

International Conference on Applied Business Research Abstract Submission

Name: Marie Avellino

Lecturer in the Tourism Department, University of Malta

Mailing Address: Room 312, Tourism Department,
Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy,
University of Malta

Msida, MSD2080, Malta

Tel: +356 23403352/99829529

Email address: marie.avellino@um.edu.mt,

PhD Candidate in Anthropology, London Metropolitan University, London

Key words: Socio-Anthropomorphic Strategies, cultural and social capital, female entrepreneurs,
education tourism.

Title: Socio-Anthropomorphic Strategies for Competitive Advantage

Full Abstract

Aim/Purpose: Malta is highly dependent on its tourism industry and recent years have witnessed stagnation in tourist arrivals and foreign earnings. This paper aims at presenting an overview of socio-anthropomorphic strategies that have been employed (knowingly or otherwise) by family-run Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) who operate within the Educational Tourism (ET) sector, a sector that has been overshadowed by its sub-sector, the English Language Schools (ELT) niche.

Use of the term 'paradigm shift' here is intentional, as this research will aim to show that the culture of how the tourist product is sold or marketed, has to change, and this will call for a change or shift in the present culture or mentality. The limitation of this research will be that the financial and economic benefits will not be considered *per se*, but will in fact be taken as a 'given'; the research will also be restricted and focused on to the benefits arising out of the paradigm shift taken from a socio-anthropomorphic perspective and will thus focus on the following two themes:

- Social capital as defined by Pierre Bourdieu, as "*the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition*" (Bourdieu 1986: 248).
- Cultural capital as viewed by Pierre Bourdieu as a form of capital in which people and societies invest their time and material resources, however, the word 'culture' here will be used in a broader sense than that used Bourdieu, and as defined by the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski (1931: 4:621-646), who stated that "*culture comprises inherited artefacts, goods, technical processes, ideas, habits, and values*".

Methodology: The main research was initially carried out in 2004 and revisited 5 years later in 2009, using a qualitative approach, so as to give a holistic and systematic picture of the current situation and changes which have taken place. The main aim of the 2004 research was to consider the benefits that would arise as a consequence of a paradigm shift, from the then current emphasis on ELS tourism towards the wider reaching and high growth sector of Education Tourism; and how such a shift could be assisted by the cultural and social capital resident in Maltese family managed SMEs. The 2009 research went back to the participants who had taken part in the first research study and looked at the changes which had taken place over the 5 year period.

Qualitative research methods were used as these are especially appropriate when dealing with issues of agency and representation. This method can highlight strategies of various agents in tourism and shed light on their perceptions and practices, especially the extent to which they are influenced by (or express certain qualities of) the social and cultural reality under examination.

Results: The cultural capital that is found within this sample of micro SMEs is extremely relevant to Malta's ET industry. Not only is it high, but in the ELS tourism it can continue to grow as well as be utilised to transform it into other forms of capital. If this cultural capital is also invested in the ET, then the investment return will be exponential for various reasons.

The social capital that is found among the SME respondents is used paradoxically depending on whether it is locally or externally (outside the island). Locally, it is manifested through networks of exchange it does not appear to be sufficiently developed because there is a lack of trust. There is no relevant culture of 'knowledge sharing' either at inter-organisational level and neither at intra-organisational level. The highest forms of networks are actually found amongst female entrepreneurs and this may in fact be a proactive reaction to push forward female entrepreneurship. This form of networking is also actively supported by Political parties (for political mileage) as well as Government and NGOs.

When it comes to developing networks with foreigners then there is a different scenario. Contacts are actively pursued, especially since Malta became an EU member and has access to a massive market. However, even here, networking is not sufficiently developed to consider social capital as high. There is in fact a 'natural' limitation which is mainly imposed by geography and the Maltese island culture of 'insularity'.

Policy makers should be aware that social capital that has a narrow radius of trust is detrimental to society at large. The greatest area where government can generate social capital as well as increase the stock of cultural capital is through education. Educational bodies transmit human capital as well as pass on social capital in the forms of social rules and norms

Conclusion: The results show that Malta is ideally situated as a hub for Educational Tourism. It can easily capitalise on its social and cultural capital to increase its economic capital and in so doing provides a space for enterprise and innovation. The sector has a high value-added component which makes it ideal for Malta; however it will also argue that the potential developmental impacts will not be maximised if inappropriate management, infrastructural support and adequate research are not undertaken.

Women, in Malta, also emerge as depositories of cultural and social capital and are well-positioned to offer unique and irreplicable resources to the family businesses.

This sector has a high value added component and therefore this research is of interest to entrepreneurs, managers in the tourism and education industries and policy makers as the case will be made for Malta to become a centre for education tourism in the Mediterranean.

Title: Socio-Anthropomorphic Strategies for Competitive Advantage

Abstract

Aim/Purpose: Malta is highly dependent on its tourism industry and recent years have witnessed stagnation in tourist arrivals and foreign earnings. This paper aims at presenting an overview of socio-anthropomorphic strategies that have been employed by family-run Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) who operate within the Educational Tourism (ET) sector, a sector that has been overshadowed by its sub-sector, the English Language Teaching (ELT) niche.

The research is restricted to the following two themes: Social capital as defined by Pierre Bourdieu, as *“the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition”* (Bourdieu 1986: 248). Secondly on Cultural capital as viewed by Pierre Bourdieu as a form of capital in which people and societies invest their time and material resources, however, the word ‘culture’ here will be used in a broader sense than that used Bourdieu, and as defined by the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski (1931: 4:621-646), who stated that *“culture comprises inherited artefacts, goods, technical processes, ideas, habits, and values”*.

Methodology: The main research was initially carried out in 2004 and revisited 5 years later in 2009, using a qualitative approach, so as to give a holistic and systematic picture of the current situation and changes which have taken place. The main aim of the 2004 research was to consider the benefits that would arise as a consequence of a paradigm shift, from the then current emphasis on ELT tourism towards the wider reaching and high growth sector of Education Tourism; and how such a shift could be assisted by the cultural and social capital resident in Maltese family managed SMEs. The 2009 research went back to the participants who had taken part in the first research study and looked at the changes which had taken place over the 5 year period.

Qualitative research methods were used as these are especially appropriate when dealing with issues of agency and representation. This method can highlight strategies of various agents in tourism and shed light on their perceptions and practices, especially the extent to which they are influenced by (or express certain qualities of) the social and cultural reality under examination.

Results: The cultural capital that is found within this sample of micro SMEs is extremely relevant to Malta's ET industry. Not only is it high, but in the ELT tourism it can continue to grow as well as be utilised to transform it into other forms of capital. If this cultural capital is also invested in the ET, then the investment return will be exponential for various reasons.

The social capital that is found among the SME respondents is used eclectically, depending on whether it is locally or externally (outside the island). Locally, it is manifested through networks of exchange it does not appear to be sufficiently developed because there is a lack of trust.

Conclusion: The results show that Malta is ideally situated as a hub for Educational Tourism. It can easily capitalise on its social and cultural capital to increase its economic capital and in so doing provides a space for enterprise and innovation. The sector has a high value-added component which makes it ideal for Malta; however it will also argue that the potential developmental impacts will not be maximised if inappropriate management, infrastructural support and adequate research are not undertaken.

Women, in Malta, also emerge as depositories of cultural and social capital and are well-positioned to offer unique and irreplicable resources to the family businesses.

This sector has a high value added component and therefore this research is of interest to entrepreneurs, managers in the tourism and education industries and policy makers as the case will be made for Malta to become a centre for education tourism in the Mediterranean.

Introduction

Malta is highly dependent on its tourism industry and recent years have witnessed stagnation in tourist arrivals and foreign earnings. This paper aims at presenting an overview of socio-anthropomorphic strategies that have been employed by family-run Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) who operate within the Educational Tourism (ET) sector, a sector that has been overshadowed by its sub-sector, the English Language Teaching (ELT) niche.

The research will focus on the following two themes: Social capital as defined by Pierre Bourdieu, as “*the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition*” (Bourdieu, 1986:248) and Cultural capital as expressed by Bourdieu as a form of capital in which people and societies invest their time and material resources, however, the word ‘culture’ here will be used in a broader sense than that used Bourdieu, and as defined by Malinowski (1931: 4:621-646), who stated that “*culture comprises inherited artefacts, goods, technical processes, ideas, habits, and values*”.

The research was conducted among the smallest units of the tourism industry in Malta: the small family-run business enterprise. This unit is worthy of research as among the entrepreneurial groups most likely to invest in their social and cultural capital are business firms, which in Malta are composed mainly of small and medium sized undertakings.

The typical Maltese firm (Baldacchino et al, 2003: 67-87) is usually a family firm, which officially employs less than 10 persons, and uses family labour for many functions in the firm. Its culture is family based on ownership and management, embodied in the (traditionally) male owner/manager. Informal recruitment and usually secret forms of remuneration are used. The basis for remaining employed is complete loyalty and commitment to the director/owner, which usually includes not applying overtime rates when working in excess of a 40 hour week, taking work home at the weekend or using a personal vehicle for company work. These firms are also distinguished by the absence of employee’s membership or affiliation of Trade Unions or other constituted bodies.

This research was particularly challenging as it delved into family owned businesses to show how these enterprises have utilised particular capitals to try and achieve competitive advantage, in spite of past challenges, competitors and globalisation. This type of enterprise is ‘historically’ averse to outsiders studying their decision making processes; mainly because of what they term as giving away ‘commercial secrets’

Family firms and Resource Management, Strategy and Performance.

Resource management or capital exchange is fundamental for the creation of wealth through the gaining of competitive advantage (Chrisman et al 2003 :359). Family values and aspirations, as well as the perceived importance of various social responsibilities, are likely to affect how the firm adds, sheds, and bundles resources and capabilities. However, while resources are the essential building blocks, an organization will gain a competitive advantage and thereby achieves above-normal returns only if this is

a function of the strategy used to leverage those resources to pursue diverse opportunities (See Barney, 1996; Hofer & Schendel, 1978; Ward, 1987).

In a small and medium-size family firm, there is typically a single owner-manager (Gersick, Davis, Hampton, & Lansberg, 1997), whose values and vision will strongly influence the governance and management of the business. In a larger business, especially one where there are outside shareholders, the family will typically hold sway over the governance and management of a business through majority ownership. Even when the family does not own the majority voting rights in the firm, however, it may still significantly influence the firm by controlling the dominant coalition. As Porter (1980) shows, opportunities pursued will affect a business's potential profitability because some industries are inherently more profitable than others. More important, the nature of the industry will influence the types of resources that are necessary to compete effectively. Therefore, decisions on which opportunities to pursue affect the potential value of the resources controlled by a family business, as well as the resources that must be acquired or shed to create economic value. Assessment, addition, shedding, and bundling of resources influence which opportunities are pursued, while the opportunity pursued determines which resources have to be added, shed, and bundled (*Chrisman et al, 2003*).

Education Industry

The Education Service Industry presents tremendous potential as we move into a knowledge driven global economy. It would not only serve as an important pillar for the tourism sector but will be an indispensable part of the Malta's infrastructure as we go further into the knowledge economy. It can be a renewable source of economic contribution as it is an activity that can be undertaken by the majority of the population, which also leads to innovation and creativity. It can be a competitive advantage as leading-edge, knowledge-based industries are attracted to Malta.

If the Maltese Industry becomes geared towards Knowledge-driven enterprise (given the necessary infrastructure and opportunities to become so), we could see a reversal of the brain drain, as well as an influx of some of the best and brightest individuals and organizations who wish to develop further the education service industry, whilst creating jobs and boosting export income. Singapore, for example is leading the way as a Global Education centre by differentiating itself in its strategy to become a world-class education hub. In the long term, education may become an important service export for Singapore. But, in the short term, Singapore is building a brand and attracting FDI or forming alliances with strategic partners. Its strategy is "to collect that critical mass of talent, to make it attractive for people to say that Singapore is the place to be," before making any moves to encourage large numbers of overseas students to flock to Singapore as an international study destination (SEDB, 2004).

Methodology

A qualitative research method was chosen as this is especially appropriate when dealing with key human issues of agency, subjectivity, choice and representation, whilst also revealing conflicts that ensue as agents seek to promote their own interests or of those they seek to represent.

Five Education providers were chosen based on their geographical distribution on the Island of Malta. The researcher worked with three of the organisations, one of which was solely an ELT School, another was solely a Training Provider (TP), and the third was licensed as both an ELT school as well as a TP. The other 2 informant organisations took part by allowing the researcher to visit the school as well as by participating in open-ended, in depth interviews. The researcher was also involved in industry meetings and discussions which provided more material for the research.

The main research was carried out in 2004, when there were 46 licensed schools of English (Visitmalta, 2004); of these 70% were family owned and managed. Three of the education providers who participated in the research were licensed Schools of English and therefore represented 10% of the EFL schools, however the research did not in any way attempt to be representative of the ELT Industry as qualitative research aims to reveal the specificities of each case studied, the socio-cultural context in which actors operate and which influences their choices (Scott, 2001: 87-107).

In 2009, the researcher re-visited the informants and 3 of these organisations were able to participate in an updated open-ended interview. One informant also allowed the researcher to stay at the school and talk to the teachers, students and other employees. For ethical purposes, the case studies are identified as α , β , γ , δ , and ϵ (Alpha, beta, gamma, delta, and epsilon).

Entrepreneurial Social and Cultural Capital in the Maltese Educational Tourism Sector

Results from the research indicate that the Educational Tourism Industry is very pro-active, with the most institutional and infrastructural support being given to the English Language sector. The beginning of EFL industry dates back to at least 1963 when 30 students from Italy attended a English Language learning programme (NSO, 1997 [online]), and ten years later the state-run International School of English welcomed 450 students from Italy, Germany and Scandinavia (ibid.) This demand encouraged entrepreneurs to open more schools (ibid.) and in 2008 over 83,000 foreign students followed courses at local English-language schools (NSO, 2009 [online]) from Europe as well as from Russia, Asia, and North Africa.

There are many agencies which have a role to play in promoting and providing platforms for accessing education or training for tourists. The most prominent National ones are the Federation of English Language Teaching Organisations Malta (FELTOM), Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association (MHRA), The Federation of Associations of Travel Tourism Agents (FATTA) and Malta Association for Private Training Providers (MATP). One also has to include Language Travel Agents who are usually non-Maltese but who have a very vital role to play in attracting students to Malta.

FELTOM is a self-regulating association of the major schools of English in Malta. It is officially recognized by the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Tourism and holds consultative status with the Malta Tourism Authority. FELTOM was set up to ensure that member schools are governed by a Code of Academic Conduct which incorporates a mechanism for customer protection. FELTOM promotes itself as a standard of quality for schools by setting, improving and ensuring the maintenance of standards in all

respects of English language stays in Malta, and member schools. The Federation's schools are responsible for some 80% of all EFL students registered annually in Malta with Germany, Italy, France, Austria, Russia and Switzerland being the principal markets (FELTOM [online]).

FELTOM was instrumental in setting up the EFL industry on professional lines: by lobbying successfully for regulations making it obligatory for each licensed school to have an Administrator who is responsible for all non-academic matters of the school. It is also obligatory upon teachers to be professionally trained in EFL teaching methodology, and that Malta is the only known country in the EFL world to have introduced apposite legislation dedicated to the licensing and operating of English language schools. Such legislation provides for an EFL Monitoring Board within the Ministry of Education whose functions are to ensure the maintenance of standards according to law.

In 1996 Legal Notice 60 established the EFL Monitoring Board to issue language school licences and oversee the maintenance of standards. As a means of ensuring professional standards, a self regulating, non-profit organisation, dedicated to promoting professionalism within the language learning industry was formed amongst the leading English Language Schools, The Federation of English Language Teaching Organisations Malta (FELTOM) (FELTOM, n.d [online]). It was instrumental in helping to draft the 1996 legislation and has now gone further by introducing its own rigorous Accreditation Scheme for its members (ibid.)

In 2008 MATP (Times of Malta [online]) carried out research about the training provision in Malta which concluded that the sector has a large potential for expansion but was hindered by state support. One of the main problems highlighted by both the ELT and TP markets is that of seasonality, as the majority of students arrive in the summer season. ELT students make up approximately 10% of the total visitor arrivals. This negatively effects employment and accommodation provision.

Research findings from case studies

Cultural Capital

Bourdieu (1986) distinguishes three forms of cultural capital: the embodied state, the objectified state and the institutionalized state.

Embodied State

One of the most important resources is the embodied state of cultural capital. It can be increased through the investment of time and money and this is usually manifested through greater knowledge or skill which becomes inherent in an individual, and which through its output can generate other forms of capital. The respondents are convinced that this is an important resource and will continue to be so in the future so much so that they built their service industry around the provision of it, although interestingly α , β and γ do not provide training for their staff and prefer to employ ready trained persons. They do not encourage staff to take time off for professional development and if they do, it will come out of their annual leave entitlement. Money is saved by α by bringing in administrative assistants as trainees. These are in fact students who will be given free or subsidised learning at the school in return for their work, thus implementing a zero cost strategy. Professional family members also give

their contribution as accountants, lawyers and consultants. As γ is a fairly new operation, the director himself continuously learns new skills and recruits highly professional persons as he does not access to a professional family network. γ , δ , ϵ are both committed to ongoing training as most of it is delivered in-house and the company directors, who have professional vocational qualifications utilise this knowledge not just for running the business but also take part in training delivery.

According to Bourdieu, cultural capital as a non-economic force includes family background, varying investments and commitments to education as well as social class, as the ability and talent of an individual is primarily determined by the cultural capital invested in them by their family and the larger the investment, the faster one accumulates capital. This is evident from the case studies, as children are educated in private institutions, to as high a level as possible, so that most of them will join the family firm or open up new enterprises which are vertically or horizontally linked with the original enterprise. The skills found within the wider family group is availed of, so much so that either family members are employed directly with the company, or else they set up alliances with other family groups that own ancillary businesses. All these varied skill sets and different resources have possibly enabled them to build their business much faster than the other education providers.

Objectified state

Cultural capital is represented by material objects such as books, painting, grand houses with architectural features and furniture. Economic capital is essential to gain access to them materially, whilst they can be appropriated symbolically through the embodiment of capital through education and consumption of culture, according to Bourdieu. Ray (2000) also includes the recovery or creation of cultural resources found within the family sphere.

Alpha participates in the accumulation of this type of culture through the family history, family lineage, and the family home is full of *objects d'art*, libraries, poetry, music and so on. The extended family are aware that this type of culture is important so as to create the right image of their school, so much so that when agents come to view the school, they are invited 'home' for high tea, where they are greeted by the father, who is an artist and lover of the arts, and by a warm welcoming mother, both able to converse in Queen's English as well as in Italian and French. This image of a 'genteel' way of life imbues the foreign agents with a sense of awe and trust and they will be happy to let this family look after their young students. All the case studies tend to invite the top agents out to exclusive restaurants and are also taken to visit the cultural places of interest in Malta, which by extension is also their 'own' cultural capital.

In contrast to Alpha, Epsilon comes from a working class family, and has no notable lineage to speak of; however has still found a way to capitalise on this resource, albeit in a symbolical way. He financed his way through education by working and studying hard. The training that his school delivers is technical

and vocational. The image that he projects is one that if one studies hard and '*ikun ragel*'¹, "God will endow you with the gift of success". He wants to serve as a role model for people who might not have the resources to make it. It is also an image which works well with the Arab market, as the culture there is to work only with persons of a good reputation, and Epsilon does his best to build trust and friendship with his suppliers and customers. Achieving qualifications which enabled him to set up his own business, allowed him access to cultural capital which he could not have had in the first place. He uses his social capital to gain entry to sit on boards of directors and committees so that he can have access to objectified as well as embodied culture.

Institutionalised State

'Pieces of paper' such as educational certificates which represent academic qualifications are highly prized. They confer on the owner a legal and conventional certification of competence and are increasingly becoming the embodiment of the commoditisation of the education system. This commoditisation process not only constrains but also channels all the different forms of capital in pursuit of gaining them. Through them the case studies gain recognition and can use them as mediums of exchange between cultural and economic capital. They are also items of 'prestige'.

The case studies have varying academic qualifications and most continue with professional development so as to ensure that the qualifications they have are in line with modern levels of education in their respective field. The only family directors which are left out of this process are the two matriarch/directors from Alpha and Beta. They were the ones who initiated the companies; however they were too busy running them, for most of the early years, single-handedly, that they did not continue their educational development. Both are IT illiterate, one does not even drive and has never done so. In 2004 they were still involved in the day to day running of the school, handwriting notes which have to be given to someone else to input into the IT system. This made them feel inadequate and untrusting of anything which was IT related, they also felt that they could do their work much more efficiently without a computer. This also meant that they were reluctant to give up their way of doing this type of work as they would lose control of the situation. In 2009 both had reduced their day-to-day involvement with the organisation.

Research shows that the respondents exhibit a high level of cultural capital. Knowledge and skills are learned as an outcome of cultural interactions and embedded with culturally produced values and meanings. This may be an effect of having a business which pivots on the production of cultural (human) capital for its very survival, or it may have been the cause (reason) why the enterprise product was chosen. All respondents are immensely aware that to increase their economic capital, cultural capital had to be accessed, by any or by all means- in its objectified, embodied and/or institutionalized form. As

¹ A Maltese idiom which means 'being a man'. This has connotations of honesty and integrity which is very important in Maltese and Mediterranean culture.

Bourdieu (1998) points out, people within a particular social space and with a certain type and amount of capital develop particular tastes and ways of being which support engagement in activities that put them in contact primarily with others who share similar interests and generally fall within the same social space, making the transfer of cultural capital difficult.

The cultural capital that is found within this sample of micro SMEs, is extremely relevant to Malta's ET industry. Not only is it high, but in the ELT tourism it can continue to grow as well as be utilised to transform it into other forms of capital. If this cultural capital is also invested in the ET, then the investment return will be exponential for the following reasons. Primarily the present resources that are used for ELT can also be easily accessed or reproduced by ET, thereby addressing the uneven use of resources (example: empty classrooms during parts of the year, unemployed part time teachers only utilised in summer months.) Secondly the domestic education system is of a comparably high standard. This could be revamped to incorporate ET programs in school curricula. It would also mean that government funded institutions could become profit centres instead of cost centres. This could also be converted to a socio-cultural benefit for students and all other stakeholders as they gain exposure and understanding of multi-ethnic learning environments.

Social Capital

The social capital that is found among the SME respondents is used eclectically. Locally, it is manifested through networks of exchange though up to 2004 it did not appear to be sufficiently developed due to a lack of trust. Due to the small geographical size of Malta, the relatively high level of population and scarce resources, there is a 'civilised' form of protecting one's patch. The Maltese saying "*Ghal kul ghadma hawn mitt kelb*"² means that no-one trusts any one else, and this sometimes also extends to other family members. The norm described by Banfield (1958) as characterizing southern Italy, which enjoins individuals to trust members of their immediate nuclear family but to take advantage of everyone else, is clearly not the basis of social capital outside the family. In Malta this lack of social capital is further extenuated as some respondents declared that although they do trust family members, they prefer not to have them as part of their trusted network for two reasons. The first is when the owner/manager is placed under a higher obligation to family members than to 'outsiders' as these (family members) can always say that they were the ones that allowed the owner manager to succeed, a form of symbolical or moral obligation, which is higher than an obligation that can be reciprocated by simple gift-giving. Secondly as betrayal by a family member is harder than betrayal of a non-relative, so it is best not to be placed or to place anyone in a position of compromise.

There is no relevant culture of 'knowledge sharing' either at inter-organisational level and neither at intra-organisational level. The highest forms of networks are actually found amongst female entrepreneurs and this may in fact be a proactive reaction to push forward female entrepreneurship.

² Literally translated to "There are a hundred dogs for every bone".

This form of networking is also actively supported by Political parties (for political mileage) as well as Government and NGOs.

When it comes to developing networks with foreigners then there is a different scenario. Contacts are actively pursued, especially since Malta became an EU member and has access to a massive market. In 2004, networking was not sufficiently developed to consider social capital as high. There is in fact a 'natural' limitation which is mainly imposed by geography and the Maltese island culture of 'insularity'. However in 2009, networking has become quite developed, probably due to the opportunities which are available as Malta became an EU member state.

Political Capital

Politics plays an important part in Maltese society. *"Political institutions ... provide a ruling class with means to perpetuate their power, maintaining the relationships of producers and consumers, rulers and ruled"* (Keesing, 1981). This symbolical, free flowing capital can be transformed into other forms, most often into economic capital which is outside the scope of this paper. I will give three examples of this capital transformation. Firstly, when political appointees 'arrange' for work permits or visa entry permits for non-EU females (it is actually the schools which apply for these permits). These political appointees transform (their country's) economic and social capital into (their personal) political capital. This is done in return for 'friendship' with school management. The second is the case of a director that invited a senior official and his wife for a week's holiday as a 'thank you' for facilitating the provision of a training tender. This holiday would also ensure that the official would be morally obliged to do his best to award the director with other tenders in the future. The third is an example of how social capital can be used for a positive benefit for society. This is seen in the formation of FELTOM, where social capital was transformed into political capital when FELTOM managed to achieve (as a collective) consultative status. On an individual level this is also re transformed in social and cultural (including political) capitals. It also means that some Schools of English, do not want to become members and some members are highly critical of it for the same reason (Political self-exclusion). These feel that some board members are using FELTOM as a platform for further political mileage not for consensus building, and being a member means that they (the self-excluded) are giving the elite group (the board) more 'power' to further their private interests.

Female Images and Status

The research shows that women emerge as being well-positioned to offer unique and irreplicable resources to the family businesses as developers of social and cultural capital as given by these examples. The first is that they strengthen family dynamics as they hold positions of outright ownership or are co-directors or in roles as daughters, wives/partners.

Secondly, women manifested a cooperative network orientation, preferring to use network and team structures even back in 2004 and extensively more so in 2009, especially when they are in positions of outright ownership or in managerial positions. Collaboration amongst them was higher. This was more important for them, then for men, maybe this is why they worked harder at it. It could also be, especially among founder/owners, that this skill was a prerequisite in the first place for them to succeed in starting up their own business. This network was sometimes formal, but among the older women it was informal and included primarily networking at religion-linked social occasions, for example, in one case it include networking everyday at Holy Mass with Host Families.

Thirdly, they see themselves in self-appointed role of protectors of the family name, legacy, business and honour. These were to be defended at all cost and this role gives them a sense of purpose which also created a sense of identity for the family business members as well as the employees (by extension).

Finally, wives or partners of male entrepreneurs were used as sounding boards for the male partners' ideas as well as ensuring that the male members balance the needs of the business with the needs of the family or leisure sometimes even going as far as taking on extra work themselves during the night time or early hours of the morning.

Images depicted in posters adorning the schools or else posted on the websites or other relevant literature portrays the female as the provider and carer of the students. In the discourse used at the schools, host families are often referred to as Host Mothers and students frequently correspond with host mothers before coming to Malta, so as to establish a sort of foster-mother relationship. Should the student return, they will frequently ask to stay with the same host mother.

Imagery and use of colour and symbols in the marketing media, also portray Malta as an Earth Mother, a place that is warm, inviting, protective and safe. This is especially true with the English Language schools' websites, however with the other schools' websites the format is more formal and with a general lack of images. However, once the link for Malta is clicked, the imagery takes on a transformation and once again we have the Earth Mother approach, resplendent with photos of the Sleeping Venus, the Goddesses and their welcoming temple.

Issues that must be addressed urgently

An issue which was raised by the case studies and by the Deloitte report (2003) and the MATP report (Times of Malta, 2008), concerns seasonality. ET can address the problem of seasonality, especially when it is based on vocational or degree courses, which traditionally take place during the shoulder and low season. The Deloitte report (ibid.) also suggested that if 'Product Malta' is upgraded to the extent that proportionately more higher-yielding tourists are attracted to Malta, then the national economy could benefit from an increase of just over Lm87 million in revenue from tourism. ET tourism could also be a net contributor to this increase in income as ET has a high value-added.

Another issue of concern was raised by the respondents in the research study. In 2004, two out of the five case studies were showing an interest in expanding overseas, due to what they saw as a declining destination hampered by a bureaucratic system. In fact in 2009 both confirmed that they had set up offices in a foreign country, one in Europe and one in the Middle East. This is surely a warning signal of an impending brain drain as well as a loss of entrepreneurs from the island. Education and enterprise are crucial for economic recovery as well as for national social well being. Entrepreneurs create and innovate and must be given the space to do so as well as the resources to expand their business. As suggested in the Deloitte report, success in tourism can only be achieved in a concentrated effort. The researcher also claims that the concentrated effort must allow space for micro – enterprises to contribute and participate, as historically it has always been the larger organisations that have been allowed to take part as they were the ones that were considered the stronger by virtue of their economic and social capital.

Strategies for Policy Makers to Increase Cultural and Social Capital

Policy makers should be aware that social capital that has a narrow radius of trust is detrimental to society at large. The greatest area where government can generate social capital as well as increase the stock of cultural capital is through education. Educational bodies transmit human capital as well as pass on social capital in the forms of social rules and norms. An example which is given by Fukuyama () is that

“Doctors learn not just medicine but the Hippocratic oath; one of the greatest safeguards against corruption is to give senior bureaucrats high-quality professional training and to create an esprit de corps among this elite.”

The government can also ensure that correct procedures are laid down and adhered to for granting of licences, permits and funding. Transparency should also be adopted in the granting of tenders for service provisions such as training. This can prevent issues of corruption and eliminates the gap between the haves and have-nots, as well as granting accessibility to all for these types of resources.

The Church in Malta is also a formidable force ; the Church can continue to be a source of shared values, not just verbally, but actively. In the case of Beta, the local Parish Priest offered premises for the school at a nominal rent. The Church is also a font of cultural capital, especially in Malta as it has many seats of learning as well as material culture. It should also promote intolerance as well as safeguard against Xenophobia. ET should be open to all, no matter what religion, creed or ethnic group.

Activities of the private sector should be encouraged and supported through less bureaucracy and transparency. The government should be there to facilitate the horizontal trust between enterprises and not serve as a wedge through a system of status distinctions based on political subservience, patronage and privileges in exchange for votes. Cultural capital can also be increased as spheres are created for organisations that are intent on innovation and creative action as well as when taking initiative in

building associations or lobby groups. These should not be seen as anti-government, but should be encouraged.

Shift from EFL to ET

According to Berger et al (n.d) we are now witnessing a change in the nature of the ET product. In the past, international establishments such as Elderhostel concentrated on low budget offerings. In Malta, English Language tourists are often considered as low quality tourists as they stay in residences or with families.

“This has changed; educational travellers today expect en suite – unless the location presents an unavoidable reason why this is not available – and many of the programmes offer quality accommodation and facilities as well as quality education”(ibid.). Most of this change is market driven. Tourists who travel for Education purposes “have come to expect a certain level of accommodation, reliable travel arrangements, etc. and are prepared to pay more than the average package traveller to get these as part of their experiences. The greater cost of an educational package is the value added offered by the learning experience and many people are clearly prepared to pay for this as they value the learning”(ibid.).

This shift was also noticed by the respondents in the Maltese ELT, however this was limited to the older (25+) students. The ELT market has a valid role to play in this shift and as such does not exclude ET. If the strategy was to exclude or shift away completely over a short span of time from ELT to ET, as suggested by the MTA report, this would be detrimental to the Maltese Tourism Industry. The important emphasis that must be made here is that any development which takes place in Malta as a destination has to be sustainable. ET is in fact one of the most sustainable forms of tourism and this should include ELT. Malta’s National strategy should be geared towards ET in a holistic way, by empowering the entrepreneurs in all areas of decision making and strategy formulation.

The growth in the SMEs has to be ethically motivated and geared for long term sustainability. ET including ELT could be just that, as in fact, the main resource which is used for sustainability is Education. By its very nature, ET is sustainable as well as providing high ‘value added’. By educating holistically, both locals and foreigners, ET can be successful because it allows the service providers, the consumers and all the stakeholders, to recognise the unique value of Malta as a destination, as well as provide a cultural understanding and a space for enterprise and innovation.

It has increasingly become recognised that intellect and human resources have become some of the most important assets of the tourism industry. It also follows that the islands’ competitiveness as a tourist destination will in the present and even more so, in the future, increasingly depend on the labour market available. Innovation, creativity, and interactivity are crucial in addressing and satisfying tourism

demand. Education and training are of utmost importance in order to develop these attributes, not only for the present generation, but also for future ones.

Economies of scale do not allow the Maltese Islands to embark on ambitious programmes, however if that scale could be increased by taking in students from other countries, by offering them Quality Training and Education, then the solution may be found in combining the local tourist product with Education. The aspect of Education would include not only training for the tourism industry students, but also for teachers, lecturers and other professionals in the leisure and hospitality industry. This product can be further complimented by offering other types of education and training outside the tourism industry, such as professional degrees, language studies other than English, and other world class qualifications. This would serve as an export service for the Maltese Islands, whilst addressing issues of seasonality, competitiveness, and positioning in the market.

References

- Baldacchino, G. et al, editors, 2003, *Managing people in Malta*, Agenda, Malta
- Banfield, E., 1958, *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society* Glencoe, IL: Free Press
- Berger, D., Bodger, D. H., Bodger, P. M., Frost, H., Undated paper, *Educational Travel – where does it lead?* School of Continuing Education, University of Nottingham, unpublished paper.
- Bourdieu, P., 1973, 'Cultural reproduction and social reproduction' in Brown, R. (ed.) *Knowledge, Education and Cultural Change: Papers in the Sociology of Education*. London: Tavistock
- Bourdieu, P., 1977, *Cultural reproduction and social reproduction*. In J. Karabel and A.H. Halsey (1977). *Power and ideology in education*. New York: Oxford University Press, 487-510,
- Bourdieu, P., 1981. *Language and symbolic power* (G. Raymond & M. Adamson, Trans.). Cambridge: Polity Press,
- Bourdieu, P., 1986. *The Forms of Capital*, Pp. 241-258 in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. J.G. Richards. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Chrisman, J. J.; Chua, J. H.; Zahra, Shaker, A., [Creating Wealth in Family Firms through Managing Resources: Comments and Extensions](#). In *Entrepreneurship: Theory & Practice*, Summer 2003, Vol. 27 Issue 4
- Deal, T. E. & Kennedy, A. A. (1982). *Corporate cultures: The rites and rituals of corporate life*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley
- Deloitte Report 2004, Malta Tourism Authority review, Oct 2003.
- Keesing, R.M. 1981, *Cultural Anthropology*, 2nd. Edit. Harcourt Brace
- Language Travel Magazine, Malta Feedback: October 2004
- Language Travel Magazine, *Status: Malta 2002*, February 2004, page 40
- Malinowski, B., 1931, *Culture*. *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* 4:621-646.ki, B, 1931
- Malta Tourism Authority, September 2004, *English Language Learning in the Maltese Islands*.
- Malta Tourism Authority, 2003, *English Language Learning in the Maltese Islands 2002-2003*.
- Malta Tourism Authority, 2002, *Strategic plan 2002 – 2004*.

Porter, M. E., 1980, *Competitive Strategy: Techniques for Analyzing Industries and Competitors*, New York: The Free Press

Ray, C. 2000, Working Paper 49, Further Ideas about Local Rural Development: Trade, Production and Cultural Capital Centre for Rural Economy Working Paper Series, http://www.ncl.ac.uk/cre/publications/working_papers/wp49_full.htm.

Sadler P., 2003, *Strategic Management*, (2nd edit.), Kogan Page

Scott, J., 2001. Gender and Sustainability in Mediterranean Island Tourism. In: Ioannides, D., Apostolopoulos, Y. and Sonmez, S., Editors, 2001. *Mediterranean Islands and Sustainable Tourism Development: Practices, Management and Policies*, Continuum, London, pp. 87–107

www.education.gov.mt/edu/schools/commercial_schools.htm

www.education.gov.mt/edu/schools/english_language.htm

www.feltom.com/feltom/content.aspx?id=80964

www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/seminar/1999/reforms/fukuyama.htm

www.mhra.org.mt

www.mta.com.mt/uploads/1869/EL_Report_1.pdf

www.mta.com.mt/index.pl/marketing

www.nso.gov.mt

www.nso.gov.mt/newsreleases/2004/news13004.pdf

www.nso.gov.mt/statdoc/document_file.aspx?id=1324

www.nso.gov.mt/statdoc/document_file.aspx?id=2520

www.sagepub.co.uk/PDF/JOURNALS/FULLTEXT/a010502.pdf

www.sedb.com