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# **Social Capital and Public Policy in Greece**

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# Social Capital and Public Policy in Greece

Christos J. Paraskevopoulos<sup>#</sup>

## ABSTRACT

Social capital has emerged as a key concept on the social sciences in general and political science/public policy in particular over the last two decades or so, because, by facilitating collective action among the actors, it leads to increased levels of performance in several public policy areas and public policy at large. In the case of Greece, the low level of social capital, at least since the late 1980s, tends to be regarded as a key problem of the domestic institutional infrastructure that crucially affects the level of performance in several public policy areas. In that respect, there is evidence to suggest that the low level of social capital is linked to the dominant role of rent-seeking behaviour of relatively small and strongly-tied interest groups in the policy process that inhibit policy learning and hence the reform process in several public policy areas. This paper presents evidence on the implications of the state of social capital in Greece for public policy-making from two policy areas, namely environmental and regional.

Keywords: Social Capital; Measurement; Public Policy; Greece

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# Social Capital and Public Policy in Greece

## 1. Introduction

Social capital has relatively recently (Paraskevopoulos, 1997, 1998, 2001a-d; Lyberaki & Paraskevopoulos, 2002; Lyberaki and Tsakalotos, 2002) emerged on the academic debate on public policy-making in Greece as a potentially crucial variable affecting the institutional and/or policy adaptation -policy change- processes, resulting from the Europeanization and/or modernization agenda. Despite the lack of historical/time series data on the level of social capital in Greece, there is some evidence to suggest that the relative “civicness” of the first post-authoritarianism period, i.e. 1974-1980s, seems to have been eroded by increasing levels of individualism, very low level of social trust and distrust in political institutions, that is very low level of social capital at large (see Paraskevopoulos, 1998, 2001; Lyberaki and Paraskevopoulos, 2002; Sotiropoulos, 2004). The main task of this paper is twofold: first, to systematically measure/evaluate the level of social capital in Greece; and, second, to identify whether or not this is linked to levels of institutional performance and/or policy-making outcomes, in terms of policy change resulting from Europeanization and/or modernization processes. Thus, the first section of the paper establishes the link between the concept of social capital and the *problematique* of public policy-making in general. The second section

examines the theoretical and methodological approaches to the challenge of measurement of social capital. The third section presents the main findings with regard to the state of social capital in Greece from both macro-analytical, namely pan-European, and micro-analytical perspective. The fourth section investigates the implications of the state of social capital in Greece for public policy in general and policy change in particular with specific focus on two policy areas, namely environmental and regional. Finally, the final section presents the main conclusions with regard to the state of social capital in Greece and its implications for domestic public policy-making.

## **2. Social Capital and Public Policy**

Social capital, defined as a combination of generalized trust and access to social networks, has become a key concept in the social sciences over the last two decades or so, because it correlates with normatively highly desirable qualitative features of liberal democracy, such as functioning democratic institutions, increased levels of civiness and citizens' participation in social and/or public life, but most importantly with increased levels of performance in several policy areas, i.e. education, health, development, and public policy at large. Indeed, social capital has emerged on the public policy agenda as a crucial conceptual tool that, by facilitating 'certain actions of actors within the structure' (Coleman, 1988:98), leads to the crossing of the old schism between structure and culture. As a resource for action available to an actor, it is one

way of introducing social structure into the rational choice paradigm (ibid., 1988:95; Ostrom, 1992, 1995a,b, 1998). Although Coleman's<sup>1</sup> (1990:300-302) definition of social capital as 'a set of inherent social-structural resources in the social organization that constitute capital assets for the individual' implies it refers to individual actors (persons), it has been acknowledged as a crucial factor for facilitating collective action among corporate actors as well: 'because purposive organizations can be actors just as persons can, relations among corporate actors can constitute social capital for them as well' (Coleman, 1988:98). Thus, social capital is not of any individual or group. Rather, it is a relational concept that refers 'to features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated action' (Putnam, 1993:167). Therefore, voluntary cooperation is easier in a community<sup>2</sup> that has inherited a substantial stock of social capital: that is the pursuit of collective goods is not seen as in contradiction with the pursuit of maximizing individual or family group wealth.

Subsequently, another main feature of social capital is that of a shared or public good, whereas conventional capital is considered to be a private good. Therefore, like all public goods, it tends to be undervalued and undersupplied by private agents, which means that social capital, more so than other forms of

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<sup>1</sup> Though Coleman is considered the scholar who introduced and analysed the term, he credits *Glenn C. Loury* with introducing the concept into economics and identifying the social resources useful for the development of human capital. See J. Coleman, (1990:300-301).

<sup>2</sup> S. Singleton and Michael Taylor defined *community* as: 'a set of people (a) with some shared beliefs, including normative beliefs and preferences, beyond those constituting their collective action problem, (b) with a more or less stable set of members, (c) who expect to continue interacting with one another for some time to come, and (d) whose relations are direct (unmediated by third parties) and multiplex' (1992:315).

capital, needs to be nurtured, supported and enhanced in order not to be depleted. To this end, the role of institutions is crucial.

The relevance of social capital to almost all areas of public policy draws on its capacity for resolving problems of collective action, such as the provision of various forms of public goods, and avoiding a situation known as *social trap* (Rothstein, 2002:290;2005). Indeed, *public goods*, because they can be enjoyed by everyone regardless of whether he or she has contributed to their provision, can be seen as constituting prisoner's dilemmas. Under ordinary circumstances, therefore, no one has an incentive to contribute to providing the public good, causing all to suffer. In a similar vein, in the *logic of collective action* (Olson, 1971:2) the presumption that the possibility of a benefit for a group would be sufficient to generate collective action to achieve that benefit is challenged. Olson's argument is based on the assumption that one has little incentive to contribute voluntarily to the provision of a collective good, unless he or she could be excluded from the benefits of that good, once it is produced. What all these cases underline is 'how perfectly rational individuals can produce, under some circumstances, outcomes that are not "rational" when viewed from the perspective of all those involved' (Ostrom, 1990:6). The performance of all social institutions from international credit markets to modern national and regional governments depends on the way in which those dilemmas of collective action can be resolved (Putnam, 1993:164). The interesting part of these dilemmas is the irrelevance of traditional theories about rationality, which are based on the presumption that actors make choices according to their

preferences ordering to maximize utility. Yet, in dilemmas of collective action the choices made by agents actually depend on the expectation of what others will do (Rothstein, 2002:290). As D. Gambetta has pointed out, 'it is necessary not only to trust others before acting cooperatively, but also to believe that one is trusted by others' (1988:216). Indeed, norms of trust and reciprocity, as intrinsic elements of social capital, constitute the main tools for resolving collective action problems.

Theoretical work on the refinement of the concept of social capital over the last decade has led to its de-construction into three separate and almost mutually exclusive typologies. A first is the notion of social capital as 'bonding'. It refers to the inner strengths of primary social groups such as families, clans and neighbours in a community in defence of the group's interests and in particular as basic coping mechanisms for individuals in times of natural disasters and man-made crisis and in the absence of institutions (Narayan, 1998). It is sometime referred to as 'unsocial capital' (Levi, 1996). A second notion, and most widely subscribed to, is social capital as 'bridging', by which it is meant the associational capacity of a community to express dense networks of social exchange, which are viewed as countering 'bonding' forces. Much of the empirical work, including a substantial body of comparative studies, aimed at measuring the stock of social capital in communities today is focused on 'bridging' (Putnam, 2002; Edwards et. al., 2001). A third notion is that of social capital as 'linking'. It refers to the mechanisms which enable a community's associational capacity or 'bridging' social capital to express itself

through political behaviour, thus interacting with public institutions and contributing to the production of public goods and outcomes. This is the least researched of the three de-constructed notions of social capital, perhaps because it entails longitudinal rather than cross-sectional studies, while ultimately it is most critical for public policy aims.

The crucial question from public policy's point of view is whether or not trust and subsequently 'bridging and linking' social capital can be created, particularly where it is needed and in short supply. In this respect, a concern with regard to the role of the state in promoting collective action and building social capital through successful state/society synergies has emerged relatively recently, especially in the institutional literature (Ostrom, 1996). In that respect, the basic argument in the *problematique* of 'crossing the great divide' derives from the debate between the 'endowments' and the 'constructability' approaches to state/society synergies. The former adopts the disjunction "strong state-weak civil society" and emphasizes the dependence of successful state/society synergies on a pre-existing strong civil society and presence of substantial stock of social capital and therefore points to a long-run process for success. In this theoretical framework, the creation and destruction of social capital are marked by virtuous and vicious circles (Putnam, 1993:170) and, in this regard, this presumption has engendered criticisms in relation to its historicism and 'path dependence' logic (Boix and Posner, 1996; Goldberg, 1996; Sabetti, 1996; Levi, 1996; Tarrow, 1996). Conversely, the latter stresses the possibility of social capital building in the medium term, through

synergistic relations between state, market and civil society (voluntary) institutions and points to the evidence of successful synergies -with a key role attributed to the state- from areas of the globe (i.e. Third World countries) where the presence of social capital is in demand (Evans, 1996). Overall, the institutional literature on the European experience seems to suggest that issues such as the structure and the degree of centralization of the state and the strength of civil society constitute the crucial parameters that determine the administrative capacity of the state and shape the public/private relations. Thus the main features of the state structure in the degrees of bureaucratization, centralization and clientelism can account for the way in which areas of public policy are regulated and the state/society relations are shaped (see Putnam 1993, Boix & Posner 1996, Grote 1997, Paraskevopoulos 1998, 2001a-d, Paraskevopoulos & Leonardi, 2004). In sum, there is evidence to suggest that social capital, civil society and co-operative culture at large, as components of a governance paradigm that has become known as *participatory governance*, constitute key variables affecting the levels of effectiveness and efficiency in almost any area of public policy. (Warren, Thompson and Saegert, 2001; Opp and Gern, 1993; Campbell, 2000; Halpern, 2001; Woolcock, 2001; Healy, 2001; Whitehead and Diderichsen, 2001; Paraskevopoulos and Leonardi, 2004). Moreover, this is particularly evident in the areas of regional policy and local self governance at large, whereby social capital is widely considered as a crucial conceptual tool and intrinsic element of the concept of regionalism, namely the bottom up movement of localities towards local self-governance as

opposed to the top-down process of regionalization from above (see Paraskevopoulos, 1997).

### **3. Measuring Social Capital: theoretical and methodological approaches**

The literature about the measurement of social capital suggests that the identification of social capital involves a primarily twofold process: first, the *cultural dimension*, that is the identification of trust through mainly mass survey data; and second, the *structural dimension*, namely the identification of networks of civic engagement through data on membership in voluntary-community organizations (NGOs) (see *inter alia* Newton and Norris, 2000; Norris, 2000, 2001; Narayan and Cassidy, 2001; della Porta, 2000; Mishler and Rose, 2001; Uslaner, 2001; Putnam, 2002; Pharr and Putnam, 2000; Rothstein, 2002; Rothstein and Stolle, 2001; van Deth, 2000, 2001; Whiteley, 1999; Herreros, 2004).

However, this two-dimensional approach leads to a number of areas of concern with regard to the measurement of social capital internationally, across countries and/or across subjects/policy fields. These include: the distinction between *formal and informal ties/networks*; the distinction between ‘*bridging*’ and ‘*bonding*’ networks and hence among inclusive and exclusive forms of social capital; the distinction between *altruistic* (other-regarding - offering services outside the membership) and ‘*egotistic*’ (self-regarding) which exists

to further the interests of members networks (Boix and Posner, 1996); and the distinction between individual and societal-level effects (Putnam, 2000; Putnam, et. al., 2000; Norris, 2001; Newton and Norris, 2000). Thus, while it is widely accepted that the capturing of the structure-culture interplay should lie at the core and be intrinsic element of the process for the measurement of social capital, a wide variety of other variables/proxies directly or indirectly related to social capital, the so called determinant and outcome measures, have also been incorporated into the measurement exercise (Narayan and Cassidy (2001).

Thus, as existing research suggests, social capital is an extremely complicated concept and therefore its investigation requires the development of a reliable and valid index, incorporating associational membership and associational activism measures, social trust, as well as determinant and outcome measures. For capturing the associational *membership* vis-à-vis associational *activism* distinction Norris (2001) has adopted a three-stage approach, culminating in a scale weighting active membership, passive membership and not belonging<sup>3</sup>. As for the determinant and outcome measures, there is an ever expanding literature which points to socio-psychological and identity measures (Whiteley, 1999), such as life satisfaction, pride & identity, as well as communication

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<sup>3</sup> While associational membership according to the World Values Survey (WVS) is measured by the typical question: [*"I am going to read off a list of voluntary organizations; for each one could you tell me whether you are an active member, an inactive member or not a member of that type of organization?"*], the first stage refers to the development of a specific (VOL-ANY) measure that gives an overall summary of belonging to any of the categories of voluntary organizations. The second stage involves the so called (VOL-ORG) measure, which focuses on capturing the spread of multiple and/or overlapping memberships through estimations of the mean number of associational categories that people join. Finally, the third measure (VOL-ACT) involves the creation of a scale weighting active membership, passive membership and not belonging. For the investigation of social trust -despite the problematic/limited character of the measure- the question of the WVS [*"Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people"*] is widely acceptable.

variables, such as television viewership, papers readership and radio listenership (Norris, 2000) for the former and to perceptions and measures of corruption (della Porta, 2000), confidence in institutions (Newton and Norris, 2000) and political interest (Rothstein and Stolle, 2001) for the latter. Nonetheless, although it has become clear from existing research that there seems to be an ambiguity/concern with regard to the logic of causality among the variables mentioned above, given the importance of the 'linking' form of social capital for public policy, the relation to the role of public institutions and the state's institutional infrastructure at large is particularly crucial.

In that respect, the so called *institutional theory of trust* (Rothstein and Stolle, 2001; Rothstein, 2002) attributes a very important role to the perceptions of fairness and impartiality of public institutions on the part of citizens as a crucial variable/determinant affecting the creation of generalized trust and hence the building up of social capital. Given that what this theory implies is the importance of the principles of *impartiality* and *universalism* in public policy-making in general and policy implementation in particular, the link to formal state institutions and hence to the 'linking' form of social capital becomes clear. This is particularly true for the *universal welfare state* as the main pillar/guarantor of universalism. In this framework, given that confidence in institutions is widely regarded as a very important measure/proxy for the identification of social capital, what really matters is not confidence in institutions in general, but rather confidence in the institutions mostly involved in the implementation of public policies, that is confidence in the -impartiality

of- the so called *street-level bureaucracy*. In a similar vein, Herreros (2004) points to the crucial role of formal social and political institutions -as providers of external solutions to dilemmas of collective action- in the creation of social capital in two important respects: first, a direct one, as guarantor of agreements, that is sanctioning agent; and second, an indirect one, as facilitator of increased participation in associations and hence of building social capital through the provision of selective incentives. While the former function refers to the role of social and political institutions as an impartial state (*street-level*) bureaucracy, the latter refers to the universal welfare state. Yet, this measure becomes relevant at the societal and cross-national and not at the individual level of analysis (Newton and Norris, 2000; Mishler and Rose, 2001). In other words, while institutional performance and not culture determines trust in institutions at the individual level, at the societal/national level social capital may play a crucial role as determinant of institutional performance that leads to trust in institutions at the individual level. Perceptions of corruption, such as those collected by Transparency International, are widely used as a very important measure/proxy of confidence in institutions and hence of social capital (della Porta, 2000).

Finally, another matter related to both the confidence in institutions and citizens' activism is the interconnectedness between social capital and participation/activism in politics. This relationship, however, is not as straightforward as it seems to be. In particular, only association membership appears to be positively related to political engagement, while the correlation

between social trust and political activism is very weak (van Deth, 2000, 2001).

In sum, given all the above, the interconnectedness between social capital and political engagement is a very complicated one and, hence, under these circumstances, the latter may not be as good outcome measure or proxy for social capital identification as many might have hypothesized.

In light of the above analysis, the categorization of indicators/measures and proxies that are widely used for the measurement of social capital may be as follows.

**Table 1. Indicators used in Social Capital research**

<b>Determinant (Sources/Origins) Measures</b>	<b>Social Capital Measures</b>	<b>Outcome Measures</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Socio-psychological and identity measures (life-satisfaction, pride and identity)</li> <li>▪ Communication variables (television viewership, papers readership, radio listenership)</li> <li>▪ Demographic traits (age, gender, class, race, marital and parental status...)</li> <li>▪ Occupation status (working hours, kind of work, employment status...)</li> <li>▪ Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Social Networks Membership (Voluntary – Associational - NGO memberships, activities, involvement, rates of engagement, work relations...) (Structural aspects)</li> <li>▪ Generalized (social) trust measures (Cultural aspects)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Well-being, happiness</li> <li>▪ Institutional performance and confidence in public institutions</li> <li>▪ Perceptions and measures of corruption</li> <li>▪ Political interest and political participation (voting, party membership, activities, intensity...)</li> </ul>

#### **4. The State of Social Capital in Greece**

While measuring social capital is not an easy research task/objective, in the case of Greece the lack of historical databases constitutes an additional impediment. Thus, research for this paper has relied on two main sources of data/surveys that became available relatively recently: the Special Eurobarometer 223 which has been carried out by the European Commission (DG-V) and released in the beginning of 2005 (Paraskevopoulos, 2005b); and the European Social Survey (ESS) (3rd wave) which -for Greece- was carried out by EKKE, the Greek Centre for Social Research, and released in 2003. Although both surveys provide rich databases for measuring social capital and are very similar in their findings, there are important differences in their sample size and coverage of specific variables that allow for differentiation in their analytical capacity. In that respect, the data from Eurobarometer 223 is used in this paper mainly for macro-analytical comparative purposes, that is for comparing Greece vis-à-vis the other EU member states on the basis of a social capital index. The ESS, on the other hand, involves generally larger samples and covers a wider variety of variables, including communication, control, trust in institutions and other crucial, especially for the case of Greece, variables, and therefore it provides for capturing the micro-foundations of social capital at the domestic level. In that respect, it is used for micro-analytical purposes, namely for the analysis of the specificities related to the composition of social

capital in Greece and its interconnectedness with other determinant and/or outcome variables.

The social capital index involves the capturing of the nexus between the main aspects of social capital, namely structure and culture, through measures of associational membership and social trust. Measures of associational membership normally include membership of at least one voluntary organization (vol.any), a number of multiple organizational memberships (vol.org) and a combined score (vol.act) of active membership, passive membership and no membership at all in any category of organization (Norris, 2001). The measurement of social trust, on the other hand, is based on the proportion responding “*most people can be trusted*” in each society. The construction of the social capital index on the basis of Eurobarometer 223 data, however, has been based on a combination between social trust and number of multiple organizational memberships (vol.org). This is because it was very difficult from the data provided to distinguish between active and passive memberships and therefore to end up with a cohesive combined score (vol.act). Nonetheless, we are confident that the measure of organizational memberships adequately captures the dynamism of associational membership across the EU member states.

**Table 2. Social Capital Index**

Country	N	Social Trust Most people can be trusted	Vol.Any	Vol.Org	Social Capital Index Social Trust x Vol.Org
Sweden (SE)	993	0.65	0.93	2.80	1.82
Denmark (DK)	1010	0.75	0.90	2.38	1.79
Netherlands (NL)	1026	0.62	0.84	2.21	1.37
Finland (FI)	1032	0.61	0.76	1.53	.93
Luxembourg (LU)	384	0.31	0.78	1.87	.58
United Kingdom (UK)	1290	0.36	0.56	1.06	.38
Ireland (IE)	1067	0.34	0.59	1.07	.36
Austria (AT)	995	0.33	0.59	1.02	.34
Belgium (BE)	960	0.30	0.58	1.14	.34
Germany (DE)	1505	0.34	0.56	0.98	.33
Slovenia (SI)	1023	0.24	0.57	0.94	.23
France (FR)	982	0.22	0.56	0.90	.20
Spain (ES)	1001	0.36	0.29	0.46	.17
Estonia (EE)	991	0.33	0.37	0.53	.17
Malta (MT)	493	0.22	0.44	0.73	.16
Italy (IT)	1031	0.22	0.33	0.48	.11
Cyprus (CY)	466	0.19	0.39	0.60	.11
Portugal (PT)	1048	0.24	0.25	0.32	.08
Czech Republic (CZ)	1110	0.17	0.36	0.47	.08
Hungary (HU)	991	0.25	0.21	0.26	.07
Slovakia (SK)	1295	0.16	0.38	0.42	.07
Greece (EL)	1009	0.18	0.26	0.31	.06
Latvia (LV)	984	0.15	0.27	0.35	.05
Lithuania (LT)	1005	0.14	0.22	0.28	.04
Romania (RO)	986	0.17	0.19	0.24	.04
Bulgaria (BG)	870	0.20	0.16	0.18	.04
Poland (PL)	1020	0.10	0.25	0.34	.03
<b>EU15</b>	<b>15297</b>	<b>0.33</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>0.93</b>	<b>.31</b>
<b>EU25</b>	<b>24774</b>	<b>0.30</b>	<b>0.47</b>	<b>0.82</b>	<b>.25</b>
<b>NMS10</b>	<b>9390</b>	<b>0.15</b>	<b>0.28</b>	<b>0.38</b>	<b>.06</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>27008</b>	<b>0.29</b>	<b>0.45</b>	<b>0.80</b>	<b>.23</b>

*Note:* Explanation of variables. Social Trust: the proportion responding “most people can be trusted”. Vol. Any: the proportion of the adult population who say they belong to at least one category of voluntary organization. Vol.Org: the number of organizational sectors to which people belong. *Source:* EuroBarometer 62.2 (2004). Data weighted.

Thus, from macro-analytical perspective, namely in comparison with the other EU member states, Greece’s position is depicted within a group of primarily Southern and CEE countries, demonstrating very low levels of social capital and capacities for collective action. Obviously, this is the outcome of Greece’s weakness in both the social capital components, namely social trust and

associational membership, which, additionally, seems to be closely associated with weaknesses in other crucial from public policy's point of view determinant and/or outcome variables, such as social networks and access to and satisfaction from the quality of public services (see Paraskevopoulos, 2005b). Thus, the overall state of social capital in Greece and particularly that of associational membership, viewed from a macro-analytical perspective, raises serious doubts about the post-Olympic games euphoria with regard to the development of the voluntary and NGOs sector, which was rooted in the increasing levels of volunteers' participation in the games. This is particularly true, if one takes into account the additional factor of the low intensity of membership/participation (see Whiteley and Seyd, 2002), if any, in voluntary and civil society organizations, as becomes evident even from the descriptive statistics (see Eurobarometer 223 data). Finally, this state of social capital points to the limitations of the role played by other, primarily socializing-related, variables, such as contacts with friends, colleagues etc., where Greece, along with other countries of Southern Europe, appears to be in a better position vis-à-vis the other EU member states (Paraskevopoulos, 2005b).

As for the specificities of social capital in Greece based on the ESS data, despite the fact that ESS does not provide for income, social class and/or size of town identification that would allow for controlling for these types of variables, the logistic regressions between the dependent variables, namely social trust and associational membership, and all the other independent and control variables reveal the micro-foundations related to the composition of

social capital endowments and capacities of collaborative collective action in Greece.

**Table 3. Logistic regression, dependent variable: social trust**

Variables	Coefficients
TV watching (total time on average weekday)	.039 (.041)
TV watching (news/ politics/current affairs on average weekday)	-.071 (.051)
Radio listening (news/ politics/current affairs on average weekday)	.016 (.028)
Newspaper reading (total time on average weekday)	-.017 (.059)
Personal use of internet (e-mail/www)	.015 (.035)
Fairness	.496*** (.033)
Political interest	-.131* (.082)
Trust in political institutions	.231 (.487)
Trust in order institutions	.268 (.485)
Trust in the European Parliament	.047 (.039)
Trust in the United Nations	-.074** (.032)
Placement on left right scale	-.076** (.034)
Church attendance	.079 (.062)
Associational membership	.284* (.167)
Gender	.353** (.147)
Education	-.007 (.057)

*Notes:* Standard errors in brackets. \*\*\* Significant at 99 percent. \*\* Significant at 95 percent. \* Significant at 90 percent. *Source:* European Social Survey (ESS), 2003.

Thus, as the model of table 3 reveals, the most important variables/predictors of the level of social trust are fairness, gender, placement on the left-right scale, associational membership, trust in international institutions, and particularly in the U.N. and political interest. In other words, the fairness of the society as a whole, being female rather than male, belonging to the left rather than the

rightwing of the political spectrum, having interest in politics and being a member of a voluntary association and rather distrustful towards international institutions have a positive impact on the probability of being trustful in Greece.

**Table 4. Logistic regression, dependent variable: associational membership**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Coefficients</b>
TV watching (total time on average weekday)	-.154*** (.036)
TV watching (news/ politics/current affairs on average weekday)	.119** (.048)
Radio listening (news/ politics/current affairs on average weekday)	.032 (.024)
Newspaper reading (total time on average weekday)	.054 (.050)
Personal use of internet (e-mail/www)	.043 (.030)
Social trust	.047* (.031)
Fairness	-.070** (.033)
Political interest	-.285*** (.071)
Trust in political institutions	.016 (.038)
Trust in order institutions	-.058* (0.33)
Trust in the European Parliament	.045 (.033)
Trust in the United Nations	-.053* (.028)
Placement on left right scale	-.016 (.029)
Church attendance	.019 (.057)
Gender	-.662*** (.130)
Education	.355*** (.051)

*Notes:* Standard errors in brackets. \*\*\* Significant at 99 percent. \*\* Significant at 95 percent. \* Significant at 90 percent. *Source:* European Social Survey (ESS), 2003.

Additionally, as the model of table 4 where the dependent variable is associational membership demonstrates, the most important variables/predictors of associational membership in Greece are TV viewing, in terms of

total time and news/politics watching, fairness, interest in politics, gender, level of education, social trust, trust in order and international institutions. In particular, as expected, TV viewing seems to be a crucial variable/predictor of associational membership and participation in civil society organizations at large, given that while TV viewing in general is clearly a negative predictor, news/politics watching appears to play a positive role (i.e., the more you watch the more you participate), as it has been already identified in the literature (Norris, 2000). The level of education, gender (male rather than female), political interest and social trust are also important predictors, while it is worth stressing that fairness and trust in order and international institutions are negative predictors, namely the less you believe in the fairness of society, as well as of order and international institutions, the more you participate.

Overall, the following points deserve reference with regard to the specificities of social capital in Greece. First, Greece demonstrates important similarities with other countries of Western and/or Southern Europe, with regard to the role of control variables, such as education and gender, as predictors of social trust, associational membership and social capital at large. The same applies to other determinant and/or outcome variables, such as trust in institutions (see Christoforou, 2003, 2004; Herreros, 2004). Second, TV viewing constitutes a very important variable/predictor of the level of social capital, since it affects - in varying ways- the level of associational membership and participation in the voluntary sector at large. Given the unregulated-problematic character of the TV industry and the comparatively high rates of TV viewing in Greece, there

might be grounds for drawing comparisons between the Greek and the U.S. cases (see Putnam, 2000), with regard to the role of TV viewing in civic malaise and the erosion of social capital at large. Third, although the end of the 1980s is widely considered as a turning point, in terms of levels of political participation in the post-authoritarianism period (see Lyberaki and Paraskevopoulos, 2002; Sotiropoulos, 2004; Pappas, 2001), and what one might expect would be a shift from increased levels of party membership and interest in party politics at large towards interest in and membership of civil society and voluntary sector organizations, there is no evidence to support such a hypothesis. Indeed, civil society appears to be particularly weak in Greece in terms of both the level of membership and intensity of participation (see ESS 2002-03 data). Finally, there seems to be no evidence to support the hypothesis about some sort of informal strength of civil society in Greece (see Sotiropoulos, 2004) either, given that surveys are generally capable of capturing even informal patterns of participation. Yet, what might best describe the phenomena Sotiropoulos (2004) refers to would be ad hoc, spontaneous and reactionary attitudes, albeit without any organizational structure and hence without continuity, with the exception of some local specificities, which undoubtedly exist. Indeed, there is some evidence (see Paraskevopoulos 1998, 2001a-d) to suggest that informal types of collaboration between actors within networks may be an important variable affecting the strength of civil society and/or the level of administrative capacity, especially at the local level of governance in Greece, though the institutionalization of informal exchanges

remains a key issue, especially with regard to the continuity and efficiency in policy planning and implementation.

## **5. From Social Networks to Policy Networks: social capital and domestic policy change**

Social capital is considered a key concept in the academic debate on the impact of Europeanization and/or modernization processes on domestic policy and institutional change. This is primarily because of its role in facilitating the learning process among actors within policy networks/policy communities, which is viewed as a fundamental precondition for domestic policy change. Although it is supposed to be linked to the social rather than the rational choice type of learning, it may be viewed as a conceptual tool for bridging the gap between the two approaches and in that sense, it may fit well with the so called “*actor-centred*” version of sociological institutionalism which is better equipped for capturing the actor (interests, preferences, identities) – structure (norms, institutions) interactions (see Paraskevopoulos, 1998, 2001a-d, 2004, 2005a, 2006).

The state of social capital in Greece has been identified as a key factor/variable linked to the blocking of the reform and policy-making processes at large in several policy areas from the economy (Lyberaki and Tsakalotos, 2002) to the environmental and regional policies (Paraskevopoulos, 1998, 2001a-d, 2004; Paraskevopoulos et.al., 2006). This is attributed to the fact that the family and

kinship-based, essentially “bonding” (that is “unsocial”), type of social capital, similar in many respects to the “amoral familism” identified by Banfield (1958) in Southern Italy, that had underpinned the spectacular economic growth in the 1960s and 1970s with the support of the patronizing state (see Lyberaki and Tsakalotos, 2002), has gradually been replaced by another sort of “bonding”, that is unsocial, capital which is based on relatively small and strongly-tied interest groups. Given that the creation of these groups has been based on a variety of selective incentives (see Olson, 1971) and that rent-seeking behaviour is their dominant feature, they put important limitations to the “exit” and “voice” options of the actors, thus inhibiting learning and policy change in several policy areas (see Pelagidis, 2005). Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that the state of social capital in Greece constitutes a key variable affecting the reform process in public policy in two important respects. On the one hand, the low level of social trust and trust in institutions is linked to the absence of weak ties among the actors within social and/or policy networks that would facilitate the –crucial for the learning process- diffusion of information and knowledge (see Granovetter, 1973). Hence social and policy networks are characterized by the predominance of small, strongly-tied and rent-seeking-oriented interest groups which block the reform process. On the other hand, simultaneously, the low level of social capital/social trust crucially affects the level of other actors’ participation in policy networks, and hence inhibits the creation of advocacy coalitions and/or issue-specific policy networks, such as epistemic communities and independent think-tanks, that would facilitate the policy learning and

reform processes in public policy at large (see Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier, 1993; Sabatier, 1999). In this way, the lack of social capital may actually play a key role in undermining crucial reforms in public policy-making, such as the adoption of new ideas originated in New Public Management, namely the creation of quasi markets through PPPs and PFIs in a wide variety of policy areas, such as education and health (see Le Grand, 2003). Thus, while the particular type of “bonding”-unsocial capital is considered as having facilitated a spectacular and of particular type economic growth during the 1960s and 1970s, primarily based on family enterprises and a patronizing state (see Pagoulatos, 2003), it seems that it constitutes an impediment to the policy reform and adaptation processes in public policy in contemporary circumstances within an environment characterized by generally high transaction costs. In that respect, given that the EU level of governance - formally at least- provides as the only option for actors’ “exit” and “voice” functions, this section presents evidence on the state of the reform process – essentially the response to the pressures of Europeanization- in two crucial policy areas for Greece, namely environmental and regional. The empirical evidence derives from a recently completed comparative research study between Cohesion and CEE countries and its main focus was on policy structures, namely policy networks, as well as on outcomes of policy implementation (Paraskevopoulos, et.al. 2006).

### *5.1. Environmental Policy*

Environmental policy in general and waste management in particular is a policy area which perfectly reflects the weaknesses of the institutional and policy-making structures related to the low level of social capital. In particular, rent-seeking and anomic behaviour, facilitated by institutional deficiencies, such as the lack of a land registry system (see Paraskevopoulos, 2001a), has led to crucial environmental problems: namely, the degradation of the built environment in almost all urban areas; the increased levels of air pollution, mainly because of the huge expansion in the use of private cars; and land and water pollution, because of failures in the waste management policy (Paraskevopoulos et.al., 2006). Thus, although even the formulation of environmental policy as a coherent and distinct policy area in the second half of the 1980s was strongly influenced by the need for harmonisation of national legislation with EU rules, Greece is considered as belonging to the so called “latecomers” or “laggards” group of EU member states. The main institution responsible for the formulation and implementation of environment policy at the national level is the Ministry for the Environment, Spatial Planning and Public Works. However, given that policy-making is shared with other - sectoral- Ministries, such as the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Commercial Marine, as well as, the lack of effective co-ordination mechanisms, the Greek environment ministry has been characterized as a "weak" one, if compared to the ministries of other EU member states, such as the Danish and British ones (see Paraskevopoulos et.al.,

2006). Thus, the command-and-control type of regulation, which involves limited discretion and flexibility for the administrative actors, is the main characteristic of environmental policy in Greece. Yet, in this framework, several steps have been taken recently to increase flexibility and efficiency in monitoring and inspection procedures, such as the delegation of certain inspection, observation and accreditation functions to independent bodies (experts) or voluntary organizations-NGOs (see Paraskevopoulos et.al., 2006).

In the area of waste management the lack of an integrated management/co-ordination strategy that would link the national, regional and local levels of government on the one hand, and the intense conflict among social and institutional actors at the regional and local levels about the location of the disposal or recycling areas on the other -typical symptoms of the lack of social capital in any respect- create conditions of a mis-regulated policy-making environment, especially at the local level. With regard to the institutional infrastructure at the national (central state) level, this includes the EU directives which are enforced by insufficient trans-ministerial decisions and the law on “the protection of the environment”, which has a rather declarative character, resulting in a lack of effectiveness of the policy-making. Thus, although Greece has a good record of adopting EU legislation (in fact all the relevant Council Directives -75/442, 91/156, 94/62- have been transposed) there are serious delays in the process (4-6 years) and without thorough examination of the conditions and needs at the national level (e.g. through research and production of reports). It is indicative that there was a significant delay (7 years) for the

incorporation of the Packaging Waste Directive (94/62) into the Greek legislation and there are still several steps that have to be taken for its enforcement (e.g. set up of an organisation for alternative waste management schemes).

With regard to policy –policy network– structures, as the case of the region of Attica which was selected for fieldwork -Social Network Analysis (SNA)- research, reveals, there are two main groups of actors. The first group comprises the most central actors which are primarily central state (i.e., Ministry for the Environment and Public Works-YPEHODE) and subnational actors, such as local government associations (i.e., ESDKNA TEDKNA), as well as, organizations of interest intermediation (i.e., Technical Chamber of Greece-TEE). The second -peripheral- group primarily consists of policy/issue-specific professional associations, civil society organizations and small private research companies, such as the Hellenic Recovery and Recycling Association-HERRA, the Ecological Recycling Association-ERA and the Hellenic Solid Waste Management Association-HSWMA). Overall, the fragmented structure of policy network in waste management arguably reflects the pathologies of the “pre-existing” institutional infrastructure –broadly defined- in Greece, within which the lack of social capital constitutes a key factor. These include statism, centralized and weak administrative structure, problematic state-society relations, weak civil society, accompanied by some reluctant steps towards institutional innovation (i.e. some involvement of civil society,

experts/professionals in the policy-making process) (Paraskevopoulos, et.al., 2006).

As far as the implementation of environment/waste management-related EU programmes and initiatives is concerned, the evidence from the implementation of the Regional Operation Programme (ROP) for 1994-99 (under CSF II) in Attica is indicative and underlines the consequences of the lack of social capital for policy implementation. In particular, the Sub-programme 1, corresponding to the strategic objective of ‘improving the environment and quality of life’ consistently demonstrates the lowest level of both absorption rate and level of physical completion among all the sub-programmes/strategic objectives of the ROP, while it should be stressed that the general picture emerging from the evaluation regarding the implementation of other sub-programmes of the ROP is positive. Additionally, and most importantly, the evaluation provides evidence about the significant underperformance (low level of accomplishment) of the specific measure (M.1.2) related to the waste management tasks of the ROP, which is attributed to the so called “social reactions” factor, namely to the reactionary attitudes towards the location of landfills (the well-known NIMBY syndrome) (see Paraskevopoulos et.al., 2006). As for the actual accomplishment of policy objectives, the main waste management-related problem of the Attica region is two-fold: on the one hand, while the bulk (95%) of the estimated 3,500 tonnes of solid waste is disposed of to the sanitary landfill located in the Municipality of Ano Liosia, this landfill has already been saturated; and on the other hand, the remainder is disposed at

several small and uncontrolled landfills and dumpsites. As far as recycling is concerned, only an estimated 8% of the total municipal solid waste is directed into material recycling with a goal of increasing the amount of recycled waste to 25% by the end of 2006 (see Paraskevopoulos et.al., 2006).

## *5.2. Regional Policy*

Although regional policy is a policy area mostly affected by the Europeanization almost since Greece's accession into the EC/EU, the weaknesses of the domestic institutional infrastructure in general and the low level of social capital in particular are evident in both the level of non-state actors' (i.e., civil society, experts etc.) participation in policy-making (policy network) and in the outcomes of policy implementation. Thus, although the interaction between EU pressures and domestic institutional structures has led to a series of important reforms of the domestic policy-making structure over the last 25 years, involving the strengthening of administrative capacity and increased participation of non-state actors, such as private sector and expertise, in policy-making, this has taken place primarily at the central state level, while the overall response of the domestic institutional structure to the challenges of Europeanization has been rather poor (see Paraskevopoulos, 1998, 2001a-d, 2005a; Paaskevopoulos et.al., 2006).

With regard to policy structures –policy network- the Southern Aegean Islands region, which was selected for fieldwork -Social Network Analysis- research,

may be seen as reflecting the reality of policy-making structure, given that it used to be considered as a rather front-runner, in relative terms, region, in terms of institutional capacity, and has been studied over a long period of time, given that the first wave of SNA research was conducted in the region to evaluate the implementation of the IMPs and the 1st CSF (see Paraskevopoulos, 1998, 2001). Yet, the structure of the policy network demonstrates rather limited improvement, as far as institution-building and actors' participation is concerned (see Paraskevopoulos, et. al., 2006). In particular, the policy network is characterized by the dominant role of state actors, that is central state (Ministry of Economy) or regional (Regional Secretariat and ROP Managing Authority), as well as by the upgraded role of the sub-regional development agencies, the chambers of commerce and industry and the local associations of municipalities and communes, mainly due to their participation in the ROP Monitoring Committee. Nonetheless, the participation of civil society actors and NGOs is minimal (see Paraskevopoulos, et. al., 2006). Overall, the main lessons to be drawn with regard to the policy structures –policy network- in regional policy are the following: first, the limited institutionalization of the region, despite the relatively positive policy-making environment initiated by Europeanization/Structural Funds; second, the slow pace of the learning process (in terms of institution-building and actors' participation); and third, subsequently, the primarily single-loop type of the learning process (see Paraskevopoulos, et. al., 2006).

In relation to the evidence from policy implementation, as it emerges from the ex post evaluation on the implementation of the ROP (CSF II, 1994-99) of the Southern Aegean Islands and fieldwork research, despite the significant improvements in aspects of the planning process (i.e. consistency between general/main development goals and specific policy objectives), there are important and crucial weaknesses related to the implementation phase of the programme. This becomes particularly evident from the level of accomplishment with regard to the three strategic goals of the ROP, namely: the concentration of resources in the form of Specific Integrated Programmes; the expansion of private sector involvement in financing the ROP; and the support of problematic sectors in the region. In particular, the two Specific Integrated Programmes, that is on 'tourist exploitation of sea and culture' (Sub-programme 1) and the 'specific integrated programme for Leros isl.' (Sub-programme 6) are characterized by low level of both economic and physical completion. With regard to the goal of expanding the private sector involvement in the ROP, which actually is closely linked to the financing of the two specific integrated programmes mentioned above, the level of its accomplishment has been very poor up to 1999. Finally, there is evidence of serious deficiencies in the accomplishment of the third strategic goal of supporting the problematic sectors in the region. In particular, almost all of ROP's actions focused on the problematic sectors (namely, water management, protection of physical and built environment, intra-regional communication,

power sufficiency and efficiency of public administration) demonstrate a generally poor level of accomplishment (see Paraskevopoulos, et. al., 2006).

## **6. Conclusion**

Social capital has emerged as a key concept on the social sciences in general and political science/public policy in particular over the last two decades or so, because, by facilitating collective action among the actors, it leads to increased levels of performance in several public policy areas and public policy at large. In the case of Greece, although there is some evidence that a particular type of family and kinship-based “bonding” social capital might have underpinned the economic boom-growth of the 1960s and 1970s, the low level/lack of social capital, at least since the late 1980s, tends to be regarded as a key problem of the domestic institutional infrastructure that crucially affects the level of performance in several public policy areas. Indeed, from a macro-analytical, pan-European, comparative perspective Greece belongs to a group of generally poor, in terms of social capital, countries of South and Central-Eastern Europe, demonstrating low levels of performance in almost all the indicators, measures and proxies used for social capital measurement. From a micro-analytical point of view, with regard to the specificities of social capital in Greece, while there are similarities, in terms of the main variables/predictors of the level of social capital, between Greece and other countries of South and/or Western Europe, the role of TV viewing, especially in relation to the level of associational

membership, and trust in institutions seem to be particularly crucial variables for the level of social capital. In terms of the implications for public policy, there is evidence to suggest that the low level of social capital is closely linked to the dominant role of rent-seeking behaviour of relatively small and strongly-tied interest groups in the policy process that inhibit policy learning and hence the reform process in several public policy areas. This has become evident in two crucial for Greece policy areas, namely environmental and regional, where, despite the pressures of Europeanization, there is evidence that the outcomes, in terms of institutional change and policy reform, are rather poor with serious implications for performance in policy implementation.

## Appendix

### *Coding*

Explanation/coding of the variables of tables 3 and 4 are as following:

- 1) *TV watching total time on average weekday*: ordinal variable with range 0-7, 0 indicating no time at all and 7 more than 3 hours.
- 2) *TV watching, news/ politics/current affairs on average weekday*: ordinal variable with range 0-7, 0 indicating no time at all and 7 more than 3 hours.
- 3) *Radio listening, news/ politics/current affairs on average weekday*: ordinal variable with range 0-7, 0 indicating no time at all and 7 more than 3 hours.
- 4) *Newspaper reading, total time on average weekday*: ordinal variable with range 0-7, 0 indicating no time at all and 7 more than 3 hours.
- 5) *Personal use of internet/e-mail/www*: ordinal variable with range 0-7, 0 indicating no access at home or work, and 7 every day.
- 6) *Social trust*: ordinal variable with range 0-10, 0 indicating “you can’t be too careful”, and 10 “most people can be trusted”.
- 7) *Fairness*: ordinal variable with range 0-10, 0 indicating “most people try to take advantage of you”, and 10 “most people try to be fair”.
- 8) *Interest in politics*: ordinal variable with range 1-4, 1 indicating “very interested”, and 4 “not at all interested”. 9) *Trust in political institutions*: mean of trust in country’s parliament and politicians, ordinal variable with range 0-10, 0 indicating “no trust at all”, and 10 “complete trust”.
- 10) *Trust in order institutions*: mean of trust in the legal system and the police, ordinal variable with range 0-10, 0 indicating “no trust at all”, and 10 “complete trust”.
- 11) *Trust in the European Parliament*: ordinal variable with range 0-10, 0 indicating “no trust at all”, and 10 “complete trust”.
- 12) *Trust in the United Nations*: ordinal variable with range 0-10, 0 indicating “no trust at all”, and 10 “complete trust”.
- 13) *Placement on left-right scale*: ordinal variable with range 0-10, 0 indicating left, and 10 right.
- 14) *Religion/church attendance*: ordinal variable with range 1-7, 1 indicating every day, and 7 never.
- 15) *Associational membership*: membership in any of the following categories of associations/organizations for the last 12 months: sports/outdoor activity club; cultural /hobby activity organisation; trade union; business/profession/farmers organisation; consumer/automobile

organisation; humanitarian organisation etc.; environmental/peace/animal organisation; religious/church organisation; political party; science/education/teacher organisation; social club etc.; other voluntary organisation. *Coding*: value 1, member of any of the associations, value 0, not member of an association.

16) *Gender*: value 1, male; value 2, female.

17) *Education*: ordinal variable with range 1-7, 1 indicating illiterate/not completed primary education, and 7 post-graduate degree.

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