

*Briguglio & Brown: Lobbying in Malta: environmental NGOs and social capital.*  
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## **Lobbying in Malta: Environmental NGOs and Social Capital**

**Michael Briguglio and Maria Brown**  
**University of Malta**

Michael Briguglio B.A. (Hons.), M.A.  
Assistant Lecturer  
Department of Sociology  
Faculty of Arts  
Room 253, Old Humanities Building  
University of Malta MSD 2080  
Malta EUROPE.  
Email: [michael.briguglio@um.edu.mt](mailto:michael.briguglio@um.edu.mt)  
Tel.: +356 2340 2296 / 9989 4634

Maria Brown B.A. (Gen.), M.A. Qual., M.A.  
Research Assistant  
Includ-ED Project  
Department of Primary Education  
Faculty of Education  
Room 218A, Old Humanities Building  
University of Malta MSD 2080  
Malta EUROPE.  
Email: [maria.brown@um.edu.mt](mailto:maria.brown@um.edu.mt)  
Tel.: +356 2340 2926 / 9940 4820

### **Abstract**

*This paper explores the usage of social capital by Maltese Environmental Non-Governmental Organisations in their lobbying strategies and access to resources, particularly within the context of Malta as a new EU member state. The findings of the empirical research carried out in this regard show that as regards lobbying, Maltese ENGOs tend to prefer forming homogenous alliances with similar organisations. Besides, there is no direct link between access to resources and usage of social capital.*

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### **Introduction**

This study investigates whether Maltese Environmental Non-Governmental Organisations (ENGOs) make use of social capital in their lobbying strategies and in their

access to resources, particularly within the context of Malta as a new EU member state<sup>1</sup>. Using a survey that was administered to Maltese ENGOS, this study concludes that in general, such organisations tend to form alliances with similar ENGOS; and that currently, such ENGOS do not tend to associate the formation of networks with access to resources.

### **Theoretical background**

The following theoretical analysis delves into the dynamics of social capital in the Maltese context. Social capital shall be defined in terms of effectiveness of social networks and connections in order to achieve a goal (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman 1988; Putnam 1993).

#### ***Social capital and the construction of efficient networks***

Welzel et al. (2005) argue that,

(t)o begin with, social capital needs a communal basis on which it can operate. This basis consists of all possible sorts of community ties, including networks of interpersonal contacts as well as...group identities... These community ties make up the glue without which no society can exist and without which social capital cannot operate (p.140).

The second prerequisite identified by Welzel et al. comprises of the factors ‘that help translate given ties into collective action’ (ibid.). For instance norms, laws and institutions that favour freedom of expression and of association are prerequisites, or in Welzel et al.’s words, ‘the translators’ (ibid.), for NGOs to flourish.

Social capital may be a portal of access to resources. This is sustained by Nan Lin (2001) who argues that

Social ties located in certain strategic locations and/or hierarchical positions...provide...useful information about opportunities and choices otherwise not available... (and) alert about the availability and interest of an otherwise unrecognized individual (p.20).

This last point is of particular interest both if the ‘otherwise unrecognized individual’ is ‘friend’ or ‘foe’. In the first instance, research shows that, by the principle of homophily, ‘interactions tend to occur among individual actors occupying similar or adjacent and slightly different positions’ (ibid. p.39).

Nevertheless, it is even wiser to know one’s ‘enemies’, and, best of all, it is strategically valuable to form alliances with those individuals/groups who apparently do not share the same ideology or pertain to a different sphere of society. This was with the case in Malta in 2004 when the *Front Against the Golf Course* – a coalition of seven years which was

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<sup>1</sup> Malta joined the European Union in 2004.

made up of environmental, social, cultural, religious and political organizations was successful in stopping the development of a golf course on a large area of agricultural land (Front Against the Golf Course, n.d.). This kind of 'heterophilous interaction has received less attention' (Lin, 2001, p.47). However, it has been described as going 'beyond simply the reversal of homophilous interaction' (ibid. p.50), and as 'costly and unusual' (ibid.).

In this regard, Lin distinguishes between expressive social action, directed at the maintenance of valued resources that are already owned, and instrumental social action, which follows in priority expressive social action, and which is directed at gaining new valued resources (ibid. pp.57-8). Vis-à-vis heterophilous interaction, it is argued that 'the weaker the tie, the more likely ego will have access to better social capital for instrumental action' (ibid. p.76) It follows that heterogeneity within NGOs and between NGOs' alliances is empowering in that it facilitates the accomplishment of instrumental action.

Lin argues that '(t)he premise behind the notion of social capital is rather simple and straightforward: *investment in social relations with expected returns*' (ibid. p.19). It is argued that social capital is not merely being connected to the right people or institutions in society (Brown, 2007, p.226). Social capital is

the set of trust, institutions, social norms, social networks, and organizations that shape the interactions of actors within a society and are an asset for the individual and collective production of well-being (Sabatini (ed.), 2001).

The individual who is one-to-one with one or more of these social factors at the same time enjoys a degree of stability and social wealth that are more likely to give him/her an advantaged status (Brown, 2007, p.226). Hence, social capital facilitates the accomplishment of any individual or collective task, such as those embarked on by NGOs, since 'the core idea of social capital theory is that social networks have value...social contacts affect the productivity of individuals and groups' (Putnam, 2000).

This is not to say that social capital cannot 'be directed toward malevolent, antisocial purposes, just like any other form of capital...the external effects of social capital are by no means always positive' (ibid.), e.g. elite abuse of power gained by social capital. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this paper, the focus is not on the group's official or latent mission or message, but on the expected outcomes prompting the use of social capital.

The social nature itself of NGOs makes them prone to use social capital as a means of empowerment. In this regard, Putnam associates social capital with a 'civic virtue' (ibid.). Such virtue 'is most powerful when embedded in a dense network of reciprocal social relations. A society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital' (ibid.). Hence, the collective nature of NGOs, and the social context in which they function, make them a fertile soil for social capital.

The element of reciprocity is strongly linked with the concept of social capital in that '(n)etworks of community engagement foster sturdy norms of reciprocity...A society

characterized by generalized reciprocity is more efficient than a distrustful society...’ (ibid.). Thus social connections are not just contacts, they also represent obligations (ibid.), for both parts. Such obligations colour social capital with the element of constraint. This makes social capital a reliable tool since one’s contacts feel obliged to give access or to assist.

Besides being useful for access to information, knowledge and resources, one’s contacts are also valuable in terms of their degree of influence. In this regard, ‘(s)ome social ties...exercise greater power’ (Lin, 2001: 20). Moreover, one’s social ties are also ‘certifications of the individual’s *social credentials*’ (ibid.). Identity and recognition are thus reinforced by ‘public acknowledgement of one’s claims to certain resources’ (ibid.).

A thorough understanding of how efficient networks are constructed through social capital also has to take in consideration what social capital does, i.e. producing collective action. Hence, an assessment of the outcomes of social capital becomes possible:

the frequency and radius of collective action in a society measures the productivity of social capital, with more frequent and more widespread collective actions indicating more productive forms of social capital (Welzel et al., 2005: 141).

In this regard, this study seeks to assess the social capital proposition, i.e. whether ‘*the success of action is positively associated with social capital*’ (Lin, 2001: 27). In particular, this study assesses the usage of social capital for lobbying purposes by Maltese NGOs .

### ***ENGOS, Civil Society and the State***

Various types of ENGOS exist within the public sphere. The more moderate ENGOS promote reforms such as sustainable development and ecological modernisation, whilst the more radical ENGOS promote radical changes in the socio-economic structure (Dalton, 1994; Carter, 2007).

ENGOS form part of civil society, which is the ‘sphere where capitalists, workers and others engage in political and ideological struggles and where political parties, trade unions, religious bodies and a great variety of other organisations come into existence’ (Simon, 1991: 70). Civil society is in turn related to the State, which is characterised by a condensation of material struggles through hegemonic formations (Jessop, 2008; Poulantzas, 2000). Such struggles involve various interests and ideological representations. Through ideology and ideological state apparatuses such as the mass media and education, the dominant classes and groups within the State exert their hegemonic influence in a mechanism of consent (Althusser, 1984), yet at the same time dominant ideologies may be at odds with each other, as is the case with Catholicism and consumerism in Malta (Abela, 2000).

Hence, decision making on environmental matters is not simply a technical matter, but is

related to social and political processes, whereby ‘institutions do not simply follow broad and established principles, but must instead tread a sensitive path between scientific evidence, social pressures and commercial anxieties’ (Irwin, 2001, p.116). In this regard, when lobbying, ENGOs are competing with other pressures, most notably representing powerful business interests which are often at odds with the agenda of EGNOs.

Yet, the rise and influence of ENGOs should not be underestimated. Inglehart and Welzel (2005) highlight the rise of civic mass action in postindustrial societies, where ‘new, largely self-organizing and self-expressive forms of [political] participation’ increases (44). Hence, while membership in organisations such as trade unions and churches is declining, engagement in elite-challenging civic action is on the increase. Inglehart and Welzel say that this shows a shift (rather than a decline) in the nature of social capital, where socializing is being transformed from what Beck (2002) defines as ‘communities of necessities’ to ‘elective affinities’. People’s social ties become more a question of choice rather than being externally imposed (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005, p.142), resulting in *civic* social capital which is inherently related to self-expression values, to the contrary of uncivic social capital such as corruption and nepotism and traditional conformist social capital (ibid. p.295).

The value of social capital becomes particularly significant for contemporary Maltese ENGOs since it is argued that ‘expanding social networks may break down parochial attitudes and lead to more cosmopolitan views of the world’ (Dalton & Ong, 2003, p.4). This is important considering that contemporary Maltese ENGOs operate in a society that has recently become a member of the European Union, following a history of parochialism, patronage and centralisation of power: first by members of the clergy and of the traditional professions, then by Government ministers who became ‘the new super “saints”’ (Boissevain, 1993, p.154). Hence, lobbying is being carried out in a new context, within which national sovereignty in various sectors shifts from the national to the supranational level. Here, policy-making takes place within a complex network of institutions at various levels, including supranational, European, national and sub-national. In this regard, the EU can therefore be seen as a multi-layered State within a globalised context (Castells, 2000).

### ***ENGOs and lobbying strategies***

ENGOs are active on various levels, including the local, the national and the global. Amongst forms of activism used by such NGOs one finds public awareness campaigns, lobbying, protests and forming networks with various groups and institutions (Dalton, 1994; Carter, 2007).

Doyle and Doherty (2006) assert that activists on a global level possess cultural capital in the form of higher education and social capital in the form of transnational connections and access to resources and knowledge. In turn this can help create broad alliances and coalitions, whereby solidarity is the ‘only true power resource of the powerless’ (884). Hence, whilst power structures such as the State privilege some social classes and groups

over others, on the other hand, collective action based on trust and shared interest, can bring about networks of support in search of justice (Greenbaum, 2008; Lopez and Stack, 2001).

Different ENGOs may carry out different strategies and form different forms of alliances and networks. In this regard, various ENGOs tend to prefer conventional and professional methods over more radical forms of activism, in what has been described as a process of institutionalisation, particularly for global ENGOs such as Friends of the Earth, World Wildlife Fund and Greenpeace (Van Der Heijden, 1999; Carter, 2007; Rootes, 1999, 2007).

Such institutionalisation may be enhanced through the significant amounts of cultural and social capital possessed by leading activists of such ENGOs. Besides, such organisations may benefit from higher levels of public trust than governments or corporations. In turn, institutionalised ENGOs may benefit from access to restricted information and decision-making arena (Carter, 2007; Rootes, 2007). Institutionalisation of such organisations is like a double-edged sword – on the one hand their influence in terms of policy-making is increased, but on the other hand they become less radical and less likely to threaten ruling elites (Barry and Doherty, 2002, p.123).

## **Hypotheses**

In view of the theoretical predicaments discussed above, the hypotheses of this study sustain that, first, Maltese ENGOs use social capital as a tool in the construction of efficient networking in terms of lobbying; and, second, Maltese ENGOs use social capital as a portal of access to resources.

These hypotheses were tested by means of a quantitative survey of which details are explained in the next section.

## **Methodology**

### ***Strategy***

A brief quantitative survey was administered via email to all fourteen Maltese ENGOs<sup>2</sup>. The questionnaire consisted of eighteen questions of various types:

- Single response questions mainly dealt with basic information about the organisation (number of years of activism, number of members, type/s of members);
- Multiple response questions, most of them investigating trust and network

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<sup>2</sup> These are: Nature Trust Malta; Birdlife Malta; Friends of the Earth Malta; Din l-Art Helwa; Moviment Graffiti, Zminijietna - Voice of the Left; Flimkien għall-Ambjent Ahjar, Ramblers' Association Malta; The Biological Conservation Research Foundation; Gaia Foundation; Movement for the Protection of Hondoq; Qui-si -sana and Tigne Residents' Association; Committee Against the Proposed Recycling Plant; Save Wied Garnaw Action Group.

- relations (e.g. funding, support, alliances); and
- Open-ended questions, mainly to investigate ideologies and biases (e.g. aims of ENGOs, comments)

A covering letter giving details such as scope, deadline to reply, contacts and also conference dates and website was enclosed with the questionnaire. A period of three weeks was allowed for ENGOs to reply. A reminder was sent to maximise the response rate.

### ***Response Rate***

Thirteen ENGOs responded to the questionnaire, therefore the response rate is excellent. Hence it is possible to make generalized conclusions on the basis of research findings, on the relationship between the social capital of ENGOs, their lobbying strategies and their access to resources.

### ***Analysis***

The questions were based on the following set of indicators of social capital which was compiled on the basis of the literature review:

1. Reciprocity
2. Frequency (whether there is/not constant networking)
3. Public Acknowledgment from:
  - a. Authorities (Local/National/International)
  - b. Other NGOs (Local/National/International)
4. Relationships with Authorities and other NGOs in terms of:
  - a. Trust
  - b. Access to Resources
5. Competition with other lobbies
6. Alliances
  - a. Homophilous/Heterophilous
  - b. National/Transnational
7. Degree of Institutionalisation

These indicators were tested in relation to data about the ENGOs, which was also collected by means of the questionnaire, such as:

1. Ideology
2. Years of activism of NGO
3. Size (active members + supporting members)
4. Administration
5. Funding
6. Dissemination

The size of the total population (hence also of the sample) limited the statistical testing for associations. This is a characteristic of the software available. In no way it reflects the

adequacy of method and sample size. Nevertheless, despite these limitations, it was still possible to carry out statistical testing that explores the associations between the above set of indicators and the characteristics of ENGOs.

## **Results and analysis**

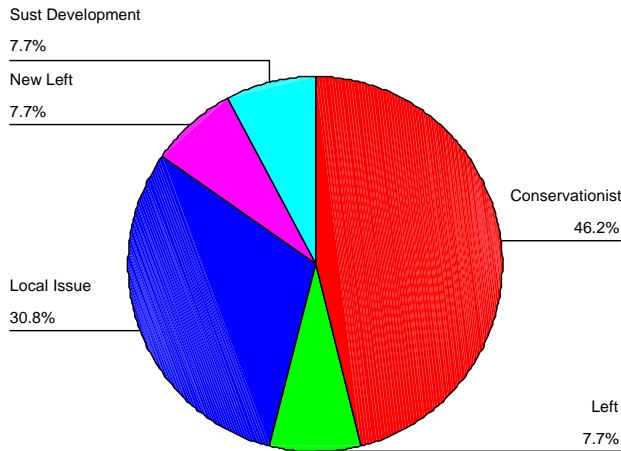
### *Aims of ENGOs*

The most common type of ENGO in Malta has conservationist aims (46.2%), followed by ENGOs based on local issues (30.8%). This can be considered to be related to the intensity of overdevelopment in Malta in both urban and rural areas (Boissevain 2000; Briguglio M. 1998; Mallia 1994, 2000; Zammit 2004), as well as the intensity of activities such as hunting (Boissevain 2000). Only one ENGO (Friends of the Earth) considers its aims to be based on sustainable development, which is a dominant environmental ideology within the European Union (Carter 2007) (see Figure 1).

The ideological orientation of Maltese ENGOs is similar to that of other Southern European environmentalists, who, according to Rootes (2007), tend to be more focused on 'threats to the immediate well-being rather than with global environment issues', when compared to Northern European environmentalism (p.240). In turn, this is related to the recent impact of relatively late industrialisation/urbanisation and the relatively late introduction of environmental legislation. Rootes explains that this is related to the relatively recent impacts of urbanization and/or industrialisation, coupled with a relatively late introduction of regimes of environmental protection, when compared to Northern countries (ibid. p.241).

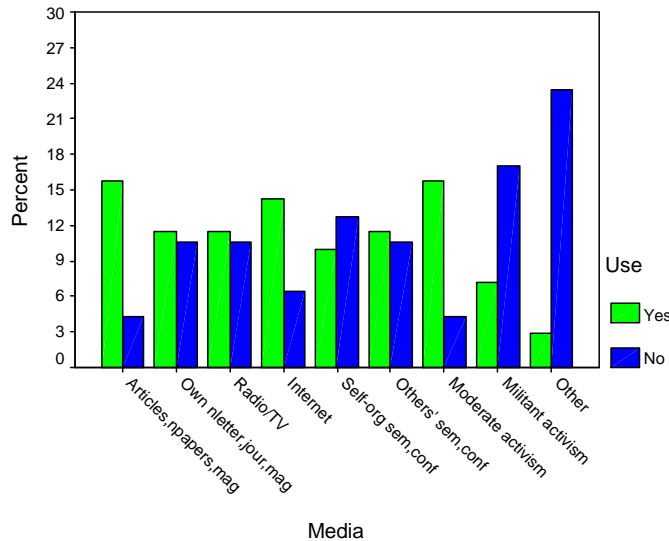
### **Figure 1: Aims (Q2)**





Most Conservationist and Local Issue ENGOS consider their ideology to be moderate. This may be an indication of institutionalization (Carter 2007; Rootes 1999, 2007), which is further confirmed below when analyzing the use of media for dissemination of ENGOS' messages, whereby militant activism is the type of dissemination which achieved most negative replies (graph 1).

**Graph 1: Use of Media for Dissemination (Yes/No) (Q10)**



***Years of activism***

Some Maltese ENGOS have been in existence since the 1960s, and most are at least nine years old. Yet it is interesting to note that more than one-third of current ENGOS (38.5%) were born following Malta's accession into the EU. Amongst others, these include *Flimkien ghall-Ambjent Ahjar* (Together for a Better Environment) and Ramblers' Association Malta.

## **Membership**

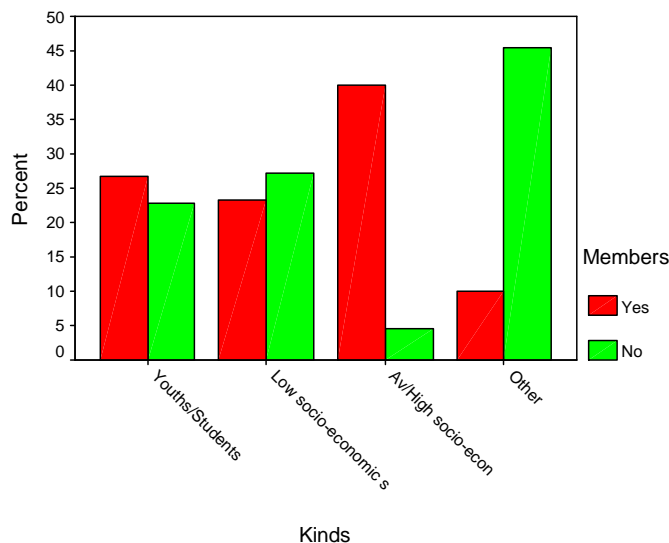
ENGOS in Malta tend to have a small number of active members, with 53.8% stating that they have between one and twenty such members. On the other hand 30.8% stated that they have one hundred or more members, and 61.5% of ENGOS state that they have 100 or more supporting members.

This seems to tally with Dalton's (2002, pp.444-5) analysis of the 1999-2002 wave of the World Values Survey coordinated by Inglehart and Welzel, whereby Malta's ENGO membership level based on percentages of respondents is of 2%. Percentages vary from 45.1% in the Netherlands to 0.2% in Turkey.

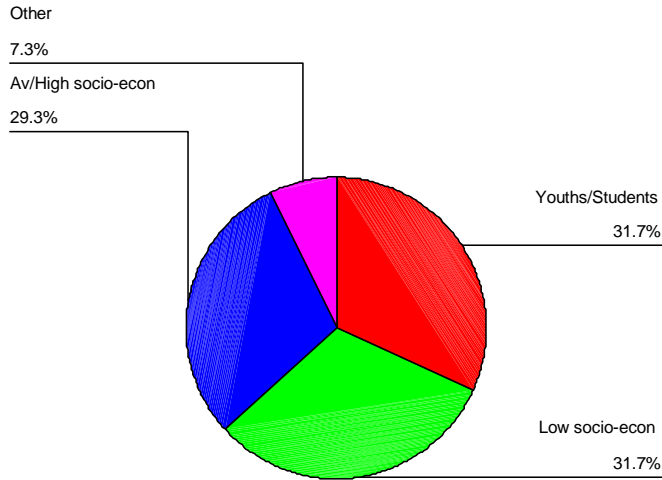
This also tallies with a common characteristic of green movements, namely, their structural make-up as loose fluid networks rather than rigid structures (Barry and Doherty, 2002).

As regards socio-economic background of ENGO members, whilst graph 2 indicates that most ENGOS state that most members come from an average to high socio-economic background, on the other hand, figure 2 shows that ENGOS recruit members from all social strata. This finding therefore shows that as regards Malta, it has to be confirmed through further research whether ENGOS are primarily composed of members from the New Middle Class, as asserted by certain sociologists (Cotgrove and Duff 2003, p.76). Further research is also required to see if the leadership of such organisations has such a class background, and if actual (rather than perceived) membership base is heterogeneous.

**Graph 2: Socio-Economic Background of Members (Yes/No) (Q9)**



**Figure 2: Socio-Economic background of Members (Q9)**



**Alliances**

All Maltese ENGOS replied favourably to the question which asked whether they ever allied themselves with other entities, thus being in conformity with such trends elsewhere in Western Europe (Dalton, 1994; Carter, 2007). Other Maltese ENGOS are the best preferred entities to work with, followed by other Maltese NGOs (social, cultural etc.) and other International ENGOS. Political parties, followed by commercial organisations, are the least preferred.

**Table 1: Aims combined with Best Preferred Entity to work with (Q2-Q13(1))**

Count		Best Preferred Entity to work with						Total
		Other Maltese ENGOS	Other International ENGOS	Other Maltese NGOs (not environmental)	Political Parties	Local Councils	No Reply	
<b>Aims</b>	Conservationist	3	2				1	6
	Left				1			1
	Local Issue	3				1		4
	New Left			1				1
	Sustainable Development	1						1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>

**Table 2: Aim/s combined with Closest Ideological Affiliations of ENGOS [First Three Preferences combined] (Q2-Q4(1,2,3))**

Count		AIMS					Total
		Conservationist	Left	Local Issue	New Left	Sustainable Development	
<b>IDEOLOGY</b>	Conservationist	13		4			17
	Ecologist	1					1
	Green Party			1	1		2
	Left		2	1	1		4
	Local Issue			1			1
	New Left		1		1	1	3
	Sustainable Development	1				1	2
	Other			1			1
	No Reply	3		4		1	8
<b>Total</b>		18	3	12	3	3	39

At the same time, it is evident that Maltese ENGOS feel a stronger sense of closeness and prefer working with NGOs of similar ideological affiliation. Hence, conservationists (and, to a lesser extent, local issue ENGOS) feel closer to conservationists, whilst the more radical organisations with leftist or new leftist ideological affiliations feel closer to organisations with similar ideological affiliations, including Green and Left political parties (table 2). Similarly, Conservationists and Local Issue ENGOS prefer working with ENGOS and dislike working mostly with political parties (tables 2 and 3). ENGOS which consider themselves to be moderate or conservative prefer working with other Maltese ENGOS.

Political parties are the first preferred entity to work with only for one self-proclaimed leftist ENGO (table 1). Conversely, political parties are the least preferred entity to work with for most moderate ENGOS and for the self-proclaimed conservative ENGO (table 3). At the same time, both self-proclaimed radical ENGOS like to work least with commercial organisations (table 3). Hence, Lin's (2001) concept of homophily can be applied to the alliance-forming of contemporary Maltese ENGOS, which seem to have similar preferred and least-preferred alliances, according to their aims and ideological affiliations.

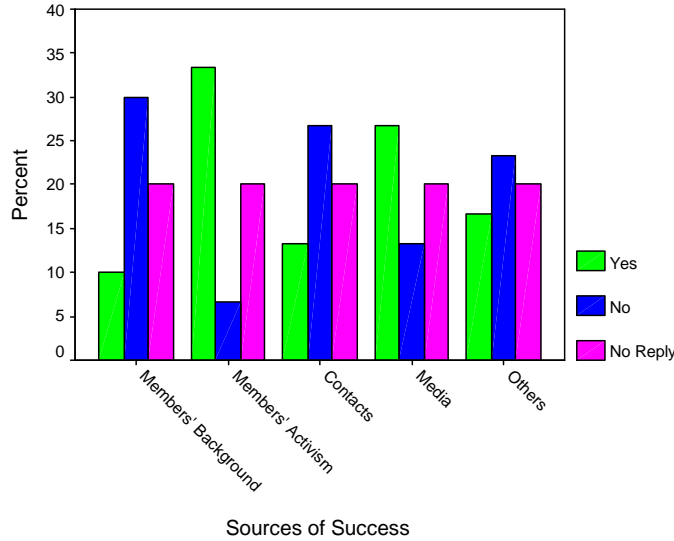
**Table 3: Aims combined with Least Preferred Entity to work with (Q2-Q14(1))**

Count		Least Preferred Entity to work with				Total
		Political Parties	State Entities	Commercial Organisations	No Reply	
<b>Aims</b>	Conservationist	3			3	6
	Left			1		1
	Local Issue	2	1	1		4
	New Left			1		1
	Sustainable Development				1	1
	<b>Total</b>	5	1	3	4	13

### *Sources of Success*

Whilst it has been assumed that the cultural and social capital of members are linked to the success of ENGOS (Doyle and Doherty, 2006), this study shows that ENGOS perceive their success to be determined mostly by the activism of their members and by the media (graphs 3). This is particularly true of the smaller ENGOS. As regards the media, it is to be noted that in the recent past years, the Maltese press has given increased coverage and shown increased sympathy with environmental issues in general and ENGOS in particular. This is the case with both well-established conservative newspapers such as *The Times* as well as with newer newspapers with are more critical and liberal such as *Malta Today*.

### **Graph 3: Sources of Success (Yes/No) (Q16)**



When combining reasons given for sources of success with years of activism of ENGOS, it transpires that such organisations which were set up following Malta's EU accession tend to give most importance to their members' activism and to the media. The former is also given importance by the oldest ENGOS. The latter ENGOS, however, also emphasise that members' background and contacts are not influential factors as regards success. Indeed, these variables obtained five out of seven negative replies in both cases, with only one positive reply in each case. This seems to imply that older Maltese ENGOS do not depend on social capital tools such as networks to pursue their goals.

Newer ENGOS, on the other hand, are ambivalent as regards members' background and contacts. In fact, members' background is considered in the affirmative by two out of five and in the negative by the remaining three such ENGOS, and contacts are considered in the affirmative by three out of five and in the negative by two out of five.

### ***Sources of Finance***

Only a minority of Maltese ENGOS claim to obtain funds from external sources including other NGOs, political parties, state entities, EU entities, local councils, commercial organisations and non-members. The most popular sources of financial support are EU entities, commercial organisations and non-members, which, however, are only claimed by 30% of ENGOS. Indeed, over 60% state that they do not obtain funds from these sources and others, with some, such as political parties and other Maltese ENGOS, getting as much as 90% of negative responses. At the same time, there seems to be no clear relationship between sources of finance and best preferred alliances of Maltese ENGOS (table 4). This seems to contradict suggestions regarding institutionalisation of ENGOS (Carter, 2007; Rootes, 2007), even though, such suggestions do not focus exclusively on financial support. Yet, such support is referred to explicitly as regards ENGOS within an EU context, particularly with reference to entities such as the Commission (Hunold, 2005; Rootes, 2007).

**Table 4: Best Preferred Alliance combined with Sources of Financial Support (Q13(1)-Q15)**

Count		Best Preferred Entity to work with				
		Other Maltese ENGOS	Other International ENGOS	Other Maltese NGOs (not environmental)	Political Parties	Local Councils
<b>Entities providing financial support</b>	Other Int ENGOS	1	2			
	State entities		2			
	EU entities	1	2	1		
	Local Councils					1
	Commercial Org	1	2			1
	Donations Non-Members	2	2			
	Others				1	1

***Relationship with the EU***

While there seems to be no direct relationship between EU funding and alliances formed by Maltese ENGOS, EU accession has been welcome by the vast majority of such organisations, who claim to have been empowered through this process. Indeed, only two ENGOS claim otherwise (table 5). Yet, given the responses regarding financial support, and perhaps due to the fact that Malta is a new member state, it has to be seen whether the opportunities offered by the EU will result in the institutionalisation of Maltese ENGOS within an EU context.

**Table 5: Aims combined with Empowerment further to EU Accession (Q2-Q17)**

Count		Aims					Total
		Conservationist	Left	Local Issue	New Left	Sustainable Development	
<b>Has Malta's EU accession empowered your organisation as regards lobbying?</b>	Yes	5	1	3		1	10
	No			1	1		2
	No reply	1					1
<b>Total</b>		6	1	4	1	1	13

***ENGOS against the establishment***

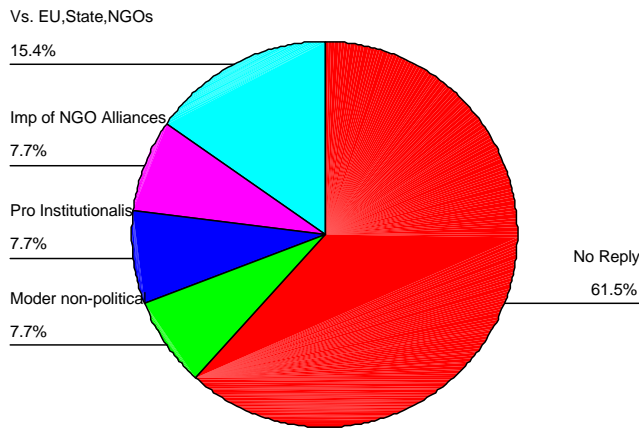
A minority of ENGOS have distanced themselves from the EU, the State and other NGOs through their open ended replies (figure 3). For example, one ENGO criticised the EU Commission, other NGOs and Maltese authorities for ignoring their plight. Another ENGOS commented that

as from Malta's accession in the EU, various environmental NGOs in Malta are not collaborating with other organisations that are not strictly environmentalist.

This strategy runs counter to previous strategies such as the victorious Front Kontra l-Golf Kors coalition which incorporated various social, environmental, political, cultural and religious NGOs and parties.

This seems to confirm the ‘dynamic tension’ between mainstream and grassroots organisations (Carter, 2007, p.144), possibly resulting in the emergence of a ‘radical countercurrent’ (Van Der Heijden, 1999, p.204).

**Figure 3: Other Comments (Q18 (open-ended))**



## Conclusions

The purpose of this paper is to verify whether Maltese ENGOS use social capital as a tool in the construction of efficient networking in terms of lobbying and as a portal of access to resources.

The findings of the empirical research carried out in this regard show that as regards lobbying, Maltese ENGOS tend to prefer forming homogenous alliances, thus applying the principle of homophily, whereby the creation of networks and the assignment of trust concerns ENGOS which are similar to each other in terms of ideology and aims. Hence, civic social capital is being created by Maltese ENGOS through such practices.

It has also been shown that as regards sources of success, the newer ENGOS, which were set-up following Malta’s EU accession tend to give high value to their members’ activism and to the media. The post-accession ENGOS are also of mixed opinion regarding sources of success related to social capital, namely members’ background and contacts. This contrasts with the negative opinion of the older ENGOS on these two variables, thus implying that newer ENGOS are more prone to benefit from social capital.

Most Maltese ENGOS engage in moderate activism and view Malta’s EU accession process favourably, thus implying that they are involved in networking with State agents.



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On the other hand, a minority of ENGOs are more critical and do not rule out militant activism.

The empirical research shows that there is no direct link between access to resources and usage of social capital, although it cannot be ruled out that EU membership may result in institutionalisation of Maltese ENGOs in the future, within this new context.

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