

MICHAEL A. BUHAGIAR & DEBORAH A. CHETCUTI

8. THE PRIVATE TUITION PHENOMENON IN MALTA

*Moving toward a Fairer Education System*¹

ABSTRACT

Private tuition is increasingly being equated to unfairness. Although it has the potential to help students who experience learning difficulties at school, it is also an inequitable ploy in the hands of other students as they work up their way to reach status, power and wealth. A review of Maltese research reveals how this purchase of educational privileges appears to favour mostly students from families with a strong financial and educational background. This situation undermines local policy initiatives aimed at providing all students with equal access to quality education and life opportunities. However, rather than suggesting the curtailing of such privileges, this chapter proposes the creation of an educational ambience in which these privileges are less effective. The idea is to blur the existing boundaries between private tuition and mainstream schooling as a starting point toward rendering the Maltese education system fairer.

INTRODUCTION

Until quite recently Malta² had a highly differentiated education system that was regulated by means of high-stakes examinations. This ‘fractured’ reality – which arguably persists, even if in a diluted form, to the present day – intensified the pressures on students to attend private tuition. The underlying notion has always been that private tuition (or ‘private lessons’ as they are more commonly known in Malta) increases the likelihood of ‘doing well’ in the selective processes that are inherent in the local system (Calleja, 1988; Grima & Ventura, 2006). But as has happened in other countries (see Bray, 1999, 2006, 2009; Bray & Kwok, 2003; Ireson & Rushforth, 2011; Scanlon & Buckingham, 2004; Smyth, 2009), local policy makers and researchers so far have paid little attention to the phenomenon of private tutoring in spite of its far-reaching implications for full-time schooling and life opportunities.

Even though so much has been written and said about private tuition in Malta, as yet it has been investigated specifically only by prospective teachers as part of their initial teacher education³ – what we are calling ‘ITE research’ – though a few other local studies provide some additional evidence. A unifying factor among all the local studies is that they all look at private tuition from the perspective of students, teachers and parents. No researcher has ever directly participated or

observed what actually happens during private lessons. Although there are various forms of private tuition (see Bray, 2006; Ireson, 2004; Ireson & Rushforth, 2011; Smyth, 2009), this phenomenon is largely understood in Malta as supplementary tutoring in academic school subjects to replicate or compensate for insufficiencies in daytime schooling that is provided by tutors for financial gain outside the school and the family (see Bray & Kwok, 2003; Foondun, 2002; Ireson & Rushforth, 2004; Mischo & Haag, 2002).

It is not the intention of our chapter to come up with new empirical evidence on the phenomenon. We are interested instead in reviewing the existing data in order to explore the phenomenon of private tuition in Malta from a perspective of 'social justice'. We use this term

... to gesture at the unifying factors underlying the general movement towards a fairer, less oppressive society. This is a movement towards opening up from the few to the many the rewards and prizes and enjoyments of living in society – including schooling. (Griffiths, 1998, p. 301)

But we would like to see an 'opening up' that moves away from entitlement, important and baseline as this is, to also include what Corbett (2001) has called 'a thoughtful concern for equity' (p. 120). We would argue like her that while 'Entitlement is about the allocation of resources, placement and individual rights ... Equity is about equitable value systems, the fair sharing of finite resources and a demonstrable respect for differences' (p. 117). Our emphasis on equity or fairness arises from the knowledge that not everyone who is entitled to a right actually gets to enjoy it. This encourages us to work in favour of a fairer Maltese education system that values all students by providing them with the best possible chances to reach their full potential irrespective of social class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and disability. We prefer to speak of 'fairer' rather than 'fair' in the belief that what Stobart (2005) said about assessment – that is, 'while we can never achieve fair assessment, we can make it fairer' (p. 275) – applies equally well to the wider education system.

Our understanding that student learning and achievement are highly related to equitable practices encourages us to position ourselves among those who think that practices that are not equitable need to be challenged and changed (Stone, 1998). We therefore set out to explore in this chapter whether the provision of private tuition in Malta is creating and/or perpetuating social inequalities. Creating awareness around an issue that has the potential to distort fairness within the education system would constitute, in our view, an important first step in moving forward our agenda of a fairer education system. Toward this end, we start by reviewing the international literature which is increasingly equating private tuition to a 'shadow education system' that increases educational and social inequalities (see Bray, 1999, 2006, 2009, 2011; Bray & Kwok, 2003; Ireson & Rushforth, 2005; Stevenson & Baker, 1992). In the next section, we provide an overview of private tuition in Malta. We discuss here the high visibility of supplementary tutoring in Malta, its links to examinations, and how provision and costs interact

with family background. This is followed by a fairness-oriented analysis of local research that sheds light on private tuition. Then, after considering the significance of this analysis and the ongoing efforts to improve schooling in Malta, we offer suggestions in line with our desire for a fairer education system. In the final section, we take a long-term view of what needs to be done, arguing in the process that this journey toward greater fairness still has to begin with sensible small steps.

PRIVATE TUITION: EXACERBATING INEQUALITIES

Private tutoring has a long history. It originated before the institutionalisation of schooling when wealthy families employed private tutors to teach their children (Ireson, 2004). But nowadays, in spite of universal education, many parents still choose to supplement what their children receive at school through private tuition (Ireson, 2004). Bray (1999, 2006, 2009) explains why private supplementary tutoring, which has now become a vast enterprise, is being described as a ‘shadow’ education system in many countries. He writes:

First, private supplementary tutoring only exists because mainstream education exists; second, as the size and shape of the mainstream system change, so do the size and shape of supplementary tutoring; third, in almost all societies much more public attention focuses on the mainstream than on its shadow; and fourth, the features of the shadow system are much less distinct than those of the mainstream system. (Bray, 1999, p. 17)

Private tuition has long been prominent in many Asian countries, but it is now growing in many other parts of the world, including North America and Europe, to become a major global phenomenon (Bray, 2006; Bray & Kwok, 2003; Foondun, 2002; Ireson, 2004; Mischo & Haag, 2002; Smyth, 2009). This growth ‘is driven by a competitive climate and strong belief in the value of education for social and economic advancement’ (Bray, 2006, p. 526). Education is viewed thus as a ‘positional good’ – that is, something whose value declines if others possess more of it – which provides entry into desired occupations, status, wealth and power (see Griffiths, 2009). Believing that private tuition helps students to do well in tests and examinations (Ireson & Rushforth, 2011), people are increasingly willing to ‘throw money at the problem’ (see Scanlon & Buckingham, 2004) in order to acquire this ‘positional good’. Some well-off parents, especially where competition is fierce, are even known to resort to ‘double tuition’ in the same subject by sending their children to a second more qualified and competent tutor (Foondun, 2002).

With the increased marketisation of education (see Smyth, 2009), private tutoring has become part of what Bray and Kwok (2003, p. 618) call ‘out-of-school strategies to enhance in-school success’ (also Ireson & Rushforth, 2011; Scanlon & Buckingham, 2004). The situation is such that while low achievers feel compelled to attend private tuition for fear of being left behind, many families of students who are doing well in mainstream schooling still invest in this form of tutoring in order to maintain a competitive edge (Bray, 2006). The head-start that both sets of students seek is ‘to perform better in school, stay longer in the education system,

and in turn secure greater lifetime earnings' (Bray, 2006, p. 526; also Bray & Kwok, 2003). The demand for private tuition increases in the proximity of decisive tests and examinations that determine one's successful transition through the education system (Bray, 2006; Bray & Kwok, 2003; Grima & Ventura, 2006; Ireson & Rushforth, 2011; Scanlon & Buckingham, 2004; Smyth, 2009). Moreover, the demand is greatest in subjects – normally Mathematics and the national languages – that are prerequisite qualifications at each stage of the transition (Bray, 2006).

Although private tuition is commonly perceived as a gateway to higher levels of education and high status occupations, there has been little research on its effectiveness and the findings are mixed (Ireson, 2004; Ireson & Rushforth, 2011; Smyth, 2009). But Bray (2006), while acknowledging the diversity of the findings, concludes that 'It still seems reasonable to assume that prosperous families are in a position to invest in forms of tutoring which significantly promote their children's performance in the school system' (p. 523; see also Mischo & Haag, 2002). But it is not just a question of money. Money can make the difference best when there is no dissonance between the family culture and the school culture (see Scanlon & Buckingham, 2004; also Smyth, 2009). The realisation that a well-resourced family – which is different from simply being rich – can influence school performance through the purchase of private tuition raises in turn a number of ethical concerns linked to the fact that not all students have access or equal access to this additional support.

Families with the necessary resources are able to secure not only greater quantities but also better qualities of private tutoring. Children receiving such tutoring are then able to perform better in school, and in the long run to improve their lifetime earnings. By contrast, children of low-income families who do not receive such benefits may not be able to keep up with their peers and may drop out of school at an earlier age. (Bray, 2006, p. 515)

This reality suggests that private tuition, rather than simply being a remedial strategy used by students who experience difficulties in mainstream schooling, is also a proactive strategy used by students who want to accumulate further advantages to the significant ones they already enjoy in the formal education system (Stevenson & Baker, 1992). This exacerbation of educational inequalities places private tuition among the various measures that link educational achievement to family background and, in particular, to the role of social class (Scanlon & Buckingham, 2004; also Bray, 2006; Bray & Kwok, 2003; Ireson, 2004; Ireson & Rushforth, 2011; Smyth, 2009). Being so closely linked to success in examinations, access or lack of access to private tuition becomes a form of social control that, as Foucault (1977) contends, describes and classifies individuals according to differences and creates a distribution among the population. This invariably builds upon what Bourdieu (1977) sees as a characteristic of schooling to systematically create fair and unfair situations

according to social context. Particularly pertinent here is Bourdieu's (1977) argument that:

The action of the school, whose effect is unequal among children from different classes, and whose success varies considerably among those upon whom it has an effect, tends to reinforce and to consecrate by its sanctions the initial inequalities. (p. 493)

By making it easier for social advantages and disadvantages to be transferred across generations (Scanlon & Buckingham, 2004; Stevenson & Baker, 1992), private tuition, if anything, serves to intensify the inequalities perpetuated by schooling. As such, it plays a crucial role in widening the divisions between the 'education rich' and the 'education poor' (Scanlon & Buckingham, 2004). The further realisation that 'unlike most shadows, private supplementary tutoring is not just a passive entity but may negatively affect even the body which it imitates' (Bray, 1999, p. 18) is behind growing calls for further research on this theme in order to redress, among others, what Scanlon and Buckingham (2004) have termed as 'cycles of disadvantage'.

PRIVATE TUITION IN MALTA

High Visibility

Private tuition is a highly visible phenomenon in Malta. We all know many parents who send their children for private lessons; we all know individuals who give private lessons at home; we have all seen placards advertising private lessons displayed prominently outside private houses; and we have all witnessed students coming in and going out of private houses and educational institutions after school hours. And this list can go on and on. Not surprisingly, one of the popular songs that featured in a local cult comedy/satire series that hit Malta's TV screens in 1986 was called 'Privatijiet'⁴ (which means 'private lessons' in Maltese). The refrain of the song, loosely translated from Maltese, said:

Study my son, study my daughter
as examinations are arriving soon.
Keep in mind all the money
I've had to pay for your private lessons!

This widespread presence of private tutoring was also noted by Roger Murphy, an educational consultant who has been invited to the islands on various occasions. He remarked that 'A very strong emphasis, and reliance, upon private tuition outside normal schooling, before and all through the years of schooling' (Murphy, 2005, p. 5) is one of the distinctive characteristics of the local education system. The notion of 'going to private lessons' is so well-ingrained in Malta that it can easily be used as an explanatory metaphor with the general public. One of the authors, Michael, recounts one such episode which he recently witnessed during a Catholic Church service:

During today's Sunday mass, a married couple made an appeal to persons aged over thirteen years to start attending catechism classes for adults that will soon be starting in our parish. The officiating priest also urged the congregation to attend. He told us: 'Take it as if you're going for private lessons ... every now and then we all need to recharge our batteries if we want to start walking on our two feet again'.

Given the high visibility of private tuition in Malta, the lack of proper regulation⁵ – which we share with other countries (see Ireson, 2004; Scanlon & Buckingham, 2004) – is somewhat surprising. In practice, it is possible for anyone who thinks that he or she can teach to start offering private tuition classes. All it takes is to advertise and recruit students. Basing ourselves on a number of mail shots that we came across and the paid adverts that appeared in six consecutive issues of *The Sunday Times* (from 19 December 2010 to 23 January 2011), Malta's top selling newspaper and arguably the most influential, we could note how private tuition providers market their services. Their main selling points were: solid content knowledge, long teaching experience, individual attention through small or one-to-one groupings, convenience of location for clients, the provision of notes, and past paper coaching.

Links to Examinations

Malta's lucrative private tuition market needs to be understood within the traditional local dominance of examinations over the schooling process which arguably continues to the present day. The recently launched consultation document, which paves the way for the new National Curriculum Framework, in fact identifies a de-emphasis on examinations as a precondition for having an assessment system that truly reflects what matters in learning (Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family [MEEF], 2011). The examinations' long-lasting control over the system has caused excessive stress among school administrators, teachers, students and parents (see Calleja, 1988; Farrugia, 1994; Grima & Farrugia, 2006; Mansueto, 1997). In particular, Maltese families live under continuous psychological tension as children's failure in examinations is almost always judged as a failure of the family (Calleja, 1988).

This pattern may have to do with self-esteem which appears to be linked in Malta with examination performance. We tend to value ourselves and others tend to value us on the basis of examination results – that is, value is attributed to achievement and valuelessness to examination failure (Chetcuti & Griffiths, 2002). In an effort to seek 'value', Maltese families are willing to send their children to private lessons, accepting in the process the extra mental, physical and financial stress that this brings (Grima & Ventura, 2006). Griffiths (2009) suggests that there are two main reasons why people value education: first because it provides entry into a desired occupation (i.e., vocational value) and second because it can have value for its own sake (i.e., liberal value). The strong local emphasis on private tuition in connection with the desire for examination success (see Camilleri, 1995)

would suggest that the predominant value associated with education in Malta is ‘vocational’. This, together with the Confucian notion of self-improvement through hard work that has traditionally influenced South East Asian countries where private tuition has long been a major phenomenon (see Ireson & Rushforth, 2011), ensures that private tuition enjoys a position of strength within the Maltese education system. The local newspaper *The Times* commented that ‘Private lessons seem to have become the norm rather than the exception’ (Editor, 2011, p. 9). In this scenario, it has often been suggested by education experts, politicians, Church authorities and the general public that many of the students who go for private lessons in Malta are doing this unnecessarily (see e.g., Calleja, 2011a, 2011b).

Provision, Costs and Family Background

There are three main tuition service providers on the island: (i) individuals who are not necessarily qualified and licensed to teach; (ii) private institutions that specialise in this sector; and (iii) the Directorate of Lifelong Learning that offers evening classes to persons aged over fifteen years. While the first two types of providers offer the service against payment, the third provider – which is a government entity – charges a nominal fee and even waives this fee, among others, for students from families facing financial and social difficulties. But other providers (e.g., the Catholic Church, the state-funded Foundation for Educational Services and the Labour Party) from time to time offer fee-free private tuition or similar educational initiatives, especially for students from disadvantaged groups.

The expenses related to private tuition have long been a thorny social issue in Malta (see Cauchi, 1996; see also Grima & Ventura, 2006). For reasons mentioned by Bray (1999, 2006) – namely, tutors’ unwillingness to declare their earnings coupled with the fact that private tutoring is beyond the reach of the government’s data collection system and students’ reluctance to publicise they are seeking either remedial support or competitive advantages over their peers – it is not possible to get a detailed or accurate picture of this phenomenon in Malta. But we do know, however, that these classes cover from pre-primary level straight up to university level. The indications – sporadic as they are – suggest that these classes gradually become more expensive as one starts moving up the educational ladder. Based on information obtained from individual providers, private institutions that provide this service and a number of students, it seems reasonable to say that Maltese families – depending on the level of tuition sought and the number of subjects involved – end up paying considerable amounts each year on private tuition. Given Malta’s relatively low wage structure⁶, the costs involved for non-government subsidised private tuition represent a serious financial problem to many local families. This situation raises equity issues linked to increases in social stratification as some students are being excluded from private tuition of their choice for financial reasons.

Exclusion, however, may also depend on family factors that go beyond finance. In Malta, the relationship between class and finance threads a very fine line. Baldacchino (1993) argues that while class distinctions do exist in Malta, they

cannot be very clearly defined mainly due to the importance of kin and friendship networks, partisan politics, and a 'perverse' distribution of income where some skilled blue-collar work is very likely to be a better source of income than any white-collar work. In Malta 'it is not what you do (that is, occupation) or what you know (formal qualification) which matters but more importantly, who you know and who you are, as well as who you know well and who would therefore not just promise but will, at the end of the day deliver the goods' (Baldacchino, 1993, p. 19). In terms of private tuition this means that parents might have the necessary finances, but not the necessary knowhow or connections to find the best private tuition for their children. This was not the case of Deborah, one of the authors, who talks about her 'advantaged struggle' to find a private tutor for her son:

This summer I needed to find a private language tutor for my son. I first referred to the adverts in the local newspapers, which were available to everyone. But I did not trust this ... so I resorted to my network of colleagues and friends ... sending emails and asking for information about private tutors ... It was only when I was convinced that I was being recommended the best people in the area that I finally made contact with the tutor.

Parents with a higher educational background or social class are thus able to pass on to their children material and cultural advantages which give them a head-start in life (see Bradley, 1996). We would therefore argue, following Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), that the organisation of private tuition and access to private tuition retranslates the inequalities in the social level into inequalities in the academic level and vice versa, creating a tightly knit circle which is very difficult to break. This circle ensures that parents from a certain background, with educational knowhow and the right contacts can buy the services of the best private tutors who coach their children toward success. The inability of other parents to do the same for their children helps to perpetuate the status quo of the social strata.

A FAIRNESS PERSPECTIVE ON MALTESE RESEARCH

We reviewed ten B.Ed. (Hons) dissertations and one PGCE long essay. This ITE research reported empirical studies conducted at primary (kindergarten to Grade 5), secondary (Grades 6-10 in the USA) and post-secondary (Grades 11-12 in the USA) levels in state, Church and independent schools in Malta. We also refer here to additional local evidence, including a survey conducted on behalf of a local newspaper.

Incidence of Private Tuition

One of the main questions addressed by local research has been the incidence of private tuition in Malta. Different studies have come up with different percentages. The figures obtained from ITE research range from a high of 51.9% (Falzon & Busuttill, 1988) to a low of 37.6% (Fenech & Spiteri, 1999) at primary level, and

from a high of 82.9% (Falzon & Busuttil, 1988) to a low of 36.3% (Bouvett & Cuschieri, 2007) at secondary level. The only available figure for post-secondary education is 19.4% (Buhagiar, 1997). On the other hand, a survey conducted for *The Sunday Times* found that 36.7% of the respondents who had school-aged children in their family said that they send their children for private tuition (Editor, 2003). Caution is called for, however, when interpreting these figures. Apart from the variety of subjects and sampling methodologies, as we have already pointed out there are a number of reasons why it is always difficult to obtain good estimates of private tuition attendance. Still, the available evidence suggests that private tuition has had and continues to sustain a strong presence in the Maltese education system. A European Commission study (Bray, 2011), after noting the particularly high rates of private tutoring in Southern Europe in comparison to other European regions, places the rate of tutoring in Malta right behind that of Greece and Cyprus. In the majority of countries, tutoring is compensatory, in the sense that it helps students to keep up with their school work. But the significant number of students who attend private tuition in Malta indicates that supplementary tutoring is also satisfying demands that have nothing to do with remedial help. One of the parents interviewed during the 2005 review exercise of the local national examination system referred to the consequences of this scenario by saying:

... our sons and daughters go to private lessons even if they do not need to go. They attend even if they are doing well at school. Private lessons are held from Monday to Sunday ... some parents push their children to go to private lessons ... leaving no time for other activities like sport. (Grima & Ventura, 2006, p. 216)

This high incidence of private tuition is causing Maltese students considerable stress (Brincat, 2000; DeBrincat & Falzon, 1996; Gauci & Wetz, 2009). The situation is confounded further in view of research (see Bonnici & Camilleri, 1994; Falzon & Busuttil, 1988; Fenech & Spiteri, 1999) indicating that a substantial number of Maltese children start attending private tuition from a very young age. For instance, 13% of the students in Falzon and Busuttil's (1988) study claimed to have started attending private tuition before they were in Year 3 of primary school (i.e., younger than age 7) and Bonnici and Camilleri (1994) found that 38% of parents of male students attending Year 4 of primary school (i.e., age 8) send their boys to private tuition. Fenech and Spiteri (1999), on the other hand, reported instances of 7-year-old children going to private lessons, but pointed out that this was not the norm.

These findings are in line with UK trends reported by Scanlon and Buckingham (2004) which reveal how private home tutoring is becoming increasingly available for ever younger children in response to parents being bombarded about 'their sense of what they *should* be doing in order to qualify as Good Parents' (p. 288). These decisions, however, are ultimately based on social norms, more precisely on parents' cultural beliefs about the nature of childhood and the value of educational achievement. It appears that many Maltese parents, rather than ensuring that children enjoy life while they are young, prefer to invest in private tutoring to

guarantee that their children do well at school in the hope that they subsequently escape the drudgery that adult life might otherwise bring. Conceding momentarily that this strategy bears fruit, we would still argue that the very notion that so many students either feel the need or are forced to attend additional lessons after school hours goes against the entitlement of every Maltese child to experience quality education (see Ministry of Education, 1999; MEEF, 2011). For we believe, like Griffiths (2009), that education should be about the ‘delight of entrancement’ as students learn to ‘inhabit new imaginative neighbourhoods’ and that an injustice occurs when this does not happen. The widespread incidence of private tutoring in Malta indicates that this entrancement with learning is lacking in the Maltese education system. We therefore take it as a sign of the defectiveness of the local education system.

Main Reasons for Attending Private Tuition

It appears that most students, parents and teachers in Malta see private tuition attendance as a necessary component of one’s educational journey. In Falzon and Busuttil’s (1988) study, 76% of the students, 67.4% of the parents and 53.1% of the teachers opined that private tuition had become an integral part of education. Only 20.8% of the students did not feel the need to attend some form of private tuition. Moreover, ‘doing well in examinations’ has been found to be either the top reason (see Falzon & Busuttil, 1988; Gauci & Wetz, 2009) or one of the top reasons (see Fenech & Spiteri, 1999) behind private tuition attendance (see also Grima & Ventura, 2006). In line with this, and similar to reports in other countries (see Bray, 2006; Bray & Kwok, 2003; Ireson & Rushforth, 2011; Scanlon & Buckingham, 2004), private tuition attendance in Malta is strongly linked to the high stakes examinations that characterise the more important transition phases throughout students’ educational journeys. While these examination-based transitions used to occur at 11+ (i.e., the now defunct end-of-primary examinations that determined entry into the more academically oriented secondary schools), they still do at 16+ (i.e., the end-of-secondary examinations) and 18+ (i.e., the pre-university examinations). In primary school, the higher incidence of private tuition occurred in Year 6, that is, the final year (Rapinett, 2001). Likewise, in secondary school, most students attend private tuition during the final two years (i.e., Forms 4 and 5) as they prepare for their end-of-secondary examinations (Vella & Theuma, 2008). The argument favouring a strong link between private tuition and high stakes examinations is reinforced by Buhagiar’s (1997) study which found that during the first year of post-secondary education – a period that is not characterised by such examinations – only 19.4% of students attend private tuition.

The evidence suggests further that Maltese students resort mostly to private tuition in order to increase their chances of continuing their studies along a scholastic route that emphasises academic achievement, thus keeping their options open to enrol eventually at university. As normally happens in other countries (see Bray, 2006), the greatest demand for private tuition therefore concerns subjects that are prerequisites for academic advancement and career choices. At primary level,

the subjects most frequently taken for private tuition are Mathematics, English and Maltese (Fenech & Spiteri, 1999; Rapinett, 2001). These used to form the backbone of the 11+ examinations that guaranteed entry to a secondary school that focussed primarily on preparing students for the end-of-secondary examinations, which pave the way in turn to post-secondary sixth form education that primarily prepares students for university studies. The link between private tuition and the academic route – as opposed to the vocational one that was considered a dead end until quite recently – is sustained throughout secondary education. Vella and Theuma (2008) found that the most popular private tuition subjects at secondary level are Mathematics, Physics, English and Maltese. Passes in the end-of-secondary examinations of Mathematics, English, Maltese and a science subject (which could be Physics) are pre-requisites to join one of the sixth form colleges.

The evident link in Malta between private tuition attendance and furthering one's studies along the academic route, ideally up to university studies, is another indication – that is, apart from the considerable volume of attendees to which we have already referred – that a good number of students use private tuition as a proactive strategy to increase their chances in the educational allocation contest. For these students, extra private tutoring is not a remedial strategy. It helps them instead to boost further their already good grades to obtain placements into what Scanlon and Buckingham (2004) call the 'right schools' and eventually into the more financially rewarding and socially prestigious university courses (see also Bray, 2006; Foondun, 2002; Ireson, 2004). The high stakes involved explain why Maltese parents – not just the financially secure ones – are willing to make big financial sacrifices in order to ensure that their children do not miss out on important, possibly life-changing, opportunities (see Grima & Ventura, 2006). But there are still students from disadvantaged backgrounds who, in spite of all the possible good will of their families, cannot afford to manoeuvre their educational path in such a fashion. One may think that they may find all the support and push they need from some form of fee-free 'voluntary tutoring'. This option, however, is not unproblematic. For a start, it does not offer parents the choice of deciding what type of tutoring to purchase and from which tutors, nor can they choose easily accessible locations and convenient timeslots. Again, students may see in this form of free tutoring a constant reminder of their inferior economic and social status. Some students may consequently even choose not to access the free tuition market for fears of being publicly labelled as forming part of the 'have-nots' in society. For them, not getting any support is less painful than to be singled out publicly.

Students Who Attend Private Tuition

According to Vella and Theuma (2008), there are basically two types of students who attend private tuition in Malta: (i) those that get high marks but want to get even higher marks; and (ii) those that obtain low marks and feel that private tuition can improve their marks. Using the terminology used by Stevenson and Baker (1992), private tuition attendance is a proactive strategy for the former group and a remedial strategy for the latter group. Vella and Theuma (2008) also pointed out

that some students feel obliged to attend private tuition as some of their school classmates are disruptive, resulting in material either being left uncovered or not treated in sufficient depth. Private tutoring, thus, is also covering for subjects that students, for a variety of reasons, perceive to be poorly taught in schools. But there is also another side of the coin. Local research shows that when students attend private tuition they tend to switch off in class during school hours, and can become uncooperative and disruptive (Bonnici, 2010; Brincat, 2000; Buhagiar, 2005; Gauci & Wetz, 2009). In such instances, private tuition – far from being an innocuous shadow – interferes directly with and distorts the educational processes within mainstream classes (Bray, 1999; Bray & Kwok, 2003; Ireson, 2004). In either case, it is mostly students from low income families who suffer the brunt of the situation. They neither have the means to seek extra help when the school system does not deliver, nor can they fall back on external support when the private tutoring that benefits other students impacts negatively on their mainstream lessons.

At secondary level, the academic orientation of the school also appears to play a significant role in determining private tuition attendance. A number of local studies (Azzopardi & Camenzuli, 2009; Falzon & Busuttil, 1988; Vella & Theuma, 2008) show that students who are enrolled in schools that put greater emphasis on academic achievement and examination success are more likely to attend private tuition. Within the Maltese educational scenario, which has since started to change, this means that students enrolled in the less academically oriented state schools – practically those who would have failed or did not do well enough in the then existing end-of-primary high stakes examinations – are the least likely to attend private tuition. Similar to what has been reported in some other countries (see Bray & Kwok, 2003; Smyth, 2009; Stevenson & Baker, 1992), it is the lower achieving students who are in most need of private tutoring that tend to receive the least of this extra support. The higher achievers, who could have found themselves in the ‘better’ secondary schools also thanks to the known links between their parents’ education and economic circumstances and the purchase of shadow education (see Ireson, 2004; Ireson & Rushforth, 2011), are thus better positioned to continue benefitting from their likely advantaged family background through additional tutoring. This raises an important issue concerning claims related to school standards. Although private tutoring in Malta is highest in schools with higher-band intakes, these schools tend to ignore this phenomenon and attribute to themselves the credit for their students’ generally positive results. This is in line with a trend noted in the UK that private tutoring has become ‘an important, yet also unacknowledged, factor in a child’s school performance’ (Scanlon & Buckingham, 2004, p. 296).

Experiencing Private Tuition and Its Effectiveness

Buhagiar (1997) and Gauci and Wetz (2009) report that private tuition in Malta often contains a strong element of coaching that relies on past examination papers. The trend is for tutors to offer ‘more of the same’ in an effort to reinforce materials already covered in school and to focus almost exclusively on strategies and

knowledge for examination success. Supplementary tutoring, moreover, normally takes place in relatively big groupings that can reach up to 20 students (Falzon & Busuttil, 1988; Gauci & Wetz, 2009). Consequently, as pointed out by parents and teachers in DeBrincat and Falzon's (1996) study, tutors are often unable to give students more individual attention than they get at school (see Bray & Kwok, 2003). Such concerns are justified in the knowledge that 'tutoring is likely to be of much higher quality if it is delivered individually or in small groups than in large classes' (Ireson, 2004, p. 112) – which explains why certain local private tuition providers use 'class size' as a selling point in their adverts. This introduces the further socially divisive issue of who has more money among those who attend fee-paying private tuition. Students from more affluent and ambitious families have an additional advantage, as they can seek better quality by opting for the more expensive options of either small-group or one-to-one tutoring. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the family's financial situation, in conjunction with its educational background, serves as a student allocator along the private tuition attendance continuum. At one end of the continuum, students from the poorer and/or educationally deprived backgrounds either miss out completely on private tuition or else have to content themselves with the free-fee type of tutoring that occasionally comes their way. At the other end, the richer students who also happen to come from families with big educational ambitions for their children have at their disposal an unlimited choice both with regard to the quantity and quality of private tutoring.

Earlier on we referred to the link between high levels of private tuition attendance and student stress. One might therefore think that the poorer students who cannot afford to attend private tuition are spared at least this extra pressure and, as pointed out by Scanlon and Buckingham (2004), the resulting resentment felt by many students. But the issue of stress is not so easily resolved. The reportedly stressed students in DeBrincat and Falzon's (1996) study, including those who were not fully convinced of the benefits of private tuition, were in fact still reluctant to forfeit their private lessons as they claimed to find an additional form of scholastic security through them. The realisation that extra tutoring was helping them on motivational and attitudinal levels (see Ireson, 2004; Mischo & Haag, 2002) explains why these students had ambivalent feelings: they felt stressed because they attended private lessons, but at the same time feared the stress that would ensue if they didn't. The frequent decision to live with the fatigue and stress of private tuition attendance shows how important it is for local students to feel well-prepared for examinations – a demanding option that is however denied to students from the more disadvantaged backgrounds. Interestingly, although Maltese students and parents seem to believe that private tuition helps to improve examination grades (see DeBrincat & Falzon, 1996), the majority of teachers interviewed by DeBrincat and Falzon (1996) and Rapinett (2001) maintained that this is not necessarily the case. Along the same lines, Gauci and Wetz (2009) reported that while private tuition can help to improve the results of fairly weak students, it makes no difference to the results of the very weak or excellent students. The Maltese evidence – just like the international findings (see Ireson,

2004; Ireson & Rushforth, 2011; Smyth, 2009) – is thus inconclusive. Still, it seems to favour those who argue like Bray (2006) and Mischo and Haag (2002) that private tuition has the potential to improve school performance, thereby advantaging students whose families value educational achievement and can also afford the extra tuition fees.

MAKING THE SYSTEM FAIRER

Local research suggests that the Maltese education system allows what Russell (2002, cited in Scanlon & Buckingham, 2004) sees as the ‘invisible’ purchase of educational privilege by some parents. This situation appears to favour mostly students who come from financially secure families that value education. Private tuition makes it easier on these students to attend either the more academically oriented schools in a stratified school system (such as Malta’s previously highly differentiated system) or the ‘better’ classes in a school system that favours equalisation among schools (such as the one Malta is trying currently to implement). In either case, these students are advantaged along their journey up the educational ladder in pursuit of the more economically lucrative and prestigious university courses. This reality undermines one of the important values that supposedly characterise the educational processes in Malta. The value at stake is equality of access to the education system without discrimination on grounds, among others, of socio-cultural and economic background (Ministry of Education, 1999). Lacking such access there can be no equality of opportunity, which is based on the premise ‘that each individual in society experiences opportunities to achieve and flourish which are as good as the opportunities experienced by other people’ (Griffin, 2008, p. 12). Rather than attempting to make everyone equal, equality of opportunity is about creating a ‘level playing field’ that gives each student a fair chance to make the most of his or her life without being held back by unfair barriers (Griffin, 2008).

When, as in Malta, education functions as a ‘positional good’ (see Griffiths, 2009), all the possible advantages provided by private tuition work against fairness within the education system, as these advantages constitute in turn unfair barriers for others who do not have any or equal access to supplementary tutoring. Conscious of these and other problematics, the Maltese education authorities have launched over the years a number of interrelated initiatives that are meant to ensure an education system that is built on the principles of entitlement and quality education for all (see MEEF, 2011). Arguably, the educational developments that could have had the greatest impact on private tuition attendance were: (i) the localisation of the end-of-secondary and pre-university examinations; (ii) the abolition of the end-of-primary examinations; and (iii) the overhaul given to vocational education at post-secondary level. With regard to the first development, Grima and Ventura (2006) report that, contrary to expectations, the introduction of the indigenised examination system did not reduce the demand for after-school private tuition. This comes as no surprise once one realises that these examinations – instead of being ‘ambitious instruments aimed at detecting what mental

representations students hold of important ideas' (Shepard, 1991, p. 9) – are largely anchored to the traditional notion of simply demanding knowledge regurgitation from students. Success in such examinations is likely to be influenced by the type of coaching that often takes place during private tuition.

Given this characteristic of local examinations, it is quite understandable to think that the discontinuation as from 2011 of the end-of-primary examinations, which used to determine the type of secondary school in which students attend, would lead to a substantial reduction of private tuition at primary level. But this may yet be an unsubstantiated conjecture as the new end-of-primary benchmarking assessment exercise, which will now regulate the bulk of the transitions from primary to secondary schooling in Malta, also includes examinations. Knowing that these new examinations are being used to allocate students in different sets within the same school, at least in some subjects such as Mathematics, makes us argue that irrespective of whether or not the whole benchmarking exercise is 'placed at the service of learning' (see Glaser, 1990), the incidence of private tuition at primary level may not change much after all. There might be a dip in numbers at first, but once parents start realising that these new examinations can still influence their children's life chances, they are very likely to resort once again to private tutoring in order to boost examination grades and consequently the set allocation.

The question of grades rises again at the end of secondary school as further studies along the academic route still depend a lot on one's performance on the end-of-secondary examinations. While this academic sixth form education is available for all students with the necessary 16+ qualifications, the more prestigious sixth form colleges only accept students with the highest grades. So the race is still on at secondary level. However, for those with little or no 16+ qualifications, the revamped post-16 vocational route is starting to hold much promise (see Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology, 2011). It is no longer an educational dead end. Instead, students can now go on to earn first cycle vocational degrees that act as gateways to good employment opportunities and further studies, even along the traditional university route. These developments may explain why the Maltese, who have traditionally shunned vocational education, are now starting to feel very positive about this form of education and related opportunities (see European Commission, 2011). This newly found appreciation may help in turn to lessen the pressure on primary and secondary students to seek supplementary tutoring in the belief that this would contribute to build a decent future for them. Our reading of local educational reforms consequently seems to suggest that the most likely long-term detractor on the incidence of private tuition in Malta is the gradual putting at par of the academic and vocational routes. This parity, however, will not be able to redress the inequalities of opportunities that the students who choose the academic route will still be facing.

So where does this leave us vis-à-vis the promotion of a fairer education system in Malta? To start with, for both practical and legal reasons, it would make no sense to propose the prohibition of private tuition. This was tried in some countries

– including Cambodia, Mauritius and South Korea – but authorities eventually had to relax or rescind the ban following evidence that private tuition had continued unabated and accusations that it was an infringement of human rights (Bray, 2006; Foondun, 2002). The question of proper regulation – which is lacking – therefore comes to mind in order to ensure that standards are reached and maintained by all providers. However, although we welcome the announced initiatives in this direction (see Calleja, 2011b) which would rightly safeguard the interests of those who want and can opt for private tuition, we would still argue that regulation cannot rectify the inequalities that are embedded in a system, such as the Maltese one, that is inundated with private tuition practices. Possibly more promising would be initiatives taken by schools to involve parents as ‘partners’ in an effort to emphasise out-of-school learning, even if these initiatives still tend to favour families who already have good links with schools (Scanlon & Buckingham, 2004) either through common social networks or shared values. As socially advantaged parents and those with higher levels of education have a keener interest to keep close contacts with schools in order to ensure that their families do not risk social demotion (Smyth, 2009).

Another avenue worth exploring would be for schools to organise voluntary extracurricular activities that include, among other things, after school support classes that target important examinations. In many UK schools, such classes have been found to benefit students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds (Ireson, 2004). Students from financially needy families could find such an initiative less threatening to their pride than the overtly ‘charity model’ type of tutoring that occasionally crosses their path in Malta. On the other hand, students from families who attribute little value to education would have the accessible opportunity to benefit from an educational service that they would not otherwise seek out on their own initiative. Schools, however, are more likely to consider similar initiatives once they have more time on their hands. It might therefore be opportune to reconsider the school calendar in Malta which, with 170 school days at best, has one of the shortest school years in the world (see Calleja, 2011a). Roger Murphy, whose consultancy has been frequently sought by Maltese education authorities, has conjectured in fact that this local characteristic contributes to push parents to send their children to private lessons in order to make up for the reduced contact hours with their school teachers (Calleja, 2011a).

LET THERE BE ‘PENUMBRA’

Our main strategy, thus, is to blur the existing boundaries between private tuition and mainstream schooling through the introduction of study support initiatives that supplement normal school activities. This would mean that while traditional private tuition continues to form a ‘shadow’ system, this type of study support falls in the ‘penumbra’, a region of half-shadow. In this in-between region, students can gain from the real or perceived benefits of supplementary tutoring without any reference to their family’s social class or educational background. In addition to helping students understand the academic content in which they require assistance, these

study groups should function as ‘learning communities’ where learners can feel safe to engage in social relationships that develop their identity as learners as well as their self-esteem (see Griffiths & Davies, 1995). This would encourage students to start valuing themselves for who they are, regardless of family values, class, gender, race and so on. With this ambitious agenda, the study support services within schools can hope to attract all sorts of students from all sorts of family backgrounds in spite of the continuing availability of the fee-paying private tuition market. Most importantly, students from disadvantaged backgrounds would now be able to access readily available learning support from which they were previously precluded.

By allowing all students the possibility to continue developing a strong sense of identity as learners within the penumbra region, it becomes less likely for private tuition to continue acting as a ‘trump card’ toward achieving educational success. Unlike the problematic ‘charity model’ that offers educational favours in recognition of one’s financial and/or cultural deficits, the driving force behind the service being proposed here is the right of every student to receive adequate and timely attention that addresses his or her individual learning needs. We see this quality after-school support service as a natural step that should run side-by-side to a quality education system for all students during school hours. By ensuring quality both during and after school hours, we would be moving closer to an equitable education system that realises entitlement promises – basically, the provision of a good learning environment that empowers all students and allows them to achieve their full potential. The embedded shift toward ‘equality of prospects’ renders our proposal, which carries important financial implications, also viable on economic grounds, as Malta’s economy would no longer be precluded from the potential assistance of individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Undoubtedly, the introduction of free study support services will not stop the more ambitious among the privileged students from continuing to seek status, wealth and power through fee-paying private tutoring. As long as education remains conceived as a race toward ‘something’ that not everyone can possess, there will always be those who start and continue to participate from an advantaged position. Still, the solution is not to diminish or prohibit privileges, but rather to create an ambience in which these privileges are less likely to make a difference. For only then will the system be fairer. It would indeed be ideal to have a system in which the value of education is intrinsic – as opposed to ‘positional good’ – as this would make it possible for everyone to benefit from the expansion of education (see Griffiths, 2009). In this scenario, pedagogy can promote deep learning as opposed to shallow learning (see Marton & Säljö, 1976) and the assessment system can be consistent with the heterogeneity of the population (Murphy & Gipps, 1996). This would make it possible ‘to attend to justice *in* education as well as *from* education’ (Griffiths, 2009, p. 1). At this stage, however, this socially just vision seems distant. We therefore feel obliged to consider social justice as a verb – that is, to engage in action in the hope of getting more fairness into educational practices. Our suggestion in favour of developing study support initiatives around existing school practices is a point of departure, not arrival. We say this in the

knowledge that social justice in education requires action along two interlinked strands: the empowerment of individuals and the righting of structural injustices due to race, class, gender and special needs (see Griffiths & Davies, 1995). Clearly, our proposal cannot hope to achieve all this. Still, we consider it as an exemplar of what can be done to soften inequalities in a system where unfair advantages continue to be tolerated under the guise of meritocracy. It may seem to be a small step, but we would argue that it is a significant step in the right direction.

NOTES

- ¹ We are indebted to our friend and colleague George Cremona for generously offering his valued assistance throughout this research project.
- ² The Maltese archipelago – or Malta, as it is better known – is a small Mediterranean island state with a total surface area of 316 km² and a population of slightly more than 400,000 people. The two main islands are Malta (the largest) and Gozo. Malta, which is a predominantly Roman Catholic country, gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1964 and joined the European Union in 2004.
- ³ The Faculty of Education at the University of Malta is the main provider on the island of pre-service teacher education. The Faculty runs two initial teacher education programmes – the four-year Bachelor of Education (Honours) degree course and the one-year Post Graduate Certificate in Education course. B.Ed. (Hons) students are required to write a dissertation of 10,000 to 13,000 words. PGCE students, up till the 2010-2011 cohort, were required to produce a long essay of circa 8,000 words.
- ⁴ This song, which is available on YouTube, has lyrics by Joe Saliba and music by Vince Fabri.
- ⁵ The only form of regulatory limitation is point 1.11 of Legal Notice 81/1988 which states that ‘The teacher shall not use professional relationships with pupils for private advantage’ (see Government of Malta, 1988) – which has long been taken to mean that the teacher cannot give private lessons to students that he or she teaches at school.
- ⁶ The average gross annual salary of employees in Malta (excluding extra payments such as overtime, bonuses and allowances) was estimated at €14,448 in the fourth quarter of 2010 (National Statistics Office, 2011).

REFERENCES

- Azzopardi, C., & Camenzuli, J. (2009). *Students' choice of paper and performance in SEC mathematics*. B.Ed.(Hons) Dissertation, Faculty of Education, University of Malta.
- Baldacchino, G. (1993). Social class in Malta: Insights into a homegrown relationship with special reference to education, *Education (Malta)*, 5(1), 23-32.
- Bonnici, M.G. (2010). *Church secondary school teachers' perspectives on mathematics teaching*. M.Ed. Dissertation, Faculty of Education, University of Malta.
- Bonnici, J., & Camilleri, S. (1994). *The home school*. B.Ed.(Hons) Dissertation, Faculty of Education, University of Malta.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). Cultural reproduction and social reproduction. In J. Karabel & A.H. Halsey (Eds.), *Power and ideology in education*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J. C. (1990). *Reproduction in education, society and culture*. London: Sage.
- Bouvet, A., & Cuschieri, M. (2007). *The teaching of Maltese at school and during private tuition: Friends or foes?* PGCE Long Essay, Faculty of Education, University of Malta [in Maltese].
- Bradley, H. (1996). *Fractured identities: Changing patterns of inequality*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bray, M. (1999). *The shadow education system: Private tutoring and its implications for planners*. Paris: UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP).
- Bray, M. (2006). Private supplementary tutoring: comparative perspectives on patterns and implications, *Compare: A Journal of Comparative Education*, 36(4), 515-530.

THE PRIVATE TUITION PHENOMENON IN MALTA

- Bray, M. (2009). *Confronting the shadow education system: What government policies for what private tutoring?* Paris: UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP).
- Bray, M. (2011). *The challenge of shadow education: Private tutoring and its implications for policy makers in the European Union*. Brussels: European Commission.
- Bray, M., & Kwok, P. (2003). Demand for private supplementary tutoring: Conceptual considerations and socio-economic patterns in Hong Kong. *Economics of Education Review*, 22(6), 611-620.
- Brincat, M. (2000). *Private tuition in junior lyceum schools in Malta and Gozo*. B.Ed.(Hons) Dissertation, Faculty of Education, University of Malta.
- Buhagiar, A. (1997). *Private tuition in the academic areas at post-secondary level*. B.Ed.(Hons) Dissertation, Faculty of Education, University of Malta.
- Buhagiar, M. A. (2005). *Mathematics teachers' classroom assessment practices: A case study in a Maltese sixth form college*. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Nottingham, UK.
- Calleja, C. (2011). Most students need not attend private lessons, experts say. *The Times (Malta)*, 2 June, p.12.
- Calleja, J. (1988). Thoughts on the concepts and practices of the Maltese educational system. In C. J. Farrugia (Ed.), *Education in Malta: A look to the future*. Malta: UNESCO.
- Calleja, S. (2011a). 'We should seriously consider increasing number of school days' – Evarist Bartolo. *The Malta Independent on Sunday*, 3 July, pp. 1, 3.
- Calleja, S. (2011b). Private tuition to be regulated. *The Malta Independent on Sunday*, 24 July, pp. 1, 9.
- Camilleri, A. (1995). *Bilingualism in education: The Maltese experience*. Heidelberg: Julius Groos Verlag.
- Cauchi, N. (1996). Private tuition: A slap in the face of the educational system. *L-Orizzont*, 2 February, p. 28 [in Maltese].
- Chetcuti, D., & Griffiths, M. (2002). The implications for student self-esteem of ordinary differences in schools: The cases of Malta and England. *British Educational Research Journal*, 28(4), 529-549.
- Corbett, J. (2001). Is equity compatible with entitlement? Balancing inclusive values and deserving needs. *Support for Learning*, 16(3), 117-121.
- DeBrincat, J., & Falzon, M. (1996). The impact of private lessons on teachers' esteem in the community. B.Ed.(Hons) Dissertation, Faculty of Education, University of Malta.
- Editor, The (2003). Conclusions of a survey on education in Malta. *The Sunday Times (Malta)*, 28 September, p. 61.
- Editor, The (2011). Mapping the 'shadow education' system. *The Times (Malta)*, 13 June, p. 9.
- European Commission. (2011). *Attitudes towards vocational education and training (special Eurobarometer 369)*. Available online at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_369_en.pdf.
- Falzon, P. A., & Busuttil, J. (1988). Private tuition in Malta. A hidden educational phenomenon revealed. B.Ed.(Hons) Dissertation, Faculty of Education, University of Malta.
- Farrugia, C. (1994). Malta: Educational development in a small island state. In C. Farrugia (Ed.), *A new vision for primary schools*. Malta: MUT Publications.
- Fenech, N., & Spiteri, C. (1999). *Private tuition in Malta: Revealed*. B.Ed. (Hons) Dissertation, Faculty of Education, University of Malta.
- Foondun, A. R. (2002). The issue of private tuition: an analysis of South-East Asian countries. *International Review of Education*, 48(6), 485-515.
- Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. London: Penguin Press.
- Gauci, D., & Wetz, S. (2009). *The private lessons phenomenon in a form five girls mathematics classroom*. B.Ed.(Hons) Dissertation, Faculty of Education, University of Malta.
- Glaser, R. (1990). Toward new models for assessment. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 14(5), 475-483.
- Government of Malta. (1988). Teachers (Code of Behaviour). Regulations (Legal Notice 81/1988).
- Griffin, S. (2008). *Inclusion, equality & diversity in working with children*. Essex, UK: Heinemann.
- Griffiths, M. (1998). The discourses of social justice in schools. *British Educational Research Journal*, 24(3), 301-316.

- Griffiths, M. (2009). *Justice, joy and educational delights*. Professorial inaugural lecture, Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh, 24 March. Available online at: http://www.morwennagriffiths.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/social_justice.htm.
- Griffiths, M., & Davies, C. (1995). *In fairness to children*. London: David Fulton.
- Grima, G., & Farrugia, J. (2006). *Transition from primary to secondary in Malta: Time to break the mould?* Malta: Allied Publications.
- Grima, G., & Ventura, F. (2006). Auditing a national system of examinations: issues of selectivity in the Secondary Education Certificate (SEC) examination in Malta. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 16(3), 207-221.
- Ireson, J. (2004). Private tutoring: How prevalent and effective is it? *London Review of Education*, 2(2), 109-122.
- Ireson, J., & Rushforth, K. (2004). *Private tutoring: Global perspectives and current research in England*. Paper presented at the conference of the British Educational Research Association held at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, 16-18 September, Manchester, UK.
- Ireson, J., & Rushforth, K. (2005). *Mapping and evaluating shadow education*. London: Institute of Education, University of London.
- Ireson, J., & Rushforth, K. (2011). Private tutoring at transition points in the English education system: Its nature, extent and purpose. *Research Papers in Education*, 26(1), 1-19.
- Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology. (2011). *10 years developing students' potential*. Press Release dated 3 October. Available online at: <http://www.mcast.edu.mt>.
- Mansueto, R. (1997). Examinations and stress: childhood and education subverted. In R. G. Sultana (Ed.), *Inside/outside schools: Towards a critical sociology of education in Malta*. Malta: Publishers Enterprises Group (PEG).
- Marton, F., & Säljö, R. (1976). On qualitative differences in learning: 1. Outcome and process. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 46(1), 4-11.
- Ministry of Education. (1999). *Creating the future together: National minimum curriculum*. Malta: Author.
- Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family (MEEF). (2011). *Towards a quality education for all: The national curriculum framework 2011* (Consultation Document 2 – Rationale and Components). Malta: Author.
- Mischo, C., & Haag, L. (2002). Expansion and effectiveness of private tutoring. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 17(3), 263-273.
- Murphy, P., & Gipps, C. V. (1996). *Equity in the classroom: Towards an effective pedagogy for girls and boys*. London: Falmer Press.
- Murphy, R. (2005). Some external perspectives on MATSEC (Appendix C). In *MATSEC: Strengthening a national examination system*. Malta: Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment.
- National Statistics Office. (2011). *Labour force survey: Q4/2010*. News Release 059/2011 dated 28 March. Available online at: <http://www.nso.gov.mt>.
- Rapinett, M. (2001). *Private tuition: A case-study in a state school and in a church school*. B.Ed.(Hons) Dissertation, Faculty of Education, University of Malta.
- Russell, J. (2002). Pay as you learn, *The Guardian*, April 8.
- Scanlon, M., & Buckingham, D. (2004). Home learning and the educational marketplace. *Oxford Review of Education*, 30(2), 287-303.
- Shepard, L.A. (1991). Psychometricians' beliefs about learning. *Educational Researcher*, 20(6), 2-16.
- Smyth, E. (2009). Buying your way into college? Private tuition and the transition to higher education in Ireland. *Oxford Review of Education*, 35(1), 1-22.
- Stevenson, D. L., & Baker, D. P. (1992). Shadow education and allocation to formal schooling: Transition to university in Japan. *American Journal of Sociology*, 97(6), 1639-1657.
- Stobart, G. (2005). Fairness in multicultural assessment system. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 12(3), 275-287.

THE PRIVATE TUITION PHENOMENON IN MALTA

- Stone, C. (1998). Leveling the playing field: An urban school system examines equity in access to Mathematics curriculum, *The Urban Review*, 30(4), 295-307.
- Vella, A., & Theuma, M. (2008). *Various aspects behind private tuition: A study among form 4 secondary schools*. B.Ed.(Hons) Dissertation, Faculty of Education, University of Malta.