

# RESEARCH INTO HOW DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS VALUE GEODIVERSITY WITHIN MALTA'S COASTAL ENVIRONMENT

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**INTRODUCTION:** Geodiversity refers to the variety of geological, geomorphological and soil features, and their assemblages, properties, relationships, systems and interpretations [1]. For years geodiversity conservation has come second to biodiversity, with many finding it difficult to define the two separately [2]. The research conducted aimed to explore the diverse set of ways geodiversity was valued between tourists and locals, and whether coastal sites were treated differently to others. The question 'Do tourists and locals value geodiversity differently in three separate coastal environments' was used throughout the study.



The locations above were used in the research. The coastal environments were all within a 5km walking distance of one another.

## METHODS:

- 1 Murray Grays 5 values of Geodiversity were adapted to the study. A descending rating scale of 1-5 was used to gain tourists and locals most important value in relation to the geodiversity in the specific area. The values of: Functional, Appearance, Cultural, Research, and Educational were used [3].
- 2 56 semi-structured interviews containing 8 open and closed questions were conducted at all three sites.
- 3 Inventories were used to describe the geodiversity of the site.
- 4 Tourist literature and visitors comments were reviewed.
- 5 A selective coding approach for each site was used to analyse qualitative data, formulated from the grounded theory [4].

## DISCUSSION:

- Ecocentric (protecting the environment for the environments benefit) and anthropocentric (protecting the environment for human benefit) views occurred at Il-Majjistral and Golden Bay.
- Tourists and locals at Għajn Tuffieħa and Il-Majjistral blamed the government for not doing enough to protect geodiversity, shifting responsibility [5].
- Spatial location differences were apparent when comparing the highest value for local's at all three sites.
- Social identify within a location has a huge impact on ones respect for geodiversity.
- Businesses noticed that they only survive in areas because of its geodiversity.

**CONCLUSION:** Although Malta already has an existing understanding about biodiversity, this research highlighted modifications the island is now taking to enhance its Geodiversity. The values addressed present reasons as to why the islands coastal environments must be protected. This research found that tourists come from all over the world to value Malta's geodiversity, highlighting the values that it holds. There is a desire for the Maltese to preserve and protect their coastal environments in order to not only conserve its geodiversity, but to retain both tourists and locals social values too.

## REFERENCE LIST:

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