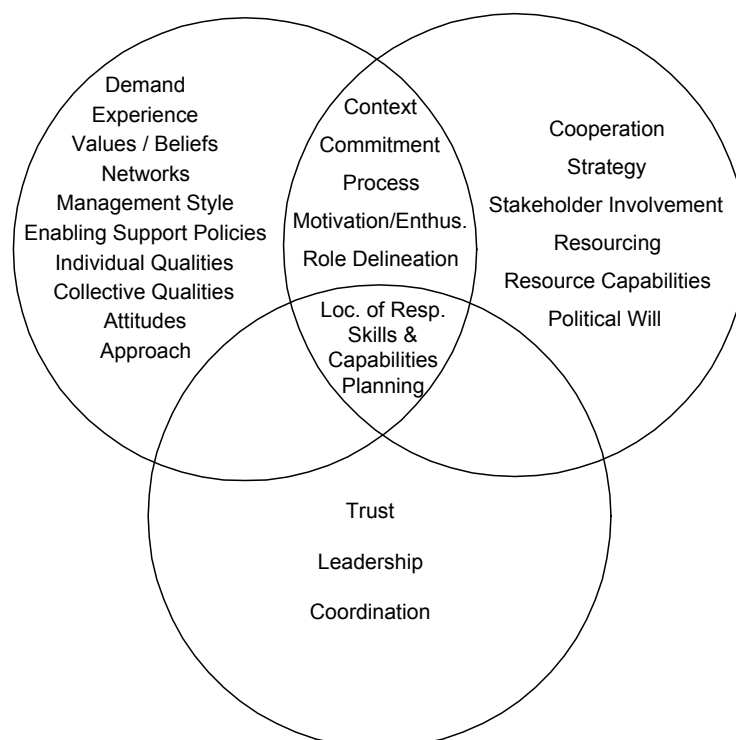
An analysis of the cognitive map of Interviewee 142 revealed three clusters of concepts each representing a particular theme. One of the clusters pertained to the interviewee's perception of the need for 'effective group dynamics' to ensure successful policy implementation. Further analysis allowed the concepts in this cluster to be divided into two broad groups each representing a somewhat different variation of the same theme. The first pertained to the interviewee's perception of the presence of a strong collaborative relationship among the various members of the team designated with the responsibility for driving this initiative. The second group reflected the interviewee's perception of the presence of a supportive environment that was brought to bear upon the policy initiative as a result of a sense of dedication from a number of persons/quarters within Government. The two

factor-categories were therefore labelled 'co-operation' and 'commitment'. In turn, the interviewee explained his perception of co-operation from two perspectives. One related to the development of a strong, informal personal relationship among the members of the implementing team, while the other concerned the availability of formal political support for the initiative. The properties of this factor-category could therefore be teamwork and sponsorship respectively. The dimensions of these properties would be 'informal...formal' and 'formal...informal' respectively. Both are considered to have influenced the successful implementation of the policy under review.

While each of the eight (8) interviews were analysed using the same techniques mentioned above, and following the operational logic mentioned, not all clusters were necessarily broken down into multiple factor-categories. Similarly, factor-categories did not necessarily exhibit multiple properties.

A detailed explanation of the rationale leading to the elicitation of the factor-categories listed in Table 7 is included in **Appendix 12**. **Figure 13** below summarises the elicited factor-categories per interviewee group, highlighting similarities and differences by distributing the factors in sets within a Venn diagram.

Figure 13 – Factor-Categories by Interviewee Group



4.3 Summary and Conclusions

As may have been expected, some of the factor-categories elicited from the interviews are unique to specific individuals, while others are either common among all eight interviewees or are similar to one another.

To arrive at a consolidated framework of the factors influencing success in policy implementation, it was necessary to compare and contrast the results of the individual interviews to draw out similarities, or differences, in the elicited factor-categories and their corresponding properties and dimensions. This was done in a three-stepped approach as explained below²⁸.

- Step 1 -** The data of each individual interview was reduced by isolating, from the corresponding cognitive map, the factor-categories elicited by the interviewee and their corresponding properties and dimensions (see Charts in **Appendix 13**).
- Step 2 -** The factor-categories elicited by each interviewee were grouped into one list, organised in alphabetical order, and compared. Identical factor-categories were merged together. Similar factor-categories were consolidated and labelled under a common term (see **Appendix 14**).
- Step 3 -** The properties and dimensions (per factor-category) elicited by each interviewee were grouped into one list, organised in alphabetical order, and compared. Identical properties and dimensions were merged together and the relationship with their respective factor-categories was maintained. This operation was called 'First Pass Grouping' (see **Appendix 15**). Similar properties and dimensions were then reduced and consolidated under one heading. This operation was called 'Second Pass Grouping' (see **Appendix 16**).

²⁸ The protocol followed in consolidating the interviewees' factor-categories, properties and dimensions was the same as that followed in Project 1. However, a description of the approach that had been followed had been omitted in the Project 1 report.

The consolidation of the factor-categories and their corresponding properties and dimensions, presents the sum total of all the issues that had been identified by the interviewees to have influenced success in the implementation of the considered policy.

Figure 14 presents the same consolidated results but in the form of a single reduced cognitive map. The map illustrates the elicited factor-categories (denoted in a circle), their respective properties and dimensions, and the causal relationships between them.

The properties and dimensions have been divided into three groups – Enablers, denoted by the letter ‘E’; Inhibitors, denoted by the letter ‘I’; and Derivatives, denoted by the letter ‘D’. Enablers are those properties (or aspects) of a factor that ‘trigger’ or catalyse the manifestation of that factor. Inhibitors, are those properties of a factor that ‘restrain’ or hinder a factor from occurring, while Derivatives are those properties of a factor that are ‘consequential’ to its occurrence.

The numbers in square brackets refer to the identification key of the interview from which the factor-category and property/dimensions were derived – [142,145] would therefore mean that the factor-category or property/dimension as the case may be, was common in both interviews 142 and 145.

The significance of dividing the properties and dimensions into three groups is two-fold. First, it helps facilitate the separation of those things influencing success that can be controlled by policy implementers (enablers/inhibitors) from those that cannot be controlled by them (derivatives). Efforts can therefore be channelled where they are most effective. Secondly, by separating ‘enablers’ from ‘inhibitors’, policy implementers can distinguish between those aspects that need to be stimulated, and those things that need to be avoided, in order to increase the probability of success.

All of the factor-categories illustrated in Figure 14 have the potential to influence success in policy implementation. However, some factor-categories are more significant than others because besides influencing success in their own right, they also influence the occurrence of other factors, thereby potentially compounding the positive outcome. Multiple ‘routes’ leading to success are therefore possible.

Figure 14

Figure 15 contains the same information as that illustrated in Figure 14. However, the information is presented in a way that is intended to illustrate a hierarchical order of causal relationships between factor-categories. In this Figure, factor-categories are shown in double-edged boxes, while their properties and dimensions are shown in single-edged boxes. The solid arrows indicate that each factor-category independently influences success. The dotted arrows indicate a relationship between two or more factor-categories and their properties and dimensions. The type of relationship is denoted by the letter 'E', if it enables or amplifies the occurrence of that factor, or by the letter 'I', if it inhibits the factor from occurring.

The utility of Figure 15 is that it provides a 'road map' of the factors that are perceived to have influenced success in the implementation of the Local Councils project. The most 'direct route' to success is probably the one represented by the shortest chain of argumentation in the map, for example, 'Stakeholder Involvement'. However, the most influential route is likely to be one that links various factors together. Thus, for example, the decision to **locate political responsibility** for this policy initiative in the Prime Minister's portfolio, rather than that of another Minister, ensured a high, rather than low, **commitment** from both the political and administrative arms of Government, such that the policy could be implemented effectively.

To complete the road map, it is also important to consolidate the results obtained from the interviews with those derived from the documentary research. Once again, a number of similarities exist between the two data sets. Some factor-categories and their properties/dimensions are common, others are similar, and others still are different. **Table 8** highlights these similarities and differences, and illustrates how they have been treated.

Figure 16 presents the updated 'road map' to success, after the factor-categories, properties and dimensions from the documentary data were merged with those derived from the interviews.

Figure 15

Table 8 – Consolidation of Data from Documentary Research and Interviews

Data as codified from Documentary Sources				Data after consolidation with results from Interviews		
Factor-Category	Property	Dimension		Factor-Category	Property	Dimension
Consultation	Reach	Broad...Limited	=	Stakeholder Involvement	Participation	Broad...Limited
	Degree	Extensive...Limited	=	Stakeholder Involvement	(Degree of) Consultation	Extensive...Limited
	Timing	Continuous...Inconstant	=	Stakeholder Involvement	(Timing of) Consultation	Long-term...Short-lived
Environment (Context)	Structure	Centralised...Decentralised	+	Context		
External Support	Commitment	Consistent...Unsustained	=	Approach	Expert Support	High...Low
Management Involvement	Commitment	Committed...Uncommitted	=	Commitment	Personal Involvement	
Managerial Responsibility	Scope	Focused...Unfocused	=	Resourcing	Focus	Focused...Unfocused
Methodology (of Implementation)	Approach	Gradual...Abrupt	=	Approach	Implementation	Staggered...Sudden
	Approach	Correct...Expedient	=	Approach	Type	Effective...Economical
	Approach	Formal (structured)...Informal	+	Approach		
Organisation	Resourcefulness	Adequate...Inadequate	=	Resourcing	Critical Mass	Sufficient...Insufficient
Ownership	Location	Internal...External	NEW			
Personal Capabilities	Proficiency	Skilled...Inept	=	Personal / Team Attributes	Proficiency	Skilled...Inept
	Location	Internal...Outsourced	=	Personal / Team Attributes	Critical Mass	Sufficient...Insufficient
Planning	Approach	Customised...Generic	=	Planning	Approach	Customised...Generic
	Approach	Co-ordinated...Unco-ordinated	=	Approach	Cooperation (coordination)	High...Low
	Detail	Thorough...Superficial	=	Planning	Detail	Thorough...Superficial
Political Involvement	Commitment	Committed...Uncommitted	=	Commitment	Personal Involvement	High...Low
Results	Timeliness	Early...Late	NEW			
Role Delineation	Clarity	Clear...Unclear	=	Role Delineation	Clarity	Clea...Unclear

Notes: '=
'+' means that the Factor-Category/Property/Dimensions emerging from Data Codification is equivalent to Factor-Category/Property/Dimensions notation used for data obtained from the Interviews
'+' means that while the Factor-Category emerging from Data Codification has an equivalent in the Interview data, its Property/Dimensions are different and are therefore being added to the results from the Interviews
'NEW' means that the Factor-Category emerging from Data Codification has no equivalence in the Interview data

Figure 16

Text in **blue colour** refers to those factor-categories and/or properties and dimensions that were found to be common to both interview and documentary data. Text in **red colour** refers to those factor-categories and/or properties and dimensions that were unique to the documentary data set, while the text in **black** is unique to the data derived from the interviews.

4.4 Observations

Figure 16 addresses the research question by (1) identifying what factors led to the successful implementation of the policy under review, and (2) by examining how the factors influenced success, both at an individual and collective level. In essence, it concludes this phase of the study, although the following observations are also worth noting.

The factors that were identified to have influenced the successful implementation of this example of policy can be broadly divided into two classes – people-oriented, and process-oriented factors – as illustrated in **Figure 17** below.

Figure 17 – People-oriented vs. Process-oriented Factors of Success

People-Oriented	Process-Oriented
Attitude	Demand
Trust	Context
Enthusiasm	Location of Responsibility
Personal/Team Attributes	Stakeholder Involvement
Values/Beliefs	(Use of) Networks
Ownership	Approach
Leadership	Role Delineation
Commitment	Management Style
Co-operation	(Choice of) Strategy
	Results
	(Effective) Resourcing
	(Effective) Planning

This classification is significant because it separates those ‘variables’ that can be designed and, to a greater or lesser degree, be controlled by policy implementers (the process-oriented factors), from those factors that can be influenced by them, but that cannot be rationally planned or controlled (people-oriented factors). Thus, for example, decisions on where to ‘locate political responsibility’ for a policy initiative, or

to whom to entrust it, can create the necessary framework of accountability that is needed to control the likelihood of success. On the other hand, while the probability of success can be improved by motivating the persons involved in the implementation of a particular policy, the ability to generate the level of 'enthusiasm' required to ensure success is finally dependent upon the personal disposition of the persons involved in the implementation programme, and their willingness to make the initiative a success. In this sense, while decision-makers can influence their motivation, their level of co-operation and commitment to a policy implementation initiative can never be planned or controlled.

A second observation is a perceived sense of hierarchy among the elicited factors. While factors were not specifically prioritised or rank-ordered by the interviewees, it is nonetheless possible to identify relationships among the factors that would suggest different levels of importance in terms of how the factors are perceived to influence success. The logic that seems to prevail is that while each individual factor has the potential to contribute to the successful outcome of a policy implementation programme, factors that act in ways to generate, or accentuate, other factors are likely to compound the chain of events that influence success and can therefore be perceived to be more important than others. Thus, for example, if 'clear delineation of roles' between politicians and administrators is perceived to lead to greater 'cooperation' between both stakeholder groups, then it is intrinsically more important because it acts in a way that generates another factor that drives success. The probability of success is therefore perceived to improve. As shall be explained in Part 4, the perceived level of importance of the factors elicited in both Projects 1 and 2 was explored at the beginning of Project 3 so that the rest of the research could be focused on those variables that are perceived by the 'practitioners' to be more salient in terms of their potential to influence failure and success.

Notwithstanding the absence of such empirical data, it may nonetheless be pertinent to highlight those factors that interviewees' seemed to have emphasised during this Project. 'Commitment' is probably the most important factor. Besides being identified by six of the eight interviewees, it was explored and explained from various angles (see the properties and dimensions in Figure 16) and was also perceived to have been influenced by other factors. In a nutshell, the commitment was seen to

exist at both an individual and collective level and the dedication of everyone involved in the implementation process ensured the convergence of efforts and the effective achievement of a common goal. Strongly linked to commitment, was the decision to 'locate political responsibility' for the policy initiative in the portfolio of the Prime Minister. Although intrinsically symbolic in nature, this decision was a strategic one and acted to elevate the commitment to a political level. It signalled the Government's resolve to deliver this particular policy, thereby providing the project team with the authority and 'muscle' it needed to solicit support from all stakeholders and ensure the timely delivery of activities. A third factor identified by six of the eight interviewees was the individual and collective skill and capability of the persons entrusted with the policy implementation. While commitment and authority were very important because they created the right framework or context for implementation, it was the intellectual and physical 'ability' of the project team members that could ultimately ensure the timely and effective delivery of the project. This may sound an obvious conclusion, but is really not so obvious for an institution that seems to be devoid of policy/project implementation skills. The extent to which these three factors have also been found to be important in other studies on policy implementation is explored in the context of Project 3.

In relation to the results that were obtained in Project 1, a further two observations are worth noting. The first is that although fewer factors were identified in Project 2, interviewees seemed to explore these factors in greater depth. Evidence of this is the large number of properties and dimensions per factor (see Figure 16), although an explanation is not immediately apparent. The second observation is that accountability is possibly at the core of both failure and success. In Project 1, failure was, in essence, attributed to the absence of an accountability framework that would have ensured the delivery of results. In Project 2, accountability was not explicitly mentioned, but was nonetheless implied, as evidenced through the way in which the project was planned, structured and managed (the process-oriented factors) and the innate abilities and motivations of the resources assigned to it (the person-oriented factors).

Summary of Part 3

This part of the thesis summarised the findings and conclusions of the second stage of the research. It focused on identifying the factors that influenced the successful implementation of a Cabinet policy decision regarding the establishment of Local Councils as a first step towards the introduction of a system of Local Government.

Similar to the strategy adopted in Project 1, this phase of the research was based upon an interpretivist philosophy and adopted an inductive approach that was based upon the application of case study research. Data was again collected through both documentary research and personal interviews held with the key players involved in the implementation of the policy under review. In both cases, data analysis was qualitatively driven. Documentary evidence was analysed following the procedural norms of data codification as proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998), while the data derived from the interviews were analysed following the application of cognitive mapping techniques as outlined by Wrightson (1976) and modified by Huff et al. (1990). Twenty-one (21) factors were identified to have influenced the successful outcome of this policy initiative. Although not based on statistical evidence, the top three pivotal factors that seemed to have significantly influenced the successful outcome of the policy initiative were (1) the level of commitment of the key players to the policy initiative, (2) the decision to locate political responsibility for the initiative in the Office of the Prime Minister, and (3) the presence of a team composed of persons with different yet complementary skills and capabilities. Collectively, these factors were deemed to have created an accountability framework that ensured the effective delivery of the policy programme.

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Part 4

Addressing the Critical Success/Failure Factors (Project 3)

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Overview of Part 4

This part of the thesis discusses the third and final step (or project) of the research and is presented in four Chapters.

The first Chapter introduces the study by outlining the purpose of the project and the two objectives it set out to achieve; that is, (1) the prioritisation of the factors elicited in the first two projects to determine which of them are considered to be the most critical to success and failure, and (2) the development of proposals for improving the likelihood of successful policy implementation.

Chapter 2 provides a detailed description of the research methodology, structure and methods defining this part of the study. In particular, it discusses the application of a survey that was used for identifying the factors considered by stakeholders to critically influence failure and/or success, and it explains the results derived from this quantitative study.

Chapter 3 then discusses the relevant literature and theoretical principles that inform the object of this project. It focuses on an in depth treatise of the relevant literature on 'commitment' and 'leadership' that occupy the foreground of the study, as well as a consideration of aspects of the literature pertaining to some of the other critical factors perceived to influence success and failure in policy implementation. Building on the results identified from the quantitative study and the literature review, it then presents a number of proposed measures that could be undertaken to improve the effective implementation of public policy in Malta.

Chapter 4 summarises the recommendations that were proposed to address successful policy implementation through improved leadership and commitment. It identifies the key objective(s) guiding each of the propositions made, and the action(s) deemed necessary for their effective implementation.

1.0 Overall Purpose and Project Objectives

This part of the thesis summarises the findings and conclusions of the third project of the research programme. Building on the findings and conclusions of Projects 1 and 2, it addresses the second part of the research question guiding this study²⁹ by proposing measures that could be taken to address the critical factors influencing the outcome of policy implementation initiatives in Malta.

As a 'project' in itself, this phase of the research aimed to achieve two objectives. The first was to prioritise the factors of failure and success elicited in Projects 1 and 2 respectively, so that the rest of the research could focus on those factors identified by stakeholders to be the most critical or influential on policy implementation in Malta. The second objective was to develop proposals to address these factors. The development of such proposals would be based upon the lessons learnt from the case studies of Projects 1 and 2 respectively, as well as on a review of the body of knowledge pertaining to such factors.

Project 3 was approached in two 'Steps', each of which addressed one of these two objectives.

²⁹ See page 10.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Overview of Approach

In keeping with the research paradigm, it was considered important that the selection of the critical factors (Step 1) was done by, and with the participation of, the persons who are ultimately affected by such factors. Two methods were considered: conjoint analysis and the application of a survey. Although preference had originally been given to the former method, it was the latter that was actually employed in Step 1 of this project. The rationale for this choice is explained in **Appendix 17**.

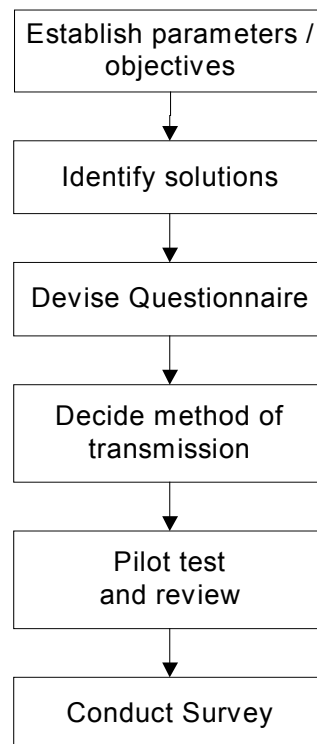
Having short-listed the critical factors, the second step of the project was then to focus on exploring the measures that could be taken to build on success and to overcome, or limit, failure. Once again, two options were considered. Option 1 was based on the identification of suitable measures through the application of the repertory grid technique. Option 2 aimed to achieve the same objective, but in a less structured manner, basing itself on a more interpretative consideration of (i) the results obtained from Projects 1 and 2, (ii) a review of the literature relating to the critical factors short-listed in Step 1 of this project, and (iii) the researcher's own experience in the implementation of public policy in Malta. While the application of the repertory grid technique was considered the ideal method, it was the second option that was ultimately applied. The reasons for this are also explained in **Appendix 17**.

2.2 Step 1 – Focusing on Failure and Success

2.2.1 Research Procedure

The first step of this project involved the administration of a survey. This was based on the application of a questionnaire that required respondents to critically consider the factors elicited from Projects 1 and 2 and to prioritise these factors in order of their perceived importance. The process followed in developing and administering the questionnaire is outlined in Figure 18.

Figure 18 - Steps followed in developing the survey questionnaire



Source: Compiled by Author

Before attempting to draft the actual questionnaire, it was considered appropriate to clearly establish the objectives that this instrument aimed to accomplish, and the manner in which they would be achieved. The principal aims of the questionnaire were to:

1. present to respondents the factors considered to influence failure and success in policy implementation as identified through the research undertaken during Projects 1 and 2;
2. get respondents to critically consider these factors and, based on their own experience in the implementation of policy initiatives, establish either (i) their likelihood to contribute to failure, or (ii) their importance to the successful outcome of such initiatives; and
3. ask respondents to identify, in priority order, the top five factors that they considered, from experience, to be either (i) the most damaging to a policy implementation initiative, or (ii) the most critical to success.

Furthermore, the questionnaire also had to reflect a number of other matters that were considered critical to ensure a response that was adequate in both content (valid and reliable) and quantity (a sufficient number of persons would respond). Table 9 lists these secondary objectives and describes how they were addressed.

Table 9 – Secondary Questionnaire Objectives

Objective	Addressed by...
Not time consuming (maximum 10 minutes)	Limited request; information in table format; close-ended statements/questions; use of tick-boxes.
Easy to use	Clear instructions; use of tick-boxes.
Easy to understand	In English; avoided jargon/buzz words and acronyms; pilot tested and adjusted as necessary
Understood by everyone in the same way	Factors clearly defined; respondents asked to limit interpretation to definitions provided.
Focus response	Limited respondents to factors elicited from the studies – ‘others’ field not provided.
Stimulate interest/be engaging	Provided sufficient background without detracting attention to what was really required.
Attract attention/stimulate a response	Allowed anonymous responses; offered a reward for timely response.
Easy to analyse	Constructed a simple database that facilitates data entry and analysis.

After considering the above objectives, the questionnaire was drafted in three stages. First, it was considered necessary to define the factors identified in Projects 1 and 2. This ensured that the factors would be presented in a manner that is faithful to the interpretation arising from Projects 1 and 2; that they would be easy to understand; and that all the respondents would understand them in the same way.

In arriving at these definitions, considerable effort was made to use the original words or terms used by the interviewees of Projects 1 and 2 to explain the factors that they had identified³⁰. Where this was not possible, the definitions reflected the words used in my own description of the factors as presented in Appendix 8 and

³⁰ These were either derived from the concepts constituting the cognitive maps or lifted from the transcripts.

Appendix 12 relating to Projects 1 and 2 respectively. However derived, definitions that were not deemed to be detailed enough to provide a proper understanding of the factor concerned were further qualified by reference to the properties and dimensions of the factor as identified from the data analysis stage of Projects 1 and 2. For example, the factor ‘Administrative Will’ that was identified in Project 1 as having contributed to failure was presented and defined as follows:

Factor name/label: (Absence of) Administrative Will

Definition: a lack of visible commitment to a policy by the administrative arm of Government [*because of*] feelings of imposition, or a disbelief in the merits of the policy itself.

- **‘Administrative Will’** was the actual factor title or name used in Project 1. The use of **‘absence of’** in brackets denotes that it was the lack of such a factor that was actually perceived by interviewees to contribute to failure.
- **‘A lack of visible commitment to a policy’** were words used by the interviewees of Project 1 to explain the lack of administrative will.
- **‘...by the administrative arm of Government’** were words intentionally added for the purposes of this questionnaire to clearly specify the person(s) to whom the factor made reference.
- The use of **‘because of’** in square brackets was meant to illustrate a further qualification to the definition.
- **‘feelings of imposition’** and **‘a disbelief in the merits of the policy itself’** reflected properties/dimensions of the factor as identified from the data analysis of Project 1. They were included in the definition to substantiate the qualification and give further meaning to the definition.

The protocol described above was applied in the derivation of all definitions. The resultant definitions of failure and success are listed in Tables 10 and 11 respectively.

Table 10 – Definitions of Factors contributing to Failure

Factor	Defined as...
(Absence of) Accountability	the absence of a suitable framework that holds people responsible for the tasks and duties assigned to them, and the outcomes of their performance.
(Absence of) Administrative Will	a lack of visible commitment to a policy by the administrative arm of Government <i>[because of]</i> feelings of imposition, or a disbelief in the merits of the policy itself.
(Inadequate) Capabilities	the lack of resourcefulness of the individuals involved in implementation, <i>[characterised by]</i> their limited experience and inadequate skills / qualifications.
Cloning (of management practices)	the practice of 'replicating' traditional approaches to management, <i>[characterised by]</i> an adherence to conventional rules, norms and traditional behaviour.
(Lack of) Collegiality	the absence of a friendly relationship between individuals party to an implementation programme <i>[driven by]</i> their inability or unwillingness to operate as a team.
Conditioning	actions taken by senior decision makers to influence the behaviour of persons <i>[with the objective of]</i> inducing them to oppose or resist the implementation of a policy programme
Context	an unproductive environment <i>[characterised by]</i> conflicting interests among politicians.
(Lack of) Cooperation	the reluctance of individuals to collaborate with one another to achieve some common goal.
(Entrenched) Customs	the perpetuation of established organisational systems and cultures that stifle change and innovation.
(Lack of) Customisation	a standardised, rather than bespoke, approach to the implementation of policy.
Divergent Goals	the inability to agree on a common set of goals, <i>[because of]</i> different stakeholder priorities and uncooperative behaviours.
(Dysfunctional) Group Dynamic	a group of persons working individually rather than as part of a team, <i>[because of]</i> different interests, and feelings of inequity, and imposition.
(Lack of) Leadership	the inability to develop and command a following for a particular policy, <i>[because of]</i> one's ineptness, an unclear or changing vision, and/or waivering commitment.
Management Aloofness	the inability or unwillingness of management to interact with subordinates and get directly involved in the implementation of a policy initiative.
Mistrust	the lack of confidence in persons involved in implementation, <i>[because of]</i> different political ideologies, feelings of disloyalty and the fear of sabotage.
Organisational Politics	the competitive struggle for power, <i>[driven by]</i> dissimilar stakeholder goals, feelings of threatened interests and the fear of losing control over resources.

(Lack of policy) Ownership	individuals' unwillingness to assume responsibility for the policy and its implementation
(Lack of) Participation	the inability or reluctance to actively engage the involvement of various stakeholders in the implementation of a policy initiative.
(Ineffective) Planning	an uncoordinated and fragmented approach to implementation, that is reactive to emerging issues and imposed top-down, rather than proactive in style and developed bottom-up.
(Absence of) Political Will	a lack of visible commitment to a policy by the political arm of Government
Political Immaturity	the imposing attitudes and behaviour of politicians, particularly young or new Ministers / Parliamentary Secretaries, who lack experience and political savvy.
(Low) Political Intervention	the absence of Ministerial involvement in the implementation and administration of policy [<i>characterised by</i>] low support and low visible participation.
Power (Struggles)	the quest for authority and control over resources that alienates attention away from the management of policy and into the domain of (small 'p') politics.
Resistance	the opposition confronting a policy initiative, [<i>because of</i>] external imposition, inadequate understanding of the policy objectives, and the fear of losing power.
(Lack of apparent) Results	the tardiness and low visibility of outcomes from a policy implementation initiative.
Role Fragmentation	the division of responsibility for a policy initiative among many individuals, such that there is no clarity of focus and ambiguous ownership.

Table 11 – Definitions of Success Factors

Success Factor	Defined as...
(Effective) Approach	a well-researched and structured process to implementation, <i>[characterised by]</i> clarity of vision, thorough attention to detail and fast decision-making.
(Positive) Attitude	an optimistic, team-oriented disposition and a persistent determination to succeed.
Commitment	a tangible and visible political and administrative will to deliver policy.
Cooperation	collaborative behaviour between stakeholders to a policy, <i>[characterised by]</i> goal alignment, the development of strong personal relationships, and a high willingness to share skills and information.
(Effective) Planning	the detailed organisation of activities.
(Effective) Resourcing	the focused deployment of skilled and motivated resources in quantities sufficient to provide a critical mass.
Enthusiasm	a heightened level of personal / team motivation, <i>[characterised by]</i> an intrinsic belief in the policy, the presence of incentives and visible political support.
Leadership	the ability to develop and command a following, <i>[characterised by]</i> clarity of vision and a legitimate mandate.
Location of Political Responsibility	the power emanating from the place or position that holds political ownership for the policy, and its ability to command authority over the deployment of resources.
Management Style	the enthusiastic and optimistic behaviour of management, and their ability to adapt to prevailing circumstances.
Ownership	a perceived state of belongingness to, and responsibility for, a policy implementation programme.
Project Team Dynamic	the presence of a group of individuals with different but complementary skills and expertise, working collaboratively towards a common goal.
Role Delineation	the clear demarcation of responsibility between individuals, particularly between politicians and civil servants.
Skills and Abilities	the capability and resourcefulness of individuals involved in implementation, <i>[characterised by]</i> qualities such as extensive experience, adequate training and qualifications, and a practical approach to policy management.
Stakeholder Involvement	broad and active consultations with persons or entities likely to affect, or be affected by, the policy.
Trust	a high degree of confidence in persons involved in the implementation initiative, <i>[characterised by]</i> the belief that individuals will not sabotage the initiative, or cause deliberate harm.
(Use of) Networks	utilising one's personal-informal relationship with others to gain access to, or control over, resources.
Values / Beliefs	people's conviction of the 'rightness' or 'goodness' of a policy initiative, because it is consistent with their personal values.

With respect to the definitions regarding Success, it should be noted that:

1. the factor originally identified and labelled in Project 2 as 'Personal/Team Attributes' was divided into two separate factors; one relating to the individual 'Skills and Abilities' of the persons involved in the implementation programme, and the other relating to the 'Project Team Dynamic', referring to the collective attributes of the individuals operating as a team. This was done because (1) when combined, the resulting factor had too broad a meaning and therefore could lead to misinterpretations by different interviewees, and (2) after a reconsideration of the interview transcripts, separating the two factors was deemed to be more consistent with the original data.
2. the factor originally labelled '(Choice of) Strategy' was combined with that labelled 'Approach', as (1) the elements distinguishing the two were really not as clear cut as originally thought during the analysis of Project 2 and, (2) leaving the two factors separate would have only served to confuse interviewees.

Having defined the factors, the next stage in the compilation of the questionnaire considered what rating scale would be most appropriate for this survey. Consistent with the objectives identified earlier, it was decided that a three-point scale would be adopted as it would be fast to apply, and as it would also make it easier for respondents to deliver judgements of choice between the factors. Furthermore, it was decided that a qualitative scale, rather than one that relied on a numeric scoring system, would also be more appropriate for the respondents' treatment of the factors. Different statements were used for rating the factors contributing to failure and those influencing success. This was done to:

1. reflect the findings of Projects 1 and 2 that suggest that factors contributing to failure and success are not necessarily different sides of the same coin; and to
2. reflect differences that existed in the syntax of the definitions used, which differences seemed necessary to better explain the two categories of factors.

Respondents rating the factors influencing *FAILURE* were asked to rate the factors along the following scale:

- **'LIKELY** to contribute to failure'
- **'MOST LIKELY** to contribute to failure'
- **'WILL CERTAINLY** contribute to failure'

Factors influencing *SUCCESS* were to be rated as either:

- **'IMPORTANT** for success', or
- **'VERY IMPORTANT** for success', or
- **'CRITICAL** for success'.

These scales enabled the factors to be separated into three categories of different relative importance. However, it did not provide a system for weighting the relative importance of factors within a category. This was necessary as the objective of the questionnaire was to narrow the research on those few factors that are perceived to deeply impact failure and success. To achieve this, respondents were asked to reflect upon the factors rated as either 'WILL CERTAINLY contribute to failure' or 'CRITICAL for success', and to list the top five (5) factors in each of the two categories in their perceived order of priority. The decision to limit these factors to only five (5) reflected the intent of the study to focus on the factors falling (roughly) in the top quartile in terms of their perceived importance in influencing failure or success.

The third stage of drafting the questionnaire considered the instructions that would be necessary to facilitate its interpretation and use. As the questionnaire was presented in table format, little explanation was considered necessary. The instructions were therefore limited to an explanatory paragraph placed at the beginning of the questionnaire itself. However, further consideration was given to the need to stimulate an interest in the questionnaire and to entice a response. This was approached in two ways. First, a covering letter was prepared to briefly explain the purpose of the survey and the importance of the response to the research.

Three slightly different letters were drafted, customised as necessary for each of the three respondent categories (politicians, civil servants and consultants). All letters were personally addressed and, in those cases where the respondent was a personal friend or acquaintance of the researcher, the letters were informally signed. Secondly, respondents were invited to participate in a lottery for a weekend break at a hotel located on the sister island of Gozo, which is often used as a retreat or get-away by many Maltese. Those choosing to participate were requested to fill in their personal details, including their role/position in Government.

The final stage of drafting the questionnaire considered its length and the duration it would take respondents to complete. The questionnaire was found to be too lengthy, requiring between 20 to 30 minutes to complete. Because of this, it was decided that it should be split into two – one addressing the factors on failure and the other addressing success. Likewise, the targeted population³¹ of respondents was randomly divided into two groups, and each group was sent one of the two questionnaires. Sample copies of the covering letters and the two questionnaires are enclosed in **Appendix 18**.

The next step was to consider how the questionnaire should be transmitted to potential respondents. Two methods were considered; e-mail and regular mail. The benefits of using e-mail were fast transmission and virtually no cost. However, after considering the quantity of junk mail that is typically received in one's e-mail account, it was decided that the risk of having the questionnaire treated as such and trashed by potential respondents, was too high to ignore. Regular mail was therefore selected as the preferred option.

Prior to conducting the proper survey, the questionnaires were piloted with thirteen (13) persons³² representing politicians, civil servants and consultants. The choice of persons was not random and it included persons who are close acquaintances or friends of the author. The reason for this choice was to 'ensure' a response. Even then, only twelve (12) responses were received. The pilot respondents reported no

³¹ Population and sample size are discussed in Section 2.2.2.

³² Approximately 5% of the sample size.

difficulty in completing the questionnaire and only directed attention to one or two definitions and a few typing errors. The former were changed to improve their explanation, and the latter were edited and corrected.

Following the above, copies of the covering letters and questionnaires were prepared and mailed simultaneously to all targeted respondents. The responses received were then registered and analysed following the protocol described in Section 2.2.3.

2.2.2 Data Sample

Two things were considered in determining an appropriate data sample – its composition and its size. The need for identifying a credible sample that would involve representatives of all the persons involved in policy implementation was important to ensure an un-biased data set. A sufficiently large sample was also important to strengthen the generalisability of findings and to further improve the external validity of the results obtained.

A credible sample for this study required representatives of all three ‘actor’ groups involved in policy implementation; that is, politicians, civil servants and consultants. The **politician** group included Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries currently in office, as well as Shadow Ministers from the Party in opposition. Shadow Ministers were included in the study so as to ensure a cross-representation of policy makers in Malta and to dispel any potential political bias.

All **civil servants** partake in policy implementation through the conduct of their daily duties. However, given the dynamics and culture of the Maltese civil service, it is only those persons in middle to senior management positions that are actually responsible for managing policy and that can directly, or indirectly, influence its implementation. Therefore, while all civil servants could potentially contribute to identifying the factor(s) that critically influence policy implementation in Malta, it is fair to assume that the most significant contribution will arise from senior management. In comparison to more junior staff, these persons have more knowledge of policy management and have a broader and more holistic understanding of the opportunities and limitations of policy implementation as applicable in the Maltese

context. For this reason, it was decided that the questionnaire would be targeted to civil servants in the positions of Permanent Secretary, Director General and Director³³.

From time to time, the Administration engages a number of **consultants** to assist it in both the formulation and the implementation of policy. However, the Government of Malta also has its own in-house management consultancy organisation that is tasked with the majority of consultancy projects relating to policy implementation. It is, therefore, the only organisation that holds a credible experience base of public sector management consultants. Representatives of this actor category were chosen from this organisation. To ensure an informed response to the questionnaire, it was decided that only consultants with at least 5 years experience with this organisation would be included in the study. Furthermore, in order to overcome any potential bias arising from people's experiences, or perceptions, of the current state of policy implementation, the consultants participating in the study had to have worked under different political Administrations.

As at the 15th of April 2002, the potential number of politicians, civil servants and consultants that could be targeted according to the criteria identified above was 37, 158 and 24 respectively. Given the small number of persons in each actor group it was decided that, following customary research practice (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe et al., 1991: 122), the survey would be treated as a census and all 219 persons would be included for the purposes of this study.

2.2.3 Data Collection and Analysis

Table 12 summarises the number of mailed questionnaires per actor category, and the number of replies received.

³³ A Permanent Secretary is accountable for a Ministry. A Director General would normally be accountable for a Division (i.e., a group of Departments) within a Ministry, while a Director is accountable for a Department.

Table 12 – Summary of Mailed Questionnaires and Replies

	Mailed				Received						
	Pilot	Success	Failure	Total	Pilot	Success	%	Failure	%	Total	%
Ministers ¹	1	10	9	20	0	2	20%	5	56%	7	35%
Shadow Ministers	0	9	8	17	0	2	22%	0	0%	2	12%
<i>Politicians</i>	1	19	17	37	0	4	21%	5	29%	9	24%
Perm. Secretaries ²	1	6	7	14	1	5	83%	6	86%	12	86%
Directors General	0	12	11	23	0	4	33%	3	27%	7	30%
Directors	6	57	58	121	6	25	44%	30	52%	61	50%
Unknown Position ³	n/a	N/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	n/a	2	n/a	4	n/a
<i>Civil Servants</i>	7	75	82	158	7	36	48%	41	50%	84	53%
<i>Consultants</i>	5	9	10	24	5	8	89%	8	80%	21	88%
<i>Unknown Group</i> ⁴	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8	n/a	14	n/a	22	n/a
	13	103	109	219	12	56	54%	68	62%	136	62%
					↓		↓				
					Including pilot questionnaires						

¹ Includes (i) Parliamentary Secretaries, and (ii) the Personal Assistant to the Prime Minister who sits in Cabinet meetings and plays an active role in both the development and implementation of policy.

² Includes the Cabinet Secretary who partakes in the implementation of policy and who, previous to this role, occupied the position of Permanent Secretary.

³ Refers to respondents who chose to remain anonymous, but who identified themselves as Civil Servants without indicating their position in Government.

⁴ Refers to respondents who chose to remain completely anonymous.

One hundred and thirty six (136) completed questionnaires were received, representing 62% of the population surveyed. The reasons behind such a significant response are unknown. It is possible that respondents felt that the subject of the study merits research because the issues encountered in the implementation of policy are real and problematic. It is also possible that people were more inclined to participate in the survey than usual because of their acquaintance with the author. It is also possible that the respondents were simply enticed by the free weekend break.

To facilitate the data capture process and the subsequent analysis, a database was constructed using Microsoft Access[®]. The fields of the database replicated those of the questionnaire and each response was entered as a record in the database. The data were then manipulated using the query and filtering functions of the programme itself and were analysed in three steps.

Step 1 involved a frequency count of the rating of each factor, first in relation to the three-point rating scale, then in relation to the number of times it featured in the top quartile in terms of priority ranking. Table 13 below illustrates an example of the results of this operation.

Table 13 – Example of Results of Frequency Count

3 Point Rating Scale							Priority Ranking in Top Quartile					
Factor Influencing FAILURE	LIKELY to contribute to Failure		MOST LIKELY to contribute to Failure		WILL CERTAINLY contribute to Failure		LEFT Out	Most Dam-aging	2nd Most Dam-aging	3rd Most Dam-aging	4th Most Dam-aging	5th Most Dam-aging
(Absence of) Accountability	16	22%	23	31%	34	46%	1	9	12	3	4	3

Frequency Count

% of total response

The operation described above was repeated for all factors in each of the two categories (success and failure) and for each actor group (politicians, civil servants, consultants and 'anonymous' respondents) within those categories. A copy of the results obtained is included in **Appendix 19**.

The second step in the data analysis process was to list the factors in their perceived rank-order priority. The factors were first sorted in descending order of frequency count according to the scores achieved on the three-point rating scale, starting with the highest score achieved at the top of the rating scale. An example is illustrated in Table 14.

Table 14 – Example of Success Factors in Rank-Order Priority as Per Rating Scale

SUCCESS Factor	Important...	VERY Important...	CRITICAL...	Critical as a % of all respondents
Leadership	6	19	37	60%
Commitment	9	17	36	58%
(Effective) Approach	11	25	26	42%
Location of Political Responsibility	15	24	22	35%
Etc.....				
	A	B	C	*

* Sort ordering procedure : First by Column C, then B, then A

In a second operation, the factors were then sorted according to the number of times they were identified as a top five (5) factor of failure, or success. An example is illustrated in Table 15.

Table 15 – Example of Top Quartile Success Factors in Rank-Order Priority

SUCCESS Factor	Most Difficult	2nd	3 rd	4th	5th	No of times factor features in top 5	% respondents listing factor in top 5
		...most difficult to manage or obtain					
Commitment	7	9	4	7	6	33	53%
Leadership	8	7	10	2	1	28	45%
(Effective) Approach	6	6	3	1	4	20	32%
Ownership	3	2	6	6	2	19	31%
Etc....							
	A	B	C	D	E	F*	

* Sort ordering procedure: First by Column F, then A, B, C, D and E.

In effecting the above operations, success and failure factors were treated separately. Furthermore, the factors in each of the two categories were sorted per actor group and also as one collective data set (see Tables in **Appendix 20**).

The third and final step of the data analysis involved a comparison of the perceived rank order priority of the top 5 success and failure factors per actor group, based on the analysis derived from the second operation described above and illustrated in Table 15. The objective of this step was to identify any overlaps in the different actors' perception of what constituted the most important factors of failure/success.

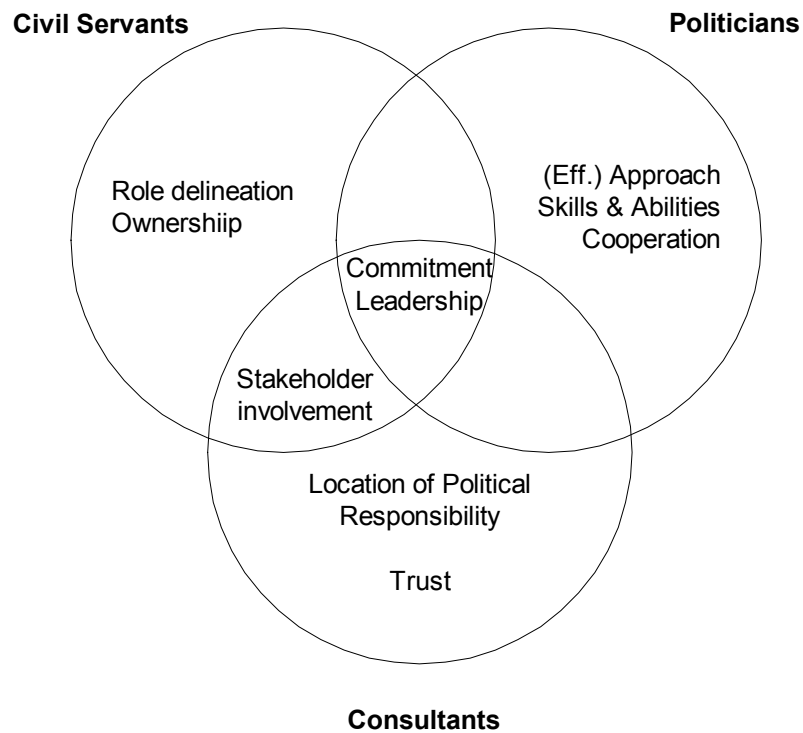
2.2.4 Results/Observations

Table 16 lists the top five most important factors per actor group, while Figures 19 and 20 illustrate the similarities and differences through the use of a Venn diagram. The charts in Figures 21 and 22 illustrate the number of times each one of these factors featured in the top quartile per actor category, indicating the perceived level of importance of each factor and the degree of similar perceptions within and between each actor group.

Table 16 – Top 5 Success and Failure Factors per Actor Group

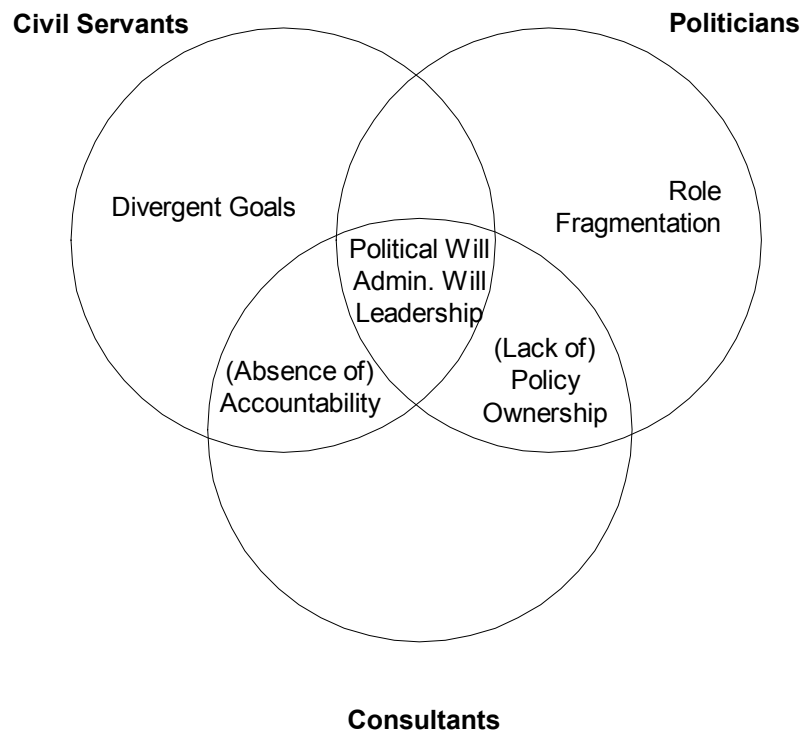
Actor Group	Top 5 Success Factors	Top 5 Failure Factors
Politicians	(Effective) Approach Commitment Leadership Skills and Abilities Cooperation	(Absence of) Political Will (Lack of) Leadership (Lack of) Policy Ownership Role Fragmentation (Absence of) Administrative Will
Civil Servants	Commitment Leadership Ownership Role Delineation Stakeholder Involvement	(Absence of) Political Will (Absence of) Accountability (Lack of) Leadership (Absence of) Administrative Will Divergent Goals
Consultants	(Absence of) Political Will (Absence of) Admin. Will Ownership Role Delineation Stakeholder Involvement	(Absence of) Political Will (Absence of) Administrative Will (Lack of) Leadership (Absence of) Accountability Divergent Goals

Figure 19 – Top 5 Success Factors by Actor Group



Source: Compiled by Author

Figure 20 – Top 5 Factors of Failure by Actor Group



Source: Compiled by Author

Figure 21 – Degree of Congruence in Perceived Level of Importance of Top Quartile Success Factors

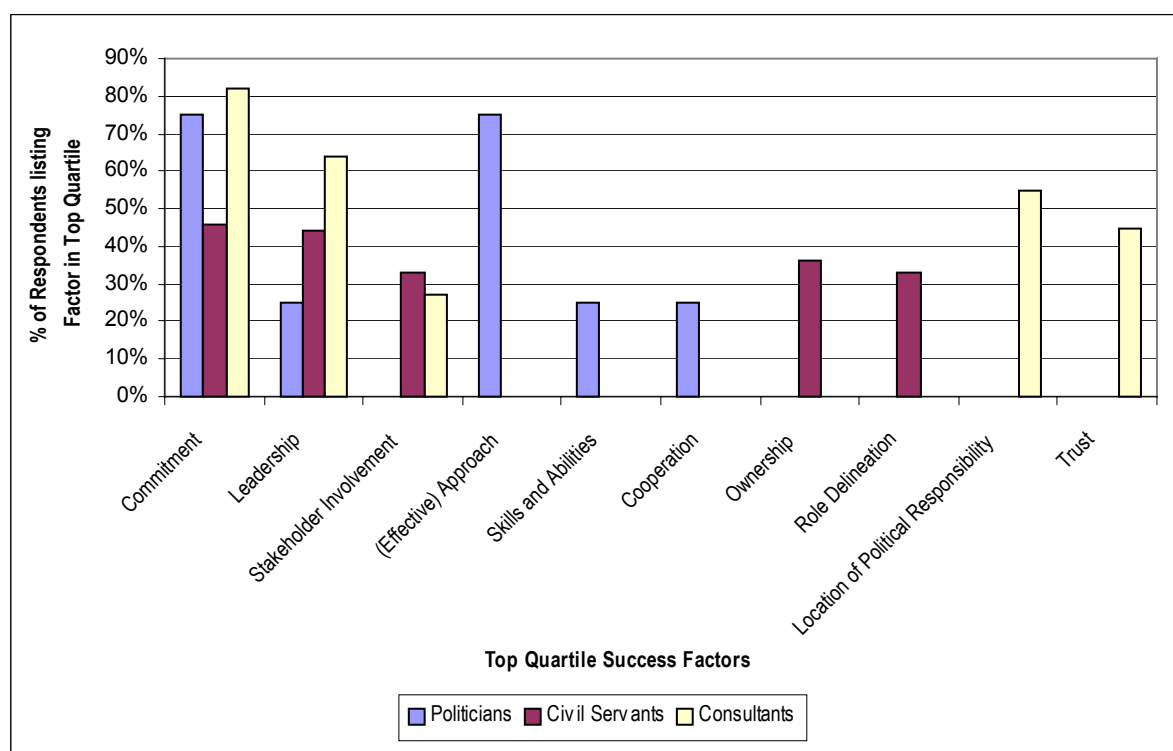
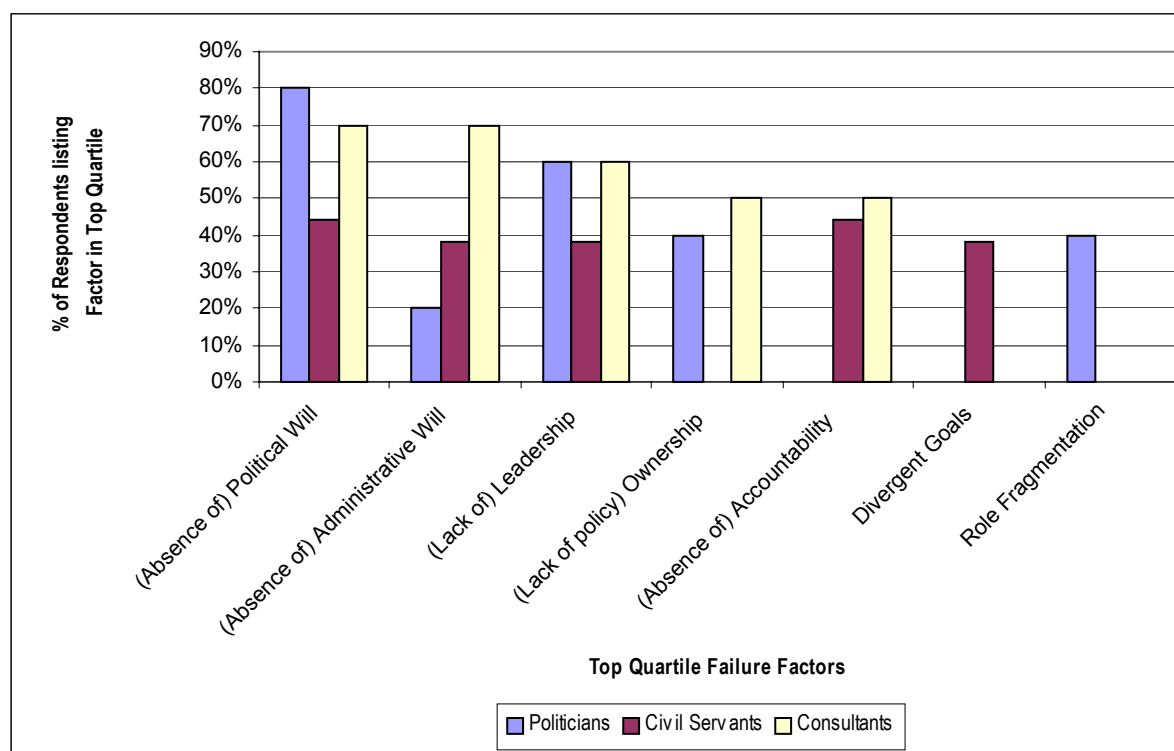


Figure 22 – Degree of Congruence in Perceived Level of Importance of Top Quartile Factors of Failure



Source: Compiled by Author

At least four observations can be drawn from the obtained results.

1. It seems that respondents approached the survey objectively and were unbiased in selecting their replies. For example, politicians attributed a considerable degree of failure to the factor '(Absence of) Political Will', while civil servants identified '(Absence of) Administrative Will', and '(Absence of) Accountability', as two major factors of failure. The willingness of each stakeholder group to share responsibility for failure, and success, is very encouraging. It indicates a readiness by all parties to assume an element of fault and to work towards achieving a common goal.
2. The relatively high percentage scores indicated in Figures 21 and 22 would suggest that respondents within each actor category share a similar perception, or understanding, of what factors are critically influencing success and failure in policy implementation. In this respect, the groups can be said to be relatively homogenous. This has its advantages. First, the search for a solution can be focused on one, or a few, core issues, therefore economising on time and resources. Second, it is likely that each group would be more willing to share and deploy resources in search of a solution. Third, the presence of homogenous groups should facilitate the acceptance and adoption of measures that are collectively considered as potential solutions to the perceived problem(s). Of course, homogeneity may also lead to groupthink, stifling creativity and creating a considerable impasse to change and to improvements in policy implementation.
3. The Venn diagrams in Figures 19 and 20 illustrate a number of overlaps between the top quartile factors identified by each stakeholder group, suggesting that politicians, civil servants and consultants share similar levels of appreciation with regards to the problems affecting modern policy management in Malta. Although a greater element of agreement seems to exist on the factors influencing failure, rather than those driving success, it is fair to state that besides the *intra*-group homogeneity mentioned in point 2 above, there is also a significant element of *inter*-group homogeneity. The absence of divergent or opposing views between the three key stakeholders should further facilitate the

search for, and adoption of, suitable measures to overcome failure and build upon success.

4. There is agreement among all actor groups on what constitutes the key factors influencing success and failure in policy implementation (see Figures 19 and 20). 'Commitment' and 'Leadership' are considered to be the critical success factors, while '(Absence of) Political Will', '(Absence of) Administrative Will' and 'Lack of Leadership' are identified as the key factors influencing failure. While 'Leadership' would seem to be the only factor that is common to both failure and success, reference to the definitions in Tables 10 and 11 should clearly indicate that the factors labelled '(Absence of) Political Will' and '(Absence of) Administrative Will' are equivalent to the factor labelled 'Commitment'. Different labels had been used in Projects 1 and 2 respectively so that reference to these factors was consistent with the language used by the interviewees of both projects. Therefore, from this point of the report, all references to 'Commitment' are inclusive of the factors labelled '(Absence of) Political Will' and '(Absence of) Administrative Will'.

2.2.5 Conclusions

Despite the presence of similar factors in the data sets for both success and failure, different factors populate their respective Venn Diagrams (Figures 19 and 20). This outcome seems to support the view concluded by Projects 1 and 2 that different factors may act to influence success and failure in policy implementation.

The results also seem to indicate that some factors are perceived to be more influential on success and failure as indicated by both their frequency count relative to that obtained by other factors, as well as by their prioritised rank order position. In particular, the fact that Commitment and Leadership are positioned at the centre of the Venn Diagrams for both failure and success indicates that they are considered by all stakeholder groups to have the most determining influence on the outcome of a policy implementation initiative.

In order to statistically support, or reject, the conclusion that differences between the perceived importance of the factors influencing success and failure do exist, a

goodness-of-fit test was performed on the data. The test parameters used for each of the two data sets are illustrated in **Table 17** below.

Table 17 – Goodness-of-Fit Test Parameters

Failure	Success
H_0 = the population distribution is uniform; i.e., each factor is perceived to be equally important by an equal percentage of the population. H_1 = the population distribution is not uniform; i.e., the perceived importance of each factor is not equal.	
Level of significance, $\alpha = 0.05$ & 0.01	Level of significance, $\alpha = 0.05$ & 0.01
Degrees of Freedom, $df = k-1 = 25$	Degrees of Freedom, $df = k-1 = 20$
Test Ratio, $TR = 37.7$ & 44.3	Test Ratio, $TR = 31.4$ & 37.6
Decision Rule = Reject H_0 and accept H_1 if the test ratio, TR , is > 37.7 & 44.3	Decision Rule = Reject H_0 and accept H_1 if the test ratio, TR , is > 31.4 & 37.6

The test was administered on the total population results of each data set, as well as for each actor group within each of the two data sets. The test results are reproduced in **Appendix 21** and summarised in **Table 18**.

Table 18 – Summary Results of Goodness-of-fit Test

Data Sets	TR $\alpha = 0.05$	TR $\alpha = 0.01$	TR Obtained
Failure - All Actors (74 respondents) - Politicians (5 respondents) - Civil Servants (45 respondents) - Consultants (10 respondents) - Unknown (14 respondents)	37.7	44.3	175.83 28.68 102.53 73.16 54.17
Success - All Actors (62 respondents) - Politicians (4 respondents) - Civil Servants (39 respondents) - Consultants (11 respondents) - Unknown (8 respondents)	31.4	37.6	92.00 18.00 52.00 46.00 18.00

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the results obtained:

1. The composite computed test ratio for each data set (i.e., TR for all respondents) exceeds the chi-square critical value specified in the decision rule for both levels of significance. The null hypothesis should therefore be rejected and one may conclude that the different factors are perceived to have different degrees of influence on policy implementation.
2. The computed test ratio for the actor groups in each data set also exceeds the chi-square critical value, with the exception of the two 'Politicians' groups and the 'Unknown' group of the success data set. In these latter cases, the test ratios fall within the areas of acceptance under both levels of significance and the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. However, while it seems that these respondents share contrasting views on which factors influence success and failure, they only represent a small percentage of the total respondents in each data set. Therefore, they should not alter the conclusions drawn in (1) above, especially when one considers that the composite computed test ratios for both failure and success exceed the chi-square critical value by factors of 4 and 3 respectively.
3. It is significant to note that the difference between the observed and expected scores of the individual factors that had previously been identified as the top five most important factors per actor category (see Venn Diagrams – Figures 19 and 20), are considerably high. With a few exceptions, they are also higher than the same figures obtained for the other factors in their respective data sets (see column labelled 'O – E' in Appendix 20). Such results confirm that not only did respondents choose to select these factors more often than they chose others, but also that the number of selections exceed what would be expected under a uniform distribution. This, therefore, confirms their individual importance relative to the other factors.
4. Further to (3) above, the central position occupied by the factors 'Commitment' and 'Leadership' in the Venn Diagram in Figure 2, and 'Political Will', 'Administrative Will' and 'Leadership' in the Venn Diagram in Figure 20, can also be statistically confirmed, given the larger difference between observed and

expected scores of these factors relative to those of the other top most important factors identified in the Venn Diagrams.

5. Notwithstanding the statistical validity of the results achieved, it could be argued that the finding that 'leadership' is perceived to be one of the two critical success/failure factors, is only a direct result of the decision to use leaders as the respondents to this survey (see Section 2.2.2). Consequently, it could also be argued that a broader cross-sectional representation of civil servants could have resulted in a different view of what constitutes the critical factor(s) influencing implementation. However, it should be noted that leadership was selected as a critical factor influencing both success and failure. While it could be expected that leaders may identify leadership as a critical success factor if they are explaining the reasons behind some successful initiative, it is less expected of them to identify leadership as a critical factor contributing to failure. The fact that it was identified as a critical failure factor means that the leaders were self-critical of their own weaknesses and hence objective in their response.

2.3 Step 2 – Proposing Measures for addressing the Critical Factors

Following from the above conclusions, the research focused on a consideration of the most influential factors identified in the Venn Diagrams and confirmed by the Goodness-of-Fit test. While due consideration was given to the findings in the literature relating to all these factors, it is the literature on Leadership and Commitment that occupied the foreground of the review. In fact, references to the literature on the other factors have been embedded in the discussion on the literature on Leadership and Commitment, which they seem to complement and support.

This step of the project dealt exclusively with secondary data and was divided in three parts. The first part concerned a familiarisation of the relevant literature. It started with an electronic search of publications using ABI/Proquest and a subsequent review of the material considered to be most relevant to the study. Where possible, particular attention was given to the literature relating to public administration and to Malta and small states. Having gained a good understanding

of the literature, the next part was to cross-reference the findings of Projects 1 and 2 to the literature with the objective of drawing any similarities and differences between the two sources of information. Finally, the third part focused on the development of propositions for improved implementation practices, building on the knowledge imparted by the literature and the contributions made by the interviewees of Projects 1 and 2.

While the traditional approach to writing a thesis separates the literature review from the results and conclusions of the study, in this case it was considered more appropriate to address the two simultaneously. It is felt that this approach provides a more logical flow to the development of proposals and also makes more interesting reading.

3.0 Theoretical Positioning and Emerging Proposals

3.1 A Focus on Leadership

To describe the literature on leadership as extensive is simply an understatement. One review of the literature carried out in 1981 cited more than 5,000 articles and books on the subject (Bass, 1981), and an electronic search of publication databases carried out for this literature review returned even more thousands of scholarly works and peer-reviewed articles; 1,200 of which covered just the period 1999-2001³⁴. This alone supports the view that leadership is perhaps the most widely studied topic in the organisation sciences (Daft, 1992: 468), although its perceived importance is by no means restricted to organisations. Indeed, the study of leadership by researchers of management and organisational disciplines has been pre-empted and pursued by an equally zealous enthusiasm on the subject by philosophers, historians, anthropologists and politicians (Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 1999:1). For centuries, people have assumed that leadership also plays a central role in politics, sports and many other human activities (Baron and Greenberg, 1989: 373) and even ancient writers such as Confucius, Aristotle, Socrates and Plato emphasised the importance of leadership as a prime shaper of societies (Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 1999:1).

Maybe because of this varied interest, different people have approached the topic in different ways and for different purposes, using the term to refer to a variety of things including a person, a position or a process (Hollander, 1978: 19). Notwithstanding this, and the emergence of different definitions to explain the term, there seems to be agreement among researchers and practitioners alike that the importance of leadership stems from a recognition of the deep impact or influence that it can have on people's actions and behaviours towards the attainment of some defined goal. Indeed, leadership is defined as the process of influencing others to achieve certain goals (Collins Cobuild, 1995: 332). It is probably because of this that the basic

³⁴ Subject search using ABI/Proquest Database.

motive underlying centuries of hypothesis, debate and research seems to have been the quest to understand what distinguishes leaders from ordinary human beings and what can be done to make this form of extraordinary activity a more ordinary occurrence at work, at home and at other places of social interaction, presumably for the benefit of the individual and of society at large. However, despite the fact that so many words have been written about it, leadership still remains one of the least understood subjects (Kakabadse, Nortier et al., 1998: 35), at times seemingly like the Abominable Snowman, whose footprints are everywhere but who is nowhere to be seen (Bennis and Nanus, 1985: 20).

Figure 23 attempts to find a way around this labyrinth by summarising the various approaches to leadership that have been pursued over the years. It presents the principal concept, or basis, of the thinking underlying each of the three main approaches (trait, style and contingency), as well as the general focus of the research pursuing such approaches and the results or characteristics of this activity. Some of the more representative works in the literature shaping each of the three approaches are also identified.

Born to Lead: The Trait Approach

The first form of research on leadership is that which is described in the literature as the trait approach. This approach stresses the personal characteristics of the leader, and deals both with who becomes a leader and what qualities make a leader effective. The earliest thinking in this regard emphasised hereditary factors in making individual leaders (Galton, 1870), thereby giving rise to the 'born to lead' philosophy of leadership. In this respect, the characteristics shaping the 'great man' (Carlyle, 1907) were perceived to be innate to the individual, although decades of research activity have failed to produce an agreed upon list of key traits shared among all leaders (Geier, 1969). Notwithstanding this, some traits that have been attributed to 'great leaders', especially as applied to organisational management, include a high need for power coupled with a high degree of self-control (McClelland and Boyatzis, 1982); a high degree of self-confidence, need for achievement and dominance (Constantini and Craik, 1980); the power to persuade and convince others to do what they ask of them (Cialdini, 2001), and the ability to command respect, admiration and excitement from followers or

Figure 23 - Approaches to Leadership

TIME 			
Approach	Trait	Style	Contingency
Variations on Theme	Charismatic Leadership	Behavioural Leadership	Contextual Leadership
Basis of Theory / Approach	Leaders are 'born to lead'	Successful leadership is a function of leaders' behaviour / approach.	Effective leadership is contingent upon prevailing situations.
Focus / Emphasis of Approach	Identifying the characteristics that make a great leader and that set leaders apart from ordinary human beings.	Understanding how successful leaders behave and how their actions affect their followers.	Understanding which style of leadership will prove most effective under which specific conditions.
Characteristics of Theory / Approach	<p>Leaders possess one or more of the following traits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High levels of ambition; dominance; need for power and achievement; self-confidence and self-control; competence and expertise; commitment • Clear visions of where they want to go / lead others to go • An aura that sets them apart • Willing to take risks • Able to handle crisis <p>Traits remain stable over time and across different groups.</p>	<p>Leadership style can be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Participative vs. Autocratic</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four patterns identified by Muczyk & Reimann 1987 - directive autocrat; permissive autocrat; directive democrat; directive autocrat. • Styles have advantages / disadvantages. Relative success depends on conditions in organisation / its stage of development. • Leaders match style to needs of the organisation. 2. <i>Person-oriented vs. Production-oriented</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dimensions independent but not incompatible • Five styles suggested by Blake & Mouton – country club mgmt; impoverished mgmt; organisation mgmt; team mgmt; authority-obedience. 	<p>Basic theories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Situational Leadership (leadership and employee-task maturity)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hersey and Blanchard suggest that leaders will be most effective in influencing subordinate behaviour and performance when their style of leadership matches their subordinates' level of (task) maturity. • When subordinates' maturity is low, leaders will be more effective through directive action. As subordinates master their jobs, leaders should show consideration. When subordinates reach full maturity, need for both decreases. Four styles of leadership will be required – directing, coaching, supporting, delegating. 2. <i>Contingency Theory (matching leaders/tasks)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiedler suggests that effective leadership is a function of two basic styles of leadership (task-oriented or relationship-oriented) and their application depending upon a leader's degree of control over the situation. • Task-oriented leaders (low LPC) > person-oriented leaders (high LPC) when situational control is very high or very low. High LPC > Low LPC when situational control is moderate. 3. <i>Cognitive Resource (leadership and leaders' cognitive ability)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiedler & Garcia suggest that leaders' intelligence / cognitive abilities will affect performance of subordinates only when leaders are directive and stress is low. 4. <i>Normative Theory (leadership and decision-making)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vroom & Yetton view effective decision-making as a key determinant of effective leadership. • Five distinct methods of decision-making are proposed ranging from total autocratic to total participative. • Choice of method depends upon the <i>quality</i> of the decision and the importance of its <i>acceptance</i>. 5. <i>Path-Goal Theory (leadership as goal setting)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to House, subordinates perform better when they view their leader helping them achieve goals. • Leaders can be instrumental (directive); supportive; participative; achievement-oriented. • Styles are not mutually exclusive – rather should be used interchangeably depending on aspects of work environment and characteristics of subordinates 6. <i>Vertical Dyad Model (leader-follower relation)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dansereau, Graen and Haga suggest that effective leadership is a function of the quality of the relationship and exchanges between leaders and followers. • Leaders holding negative views of their subordinates will be less effective in stimulating motivation, commitment and performance than those who hold positive views on subordinates and offer help/support.
Representative Authors	Stogdill, 1948,1974; Geier, 1969; Constantini and Craik 1980; McClelland and Boyatzis 1982; Conger and Kanungo, 1987,1988.	Muczyk and Reimann, 1987; Blake and Mouton, 1978; Blake and Mouton, 1985; Likert, 1961; Weissenberg and Kavanagh, 1972.	Hersey and Blanchard, 1982; Fiedler, 1967; Fiedler and Garcia, 1987; Vroom and Yetton, 1973; House and Baetz, 1979; Dansereau, Graen et al., 1975; Hammer and Turk, 1987.

subordinates (Conger and Kanungo, 1987; Conger and Kanungo, 1988). The latter category – typically referred to as charismatic leadership – is probably the one which over the years has captured most interest (House and Singh, 1987; Bass, 1990) and which even today remains a topic of both academic research and popular discourse, the merits of which, however, are probably being blown out of proportion (Khurana, 2002).

Leader Behaviour: The Style Approach

As only a few consistent findings have actually emerged from the research on trait leadership (Stogdill, 1974), the lack of generalisability led researchers to pursue a different approach to leadership based on the idea that successful or effective leadership is a function of a leader's behaviour and approach, rather than some innate traits. This approach emphasised the *style* of leadership and focused on both an understanding of how successful leaders behave and on how such behaviour affects the actions of their followers or subordinates. Understanding such behaviour would enable others to emulate such styles and achieve equally effective results.

The research seems to approach leadership style from two perspectives. The first of these viewed leaders' behaviour as either participative or autocratic in nature, although later research noted that each end of the continuum actually involves two separate dimensions, thereby leading to the proposition of four possible patterns of leader behaviour (Muczyk and Reimann, 1987). Labelled as either directive autocrat, permissive autocrat, directive democrat or permissive democrat (Muczyk & Reimann, 1987) leadership style was seen to vary according to the extent to which leaders permitted subordinates to take part in decisions, and the extent to which leaders directed the activities of their subordinates. Muczyk & Reimann (1987) noted that all styles had their inherent advantages and disadvantages and the relative success of each was heavily dependent on conditions prevailing in the organisation and/or its stage of development. Therefore, they argued, no style of leadership was considered the best under all conditions and the most effective style would be the one that matches the needs of the organisation at a particular point in time.

The second perspective of leadership style again viewed behaviour along a continuum but this time focusing on either the leader's disposition towards colleagues and subordinates, or towards a task. Research at the University of Michigan (Likert, 1961) and at the Ohio State University by Stogdill and his associates (Cialdini, 1988) found that leaders were either production-oriented with a focus on getting the job done (also referred to as 'initiating structure'), or person-oriented, in which case they were primarily concerned with establishing good relations with their subordinates (hence the alternative term 'consideration'). Further work in this area led other researchers to expand on these two dimensions and to consider a wider array of leader styles depending on the degree to which leaders emphasised each of the two dimensions. The 'managerial grid' developed by Blake & Mouton is probably the most cited outcome of such research. These researchers suggested that although the two dimensions are largely independent (Weissenberg and Kavanagh, 1972) and a leader may show signs of being more oriented to one dimension rather than to another, the two are not mutually exclusive. Leaders, they suggest, often exhibit a mix of both orientations and the extent to which leaders are high or low on consideration and initiating structure will lead to different behaviours and styles; five primary styles were ultimately suggested (Blake and Mouton, 1978; Blake and Mouton, 1985).

Unlike a trait, therefore, a style is not so much something a person possesses as it is a way of *relating* to other people in the *circumstances* in which they find themselves (Hollander, 1978: 28, emphasis added). In fact, the importance of this difference lies in the recognition that just as leaders affect the behaviours of subordinates, so too are their actions influenced by the reactions of their subordinates. Furthermore, it recognises that such actions and reactions can also be shaped by circumstance which, when applied to the domain of organisational management, refers to the environment in which organisations operate (Hammer and Turk, 1987; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978).

This reasoning led to a different but complementary line of thinking referred to as situational leadership (Hersey and Blanchard, 1982) which, in itself, can probably be considered as a transitional point to the contingency approach to leadership.

Contextual Leadership: The Contingency Approach

This approach emphasises that effective leaders are those people who choose to adopt those relevant characteristics, styles and behaviour that are most appropriate to a particular situation. As such, successful leaders are those people who are able to first understand what trait or style is best suited for the opportunity or problem they are facing, and can then be flexible enough to apply these styles differently, in different contexts. Various theories have been proposed and although they all reflect the contextual importance of leadership, they are based on different definitions or foci of the context.

Hersey and Blanchard's (1982) situational leadership theory focuses on the context from the perspective of *subordinate maturity*. They suggest that subordinates need more, or less, directive actions by their leader depending upon where they stand in terms of their (task) maturity. They concluded that when subordinates' maturity is low, leaders are more effective through directive action. As subordinates master their jobs, leaders should be less directive and show more 'consideration'. When subordinates reach full maturity, the need for both decreases. An effective situational leader is therefore one who changes his style depending on the person he is working with and the situation (Blanchard, Zigarmi et al., 1986: 27). Blanchard et al. (1986) suggest four basic styles of leadership – directing, coaching, supporting and delegating.

The importance of the prevailing situation in relation to effective leadership is again a central tenet of Fiedler's contingency theory (Fiedler, 1967), but in this case, underlying the situational aspect are two foci. Fiedler (1967) suggests that effective leadership is a function of (a) two basic styles of leadership (task-oriented or relationship-oriented) each reflecting different degrees of a leader's esteem (liking) for the least preferred co-worker (LPC), and (b) the application of these two different styles depending upon the leader's degree of control over the prevailing situation. Fiedler's theory concludes that task-oriented leaders (low LPC) are more effective than person-oriented leaders (high LPC) when situational control is either very high or very low. On the other hand, high LPC leaders are more effective than low LPC leaders when situational control is moderate. Fiedler's contingency theory received a lot of attention and has been examined and tested by other researchers (Ashour,

1973; Berkowitz, 1978; Strube and Garcia, 1981; Chemers, Hays et al., 1985; Peter, Hartke et al., 1985) who have also attempted to investigate further contingency variables.

A theory that emerged from such attention is *cognitive resource theory* espoused by Fiedler and Garcia (Fiedler and Garcia, 1987). This theory suggests that leaders' cognitive abilities (such as intelligence and problem-solving skills) play a determining role in their success (Baron and Greenberg, 1989) but that the relationship between leader intelligence and success is mediated by the extent to which leaders are directive and by the levels of stress prevailing at a particular point in time. Fiedler and Garcia (1987) suggest that leaders' intelligence and cognitive abilities will affect the performance of subordinates, only when directive action is coupled with low stress.

Another theory of leadership that bears relevance to the contextual importance common to the contingency approach is *normative theory* developed by Vroom and Yetton (Vroom and Yetton, 1973). Riding on the principle that leaders who make good decisions are likely to be more effective in the long run than leaders who make bad ones, Vroom & Yetton (1973) researched the relationship between leadership and decision-making to understand whether certain decision-making styles are more conducive to effective leadership than others. Like all other contingency-based theories, they concluded that the best method of decision-making (they identified five distinct methods ranging from total autocratic to total participative) was contingent upon the situation. Particularly, they suggested that the choice of method should depend upon the *quality* of the decision and the importance of its *acceptance*. By 'quality' of decision, they referred to the extent to which a decision will affect important group processes such as communication or output, while 'acceptance' was a function of the importance of the degree of commitment needed by subordinates for its implementation. For example, while participative decision-making goes a long way to show a leader's consideration for subordinates, helping to drive improved group atmosphere, morale (Vroom, 1976) and presumably performance, it is unlikely to be an effective style in times of crisis that require a more directive style to match the need for quick decision-making. Vroom and Yetton's theory has also received a lot of attention and while some studies designed to test or extend its validity suggest

the need for some adjustments in the theory (Heilman, Hornstein et al., 1984; Crouch and Yetton, 1987) the results of other studies have been encouraging (Vroom and Jago, 1978; Field, 1982).

Just as decision-making is seen as a key element of effective leadership, so too is the ability to establish clear and achievable goals. This is the focus of the *path-goal theory* developed by House and Baetz (House and Baetz, 1979). According to this theory, subordinates perform better when they view their leader as helping them achieve their goals. More specifically, House and Baetz (1979) suggest that the actions taken by a leader to clarify the nature of subordinates' tasks and to clear the 'path' from obstacles that may impede the achievement of their assigned goal, are likely to improve job satisfaction, motivation and their performance. As such, they suggest that leaders can be instrumental (directive), supportive, participative or achievement-oriented in their style. While these styles are not mutually exclusive, they should be used interchangeably depending on the aspects of different work environments and the different characteristics of subordinates. For example, tasks which are unstructured and non-routine may best be approached by an instrumental leadership style. On the other hand, this style may be ineffective and indeed counterproductive, if applied in the management of professional staff who typically are highly skilled, who know how tasks should be carried out, and who, therefore, are likely to welcome a supportive, rather than directive, style of leadership.

A final consideration of the contingency approach is the *vertical dyad linkage approach* developed by Dansereau, Graen and Haga (Dansereau, Graen et al., 1975). This theory is probably the one that gives most attention to the human and emotive aspect of the leader by recognising that leaders will invariably establish different personal relationships with different people. Dansereau et al. (1975) suggest that effective leadership is therefore a function of the quality of the relationship and exchanges that develop between leaders and followers given different situations and over time. Differences in such relationships will influence things such as performance and job satisfaction (Graen and Scandura, 1987). In general, it is argued that leaders holding negative views of their subordinates will be less effective in stimulating their motivation, commitment and performance than those who hold positive views on subordinates and who offer their help/support.

Leaders should therefore seek to establish positive relationships with their subordinates; something which can be achieved through adequate training (Scandura and Graen, 1984).

Other Approaches to Leadership?

Besides the three approaches to leadership just described, it is possible to identify some different trends in the literature that seem to depart from the tradition of viewing leadership solely from the perspective of either traits, styles or context. What these 'new' perspectives have in common is that they seem to acknowledge the importance of all three approaches but accentuate their validity by adopting a more holistic approach that tries to contemporarily juggle all three forms while sensitising their application to modern day realities.

For example, research has been carried out to compare and/or distinguish between leadership and management (Kotter, 1990a, 1990b; Rees, Turner et al., 1996). This stream of the literature considers how the characteristics and behaviours of different people, in different positions and facing different circumstances, can shape different *types* of leaders, of which, the research suggests, there are essentially two – transactional leaders and transformational leaders (Burns, 1978). In general terms, transactional leadership is used to connote the skills and ability inherent in those persons who are required to handle the more mundane, operational and day-to-day transactions of daily life (Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 1999: 5), while transformational leaders are those people who are distinguished by the ability to bring about change, innovation and entrepreneurship (Daft, 1992: 468). It is interesting to note that earlier thinking on the topic created a marked division between the two types of leadership, branding the latter (the real leaders) as more important to the former (the managers). Indeed, a common definition in the literature to distinguish the two, identifies managers as (merely) those people who do things right and leaders as those people who do the right thing. More recent literature would suggest that a mixture of both transformational leadership and transactional management is required to ensure successful organisational performance. As such, each perspective has led to other avenues of research that either examine how managers can become better transactional leaders, or that consider the activities that must be followed by leaders to successfully achieve transformation, such as the

process of visioning, the mobilisation of commitment and the institutionalisation of change (Tichy and Devanna, 1984). Indeed, these streams of research constitute different bodies of knowledge in themselves.

Another dimension of the literature seems to consider the *practice* of leadership. In this case, the focus lies not so much on leader characteristics or style, but rather on what effective leaders actually 'do' (Kotter, 1990b; Kotter, 2000). For example, it is suggested that leaders are at their best when they engage in the following five practices: when they challenge the process (the status quo); inspire a shared vision; enable others to act; when they model the way (they have detailed plans); and when they encourage the heart (Kouzes and Pozner, 1987: 8). Similarly, they are seen to be people who bring heart to their work; who engage in meaningful relationships and conversations with their colleagues and subordinates; who evoke creativity in people; and who are visibly committed to achieving results (Kiefer, 1998). Closely related to the treatise of what effective leaders do is also a consideration of what they bring to the act in terms of character and competence, although a fine line exists between this and the definition of traits. Thus, it is suggested that effective leaders have a great deal of self-knowledge; a strongly defined sense of purpose; a capacity to generate and sustain trust; and a bias towards action (Bennis, 1994). It is probably correct to state that the most extensive area of research pertaining to the study on the *practice* of leadership is that relating to the leader's ability to inspire a vision; i.e. 'visioning' (Kakabadse, Nortier et al., 1998; Kotter, 1997; Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991).

It should also be noted that over the years the study and practice of leadership has been iterative rather than linear or sequential in approach, and has often redirected itself back and forth to earlier concepts on the subject. For example, Khurana (2002) notes that a long-standing decline in corporate profits in the 1980s, coupled with the rise of so-called populist capitalism, led investors and companies in the late 1980s and the 1990s to frantically search for and replace the stable 'organisation man' of the managerial capitalist era with a new breed of corporate leaders, the focus of which were charismatic, energy-infused CEOs considered by many as saviours of the new era. However, while some of these leaders truly worked wonders in their respective fields, others have been equally capable of producing incredible disasters.

For example, it has been claimed in the popular press that the recent scandals of companies of the likes of Enron, Tyco and Worldcom were as much a result of poor governance and oversight by ineffective Boards, as they were the ability of their leaders to 'charm' such Boards into entrusting them with far too much freedom and flexibility in managing their companies. These leaders and their actions have been quickly condemned, but some critics may try to use such outcomes to admonish charismatic leadership, rather than unfettered leaders. Khurana argues that such unfortunate events should not lead people to discount the potential of charismatic or other trait-based leadership. Instead, it should instil in them a willingness to recognise the weakness of aspects of a particular theory and improve upon it; in this case, to move from blind faith in a person, to a more mature belief in leaders that is based on both faith and reason (Khurana, 2002: 66).

Moving back and forth from theories of leadership does not only help to improve aspects of such theories. It also leads to the development of new considerations of leadership and encourages researchers to approach leadership from multiple foci. Take the example mentioned above. Khurana's appeal to introduce an element of reason to the study of charismatic leadership would prompt some of the more ardent researchers not to shed the theories of trait leadership but rather to consider other traits or conditions that are required as safeguards against a repetition of mistakes of the past. Considering issues of corporate governance by strengthening a company's board of directors can be one such condition or response (Sonnenfeld, 2002) to the potential blinding effects of strong charismatic leadership. Ironically, the ability to find meaning in negative events and to learn from even the most trying circumstances can also be one of the most reliable indicators and predictors of true leadership (Bennis and Thomas, 2002). Indeed, such ability has been considered as a trait in itself and one that is increasingly more demanded of modern leaders. This trait is 'wisdom'. It is perceived to be fundamental to the very concept of leadership and to transcend all approaches to leadership as "no one given set of characteristics attributed to a leader, or a set of circumstances out of which a leader-follower relationship is born, can, in itself, give rise to the phenomenon of leadership without the presence of the willingness to aspire to wisdom – that openness to "truth-as-a-process" which is Socratic teaching itself" (Korac-Kakabadse, Kakabadse et al., 2000: 1). Likewise, other studies have similarly shed the traditional approach to

leadership and, in addition to viewing leadership through the concept of wisdom, have considered leadership through other 'lenses' such as power (Pinto, 2000), trust (Culbert and McDonough, 1986; Christensen and Laegreid, 1999), and the adoption and management of values (Senge, 1992; Savage, 1996).

Finally, while some researchers believe that leadership is the pivotal factor needed to enhance human resources (Bennis and Nanus, 1985: 8) and that there is no alternative for it, as it cannot be created or promoted, taught or learned (Drucker, 1989: 156), others have given consideration to the possibility that some factors may actually *substitute* for a leader's influence, rendering it superfluous. These factors may include knowledge, competence and commitment on the part of subordinates, and/or highly structured tasks or work environments, technology, work norms and group peer pressure (Kerr and Jermier, 1978; Sheridan, Vredenburg et al., 1984). Equally effective may be a functional, problem-centred approach to strategy implementation, also referred to as pragmatic leadership (Mumford and Van Doorn, 2001). Acknowledging that 'traditional' leadership is not always necessary and that steady success can be achieved equally by good management (Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 1999: 3), some authors believe that leadership has been 'romanticized' and given more importance than it deserves (Meindl and Ehrlich, 1987), thereby suggesting that the search for substitutes should be intensified.

Leadership in the Context of the DBA Research

The fact that leadership was identified as one of the top two most important factors that can decisively influence success or failure in policy implementation, is evidence enough of the high regard that this issue is given by those involved in the management of Maltese public policy. It is also highly indicative of a situation wherein at least politicians, public officers and consultants seem to yearn for better, more effective leadership. But what is it, exactly, that they are looking for or aim to achieve? Reference to the definitions of leadership that were used in Project 3 can shed some light on this issue.

In the context of successful policy implementation, leadership was defined as "the ability to develop and command a following, characterised by clarity of vision and a legitimate mandate" (Table 11), while in the context of failure, the 'lack' of leadership

was defined as “the inability to develop and command a following for a particular policy, because of one’s ineptness, an unclear or changing vision, and/or wavering commitment” (Table 10). These definitions materialised from the findings of Projects 1 and 2 and although emerging from specific case studies, Project 3 interviewees were asked to consider the universal application of such properties or dimensions of leadership in the context of the Maltese public policy arena. The notion that leadership is perceived to be “the ability to develop and command a following” seems attuned to the principles of charismatic leadership and is probably a view that persons familiar with Maltese history and the way of life of its people can come to understand and accept more readily than others. Indeed, maybe because having been shaped by centuries of foreign rule by successive dominating powers³⁵, the Maltese people have traditionally sought and embraced strong leaders to guide them in their quest for political, social and also religious emancipation. This is a trend that prevails today as evidenced, for example, in the political sphere, where almost everything that is said and done by a political party is attributed to its leader, and where elections have been won and lost on the personal strength or weakness of the party leader. Even in the administration of Government, the Public Service Reform Commission³⁶ had noted that the effectiveness of the Civil Service depended upon its leadership. Particularly, it stated that “the quality of leadership that [the Head of the Civil Service] provides is critical: his greatest challenge [lying] in cultivating a sense of collegiality among the leaders of the public service” (Public Service Reform Commission, 1989: 71). Whether charismatic leadership is truly what the public service in Malta requires is a matter for debate and investigation and cannot be answered here. However, the issue points to an important consideration with regard to tackling the perceived need for leadership: that before attempting to address the problem, decision-makers must pause to understand the problem, and the cause contributing to the perceived absence of leadership. The first proposition for improving policy implementation through improved leadership is, therefore:

³⁵ Refer to Appendix 1 for further details.

³⁶ The Public Service Reform Commission (PSRC) was appointed by the Prime Minister in 1988 “to examine the organisation of the Public Service, and to recommend means by which the Service can efficiently respond to the changing needs for effective government” (Public Service Reform Commission, 1989).

L1: Diagnose the Leadership Gap.

The importance of this initiative recognises that the key to effective leadership lies, first and foremost, in matching the *type* and/or style of leadership which subordinates feel they require most, rather than the one which leaders either think they're best at or that subordinates require (Blanchard, Zigarmi et al., 1986). An initiative that aims to understand where leadership is failing should, inter alia, question how politicians and public officers view leadership, and should also consider both the value system (Savage, 1996) characterising the public service today, as well as the present challenges of the policy context in Malta and those of the foreseeable future.

Moving beyond the type or style of leadership that may be required, one must also consider the *scope* or breadth of leadership.

An operations review of the Maltese Public Service conducted in 1988 noted an absence of middle management and a dearth of leadership in public service ranks (Tabone, 1988: 27). A similar report prepared a decade later again concluded that there was still an absence of competence and of effective leadership in a considerable number of senior positions, as well as an absence of champions in strategic positions (Management Efficiency Unit, 1998: 2). The interviews held over the recent past for the purpose of this research study continue to echo these conclusions. Collectively, these comments lead to at least two observations.

The first is that the people involved in the management of policy continue to limit their view of leadership solely to the perspective of the individual. Said differently, it seems that they are waiting for one or a few super-leaders who can herald a new era of leadership and who can mastermind the development and implementation of the government's agenda and its policies, almost single-handedly and from their positions at the apex of the Service. Nothing can be this surreal. Secondly, it also seems that politicians and public officers are not adequately recognising and distinguishing between the different roles that can be played by different leaders i.e., that not every leader has to be 'superman' and fall within the transformational category discussed earlier. Equally important are a cadre of effective transactional leaders at every level of the organisation.

In a way, the view that leadership is only about the individual is hardly surprising. This concept is probably reflective of the romanticism associated with this subject (Meindl and Ehrlich, 1987) and is indicative of the emphasis by which the subject is probably presented to students and practitioners of management. To a greater degree, it is also manifested in the populist literature that reduces the achievements of whole organisations to the single chief at the “top” (Mintzberg, 1996) and that places a significant emphasis on aspects pertaining to the leaders’ characteristics, behaviours, styles and practices. This view needs to be corrected. Decision makers must recognise that the potency of leadership is more likely to arise as the collective strength of a number of leaders working at various levels of an organisation, rather than from the traits, behaviours and/or practices of a single person at the top. Thus, it is recommended that;

*L2: Developing effective leadership requires the establishment of a **network**³⁷ of effective leaders.*

This proposition recognises that leadership exists at all levels of the organisation (Cleland, 1994, as cited in Turner, Grude et al., 1996: 108). It is also based on the belief that leadership can be ‘institutionalised’ (Nadler and Tushman, 1990). By institutionalising leadership, I do not mean substituting for leadership or mechanising it, but rather taking measures to (a) demystify the concept and correct the perception that leadership pertains solely to some type of individual or elite group; (b) devolve leadership to rank and file so that everyone can ‘run with’ his/her own responsibilities and inspire others to do the same; and (c) promote and reward exemplary leadership so that, over time, it makes its way through the value system of the organisation and becomes part of ‘who we are’ and ‘how we do things around here’.

This leads the discussion back to the second observation mentioned earlier; that there are different types of leaders who can be equally effective, albeit playing different roles. While acknowledging the merits of the argument that “leadership is different from management, and the primary force behind successful change of any

³⁷ In this context, the term ‘network’ should be interpreted in its most literal sense. The choice and use of the word ‘network’ is simply intended to connote and emphasise the idea that leadership should be approached as a shared activity and exercised in a pluralist manner. Its use is not intended to reflect the meaning ascribed to it when used in the context of political science and sociology.

significance is the former, not the latter” (Kotter, 1999a), this research would suggest that both transformational and transactional leaders are required for the successful implementation of public policy in Malta and that, following from the argument presented above, these should ideally be found throughout an organisation, rather than concentrated in a few positions or places. Thus, it is believed that:

*L2a: A network of effective leaders ideally requires a **mix** of transformational and transactional leaders.*

Unfortunately, the availability of transformational leaders in the Maltese public service now, and in the past, has been virtually non-existent or at least not evident (which in itself is evidence of the former). The reason for this would need to be explored but might be attributed to factors such as more exciting and rewarding challenges in the private sector that lure potential leaders away from the public service. Whatever the reason, Malta’s experience has shown that transformational leaders in government are more likely to arise from the political class whose mission, after all, is transformational in nature, in that they seek power to then use this to replace the old with the new. Indeed, the leadership experienced in the Local Councils initiative (Project 2) was a rare example of transformational leadership at work, which, in the main, was attributed to the political figure. However, it should be recognised that there is little, if anything, that can be done to ensure that persons occupying political positions possess the type of transformational leadership required to successfully drive policy. Politicians are *elected* to their positions and some (if not many!) are so elected on the basis of their popularity and appeal, rather than a proven track record in organisational leadership and policy management. At least from the latter aspect, some tend to disappoint. I also believe that by virtue of its own nature, there is probably little that can be done to influence the emergence of transformational leadership throughout the ranks of the public service, except to consider what conditions in the environment can be introduced, modified or removed to give ‘latent’ transformational leaders the ‘space’ required to contribute better to the Service and to make an impact on the implementation of policy. For example, experience has shown that past decisions to migrate some government departments from the main stream public service to agency status provided these organisations with an opportunity to bring about radical change and innovation that would never

have happened otherwise. Essentially, these organisations were still made up of the same people fulfilling the same core functions, but by changing their legislative context and procedural dimensions, the persons exercising leadership in these organisations could pursue strategies and manage in ways that were not possible before. The capability to do so was there, but it couldn't happen. Therefore, while it would be advantageous to have a body of active transformational leaders throughout government, those best positioned to engage in transformational leadership are likely to be the politicians and top civil servants who may have the predisposition, and also access to the resources and power required to induce or support radical change and innovation.

Without discounting the potential benefits that may arise from transformational leadership, a more manageable and, maybe, realistic approach to improving the odds of successful policy implementation is one that, at least in the short to medium term, places greater focus on the development of transactional leaders.

At face value, dealing with transactional leadership should be 'easier' than dealing with transformational leadership, at least from one aspect. Unlike some of the elected persons occupying the latter role, who may be expert impressionists but who may lack the organisational expertise required to deliver on their promises, the persons occupying the former role in the Civil Service are meant to be appointed to their position on the basis of some proven track record. Therefore, one would think that given a certain aptitude and predisposition, and given also the right conditions and support, these people could come to excel as transactional leaders. Unfortunately, there are obstacles to be faced even here. [In Malta] Parties in government have frequently used senior offices in the public service, including directorships in public corporations, to reward activists and/or close family members, while less important posts have been used to gratify constituents (Pirota, 2001: 250). Therefore, the result of such appointments may be similar to that of elections, in that, like some of their counterparts in the political sphere of government, some persons occupying significant positions in the Civil Service may excel in appeal and popularity, but may also be equally incompetent leaders. There is not much that can be done with these persons given that, once appointed, they are hard to remove. But something ought to be done with those who are capable and willing. After all, an

objective of spreading transactional leadership throughout the Service is to identify and 'exploit' the best element of its human resources to further the successful implementation of policy.

But can leadership propagate through a managed process? As mentioned earlier, those subscribing to Drucker's (1989) view object to the notion that leadership can be taught or that management can create leaders. However, even Drucker does suggest that management can [both] create the conditions under which potential leadership qualities become effective, and it can also stifle potential leadership (Drucker, 1989: 156). In this respect, it is argued that successful organisations don't wait for leaders to appear; they actively seek out people with leadership potential and expose them to career experiences to develop that potential (Dahmen and Hammond, 2002: 25). This view is supported by the findings of this research, which also indicate that the conditions for stimulating leadership can be brought to bear by either management (the institution) and/or the individual himself. This is also akin to the view held in the literature that leadership is essentially about a relationship between people who are influencing each other and who affect, or can be affected by, the context within which they operate. Therefore, the discussion that follows will present the measures (or conditions) that have been proposed to influence leadership and policy implementation from both an individual and an institutional point of view.

One of the reasons contributing to the failure of the financial management reform policy (Project 1) was the perceived ineptness of the leadership (Interviewees 65, 70, 74). In contrast, the resourcefulness and comprehensive skills base of the team leading the local councils initiative (Project 2) were perceived to have contributed to its successful implementation (Interviewees 142, 143, 144). These and other factors relating to the quality of the leadership would suggest that a foremost determining factor of its effectiveness is *competence*, and that this can be viewed from the perspectives of knowledge/skills and personal traits. The type of knowledge or traits that may be required differs from one situation to another, and various suggestions are made in the literature. What is more important in terms of the DBA research is to identify what measures, if any, can be taken to ensure the availability of competent leadership.

One's knowledge and skills can be acquired or enhanced through formal training and education. The PSRC had identified this as an important measure to improve the competency of the leadership of the Civil Service and had in fact recommended the establishment of the Staff Development Organisation to pursue this objective (Public Service Reform Commission, 1989, 1990). This is an institutional measure that, in fact, was followed. But another factor that can positively contribute to one's knowledge and leadership qualities is experience (Interviewees 145, 146). In this respect, it is suggested that the Service must provide better opportunities for its staff. First, it must be willing to risk by assigning policies, or aspects of them, to inexperienced or less experienced persons. If policies are always managed by the same people, the objective of devolving competent leadership throughout the various Ministries will not be reached. Worse still, it may lead to cloning³⁸ and stagnation in creativity (Interviewees 65 and 71). Second, it must give persons in leadership positions enough time to mature and learn from such exposure. This is inhibited by frequent turnovers in leadership, which is also disruptive to the stability of an organisation. Of course, willing to risk does not mean not managing that risk. Besides being provided with safe opportunities to learn, practice and even teach new skills and behaviours (Miller, 2000), leaders 'in formation' need to be directed, coached and supported (Blanchard, Zigarmi et al., 1986). Naturally, institutional efforts to improve the qualities of its potential leaders must be matched by the individuals' cooperation in terms of their willingness and predisposition to learn (Interviewee 67) and presumably a readiness to be flexible and open to new challenges.

This links to the other perspective of competent leadership; that is, personal traits. Flexibility and a predisposition to learn underscore the philosophy of the developmental school of leadership, in which wisdom and maturity occupy centre stage (Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 1999: 9). In the context of policy implementation, a 'wise' leader is probably one who recognises his strengths and weaknesses, who is sensitive to the elements of the environment in which he is required to operate, and who is both willing and capable of modifying his behaviour

³⁸ Defined as the perpetuation of management behaviours and practices that may potentially stifle innovation (Source: DBA Project 1).

to match the ambiguities of that context. On the other hand, the 'mature' leader is one who is capable of inviting, receiving and handling feedback well (Korac-Kakabadse, Korac-Kakabadse et al., 1996: 38) and who fosters a learning environment by being accessible, by encouraging information sharing and by admitting mistakes (Edmonson, Bohmer et al., 2001). From a trait perspective, competence is also characterised as the ability to provide clarity of vision (Interviewees 144,146,147,149). The rationale is that competent leaders are ones who know what is required and who are able to explicitly communicate that message to provide others with a clear direction (Interviewees 68,70). According to the 'born to lead' philosophy, individuals either have such traits or they don't and there is nothing others can do about it. But maybe there is. For example, exposing would-be leaders to different experiences should provide them with better opportunities for getting 'wiser'. This can also develop better if greater efforts are made to direct these individuals into those experiences that will progressively impart to them greater degrees of maturity. Going back to an earlier point, the Service must also recognise that potential leaders can arise from different ranks. Therefore, efforts to develop competent leadership throughout the organisation must be substantiated by a will to search for and acknowledge would-be leaders throughout the various levels of the hierarchy, rather than by maintaining an aloofness from the rank and file (Interviewee 67). Considering the above, it is proposed that:

*L3: Successful policy implementation requires
Competent Leadership.*

*L3a: Competence is a function of knowledge/skills
and personal traits.*

Another aspect of leadership that is considered to influence the outcome of policy implementation is *commitment*³⁹. The findings of the research would suggest that

³⁹ In the context presented here, the use of the term 'Commitment' refers to a leader's *personal* commitment to a policy initiative. It should be noted that Commitment has also been viewed from a broader, organisational perspective. In this respect, it is considered as a critical factor that independently influences policy implementation. Furthermore, besides influencing Leadership, Commitment can also be influenced by Leadership. A discussion of both Commitment as an independent factor and of its relationship with Leadership in the latter respect is presented later in this report.

committed leadership is a function of (but also affects) confidence and motivation, values and integrity.

An enthusiastic attitude (Interviewees 145,146) and visible motivation (Interviewees 65,70) are perceived as evidence of a leader's strong commitment to a policy programme (Interviewee 70,148,149). They are indicative of a confident leader, but also inspire confidence and enthusiasm in others (Interviewees 146,147). Committed leaders inspire confidence and motivation when they show high personal interest in a policy (Interviewee 147); when they persist to see it through even in times of difficulty (Interviewee 147); when they are willing to risk and assume responsibility for their actions and the outcomes of the implementation programme (Interviewees 145,149); and, maybe above all, when they adopt an optimistic disposition (Interviewee 145). Some of these factors are behavioural and dependent on an individual's character. However, from an institutional perspective, it is suggested that there are a number of things that can be done to influence this and successful implementation. Firstly, recognising that a leader's confidence derives from his past experience (Bowman, 1999: 560), policies should, to the extent possible, be entrusted to leaders who have positive experience in managing similar policies in similar contexts. Secondly, policies should be entrusted to persons who typically adopt an optimistic attitude even in the face of difficulties. Thirdly, an attempt should be made to increase leaders' commitment by affording them adequate resources in sufficient quantities (Interviewees 142,143,146,148,149); by rewarding performance within a framework of accountability (Interviewees 65,66,67,72,74); and by involving their participation in decision-making to encourage/sustain ownership (Interviewees 65, 66,67,68,70,71).

Committed leadership has also been described from the perspective of values and integrity. While it is recognised that a leader's commitment to a policy initiative can be significantly influenced by the value he ascribes to the policy⁴⁰, leaders who do not subscribe to the ideology of a particular policy but who nonetheless act with integrity in its execution are still seen to exercise effective leadership. Leading with integrity, or principled leadership, means acting ethically, with tact and diplomacy

⁴⁰ This is discussed later under 'leader affinity'.

(London, 1999). It also means maintaining a consistent focus on what needs to be delivered (Interviewee 70). It requires an apolitical attitude (Interviewee 147) and enough personal strength not to be swayed according to one's own preferences or beliefs. Government and the Public Service play an important role in safeguarding and promoting such integrity. In this respect, it is suggested that leaders can be at their best when roles are clearly defined and delineated (Interviewees 142,147,149). This minimises the potential for (partisan) political interference and promotes objectivity in the implementation of policy (Interviewee 146). Government and/or the Public Service can also promote integrity by maintaining a strong and consistent view of a policy even if opportunities arise to gain political mileage from a change in policy direction. Therefore:

*L4: Successful policy implementation requires
Committed Leadership.*

*L4a: Committed Leadership is a function of
confidence/motivation and values/integrity.*

Policies also stand a better chance of being successfully implemented when the leadership is properly *empowered* to carry them to fruition. There are two elements contributing to empowerment and each one influences the other.

The first element is power or, more specifically in the context of policy implementation, the willingness and ability to share power. From an individual's perspective, power sharing is influenced first by his/her willingness to accept responsibility and control for some policy, and then by his/her readiness to shed part of that control by delegating aspects of that responsibility to others (Interviewees 65,66,67,70). Not everyone can, or is ready to do so. Accepting and sharing power requires leaders to be both accountable and submissive to the chain of command and to be ready to enforce their responsibility and hold others accountable to it, even at the risk of jeopardising personal relationships (Interviewee 66). It also requires a shift in paradigm that acknowledges that true power arises from the ability to use information that has been shared, rather than from withholding knowledge and information (Interviewee 149). From an institutional perspective, power sharing should mean sharing ownership and responsibility for a policy, rather than dumping it

onto some other entity/individual or leaving it 'homeless'. In fact, decisions pertaining to the location of a policy initiative are critical to its successful outcome (Interviewees 146,147,149), especially when considering the [typical] lack of coordination between the activities of government departments, including those located in the same ministerial portfolio (Warrington, 1992). Proper role delineation (Interviewee 74), as opposed to role fragmentation (Interviewees 65,66,70) can be as effective in empowering leaders as can formal power ascribed to them by the organisation through authority, status or influence (Pinto, 2000). Irrespective of the origins of power, the research suggests that the effectiveness of the leadership in successfully implementing policy will be dependent upon the use of legitimate or mandated power (Interviewees 68, 149). While legitimisation enables a new paradigm to take hold (Brooks and Bate, 1994: 188), the use of 'illegitimate' power will lead to resistance and opposition and crush opportunities for successful policy implementation. Effective leadership is [therefore] the wise use of power (Bennis and Nanus, 1985: 17).

Empowerment is also dependent on the presence of trustful relationships. Indeed, power will not be entrusted to leaders, and leaders will not share it with others, if the donors fear that this could be used against them. From a leadership perspective, empowerment requires trustworthy leaders and leaders who can inspire and build trust in others. This is important because "with trust and trusting relationships, imperfect plans can be made to work [but] without trust and trusting relationships, even the most perfectly conceived plans can fail" (Culbert and McDonough, 1986: 171). What influences trust between two or more people depends on a number of variables (Herzog, 2001) and the literature proposes a number of steps or measures to address this (Shockley-Zalabak, Ellis et al., 2000; Cufaude, 1999; Webb, 2000). However, five characteristics that seem to be universally required of leaders and their followers to engage in trustful relationships include integrity, competence, consistency, loyalty and openness (Butler and Cantrell, 1984). Leaders must also build trust by "walking the talk" (Simons, 2002); that is, they must practice what they preach. Some of the findings of this research echo these propositions (Interviewees 66,70) but also point to other factors which, given the realities of the Maltese polity are also of utmost importance. First, it must be recognised and accepted that trust is more likely to emanate from relationships between persons who are 'in the same

political camp' and who are therefore less likely to fear acts of policy sabotage (Interviewee 65). Secondly, it arises when there is a considerable element of respect between colleagues (Interviewee 147) and a high level of confidence in each other's skills (Interviewee 149). Of course, this is highly dependent on the attitudes and dispositions of the individuals involved. However, such attitudes can be influenced or shaped by things that persons experience in their environment. Consequently it is suggested that, from an institutional perspective, trust can be engendered through fair and equitable management practices (Interviewee 67), participation in decision-making (Interviewee 66), and a context characterised by a calm political climate (Interviewee 65). Therefore:

*L5: Successful policy implementation requires
Empowered Leadership.*

*L5a: Empowered Leadership is a function of
trust and power sharing.*

A final condition or measure of leadership that is seen to influence policy implementation is the leader's *affinity* with the policy and its (political) context. There are two dimensions to this. The first relates to the leader's personal interests in the policy itself, while the second considers the leader's personal interests from a political perspective. In a nutshell, it is about perceived losses or gains. While the discussion on competence, commitment and empowerment centred on an understanding of what leaders *bring* to a policy implementation initiative, the focus of a discussion on leader affinity considers more what leaders seek to *gain* from such initiatives.

For example, in the Local Councils' initiative (Project 2), it was noted that all the key players (or policy leaders) strongly believed that the policy was the right measure to address the culture of centralised, authoritarian power in government⁴¹. They ardently believed in the philosophical principles of the policy and considered its implementation as the only measure for the devolution and democratisation of government. Successfully implementing this policy would therefore create a

⁴¹ Source: Interviews.

situation that they truly desired, providing them with the opportunity to gain something in return. This gain was neither something physical, nor a personal material reward, but rather a possible sense of vindication in the principles they held dear. Their belief in the policy engendered their commitment, but it also inspired others to commit to it. Indeed, the research suggests that leaders who show intrinsic belief in a policy are considered to be more committed to it, and to be better able to elicit commitment from others, than leaders who do not believe in the merits of the policy [Interviewees 142,143,144,145,146,147]. The opposite happened in the case of the Financial Management Reform programme (Project 1). The policy leaders from the administrative point of view did not believe in the merits of the policy⁴². They felt that the finances of government should continue to be managed as they had been managed in the past and that changes in the system, albeit following in the steps of other jurisdictions where they had been tried and tested, were not appropriate for the country. They ardently believed that implementing such a policy at that particular point in time, would be more harmful than beneficial for the management of Government's finances. In this case, the perceived outcome to them of implementing this policy was a potential loss of control for the Ministry of Finance. These examples echo the view that the way in which leaders identify with the policies they manage or generate will influence their performance (Kakabadse and Dainty, 1987) and, consequently, the success or otherwise of an implementation initiative.

In a similar vein, the findings of both Projects 1 and 2 would suggest that considerable attention must also be given to a leader's political interests. These can be viewed from two perspectives. The first relates to aspects such as interpersonal alliances, organisational networks and informal coalitions at work (small 'p' politics). The second relates to the formal meaning of politics, as represented by a leader's membership in, or association with, a defined Political Party and/or ideology.

Starting with the latter perspective, the research would suggest that persons who are charged to lead a particular policy but who do not share the same political belief as the Party in Government may, at times, either act to hinder the successful

⁴² Source: Interviews.

implementation of an initiative or, at best, relent to promote and champion it. Therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest that Government should attempt to match people with policies. Unfortunately, this solution may not be as simple as it sounds. The current organisation of the Maltese Civil Service is strictly functional in its composition, with Ministries eager to create virtual boundaries around their portfolio of responsibilities to protect their interests from possible 'inroads' by other Ministries. In this respect, Ministries have been likened to silos⁴³. Furthermore, the Civil Service organisation is very hierarchical in nature, with authority and command over resources being position-oriented. Consequently, the responsibility for policies typically falls within the ambit of functional leaders enjoying senior positions in a Department or Ministry. Thus, to avoid having a policy led by a person who happens not to share the same political belief, the only option is to either remove this person from office, or to transfer him/her to other posts in the Civil Service, every time there is a change in Government. Although this happens in some countries, such as the United States of America, it can be a significant problem in the Maltese context. Given the country's small size and economy, it would be difficult for senior people to easily find postings in the private sector following their removal from their positions in the Service. It would also be difficult to find sufficiently competent people to enter the Service, given the lack of available human resources in general. Transferring them to other posts within the Service is also not recommended. Besides shifting the problem, rather than solving it, persons who are subject to transfers on political grounds will simply become more bitter and pose a bigger opposing force (and maybe threat) to the Government of the day. Therefore, the problem must be addressed differently. A proposed solution that may merit consideration is a departure from the current manner of organising and managing policy, to one that adopts a project management approach.

Just as persons may champion or hinder a policy initiative on the basis of perceived (partisan) Political gains, their influence on policy implementation may also reflect their perceptions of how they stand to lose or gain in their relation to organisational coalitions. In this respect, the research seems to suggest that policy leaders can be

⁴³ Source: Interviews (Project 2).

explicitly or implicitly motivated to behave in ways that will further their position in the political system of their organisation, whether with the objective of amassing further power, or simply to avoid 'rocking the boat' and upsetting personal relationships. The best leaders for a policy initiative are therefore those whose interests align with the perceived outcomes of the implementation process. Once again examples can be drawn from the case studies. In the Local Councils' initiative, the political leader was probably encouraged by interests that were congruent with those of his Political party, while the administrative leader was probably seeking recognition that would lead to improvements to his position in the Service, or his status and position with colleagues. Similarly, the consultant who acted as project manager probably perceived this initiative as an opportunity to amass greater resources and influence in his organisation and, hence, his standing and power relative to that of his peers. On the other hand, in the Financial Management Reform programme (Project 1), the presence of dissimilar stakeholder interests and also a perceived threat to such interests, ensured that personal and/or organisational goals could not be aligned, thereby hindering the successful implementation of the policy.

Although the above discussion on leader affinity bears elements of resemblance to some of the issues raised in the previous discussion on committed leadership (particularly that on beliefs/values) and empowerment (particularly that on power), the findings of this research suggest that leader affinity and its dimensions merit to be treated separately. However, it is pertinent to note that in this case, such claims are less a reflection of explicit statements made by interviewees, and more a subject of analysis and interpretation by the author. Considering the above, it is felt that:

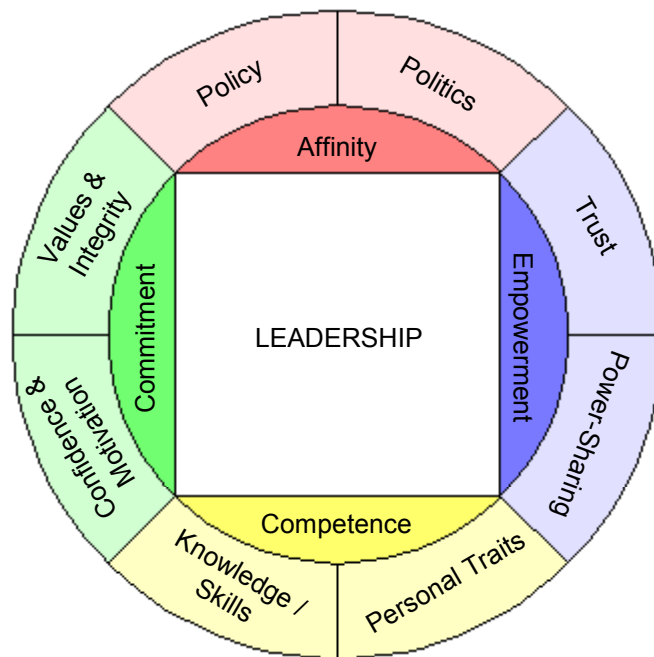
*L6: Successful policy implementation requires Leader
Affinity with Policy and Political Context.*

To conclude, this research supports the view that successful policy implementation can be positively influenced by effective leadership, and that (building on L2a):

*L2b: Developing a network of leaders requires a mix of
competence, commitment, empowerment and personal affinity.*

A summary of the perceived requisites for effective leadership in the context of successful policy implementation is presented in **Figure 24**.

Figure 24: Requisites of Effective Leadership for Successful Policy Implementation



Source: Compiled by Author

3.2 A Focus on Commitment

In the foregoing discussion, reference was made to the importance of commitment in relation to effective leadership. In that context, the use of the term 'Commitment' referred to a leader's *personal* commitment to a policy initiative. However, commitment has also been viewed from a broader perspective, extending the concept from the individual, to a group (peers, subordinates, employees or other stakeholders) and/or institutional level. In this respect, it is considered as a critical factor that *independently* influences policy implementation. The following discussion considers commitment as viewed from this perspective. As such, it will be recognised that, to a significant degree, the organisational commitment that is sought should complement and resonate with the requirements of effective leadership. For example, the leader should have power, the organisation should assign it; the leader should have an affinity for the policy, so too should the organisation have an appetite for it; a leader needs to be able to command resources, the organisation must be committed to providing them etc.

Commitment has been a very popular research topic for decades (Liou and Nyhan, 1994b). While research activity around this subject probably peaked in the 1980s, some of the more prominent studies that are still widely cited today date to the late 1950s and early 1960s. Over the years, this subject has drawn the attention of academics from a variety of different fields and interests; including psychology, sociology, management, industrial relations, and organisational behaviour. Commitment is equally a subject of interest to management practitioners in both the private and public sectors.

One possible reason for this attention is the belief that commitment is generally recognised as an important determinant of performance at both an organisational and personal level (Suliman and Iles, 2000). In fact, most of the research on commitment seems to be directed towards an exploration, or understanding, of its means-end application. For example, researchers have been studying how commitment can influence the way people act at work; how employees relate with their colleagues or how they view their employer; or how a person's commitment to his work may affect his personal life. In this respect, researchers have been studying how higher or lower levels of commitment can influence organisational matters such as job performance (Porter, Steers et al., 1974; Becker and Eveleth, 1995; Becker, Billings et al., 1996; Siders, George et al., 2001), absenteeism (Nijhof, de Jong et al., 1998; Savery, Travaglione et al., 1998), staff turnover (Williams and Hazer, 1986; Farrell and Petersen, 1984), customer service and competitiveness (Caruana and Calleja, 1998), as well as personal matters such as job satisfaction (Bateman and Strasser, 1984) and work-related stress (King and Sethi, 1997).

Besides studies related to performance, research on commitment has also been approached from a number of other different angles. Researchers have devoted considerable effort to defining commitment (see Porter, Steers et al., 1974; Ferris, 1981), on categorising it into various forms and types (see Meyer and Allen, 1991; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990), to exploring the sources and motives of commitment, as well as its outcomes and effects (see Becker and Eveleth, 1995, 1996), and to developing methods and measures for assessing different forms and levels of commitment in organisations (see Fenton-O'Creevy, Winfrow et al., 1997; McGee and Ford, 1987; Porter, Steers et al., 1974; Hrebiniak and Alutto, 1972).

Notwithstanding this, it is possible to group the research pertaining to this body of knowledge under four major headings, or themes – Employee Commitment, Organisational Commitment, Managerial Commitment, and the Escalation of Commitment. In addition, some of the research in more recent years has focused on exploring matters relating to Goal Commitment, and to Commitment to, or of, Customers. **Figure 25** summarises some of the more prominent and cited works from this body of knowledge, using the order of classification proposed above. Using the findings of these studies and those derived from Projects 1 and 2 of this research, a number of measures can be proposed to build commitment to a policy initiative and to improve the odds of successful policy implementation. These are discussed below.

Understanding Commitment

Commitment has been defined in many different ways. Ferris (1981) suggests that the strength of an individual's identification with, and involvement in, a particular organisation is what defines organisational commitment. Similarly, employee commitment has been defined as the psychological attachment of workers to their workplaces (Allen and Meyer, 1990a) involving aspects such as a sense of job involvement, loyalty and a belief in the values of the organisation (O'Reilly, 1989). In contrast, Salancik, 1977 suggests that commitment should be construed as being something that is less about feelings of belonging and more about action. To him, commitment is a binding act to deliver. It is about people who subscribe to some actions and become bound to such actions so as not to let themselves, or others, down. However, the most compelling definition of commitment is probably that presented by Klein and Izzo, 1996. They describe commitment as 'corporate soul' or, the ability and experience of coming fully alive at work. Their definition of commitment can probably be described as a compromise between the former two positions. It is based on the ability to achieve individual and corporate value congruence, coupled with a desire and expectation to deliver on established and agreed goals.

Figure 25

The latter definition of commitment bears a lot of relevance to the public sector. Unlike organisations in the private sector that are ultimately guided by a single overriding objective – the maximisation of wealth – public sector organisations are often faced with multiple and sometimes competing policies and objectives. Consequently, multiple and different stakeholder interests abound, possibly contributing to evidence that would suggest that government managers are generally less involved, less loyal and display weaker identification with the aims of their agencies than business executives (Buchanan, 1974a: 345). As such, the ability to align different individual or group interests and expectations with those of an underlying policy can be a critical step towards the laying of sound foundations upon which to successfully launch a new initiative. In the context of a policy implementation initiative such alignment in values should start, in the first instance, with the person or team earmarked to project manage the delivery of a particular policy. For example, the Local Councils case study examined in Project 2 suggested that a critical dimension of the commitment portrayed by the individuals entrusted to implement this initiative was their strong sense of belief in the value and importance of the policy itself [Interviewees 142,143,144,145,146,147]. Their belief, and value alignment, meant that they did not feel the need to question the policy or its purpose; that they could associate with it better; that they had something in common that could quickly bring them together as a team; and, most importantly, that they felt they could 'own' the initiative. Senge (1992) points out that when people are in touch with their personal values and can align their work behaviour with these values, they are naturally committed to their work because they are doing what they want to do, and they can do so to an extent that they persevere even in the face of frustration because they are doing what they feel they *must* do. Following this logic, it seems reasonable to assume that a policy implementation initiative stands a better chance of getting off to a good start if the persons involved in its implementation are convinced of the merits of that policy and its potential outcomes. Therefore, the first proposition for improving the odds of successful policy implementation is:

C1: Do not seek to convert; seek converts.

Policies should ideally be entrusted to people who believe in the qualities of such policies, so that they can easily internalise them, come to own them, establish them

as their mission and, following Klein & Izzo's metaphor, give them soul. If these people are already 'converted' to the merits of the policy initiative, then it is likely that they can more easily envision its implementation, lead it with greater fervour and effectiveness and, through such passion, inspire others to 'convert' to it.

Although empirical studies support the importance of affective commitment in public organisations (Romzek, 1990; Romzek, 1989; Romzek, 1985), and research suggests that public employee motives and commitment are primarily based on their identification with and involvement in their public organisations (Liou and Nyhan, 1994: 111), it is also possible that persons commit to a policy initiative and 'own' it, even when they do not personally believe in, or subscribe to, its purpose or intrinsic value. In other words, they commit to the policy not because of some personal feeling or emotional attachment to the policy, but for other reasons altogether. This line of thinking led researchers to consider the existence of different 'types' of commitment.

The type of commitment based on matters of feeling, of emotional attachment, of values, and/or of identification with the goals of an initiative, or of the organisation itself, is classified in the literature as affective or attitudinal commitment (Luchak and Gellatly, 2001) and is based on work initiated by Porter et al., 1974 (Suliman A, 2000). In contrast to this is a rationally-based, or calculated type of commitment (Luchak and Gellatly, 2001), which originated with Becker's (1960) side-bet theory and has also been referred to as the behavioural perspective (Meyer and Allen, 1991). According to this view, persons are committed to an organisation because they foresee the benefits accruing from such behaviour as outweighing the costs of non-compliance. In particular, it is based on employees' consideration of the costs associated with leaving, or staying with, their organisation. As such, it is also referred to as continuance commitment (Mathieu, Bruvold et al., 2000). A third and different type of commitment identified by Meyer & Allen (1991) is normative commitment, which refers to employees' feelings of obligation to remain with their organisation. It has been defined by Weiner (1982) as the "totality of internalised normative pressures to act in a way which meets organisational goals and interests" (Weiner, 1982, cited in Suliman A, 2000). Finally, the most recent approach to conceptualising organisational commitment is the multidimensional approach which

assumes that commitment does not develop simply through emotional attachment, perceived costs, or moral obligation, but through the interplay of all three components (Suliman A, 2000).

The existence of different types of commitment does not diminish the merit of Proposition C1. People need not be converts to a policy initiative only if they are emotionally attached to it. They can be equally committed to it because they place equal importance on some perceived costs, moral obligation or to a mix of these reasons. However, it must be noted that research has consistently demonstrated that affective, continuance and normative commitment are conceptually and empirically distinct (Suliman A, 2000), and that different types of commitment have different relationships to organisational behaviour (Iles, Mabey et al., 1990). For example, studies have shown that affective commitment is expected to be higher in situations where employees believe the firm to be motivated in its actions out of a genuine concern for themselves or their customers (Meyer and Allen, 1997), and in situations where employees perceive role clarity at work, influence over decision-making and opportunities to experience accomplishment (Luchak and Gellatly, 2001). In contrast, calculative type commitment is likely to increase when aspects such as job security are at risk. As such, affective, calculative or normative factors influence people's commitment in different ways and may do so differently in different situations. They also result from different stimuli and lead to different behaviours and outcomes (see Figure 25) ⁴⁴. Does this mean that certain types of commitment are better or more important than others? Or that successful policy implementation is more likely if supported by one type of commitment rather than another? Nothing in the literature seems to support this. However, it does mean that certain types of commitment are likely to be more effective than others in certain situations. Therefore, it seems important to recognise these differences when attempting to rally people's commitment, starting, in the first instance, with those identified to lead the implementation of a policy initiative. Thus;

⁴⁴ A more detailed discussion of the stimuli/sources/antecedents of commitment follows later.

C1A: Select policy (project) leaders whose motives for committing to a policy initiative are best suited for the situation at hand and the type of environment receiving the policy.

This recommendation builds on Proposition 1 by recognising that different situations call for persons with different motives, skills and competencies. As such, it acknowledges the logic of situational leadership theory and recognises that in selecting project leaders for a policy initiative, due consideration should be given to the fact that “effectiveness of leadership is determined by being able to recognise the appropriateness of actions relevant to the circumstances of the situation” (Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 1999: 2). For example, a policy that is aimed at introducing some new social benefit is more likely to be committed to, and effectively led, by a person who intrinsically values the merits of increased social welfare rather than by a person who shares no affinity to the principles of the welfare state and perceives such policies as merely a strain on the public purse. Similarly, a person whose position or status in an organisation can be materially influenced by the success or failure of a particular policy is more likely to commit to the policy than someone whose career prospects are limited, and whose position can neither be improved nor threatened by the outcome of the implementation of such policy. Unfortunately, the norm is to automatically entrust policies to the same persons either because they happen to occupy certain positions in the hierarchy, or because decision-makers are so aloof from operations that they do not know of other people in the organisation who may be better suited to lead such an initiative. Time and effort spent in selecting the right champion for a policy initiative is time and effort saved during implementation.

Of course, successful policy implementation is not solely dependent upon the level of commitment of the person or team leading the initiative. Equally important is the ability to muster a sufficient level of commitment from the persons who must initiate and operate the new policy. Indeed, a lot of the literature is dedicated towards an examination of employee commitment. However, the results of Projects 1 and 2 of this research would suggest that, although employee commitment is an important consideration for policy implementation, the greatest difficulty experienced in Malta is

the ability to leverage political and management commitment to a policy programme [Interviewees 142,143,145,146,147]. By their own admission⁴⁵, politicians and senior civil servants recognise that all too often, it is their lack of political and administrative will that seems to hinder successful policy implementation efforts. A number of reasons can account for this, and these have been highlighted in Projects 1 and 2. It is now important to gain an understanding of measures that can be taken to overcome this problem. Reference to the findings of Projects 1 and 2 of this research, as well as the studies in the literature can contribute in this regard.

Driving Commitment

A significant element of the literature on commitment considers the sources or antecedents of commitment (see Figure 25). One way of approaching these is to classify them into two broad categories; person-related i.e., those concerning factors relating to the individual, and organisation-related i.e., those concerning factors relating to the establishment (Cohen, 1992).

One dimension of the literature that examines person-related sources of commitment focuses on factors relating to personal characteristics and demographics such as age, education and gender. The research in this area is somewhat contradictory (Reichers, 1985). For example, some studies suggest that given equitable work conditions women are more attached as employees than are men (Galizzi, 2001), and that women exhibit higher levels of continuance commitment than men (Wahn, 1998). In contrast, other studies report findings that support a negative relationship between gender ideology and organisational commitment (Gray, 1989; Bruning and Snyder, 1983; Aven, Parker et al., 1993). Similarly, some research suggests that organisational commitment is positively related to employees' level of education (Newton McClurg, 1999; Luthans, Baack et al., 1987), their age (Allen and Meyer, 1993) and the presence of children (Gray, 1989), while others suggest that such factors have minimal or no effect on commitment (Sager, 1989; Mottaz, 1988); Korabik and Rosin, 1995; Wahn, 1998).

⁴⁵ See results of survey.

The importance, or otherwise, of these personal factors on commitment was not an issue that featured in the case studies of Projects 1 and 2 of the DBA research. Other factors that have also been the subject of research but which did not emerge in the case studies as important factors influencing commitment include tenure (Metcalf and Dick, 2000; Luthans, Baack et al., 1987; Luthans, McCaul et al., 1985), career factors (Jans, 1989) and occupation (Vandenberg and Scarpello, 1994; Meyer, Allen et al., 1993; Norris and Niebuhr, 1984), job meaningfulness and characteristics (Colbert and Kwon, 2000; Pearson and Chong, 1997; Wetzel and Gallagher, 1990; Hunt, Chonko et al., 1985), job satisfaction (Williams and Hazer, 1986; Curry, Wakefield et al., 1986; Bateman and Strasser, 1984), and the use of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards (Young, Worchel et al., 1998; Cullen, Johnson et al., 1995; Putti, Aryee et al., 1989; Goffee and Scase, 1986), including performance appraisals (Pettijohn and Pettijohn, 2000; Metcalf and Dick, 2000; Martin, 1995) and financial incentives (Luchak and Gellatly, 2001; Stum, 1999; Li-Ping Tang and Kim, 1999; Wood, 1996).

On the other hand, some factors including trust, position in an organisation, leadership, ownership, accountability, and goal congruence, are considered in the literature and were also highlighted as being important elements by the DBA case studies⁴⁶. The emergence of these factors and not others from the DBA research would suggest that, at least in a Maltese context, these factors are possibly considered to be more important or influential, thereby deserving greater attention.

Some research proposes that trust generates commitment (Hosmer, 1994; Liou, 1994) and that one dimension of the nature of managerial commitment is trust (Lamsa and Savolainen, 2000). Although the findings of the DBA research do not suggest a direct cause-effect relationship between trust and commitment, they do support the view that trust has an influence on commitment and the outcome of a policy implementation initiative. Different political ideologies, fear of political sabotage, divided allegiances, and low respect and confidence between politicians and civil servants were identified as factors inhibiting the formation of trustful relationships and of colleagues' loyalty to one another and to their organisations

⁴⁶ See Figures 9 and 14 relating to Projects 1 and 2 respectively.

(DBA Projects 1 and 2). Because of this, people do not cooperate with one another and alienate themselves from each other and the organisation/policies they are meant to serve. While it must be recognised that trust is an emotive factor and difficult to manage in a rational manner, some measures can nonetheless be taken to create an environment within which trustful relationships can develop (some proposals have already been made during the discussion on empowered leadership).

The influence of position in an organisation on commitment is argued both ways in the literature. Some empirical studies suggest that persons occupying higher positions in an organisation tend to be more committed than lower level employees (Morrow, McElroy et al., 1988). Others (Wahn, 1998; Bruning and Snyder, 1983) consider position to be unrelated to commitment. The DBA research supports the view that a relationship exists between position and commitment, albeit with a different twist than that presented in the literature. Rather than suggesting that persons in higher positions are more committed to a policy initiative, the research would suggest that commitment to a policy initiative is influenced by decisions regarding the 'locus of responsibility' for that policy. There are two dimensions to be considered in this respect and both must co-exist simultaneously to stimulate commitment and to ensure successful policy implementation. One dimension is personal and concerns decisions regarding the individual who is to assume responsibility and authority for the policy initiative, rather than his position. The other dimension is institutional and concerns decisions regarding both the organisation that is to 'house' the policy implementation initiative, and the position of the person within that organisation who is to 'host' the initiative.

Issues pertaining to the personal dimension of 'location' are closely linked to decisions regarding leadership; specifically, who should lead a particular policy initiative? The success of the Local Councils project examined in Project 2 was attributed, in part, to decisions concerning its location in terms of the right balance in the type and form of leadership achieved. For example, responsibility for the policy initiative was equally shared between the political and administrative arms of Government thereby addressing (whether consciously or not) the contextual need to balance power between both domains. The persons chosen to lead each domain

were also considerably competent in their respective spheres. They were resourceful and managed to secure the support and commitment of various government entities and their respective resources, and they also demonstrated excellent personal capabilities in terms of clarity of vision, knowledge, creativity and determination. Furthermore, there was also a match between the motivations of the respective leaders; motivations that were perceived to have been influenced by a mutual sense of belief in the principles of the policy (affective commitment). This provided an opportunity for the better alignment of goals and greater cooperation. Taken collectively, these factors enabled the leaders to influence the approach and manner in which events unfolded, so as to foster the type of commitment they required to successfully see the policy through.

However, besides the personal prerequisites of a skilled and competent leader, the research also suggests that policy implementers must command *power* to mobilise events and resources, as and when required. While this may well be related to the leader's personality or to contextual factors, the source of power in the example of policy reviewed emanated from an organisational consideration of where responsibility for the policy should reside. Power can emanate from various sources (Morgan, 1997: 171). From a modernist perspective, strategic contingencies theory explains how uncertainty predicts which social actors will have power in an organisation (Hatch, 1997: 287), while resource dependence theory suggests that power is conferred upon individuals who command control of critical or scarce resources (Hatch, 1997: 288). Referring to the model proposed by Graham (1989), Pinto (2000) suggests the consideration of 'authority', 'status' and 'influence' as sources of power. Authority accrues from the position that a person occupies in an organisation; status accrues from the level and type of assignment or responsibility assigned to a person; while influence is the ability of persons to manipulate others and is usually highly individualised (Pinto, 2000: 86-76).

The type of power that was brought to bear in the Local Councils initiative can be described as a hybrid of these three forms, which, in itself represents an amalgamation of the personal and institutional dimensions mentioned earlier.

Power primarily emanated from formal authority. Total ownership of the policy was located in the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). Choosing to locate the policy

within this particular portfolio was perceived as the clearest indication of the government's seriousness with respect to this policy. The reason behind this choice was at least twofold⁴⁷. First, it created pressure at a political level, ensuring that Ministers and their staff gave the policy the attention it deserved. Secondly, and possibly more importantly, it committed the coordination of activities, at both intra and inter-Ministerial level. Such type of coordination was essential because the policy cut across various Ministerial domains and because it was recognised that coordination between Ministries in Malta is often lacking both because of poor skills and capabilities, and also because of piques between politicians⁴⁸ which are almost inevitable given the country's particular political context. Indeed, it is suggested that had the policy been entrusted to another portfolio 'it would not have happened'⁴⁹. This perception is not a reflection of the personal skills and expertise of the persons working in the Office of the Prime Minister, but is rather a reflection of the command and control role that this particular ministry is perceived to occupy and its ability to 'open doors'.

Besides the formal authority arising from the organisational choice of location (i.e., OPM) another element of importance was the power that was reflected on the programme because it was assigned to persons holding very senior positions in government. Political responsibility for managing, monitoring and controlling its implementation was entrusted to the Personal Assistant to the Prime Minister who was heavily involved in the development of Government policy and who was regarded by all as being the Prime Minister's mouthpiece and executive arm⁴⁹. From a Public Service viewpoint, administrative responsibility for the initiative was entrusted to the Director General in the Office of the Prime Minister who could influence the allocation of resources across Government. The source of power of these two individuals derived from the position they held in government and the status they enjoyed by virtue of those positions. The formality of those positions gave their authority legitimacy, more so when it was recognised that the persons

⁴⁷ Source: Interviews.

⁴⁸ Source: Interviews.

⁴⁹ Source: Interviews.

involved had direct access to the Prime Minister and had his full support and backing.

However, power and the consequent command over resources and events is not, in itself, the solution. The research suggests that the success of the policy was significantly influenced by the fact that the decisions and activities that were taken in support of the implementation programme were perceived to be *legitimate* and devoid of the indiscriminate use of power. This was instrumental to foster greater commitment and cooperation from those concerned.

So what type of power should be used when implementing policy, and how can such power be legitimised? The decisions taken to mobilise power in the example of successful policy implementation researched may provide the answer to this question.

Policy makers should consider the organisational location of power. They should identify the stakeholders who can influence, or be influenced by, the policy decision and its implementation, and then assign responsibility for the policy within the realm of that entity that can somehow control such influence.

Having found a 'house' for the initiative, the policy then needs a 'host'. Policy makers must therefore consider decisions of championship. They need to decide who within the selected organisation is best suited to spearhead the implementation. This decision should be based on at least three considerations. It should first consider a person's motives, skills and capabilities, the importance of which has already been discussed (see Proposition C1A). Then, it should consider their perception of what others think about the person. In this regard, policy makers should realise that as soon as a policy is entrusted to a person, the policy assumes the identity of the person in question. If the latter is perceived as being a target-oriented, results-driven person, the policy already stands a better chance of succeeding. His/her decisions and direction will be perceived as being legitimate on the basis of people's perceptions of his/her past successes and behaviours. Of course, the inverse applies. Thirdly, sponsor responsibility for the policy should be entrusted to the person occupying the highest level of formal authority. While specific aspects of the implementation may be delegated down the hierarchy, overall

accountability for the initiative must remain with the most authoritative person so that a clear sponsor exists in everyone's mind. Finally, policy makers must create a supportive environment for that policy. They must provide the policy champion(s) with direct and immediate access to the highest levels of power (sponsors) required, as the need to have to resort to obtaining multiple endorsements is likely to weaken their perceived authority. Furthermore, policy makers must afford the policy champion(s) with the right type of resources and then, to do so in amounts that are sufficient to generate critical mass. They must also provide the policy champion(s) with cross-organisational authority and the ability to mobilise and deploy resources across traditional organisational boundaries. In summary, the following is proposed:

C2: Consider decisions of Location

C2a: Select the right 'address' for the policy initiative.

C2b: Ensure that the 'host' has (or is given) the requisite (legitimate) power and resources to champion the initiative.

The DBA research also suggests that people are more likely to commit to a policy programme if it carries a high profile. A policy can gain a high profile for a variety of reasons. Location is one of them. It could also gain high profile if the policy occupies a prominent position in the Government's agenda; if it influences a large or important segment of society thereby generating considerable discourse on the subject; or if it is an issue of political contention thereby attracting popular attention and debate. Irrespective of the reason, it is argued that a policy of high profile will be associated with greater risk in terms of the political fall-out that could accrue if it is not implemented correctly. Because of this, the case studies suggest that politicians experience a heightened will to see a policy through in an effective and successful manner, thereby subjecting civil servants to greater degrees of accountability. Feeling the pressure, civil servants dedicate more attention to the policy, either as a measure to avoid failure and the repercussions associated with it, or to excel in their delivery in an attempt to position themselves favourably with their political masters. Does this mean that low profile policies are doomed? Not necessarily, but raising their profile should influence political and administrative reactions in the manner just described, thereby improving the policies' likelihood of success.

Leadership is deemed to play an important role in driving the visibility of a policy. The *intrinsic* importance of leadership to commitment has already been discussed. However, the DBA research also suggests that there is an *extrinsic* dimension to leadership that is equally important. This dimension considers the visibility of the leadership itself and has been described as the 'physical' element of commitment⁵⁰. In one of the case studies, this was exemplified by the Prime Minister's personal involvement in the implementation process. It was argued that, "in the Maltese context, the biggest political will is shown when the Prime Minister takes an initiative under his responsibility"⁵¹. The lesson is, that whether through the personal involvement of a prominent political figure, or a high-ranking civil servant, or some form of 'Steering Committee', policies need to be championed by someone of high profile who can accentuate their visibility. The ability to personify a policy provides symbolic, if not real leadership. It gives meaning to a policy, it projects a message of confidence and it drives commitment to it.

The visibility of a policy is also a function of effective communication. Research has shown that organisations can strengthen employee commitment by increasing awareness of the organisation's strategic goals (Enriquez, McBride et al., 2001). One way to achieve this is through the deployment of internal marketing strategies (Unzicker, Clow et al., 2000; Caruana and Calleja, 1998). Another more powerful way is through effective visioning (Domm, 2001). Besides delivering a message, the process of visioning itself garners commitment (Kakabadse, Nortier et al., 1998:139), providing people with something more important than direction; something to hold onto and to point to what must be changed (Pascarella, 1998:13). As such, policies need to be communicated as visions. After all, a policy is a vision of the future.

C3: Building Commitment requires Visibility

C3a: Visibility can be garnered through visible leadership, communication and visioning.

⁵⁰ Source: Interviews

⁵¹ Source: Interviews

Commitment to a policy implementation programme must also *reach* as many stakeholders as possible. There are two dimensions to reach ('breadth' and 'appeal') and two perspectives to account for (the recipients or 'audience' of a policy and the persons involved in its implementation). Breadth refers to the number of people targeted by, and involved in, the policy initiative. Appeal refers to the ability of policy makers to formulate a policy with characteristics that meet the interests of the audience to which it is targeted, and to create and present a vision of it that encourages take-up and a following by the persons required to implement it.

The DBA research suggests that the wider the audience, the more widespread is the policy, and the more difficult it is for specific lobby groups to rally strong opposition to it. Although seemingly Macchiavellian in approach, the suggestion is not really intended as such. The point to be made is that key to a successful policy implementation programme is the ability to identify and properly manage all affected stakeholders. In this regard, interviewees argued that implementation programmes often fail either because stakeholders are not adequately defined, or because it is only the interests of one or a few select groups that are accounted for. Similarly, it was suggested that policy failure might also arise if responsibility for its implementation is concentrated in only one person or a few individuals. The failure of the Financial Management Reform policy examined in Project 1 was attributed, in part, to this shortcoming. Responsibility for the policy was entrusted to senior management at the Ministry of Finance but, because they felt threatened by aspects of the policy, they did not act upon it or allow it to be acted upon by other officers of their organisation. Had the policy involved senior managers from other Ministries and Departments who were equally affected by the policy, but who might have had more to gain from it than to lose, responsibility would have been spread and enough pressure might have been leveraged to generate a momentum for the policy.

However, to achieve a broader reach, a policy must be constructed in ways that appeal to different people who are likely to have different interests. This is probably the most difficult task to accomplish, as it requires policy makers to either align the policy's goals with the interests of different stakeholders or, influence stakeholders to shed their customs and preferences in favour of the outcomes sought to be achieved by the policy. From an 'audience' perspective, this requires policy makers to build

into a policy features or characteristics that will deliver, in whole or in part, some output or outcome desired by these stakeholders. From the perspective of the policy implementers, it requires policy makers to understand and account for the motivations of these stakeholders and the motives (affective, behavioural, normative or multidimensional) that will lead to their commitment. Indeed, it has long been recognised that a strategy for winning employee commitment is not a management approach that relies on directive power and an expectation of compliance by employees, but rather a philosophy of leadership that emphasises the sharing of objectives (Sherwin, 1972). As such, it is suggested that true commitment can only be achieved if there is agreement on what needs to be done, and if personal and organisational goals are aligned into a common goal (Belasco, 1998). Achieving consensus on strategic decisions helps build commitment to such decisions (Dooley, Fryxell et al., 2000). It is therefore proposed that:

C4: Building Commitment requires Reach

C4a: Reach is achieved by broadening a policy's scope and improving its appeal, particularly through goal alignment.

Recognising that a shared vision is a powerful way to build commitment (Turner, 1999), it is important to understand how this can be achieved. The DBA research suggests that 'reach' must be supplemented by the *active participation* of stakeholders. There are two reasons for this. The first is to further diffuse any potential opposition to a policy, while a second, more important reason, is to transfer responsibility for the policy to the people who are best positioned to make it work. The findings of the research would suggest that there are three dimensions to the concept of active participation. These include the need for stakeholder participation in setting the agenda of the policy, employee participation in the planning and decision-making activities relating to the policy initiative, as well as management involvement in the implementation of policies entrusted to subordinates.

The need for stakeholder participation is perceived to be important because it provides policy leaders with a direct understanding of their expectations. This ensures that, to the extent possible, policies can be configured to deliver outcomes that match the desired goals and benefits, thereby garnering support and

commitment from stakeholders, rather than resistance and opposition. Similarly, the participation of employees (the internal stakeholders) in the planning and implementation of policy helps to confer on them a sense of belonging to the organisation. It shows management's recognition that subordinates 'on the ground' are likely to be more in touch with the specific context within which the policy is to be implemented, and that their participation may facilitate the identification of potential stumbling blocks that management may have otherwise failed to notice or account for. This should lead to improved commitment. Equally important is the need for active management involvement. This concept is different to participation. While 'participation' is meant to reflect the need for employees and stakeholders to *contribute* to the development and implementation of policy, 'involvement' reflects the need for management to *interact* with stakeholders, especially their subordinates. Unfortunately, there is a tendency in the civil service for management to keep itself aloof from employees, with officers not mixing outside their 'class'. This hinders management from understanding the capabilities of their subordinates and the operational limitations of the organisations they manage, and is also counter-productive to the development of good personal relationships. In contrast, active management involvement provides the right opportunity for management to impart the coaching and support required by employees so that they can grow in their position. By getting personally involved in implementation and by actively interacting with subordinates, management can also identify potential would-be leaders so that they can slowly develop the network of committed leaders required for the effective implementation of policy.

The relationship between participation and commitment is well reflected in the literature. Some studies suggest that participation is the outcome of program commitment (Neubert and Cady, 2001; Mayer and Schoorman, 1992) but a considerable element of the literature also focuses on an examination of the inverse relationship. For example, building on the work of Lawler (1992), Coetsee, 1999 identifies involvement as an essential ingredient in building commitment and for gaining acceptance of a change program, echoing the views that people need to inform themselves to become committed to something and that no one can really make a commitment for someone else (Giovale, 1995). Participation is important because through such processes, "people are encouraged to make incremental

choices and develop a sense of responsibility for their actions. [Furthermore] When we choose of our own volition to do something, we feel responsible. When the choice is volitional, explicit, public and irrevocable, the commitment is even more binding. [This phenomenon is so strong that] systems that provide for participation [are] critical in developing or changing a culture.” (O'Reilly, 1989:20). It is also important to note that contrary to some commonly held perceptions, participation does not only influence employee commitment. Managers' involvement in strategic planning activities have been found to be positively related with their feelings of organisational commitment (Oswald, Mossholder et al., 1994), suggesting that, in a public policy context, the formulation of policies should not be restricted to the upper echelons of the establishment but rather opened to include lower management levels. A fifth proposition is, therefore, to;

C5: Build Commitment through ACTIVE Participation

Closely related to the above is the issue of *ownership*. People may participate in setting the agenda for a policy, and may also commit to execute elements of it, but may nonetheless fall short in their efforts. Real commitment to a policy is shown when intent is followed by concrete action. The DBA research suggests that people will act on a policy initiative if there is ownership of that policy. As stated earlier, people may commit to a policy and own it for affective reasons, but when emotional stimuli are missing, the research suggests that people may be compelled to own a policy initiative if they are held accountable for it.

The principal connotation of accountability is linked to the stewardship of resources but in a secondary meaning of accountability, someone who is accountable can be called on, in a more general way, to explain actions rather than account for resources in a strictly material sense (Kirkwood, 1982:17). Considerable efforts have been made by researchers to identify and propose different types of accountability relationships. For example, Romzek, 2000 identifies four types of accountability (hierarchical, professional, legal and political) based on a consideration of internal or external sources of expectations and control, and the desire for low to high degrees of autonomy; while Stone, 1995 distinguishes five main conceptions of accountability (parliamentary control, managerialism, judicial/quasi-judicial review, constituency relations and markets). However, studies

like these tend to focus on matters pertaining to the collective accountability of the establishment, or parts of it. While the problems of ownership and accountability emerging from the DBA research seem to focus on the individual or the team responsible for, and managing, the policy, few studies on program accountability based on the efforts of the individual, were encountered during the literature review. According to the DBA findings, efforts to improve ownership of, and accountability for, policy initiatives should be primarily directed at the level of the individual.

Capron and Kuiper, 1998 suggest that linking the success or failure of a policy initiative with an individual's success or failure in his/her organisation, ensures project ownership. This strategy is akin to that followed by the application of performance based appraisals and rewards systems (Pettijohn and Pettijohn, 2000; Metcalfe and Dick, 2000; Martin, 1995). Keeping score of a person's performance and making such performance visible (Belasco, 1998) can also compel ownership of, and commitment to a policy. Other measures for improving accountability and ownership that have been identified from the DBA research, particularly from Project 1, include clear delineation of roles and responsibilities, a real and visible will to institute disciplinary action when required, and political involvement in a policy process. The latter does not mean direct participation in the implementation of a policy, as this would lead to a confusion in roles and the perception of 'interference' (Cachia Zammit, 1992) that would disengage, rather than motivate, commitment. Involvement means a commitment to monitor a policy and the progress registered; to be visibly seen to be responsible for understanding what is happening, for questioning what is happening and for pulling senior management along⁵². Furthermore, it is important to note that the DBA research suggests that ownership of a policy initiative must lie at multiple levels. First, there must be both a political and an administrative commitment to the policy, with the research further suggesting that the political element must exist at two levels. At one level it must emanate from the executive arm of Government (Ministers and Cabinet). At another, it must also exist from a Party perspective. In this latter respect, the commitment of the political machinery of the Party in office is seen as being necessary to raise the visibility of

⁵² Source: Interviews.

the policy through adequate propaganda and, more importantly, to generate a greater degree of accountability among its politicians to personally commit to it. Secondly, there is also the need for ownership to exist at both an individual and collective level. With politicians vying for attention and resources in (competitive) ways that can be detrimental to colleagues, the principle of ministerial collective responsibility may often be hard to accomplish in practice. In fact, the DBA research would suggest that a major element contributing to the success of the Local Council's policy was this ability to muster collective responsibility for it. Following on from participation, it is proposed that:

C6: Building Commitment requires Ownership

C6a: Ownership requires policy implementers to believe in the values of the policy, and/or to be held personally accountable for it.

It is also argued that the success of programs and initiatives in positively affecting lasting change is not only dependent on gaining commitment to it, but also of retaining such commitment (Neubert and Cady, 2001; Nash, Childe et al., 2001). Commitment must endure the test of time. It must be long-term and not short-lived. In other words, commitment should not just be present at kick-off and/or at the finishing line. It must be present all throughout the process, and all the way through it must also be consistent. There are two aspects to the latter notion. Firstly, commitment cannot grow when things are going right, and wane when the odds take the upper hand. Secondly, commitment must be focused on the planned process and outcome. Policy leaders cannot change direction to avoid obstacles when problems arise. They must tackle them. Similarly, policy sponsors should not re-orient the direction of a policy because of some political, and maybe short-term, gain. While policies should be adjusted if the situation so demands, their focus should remain consistent with the objectives they set out to achieve. In the Local Councils initiative, commitment was sustained through formal project management structures, regular meetings and debriefing sessions, informal motivational seminars for participants, and continuous marketing and promotional campaigns aimed at maintaining both external support, and internal encouragement and determination.

Projecting an air of confidence at all times also helped to sustain momentum in the manner in which the policy was developing. Therefore;

C7: Commitment must be Durable

Building commitment must also be an *action-oriented* activity. The DBA research would suggest that policy implementation may fail either because decisions are postponed or they are not made, or, when taken, they are too late and ineffective. Policy implementers must therefore be assertive in their actions and must be seen to be confident in the outcomes of their decisions. This research suggests that unlike the Financial Management Reform programme, the Local Councils' policy programme distinguished itself from the norm by the fact that the policy-makers did not shy away from taking the difficult decisions that were critical to the programme, and when they did, they did so in a timely manner. This served to accentuate the tangibility of the commitment, and to symbolically demonstrate a competent and confident leadership. Therefore, besides surviving the test of time (Proposition C7);

*C8: Commitment must be sustained through
Timely Actions and Decisions*

Caution must however be observed in following Propositions 7 and 8 above. An issue of importance that was raised by the literature but which was not reflected in the DBA research is the concept of escalation of commitment.

Escalating commitment (or escalation) refers to the tendency of decision makers to persist with failing courses of action (Brockner, 1992:39) and is found to occur at both an individual and group level (Bazerman, Giuliano Toni et al., 1984). Among other studies, escalation has been explained by prospect theory which suggests that decisions made subsequent to related decisions will be framed in such a way as to reflect the success or failure of the previous decision (Whyte, 1986). It has also been attributed to project and psychological traits, such as biased information processing, self-justification and risk propensity (Ross and Staw, 1986); the mediating effects of cultural norms and values (Geiger, Robertson et al., 1998); and, probably more central to the discussion around Proposition 6a, perceptions of personal responsibility for the initiative, especially when linked to negative consequences (Staw and Fox, 1977; Staw, 1981).

It is therefore important that commitment to a policy initiative is closely monitored so that escalation is avoided. Various counter-measures have been proposed in the literature. A number of these include recognising, in the first instance, the possible causes of over-commitment (Staw and Ross, 1987), encouraging open communication between teams and organisational departments (Devaney, 1991), and consciously framing a decision problem in a variety of ways to tease out any faults in the decision making process (Whyte, 1986). Identifying a person or team to play the 'devil's advocate' and separating initial and subsequent responsibility for a decision (Devaney, 1991) have also been identified as potential measures, although their effectiveness has also been questioned by other studies (Barton, Duchon et al., 1989; Schwenk, 1988). Nonetheless:

*C9: Commitment must be monitored against
Escalation*

Finally, building commitment requires a *supportive* environment. The DBA research suggests three strategies in this regard. The first is to create a demand for the policy to be implemented. It is suggested that a policy should not be implemented before the necessary spadework has been done to muster support for it, at least at a conceptual level. Various measures can be taken, including political propaganda, the launch of educational and awareness campaigns, public debates, the publication of policies as Green and White Papers etc. Ultimately, the objective is to get the audience that is targeted to receive the policy to reflect about it, talk about it, question it, add to it by proposing ideas, and hopefully, end up demanding it. This leads to the second strategy, which concerns the development of the necessary pressure to instigate change. Every policy will somehow influence existing ones, stirring resistance from quarters that are comfortable with the status quo. This research suggests that the best way to overcome such resistance is to bombard it with enough pressure from all angles to an extent that it becomes easier for stakeholders to embrace the new policy, than it is for them to continue to hold dear to an existing one. Finally, it is important that policies are not implemented in a vacuum, with no or little regard to what is happening in other areas of government. It is vital that policies are supportive of one another. The often-held idea that policies should be implemented independently from one another, so that failure in one does

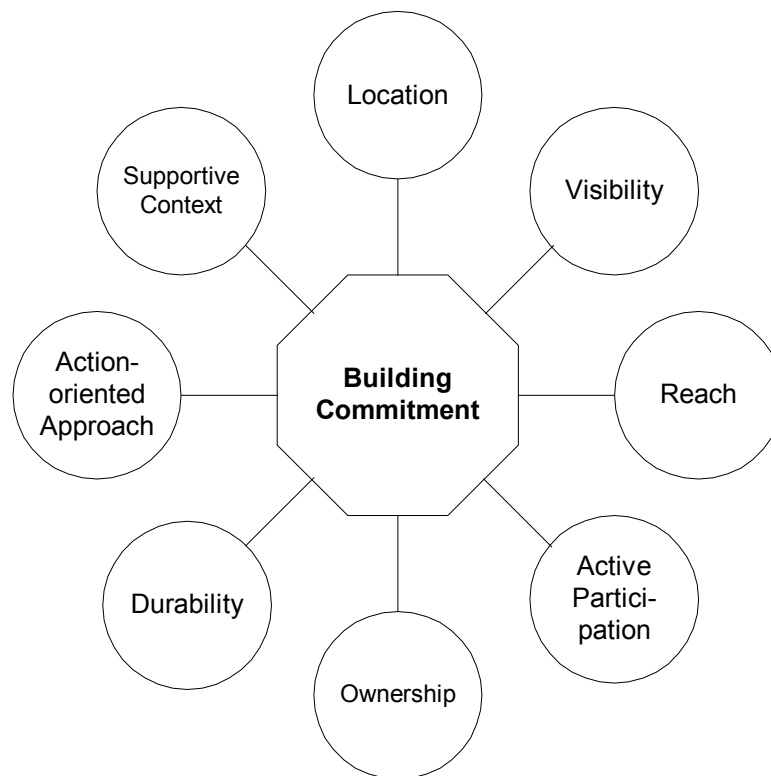
not taint the potential success of another, should be turned on its head. If managed properly, the 'bundling' of policies should help to channel resources in a synergistic and complimentary manner, and strengthen inter-organisational dependencies by broadening commitment throughout the different spheres of Government activity. 'Bundling policies' can help to focus efforts, and can prove to be a powerful strategy, especially when one considers that "experience has convinced former Governors that to really make a difference in one or two areas and adequately manage the rest is [already] an ambitious agenda" (Legislative Research Commission, 1995: 7).

The need for a supportive environment is also manifested in the literature, although presented from a different perspective. Rather than focusing on preparing the external environment, as implied from the findings of the DBA research, the literature focuses on the need to develop an internal supportive environment. It is suggested that employee commitment to a program or the organisation itself can be positively influenced when employees perceive a heightened level of support by their management and the organisation at large (Metcalf and Dick, 2000; Newton McClurg, 1999; Shore and Wayne, 1993; Odom, Boxx et al., 1990; O'Reilly, 1989). Perceived organisational support is seen to increase employee's affective attachment to the organisation and the expectation that greater effort toward meeting organisational goals will be rewarded (Hutchison, Sowa et al., 1986). It may be influenced by the choice of management styles (Zeffane, 1994; Nijhof, de Jong et al., 1998) and perceived organisational justice (Naumann, Bennett et al., 1998). A conducive internal environment is also characterised by an ethical work climate (Schwepker, 2001; Schwepker, 1999; Hosmer, 1994) and corporate ethical values (Hunt, Wood et al., 1989), and work/life balance (Sager, 1989; Talley, 1998). It is therefore proposed that:

C10: To build commitment, policy makers must ensure an internal and external supportive environment.

A summary of the various *drivers* of commitment deriving from the research and the literature review is presented in **Figure 26**.

Figure 26: The Building-Blocks of Commitment in the context of Successful Policy Implementation



Source: Compiled by Author

4.0 Summary of Recommendations

A number of recommendations have been proposed to address successful policy implementation through improved leadership and commitment. Each of the propositions made, as well as the key objective(s) they aim to address and the action(s) deemed necessary for their implementation, are summarised below.

Successful Policy Implementation requires **Effective Leadership**

Proposition: L1: Diagnose the Leadership Gap

Key Objective(s) To understand the problem contributing to the perceived absence of leadership.

To understand what leadership the Civil Service is yearning for.

Required Action(s) Conduct a survey among politicians, civil servants and consultants working with the public service to define their understanding of the problem of a lack of leadership and to solicit their proposals, if any, for overcoming such issues.

Proposition: L2: Developing effective leadership requires the establishment of a **network** of effective leaders.

L2a: A network of effective leaders ideally requires a **mix** of transformational and transactional leaders.

Key Objective(s) To address the (mistaken) view that the potency of leadership arises from one individual rather than from the collective strength of a number of leaders.

To address the 'dearth of leadership in the Civil Service'.

To correct the perception that there is only one type of leader and that only this type can effectively influence the successful implementation of policy.

Required Action(s) Promote a view that attempts to institutionalise leadership by demystifying the concept; gradually devolving leadership to rank and file; and promoting and rewarding exemplary leadership.

Distinguish between transformational and transactional leadership.

Select persons whose traits indicate a potential for transformational leadership. Introduce, modify or remove conditions in the environment that do not give potential and 'latent' transformational leaders enough 'space' to operate.

Develop transactional leaders; endow them with resources to lead.

Proposition:	L3: Successful policy implementation requires Competent Leadership
	L3a: Competence is a function of knowledge/skills and personal traits.

Key Objective(s) To match the competence needs of a policy with the knowledge, skills and traits required of the policy leader.

Required Action(s) Select policy leaders who (i) are knowledgeable and skilled in the area of policy they are meant to lead, and (ii) whose traits match the dynamics of the context within which they are to operate.

Enhance the knowledge and skills of potential leaders through formal training and education programmes.

Expose leaders to new experiences; provide them with ever escalating challenges; and give them sufficient time to mature and learn from their exposure.

Proposition:	L4: Successful policy implementation requires Committed Leadership.
	L4a: Committed Leadership is a function of confidence/motivation and values/integrity.

Key Objective(s) To ensure ownership of the policy initiative, perseverance in the face of difficulty and the willingness to risk and assume responsibility for one's actions.

To inspire confidence, motivation and commitment to a policy initiative from others.

Required Action(s) Select as leaders people with (i) a positive, optimistic and confident attitude; (ii) a proven ability of effective policy management and (iii) a reputation of integrity.

Clearly delineate roles and responsibilities; endow policy leaders with adequate resources in sufficient quantities; reward performance within a framework of accountability.

Proposition:	<p>L5: Successful policy implementation requires Empowered Leadership.</p> <p>L5a: Empowered Leadership is a function of trust and power sharing.</p>
Key Objective(s)	To ensure that policy leaders can mobilise the momentum and support required to drive a policy to fruition.
Required Action(s)	<p>Select as leaders people who (i) are willing to accept responsibility; (ii) are not averse to sharing authority; (iii) do not shy from holding others accountable; and (iv) are willing to share information and resources.</p> <p>Carefully consider issues of 'location' for a policy, to ensure that coordination and cooperation is forthcoming.</p> <p>Mandate leaders with the authority to exercise power. Ensure that leaders do not abuse of their power.</p> <p>Select leaders who are considered trustworthy and who can inspire and build trust in others.</p> <p>Engender trust through fair and equitable management practices; participation in decision-making and integrity in dealing with sensitive (political) situations.</p>
Proposition:	L6: Successful policy implementation requires Leader Affinity with Policy and Political Context.
Key Objective(s)	To recognise and match leaders' personal interests in the implementation of a policy initiative and the motives behind such policy.
Required Action(s)	<p>Consider whether leaders stand to gain or lose from the implementation of a policy.</p> <p>Select leaders who can gain from the intrinsic merits of a policy and/or from the extrinsic rewards arising from a political perspective.</p>

Build and Maintain Commitment for Successful Policy Implementation

Proposition:	<p>C1: Do not seek to convert; seek converts.</p> <p>C1a: Select policy (project) leaders whose motives for committing to a policy initiative are best suited for the situation at hand and the type of environment receiving the policy.</p>
Key Objective(s)	<p>To ensure alignment between the interests of a policy initiative and those of the persons managing it, so that the policy is adequately 'rooted' in the persons most likely to commit to it.</p>
Required Action(s)	<p>Decide what type of commitment (affective, normative or calculative) is best suited for the situation at hand.</p> <p>Understand the motives of potential policy leaders in committing to a policy; implement a survey (eg, OCQ) to measure the type and level of commitment in the organisation.</p> <p>Select policy leaders whose motives are most likely to engender the highest degree of commitment, given the type and nature of policy that they are to be entrusted with.</p>
Proposition:	<p>C2: Consider decisions of Location</p> <p>C2a: Select the right 'address' for the policy initiative.</p> <p>C2b: Ensure that the 'host' has (or is given) the requisite (legitimate) power and resources to champion the initiative.</p>
Key Objective(s)	<p>To address issues of power and politics that can influence the extent to which people commit to a policy initiative.</p>
Required Action(s)	<p>Decide on the organisation to host the policy. Select the organisation that can mobilise resources to support the policy and which has the command and control ability to stimulate/influence cooperation from others.</p> <p>Select a policy leader who is skilled and competent to carry the policy through, and who also commands power to mobilise events and resources. The source of power may be a function of authority, status or influence but in any case must be legitimate and used wisely.</p>

Proposition:	C3: Building Commitment requires Visibility
	C3a: Visibility can be garnered through visible leadership, communication and visioning.
Key Objective(s)	To give a policy a high profile, forcing stakeholders to commit to its successful implementation so as not to avoid the repercussions of failure.
Required Action(s)	<p>Identify a prominent sponsor to personify the policy and to provide it with visible, physical leadership.</p> <p>Give the policy a prominent position in the Government's agenda.</p> <p>Communicate the policy incessantly. Internally, communicate the policy through a process of visioning and through the deployment of effective marketing strategies. Externally, make use of the propaganda machinery of the Political Party in Office.</p>
Proposition:	C4: Building Commitment requires Reach
	C4a: Reach is achieved by broadening a policy's scope and improving its appeal, particularly through goal alignment.
Key Objective(s)	<p>To identify and properly manage all affected stakeholders.</p> <p>To diffuse the potential of specific lobby groups to rally strong opposition to a policy.</p>
Required Action(s)	<p>Understand how different stakeholders will be influenced by a policy initiative. Identify their expectations and motivations.</p> <p>To the extent possible, ensure that policies are constructed in a manner that accounts for or balances the interests of as many stakeholders as possible.</p>
Proposition:	C5: Build Commitment through ACTIVE Participation
Key Objective(s)	<p>To further diffuse any potential opposition to a policy.</p> <p>To transfer responsibility for the policy to the people who are best positioned to make it work.</p>
Required Action(s)	<p>Encourage stakeholders to participate in setting the agenda of the policy.</p> <p>Engage employees to participate in the planning and decision-making activities relating to the policy initiative.</p> <p>Get management directly involved in the implementation of policies entrusted to subordinates.</p>

Proposition:	<p>C6: Building Commitment requires Ownership</p> <p>C6a: Ownership requires policy implementers to believe in the values of the policy, and/or to be held personally accountable for it.</p>
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Key Objective(s)	To ensure that intent to commit is followed by concrete effective action.
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Required Action(s)	<p>Select people who are convinced of and value, the merits/ outcomes of a policy initiative. They will hold themselves accountable for their performance.</p> <p>Select a suitable framework of accountability to induce ownership where personal will is lacking. Ensure that it directly links the success or failure of a policy initiative with rewards or penalties to the individual.</p>
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Proposition:	C7: Commitment must be Durable.
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Key Objective(s)	To ensure lasting commitment and consistency over time.
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Required Action(s)	<p>Maintain a high profile for the policy. Keep a focus on the main objective of the policy.</p> <p>Monitor, evaluate and control outcomes. Take timely corrective action to keep the policy 'on track'.</p>
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Proposition:	C8: Commitment must be sustained through Timely Actions and Decisions.
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Key Objective(s)	To keep commitment alive and moving.
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Required Action(s)	<p>Time-line decisions. Maintain constant oversight and identify milestones for formal progress review.</p> <p>Adopt a proactive approach to problem-solving and decision-making. Do not shift or avoid problems: solve them. Commit to taking tough decisions.</p>
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Proposition: C9: Commitment must be monitored against Escalation

Key Objective(s) To ensure that decision makers do not commit to and persist with, failing courses of action.

Required Action(s) Institutionalise an effective framework of governance.
Challenge assumptions and approaches; evaluate the costs and benefits of alternative effective courses of action.

Proposition: C10: To build commitment, policy makers must ensure an internal and external supportive environment.

Key Objective(s) To establish an enabling context that encourages people to commit to a policy initiative.

Required Action(s) Develop a receptive internal and external environment – remove obstacles to implementation; communicate relentlessly; bundle policies with common themes to encourage cooperation and synergistic operations; flag issues; and invite stakeholders to comment.

Summary of Part 4

This part of the thesis presented the findings and conclusions of the final stage of the research activity.

Specifically, this stage of the research set out to answer the second part of the research question and to achieve two objectives: (1) to establish which of the factors elicited in Projects 1 and 2 are considered by stakeholders to be the most critical to success and failure in the implementation of public policy in Malta; and (2) to develop proposals around these factors, with the purpose of identifying suitable measures for improving the likelihood of success in future policy implementation initiatives.

The methodology followed for the identification of the critical factors was quantitatively driven and based on a survey of 136 persons (representing a 62% response rate from a census of 219 Politicians, Senior Civil Servants and Consultants working with the Government of Malta). Following a rank-ordering process of the factors elicited from Projects 1 and 2, and the application of a goodness-of-fit test to establish the statistical validity of the survey results, 'commitment' and 'leadership' were identified as the only two factors that were considered by interviewees to be the most critical influences on both failure and success. Focusing primarily on these factors, the study proceeded to answer the second part of the research question by developing propositions for addressing these critical factors. This was achieved on the basis of a review of the data collected in Projects 1 and 2; a review of the literature relating to the identified critical factors and their application in the context of the implementation of policy; as well as due consideration to the researcher's own experience in the implementation of public policy in Malta. Six propositions for effective policy leadership, and ten propositions for building and maintaining commitment to a policy initiative were recommended.

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Part 5

Research Conclusions

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Overview of Part 5

This part of the thesis concludes the discussion on the entire research and is divided into three Chapters.

Chapter 1 summarises the research findings, propositions and limitations of the study, and draws a number of conclusions relating to each of the three Projects.

Chapter 2 addresses the management issue that initially gave rise to this research. Building on the research evidence, it proposes a conceptual management framework for improving the likelihood of successful policy implementation in Malta.

Chapter 3 concludes the research by considering the contributions made to both knowledge and practice.

1.0 Discussion of Findings and Conclusions

1.1 Projects 1 and 2

1.1.1 Summary of Key Findings

A detailed explanation of both the findings of Projects 1 and 2, and of how they were derived can be found in Parts 2 and 3.

Table 19 below summarises only the key data in relation to each of the two projects. The findings can be presented and discussed together because the two projects addressed the same aspect of the research question and followed the same methodology in relation to both data collection and analysis. While the Table highlights the key results obtained, a proper understanding of the findings can only be obtained from the detailed explanations mentioned above. These should be read before considering the conclusions drawn in the next section.

Table 19 – Summary of Key Data (Projects 1 and 2)

	Project 1 – Failure		Project 2 – Success	
	Documentary Sources	Interviews	Documentary Sources	Interviews
Size of Investigation	69 records	8	103 records	8
No of Factors Derived	14	26	13	27
Consolidated Factors	26		21	
Properties	96		169	
Output	Cognitive Maps (App. 6); Road Map to Failure (Fig.11)		Cognitive Maps (App .10); Road Map to Success (F16)	

Source: Project 1 and Project 2 data.

1.1.2 Conclusions

After considering the findings of the first two projects, as well as the observations derived from the literature review (p. 10), the following initial⁵³ conclusions can be drawn in relation to the first part of the research question⁵⁴:

1. *Policy implementation is influenced by a large number of factors.*

It is fair to state that despite the knowledge gained from the literature review prior to starting this research, the study was still undertaken with the expectation that only a few significant factors would be identified as influencing policy implementation in Malta. The reason for this is not naiveté, but rather the author's experience over the years of hearing politicians, civil servants and consultants pointing fault or praise for failure or success to the same issues.

The results obtained from the research correct this misconception. Similar to other comparable studies such as those by Alexander (1985) and Morris and Hough (1987), a significantly large number of factors were identified as influencing failure and success. A number of the factors elicited from this research also seem to be similar to those of these studies, although the certainty of this cannot be established because the meaning behind the 'titles' used to describe the factors highlighted in the said studies is not discussed by the authors. Assuming that the meaning behind such factors is identical, this result would suggest that the factors influencing policy implementation are not context specific. However, this is at best a hypothesis, and would have to be confirmed or refuted through a comparative study across different jurisdictions.

More importantly, the results from this research suggest that information obtained from informal discussions can be considerably different from that given by the same persons when they are subject to more rigorous interviewing. The significance of this observation is three-fold. First, it recognises that what people say and what they

⁵³ Further observations/conclusions are drawn from the findings of Project 3 that may have a bearing on the conclusions listed here.

⁵⁴ This was "what issues (or factors) curtail the effective implementation of a given public policy..."

actually mean may be two different things altogether. Detailed probing is therefore required to ensure that issues are properly uncovered. Second, it suggests that those involved in the implementation of policy need to shed preconceived ideas of what does, or does not, influence implementation and broaden their sensitivity and perspective to other potential factors. Third, it amplifies the importance of engaging in sound research and preparation before attempting to implement policy, recognising that each one may need to be undertaken differently because of different influencing factors.

*2. Different stakeholders share **different and similar views** of the factors influencing policy implementation.*

That different persons identify different or similar factors influencing policy implementation is neither a surprise nor, in itself, an important finding. However, what is noteworthy is the need and ability to draw similarities and differences within and between the different categories of stakeholders. This is something that was not encountered in the literature and is considered to be important for at least two reasons.

First, it provides greater insights to what factors are considered to be more important by each stakeholder category, and to how they each view the issues surrounding policy implementation differently. This understanding should allow policy managers (implementers) to address the concerns of the different stakeholders in different ways, thereby encouraging their support and commitment to the policy management process or, at least, abating their resistance to it.

Second, it can guide policy implementers in determining an order of priority for addressing the identified issues. For example, while it is not possible to conclude that the factors common to all three stakeholder categories in this research are considered by each one to be the most important factors influencing policy implementation, it is reasonable to assume that their expectations can be better managed if the factors common to all three are addressed first, followed by those issues common to two stakeholder groups and lastly those specific to each category.

The need to draw similarities and differences in the issues perceived to influence policy implementation is an important conclusion and should not be overlooked.

*3. Different stakeholders attribute different **meanings** to the same factors.*

Another important conclusion is the recognition that differences arise in the interpretations given to the same factors. Although it may seem obvious that different people perceive issues differently, once again the literature falls short of identifying and explaining the meaning behind factors considered to influence the implementation of policy.

It is argued that it is not enough to identify, say, 'commitment' as an important factor. Equally or more important is the need to determine what it is about commitment that makes it such an important consideration in the implementation of policy. For example, in Project 2, twenty-two (22) different properties were identified to explain commitment. This means that while different interviewees were generally talking about the same issue, they were defining it and interpreting it from different perspectives. A solution that properly addresses the issue of commitment must address it from all these perspectives.

Practitioners are advised to shed their clichéd views of the issues influencing policy and search for particular answers to specific problems, while researchers are encouraged to delve deeper into the symbolic and contextual significance of such issues.

*4. There is a **hierarchy** of influence among the perceived factors.*

Although a priority ranking of factors was neither an objective of the study, nor possible given the chosen research design and the results obtained, a laddering effect could nonetheless be determined among factors, indicating a pecking order or hierarchy of influence on failure and/or success.

This was arrived at by examining the perceived causal relationships between factors as presented by the documentary data and by interviewees. It was noted that some factors were super-ordinate and/or sub-ordinate to other factors, either because they were perceived to trigger or amplify their occurrence, or because their own occurrence resulted from the activity or inactivity of some other factor. These relationships are illustrated in Figures 9 and 14 (relating to Projects 1 and 2

respectively), while the hierarchical ordering are presented as 'road maps' of failure or success in Figures 11 and 16 respectively.

This is a very important consideration. Unlike the literature that seems to suggest that all factors carry equal 'weight' in influencing success or failure, the findings of this research suggest that certain factors can be more problematic (in the case of failure) or solution-prone (in the case of success) than others, because of what can be termed their 'compounding' effect. Recognising this relationship and effect should help to channel effort in the policy implementation process to where it is most required.

*5. Factors can be classified into **three categories** to facilitate their management.*

Without wanting to run the risk of oversimplifying the complexity of matters surrounding the implementation of policy, it is possible to reduce or group the identified factors into three broad categories.

Borrowing on the conclusions drawn earlier from the literature review, most factors can either be classified as 'people-oriented' or 'process-oriented' (previously referred to as technical-oriented). This is because the factors falling within these categories are either (i) intangible and intrinsically relate to some personal, social, psychological or behavioural dimension of the individual(s) involved in the policy implementation process, or (ii) are extrinsic to the individual and related to matters of procedure, process or approach. The third category relates to what can be termed as 'contextual-factors'. These factors define the environment within which a policy is being implemented. Their durability over time will vary according to circumstances but they are likely to change in time as the elements comprising the environment or the policy itself change.

The utility of such a classification is that it provides policy implementers with a rough template to guide their actions and activities. First, it separates the factors into dependent (people-oriented and process oriented) and independent (contextual) variables, so that attention can be directed on the former category. Secondly, it separates the dependent variables by recognising differences between those factors that can be planned and controlled by policy implementers (process-oriented), from

those factors which can be influenced by them, but that cannot be rationally planned or controlled (people-oriented).

While it is recognised that this classification is nowhere as detailed as that by Morris and Hough (1987), it is possibly more useful to practitioners as it is simpler to bear in mind and to apply.

6. *Addressing failure is not a prescription for success. Equally, achieving success requires recognition of the factors that may lead to failure.*

Alexander (1985: 97) states that:

“successful implementation in part involves preventing various implementation problems from occurring in the first place...[it] also involves doing the things that help promote success rather than just preventing problems from occurring”.

This research supports these claims. It recognises that a distinction must be made between:

- (i) those factors that are considered to influence only policy failure (eg., cloning) or only policy success (eg., demand) – that is, factors that are ‘unique’ to either one or the other situation, and whose absence or presence in one situation is not considered to bear any influence on the outcome of the other;
- (ii) those factors that were specifically identified to have played a part in influencing both failure and success, either because of their absence or presence (for example, a lack of *commitment* influenced failure, while strong *commitment* influenced success) or because of the way in which different properties of the same factor acted to influence failure or success (for example, the *frequent turnover* in leadership was an influence in the case of failure, while *clarity of vision* of the leadership was an important determinant of success); and
- (iii) those factors that were explicit to the outcome of failure, but only implicit to success – for example, a central factor to failure in Project 1 was the sheer absence of accountability. Accountability was not identified as an issue in success, but this does not mean that it is not important. Said differently,

accountability was not raised as an important factor of success, not because it isn't, but because it was not a problem in the policy investigated.

Therefore, in relation to the above;

- (i) addressing factors specific to failure may decrease the possibility of failure but will not necessarily influence success;
- (ii) different *aspects* of the same factor that can influence both failure and success must be addressed differently; and
- (iii) working to ensure success must also consider the factors that if unaccounted for or taken for granted may ultimately drag a policy to failure.

7. *Modelling Failure and Success.*

Similar to the work by other authors (discussed in the literature review), this research identifies a number of factors that are perceived to influence successful policy implementation. In addition, it separately identifies those factors that are perceived to influence failure and also explores the meaning and relationships behind the elicited factors. With this information, it was considered possible to develop a theoretical model of policy failure and of policy success that illustrates the apparent inter-play between the elicited factors and how they are perceived to relate to one another in shaping the implementation process. The development of these models was heavily influenced and guided by the methodology for theory development proposed by David Whetten (2002).

Whetten (2002), quoting Campbell (1990: 65), states that the development of a theory (or model) requires the collection of assertions, both verbal and symbolic, that identifies WHAT variables are important for what reasons, that specifies HOW they are inter-related and WHY, and that identifies the CONDITIONS under which they should be related or not related. Based on this assertion, he identifies four steps for the construction of theory. This logic and process was applied to the data and findings of this research and the resultant models of successful and failed policy implementation illustrated in **Figures 27** and **28** are proposed.

Figure 27 – Model of Successful Policy Implementation

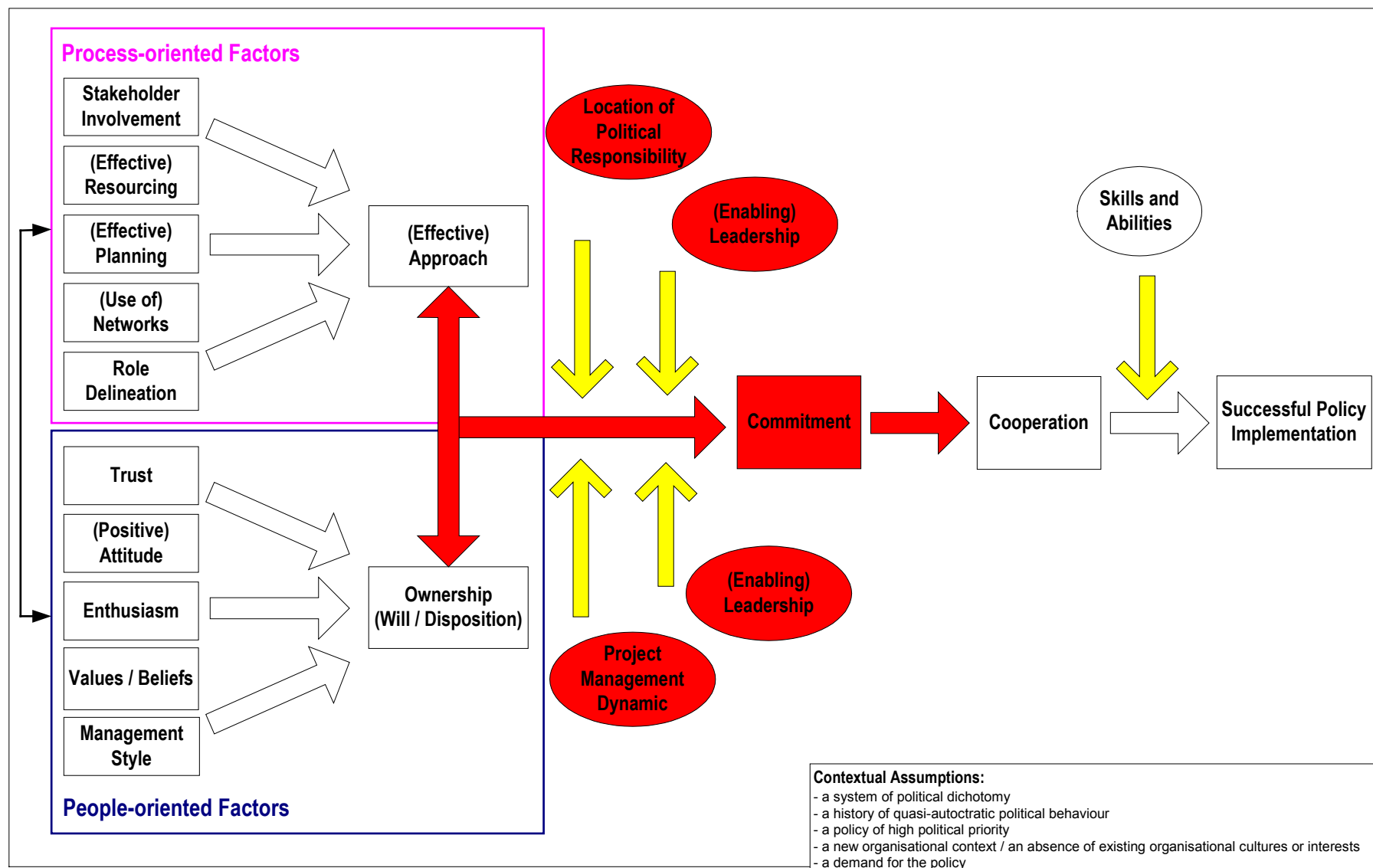
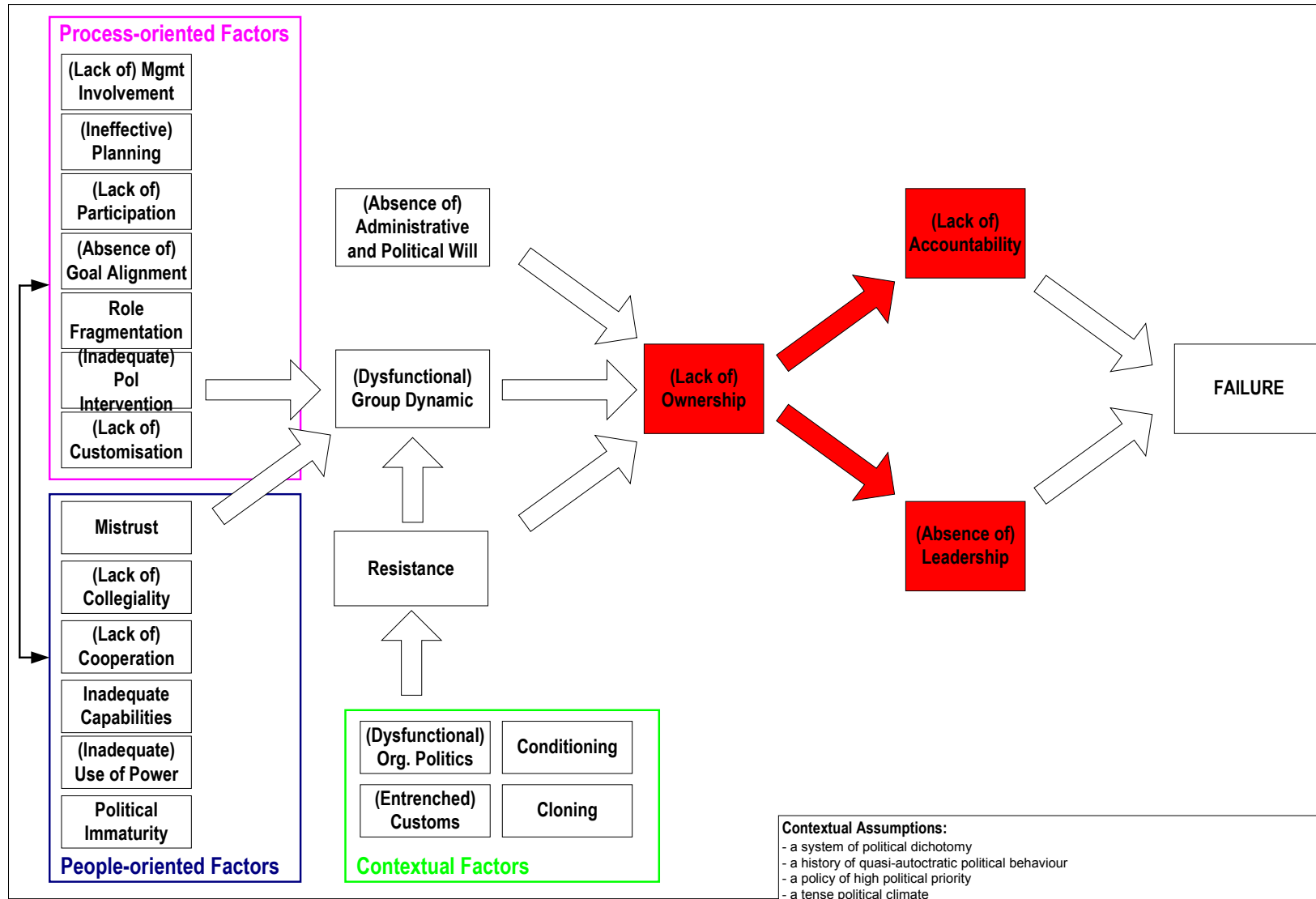


Figure 28 – Model of Failure in Policy Implementation



The success and failure factors derived from the research constitute the subject of the two models. These factors are either delimited by a rectangular box or by an oval shape, depending upon their respective roles. Factors in rectangular boxes are 'mediators'. They mediate the relationship between the constructs (or factors) on either of their side (Whetten, 2002), thus acting as intermediaries or brokers in the model's sequence of events. Factors in oval shapes are 'moderators'. When present, they act to influence or change the relationship between two other constructs (Whetten, 2002). Their influence is represented by the yellow-coloured arrows. The other arrows in the models indicate direction and a type of relationship between two factors. White-coloured arrows indicate a cause-effect relationship between factors, while red-coloured arrows indicate a means-end relationship. For example, in the model on success, the 'Approach' to policy implementation is perceived to be effective *because of* 'Stakeholder Involvement', while an effective 'Approach' to policy implementation is required *in order to* generate 'Commitment'. In the first case, the initial factor controls the final factor, much like a stimulus in classical conditioning. In the second case, it is the final factor that determines the initial factor, analogous to the role of reinforcement in operant conditioning (Whetten, 2002). The models also distinguish between process-oriented and people-oriented factors, and the contextual factors (and assumptions) defining their scope. The significance of these differences has already been discussed, but an example may serve to amplify this further.

In the model of success, both 'Stakeholder Involvement' and 'Trust' contribute to success by influencing an 'Effective Approach' and a sufficient 'Will/Disposition' in people for them to embrace the policy objectives and to work towards their successful implementation. However, while 'Stakeholder Involvement' and 'Effective Approach' are factors that are within the full control of the policy implementer (because the extent to which stakeholders are involved is determined by the extent of participation allowed or prohibited), 'Trust' and 'Will' are not. Policy implementers may influence the level of trust in one another and other stakeholders through their actions, but their 'Will' or 'Disposition' to the implementation initiative is ultimately a personal orientation and one that can never be externally planned or controlled.

The classification of process-oriented and people-oriented factors is not intended to create a divide between the two. Indeed, one class of factors may influence the occurrence of the other. For example, in the model of success, it is logical to presume (and this also arises from the data) that decisions that generate a greater degree of 'Stakeholder Involvement' are bound to influence the type and level of 'Trust' among the actors and stakeholders to a policy implementation initiative. Therefore, while directly influencing the 'Approach' to implementation, it also indirectly influences people's 'Will/Disposition'. In fact, the data from the research would suggest that the factors classified as process-oriented and people-oriented are positively related; that is, a positive stimulus to one factor would reinforce the emergence or occurrence of another factor, and vice-versa⁵⁵. This relationship applies equally to the model on failure and, in each case, should serve to sensitise policy implementers to direct equal, but different, attention to both classes of factors. Recognising the intrinsic difference between the two classes of factors should help policy implementers identify and adopt those 'levers' that are most suited for eliciting some desired action or response, according to prevailing contextual conditions.

Sticking to the same example of success for explanatory purposes, the proposed model suggests that 'Commitment' is justified by '(Effective) Approach' and 'Will/Disposition' through a means-end relationship. In turn, it too is linked to success through a means-end relationship with 'Cooperation'. Lying at the centre of the figure, 'Commitment' is considered to be the core construct or factor of the model and the 'hub' of all activity. Said differently, successful policy implementation is dependent upon the 'Cooperation' of all persons involved in the implementation of an initiative. But in order to achieve this, there must be a solid 'Commitment' to the initiative, which in turn requires people's unconditional 'Will and Disposition' to see it through, and an 'Effective Approach' and sound strategy to make it happen. More importantly, however, are the moderating effects of three other factors on 'Effective Approach' and 'Will/Disposition'. These factors are 'Location of Political Responsibility', '(Enabling) Leadership' and 'Project Management Dynamic'. By

⁵⁵ In the model, this relationship is illustrated by a double-edged arrow.

suggesting this type of relationship, the model proposes that the right type of commitment only occurred because

- (i) from a *process*-perspective, the decisions taken regarding the choice of 'Location of Political Responsibility' provided the required legitimacy, power, resource control needs and institutional leadership to the approach followed;
- (ii) from a *people*-perspective, the chosen 'Project Management Dynamic' provided a comprehensive pooling of skills, focused expertise, a critical mass and an alignment of goals, all of which encouraged ownership of the policy initiative and positively shaped people's attitudes to it; and
- (iii) from *both* a process and people-perspective, the qualities of the 'Leadership' shown acted to provide vision, authority and control to the initiative, and to foster a team approach that encouraged take up and a collaborative environment.

Interpretation of the proposed model of failure should follow the same logic as that described for success. Of course, the elements of the discussion are different because (i) the factors that constitute the subject of the model are different, (ii) the types of mediating relationships between the factors are different (and there are no perceived moderating relationships), and (iii) the factors perceived critical to the whole process (i.e., what constitutes the 'hub' of the model) are also different.

It is important to note that both Figures 27 and 28 should be construed as interpretative models that attempt to represent a composite explanation of people's understanding and perception of what led to success and failure in a particular context and at a particular time. While generalisations from the model are somewhat possible if delimited to the Maltese socio-political context that characterised the two examples of policy implementation, it is important to note that the models are not intended, and cannot be used, as prescriptive models of success or failure. Instead, they represent a theoretical perspective of possible explanations of success and failure and are intended to stimulate further thought, discussion and research in this area.

1.2 Project 3

1.2.1 Summary of Key Findings

Project 3 had two objectives (i) to prioritise the factors elicited in Projects 1 and 2 and identify those factors considered by stakeholders to be the most critical or influential on policy implementation in Malta and (ii) to develop proposals (measures) to address these factors, thereby answering the second part of the research question.

Through the application of a survey of Politicians, Civil Servants and Consultants involved in the implementation of policy in Malta, a rank-order of the factors of failure and success was determined. A Goodness-of-Fit test was applied to the results achieved in order to support or reject the observation that differences existed in the perceived importance of the factors. The test confirmed this observation and highlighted a significant difference between the test scores achieved by the factors 'Leadership' and 'Commitment' and those achieved by the other factors, for both failure and success. Leadership and Commitment could therefore be identified to be the most important or critical factors considered by stakeholders to influence the outcome of policy implementation in Malta.

After re-visiting the Project 1 and 2 data on these factors, as well as an in-depth review of the literature pertaining to these subjects, a number of recommendations were drawn as proposed measures for addressing the perceived leadership and commitment gaps curtailing the effective implementation of policy.

The survey findings and the proposed measures are detailed in Part 4.

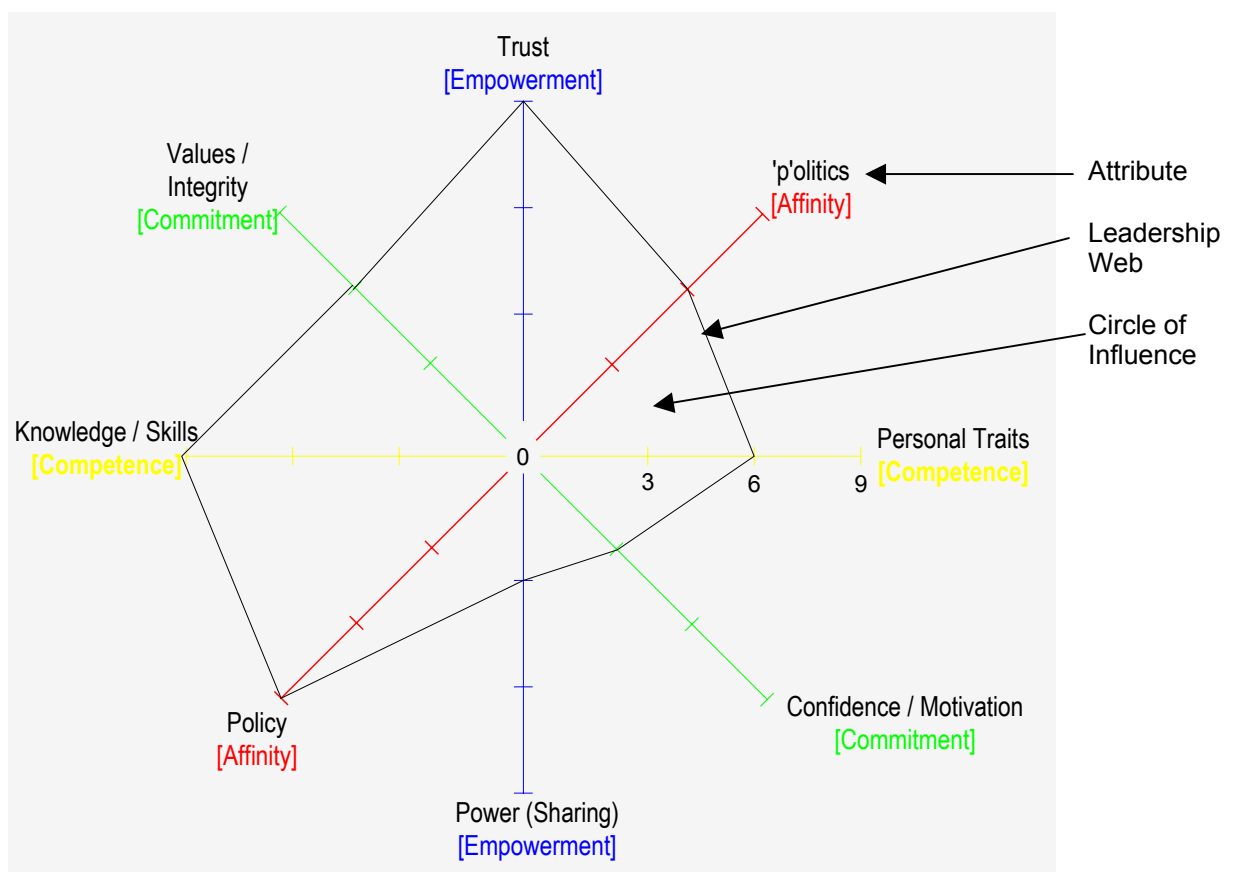
1.2.2 Conclusions

In themselves, the propositions on leadership and commitment discussed in Part 4 constitute the conclusions of the third and final part of this research. They identify the various drivers considered important to stimulate commitment (Figure 26), and also define the perceived requisites for effective leadership in policy implementation (Figure 24). However, a further final consideration must be drawn in relation to policy leadership.

It was noted from the literature review that the focus of the various leadership ‘tools’ available seems to lie on helping persons to develop a profile of their own leadership qualities or that of others; for example, one’s leadership traits, the preferred style of leadership/management, and one’s inclinations as a task-oriented or people-oriented person. However, they do not provide a means for assessing, or matching, the *particular* qualities required of a leader, given a *particular* policy and context.

This research inductively identified a number of requisites (or qualities) that are considered critical for the effective leadership of policy implementation initiatives. Using this information, a ‘tool’ (**Figure 29**) has been developed to guide policy sponsors in their decisions regarding the selection of policy leaders. The tool is intended to measure the qualities of potential leadership candidates against the eight attributes of effective leadership proposed by the research, with the objective of identifying the candidate(s) whose particular qualities in relation to these requisites are most suited for a particular policy and situation.

Figure 29 – Policy Leadership Selection Tool



Source: Compiled by Author

The Selection Tool

1. The application of the tool is based on the operational logic of radar charts.
2. Each variable of the chart corresponds to one of the eight attributes determined by this research as requisites of effective policy leadership. The attributes are presented in coloured pairs so as to highlight the super-ordinate variable to which they belong.
3. Each variable can carry a score of 3, 6 or 9. The higher the score, the higher the measurement of the variable (the methodology for scoring the variables and the meaning of each score is defined later).
4. The score obtained for each variable is marked on the relevant coordinate point on the corresponding axis.
5. The coordinate points are joined to one another to form a radar web. The web provides a clear picture of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the candidate whose leadership qualities are being assessed.

Applying the Test

1. Defining the Context

In preparing to select a leader(s) for a policy implementation initiative, it is important to frame that selection within the context in which the leader(s) would be expected to operate. To that end, a summary description should be developed of the Policy and its context. This should include an outline of its purposes and intended outcomes; the political and organisational Environment in which the leader(s) will be expected to operate; and the nature and needs of the various groups of Stakeholders who will be affected by the policy initiative. Defining the context will enable the person selecting the leadership candidate to consider, in a balanced manner, the individual's qualities (attributes) in relation to the specific features and characteristics of a given situation in time. An example of such definition is included in **Appendix 22**.

2. Defining the Test Statements

A number of questions or statements that reflect the eight attributes of the tool are required to serve as benchmarks against which the leadership qualities of a potential candidate are assessed. The following are suggested⁵⁶:

- *TRUST* – The leadership candidate is trustworthy and enjoys the trust of the stakeholders. His actions and reputation can inspire and build trust in others.
- *POWER-SHARING* – The leadership candidate will be willing to accept responsibility and control for the policy and champion it; will be prepared to share and delegate ownership with stakeholders; and will ensure accountability for such authority. The influence group has reason to share power, and will be willing to do so with this leadership candidate.
- *POLICY AFFINITY* – The leadership candidate has a personal interest in, and/or believes in, the particular policy initiative, its objective and desired outcomes; and/or will be willing to personally support it.
- *P(p)OLITICAL AFFINITY* – The leadership candidate cares for the (reference) group and can establish the requisite coalitions and networks to garner support and momentum for this initiative.
- *KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS* – The leadership candidate possesses the requisite knowledge and skills, acquired formally and/or through experience, that will enable him/her to adequately consider the strategic, operational and technical requirements and implications of this policy initiative.
- *PERSONAL TRAITS* – The leadership candidate possesses the wisdom and maturity to operate in this environment, can communicate effectively with stakeholders and can provide clarity of vision to his/her co-workers and followers.

⁵⁶ These statements have been coined to reflect the properties of the data arising from this research and, consequently, those aspects of the qualities of leadership that are considered to be most important in the Maltese public policy context.

- *CONFIDENCE/MOTIVATION* – The leadership candidate has confidence in his abilities and is motivated to succeed. He/she can act to inspire confidence in others and motivate them to achieve the policy's goal(s).
- *INTEGRITY/VALUES* – The personal values of the leadership candidate are congruent with the policy purposes; his/her ethics are respected by others; and he/she can be expected to provide principled leadership.

3. Scoring the Attributes

Each of the eight statements must be scored so that the relative worth of the leadership qualities can be established. A three-point scoring system is used. Statements are either given a score of 3, 6 or 9.

- A statement is given a score of **9**, if the person rating the candidate feels very confident that the **statement is true** and reflects his/her evidence-based judgement of the qualities of the candidate against that particular attribute.

A 'nine score' indicates that, at least going into the policy initiative, the indications are that the leader will be able to succeed in the specific policy context. As the policy initiative proceeds, any perceived deterioration in the attributes can be assessed with a view to improving them. Weaknesses in the attributes indicate where training and exposure are required.

- A statement is scored **6**, if the person rating the candidate feels that the **statement is only true in most of its aspects** and, in those respects, reflects his/her evidence-based judgement of the qualities of the candidate against that particular attribute.

A 'six score' means that there is a concern that the candidate has a sufficiently strong possession of the requisite attribute. The six score is an acknowledgement that the attribute is present in some strength but that it exists in less than a full professional measure, or that there is some question that the environmental context will allow the strength of the attribute to be drawn upon in its full measure.

- A statement is scored **3**, if the person rating the candidate feels that the **statement, in most of its aspects, is NOT true.**

A 'three score' indicates that, in the context of this policy initiative, the attribute is held in low quantity. Through training and exposure, it may be possible to raise the score, but it is unlikely that the score can be raised sufficiently in time to enable the person to successfully lead the specific project for which he or she is being assessed.

It is possible that a person rating a candidate may feel that even a score of 3 should not be awarded to one or more of the attributes. In such a situation, the candidate should be immediately disqualified, as persons occupying leadership positions should be expected to hold a basic level of 'competence' across all of the identified attributes.

4. Preparing to Draw Conclusions

The next step is to plot the attribute scores on the relevant axis of the radar chart and draw a 'leadership web' that graphically illustrates the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the leadership qualities of the candidate. The attribute scores should also be summed up to establish a total score.

To ensure that the qualities of the leadership candidate(s) are fairly scored, the test should be administered by someone who either (i) has direct experience of working with the candidate(s), and/or (ii) has previous experience of observing the candidate(s) at work, and/or (iii) has had the opportunity to judge his/her output and performance. To reduce the potential of bias or subjectivity, it is also suggested that the candidate's qualities are rated by more than one individual. The results can be compared and, if considered necessary, a final score per attribute can be established at the median of the individual scores awarded.

Furthermore, prior to rating a candidate(s), a 'reference leadership web' should also be drawn that reflects the minimum score levels per attribute required, given the particular policy and its context. This practice will provide an adequate baseline against which to compare the actual results of candidate scores, and will guard decision-makers from making sub-optimal choices of leadership.

5. Interpreting the Results

The objective of the leadership web and the total score is not to establish some minimum pass mark. Reality is never that clean cut. Instead, the objective is to provide a tool with which decisions can be made in a more informed and objective way.

The ideal leader for any policy will be that candidate whose leadership web has the widest circle of influence (web pattern) represented by a score of nine on each of the eight attributes; i.e., a total score of seventy-two (72). The reasons are obvious but such candidate(s) are likely impossible to be found⁵⁷.

Short of finding such candidates, the ideal leader for a particular policy will be that candidate whose leadership web has a circle of influence that either matches, or exceeds, the minimum web pattern established for this policy (hence the importance of drawing this first, and before rating the potential of a candidate). He/she is ideal when his/her apparent leadership qualities are perceived to match, or exceed (as the case may be), the minimum required attribute levels considered critical for the particular policy dynamic. **This does not mean that the policy will be successfully implemented.** It should be remembered that leadership is only one factor (albeit considered critical) that influences the outcome of a policy initiative. However, given a specific context, and assuming all else equal, the candidate should be expected to provide effective leadership, thereby improving the likely outcome of a successful implementation.

It should be noted that it is a match in the leadership web, and not the total score that is the determining factor of effective leadership qualities. This is because, given the combination of scores possible, a candidate can achieve a total score that is *equal* to that of the reference leadership web, but that does not match the required *distribution* of scores along the 8 attributes that define the specific pattern (or circle of influence) of the reference web.

⁵⁷ Proponents of the 'Born to Lead' would contest this statement, arguing that effective leadership is person-specific and not situation bound. The arguments against the former position and in favour of the latter were discussed in Part 4.

What happens if no candidate is judged to have a leadership web that matches or exceeds the reference web?

There are two options to consider. The first is to consider scrapping the policy initiative or postponing it, until either a suitable leader is found, or existing leaders are given the training and exposure required for them to develop the qualities that match or exceed the policy requirements. A second option is to shed traditional views of leadership and accept the act of leadership as a pluralist function. Building on the proposition that *effective leadership requires the establishment of a **network of effective leaders***⁵⁸, a decision can be taken to have the policy initiative led by not one, but a number of the candidates considered. The selected candidates should complement one another in their respective areas of weakness. In other words, it is their *composite* leadership web that should match or exceed the reference web.

There are a number of advantages to choosing this strategy. First, it truly acknowledges that different people have different qualities to bring to bear on different situations, hence maximising the utilisation of human capital (a scarce resource everywhere, more so in Malta). Second, it democratises the policy management process, drawing more people directly into implementation and helping to foster further support and ownership of initiatives. Third, it exposes a greater number of people to broader and more onerous responsibilities, building their capacity to contribute further to the organisation and to their own personal growth. Fourth, it requires the sharing of tasks, which if managed properly, can help to break down organisational barriers, encourage cooperation and the development of a team-oriented philosophy. Fifth, by distributing responsibility for a policy initiative, power and the command over resources are likewise shared and not concentrated in one person or entity, thereby abating the creation of fiefdoms or silos.

⁵⁸ Proposition L2 – Project 3.

1.3 Limitations of the Study

Issues pertaining to the study's validity and reliability have already been discussed in previous Chapters. The only real concern regarding these matters probably pertains to the study's external validity.

It has already been acknowledged that the decision to base each of Projects 1 and 2 on a single case study, using only examples of Maltese policy, limits the domain to which the study's findings can be generalised. First, it creates restrictions to the generalisability of findings beyond the Maltese context and, secondly, it questions the generalisability of the findings beyond the context of the chosen examples of policy. Potential criticism in this respect must however consider the reasons behind the deliberate choices made. First, the research was motivated by a management issue operating in a particular policy context. Consequently, solutions to that issue had to be likewise based on the policy context in which the problem is located. Secondly, the examples of policy selected for the case studies followed a rigorous interviewing process that (i) targeted people who had sufficient experience with the implementation of Maltese policy to consider a wide array of policy examples, and (ii) required interviewees to select a *representative* example of success and failure on the basis of a number of pre-established criteria. In these respects, it is felt that while it may not be possible to engage in statistical generalisations, analytical generalisations are not beyond the possibility of this research. Furthermore, a certain degree of generalisation did take place in the third project, when the factors elicited from Projects 1 and 2 were used as the subject of the survey, so establishing a priority order of importance. The response to the survey was significant and given the results achieved, it is fair to state that interviewees did not feel that the data they were faced with was extraneous to their experience in dealing with policy implementation.

The problem of external validity remains a major barrier in doing case studies (Yin, 1994: 36). Nonetheless, case studies of the policy-making process have long been considered one of the more important methods of political science analysis (Lowi, 1964: 677). Would better theory arise from more surface case studies, or from fewer but deeper case studies? The issue is well debated in the literature (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt, 1991; Dyer and Wilkins, 1991) and valid arguments

are presented by each side. However, given the objective of this study, it is felt that choosing a single case study approach was an appropriate decision and one that fits well within the selected research paradigm. This notwithstanding, due consideration was given to the need for rigour to ensure the study's construct and internal validity, as well as its reliability. This was deemed important to ensure that the study could be replicated in other case contexts and to facilitate the drawing of comparisons and generalisations from inter-case findings. Indeed, a natural next step to this research would be to engage in a comparative study of the factors influencing policy implementation in other countries. The study could be designed to compare policy implementation in Malta to that in other small island States, and/or to that in commonwealth countries, and/or even to other large States that have different politico-administrative contexts.

Another limitation, or criticism that could be levied on the study, is that the selected examples of policy on which the case studies are based may be somewhat outdated, given that they related to policy decisions taking place in the early to mid-1990s. It has already been highlighted that the subject of the policies remains an issue of current interest today and new/revised policies are still being directed in the area of Financial Management Reform and Local Councils. However, it could be argued that the contexts within which those policies operated in a decade ago are different to the contexts shaping their operations today. Consequently, if the case studies were to be replicated today, using some current policy as the subject of research, new or different factors may be identified, and/or less/more importance may be attributed to the original list of factors. This is possible and a longitudinal study would have served to address the concern. However, it would have also created its own set of problems. First, it would have required more of an action research approach, which for the reasons mentioned earlier, would not have been practical. Secondly, it would have represented a very risky approach, in that the author's association with his current employer could have terminated at any time and, with this, possibly his access to the required data. A case study approach based on historic data was more reliable. Despite the foregoing, it should also be noted that the Project 1 and 2 factors were considered by current policy managers in the Project 3 survey. Their validity was not questioned and the factors may therefore be deemed to be significant in a current policy context.

2.0 Addressing the Management Issue

Having identified the critical issues influencing policy implementation, and having proposed various separate measures to address these concerns, the final step, from a practitioner's perspective, is to develop a framework that provides policy managers in Government with the opportunity to address implementation in a holistic and manageable way. Building on the evidence from Project 2, it is believed that this can best be achieved if the Government adopts a project management approach to the management and implementation of policies.

2.1 The Case for Project Management

Ever since Government introduced its reform movement in the late 1980s, there has been a lot of discussion about project management being the new form of managerialism for a dynamic and proactive public service. In reality, project management remains a concept that in Government in Malta is not understood and much less practised. However, the research would suggest that if it were to be applied as a technique for the implementation of policies, it could be a viable tool for their successful delivery. Besides acting as a catalyst for effective leadership and commitment to a policy initiative, good project management also brings into perspective many of the other factors that are perceived to influence implementation.

The suitability of project management for the implementation of strategy is well recognised in the literature. Bowman (1998: 157), for example, notes that:

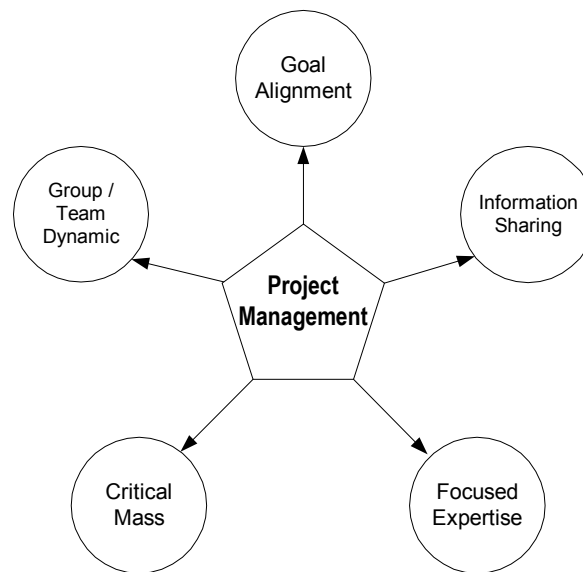
“the advantages of the technique in strategy implementation derive from the disciplines and procedures that have been developed, its multidisciplinary approach, and the measurability of output”.

Turner and Muller (2002: 3) also suggest that:

“project management is the process by which projects are *successfully* delivered, and their objectives *successfully* achieved [*emphasis added*]...[and that] projects are better suited for managing change than the functional organization”.

The importance of project management also emerged from the research and was particularly evident in the Project 2 case study. The findings had suggested that project management can influence successful implementation in at least five ways (Figure 30).

Figure 30: The Influences of Project Management on Policy Implementation



Source: Compiled by Author

By effectively adopting a project management approach to implementing the Local Councils policy, the political and administrative arms of Government were successfully combined without concentrating too much power in one entity. Indeed, the first contribution that a project management approach had on the successful outcome of the implementation programme was the ability to channel the (internal) stakeholders' interests in the same direction and generate a sense of *goal alignment*. Political, administrative and expert resources were channelled to work in tandem and towards the achievement of a common goal. Each contributing party held firm to its resources, but found it unthreatening to share these with the other parties. Feelings of territorialism were thus avoided and problems were swiftly dealt with as they arose.

The project management methodology was also instrumental in overcoming traditional mentalities concerning the control of power. It was noted that the parties to the project team came to realise that their individual and collective interests were

best served when *information was shared*. There was a recognition that their collective power in driving the policy came not from withholding information, but from understanding each other's point of view so that the whole could be managed more comprehensively. To facilitate this process of information sharing, meetings were held at regular and pre-determined intervals and followed a specific agenda. The agenda was also purposely designed to generate discussion about the detail of the project as well as the progress achieved on all fronts. Problems could therefore be minimised and often avoided.

Typical of most policy implementation programmes, the one in question required the pooling of various skills and expertise; competencies that are almost never concentrated in one Ministry, and on many occasions are also scarce across Government. The adoption of a project management approach alleviated this problem. It allowed scarce resources to be brought together and *focused* on an initiative on a semi-permanent basis, without disrupting other day-to-day activities that must nonetheless be seen through and effectively managed. The pooling of resources was also instrumental in influencing the transfer of skills and know-how that is so often limited to persons normally performing distinct line operational duties.

Consequent to the aforesaid, the project management dynamic also served to generate a *critical mass* of resources working on a particular initiative. Besides allocating the required skills, the parties to the project team also contributed resources (human, technical and financial) in sufficient quantities to leave an impact and to ensure that the policy could be holistically tackled in both breadth and depth.

However, the most important success factor emerging from this organisation of activities was a special type of *group or team dynamic*. It is interesting to note that during interviews, recollections on the policy in question were surfaced with a certain sense of nostalgia. The sense of dedication to the team and the affinity to the project was something real and almost tangible. It was influenced by various factors but was ultimately premised on a collective belief in the possible successful outcome of the initiative, recognition of the leadership capabilities and the commitment of all members of the project team in their respective camps.

This example of policy implementation suggests that managing policies as discrete 'projects' provides an opportunity to:

1. implement initiatives in an incremental and manageable way;
2. assign different responsibilities to different people 'in chunks', thereby providing them with the exposure required to develop and enhance their leadership skills while simultaneously allowing for better risk management;
3. draw management and subordinates to work closer together as a 'team', thereby encouraging participation, communication, and the development of trustful relationships; and
4. solicit greater commitment from individual team members by assigning them ownership for specific deliverables.

2.2 Developing a Project Management Capability in Government

For the Government of Malta, the first step to implementing policies as projects is the development of a project management function. This can be addressed at a line Ministry/Department level or as a centralised corporate activity. As an initial step, the latter is suggested for two reasons.

First, the Maltese Public Service lacks the number of professionally trained managers at line Department level that may be more widely available in larger Governments. To try and introduce a new management framework at this level will be like sowing seeds in unploughed land. There is little to feed on and the initiative will be unsustainable. Secondly, the few professionally competent managers that exist are either focused on the delivery of critical day-to-day operational functions and services, or are otherwise deployed to fire-fight issues as they arise. To re-deploy these officers to develop a project management capacity would detract their efforts away from the delivery of critical services and would only serve 'to rob Peter to pay Paul'.

The Government may therefore stand to gain if it strengthens its policy governance by first establishing a central Policy Management Office. The objective of this Office

would be two-fold: to oversee the roll-out of Government's policy programme, and to provide support to line Ministries through the deployment of management specialists who are specifically schooled and trained in the strategic implementation of public policy. This strategy would serve two purposes. First, it would provide much needed assistance to line Ministries in a coordinated and organised fashion. Secondly, it would serve to start inculcating a policy management competence at line operational level through knowledge and skills-transfer.

The Policy Management Office would have to be composed of management professionals specifically recruited for this function. Understudies may be deployed to work alongside them, so as to facilitate skills transfer, to develop a team approach and to engender commitment.

Recognising that (i) in itself, this would be a new policy initiative, and (ii) 'location of political responsibility' for a policy was identified as a determining factor influencing failure or success, the Office should be resident within a domain that provides it with the power to influence the assignment and deployment of resources, and the establishment of policy priorities. Given the current context, a suitable location would be the Office of the Head of the Civil Service. The Head of the Civil Service should personally sponsor the initiative. These considerations will empower the Project Management Office, sending symbolic and real messages of Government's confidence in its intent and its ability to change its *modus operandi*.

The Project Management Office could be established as a completely new function (i.e., Office), or otherwise introduced as an expanded remit of an existing function. A possible candidate for the latter option is the Management Efficiency Unit (MEU). MEU is the Government's in-house management consultancy firm. It reports directly to the Head of the Civil Service and employs some thirty (30) multi-disciplinary professionals who are exclusively focused on providing public sector consulting services to all Ministries and Departments in Malta. There are a number of advantages to following this strategy. First, it capitalises on existing human capital and expertise, thereby expediting the set-up process and reducing the learning curve. Second, it makes use of an existing function that is well known in Government and highly respected. Third, it can 'exploit' the existing network of relationships and activities between MEU staff and public officers in Government

departments, thereby reducing potential resistance to this initiative. Fourth, it is also advantageous to MEU, as it would move from the provision of advice, to more direct involvement with the implementation of policies and initiatives – i.e., to move from the ‘comfortable’ position of telling Government Departments ‘what to do’ and ‘how to do it’, to the actually ‘messy’ part of doing what needs to be done.

The Project Management Office should initially be given a programme that is focused on a few, but high profile, policy initiatives. By working visibly with line Ministries to deliver these initiatives and by providing direct and tangible support to ensure early, visible results, the Office will gradually rally support.

As commitment is built and competencies start to develop at Ministry-level, operational champions can be identified and ‘satellite’ project management offices can be established to act as remote site-offices to the central Office. The persons deployed to these offices will need to be schooled in policy management and trained in project implementation skills. By time, the Government would have developed a *network of policy leaders* at Ministry level who will act to re-direct policy implementation efforts away from line managers, so that the latter can focus on their day-to-day activities, while they can focus on successfully delivering new policies and services in parallel. Once implemented, responsibility for ‘maintaining’ the new policy can be transferred to line managers, so that the policy leaders can redirect their attention to new initiatives.

3.0 Research Contributions

It is believed that this research makes a contribution to both theory and practice. The suggested contributions are summarised in **Table 20** and discussed further below.

3.1 Contributions to Theory

3.1.1 Theoretical Knowledge

1. In his concluding remarks, Alexander (1985) observed that successful implementation involves doing the things that help promote success, rather than just preventing problems from occurring. The findings of this research suggest that failure and success are influenced by different factors, or by the same factors but acting in different ways. This therefore confirms Alexander's observation and suggests that the ability to manage or avoid failure is not a prescription for success. A successful outcome requires due consideration of the factors that promote success.
2. The most significant contribution that this study makes to theory emanates from the proposed models of policy failure and success. These models provide a framework that suggest *what* factors influence policy failure and success and *how*. Similar representations have not been encountered in the literature. The value of their contribution is two-fold. First, these models can serve as a reference or benchmark for exploring or comparing other policy implementation initiatives. Second, they provide the basis for structuring and testing further hypotheses on both the substantive variables (the factors) that are being claimed to influence policy implementation, as well as the degree and bearing of their influence on failure and success in different policy contexts. Although the models are not intended to be prescriptive of failure and success (because different contexts may influence the models differently), they provide a useful tool for framing and 'navigating through' the two phenomena.

Table 20 – Contributions to Theory and Practice

Domains of Contribution	Extent of Contribution		
	What has been confirmed	What has been developed	What has been found that is new
Theoretical Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Avoiding failure is not a prescription for success. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Theoretical models for framing success and failure. ○ Ascribed the meaning behind various factors as perceived by members of a particular polity and, particularly, unbundled the meaning of (policy) commitment. ○ Identified eight dimensions (or attributes) of effective leadership that are critical for the implementation of public policy.
Empirical Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some of the factors identified in the literature to influence implementation were confirmed by the research. ○ Effective leadership <u>is</u> a function of both transactional and transformational qualities. ○ Effective leadership is a pluralist, not individualistic, function. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A distinction has been drawn between factors influencing failure and success. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Failure and success are heavily influenced by the absence or presence of commitment but, in a public sector context, this is more likely to be a function of the commitment of the <i>leadership</i> of the Service, rather than a matter of <i>employee</i> commitment, which occupies centre stage in the private sector. ○ The prioritisation of success and failure factors in a particular policy context.
Methodological Approaches		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Triangulation of the data codification and cognitive mapping techniques, to achieve a consolidated set of failure/success factors. ○ Database to facilitate the recording and analysis of documentary evidence. 	
Practice		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An understanding of what policy makers in Malta consider to be the most important factors in the implementation of policy. ○ The application of a project management framework for the management and implementation of policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A potential 'road-map' or how-to guide for driving successful policy implementation in Malta. ○ A model/tool for guiding the selection of policy leaders.

3. Using the general principles of data codification proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998), and the application of cognitive (causal) mapping techniques (Eden, Ackermann et al., 1992), the study has been successful in ascribing some meaning to a number of clichéd concepts that are extensively used, but that are nonetheless elusive and poorly understood. While the research does not claim to provide definitive explanations to such concepts (because they are contextually bound), it does make a contribution by unbundling the meanings attributed to them by the members of a particular polity. These meanings are illustrated through the cognitive maps and 'road-maps' of failure and success discussed in Projects 1 and 2. Of particular relevance is the unbundling of 'commitment' in a public policy context. As discussed earlier (p.176-201), while some aspects of the literature on commitment focus on categorising and defining this term, the application of such studies in a public sector context has not been substantial. Furthermore, while studies in this field have successfully explored the sources/antecedents of commitment, there is little, if any, on what leaders and organisations can *do* to show and build commitment. The research proposes a number of variables for a public policy context (see p.205-208).
4. Leadership is defined and explained in the literature in numerous ways (see Figure 23, p.151). According to the trait and style philosophies, effective leadership can either arise because of a person's innate characteristics or because of his abilities to influence behaviour. The contingency school argues that effective leadership is not contingent on one characteristic or the other, but rather on the specific conditions of a particular context. This study would suggest that effective leadership requires an element of all three. Using the data and findings arising from the research, an attempt was therefore made to match different aspects of the three schools by identifying those critical elements of leadership that, according to the data, constitute or define an effective leader(s) from the perspective of public policy implementation. It is believed that the contribution to knowledge in this regard primarily arises from (i) the substantive identification of the attributes that are considered to shape effective policy leadership and (ii) the proposition of a framework that considers aspects of all three schools of thought, and not just the limited view of one of them. Furthermore, it provides a conceptual framework for further research

that can be oriented at testing the generalisability of the proposed attributes to other policy contexts. In general terms, the research also contributes to the study of leadership in a public sector setting, which in contrast to its counterpart study in the private sector is very limited.

3.1.2 Empirical Evidence

5. The factors elicited from Projects 1 and 2 are themselves a substantive contribution to both theory and practice. From the former perspective, they provide empirical evidence of the variables considered to influence failure and success in a particular policy context. As such, they add to current knowledge by confirming what is already known to influence policy implementation, and can also serve as a basis for further empirical research that would test their general application beyond the context and limitations of this study. Similarly, they can be used to benchmark and compare factors derived from other research studies. From a perspective of management practice, they can serve as a checklist of 'what to watch out for' and 'what to avoid', when managing the implementation of policy.
6. The findings of the research confirm that leadership is most effective when there is a balance of transactional and transformational leadership. It supports the claims made by other authors that the potency of leadership is greater when viewed and applied from this perspective.
7. The findings of this research also confirm claims made in the literature that leadership should be considered and encouraged as being a pluralist activity and not an individual function. A broader, more inclusive perspective of leadership that capitalises on the various leadership qualities of different people is claimed to contribute to more effective leadership.
8. Besides adding to current knowledge by providing further evidence of the factors influencing policy implementation, this research also makes a further contribution by distinguishing between factors that were considered to influence failure and those perceived to influence success. This distinction is not normally made.

9. While the literature on commitment emphasises that the most important dimensions of commitment that influence implementation are employee and organisational commitment, and not management or sponsor commitment, this research claims otherwise. Given the findings obtained, it is suggested that in a public sector context, the implementation of policy is more likely to be influenced by the absence or presence of the commitment of the leadership (both political and administrative) rather than the commitment of other junior employees. By highlighting this distinction, it is argued that the manner in which commitment needs to be addressed in a public policy context is different to that in a private sector setting. In this respect, the study is suggestive of the need for greater research in this direction.
10. A final empirical contribution is the prioritisation of success and failure factors. It is a contribution to theory because rather than just being a listing of factors, it provides researchers with a *weighted* consideration of the perceived importance of the factors. Therefore, it (i) represents new information on the sensitivities considered to have a significant effect on the shaping of public policy in Malta, and (ii) provides an opportunity for the comparison of such sensitivities among different policy contexts, so that the similarities and differences in the implementation of policy across different polities and jurisdictions can be examined and understood better. It is also a contribution to practice because it can help practitioners to focus their effort, time and resources on those factors considered by stakeholders to be the most important. Given the fast pace of change and an ever-increasing and crowded agenda, it provides them with the opportunity to 'manage by exception' and to derive greater returns per unit of effort.

3.1.3 Methodological Approaches

11. The protocol that was developed to merge the findings of the documentary research to that arising from the interviews (defined in Project 2), may be viewed as a development of the data codification and cognitive mapping techniques used separately in each of the two stages of the data collection phase. This methodological triangulation allowed two data sets to be

compared, contrasted and reduced, so that a final categorisation of the failure and success factors could be achieved.

12. A custom-built database composed of three modules was designed and built in Microsoft Access ©. This database facilitated the capture and analysis of the documentary data used in Projects 1 and 2, and also served to strengthen the reliability of the study by providing a chain of evidence for audit purposes. The information resident in the database can also be used for replication studies or as additional data to other similar studies.

3.2 Contribution to Practice

13. The individual and collective cognitive maps arising from Projects 1 and 2 provide an element of insight to the thought processes of some of the policy makers in Malta and to the mental images they hold of (i) what factors are important for policy implementation and, therefore, what they believe defines, leads to and constitutes failure and success, and (ii) how these factors are perceived to interact in influencing the outcome of a policy initiative. This information is particularly of interest to the policy implementers operating in the Maltese public sector given that a better understanding of the beliefs, views and opinions of the decision-makers around them can help them to frame and manage the implementation of policy in ways that will garner support, and not opposition, from these stakeholders. In broader terms, to the policy implementer operating outside this context, it also provides useful insights into how different people plan, implement and evaluate their policy programmes. From an academic perspective it would also be interesting to compare these mental models with those of policy makers from other different and similar political jurisdictions and contexts, to establish whether there exist different perceptions of (i) what constitutes or defines failure or success in the implementation of public policy, (ii) what factors drive such failure or success, and (iii) the manner in which such factors interact in driving one or the other policy outcome.

14. The findings of the research support the view in the literature that project management is not only a useful and practical technique for routine, operational activities, but can also be successfully applied to the management and implementation of policies. The proposed framework of project management in the Maltese Government gives due consideration to the findings of this research and it is believed that if operationalised as suggested, it will make a deep and lasting contribution to the effective management of policies.
15. The contribution to theory of the proposed models of success and failure has already been highlighted. The models also make a practical contribution. To the policy implementer operating in Malta, they can serve as practical 'how to' and 'how not to' guides to policy implementation. Although not prescriptive in content, they can nonetheless act as 'road maps' of implementation.
16. From the viewpoint of management practice, a significant contribution is the identification of the dimensions or attributes that are considered to define effective policy leadership in a public sector context. While recognising that leadership effectiveness is influenced by a variety of factors contingent on contextual variables, the research proposes eight dimensions that, in a public sector context, are considered to influence policy leadership in specific and different ways. These attributes point to areas of leadership that in a private sector context may at times be taken for granted, or are not emphasised enough, because of the different elements defining that context. For example, the private sector stands a better chance of attracting *competent* leadership because of the processes by which leaders are acquired and/or scouted through organisations. In the public sector, the development of competent leadership may be hindered by factors such as the inability to directly recruit people into leadership positions from outside the Civil Service, the emphasis on length of service (a different term for seniority), and/or the limitation/inability to either remove incompetent leaders from the positions they hold or to replace them altogether. Similarly, the motives driving *committed* leadership are likely to be different and, hence, the outcome or degree of such commitment is bound to be different. A further contribution is the proposed tool for selecting policy leaders that should provide a useful framework for policy sponsors to make

more objective decisions of selection and appointment. The selection of policy leaders whose qualities match the particular requirements of a specific policy context should improve the likelihood of success.

Summary of Part 5

This part of the thesis ends the discussion of the research.

It draws a number of conclusions relating to various stages of the study and proposes some recommendations for guiding future policy implementation initiatives. Of particular note is the presentation of two conceptual models for framing, or representing, success and failure in policy implementation, and the proposition of a tool for guiding the selection of policy leaders. The adoption of project management for the management and implementation of policies is also proposed, and a framework for introducing this practice in the Government of Malta is recommended. Finally, the major contributions made by this research to both theory and practice are presented and discussed. Those considered to be of particular merit include (1) the theoretical models for framing success and failure – such representations were not encountered in the literature, (2) the success of ascribing some meaning (as perceived by members of a particular polity) to a number of clichéd concepts that are extensively used, but nonetheless elusive and poorly understood, (3) the identification of eight dimensions which, according to the data, define effective policy leadership, and (4) the proposition of a tool for guiding the selection of policy leaders.

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