



**THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL
PARTICIPATION IN EUROPE:
EVIDENCE FROM ESS2002**

Massimiliano Mascherini, Andrea Saltelli, Daniele Vidoni

EUR 23088 EN

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JRC42901

DOI:10.2788/62278

EUR 23088 EN

ISBN: 978-92-79-08192-7

ISSN: 1018-5593

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

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Printed in Italy

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**Massimiliano Mascherini, Andrea Saltelli,
Daniele Vidoni¹**

¹ This manuscript has been developed within the framework of the ongoing cooperation between DG BEPA and JRC-CRELL. The first result of the cooperation has been the article: Marcel Canoy, Frédéric Lerais, Massimiliano Mascherini, Andrea Saltelli, Daniele Vidoni “The importance of social reality for Europe's economy - an application to civil participation”, which was presented as a contribution for the OECD's World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy 27-30 June 2007 Istanbul.

With respect to this specific contribution, the authors' names are in alphabetical order reflecting equal coauthorship. The authors thank Michela Nardo and Beatrice D'Hombres of DG JRC, as well as Marcel Canoy and Frederic Lerais of DG BEPA for their support and useful comments. All the errors still in the manuscript are – of course – sole responsibility of the authors.

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Executive summary

The paper investigates the characteristics of social involvement in Europe by tracing and identifying the shares of individuals that are more likely to be involved with different kinds of formal organizations and showing how each of these groups perceives the political, economical, and relational spheres of social reality.

The analysis covers 19 European countries and is based on indicators for which the data has been principally drawn from the European Social Survey of 2002. The results indicate an heterogeneous Europe in which Nordic and Continental countries are adequately represented by the existing indicators, which determine the representation of reality that we are using. Mediterranean and Eastern countries, on the other side, appear follow different participatory schemes. Thus, alternative variables, such as *informal participation*, must be collected and analyzed to inform policies that can effectively support the different forms of interactions (both formal and informal) between State and Society.

Moreover, education has a *consistently positive effect for all kinds of participation in all the countries under analysis*. Such result advocates for looking at education as one of the possibly most transversal policy actions to undertake and suggests the importance of working on the quality of education systems both at basic and higher level.

Introduction

In the course of history the European Union has established itself as a level of policy making that is perceived as being largely economically driven. The Single Market, the stability and growth pact, the introduction of the euro, competition policy and trade policy are all key European level competences. But ever since Jacques Delors there has been an 'uncomfortable feeling' by many about the dominance of economic issues. Should the Union show its 'social face too'? Is economics 'all that matters'?

For a while 'showing a social face' or quid pro quo social policies to 'compensate for the losses of economic policies ' could be seen as the driving political forces of social policies at the European level, exemplified by the original Lisbon agenda of 2000, where social policies and economic policies were identified as separate pillars, arguably in part for those reasons.

One of the risks of such an approach is that it puts economic and social policies as antagonistic entities, often leading to polarized political discussions as if countries have to choose between free markets or social societies. And even if that is not the case it erroneously displays economic and social policies as disjoint entities that do not interact. In reality they do interact intensively either in a mutually reinforcing way or in a way that trades off one against the other.

The link with EU policies and social items also show up in Eurobarometer surveys. For instance the Belgians think the European Union should fight unemployment (49%), poverty and social exclusion (47%) as a priority. At the top of the Danes' wish list as to how the EU should prioritize its tasks are: protecting the environment, peace and security, as well as fighting terrorism and poverty. And even in a liberal country such as Ireland the most popular answer to the question 'which actions should the European Union prioritize?' is a surprising 'fight poverty/social exclusion'.²

In the last years the European Commission has tried to integrate social policies into their core business without doing injustice to relative responsibilities by other policy levels. To do so effectively, since the revision of the Lisbon strategy in 2005 into a growth and jobs agenda and particularly after the informal Summit in Hampton Court in the end of 2005, a new logic prevailed.

² http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm

The conventional wisdom that greater economic prosperity drives jobs growth that in turn drives wellbeing in general can be challenged (Liddle and Lerais, 2007). Not only is such logic not perceived as such by many citizens, it is also still based on a pillared view of economic and social policies. The logic is that economic activities create the size of the pie while social policies deal with the division of it.

If we look at the characteristics of our current and likely future societies such logic falls apart. Europe of today and tomorrow is more diverse than yesterday, people face different social risks, the world moves at a higher speed, is more knowledge driven and the population is ageing rapidly. The consequence of the combination of these characteristics is that future wellbeing does not only depend on economic activities. Tomorrow's Europe needs inter alia: (i) the highest possible education for all; (ii) the highest labour participation possible; (iii) well integrated migrants that add value to European societies; (iv) healthy citizens; (v) citizens fully participating in civil society.

These requirements are not needed (just) for social reasons but for economic reasons too. They do not relate (solely) to division of the pie but have clear implications for creation of a larger pie. More, healthier, better educated and participating citizens create higher growth.

One of the consequences of the different nature of interactions between economic and social policies is that there is a shift in responsibilities. There is more need for policy coherence across layers, there is an increased role for NGO's and more than in the past there is a sharper emphasis on prevention and own responsibility is needed.

In essence, civil society³ is both the substratum that will “eat the pie”, and a primary stake-holder of the policy making process so that cooking the foresaid recipe results from a process of co-ordination and valorization of the different forms of interactions (both formal and informal) between State and Society. The existence of at least four European social models with different structures and rules (Sapir, 2005) prevents the implementation of 1-fits-all solutions; moreover, the rapid social evolution that we witness could imply a change in the values and characteristics

³ As the CCS (Centre for Civil Society at the London School of Economics) indicates, “*Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Civil societies are often populated by organisations such as registered charities, development non-governmental organisations, community groups, women's organisations,*

intrinsic to each model. Hence, the European process of coordination could benefit from the identification of some transversal characteristics of civil society and some common avenues for change, as well as from the identification of specificities to be exploited in order to maximize policy impact.

“What are the determinants of social involvement and how can involvement enhance the results of the coordination process between State and stakeholders in an increasingly diverse society?” As previously suggested, tomorrow's Europe needs citizens fully participating in civil society. Hence, the paper investigates the characteristics of the shares of individuals that are more likely to be involved with different kinds of formal organizations and shows how each of these groups perceives the political, economical, and relational spheres of social reality.

A renewed role for individual participation.

Alternative focuses

Traditional welfare states are generally unequipped for facing the challenges of a social woven dependant on an ageing population whose demographic composition is rapidly changing. The situation is also complicated by new and renewed challenges – social exclusion, sustainability, unemployment, security... – that pose a further burden on the evolving dimension of the ‘European quality of life’. Hence, “innovative social policies ... tend to delegate power for local implementation to collaborative public-private arrangements and even to wholly private actors. We see more and more decentralised co-ordination. This applies also to policy experiments at the EU level” (Esping-Andersen et al.: 9). *Vertical subsidiarity* becomes the necessary tool for *horizontal subsidiarity*, as it opens the public service sector to the market, civil society and social entrepreneurship.⁴ Through their ties with public businesses and profit organizations, non-profit organizations become a part of the economic activity (i.e. health care, education, assistance, culture, environmental protection and transport) and take on the independent and legitimate role of interpreting social needs and of launching cooperation strategies at territorial level.

In social policies developed along these lines, the voice of the citizen needs to be heard at the outset of the public-value creation process and not merely when protests or complaints are made. This means ensuring that, via the right social channels, citizens have access to those institutional conditions that will allow them to be a part of the intervention programming process and of the ensuing strategy adoption phase.

As indicated before, citizens’ concerns with public issues are constant, but the traditional forms of participation and policy engagement show signs of fatigue. This fact suggests that individuals are more and more inclined to use alternative architectures – such as cohesive local networks (civil society, private sector) and global networks (international organisations and NGOs) – for advocating their needs.

⁴ As hinted, the concept of *horizontal subsidiarity* addresses the fundamental role of the social partners in the implementation of the social dimension of the EU. In its first Communication concerning the application of the Agreement on Social Policy (COM (93) 600 final, Brussels, 14 December 1993), the Commission acknowledged: ‘a dual form of subsidiarity in the social field: on the one hand, subsidiarity regarding regulation at national and Community level; on the other, subsidiarity as regards the choice, at Community level, between the legislative approach and the agreement-based approach.’ (<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/industrialrelations/dictionary/definitions/horizontalsubsidiarity.htm>).

As Dobell and Mitchell suggest, “analytic formulation of policy within an agency has been replaced to a considerable extent by organic, unpredictable and often highly conflictual public multistakeholder processes of formation of policy, not only through executive or legislative stages of policy adoption, but through multi-agency and private sector partnerships for implementation and co-management” (Dobell and Mitchell, 1997, 27-28).

For optimizing their responsiveness, the institutions, on one side, must learn *how* these structures are built and interact and, on the other side, must understand *who* the individuals that participate in the process are.

Individual participation and contribution to social capital

The scope of our analysis is to identify the characteristics of the shares of individuals that are more likely to be involved with different kinds of formal organizations and to investigate how each of these groups perceives the political, economical, and relational spheres of social reality.

As Putnam (1993, 2000) and other researchers (Woolcock, 2001; Adler and Kwon, 2002; van Oorschot and Arts, 2005, for effects on the European welfare states) suggest, not all participation is conducive to positive results in terms of attentiveness to social and economic challenges. The classical Putnam’s distinction between *bridging* (or inclusive) and *bonding* (or exclusive) social capital suggests that:

“Some forms of social capital are, by choice or necessity, inward looking and tend to reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneous groups. Examples of bonding social capital include ethnic fraternal organizations, church-based women's reading groups, and fashionable country clubs. Other networks are outward looking and encompass people across diverse social cleavages. Examples of bridging social capital include the civil rights movement, many youth service groups, and ecumenical religious organizations” (Putnam, 2000, 22).

Previous work (e.g. Beugelsdijk & Smulders, 2003; Sabatini, 2005; Beyerlein & Hipp, 2005) focuses on the distinction between *bridging* and *bonding* social capital, eventually to categorize the various networks and organizations to which people belong. However, as Woolcock (2000, p. 80) suggests “[t]he policy response to reading the social capital literature should not be a call for more choirs and soccer

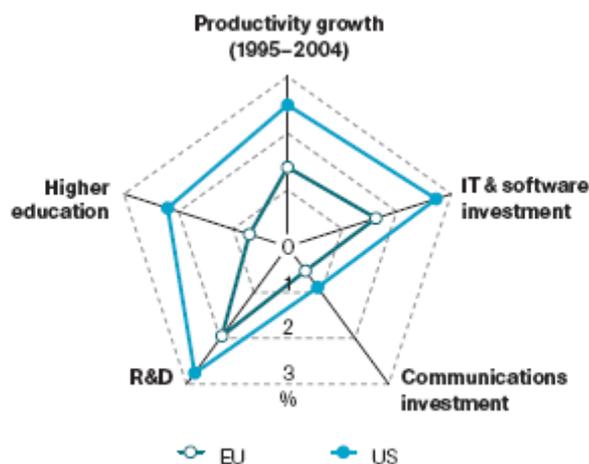
clubs, as writers satirizing Putnam have tended to infer.” In fact, as suggested earlier, we are interested in the characteristics and development of the European social reality as a whole. Specifically, we are trying to understand what the determinants of social involvement are and whether involvement can enhance the results of the coordination process between State and stakeholders in an increasingly diverse society.

A consistent body of literature (see for example: Dasgupta, 2003; Völker and Derk, 2004) suggests the existence of a positive link between bridging and linkage capital and economic prosperity in the sense that “bridging social ties (sometimes called ‘weak’ ties) are more likely to be drivers of economic growth than bonding social ties” (Putnam, 2002). One possible explanation of such parallelisms is given by Sapir and highlights the need of the “adaptation to change paradigm” proposed in section 2:

“Instead of fostering the necessary adaptation and flexible responses to increasingly rapid changes, modern European welfare states ... [] now often protect the status quo. And as James Heckman (the Nobel Prize winner) rightly states in his insightful analysis of Europe, ‘The opportunity cost of security and preservation of the status quo – whether it is the status quo technology, the status quo trading partner, or the status quo job – has risen greatly in recent times’ (Heckman, 2002)”.

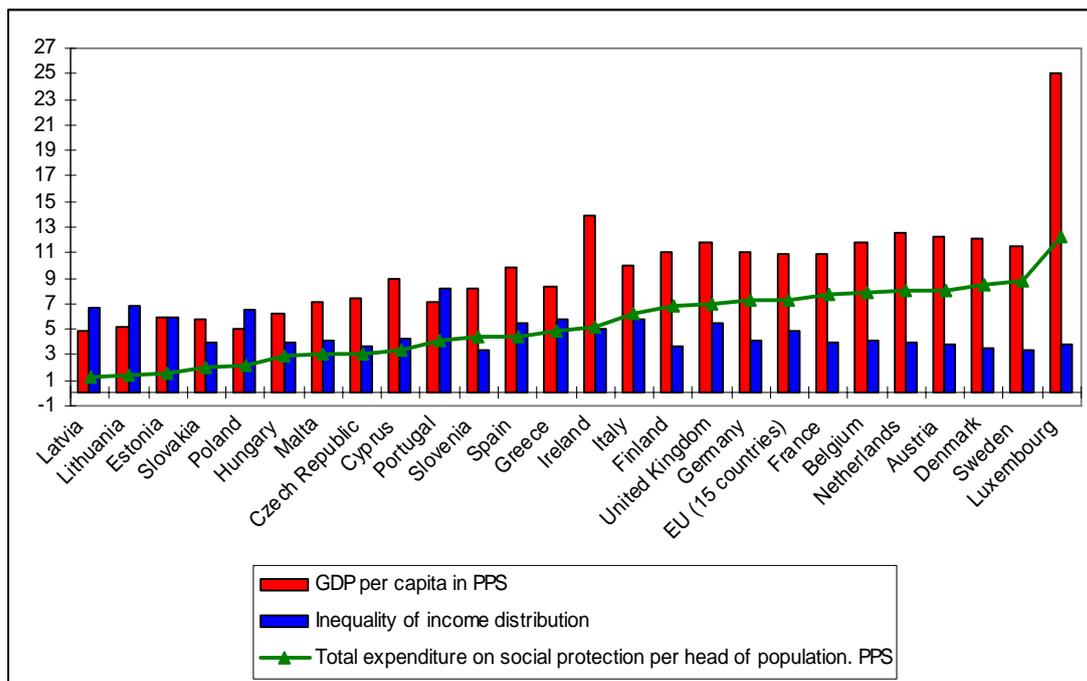
Indeed, in a comparison with the United States (fig. 1), Europe as a whole lags behind in all aspects of investment in R&D, Communications, IT & Software, and Higher Education. The result is a substantial slowness in productivity growth (1995-2004).

Figure 1: Investments in various forms of knowledge and productivity growth (1995-2004): comparison between EU and USA



Recalling the initial argument, the figure could suggest a predominance of bonding ties that anchor the EU to maintaining the status-quo, rather than investing for changing. However, if we break-up these effects at country level, we can notice that the intensity of the investments tends to co-vary with welfare state characteristics, especially on a North-South axis. For instance, high welfare spending in the Scandinavian countries goes hand in hand with a relatively higher level of wealth (GDP), a relatively smaller income inequality. Low welfare spending in the Mediterranean countries goes together with a lower level of wealth, a larger income inequality (fig. 2).

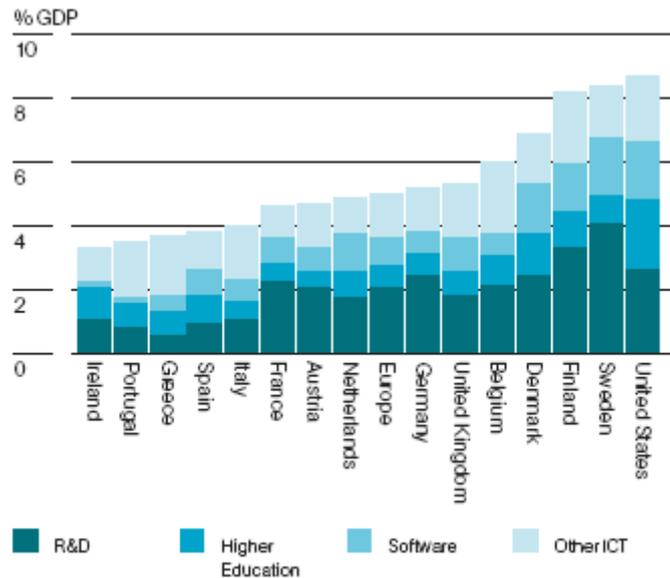
Figure 2 : GDP per capita, social protection and inequality of income distribution. An European overview (2004-2005)



Data source : Eurostat (Expenditure in social protection and GDP per capita relate to 2004, Inequality of income relates to 2005)

The picture does not change when looking at investments in R&D, Higher Education, and ICT (fig.3) whereby Finland and Sweden match closely the US figure of 8% of GDP invested in the afore specified chapters with a specific focus on R&D. Southern European countries, on the other hand stop half way through at about 4%.

Figure 3 : Investment in knowledge : An European overview (2005)



Source: OECD & GGDC (2006)

Referring again to the initial paradigm, these figures make us wonder whether there is any parallelism between such diversified investment strategies and the prevalent type of social capital in the various European countries.

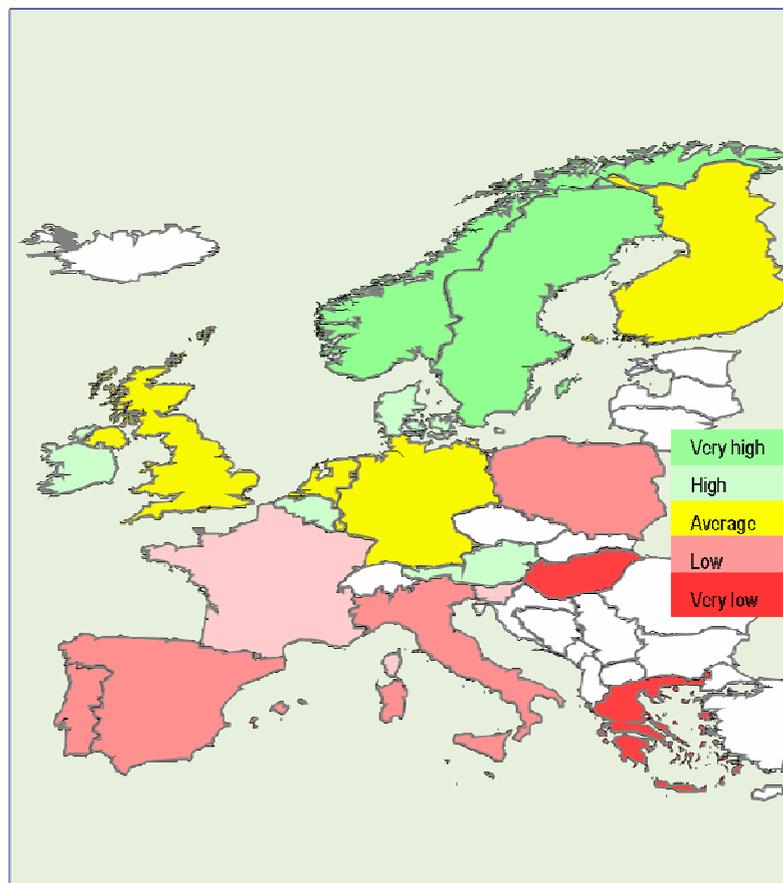
As Liddle and Lerais (2007) suggest, however, Europe's social reality is a rather fragmented picture. Many people now “see their lives in terms of a personal biography they write for themselves. This is not to say that people are no longer concerned about ‘social cohesion’: on the contrary surveys suggest that many are, but many have no desire to return to the old conformities of family, class or religion.” Social cohesion, individualization, participation, acceptance, disinterest; making sense of all these apparently diverse indicators requires a ‘dashboard’ that recovers basic message behind all these signals. One such measure is the Active Citizenship Composite Indicator (ACCI). This aggregated index has been built by the European Commission – Centre for Research on Lifelong learning to measure the European active and democratic citizenship, defined as:

Participation in civil society, community and/or political life, characterized by mutual respect and non-violence and in accordance with human rights and democracy (Hoskins, 2006).

The ACCI covers 19 European countries and is based on a list of 63 basic indicators for which the data has been principally drawn from the European Social

Survey of 2002. This composite indicator shows a heterogeneous Europe where Nordic countries lead and southern European countries perform well in Values and Political Life but lag behind in Civil Society and Community Life dimensions (Hoskins et a., 2006, see fig. 4)⁵.

Figure 4 : The Active Citizenship Composite Indicator



The overall picture produced by the indicator supports the hypothesis by which the intensity of change follows a North-South axis. However, the indicator cannot tell us much with respect to the *role of the different types of social capital* for the progress of European societies. In fact, as depicted in figure ..., the structure of the indicator considers positively *all* kinds of participation. Still, as suggested earlier, the prevalence of different forms of participation may imply a trade-off between behaviors aimed at maintaining the status quo or at fostering progress. Hence, it's

⁵ The full report can be downloaded from: <http://crell.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ActiveCitizenship/AC-Final%20Report-December%202006/measuring%20AC.pdf>

necessary to investigate whether such trade of does exist and whether the behavior follows a mere North-South axis, or whether more articulated structures are required.

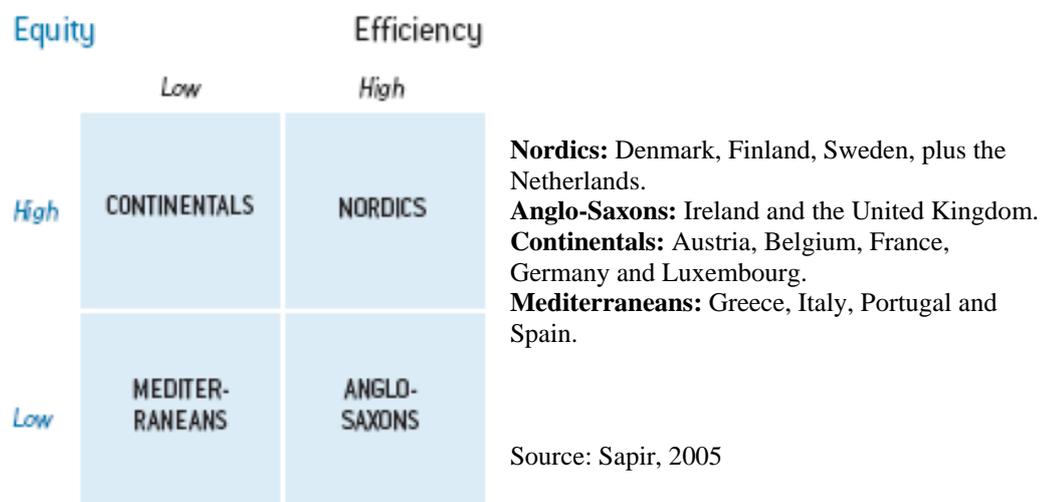
A possible taxonomy of European social models

Various authors have are supportive of the idea of a complex Europe built around numerous alternative social models.

Sapir identifies four basic models of welfare on the basis of the trade-offs existing between efficiency and equity, whereby a model is considered efficient if it provides sufficient incentive to work and, therefore, if it generates relatively high employment rates. It will be deemed equitable if it keeps the risk of poverty relatively low (Sapir, 2005, fig. 5).

This idea is extremely appealing because it refers directly to a trade off between the need of securing opportunities to everybody – hence maintaining the status quo and promoting progress – and the sustainability of the exercise – hence the factual possibility of supporting the growing price of the status quo.

Figure 5: The four European Models, a typology



The following analysis will basically adopt Sapir’s taxonomy and will develop an in-depth analysis of the European styles of participation to investigate whether alternative participatory strategies entail different approaches to society.

Participation and European Social Models

The data

Favoring the fine-tuning of the process of institutional responsiveness requires identifying the objective characteristics and the perceptions of the actively engaged individuals.

To achieve this aim, we investigated the European Social Survey (<http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/>), which ran a specific module on citizenship in 2002. This data is more up-to-date than that which is available from alternative sources, such as the World Values Survey and IEA's CIVED, which is currently only available from 1999.

The European Social Survey (the ESS) is an academically-driven social survey designed to chart and explain the interaction between Europe's changing institutions and the attitudes, the beliefs, and the behavioral patterns of its diverse populations. The survey is administered every two years (the forth wave is scheduled for 2008) and consists in a core questionnaire and two rotating modules. In the first wave of 2002 one of these modules was on citizenship; such data was not available in the 2004 issue and the 2006 data hasn't been disclosed yet.

The European Social Survey (ESS) aims to be representative of all residents among the population aged 15 years and above in each participating country. The size and the quality of the sample make the European country coverage in the ESS data reasonably good, with 18 EU member states providing data of sufficient quality. Among the 18 investigated member states, Austria, France, Hungary, and Ireland have been excluded from the analysis because some variables were completely missing in the dataset as some questions were not asked in the national versions of the questionnaire. Although data on Poland has revealed anomalous patterns (see section 4.6) we have decided to keep the country in the dataset for the analysis.

The dataset under investigation is therefore composed by 26491 observations. The sample is representative at the national level for the 14 European countries considered, which are: Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Finland, United Kingdom, Greece, Italy, Luxemburg, Nederland, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden. The number of observations was subsequently reduced to 24023 to exclude people below 18 or above 80 years of age.

The Variables

In the European Social Survey 2002, individuals were asked about their *ways of participating* to several types of organizations (sport, cultural, trade union, business, human rights, environment/peace, religious, politics, social, teacher/parents organizations), and they could choose among four different behaviors (membership, donating money, participation and voluntary work) recorded as dichotomous variables (values 0/1). For each type of organization, the *strength* of individual participation amounts to the sum of the scores that the individual has obtained with respect to the foresaid possible behaviors.

Specifically, we created a new variable equal to the sum of the four binary variables describing the possible action of engagements in that organization.

$$Y_h = \sum_{i=1}^4 X_{h,i}$$

where $h=1..10$, is the type of organization and $i=1..4$, are the forth different ways of engagement. Each variable can assume a value from 0 (no action taken) to 4 (the person is engaged in all possible ways).

On the basis of the definitions of *bridging* and *bonding* social capital, we divided individual participation into two categories:

1. *Social engagement*, individuals participating to organizations that are outward looking and aim at improving the society at large (Cultural, Human Rights, Social, Religious, Environmental/Peace organization).
2. *Private engagement*, encompasses the organizations that work closer to the private interest of the respondent (Sport, Trade Union, Business, Teacher/Parents, Political Party).

A factor analysis using polychoric correlations for ordered-category data was carried out to validate the consistency of this theoretical grouping. The results of the analysis confirm the hypothesis and explain approximately the 40% of the variance.

The two groups were used as the basis for constructing two variables – SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT and PRIVATE ENGAGEMENT – given respectively by the aggregation of the variables reporting higher factor loadings in factor 1 (social

engagement) and in factor 2 (private engagement), respectively. On the basis of the 10 categories of organizations previously identified (sport, cultural, trade union, business, human rights, environment/peace, religious, politics, social, teacher/parents organizations), the variables *social engagement* and *private engagement* ended up having the following structure:

$$\text{SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT} = Y_{\text{Cultural}} + Y_{\text{Social}} + Y_{\text{Env/Peace}} + Y_{\text{HumanRights}} + Y_{\text{Religious}}$$

$$\text{PRIVATE ENGAGEMENT} = Y_{\text{Sport}} + Y_{\text{TradeUnion}} + Y_{\text{Business}} + Y_{\text{Teacher/Parents}} + Y_{\text{Political}}$$

Subsequently, we created the variable ENGAGEMENT that will constitute the basis of our analysis. ENGAGEMENT is a multinomial variable that takes values from 0 to 3 defined as follows:

ENGAGEMENT = 0 - individuals not participating in any organization;

ENGAGEMENT = 1 - individuals participating just in social organizations;

ENGAGEMENT = 2 - individuals participating just in private organizations;

ENGAGEMENT = 3 - individuals engaged in both social and private organizations.

To characterize the factors that can determine the decision of an individual to participate in formal organizations, the variable ENGAGEMENT was considered as the dependent variable, and a set of objective variables reported in the European Social Survey was included as explanatory variables. The complete list of the explanatory variables considered is reported in table 3.

Table 1 : List of explanatory variables.

Type	Description
Family Income	Family income categorized in 12 levels following the ESS scale: <i>Less than 1.800; 1.800-3.600; 3.600 - 6.000; 6.000 - 12.000; 12.000 - 18.000; 18.000 - 24.000; 24.000 - 30.000; 30.000 - 36.000 - 36.000 - 60.000; 60.000 - 90.000; 90.000 - 120.000; more than 120.000.</i> The last category "120.000 or more" has been chosen as reference.
Age	Age of the respondent divided in class: <i>18 - 24; 24 -35; 35 - 44; 44 - 55; 55 - 65; 65 or more.</i> The last category "65 or more" has been chosen as reference.
Individual Human Capital	expressed as years of education.
Sex	0 = Male; 1 = Female
Citizenship	0 = No; 1 = Citizen of the country where interviewed
Number of persons	Size of the Family
Declared Religious	0 = No; 1 = Yes
Place where the respondent lives	Place where the respondent lives categorized in classes following the ESS scale: <i>0 = A big city; 1 = The suburbs of a big city; 2 = A town or a small city; 3 = A country village; 4 = A farm or a home in the countryside.</i> The category " 0 = A big city" has been chosen as reference.
Time spent in watching TV	Time spent during the day in watching TV following the ESS scale: <i>0 = No time at all; 1 = Less than 1/2 hour; 2 = 0.5 -1 hour; 1 - 1.5 hour; 1.5 - 2 hours; 2 -2.5 hours; 2.5 - 3 hours;more than 3 hours.</i>
Time spent in listening to the Radio	Time spent during the day in listening to the radio, following the ESS scale: <i>0 = No time at all; 1 = Less than 1/2 hour; 2 = 0.5 -1 hour; 1 - 1.5 hour; 1.5 - 2 hours; 2 - 2.5 hours; 2.5 - 3 hours;more than 3 hours.</i>
Time spent in reading newspapers	Time spent during the day in reading newspapers, following the ESS scale: <i>0 = No time at all; 1 = Less than 1/2 hour; 2 = 0.5 -1 hour; 1 - 1.5 hour; 1.5 - 2 hours; 2 - 2.5 hours; 2.5 - 3 hours;more than 3 hours.</i>
Time spent in surfing the Internet	Time spent during the day in surfing the internet following the ESS scale: <i>0 = No time at all; 1 = Less than 1/2 hour; 2 = 0.5 -1 hour; 1 - 1.5 hour; 1.5 - 2 hours; 2 - 2.5 hours; 2.5 - 3 hours;more than 3 hours.</i>
Main Activity	Main Activity performed by the respondent during the seven days before the interview, coded following the ESS scale: <i>1 = paid work; 2 = In Education; 3 = unemployed and actively looking for a job; 4 = unemployed but not actively looking for a job; 5 = permanent sick or disable; 6= retired; 7 = in community or military service; 8 = doing houseworks; 9 = other.</i> The category " 1 = in paid work" has been chosen as reference.
Country Dummies	A set of dummy variables representing the country effect was included in the model

The Model

The variable object of the analysis are qualitative, hence the application of classical regression models (OLS) is not allowed due to the violation of the basic assumptions underneath the model. Modeling qualitative variables with two or more categories requires the use of models based on different assumptions that can produce reliable estimates and allow for the correct application of standard statistical techniques. If the adoption of Logistic Regression could solve the problem of

modeling dichotomous variables, in the case of variables that can assume more than two categories the use of the Ordinal Logit or the Multinomial Logistic regression model can face the challenge of providing correct and reliable estimation of the parameters.

The model we decided to adopt to analyze the variable ENGAGEMENT is the Multinomial Logit (mLogit). The mLogit is a straightforward extension of the classical Logistic model and it is a strategy often-used in the literature when categories are unordered (as the case of the variable ENGAGEMENT). In the mLogit model a category (Non Participant, in our case) is designated as reference category. The probability of membership in other categories (Social, Private and Full Engagement) is compared to the probability of membership in the reference category. In general for a dependent variable with M categories, the mLogit requires the calculation of M-1 equations, one for each category relative to the reference category to describe the relationship between the dependent variable and the explanatory variables. In our case, three different equations have been computed.

Although possible violations of the Independence from Irrelevant Alternatives (IIA) assumptions need to be further investigated, similar results have been obtained by repeating the analysis and applying several logistic regressions that perform pairwise comparisons between the reference category and the other categories.

The clustering

With respect to Sapir's model, we suggest a similar partition, but we group Anglo Saxon and Continental countries because Great Britain was left alone, and we include an extra group – Eastern – composed by Poland and Slovenia, which were not considered in Sapir's original taxonomy (tab. 4).

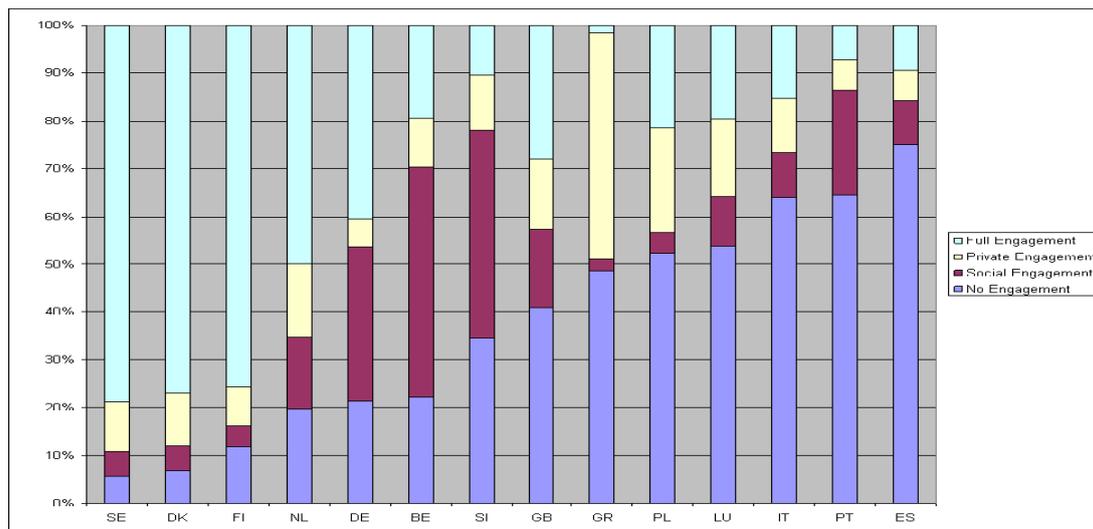
Table 2 : Clusters of Countries

<i>Cluster</i>	<i>Countries</i>
1	Denmark, Sweden, Finland, The Netherlands
2	Belgium, Germany, Luxemburg, Great Britain
3	Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain
4	Poland, Slovenia

The results – overall

An initial analysis of the participatory patterns at country level (fig. 6) suggests that individuals in all Nordic countries are preponderantly engaged in both private and social organizations, while more than 50% of the individuals in Mediterranean countries – with the exception of Greece – are not engaged. Greece is an interesting outlier because it shows a strikingly high 45% of people that are involved in private organizations, a result partly due to the peculiar status of Greek business organizations.⁶ In Continental and Anglo-Saxon countries the rates of participation are generally above 50%; Slovenia, Germany, and Belgium show high percentages of people involved solely with social activities.

Figure 6 :Engagement : how is it distributed among European countries?



Various authors have criticized the use of micro-data to account for the behavior of social structures that exist only at aggregate level such as social capital.⁷ Although such critiques are legitimate, the variables derived from the ESS dataset provide

⁶ See for example: Aranitou, V., (2003), "The strengthening of the employers' organisations representation

and social dialogue", paper presented at the S. Karagiorgas Conference on Social Change in Contemporary Greece (1980-2001), Athens.

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/hellenicObservatory/pdf/symposiumPapersonline/Aranitou.pdf>

⁷ For example, Putnam's analyses have been criticized because his aggregation of individual-level data up to collectivities does not capture the social structural nature of social capital(see Skocpol, 1996, or Sampson, 2001).

valuable information in understanding the *character* and *nature* of the social connections in a place and the identification and strengthening of the social channels through which citizens have access to those institutional conditions that will allow them to be a part of the intervention programming process and of the ensuing strategy adoption phase.

Specifically, if the dimensional identification is correct, the level and type of participation should reveal a driver of Europe's social reality whereby social and full engagement (which correspond to bridging and linking social capital) should be correlated with positive social and economic dynamics. The preponderance of private engagement could, on the other hand, be correlated with a more stagnant situation because “[b]onding social capital is, as Xavier de Souza Briggs puts it, good for ‘getting by’ ... [while] bridging social capital is crucial for ‘getting ahead’” (Putnam, 2000, 22).

If we sketch the situation at country level with respect to the trade off between social engagement and private engagement, we are presented with an interesting situation whereby we register a clear polarization between Nordic countries (most fully engaged) and Mediterranean countries (most non participants), while the other countries present trade-offs in the patterns of participation.

When considering the variable ENGAGEMENT as the dependent variable and the variables listed above as explanatory variables, the analysis of the results the mLogit shows an interesting picture, highlighting different profiles of the participants. The result of the analysis and the complete list of the coefficients are shown in table 5

Table 3 : Coefficients of the model for the whole Europe

<i>Dependent Variable: ENGAGEMENT</i>	<i>Comparison between Non Engaged and Socially Engaged</i>		<i>Comparison between Non Engaged and Privately Engaged</i>		<i>Comparison between Non Engaged and Fully Engaged</i>	
	Coef.	P>t	Coef.	P>t	Coef.	P>t
Explanatory Variables						
Income: Less than 1800Euros	0.703	0.511	-2.670	0.001	-2.527	0.004
Income: Less than 3600Euros	0.786	0.444	-1.939	0.001	-2.882	0.000
Income: Less than 6000Euros	0.618	0.547	-0.351	0.529	-0.496	0.350
Income: Less than 12000Euros	1.141	0.256	-1.529	0.007	-1.754	0.001
Income: Less than 18000Euros	1.878	0.061	-1.399	0.012	-1.587	0.002
Income: Less than 24000Euros	1.783	0.076	-0.723	0.190	-1.005	0.052
Income: Less than 30000Euros	0.884	0.384	-1.021	0.069	-1.045	0.043
Income: Less than 36000Euros	1.240	0.224	-1.140	0.440	-0.800	0.124
Income: Less than 60000Euros	1.274	0.208	-0.601	0.283	-0.434	0.398
Income: Less than 90000Euros	1.470	0.156	-0.217	0.714	-0.389	0.478
Income: Less than 120000Euros	0.690	0.602	-0.936	0.157	-0.694	0.280
Age (18-24)	-1.997	0.000	-0.333	0.313	0.712	0.010
Age (24-35)	-1.940	0.000	-0.181	0.539	0.875	0.000
Age (35-44)	-1.726	0.000	1.001	0.000	1.228	0.000
Age (44-55)	-1.391	0.000	0.340	0.223	1.231	0.000
Age (55-65)	-0.960	0.000	0.648	0.011	1.600	0.000
Sex	-0.389	0.000	-0.815	0.000	-0.741	0.000
Watching TV	-0.113	0.000	0.035	0.153	-0.253	0.000
Listening to the Radio	0.060	0.001	0.048	0.006	0.077	0.000
Reading Newspaper	-0.268	0.000	0.174	0.000	0.177	0.000
Surfing the Web	-0.006	0.779	0.042	0.000	0.042	0.000
Individual Human Capital	0.196	0.000	0.098	0.000	0.178	0.000
Number of persons	0.060	0.145	0.057	0.132	-0.181	0.000
Residence: suburbs of a big city	0.506	0.007	-0.495	0.002	0.447	0.009
Residence: small town	0.630	0.000	-0.625	0.000	0.492	0.000
Residence: country village	0.005	0.979	-0.862	0.000	0.397	0.006
Residence: home in the countryside	0.118	0.735	-0.634	0.041	0.406	0.116
Citizenship	0.672	0.003	0.610	0.004	0.669	0.000
Declared Religious	0.946	0.000	0.348	0.004	1.027	0.000
Main Activity: In education	0.548	0.057	-0.059	0.834	0.227	0.382
Main Activity: Unemployed, looking for job	0.042	0.877	-1.159	0.000	-0.981	0.000
Main Activity: Unemployed, not looking for job	-0.519	0.238	-1.086	0.003	-0.415	0.275
Main Activity: permanently sick	-0.040	0.891	-2.015	0.000	-0.582	0.063
Main Activity:retired	0.098	0.592	-1.249	0.000	0.706	0.000
Main Activity:community or military service	1.437	0.155	0.389	0.745	-1.745	0.070
Main Activity:houseworker	0.203	0.217	-0.995	0.000	-0.308	0.054
Main Activity:other	-0.365	0.403	-1.081	0.083	0.091	0.823
Constant	-3.606	0.115	-6.198	0.000	-7.110	0.000

As suggested earlier, we contend that the *social engagement* groups are *bridging* and bring citizens into contact with people from a cross-section of society, while the *private engagement* organizations are *bonding* and tend to aggregate people who have mainly the same background. Consistently, the depicted profiles indicate that the *income level* and the *main activity of the previous week* are not relevant explanatory variables for social participation, while it's highly so for *private participation*. More specifically, lower income and non-active participation to the job market are associated with a substantial reduction of the probability of being privately engaged. The age and the place of residence have opposite effects whereby older people living in suburbs are more likely to participate in social, and working-age individuals living in small cities are more likely to participate in private groups. In both cases, males are more likely to participate than women, but this distinction is much more evident with respect to private participation and it is likely to indicate a *bias* due to a non-yet-closed gender gap. Level of individual human capital (proxied by the years of education), access to the media – and in particular listening to the radio – and being natives of the specific country of reference increases chances of participation in both types of organizations. The same is true for religious affiliation, although this characteristic has a much stronger effect on social participation.

As expected, these profiles show consistent differences between the two populations, but present also some relevant similarities. Direct analysis of the profile of the fully engaged individuals allows to further elaborate on this issue.

As reported in the table, individuals that are fully engaged (participate both in social and private organizations) have a peculiar profile that seems to be a composition of the previous two identikit. First, income plays a big role as the probability of being fully engaged decreases for the individuals with a yearly family income below 30.000 euros.

In line with the previous comparison, individuals in the “productive age” are more likely to be part of the fully engaged group, as well as men have a higher probability than women. Moreover, Individual Human Capital plays a significant positive role so that individuals with a higher lever of ICH have a higher probability to be members of the Fully Engaged group. Citizenship and religiosity yield the same effect detected in the previous two groups.

The place where people are living gives an interesting picture; individuals that live outside big cities but not completely isolated in the countryside have a higher

probability to be part of the fully engaged group. Conversely, the effect of the media is controversial; if people who spend more time watching TV have a lower probability to be part of the group, increasing the time spent listening to the Radio, reading Newspapers and surfing the Web increases the probability to being fully engaged.

The results inside the clusters

In order to deepen the investigation, we repeated the analysis for the four clusters identified in section 4.3. The comparison of the results shows a peculiar and picture of the Europe.

The analysis of cluster 1 (Nordic countries) gives a clear picture of the dynamics related to participation and table 6 shows the results in detail. The comparison of the three models resembles the differences identified in the overall results, but not quite. First of all, it is worth noticing that income variables are not significant in any of the three models, showing that – in the Nordic cluster – income does not have any effect on the probability of participate. Subsequently and unlike in the overall picture, females do not have a significantly lower probability of being socially or fully engaged, while people outside the job market are less likely to be fully engaged.

Table 4 : Coefficients of the model for the Nordic countries

<i>Dependent Variable: ENGAGEMENT Cluster 1: Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Netherlands</i>	<i>Comparison between Non Engaged and Socially Engaged</i>		<i>Comparison between Non Engaged and Privately Engaged</i>		<i>Comparison between Non Engaged and Fully Engaged</i>	
	Coef.	P>t	Coef.	P>t	Coef.	P>t
Explanatory Variables						
Income: Less than 1800Euros	-0.065	0.967	-1.489	0.349	-0.609	0.677
Income: Less than 3600Euros	0.522	0.669	0.485	0.675	0.151	0.885
Income: Less than 6000Euros	-0.312	0.757	-0.366	0.719	-1.482	0.089
Income: Less than 12000Euros	0.547	0.562	-0.346	0.714	-0.589	0.454
Income: Less than 18000Euros	0.725	0.440	0.184	0.845	-0.037	0.963
Income: Less than 24000Euros	0.735	0.431	0.434	0.641	-0.130	0.867
Income: Less than 30000Euros	0.503	0.594	0.478	0.609	0.388	0.618
Income: Less than 36000Euros	0.523	0.582	0.324	0.733	0.575	0.464
Income: Less than 60000Euros	0.741	0.439	1.287	0.171	1.434	0.068
Income: Less than 90000Euros	0.889	0.360	0.188	0.846	0.198	0.805
Income: Less than 120000Euros	0.019	0.988	1.205	0.283	0.891	0.355
Age (18-24)	-1.022	0.016	0.130	0.764	-0.004	0.992
Age (24-35)	-1.136	0.002	0.203	0.613	1.251	0.000
Age (35-44)	-1.134	0.003	0.807	0.037	0.866	0.007
Age (44-55)	-0.544	0.106	0.511	0.156	0.542	0.066
Age (55-65)	-0.779	0.005	0.696	0.024	0.806	0.000
Sex	0.002	0.990	-0.489	0.001	-0.113	0.403
Watching TV	-0.103	0.023	-0.036	0.378	-0.194	0.000
Listening to the Radio	0.018	0.565	0.046	0.085	0.080	0.001
Reading Newspaper	0.045	0.576	0.210	0.010	0.346	0.000
Surfing the Web	0.008	0.861	0.008	0.858	0.040	0.358
Individual Human Capital	0.099	0.000	0.030	0.279	0.123	0.000
Number of persons	-0.054	0.567	-0.162	0.019	-0.257	0.000
Residence: suburbs of a big city	0.405	0.150	-0.022	0.928	0.853	0.000
Residence: small town	0.492	0.037	0.212	0.314	0.556	0.006
Residence: country village	0.520	0.038	0.211	0.362	0.954	0.000
Residence: home in the countryside	0.026	0.943	-0.095	0.783	1.308	0.000
Citizenship	0.462	0.079	0.883	0.000	1.171	0.000
Declared Religious	0.842	0.000	-0.159	0.305	0.982	0.000
Main Activity: In education	0.592	0.131	0.024	0.943	0.298	0.315
Main Activity: Unemployed, looking for job	-0.058	0.919	-0.617	0.114	-1.065	0.011
Main Activity: Unemployed, not looking for job	-0.404	0.492	-0.933	0.037	-1.465	0.000
Main Activity: permanently sick	-0.274	0.513	-1.315	0.000	-0.843	0.009
Main Activity:retired	-0.039	0.899	-1.593	0.000	-0.431	0.081
Main Activity:community or military service	...	...	...	...	...	...
Main Activity:houseworker	-0.192	0.493	-1.237	0.000	-0.887	0.000
Main Activity:other	0.107	0.823	-1.805	0.001	-0.785	0.044
Constant	-2.071	0.069	-1.106	0.316	-2.260	0.014

The analysis of the results of cluster 2 (Belgium, Germany, Great Britain and Luxemburg) are shown in table 7 and gives a slightly different picture.

In contrast with the results obtained with the Nordic countries, in this cluster the income play a major role in the probability to be privately and fully engaged where people with an income lower than 60.000 € have a decreasing probability of participate. Nevertheless the income turns out to be non significant for the probability to be part of the socially engaged group.

Older people are still more likely to be part of the socially engaged group, but the effect is much clearer in this cluster than the previous analysis. The same consideration holds for men, who have a much higher probability of being part of any group.

On other hand, the effect of the place of domicile maintains its direction but is weaker than in the Nordic countries, and people outside the job market seem to have an higher probability to be part of the socially engaged groups whereas they are less likely to be member of the privately or fully engaged groups.

Table 5 : Coefficients of the model for the Continental countries

Dependent Variable: ENGAGEMENT Cluster 2: Belgium, Germany, Great Britain, Luxemburg	Comparison between Non Engaged and Socially Engaged		Comparison between Non Engaged and Privately Engaged		Comparison between Non Engaged and Fully Engaged	
	Coef.	P>t	Coef.	P>t	Coef.	P>t
Explanatory Variables						
Income: Less than 1800Euros	-0.379	0.792	-2.169	0.045	-4.971	0.000
Income: Less than 3600Euros	0.620	0.639	-2.245	0.017	-3.240	0.000
Income: Less than 6000Euros	0.010	0.994	-2.936	0.004	-1.833	0.012
Income: Less than 12000Euros	0.290	0.812	-2.815	0.000	-2.356	0.000
Income: Less than 18000Euros	1.441	0.233	-2.277	0.002	-2.208	0.001
Income: Less than 24000Euros	0.982	0.421	-1.764	0.012	-1.543	0.014
Income: Less than 30000Euros	0.142	0.908	-1.785	0.011	-1.625	0.010
Income: Less than 36000Euros	0.606	0.623	-1.645	0.020	-1.591	0.012
Income: Less than 60000Euros	0.694	0.570	-1.505	0.032	-1.310	0.036
Income: Less than 90000Euros	0.602	0.634	-0.926	0.204	-1.232	0.063
Income: Less than 120000Euros	-1.425	0.294	-0.002	0.914	-1.693	0.057
Age (18-24)	-2.389	0.000	0.050	0.919	0.156	0.677
Age (24-35)	-2.457	0.000	0.238	0.568	-0.009	0.976
Age (35-44)	-2.065	0.000	0.303	0.464	0.101	0.746
Age (44-55)	-1.451	0.000	0.806	0.046	0.688	0.021
Age (55-65)	-1.081	0.000	0.900	0.014	0.484	0.052
Sex	-0.549	0.000	-0.381	0.020	-0.631	0.000
Watching TV	-0.118	0.004	-0.074	0.077	-0.176	0.000
Listening to the Radio	0.071	0.007	0.056	0.045	0.001	0.979
Reading Newspaper	-0.351	0.000	0.053	0.380	0.215	0.000
Surfing the Web	-0.003	0.039	-0.005	0.004	-0.002	0.083
Individual Human Capital	0.229	0.000	0.119	0.000	0.210	0.000
Number of persons	0.089	0.217	0.082	0.248	-0.018	0.753
Residence: suburbs of a big city	0.685	0.020	0.201	0.472	0.429	0.078
Residence: small town	0.607	0.017	-0.122	0.607	0.081	0.689
Residence: country village	0.206	0.484	0.110	0.677	0.461	0.035
Residence: home in the countryside	0.649	0.244	0.366	0.476	0.594	0.183
Citizenship	0.609	0.044	0.281	0.311	0.579	0.012
Declared Religious	0.993	0.000	0.364	0.029	1.059	0.000
Main Activity: In education	1.285	0.010	0.172	0.749	0.491	0.225
Main Activity: Unemployed, looking for job	-0.018	0.963	0.017	0.959	-0.873	0.021
Main Activity: Unemployed, not looking for job	0.273	0.665	-0.120	0.840	0.210	0.610
Main Activity: permanently sick	-0.055	0.887	-1.819	0.000	-0.570	0.140
Main Activity:retired	0.075	0.789	-0.481	0.152	-0.060	0.819
Main Activity:community or military service	0.817	0.415	1.715	0.212	-1.413	0.087
Main Activity:houseworker	0.573	0.019	-0.215	0.421	-0.205	0.361
Main Activity:other	-0.499	0.522	-0.359	0.764	0.815	0.193
Constant	-3.547	0.008	-1.117	0.250	-1.765	0.032

The story changes altogether when looking at the Eastern and the Mediterranean clusters. In fact, the analysis of the Mediterranean countries (Italy, Greece, Portugal and Spain, tab. 8) and of the Eastern countries (Poland and Slovenia, tab. 9) triggers concerns on the validity of the proposed model for these clusters.

First of all, the limited number of significant coefficients coming out from the model suggests that, in these clusters, participation is driven by variables not considered in the model and not collected through the survey.

Moreover, the variables used for the analysis are *self reported* and doubts persist on the reliability of the variable *income*. For example, almost nobody declared a yearly family income above €90.000,00 in any of the two clusters.

With respect to the Eastern cluster, as mentioned before, doubts persist on the reliability of the Polish data. In fact, the Polish dataset shows anomalous patterns of response by which 80% of the individuals answer consistently in the same manner. Although we haven't reported the detailed table, we have also re-run the model on the Slovenian sample alone, and the results are quite similar to those of the Continental countries.

Provided these caveats, the analysis confirms, for both the clusters, some common trends appeared in the previous groups of countries. The role of age in the socially engaged group is similar to what recorded for Nordic and continental countries, as well as the role of the individual human capital or the people outside the job market that looks less likely to be part of the privately engaged group. Moreover, women still appear to be less likely to be engaged in all the groups.

The adoption of a different model exploring new dimensions and variables appear necessary for modeling the participation in these parts of Europe.

Table 6 : Coefficients of the model for the Mediterranean countries

Dependent Variable: ENGAGEMENT Cluster 3: Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal	Comparison between Non Engaged and Socially Engaged		Comparison between Non Engaged and Privately Engaged		Comparison between Non Engaged and Fully Engaged	
	Coef.	P>t	Coef.	P>t	Coef.	P>t
Explanatory Variables						
Income: Less than 1800Euros	-1.435	0.226	-1.788	0.064	1.020	0.223
Income: Less than 3600Euros	-3.047	0.001	-1.994	0.010	-1.919	0.025
Income: Less than 6000Euros	-1.341	0.093	-1.017	0.132	0.001	0.999
Income: Less than 12000Euros	-1.037	0.183	-0.405	0.416	-0.725	0.241
Income: Less than 18000Euros	-1.047	0.168	-0.652	0.192	-0.180	0.756
Income: Less than 24000Euros	-0.026	0.972	0.073	0.879	-0.097	0.870
Income: Less than 30000Euros	-0.993	0.217	-0.428	0.440	-0.521	0.401
Income: Less than 36000Euros	-0.504	0.530	-1.254	0.036	0.244	0.698
Income: Less than 60000Euros	-1.398	0.112	0.251	0.655	0.295	0.641
Income: Less than 90000Euros*	...	....	...	....	...	....
Income: Less than 120000Euros*	...	....	...	....	...	....
Age (18-24)	-1.025	0.042	-0.858	0.294	-0.961	0.163
Age (24-35)	-0.921	0.023	-0.303	0.690	-0.829	0.177
Age (35-44)	-1.294	0.003	0.692	0.347	-0.282	0.611
Age (44-55)	-0.778	0.050	-0.072	0.922	-0.406	0.463
Age (55-65)	-0.647	0.050	0.395	0.559	0.064	0.894
Sex	0.347	0.142	-0.909	0.000	-0.614	0.008
Watching TV	-0.070	0.161	0.020	0.717	-0.095	0.119
Listening to the Radio	-0.039	0.329	0.028	0.518	0.083	0.046
Reading Newspaper	0.036	0.723	0.060	0.486	0.196	0.030
Surfing the Web	-0.051	0.309	0.019	0.118	0.026	0.005
Individual Human Capital	0.120	0.000	0.102	0.000	0.127	0.000
Number of persons	-0.040	0.626	0.067	0.427	0.084	0.373
Residence: suburbs of a big city	1.039	0.006	0.476	0.231	0.139	0.758
Residence: small town	0.994	0.001	0.545	0.068	0.769	0.022
Residence: country village	0.564	0.067	0.273	0.426	0.483	0.184
Residence: home in the countryside	0.482	0.450	0.526	0.372	-0.864	0.302
Citizenship	0.968	0.078	0.618	0.228	0.632	0.222
Declared Religious	0.094	0.759	0.162	0.575	0.455	0.107
Main Activity: In education	0.014	0.981	0.717	0.206	0.470	0.375
Main Activity: Unemployed, looking for job	0.469	0.328	-0.696	0.251	-0.887	0.126
Main Activity: Unemployed, not looking for job	-0.340	0.445	-0.199	0.765	0.334	0.432
Main Activity: permanently sick	0.685	0.274	-3.734	0.001	0.009	0.993
Main Activity:retired	-0.169	0.657	-1.259	0.044	-0.350	0.468
Main Activity:community or military service*	...	...	...	...	-1.413	0.087
Main Activity:houseworker	0.237	0.234	-2.560	0.000	-1.667	0.000
Main Activity:other*	...	...	0.572	0.017	0.429	0.116
Constant	-3.547	0.008	-3.424	0.001	-3.915	0.000

* variable excluded for scarcity of data

Table 7 : Coefficients of the model for the Eastern countries

Dependent Variable: ENGAGEMENT Cluster 3: Poland, Slovenia	Comparison between Non Engaged and Socially Engaged		Comparison between Non Engaged and Privately Engaged		Comparison between Non Engaged and Fully Engaged	
	Coef.	P>t	Coef.	P>t	Coef.	P>t
Explanatory Variables						
Income: Less than 1800Euros*	...	...	...	...	...	...
Income: Less than 3600Euros	-0.357	0.387	0.707	0.250	0.839	0.304
Income: Less than 6000Euros	-0.509	0.209	0.780	0.102	2.463	0.001
Income: Less than 12000Euros	-0.094	0.824	0.355	0.562	2.078	0.010
Income: Less than 18000Euros	0.256	0.626	0.011	0.988	2.302	0.010
Income: Less than 24000Euros	-0.157	0.811	0.275	0.753	1.929	0.041
Income: Less than 30000Euros	0.605	0.369	1.361	0.123	3.478	0.002
Income: Less than 36000Euros	-0.534	0.647	0.129	0.922	0.582	0.613
Income: Less than 60000Euros*	...	....	...	....	...	....
Income: Less than 90000Euros*	...	....	...	....	...	....
Income: Less than 120000Euros*	...	....	...	....	...	....
Age (18-24)	-1.450	0.012	0.015	0.983	0.633	0.430
Age (24-35)	-0.937	0.054	-0.184	0.763	0.342	0.649
Age (35-44)	-0.943	0.048	1.952	0.000	1.197	0.073
Age (44-55)	-0.997	0.024	0.512	0.314	1.483	0.016
Age (55-65)	-0.252	0.484	0.346	0.501	2.609	0.000
Sex	-0.179	0.422	-0.696	0.001	-1.055	0.000
Watching TV	-0.074	0.106	0.069	0.186	-0.471	0.000
Listening to the Radio	0.033	0.385	0.019	0.636	0.197	0.000
Reading Newspaper	0.084	0.375	0.284	0.001	0.215	0.113
Surfing the Web	0.059	0.274	0.280	0.000	0.148	0.048
Individual Human Capital	0.083	0.032	-0.036	0.467	0.144	0.001
Number of persons	0.081	0.250	0.077	0.256	-0.440	0.000
Residence: suburbs of a big city	-0.837	0.114	-0.724	0.127	0.976	0.116
Residence: small town	-0.022	0.932	-1.072	0.000	1.414	0.001
Residence: country village	-0.622	0.042	-1.683	0.000	0.403	0.403
Residence: home in the countryside	-0.280	0.665	-0.863	0.212	2.442	0.000
Citizenship	2.103	0.002	-0.683	0.314	1.094	0.040
Declared Religious	0.360	0.261	0.278	0.433	0.716	0.083
Main Activity: In education	0.499	0.354	-0.671	0.249	0.662	0.324
Main Activity: Unemployed, looking for job	-0.393	0.481	-0.177	0.435	0.613	0.320
Main Activity: Unemployed, not looking for job	-0.145	0.556	-0.987	0.643	0.099	0.543
Main Activity: permanently sick	-0.553	0.516	-4.279	0.000	-2.228	0.052
Main Activity:retired	0.017	0.965	-0.674	0.091	0.959	0.022
Main Activity:community or military service	...	...	...	...	...	...
Main Activity:houseworker	-0.360	0.352	-0.698	0.078	-0.581	0.372
Main Activity:other	0.411	0.665	0.133	0.897	-1.267	0.228
Constant	-4.664	0.000	-2.616	0.026	-8.079	0.000

* variable excluded for scarcity of data

Participation and perception of Europe's social reality: the differences.

The tendential institutional slowness in adapting to change shown by some countries in a situation of incremental rise of the cost of the status-quo has been identified by many (Esping-Andersen, 1999; Bison & Esping-Andersen, 2000; Kohli, 1999; Easterlin, 1987) as one of the key reasons for the decline of the traditional welfare state, especially in terms of sustainability. Moreover, many authors (see for example Wolfe, 1989; Fukuyama, 2000; Putnam, 2000; Beugelsdijk & Smulders, 2003)⁸ suggest the existence of a “crowding out effect” by which the focus of *traditional* welfare states on social expenditures and comprehensive social programs undermines informal caring relations, social networks, and systems of reciprocity and leads to a general decline of commitment to civil norms, of participation in civil society, and trust in fellow citizens and social institutions.

A situation whereby individuals expect solutions from institutions that are not able to keep up with the development of society is a structural problem. As Delor foresaw, “the problem of how we finance the welfare state should not obscure a separate issue: if each person thinks he has an inalienable right to welfare, no matter what happens to the world, that's not equity, it's just creating a society where you can't ask anything of people”.

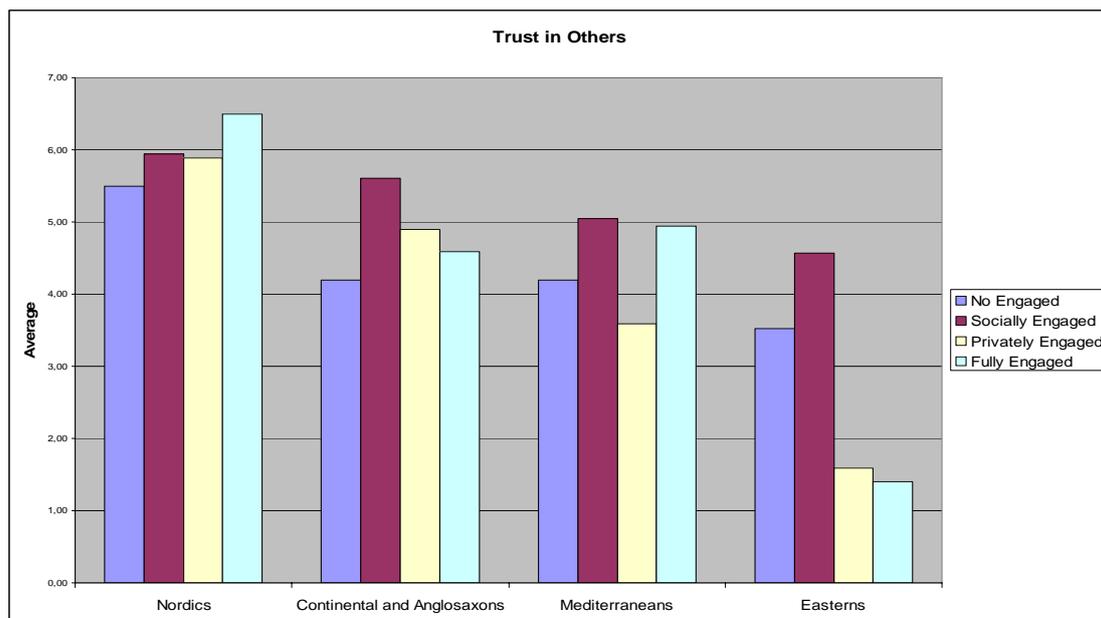
Part of the Nordic success is due to the ability of these countries to invest in the creation of a renewed form of welfare state in *closer dialogue* with civil society (Esping-Andersen 1990, 2002, 2006). Such political architecture creates the structural and cultural conditions for a welfare mix operating in a social environment of high ‘generalized trust’ between the populations and state-systems (Rothstein and Stolle 2003) and where voluntary activity works complementary to the state, not a substitute for it (Bartkowski and Jasinka-Kania, 2004).

Although the levels of participation are different, these considerations suggest the need of investigating whether such feeling of ‘generalized trust’ holds systematically in case of individual participation, whether different participatory styles suggest substantial differences in attitudes towards policy, society, and the economy, or whether other latent dimensions must be necessarily investigating before making any policy suggestion.

⁸ The “crowding out” hypothesis must not be considered valid altogether. In fact some scholars reject the crowding out hypothesis by arguing that a well developed welfare state creates the structural and cultural conditions for a thriving and multiform civil society. The point could be certainly shared

The first set of graphs investigates individual perceptions towards a number of social dimensions. What is apparent is that people who participate perceive the world in a more positive way than those who don't participate. In this sense, the first remark to be made is that the greater the participation, the higher the trust in others. "Trust lubricates cooperation. The greater the level of trust within a community, the greater the likelihood of cooperation. And cooperation itself breeds trust" (Putnam 1993:171). Considering people's trust in the others (fig. 7), it is apparent that people in Nordic and Continental Europe engaged in participative activities has a more positive approach to the society. On other hands, this trend is not completely confirmed in Southern and Eastern Europe.⁹ By the way, Nordic fully engaged people report the highest mark with 6.57 while eastern European fully engaged report the lowest score: 1.56.

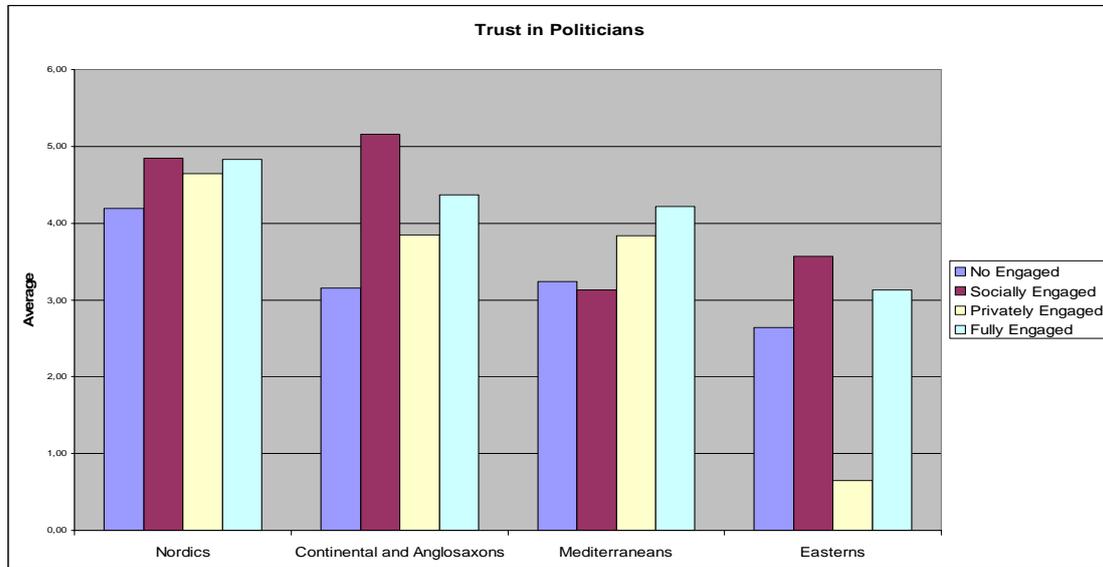
Figure 7 : Trust in others



The general picture shown in the previous graph is also confirmed when analyzing the "Trust in Politicians" (fig. 8). It is also interesting noticing that the average score assigned in the different clusters show the same trend, whereby the Nordic countries – on average – trust much more than Southern and Eastern countries. The anomaly of polish data is clear also in this question, with an peculiar behaviour of Privately engaged people.

⁹ Again, the results of Eastern Europe are affected by the Polish data, which shows an anomalous concentration of answers.

Figure 8 : Trust in Politicians



The overall trend is still confirmed for the assessment of the satisfaction of the way democracy works in the country (fig.9) and the perception of the state of the economy (fig.10), where participants are more positive than non participants. The trend is uniform for Nordic and continental countries and more peculiar for the rest of Europe. Still present the polish anomaly.

Figure 9 : Satisfaction of the way democracy works in the country

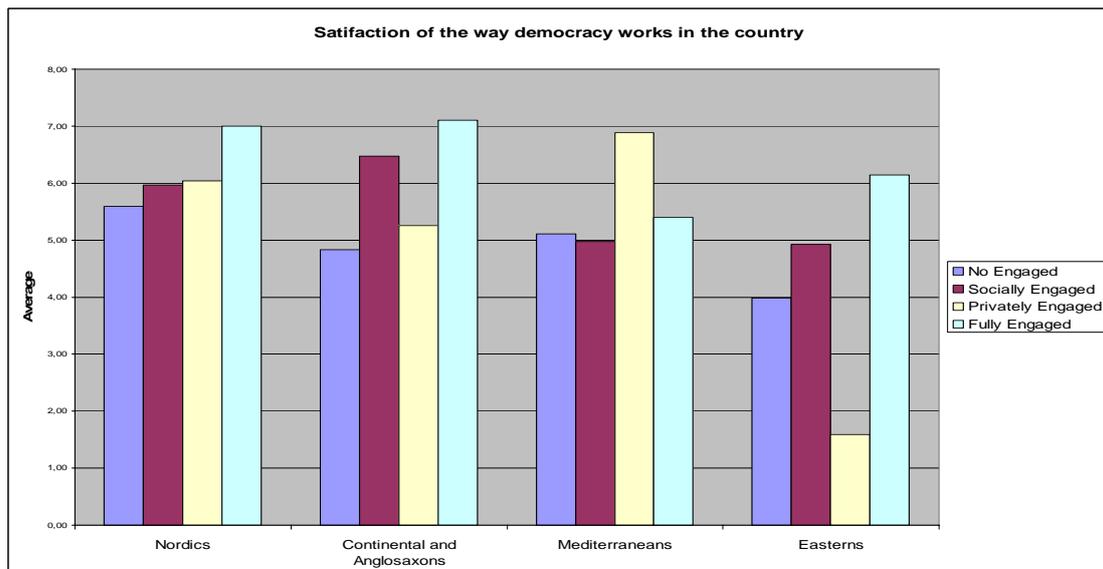
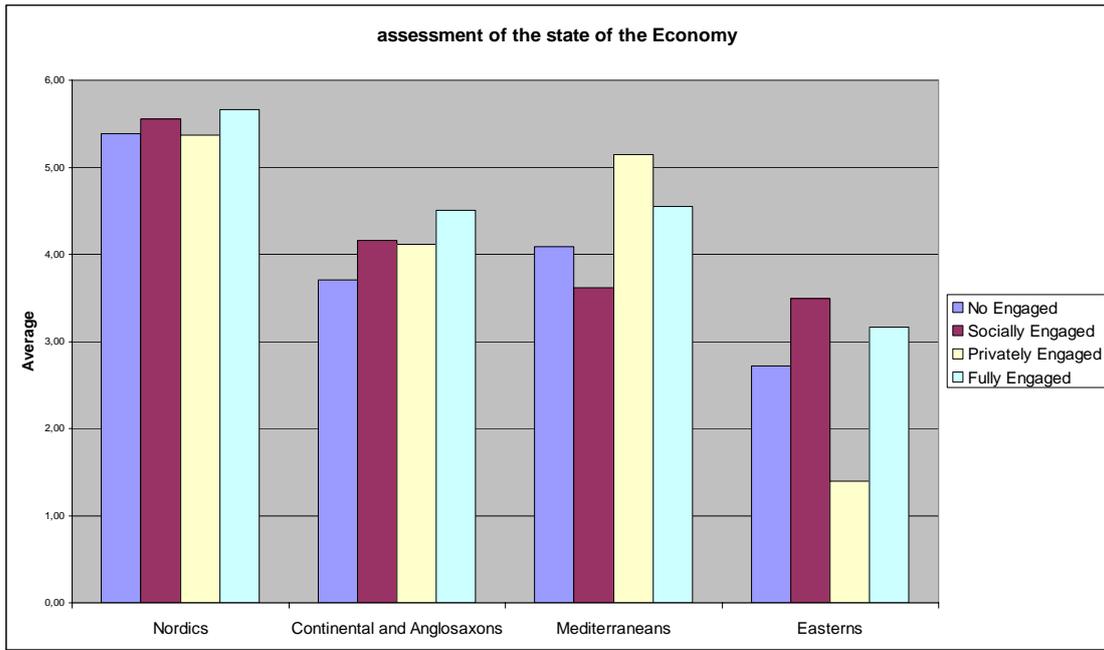


Figure 10 : assessment of the state of the Economy



One final remark regards the existence of some transversal dimensions such as “voted in the last elections” (fig.11) or “importance of friend in life” (fig.12) that show common trends shared all across Europe.

Figure 11 : Voted in the last elections

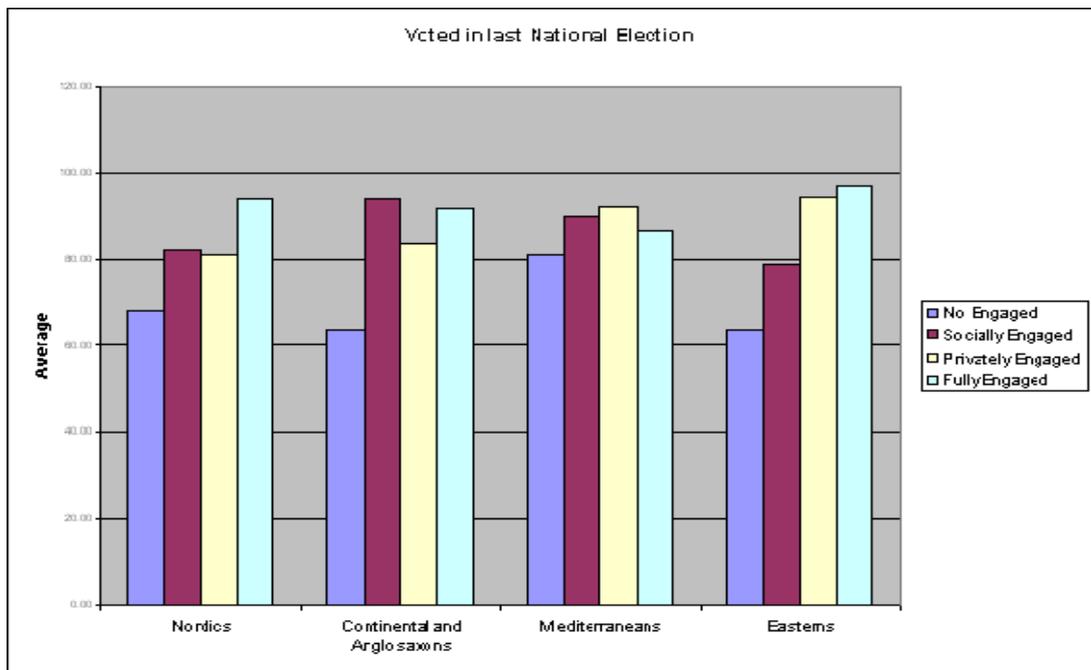
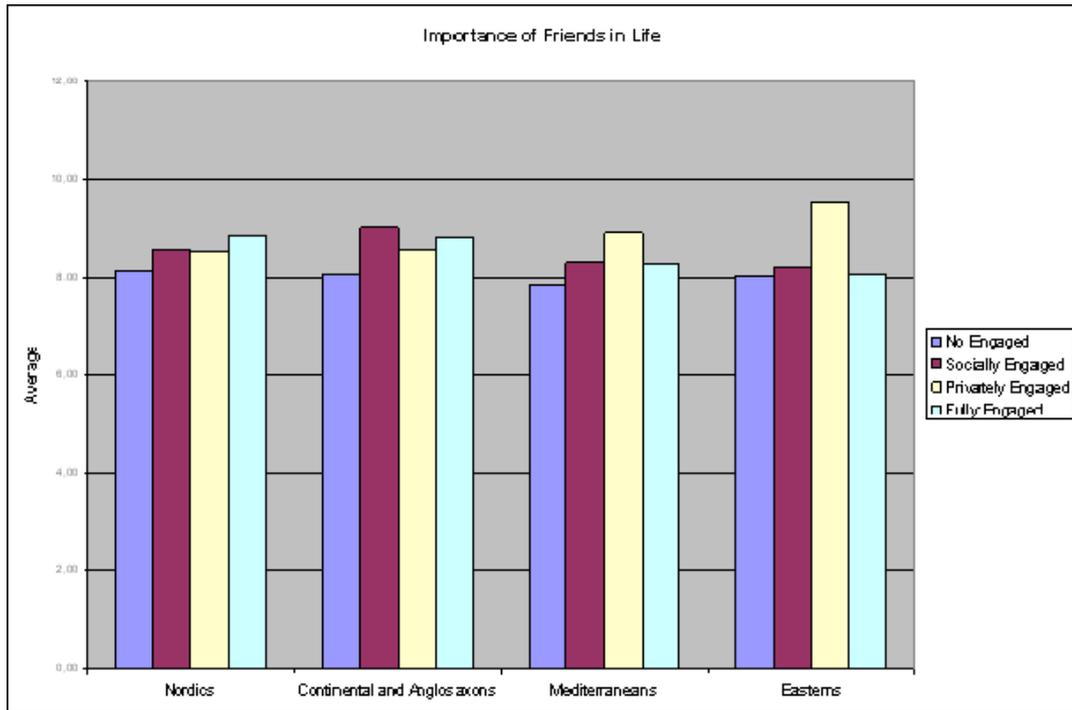


Figure 12 : Importance of friends in life



Conclusions for future work

The analyses presented do not advocate for the development of specific organization or structures. In fact, as suggested earlier, we are interested in the characteristics and development of the European social reality as a whole. Specifically, we are trying to understand what the determinants of social involvement are and whether involvement can enhance the results of the coordination process between State and stakeholders in an increasingly diverse society.

Of course, we have sketched a picture that depends on the *indicators chosen*, which determine the representation of reality that we are using. A set of indicators is not reality itself, but rather a descriptive model of reality. This caveat explains the limited validity of the model for Eastern and Mediterranean countries and suggests that, in these countries, participation is driven by variables not considered in the model and not collected through the survey. Moreover the data used are from a survey undertaken in 2002, meaning that the picture today might be different.

The possibility of drafting policy measures that can effectively support the close coordination between the stakeholders depend on the availability of adequate data and – in the present situation – we must highlight a *problem with the quality of the available information* as important variables, like *informal participation*, which is a typical asset of the Mediterranean region, are poorly or not at all represented.

One point to highlight is the *consistently positive effect of education for all kinds of participation in all the clusters*. Such result advocates for looking at education as one of the possibly most transversal policy actions to undertake and suggests the importance of working on the quality of education systems both at basic and higher level.

This empiric analysis characterizes some of the dimensions along which European social models differ while also suggesting that a situation whereby individuals expect solutions from institutions that are not able to keep up with the development of society is a structural problem. As Delor foresaw, “the problem of how we finance the welfare state should not obscure a separate issue: if each person thinks he has an inalienable right to welfare, no matter what happens to the world, that's not equity, it's just creating a society where you can't ask anything of people”. Part of the Nordic success is due to the ability of these countries to invest in the creation of a renewed form of welfare state in *closer dialogue* with civil society.

The existence of such strong structural differences impedes the application of one-size-fits-all policies and suggest the need of cooking *ah hoc* recipes closely

agreed upon with the stakeholders, who take on the independent and legitimate role of interpreting social needs and of launching cooperation strategies at territorial level. In this paradigm, favoring individual participation to the public-value creation process is a key element and reminds us that "...how we associate with each other, and on what terms, has enormous implications for our well-being...." (Woolcock, 2001, p. 15).

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European Commission

EUR 23088 EN – Joint Research Centre

Title: The Characteristics of Social Participation in Europe: Evidence from ESS2002

Author(s): Massimiliano Mascherini, Andrea Saltelli, Daniele Vidoni

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

2007 – 46 pp. – 29.7 x 21 cm

EUR – Scientific and Technical Research series – ISSN 1018-5593

ISBN 978-92-79-08192-7

Abstract

This report investigates the characteristics of social involvement in Europe by tracing and identifying the shares of individuals that are more likely to be involved with different kinds of formal organizations and showing how each of these groups perceives the political, economical, and relational spheres of social reality.

The analysis covers 19 European countries and is based on indicators for which the data has been principally drawn from the European Social Survey of 2002. The results indicate a heterogeneous Europe in which Nordic and Continental countries are adequately represented by the existing indicators, which determine the representation of reality that we are using. Mediterranean and Eastern countries, on the other side, appear to follow different participatory schemes. Thus, alternative variables, such as informal participation, must be collected and analyzed to inform policies that can effectively support the different forms of interactions (both formal and informal) between State and Society.

Moreover, education has a consistently positive effect for all kinds of participation in all the countries under analysis. Such result advocates for looking at education as one of the possibly most transversal policy actions to undertake and suggests the importance of working on the quality of education systems both at basic and higher level.

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