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**SOCIAL CAPITAL MEASUREMENT IN GREECE**

*by*

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This paper is about social capital and its measurement in contemporary Greece. It is mainly about networks but also about attitudes, values and behaviour. It attempts to address the measurement challenge by distinguishing (and subsequently examining) between social capital indicators as such (networks etc), indicators focusing on the determinants of social capital (values, predisposition towards trust, etc) and indicators of outcomes of the incidence –or lack – of social capital (corruption...).

Measuring social capital is a notoriously difficult exercise, partly due to the co-existence of multiple definitions of what constitutes social capital, and partly because it necessarily rests on elusive and intangible proxies rather than hard facts. What makes things even harder is the lack of comparable proxies extending throughout space and time in a comparable and reliable fashion. In the case of Greece, we lack even the data included in the World Values Survey, as Greece was included in the sample only in the fourth wave (2000 survey), which will be made available soon but has not yet been released.

Apart from the problem of data availability (both contemporary and across time), there exists the problem of inter-temporal discontinuities: in other words, it could be the case that fairly reliable data sets were available for the past three decades, but then we would be confronted with the problem of interpretation. To what extent the answers (to the same questions) can be seen as being comparable, in view of pervasive shifts occurring in the social and economic format during the period of coverage? This type of obstacle is very prevalent in the case of Greece where a process of transformation reflecting a transition in economic (from being the laggard among its European partners, it accelerated real and nominal convergence and successfully joined the EMU), political (consolidation of democratic regime) and social (identities, perceptions of roles, drivers of everyday behaviour) terms is, among other things, reshaping the meaning of what constituted a clear-cut answer until recently.

The inter-temporal discontinuities often take the form of different age-cohort effects.... Younger people may display different patterns of behaviour if compared with more mature people, and clearly gender can also have a variable effect on people of different ages.

Greece can provide some interesting insights in the discussion of what is, how to accumulate, and exactly what is to be done in order to encourage the expansion of social capital and –more relevant for this conference- how to measure social capital because:

- It starts from a relatively low starting point concerning trust-related resources, but it appears to have entered a phase whereby networks and non-government organizations are multiplying. This process will most likely be further strengthened by the networks and voluntary work encouraged for the purpose of the 2004 Olympic Games. The availability of funds coincides with conscious policy prioritization of NGOs involvement in a number of EU-funded projects (most of which are linked to the protection of the environment, but in

other areas as well). Will this lead to new institution-building? Or will it turn out to be a case of “cargo cult”?

- There is a shifting pattern of confidence (away from political parties and in favour of a) the EU and b) domestic conservative and less ideologically tinted institutions such as the army). The question, which arises is whether economic modernization will bring about greater trust-related resources (albeit of different persuasion) or will it simply eradicate older types of trust (familism) without replacing them with new?
- And last but not least comes the question of the relationship between trust-building efforts and the transition to information society. What is the likely overall effect? Is technology making it easier to build trust (in societies enjoying few trust-related resources) or is it a hopeless case running against the current of history?

The rest of the paper is organized along the following lines.

Section two examines briefly some conceptual and methodological aspects in measuring social capital. Section three presents a number of what are often perceived as Greek specificities, in order to assess to what extent these pose additional problems in social capital measurement. Then section four gives an overview of the evidence on social capital in Greece. Finally section five draws the main conclusions from the earlier discussion and highlights some areas for further research.

## **2. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS IN MEASURING SOCIAL CAPITAL**

The literature about the measurement of social capital is rooted in the definition of the concept by J. Coleman (1990:300-302) as “a set of inherent in the social organization social-structural resources ... such as trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated action”. What this definition implies is that the identification of social capital, a difficult enterprise in any event, involves a primarily twofold research 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, say, data on membership in voluntary-community organizations (NGOs).

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:

1. First, the distinction between **formal and informal ties/networks**; The distinction refers to the fact that research on formal networks alone (e.g. by focusing on official records of membership in voluntary organizations), beyond the problems of reliability and consistency of the historical records, may be inadequate for capturing other forms of primarily informal and loose-knit memberships. The latter characterize the more decentralized, less bureaucratic organizations, such as the anti-globalisation movements. Therefore, research should cover *all* forms of civic engagement, distinguishing among formal and informal as well as active and inactive organizational affiliations.
2. Second, the distinction among ‘bridging’ and ‘bonding’ networks and hence among inclusive and exclusive forms of social capital; The type of networks,

namely whether they are 'bonding' networks based on any specific characteristic (race, ethnic origin etc.) and hence exclude outsiders, or, alternatively, 'bridging' networks that connect heterogeneous groups and therefore are cross-cutting and inclusive, is a very important parameter in the measurement process<sup>1</sup>. Similar, but not identical, to this distinction is one referring to the *purpose* of the association: *altruistic* (other-regarding) offering services outside the membership and 'egotistic', (self-regarding) which exists to further the interests of members.

3. Third, the distinction between individual and societal-level effects (Putnam, R.D, 2000; Putnam, et.al., 2000; Norris, P., 2001; Newton, Ken. and Pippa Norris, 2000). As Newton and Norris (2000) have shown, while there may be weak links between social capital and confidence in political institutions at *individual* level, these factors are highly correlated at the *national/societal* level.
4. And fourth, the time dimension is problematic in the treatment of social capital. The passage of time may alter the stock of the (unobservable) social capital, it may alter the way the proxies are related to the underlying concept, it may alter the meaning of the proxies, or it may alter the implicit weights used in aggregation.<sup>2</sup> The nature of social phenomena is such that these changes are unlikely to be linear or smooth. The interpretation and effect of social capital is subject to alteration according to the state of public debate among the political actors. For example, the inclusion of frequent references to corruption and misgovernement in the (party political) discourse may itself both lead to falls in social capital and may corrupt the measurement of social capital.

Taking the above considerations into account, D.Narayan and M.F.Cassidy (2001) propose a broader investigation employing three types of measures: The *social capital measures* include a variety of variables, such as group membership, generalized norms, togetherness, everyday sociability, neighbourhood connections, volunteerism and trust. The *determinant (of social capital) measures* are mainly focused on the pride and identity and communication variables. Finally, the *outcome (of social capital) measures* include variables such as honesty and corruption, confidence in institutions, crime and safety and political engagement.

**A three stage approach?** Overall, 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 both 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, P. Norris (2001) proposes 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, existing research

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<sup>1</sup> This distinction is related to the ease of entry and inclusion of new members.

<sup>2</sup> In this the measurement of social capital has similar problems to the measurement of capital in general – cf the 'capital controversy' of the 1960s.

<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

suggests the well-known measures of frequency of television viewing and papers readership (Norris, 2000), perceptions and measures of corruption (della Porta, 2000), confidence in institutions (Newton and Norris, 2000), pride and political engagement.

### **3. POSSIBLE GREEK SPECIFICITIES IN MEASURING SOCIAL CAPITAL**

The measurement of social capital in Greece should, obviously, take into account the country's specificities and peculiarities, and especially the fact that research on social trust and networks of civic engagement is at an early phase. There exist no comprehensive data sets that can be easily tracked back to earlier periods, while the fragmentation of sources (administrative, academic and surveys) are impediments to research. This implies the need for the development of a research toolkit/index for the measurement of all aspects of social capital, according to the international standards analysed above. A number of features of Greece argue for caution in measuring social capital.

As far as measuring **associational membership** is concerned, Greece's tradition of strong (nuclear) family ties and/or hierarchical clientelistic networks should not be forgotten. This means that research should not rely merely on registration data, but rather should include the appropriate measures for weighting active and passive membership, especially in dealing with trade unions' and political party memberships. Another possible remedy in this case might be a distinction between voluntary organizations according to their real propensity/orientation towards the provision of public goods and services as opposed to those focusing exclusively on the interest intermediation function (Paraskevopoulos, C.J, 2001a,b).

Another crucial distinction should be drawn between 'bonding' and 'bridging' social networks and consequently between exclusive ("bad") and inclusive ("good") forms of social capital. Given the specific weight of the –extended- form of family as illustrated by Ed. Banfield's *Amoral Familism* (1958) and/or clientelistic networks in the Greek context (Tsoukalas, 1995; Paraskevopoulos, C.J, 2001a,b), Granovetter's (1973) analysis of the disadvantages of strong ties may be more than relevant. Thus, in measuring associational membership and consequently identifying social network structures research should concentrate on capturing the differentiation between strongly tied, exclusive towards outsiders 'bonding' networks and the inclusive, 'bridging' ones that facilitate the interconnectedness between several networks or subgroups. This may be achieved primarily through the identification of multiple, overlapping memberships.

Emphasis needs to be placed on the elusive boundaries between social trust and its Greek substitutive notion of *filotimo* (Tsoukalas, 1995, sometimes translated as 'honour' – see also Campbell, 1956, *Honour Family and Patronage*), especially in the case of regional studies and/or relatively small communities. The fundamental

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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.

characteristic of clientelistic networks is that decisions are based on personal criteria and are not expressions of abstract rules.

Some of the **determinant and outcome** measures (e.g. the communication - television, papers, radio, the honesty/corruption and the confidence in institutions measures), may prove especially salient in the Greek context because of the following main reasons.

- *First*, the analysis of the former may be revealing as an important determinant of the level of social capital, given the still unregulated character of the television industry in Greece and the increasingly dominant role of television in everyday life.
- *Second*, perceptions of corruption tend to become a dominant feature of public life, partly because of the role of the media in the issue and therefore these two measures may be correlated.
- *Finally*, the measure of confidence in public institutions may also reveal important specificities, which may at least partly attributed to Greece's problematic transition from authoritarianism, similar, in some respects, to what has been observed in most of the Central and Eastern European countries (Rose and Haerpfer, 1998a,b). Of particular importance in this respect should be the relationship to the EU and other supra-national institutions.

Going beyond measurement, the **interpretation** of research outcomes (measures) should take into account that Greece is undergoing a phase of very fast change/transformation in both economic and social spheres. In economic terms these changes include modernisation, increasing wealth and consumption patterns, while simultaneously very important social changes take place in social roles, identities, self-perceptions and personal aspirations (among which the changing role of women, the transition from migrant-sending to migrant-receiving society and the – hidden so far- dynamics of ageing and changing needs are the most important determinants). It is reasonable to hypothesise that in a context of changing rules, new learning processes are being developed and previous inertias are being replaced.

The context of modernisation in political discourse makes Greece especially interesting in studying social capital. What may be called the “modernisation project” defines itself in terms of combating clientelistic practices and establishing due processes to all. For example, one of the most far-reaching measures was the establishment of a special hiring agency (presided over by non-party figures such as judges) for all civil service jobs, relying on competitive examinations. The hiring agency short-circuited one of the most common features of clientelism – securing public sector jobs for clients. The modernisers' rhetoric is thus in terms which should be familiar with all who are dealing with social capital, and can be interpreted as an attempt to *create* trust in institutions and in processes.

All these changes may create obstacles in interpreting the available evidence and the changing socio-economic context poses challenges to “facile comparisons”.

#### **4. INDICATIONS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN GREECE**

Existing evidence from countries of Southern Europe (Putnam, 1993; Grote, 1997; Paraskevopoulos, C.J, 1998, 2001a,b) suggests that the combination of centralized state structures and weak civil society creates conditions favourable for hierarchical clientelistic networks that inhibit rather than encourage the long-standing process of social capital-building. Greece, in particular, is widely considered as a poor country in social capital and consequently in strength of civil society, characterised primarily by a centralized and simultaneously weak central state structure (Sotiropoulos, 1993). With regard to the specific measures current research outcomes –as contradictory as they may be- demonstrate the following trends.

#### **4.1 Social capital measures (Associational membership/activism)**

##### ***1. Voluntary and community participation: some recent attempts in the terrain of social protection***

The recognition that the data on social organizations were inadequate and dated has triggered a number of attempts to study the area of social protection, self-help and solidarity organizations/entities. The various attempts were uncoordinated, had different interests and targets, and employed inconsistent and non-comparable definitions of key variables. Their areas of agreement as well as of disagreement must be taken as indicative and not as conclusive. The studies are divided into three attempt to survey NGOs themselves and elicit administrative data, on the one hand, and sample surveys of *individuals*, containing questions on membership in associations.

The three studies targetting administrative data start from a common problem of not having a sample frame of NGOs or associations on which to draw. The different focus of the studies also means they are interested in different aspects of NGO activity.

The ***VOLMED Study***, undertaken under commission from the EU to study volunteerism in the Mediterranean countries in 1996, estimated that the total number of volunteer organization providing social services in Greece by 1997 was of the order of 1.200. Over 60% were established after 1980, while a quarter of the total were only established during the period from 1990 to 1996. The study offers no information concerning the volume and range of activities, neither membership and active membership figures. A limited range of information has been obtained for 400 organisations (number of volunteers, total revenue).

On the basis of this more limited sample, the following picture emerges: Over 90% of the voluntary organizations are registered as “non-profit organizations”, and are funded mainly by private contributions (70%) while the rest comes from state subsidies. As far as size is concerned, 65% had less than 50 members, while 23% had more than 100 members [Panteion University, 1997 “Greek Voluntary Organisations: a preliminary approach based on VOLMED-Hellas Project”].

The ***PAREMVASSI Survey*** on Greek Volunteer Organisations in the terrain of social welfare (1997-99) compiled a list of 2.400 entities (formal organisations and informal

groups) and presents information on 585 organisations involved in mutual-help, self-help, health, solidarity and welfare.

Number of registered members: 198.851  
 Number of active members: 27.710  
 Their total budget: 6,7 billion drachmas  
 79,3% are active locally, 10,7% regionally and only 10% nationally and/or internationally.  
 300 organisations employ a total number of 441 remunerated personnel.

When accounting for the incidence of numerous branches, as well as the existence of other informal (and hence more or less invisible) groups, the survey extrapolates (rather generously) that registered members could be of the order of 1 million people (around 8% of the population), with one out of three being active members. Their total annual budget could be of the order of 37,8 billion drachmas in 1999, while the number of paid employees is estimated around 4.500 (slightly below 2 per group). These extrapolations are overstressing the case as they assume that all entities share the same characteristics as the organisations interviewed (which is not a plausible hypothesis, given that the NGOs interviewed were not randomly chosen). Nevertheless, they provide an indication that could warn against the hegemonic view, namely that civil society organisations and volunteer groups are extremely few and far between in Greece [Panayotidou, I./Paremvassi, 2001 “The Society of Volunteers”].

***The Church of Greece-related activities in the terrain of social welfare***, examines a wide range of social welfare activities performed by the Orthodox Church in Greece [“The Testimony of love: the charitable and welfare activity of the Church of Greece”, Athens 2001]. Today there exist over 3.714 Parish Charity Funds and more than 1.360 associations, Foundations and Initiatives in the sphere of the church. The number of volunteers is greater than 30.000 people, 23.000 of which performing several hours of voluntary work every week. The financial picture (concerning expenditure) of the years 1998-2000 is estimated as follows (in billion drachmas):

1998	1999	2000
36,2	39,3	45,6

These financial data, however, tend to underestimate the real picture of total expenditure because they do not include consumption from own production, the housing expenditure is under-recorded, there are omissions in the records, and last but not least, voluntary work is not included as “shadow expenditure”.

The ***NGOs (excluding church-related) in the terrain of social welfare (NSSG, 2000, survey-Work-In-Progress)***. The National Statistical Service attempted to estimate the social protection activity of NGOs in the context of compiling the ESSPROS estimates of social protection expenditure. The focus was thus on the work achieved by NGOs (outputs) rather than inputs, and was oriented towards quantitative estimates. A first survey in 1999 led to 70 responses. A wider survey conducted in 2002 on a much larger sample frame<sup>4</sup> has led so far to 136

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<sup>4</sup> The samples frame built on that of Volmed and the Paremvassi survey. Many of the organisations then sampled were 4 years later for various reasons not contactable or unwilling to participate.

questionnaires being filled. These NGOs are not random, but were targeted and selected on the basis of the extent of social protection activity. The current work reveals the following figures.

Average age on NGO is 20 years. 53% were established in the 1990s, 3,6% in the years 2000 and 2001, 22,7% were established in the 1980s and 13,2% in the 1970s. The remaining 7.3% were established earlier. The tables below summarise paid employment (total, full-time and part-time) and volunteers both in terms of absolute volume and in terms of change between years 1999 and 2002.

**TABLE 1**

<b>Employees (paid) and Volunteers, 1999, 2000, 2001</b>			
Year	1999	2000	2001
Paid employees (total)	1306	1354	1491
Full employed	1077	1112	1216
Part-time employed.	229	242	275
Volunteers	5785	8063	8291

<b>% Change of employees and volunteers</b>		
Year	1999-2000	2000-2001
Paid employees (total)	3.60%	10.10 %
Full-timers	3.20%	9.40%
Part-timers	5.70%	13.60%
Volunteers	39.30%	2.80%

Their institutional status is most frequently that of the Association (64.7%), followed by "Non-profit organization" (11%) and Foundation (5.8%). Their financial activity is far from negligible. The following table summarises their revenues and expenditures over the period 1999-2001.

**TABLE 2**

	<b>Revenues (GDR 000s)</b>		
	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
State grants	3.250.469	3.921.016	5.182.922
Grants from Local Authorities	45.424	45.723	93.779
European community programs	2.011.920	1.467.869	788.098
Members' contributions	1.624.001	1.883.689	2.517.501
Donations Bequests	1.689.098	1.700.406	2.349.066
Charitable collections	44.382	29.311	61.555
Companies donations	96.653	207.557	221.353
Church	31.703	36.518	36.020
Total Revenues	11.767.800	12.370.422	14.781.299
	<b>Expenditures</b>		
Social Protection Activity	5.543.729	6.143.751	7.195.005
Salaries	3.761.832	3.995.799	4.118.502
Operating Expenditures	3.645.969	4.207.727	4.613.012
Total Expenditure	12.951.530	14.347.277	15.926.519

To put these figures into perspective, it is meaningful to compare them to the total Social Expenditures of the respective years, which exceeded in 2000 10.5 trillion

GDR. The NGO contribution is that less than 0,2% of total social protection expenditure.

**Volunteerism**, a publication of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (*March 2002*), is a simple list of 1.275 NGOs, providing information related to the sphere of activity, the prefecture of location, address, phone and fax number (where available), the name of the president (when available) and e-mail addresses (only for 16). This publication is the product of work carried out in 2002 by the Ministry and is expected to be extended to cover richer information in future as part of the “Social Welfare Map” which is currently being prepared.

With regard to **Environmental NGOs** exclusively, a relatively comprehensive data base (including name, address and area of mobilization –thematic as well as geographical) has been compiled by the National Centre for Social Research (commissioned by the Ministry for Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works). This includes some 230 NGOs (a supplementary list of some 20 additional NGOs has been added more recently). Unfortunately, there is no information either on membership, active membership and remunerated employment or on financial magnitudes (revenues and expenditure).

The overall picture is a two-tier one: there exists a multitude of locally based NGOs working primarily with own funds (contributions) and volunteers, while there exists a small number (around 10) of organizations which are of a national or international character and which absorb almost all the government subsidies (some of which become later dispersed to smaller, locally-based partners).

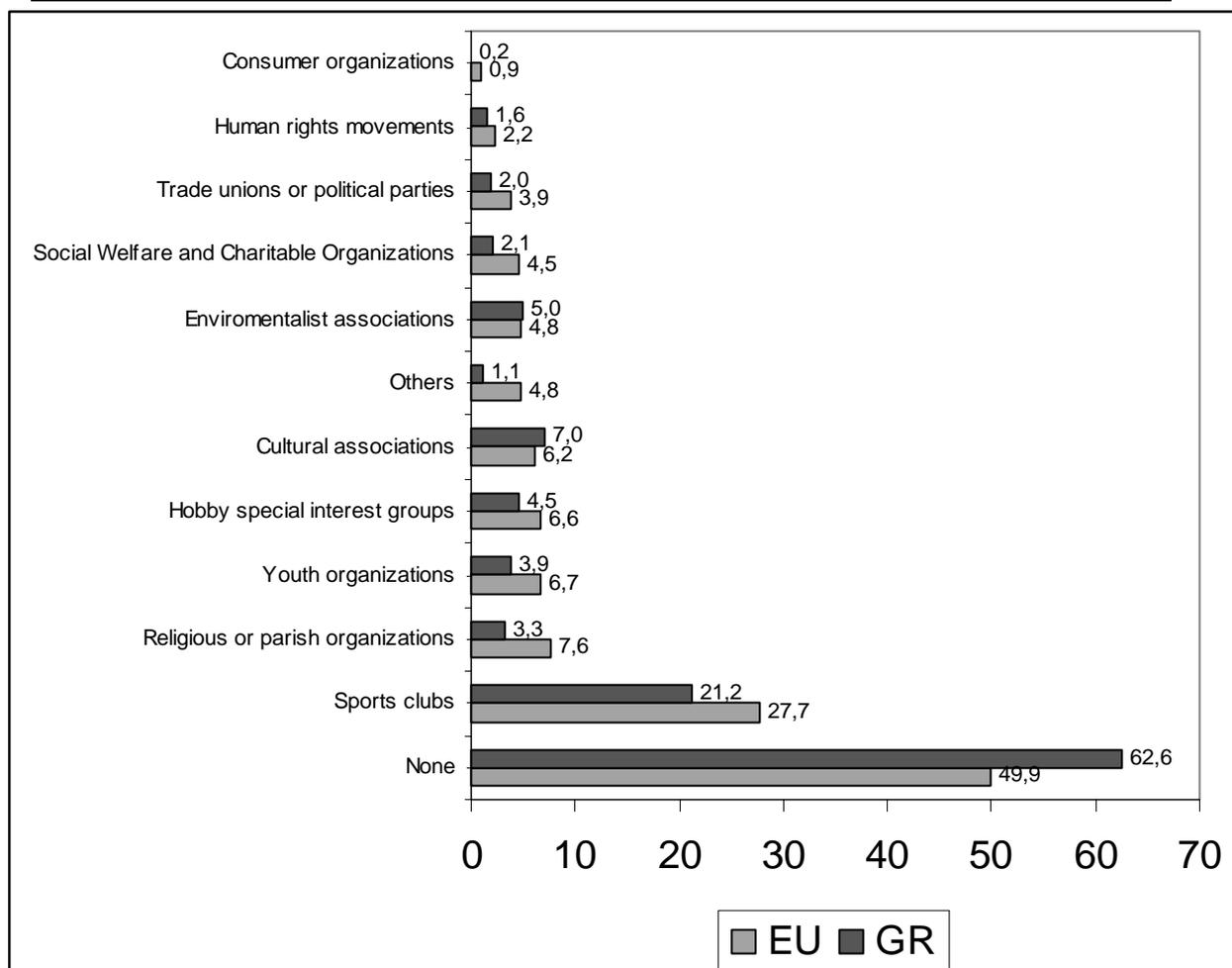
The picture of the recipients of government funds is clearer: 35 NGOs have had their projects approved and financed between 1997 and 2001. The total subsidies were of the order of 1,26 billion drachmas, half of which has been already paid. This experience, together with the planned programme on “Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development” for 2002-2003 (2,2 billion dr. or 6,5 million euro) contributes to the strengthening of the role and activities of environment-related NGOs. For projects whose budget is between 8.800 and 29.340 euro the recipient organization is expected to finance 10% of the budget, while for projects over 29.340 euro, the recipient is expected to co-finance the activities by 15%.

Turning to sample surveys of individuals, some information on activism can be gleaned from a variety of sources:

***Young Europeans in 2001: participation in associations and organizations.***

In 2001 (April/May) the European Commission, Directorate-General for “Education and Culture”, “Youth Unit”, carried out a survey on young Europeans aged 15 to 24. It appears that in general young Europeans are not active members in associations (one out of two spontaneously claims not being affiliated to any organization, exactly the same percentage as in 1997). Interestingly, for Southern Europe the participation rate is even smaller (the smallest being in Portugal-30%-, then in Spain-35% closely followed by Greece 37%). The following figure gives the comparative picture.

**GRAPH 1: Participation in associations/organizations (%) in EU and Greece**

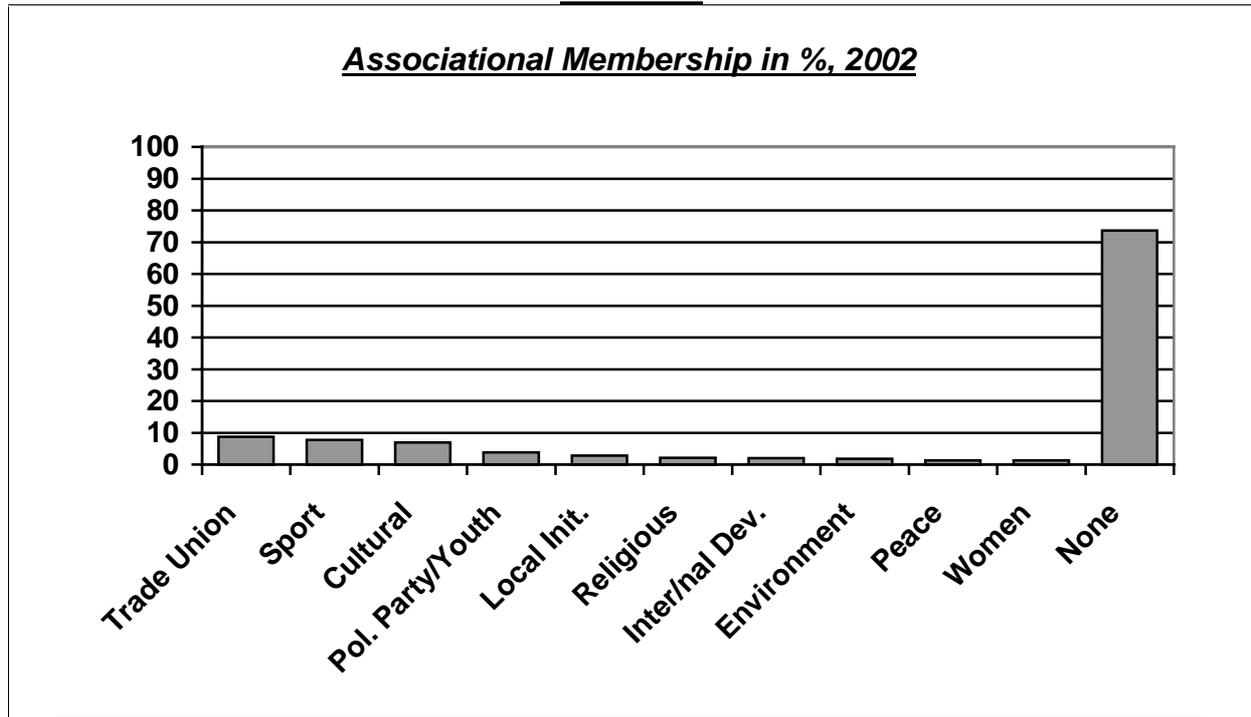


Interestingly, the spontaneous response of not belonging in any organization is much more common among Greek youth than among the EU average.

## **2. Unpublished project-specific survey of individuals (Athens, May 2002)**

A project-specific survey carried out recently (May 2002) in the Athens area contributes to the identification of the main features of associational membership in Greece. What the survey reveals is an overall -as expected- relatively low rate of membership, only 26.3% participate in voluntary organizations, while on the other hand the dominant areas of participation are those of trade unions and sport (8.7% and 7.7% respectively) (see graph 2 below). These data should be accompanied by the frequency of participation, which reveals that, overall, a rather surprisingly high percentage (69%) of participants take part in activities of their organizations on monthly or weekly basis, while the participation of the rest is rarer. Additionally, a widespread perception of individualism that emerged from the survey –67% of the respondents “more or less disagree” or “disagree completely” with the statement that “people in general are helpful and much concerned with what happens to their neighbour”- may be considered as another confirmation of the weakness of social networking. Moreover, given the country specificities, trade union membership can hardly be conceived of as active.

**GRAPH 2**



**Source:** Project-specific survey (N 609), Athens: Kappa Research (2002)

Therefore the emerging general picture of voluntary associations and social networking in Greece seems to reflect the typical characteristics of the Southern European paradigm of civil society, which involves a strong tradition of authoritarian statism and, at least in the Greek case, dominant role of the political parties during the post-dictatorship period. This led to indistinct boundaries between state and civil society (“third sector”) and consequently to a situation in which even if civic activism is present, it may have been mediated either by state agencies/funds or by (until recently) party machineries,. This, in turn, contributed to the fragmentation, which may be the main feature of civic voluntarism in Greece.

▪ **Social trust**

Given the lack of historical survey data (i.e. WVS) on social trust in Greece, our research was based on the already mentioned project-specific survey in the area of Athens. What this survey revealed is that, on a 7-point scale, the overall positive responses to the relevant question (“...one could in general trust other people...”) accounted for only 12.3% of the respondents. If this very low level of social trust would be vindicated by further research in the future, it might be proved as highly correlated with the low in general rate of associational membership and social networking.

**4.2 Determinant measures**

- **Pride & identity.** According to some recent research outcomes (Eurobarometer 95) Greece -along with the UK?- demonstrate a comparatively high level of national pride/identity, as compared to EU countries.

- **Communication.** The communication variables (television viewership, papers readership and radio listenership) may constitute a very important determinant of the level of social capital in Greece, similar in many respects to what Putnam (2000) found for the U.S. Although the data presented in this paper (Appendix Figs. 5, 6, 7) refer to the use of news media and not to the general use, the extremely low level of papers readership and the dominant role of television –partly a consequence of the failure of media regulation policy- are considered as widely acceptable characteristics of the media use in Greece. However, this masks a regional differentiation, with news readership and awareness generally, being concentrated in the large cities and far less so in rural areas. Indeed, the transmission mechanism between Athens and the rest of Greece is held to be, by political professionals themselves, of key importance in electoral behaviour<sup>5</sup>. Thus, despite the ambiguity surrounding the interconnectedness between media use (and especially news media) and social capital indicators, such as citizens' participation and activism with specific reference to politics, in the current research (Norris, 2000), the existing evidence from Greece suggests that media use and the state of social capital may be highly correlated. This outcome of course needs to be interpreted within the framework of the current debate on the specific link (i.e. as determinant or outcome) between media malaise and social capital decline at the cross-national level.

### 4.3. Outcome measures

- **Trust in institutions**

Confidence in institutions is considered a very important outcome measure/proxy for the identification of social capital. However, this measure becomes relevant at the societal and cross-national and not at the individual level of analysis (Newton and Norris, 2000; W. Mishler and Richard Rose, 2001). In other words, while institutional performance and not culture (social capital) 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.

Having said that, Greece demonstrates a significantly lower level of trust in average in the most important public institutions. That applies to the political parties, the civil service, the national government and the national parliament, (Appendix Fig. 3); however, it follows the general trend (across the EU and elsewhere Putnam et al, 2000) of low average trust (almost below 50%) in these institutions during the last decade or so. On the other hand, supra-national institutions like the EU and the idea of European unification enjoy enthusiastic support (see Tables AI, AII and AIII in Appendix). Important and revealing differences arise, however, from the in-depth analysis of the data. In particular, in the crucial measure of trust in civil service (Appendix Fig. 4), where there are important differences and not homogeneity among the EU countries, Greece and Italy are the countries with extremely low trust -well

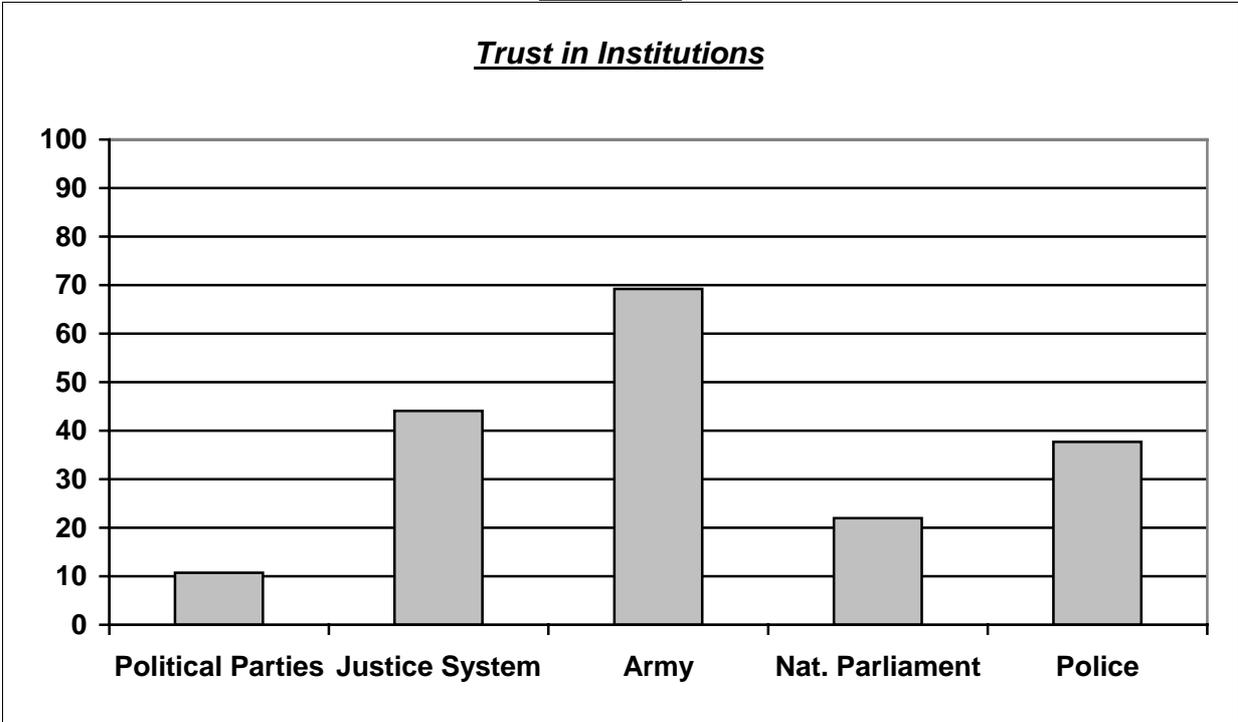
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<sup>5</sup> A characteristic of Greece is the vital links between city-dwellers and the country side. Many Athenian residents indeed retain voting rights in their village of origin.

below the EU average. In this respect, the overall differences in confidence in political institutions between Italy and Greece on the one hand, and the other comparable Southern European and/or Cohesion countries, and especially Ireland, on the other, might be worth mentioning, in particular with reference to specific public policy outcomes.

As for the other institutions, Greece seems to follow the general trend among the EU countries, which implies that among the top three most widely trusted institutions are -interchangeably- the army, the police, the Church and the Charities. This characteristic is confirmed further by the project-specific survey we carried out in Athens (see graph 3 below). This finding is remarkable in Greece given the relatively recent (and commonly admitted to be disastrous) experience of military rule. It appears that the institutions that currently enjoy support are those that are usually outside the party fray<sup>6</sup>.

**GRAPH 3**



**Source:** Project-specific survey (N 609), Athens: Kappa Research (2002)

▪ **Honesty/ corruption**

Perceptions of corruption constitute a very important outcome measure/proxy of social capital (della Porta, 2000). According to the data presented in this paper (Appendix Fig. 8), Greece is perceived as the country with the highest level of corruption among twenty democracies. Although these data are from the latest (2001) global corruption report, Greece’s position was similar in the previous reports

<sup>6</sup> Interestingly, once the Church took positions on more politically controversial subjects, its approval rating, though still high, started falling.

as well. Moreover, while the TI evaluations of corruption are based on perceptions of corruption among business people and staff of international organizations, a very similar picture emerges from our recent project-specific survey (K-Research) on perceptions of corruption among ordinary citizens as well. In particular, 77.5 % and 71.6% of the respondents more or less disagreed or disagreed completely with the law and order, (“...in this area people generally obey the law...”), and honesty/corruption, (“...honesty rather than corruption characterize better this area...”), statements respectively. This may be a key proxy for the measurement of social capital in Greece, although these findings might be interpreted better in conjunction with the communication measures.

▪ **Political engagement**

The interconnectedness between social capital and participation/activism in politics is not so 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). Furthermore, the decline in party politics participation and mobilization may be relatively easily substituted by the emergence of civic participation in new social movements, NGOs etc. in very important public policy areas, such as the environment and sectors of social policy, as indeed it has happened in a number of instances. So, the significant decline in party mobilization and political engagement in the narrow (party-centred) sense in general, may be viewed within the framework of the crisis of the principal-agent model of representation and decision-taking, especially in the field of public policy. This general trend is vindicated in the case of Greece by the responses appeared in Table 3 below. In this respect, the social capital-based collective action and the subsequent emergence of civic society organizations as important players in the policy-making process may be considered as complementary forms of political participation and representation to the more traditional ones, such as the party politics.

**TABLE 3**  
**Governance Survey, 1998**

	Fully agree	Rather & fully agree
<b><i>Views of people in government</i></b>		
Whoever gets into office always pursues own interests	62.5	83.3
Elected MPs lose contact with people very quickly	55.8	81.0
<b><i>Views on government parties</i></b>		
Parties are only interested in attracting voters but do not care about their views	60.2	84.8
Political parties accuse each other constantly, but in reality they are all the same	44.1	65.2
<b><i>Personal political effectiveness</i></b>		
Politicians do not care about the views of people like me	54.2	80.2
I feel I have no control over the decisions of politicians	47.9	80.1
People like me have no influence on government	46.5	77.2
Voting is the only tool available for influencing government	51.1	77.8
Politics is so confusing that people like me do not understand it	21.5	42.0
.....		

Further, as Appendix Fig. 2 and Tables 1 and 2 below demonstrate, the turning point for political interest and mobilization in Greece’s relatively young democracy is around 1988-1990. Since then there appears to be an increasing dissatisfaction with the functioning of democracy and a decreasing interest in politics and active participation in political life. Although this trend may to some extent reflect domestic developments, in macro-analytical terms it may be a symptom of more general changes occurring at the international environment such as changes in the paradigms of political economy (globalisation) and governance that made domestic politics somewhat “irrelevant” for people’s everyday life. This of course may have been a sort of “trend of the age of 1990s”, given that recent research points to the opposite direction, namely to the crucial importance of domestic institutional structures for public policy outcomes and not the other way round.

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 would have hypothesized.

**TABLE 4**  
**INTEREST IN POLITICS 1985-1996**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Great</b>	<b>Enough</b>	<b>Limited</b>	<b>Not at all</b>
1985	23.1	34.7	<b>27.0</b>	<b>14.9</b>
1990	21.2	33.3	<b>28.2</b>	<b>17.3</b>
1996	15.6	25.3	<b>31.9</b>	<b>27.0</b>

**Sources:**; cited in Pappas, T.S (2001) ‘Party System and Political Competition in Greece, 1981-2001’, *Greek Review of Political Science*, 17:71-102 (in Greek).

**TABLE 5**  
**ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS 1985-1996**

	<b>Year</b>	<b>Attendance of Party Rally</b>	<b>Participation in Party Campaign</b>	<b>Active Involvement in Party Campaign</b>
<b><u>YES</u></b>	1985	36.0	31.9	31.7
	<b>1996</b>	<b>24.9</b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>12.6</b>
<b>NO</b>	1985	63.7	67.6	68.0
	<b>1996</b>	<b>75.1</b>	<b>83.5</b>	<b>87.4</b>

**Source:** cited in Pappas, T.S (2001) ‘Party System and Political Competition in Greece, 1981-2001’, *Greek Review of Political Science*, 17:71-102 (in Greek).

- **Does Social Capital underpin growth? Social development and economic performance**

This approach emphasises institutions that ensure social cohesion. The argument goes as follows: The main components of social capital, namely trust and norms of civic co-operation are stronger in countries that are less divided and less polarised along lines of class or ethnicity [Knack & Keefer, 1997]. Social cohesion and reduced income disparities as engines of growth constitute a prominent theme in New Political Economy theorising. Persson & Tabellini (1994), Alessina & Rodrik (1994) and Rodrik (1998) argue that a high degree of income inequality depresses the rate of growth, while it triggers social conflicts, which in turn jeopardize productivity growth. In contradistinction, the economies that enjoy democratic political systems and greater equality in income distribution tend to display faster investment and growth. When it comes to measuring social capital then, this approach tends to examine a host of social variables (such as inequalities).

As an example of this approach, Temple and Johnson (1998) analyse the connection between socio-economic development and long-term economic performance in order to examine on a comparative basis the distribution of social capital and economic performance. In their analysis, the sample of countries includes Greece. Their finding is that according to the social development index<sup>7</sup> one would expect a much more vigorous pattern of economic performance in Greece, than is the case in fact. In other words, although Greece has a high index of socio-economic performance<sup>8</sup> (comparable to the South East Asian economies), there is no parallel “economic miracle” (1965).

Turning to an alternative view of social capital, as the prevalence of third sector organizations – as the manifestation of the importance of civil society, a view associated with the work of Putnam (1993), the discussion of the sources for NGO data must provide a warning. The difficulty in locating NGOs and measuring their activity makes a meaningful contribution to growth difficult. Nevertheless, one possible approach would be to examine regional per capita GDP<sup>9</sup> and the number of social organisations at the level of the prefecture.

Much of social capital literature can be criticised as being static – in being able to explain why things are as they are, but not why they should change. It has to be noted, however, that since the comments of Temple and Johnson, 1998, Greece has

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<sup>7</sup> Their index of socio-economic development is borrowed from Adelman and Morris (1967) and includes the share of traditional primary sector, the share of dualism in production structure, urbanisation, the characteristics of the basic social unit (family), social mobility, literacy rates, communication infrastructure, fertility, modernisation of attitudes and beliefs.

<sup>8</sup> Socio-economic development is also linked to political participation, the ever increasing inclusion of wider economic strata in economic programmes and political decision-making, the relative equity in the distribution of the gifts of development so as to eliminate mass social exclusion and social confrontation all of which are adversely related to economic performance. In this sense, the rate of political participation is highly relevant in explaining economic performance. On this issue there is a clear consensus between the development literature view (Adelman & Morris, 1969, 1973; Knack & Keefer, 1997; Temple & Johnson, 1998) and Putnam’s approach emphasising the increasing interconnection between social capital and development the more advanced the modernisation process becomes.

<sup>9</sup> Such an analysis – admittedly with some unpromising proxies – shows little or no correlation between the relevant variables, in terms of quantitative measures of the prevalence of voluntary organisations [Christoforou, 1998].

indeed managed an impressive economic record resulting to its full membership in EMU. With hindsight, then, it can be argued that the social development index has in fact predicted the (subsequent) vigorous economic performance. The following tables give a brief overview of this economic speeding up.

**Table 6: Economic Performance Indicators (annual rate of change) 1960-1999**

Percentage change	1960-73	1974-79	1980-87	1988-95	1996-02
DP growth rate	8.0	3.2	-0.05	1.85	3.47
Private sector investment*	10.5	1.9	-3.7	8.5	12.6
Productivity			-0.7	1.1	2.3
Inflation rate	3.3	16.2	20.9	14.7	4.8

\* Excluding housing

**TABLE 7: Comparative economic performance indicators, 1997-2000**

	1997	1998	1999*	2000**
<b>GDP constant prices, annual rate of change</b>				
Greece	3.0	3.7	3.5	3.8
EU	2.7	2.8	1.9	2.4
OECD	3.3	2.3	2.2	2.1
<b>Gross private investment (excl. housing) annual change</b>				
Greece	10.3	8.4	11.2	8.5
EU	4.4	6.7	3.2	3.8
OECD	8.4	5.4	2.1	2.8

\* Estimates for 1999

\*\* Projections for 2000

Sources: OECD, *Economic Outlook*, no.65, June 1999; Ministry of National Economy *The Greek Economy 1960-97*, Athens, 1998; *Trends and Prospects of the Greek economy and of the world economy*, Semester Report, December 1999.

Accounting for a turnaround in growth performance is a problem for explanations starting from socio-political –and hence in the medium term close to invariant – factors. This is particularly so for Greece, where a large literature explaining Greece’s status as the “black sheep” of the EU had developed through the ‘80s and early ‘90s. Lyberaki, 2000 uses the concept of social capital and learning by doing as an explanation that effort may pay off cumulatively. The idea that social capital can be built up and a static (and fatalistic) view of social capital must be amended is also to be found in Rothstein and Stolle (2001), who emphasise the importance of “street level bureaucracy” in the sense of establishing due process and non-favouritism in the day-to-day functions of citizens. This point is taken up by Tinios 2002 who draws the parallel with the political agenda known in Greece as ‘modernisation’. According to Lyberaki and Tinios economic developments in Greece can be explained through a process of gradual social capital accumulation as a result of initiatives in governance.

One example of the kind of policy pursued is the establishment of an impersonal (and inflexible) hiring procedure through examinations to replace the clientelistic mechanisms which for decades were at the heart of the political process. Another institutional innovation with relevance to this is the establishment of an Ombudsman to oversee cases of the administration exceeding its powers.

Because of its prevalence in the economy, the existence and consolidation of detailed rules, evaluation criteria and monitoring procedures is having an influence not only on behaviour but also on the depth of horizons....

## **5. CONCLUSIONS- THE TASKS AHEAD**

### ***Greek specificities and social capital***

Greece may constitute an indicative case –along perhaps with Southern Italy- on the causes and consequences of low level of social capital endowments and consequently the weakness of civil society. These characteristics are partly attributable to the long tradition of authoritarian statism, but they also reflect a problematic transition from authoritarianism to democracy during the first post-dictatorship period (1974-mid90s). This transition was marked by difficulties in the process of institution-building. As is obvious, this has had implications for almost all aspects of public life, the most important of which, in brief, have been the unclearly defined boundaries between the main spheres (state, market, civil society) and subsequently the dominant role of the central state on the one hand and of political parties on the other, as mediating mechanism in the state-society relations. The dominant institutional framework in this interplay has been that of political clientelistic networks.

Against this transition, Greece has developed a voluntary sector whose weakness is difficult to overstate. What restricted research exists on this topic emphasises fragmentation, hierarchical structure, small size and the lack of links (either with other voluntary organizations or with civil society entities). The cost of this “independence” is financial fragility and lack of a concrete idea of the tasks at hand and the specificities of the problems addressed [VOLMED Hellas, 1997: 54-55; VOLMED Final Report, 1997: 37; Christoforou, 1998]. Given the above, it comes as no surprise that voluntary organizations have for the most part been marginalized from political decision-making [Papoulias & Tsoukas, 1998]. In post-1974 Greece, attempted reforms have seldom required the active participation of the collectivities most obviously affected by them.

Given the above, the question arising is the following: Having established that historical and other factors (political) have shaped a relatively weak stock of social capital (in the sense of generalised trust) and an even weaker propensity to cooperate, then to what extent is this an unchanging feature of Greece? There is no doubt that history matters, but to what extent is it binding for the future? Are there

any processes at work that move in the opposite direction? Is the stock of social capital increasing or decreasing? (Which factors contributing to trust-enhancing or trust-destroying processes could be identified? Putnam's argument [1995] is that generations weaned on television forsake traditional forms of organised/collective endeavour. Hall's argument is that in the British case, social capital far from being eroded, has in fact increased over the post-war period [1997]. Three factors have produced this development: First, the additional years of education have increased the propensity of individuals to become involved in community affairs. Second, the proliferation on white-collar jobs at the expense of blue-collar occupations –middle-class citizens tend to participate more fully in politics, have more organisational affiliations and are likely to have networks of friends drawn from a wider range of environments. And third comes the impact of social policy helping to sustain high levels of community involvement). Is there anything that could be done by means of conscious policy intervention to facilitate the trust-building process?

***Issues to be taken into consideration.***

1. The transition from a predominantly rural to a predominantly urban society. Here, one should distinguish between first and second generation effects (hypothesis: the first generation maintains the links while the second tends to follow a rather different mode of social insertion).
2. The changing role of women: proxies (hypothesis: probably in the past women had greater stocks of social capital but one need not idealise earlier situations because they were much more constrained in all respects).
3. Transformation from migrant sending to migrant-receiving society: attitudes locked-in past perceptions of poverty?
4. Influence of factors such as extended length of education, increasing share of white collar and middle class strata (hypothesis: increasing the stock of networks and social capital? As, say, in the U.K.).
5. Influence of factors pushing in the opposite direction (declining size of family, TV viewing). More generally: what is the impact of substantial wealth increase AND europeanisation? Is there an identity clash (eastern-western) and how does modernisation affect social capital & trust in the short and in the long run?

***Trends over time: increasing or declining?***

Ultimately, all the above aspects of transition are facets of a single process, that of modernisation in the context of European integration. Modernisation is primarily about institution building, and in this sense social capital becomes a prerequisite for successful modernisation and adaptation. If however there exist a number of reliable guidelines when a country is wishing to expand and strengthen its market mechanism, no such generalisable stock of dos and donts exist in the terrain of institution-building. In principle, the choice is between a bottom-up approach (whereby social capital, trust and cooperation are induced via the creation and expansion of networks) and a top-down approach, whereby emphasis is initially placed on the development of efficient and effective public administration in order to instigate a minimum level of generalised trust as a prerequisite for the initiation of a virtuous circle of networks generating trust, generating networks, fuelling further trust and so on. The latter approach may have some additional merits in cases of poor

institutional infrastructure like Greece, where the development of horizontal networks might be easier achieved through the transformation of the hierarchical model rather than the other way round.

### ***Concluding comments – Social Capital and Greece***

To recapitulate this discussion of social capital in the Greek context, it is important to note two key statements:

#### **A. The notion of social capital is important in order to understand developments in Greece**, for three reasons:

1. The process loosely termed in Greece as “modernisation” shares much with the analysis of social capital – the diagnosis of lack of trust, the emphasis on due process and on establishing impersonal “rules of the game”, institution building.
2. The analysis is explicitly shared by many political actors.
3. The holding of the Olympics in 2004 places emphasis on the encouragement of volunteerism as a conscious policy.

#### **B. The study of Social capital can benefit from examining the Greek case.**

1. The political processes emphasise matters linked to social capital.
2. Rapid transformation of economy, society and politics.
3. The special case of the Olympics as a case study.
4. The use of data, though at the moment availability is problematic, can build on the existence of many data sources comparable across Europe (e.g. Eurobarometer, WVS, ECHP, EU-SILC, LFS, etc).

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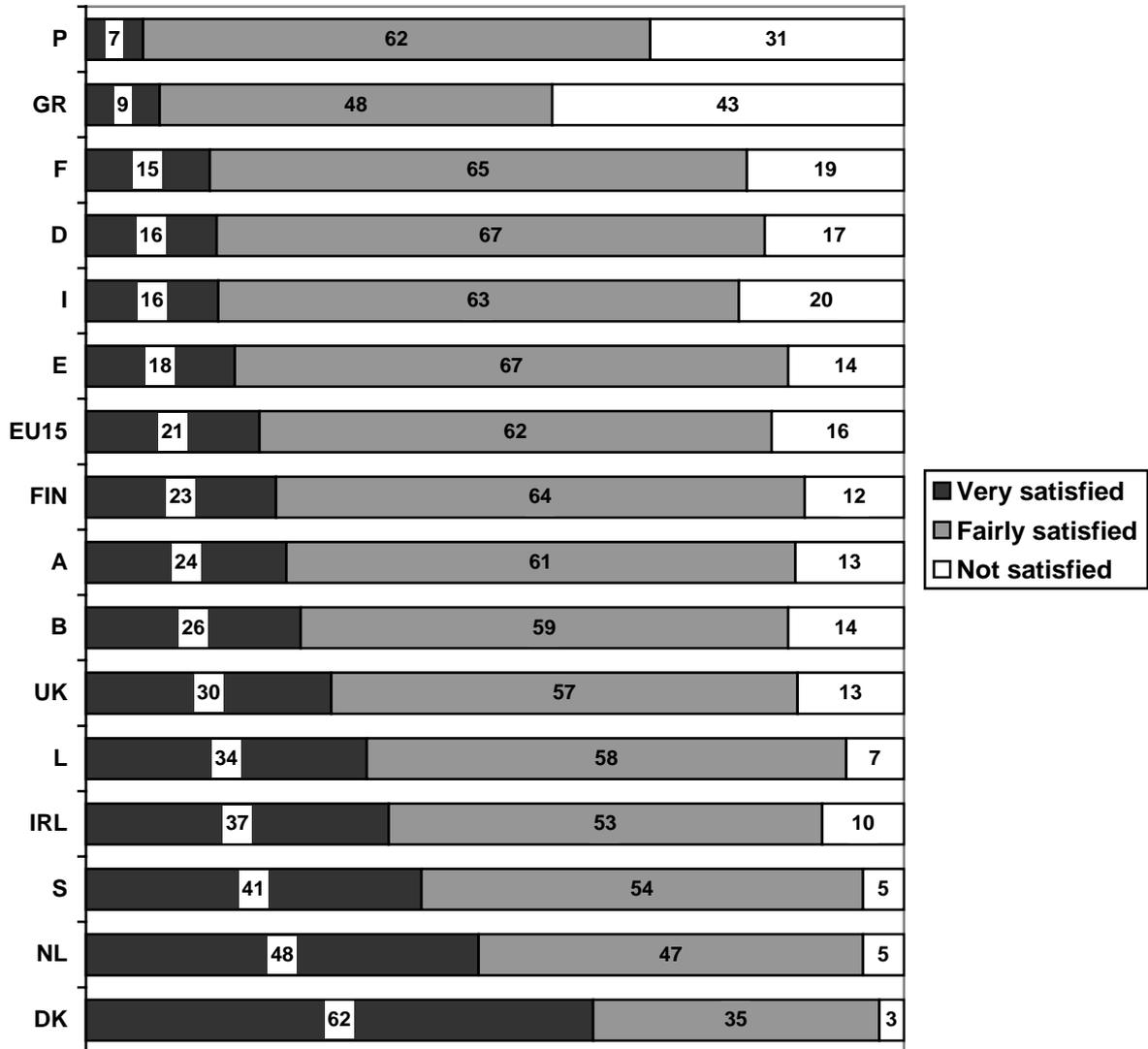
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## **APPENDIX**

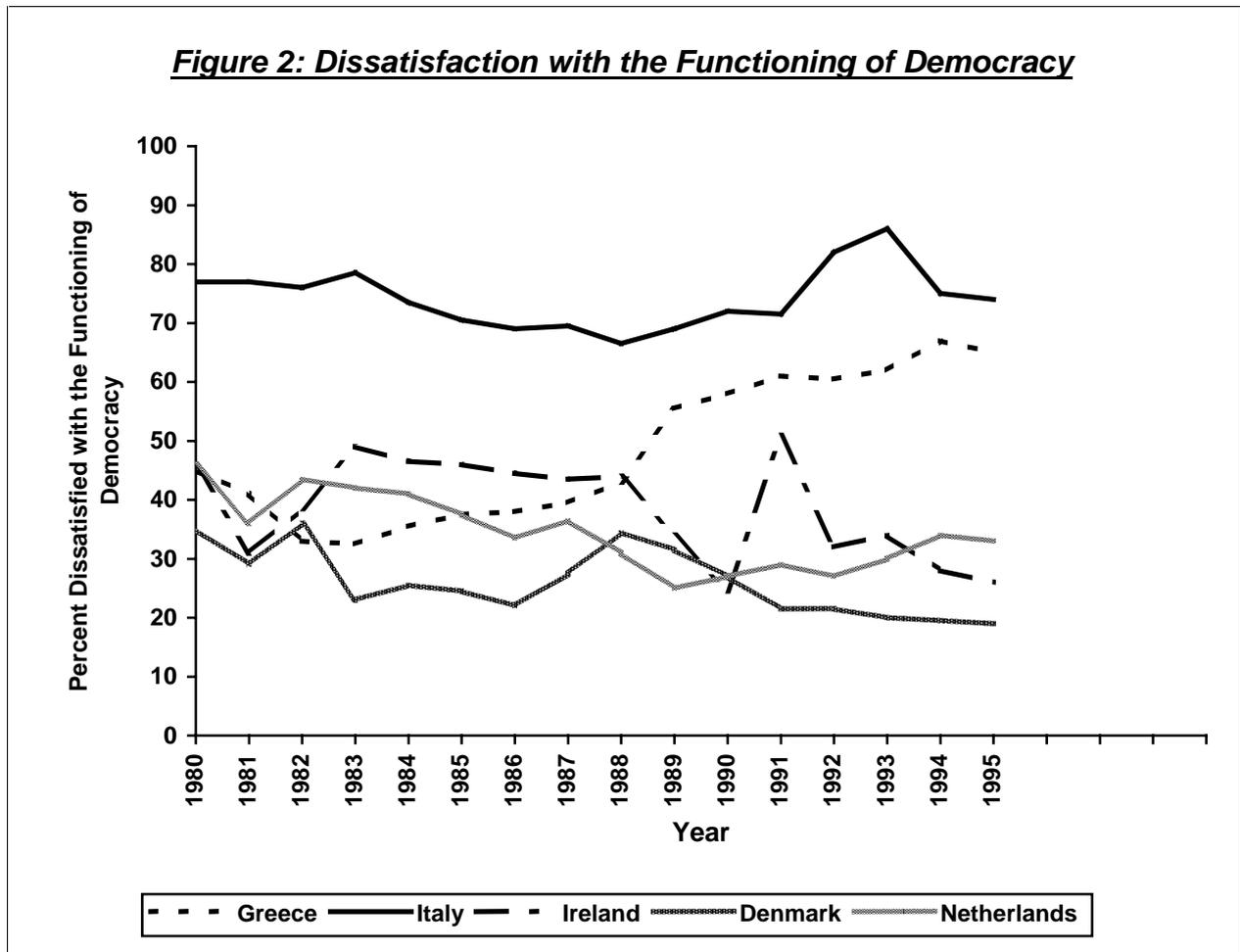
**Figure 1: Life satisfaction in EU Countries (2001)**



**Source:** Eurobarometer 55, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2001.

**Question:** On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the life you lead?

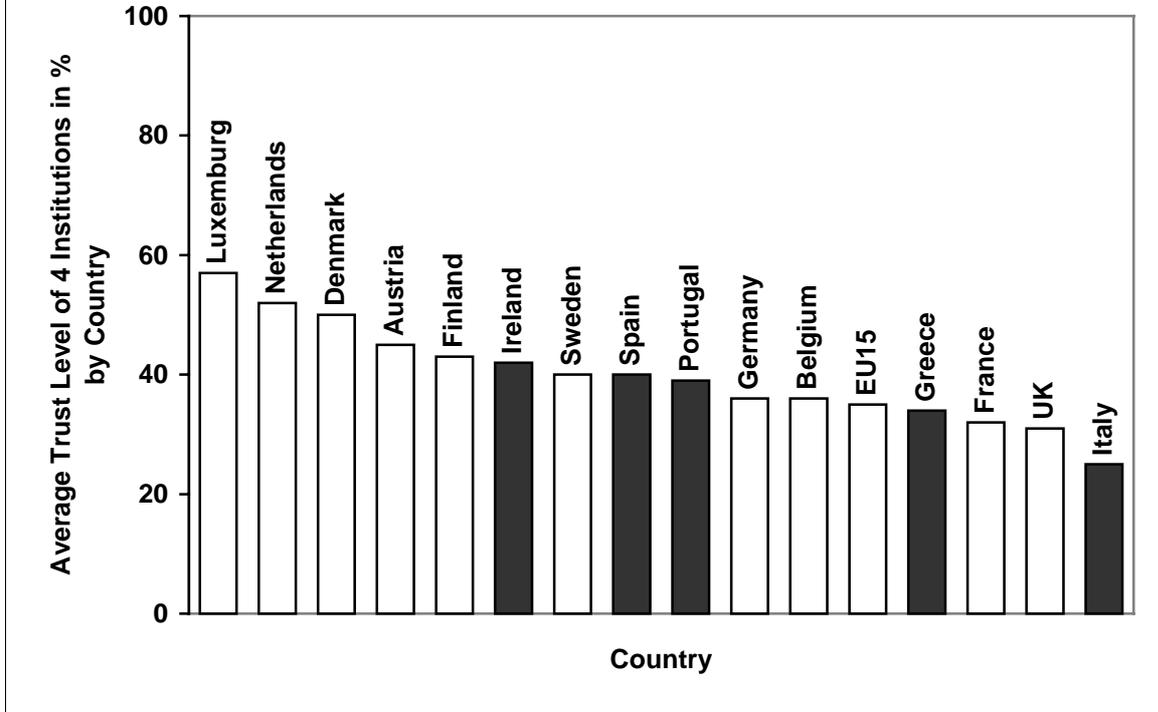
**Figure 2: Dissatisfaction with the Functioning of Democracy**



**Source:** *Elaboration from Eurobarometer Trends 1974-94, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1996.*

**Question:** *On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works (in your country?)*

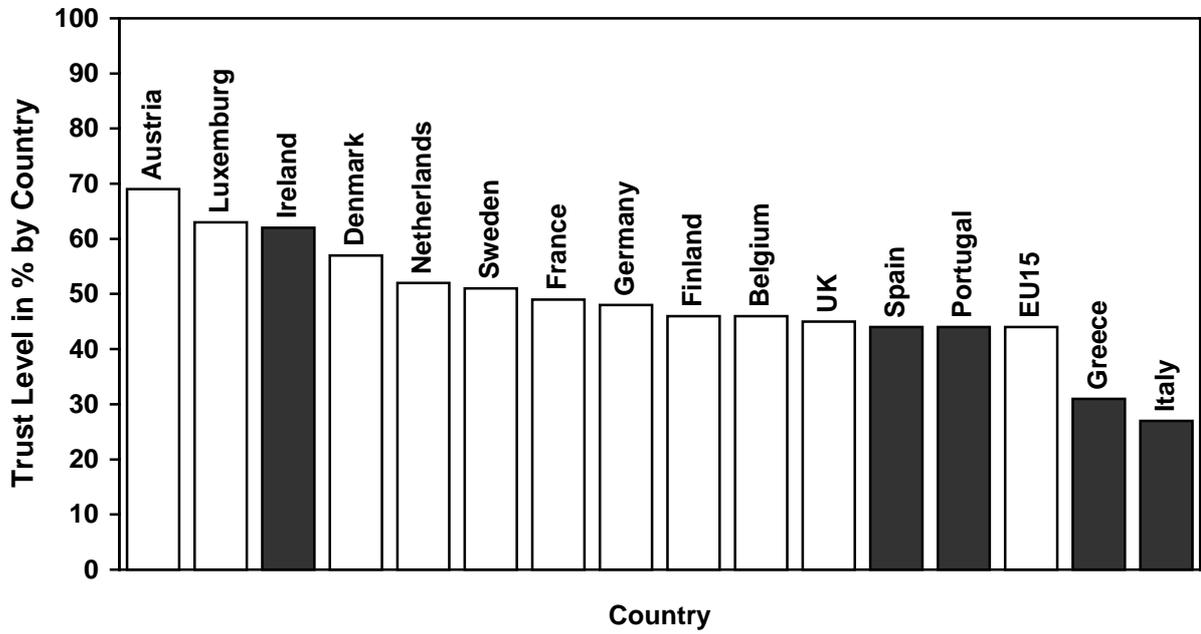
**Figure 3: Trust in Political Institutions in EU Countries, 2001 (average in % by country)**



**Source: Eurobarometer 55, Luxemburg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2001.**

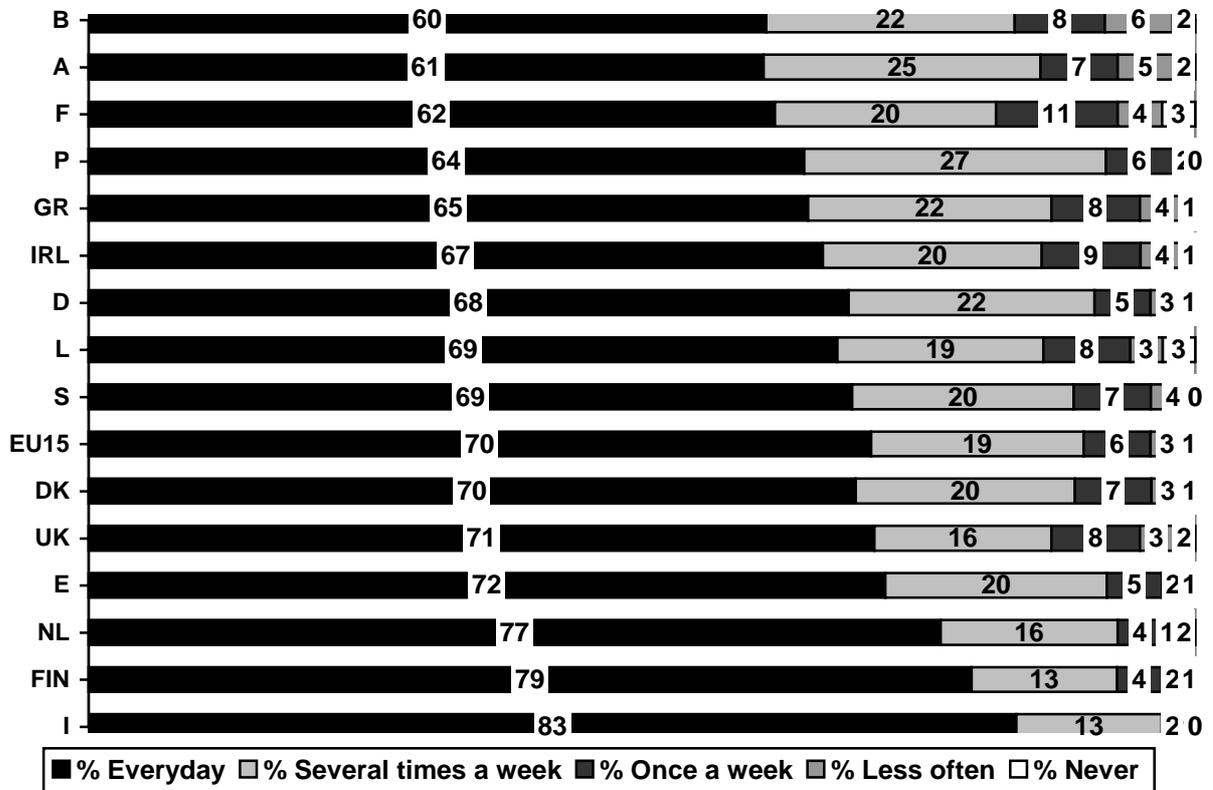
**Question:** I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain institutions. For each of the following institutions (Political parties; Civil service; The National government; and The National Parliament), please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it?

**Figure 4: Trust in the Civil Service in EU Countries, 2001**



**Source: Eurobarometer 55, Luxemburg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2001.**

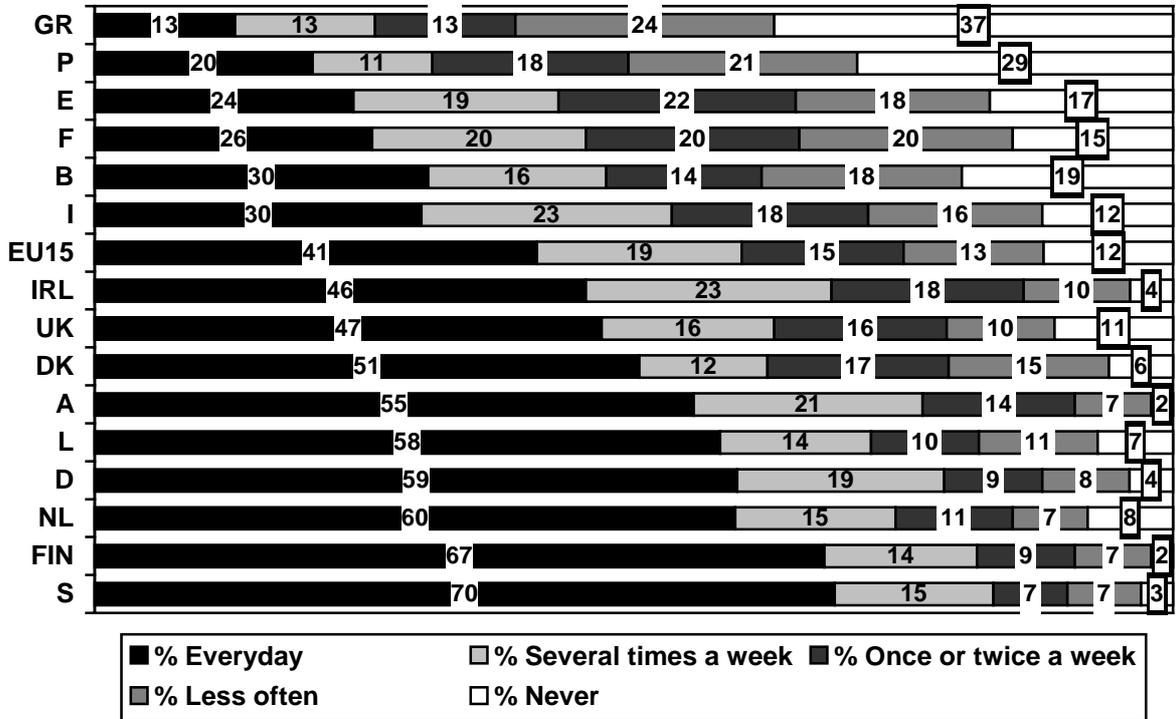
**Figure 5: News Viewership on Television in EU Countries, 2001**



Source: Eurobarometer 55, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2001.

Question: About how often do you watch the news on television?

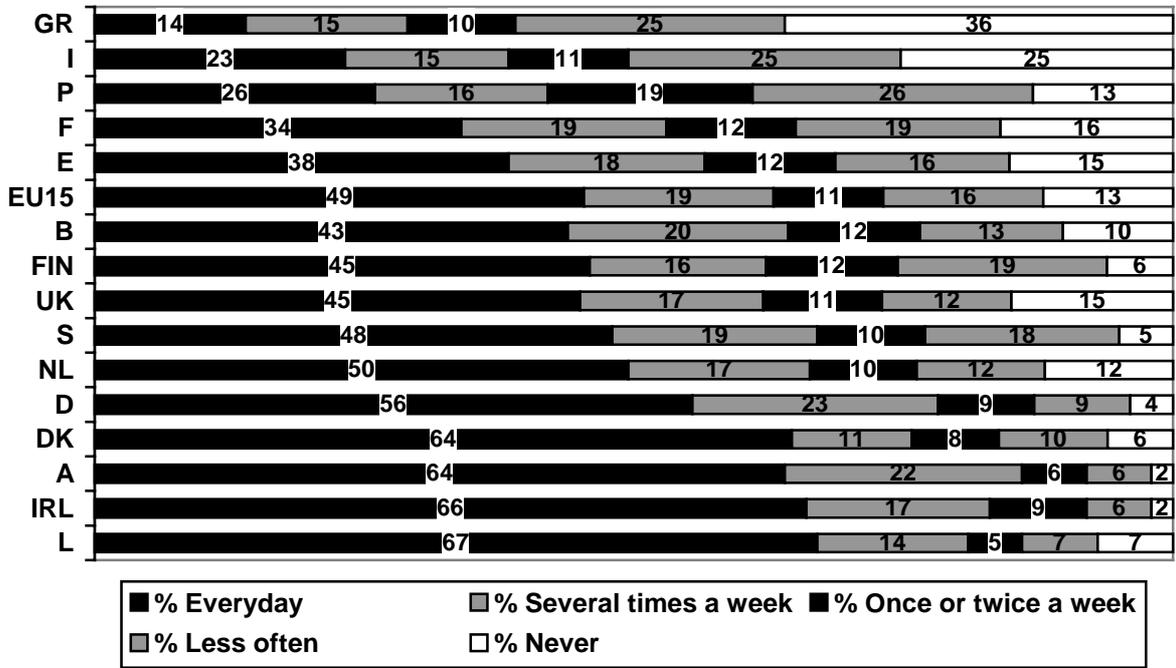
**Figure 6: News Readership of Daily Papers in EU Countries, 2001**



Source: Eurobarometer 55, Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2001.

Question: About how often do you read the news in daily papers?

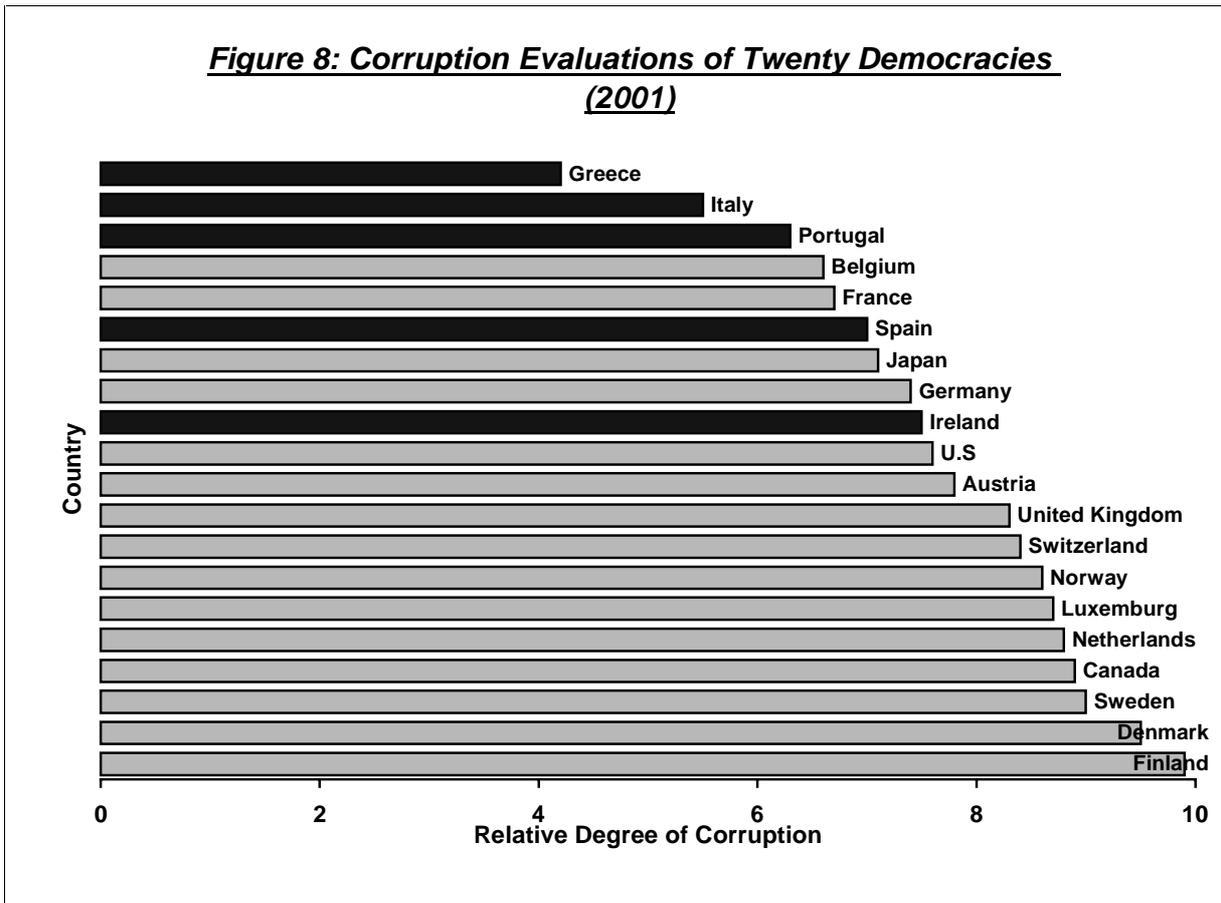
**Figure 7: News Listenership on the Radio in EU Countries, 2001**



Source: Eurobarometer 55, Luxemburg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2001.

Question: About how often do you listen to the news on the radio?

**Figure 8: Corruption Evaluations of Twenty Democracies (2001)**



**Source: Transparency International (TI), Global Corruption Report 2001.**

**Note:** TI evaluations report perceptions of corruption based on results of surveys and other assessments. Respondents in the surveys are international businesspeople and staff of international organizations (survey scale: 1-10. 10= a corruption-free country).

**Table AI****Expressed confidence in various institutions**

	High confidence	Medium confidence	Low confidence
<b>European Union</b>	68.9	22.8	6.1
<b>Church of Greece</b>	68.0	21.2	9.4
<b>Greek Parliament</b>	56.9	29.6	11.0
<b>Political Parties</b>	46.7	34.2	17.1
<b>Armed Forces</b>	68.9	23.6	5.2
<b>Ecumenical Patriarchate</b>	68.1	21.4	7.2
<b>Police</b>	54.5	30.3	13.4
<b>Newspapers</b>	49.4	32.1	15.6
<b>Confederation of Greek Industries</b>	32.8	39.8	21.5
<b>Radio</b>	59.1	29.3	9.5
<b>Large private sector firms</b>	46.6	25.4	14.2
<b>Large public sector firms</b>	44.9	35.4	16.5
<b>Television</b>	57.1	29.2	12.6
<b>Labour Unions</b>	55.8	28.0	12.6

Source: MRB *Attitudes to Various Institutions, Trends December 2001*

**Table All**

**General Attitude Towards EU**

<b>Trends</b>	<b>December 2001</b>	<b>June 2001</b>	<b>December 2000</b>
Sample	<b>2000</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2000</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Definitely positive</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>26.7</b>	<b>23.1</b>
<b>Rather positive</b>	<b>37.7</b>	<b>33.1</b>	<b>34.3</b>
<b>Neutral</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>24.0</b>	<b>23.1</b>
<b>Rather negative</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>8.7</b>
<b>Definitely negative</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>6.4</b>
<b>No ans.</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>4.2</b>

Source: MRB 2002, *Attitudes in Greece vis a vis EMU, Trends December 2001*.

**Table AllI**

**Personal views and expectations from EU membership**

<b>Definitely and rather agree</b>	<b>Decem. 2001</b>	<b>June 2001</b>	<b>Decem. 2000</b>	<b>June 2000</b>
Sample	2000	2000	2000	2000
	%	%	%	%
<b>Will upgrade Greece's role in the Balkans</b>	74.3	70.6	65.6	66.8
<b>Will strengthen Greece's position vis-à-vis Turkey</b>	69.1	67.3	60.4	62.9
<b>Will speed-up the economy</b>	68.0	66.1	62.4	62.5
<b>Will combat unemployment by creating jobs</b>	53.9	53.1	47.5	50.7
<b>Will improve living standards (own and family)</b>	51.6	50.4	44.1	49.2

Source: MRB, 2002, *Attitudes in Greece vis a vis EMU, Trends December 2001*