



**Multi-level Governance, Europeanisation
and the poorest EU region:
Epirus and the 2nd Hellenic Community Support Framework**

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Abstract

The 1990s have seen the emergence and growth of the European polity as a result of milestone developments in the EU's institutional realm. The Single European Act in 1987, the review of the EU regional policy in 1988 and the Treaty of the European Union paved the way for the retreat of intergovernmentalism and set the scene for the practice of multi-level governance, where powers and competences are shared among European, national and subnational organisations in a number of key European policy areas. Concurrently, this renewed thrust of European integration started producing sizeable domestic impact termed as 'Europeanisation', closely associated with the notion of modernisation, in member states, chiefly in the cohesion countries that were subject to a regional policy progressively acquiring its standing on the plateau of EU key policy areas. Regional or cohesion policy has entailed the institutional innovation of partnership, the provision of working relationships among the European Commission, central national governments and subnational socio-economic forces and sizeable increases in funding available for regional development policy implementation. Greece, after an uncertain decade of EU membership, has been reported to show signs of adaptation to European structures and norms in the 1990s, leading to the country's entry to the EMU, whereby there has been an alleged redefinition of the role and functions of the state vis-à-vis the regions and society. This paper looks at the implementation of the 2nd Community Support Framework Regional Operational Programme (ROP) for the Greek region of Epirus, quoted as the poorest EU region for the 2nd programming period 1994-1999 (Bache, 1998) to ascertain the validity of these claims in this regional context. Our findings negate many of the features of analyses looking at Greece in the 1990s and shed further light to work looking at the current 3rd programming period where Greece is reported as showing very poor adaptation to European structures.

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1. Multi-level Governance and Europeanisation

Multi-level governance (MLG) closely relates to the emergence of the European polity (Scharpf, 1988:266, Rosamond, 2000:52, 55-56) and lies at the heart of the debate between the two main streams of literature attempting to shed light to the evolution of the European enterprise since its inception at the start of the 1950s and its renewed dynamism from the mid-1980s onwards, namely *intergovernmentalist* or *state-centric* and *neo-functional* theories. The former attributes special importance to the state, the state executive and inter-state bargaining, while the latter looks at institutional evolution as the main propeller behind European integration. Moravcsik has been the primary recent advocate of intergovernmentalism and the role of inter-state bargaining, driven by national preferences formed by the interaction of societal strata with national central governments, in European Union policy-making (Moravcsik, 1993:481-487, 495-501). Moravcsik offers a clear account of how policy co-ordination is brought about within the EU framework, how this process is managed among and reflects internal socio-economic dynamics within nation states. He argues that national preference formation and policy pursue rests upon the interaction of domestic societal groups with the government and that the constraints imposed on governments correspond to the gains and losses by expected policy outcomes. Mechanisms of intergovernmental negotiation are referred as being the delegation to supranational officials and the “pooling of sovereignty among them”, thus achieving efficiency in bargaining, at the expense of somewhat higher risks vis-a-vis domestic groups; domestic goals are thus made more attainable. Moravcsik has argued that EU regional policy is a field of lesser importance for European national governments; regional policy is interpreted as side payments extended in exchange for national executive voting majorities or unanimity required on other policies (Moravcsik, 1993:496). Other akin contributors similarly approach the advancement of integration as a process

lead by member state executives as the primary actors (Rosamond, 2000:100,130-131). As discussed subsequently however, intergovernmentalism certainly fares better in interpreting treaty legislation and other milestone institutional advancement in the EU, or when temporally applied to the period leading to the ratification of the Single European Act in 1986. What the SEA constituted was a decisive turning point on the path to further European integration which state-centric approaches, to the very least those put forward in the first half of the 1990s, could not anymore track further. The Act, put together and forward by a resolute Commission under Jacques Delors and in preparing the ground for the completion of the Common Market, expanded policy competence at Community level in encompassing such areas as linked to the creation of the internal market, such as social and regional cohesion, introduced majority voting in a large number of European domains of policy and further paved the way for the qualitative characteristics of future integration in terms of enhancing the role of the European Parliament and providing for a common currency and a single monetary policy regime. The review of the EU regional policy, culminating in the creation the Structural Funds and national Community Support Frameworks in 1988, as well as the Maastricht Treaty on the European Union (TEU), consolidated and brought further this set of institutional innovations (Rosamond, 2000:98-99). This competence expansion involved the empowerment of new and existing actors in the EC/EU decision-making processes designed anew. Specifically, the review of the regional policy provisioned the participation of subnational governance as partners in the design and implementation of regional operational programmes with the European Commission and national governments (Nanetti, 1996:64). Further, the established institutional co-operation and co-decision procedures between the European Council, the Parliament and the Commission transformed the legislative process from a once Council-dominated premise to a dialectic process among the three organs (Marks, Hooghe and Blank, 1996:364). Moreover, the TEU itself has been the first instance of European treaty

legislation that, once concluded, sparked widespread mobilisation, instigated intense debates and raised concerns in virtually all member states and beyond. These developments upturned a key state-centric argumentative premise that national political contexts or 'arenas' are discrete or nested, as the cumulative expansion of the European political economy started being shaped by a growing interaction across member states based on the pursue of common interest at Community, or Union level. All in all, the 1985 to 1995 period, the two terms of office of the Jacques Delors Commission, represents rather indisputably a departure gradient for the study of European integration, from the point where state-centric conceptions were able to yield explanatory power and onto a new context where "states are melded gently into a multi-level polity by their leaders and the actions of numerous subnational and supranational actors" (Marks, Hooghe and Blank, 1996:371).

Marks has further placed regional policy as the foundation for his MLG theoretical proposition, where (i) a centripetal process within the EU transfers decision-making competences to the institutions of the Union and concurrently (ii) there is a centrifugal process by which authority is driven away from national central governments towards subnational authorities (Marks, 1993:402), whereby cultivation of contacts with the third triangular apex or *latus* of the MLG conceptual triangle, the EU institutions, is facilitated. Marks has pointed out that, "beyond and beneath the highly visible politics of member state bargaining lies a dimly lit process of integration, and here the Commission has played a vital role", by propelling its initiatives (in regional and other sectors of policy) across the polities and territory of the European Union, thus bringing about multi-level governance (1993:392). The enhanced role of the Commission vis-à-vis national state executives has particularly become evident as, according to regulations governing this 2nd programming period (1994-1999) under study, the Commission initiated and had its executives negotiating bilaterally with

government officials from the cohesion countries and regions (Marks, Hooghe and Blank, 1996:365-366, also in Nanetti, 1996:69, 73-74, for reference in national contexts see Ioakimidis, 1996:356-358, Magone, 2001:125-133, Morata and Muñoz, 1996:202-204, 206-210, Grote, 1996:277-278) and further had German regional policy redrafted on the basis of it conflicting with European competition regulations (Marks, Hooghe and Blank, 1996:367, Thielemann, 2002:49-52, 59-60). This involvement and, in general, the various manifestations of MLG have yet been more visible in policy implementation. The Commission has had formal executive powers and national governments bear the principal political responsibility for implementation, however these competences have been shared. In turn, the Commission, by being involved in the daily implementation of policy (regional, cohesion, environmental, common agricultural and other), maintains working relationships with subnational authorities, various interest groups and businesses. Within regional or cohesion policy, the involvement of the Commission reaches as far out as the field of implementation, since the realisation of the partnership principle in designing and drafting regional development programming require Commission representation and the active presence of Commission staff in all stages of the policy process, namely consultation, composition, fund allocation, implementation and evaluation of programmes. In particular, the working relationship and links fostered in the programme monitoring committees among the national central government, the European Commission and subnational authorities and organisations, "break open the mould of the state", in that the exercise of governance involves and employs a variety of actors and institutions within as well as beyond the territory of individual member states (Marks, Hooghe and Blank, 1996:368-369).

What hence matters greatly are the implications of the emergence and growth of the European polity and the practice of MLG for national and regional political economies of European member states. The literature on

“Europeanisation” attempts to shed full light to the workings of the multi-level governance structure (Börzel and Risse, 2003:59, 63). What is witnessed in this field of study is *complex causality*; references to structure and agency appear in differentiated and often related facets within European multi-level governance. EU membership rights obligations can have far-reaching domestic ripple effects in terms of their domestic impact¹. Agency has been reported as not merely unidirectional or “top-down”, but rather manifesting in evolving patterns (Featherstone 2001:6-7) and feedback loop circuits (Börzel and Risse, 2000:1). Keeping with the European Union as a prime point of reference, Radaelli furnishes us with concepts such as construction, diffusion, institutionalisation of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, ‘ways of doing things’, and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU public policy and politics and then incorporated in domestic actor discourse and dialogue, norms, values and identities, political and administrative structures and public policy in general (Radaelli, 2003:30). Radaelli also clears the ground of related terms such as (institutional) convergence, harmonisation, political integration, in stressing that these and other related phenomena are outcomes out of what is actually studied, that is the internalisation of European routine. Drawing on related earlier work, Radaelli further identifies four possible endpoints as outcomes of Europeanisation processes leading to change, namely *inertia*, *absorption*, *transformation* and *retrenchment*. Inertia describes a situation of lack of change and may result by dissimilarity between EU novelty and domestic established practice. Manifestations of inertia include delays in the transposition of legislation, delays in policy implementation and general resistance to EU-induced change. Absorption and accommodation indicate adaptation as the form of change against a domestic backdrop of resilience

¹ See Dyson and Featherstone on the impact of EMU in Italian politics (Dyson and Featherstone, 1999: 508-509, 533).

and/or flexibility. This backdrop conditions the outcome as one of mere policy accommodation rather than a more extensive induced change in structures and forms as those outlined above. Transformation denotes paradigmatic change: a new primary frame of reference appears within the structure(s) influenced by the process under study, constituting a new reality in the course of evolution of the organisation. Finally, retrenchment constitutes a rather paradoxical effect, as it is about domestic structures “pulling back”, adopting an esoteric stance and become more remote to the European state of affairs than initially. This outcome may particularly come about in cases where opposition by domestic societal and interest groups is very high (Radaelli, 2003:36-38). In their attempt for simplification of theoretical propositions and identification of areas for further research, Börzel and Risse (2003:58-59) make reference to two conditions, one necessary and one sufficient, that need be present if any induced change is to be observed by any Europeanising agency. First, anything European incurring domestically must be somehow incompatible to the present national context. This incompatibility, or ‘degree of misfit’, leads to adaptational pressures that constitute a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for domestic change. Such adaptational pressure, resting on the EU legal constitutional backdrop, is not to be neglected as the case might be in other supranational organisations. Börzel and Risse distinguish between policy and institutional misfits. The former represent problems of member states’ compliance with EU policy paradigms, regulations, rules, aims and the modes by which these are to be achieved. Policy misfits are shown to generate pressures for adaptation in all member states, as they stem out of national policy reserves fundamentally shaping European policy and administration as a “patchwork” or puzzle². The latter kind, institutional

² This is because policy formation is not dominated by preferences of some (notably the larger) member states but is rather based on an aggregation of very diverse approaches ‘uploaded’ at European level from across member states, a fact that

misfit, effectuates change that is long term and incremental. Rules, processes, procedures, collective comprehensions and mentalities associated with them are challenged and substantial adaptational pressure may result, however change is to be observed over a longer period. Change however requires a second condition to suffice, which is that of *domestic medium facilitating* change. Institutions or actors themselves respond to the pressures for adaptation and bring about change and these authors identify the domestic institutional structure as a key factor in the internalisation process. A country's institutional structure might be equipped with multiple veto points that may empower actors having diverse interests towards resistance to change. Here, the degree of dispersion of power, formal and informal, in the governance system across the territory is of significance. Börzel and Risse refer to European transport deregulation, where the reforms were able to be seen through in Germany, unlike the Italian case where trade union and professional associations prevented reform, to offer a case where *informal* power, temporally exercised (e.g. via strike action), is exercised to resist change (ibid.:65). Formal institutional arrangements may also provide material and intellectual resources and render actors capable of pursuing strategies and following on new opportunities, leading to an increased probability of domestic change.

Börzel and Risse present two strands of new institutionalism as the conceptual lens approaches through which the study of Europeanisation is made possible, namely sociological and rational choice institutionalism, that can be shown to complement each other in the empirical reality. Rational choice institutionalism sees actors as rational, goal-seeking, cost/benefit and preference driven and further suggests that European agency, perceived as a new opportunity structure, brings about a redistribution of resources leading

further challenges conceptual approaches in the study of European integration, notably intergovernmentalism (see Börzel and Risse, 2003:62).

to a process of differential empowerment of domestic actors; hence change comes forth as a consequence. Constructivist institutionalism emphasises a process of polity socialisation, communication, argumentation and collective learning on the domestic appropriateness of European innovation. In particular, its agency-centre variant lays emphasis on the high degree of cognitive or normative mismatch for such a process to start out domestically and the redefinition of interests and identities as an outcome of socialisation and learning. An example cited is the statist policy-making practice of Italian and Greek administration which has been challenged by the multi-level, co-operative governance practice advanced by the European Commission on the basis of regional policy and the Structural Funds. The processes of socialisation and learning are carried out by change agents or norm entrepreneurs, individuals or actor networks, such as epistemic communities and advocacy networks that, based on expert knowledge, strive to promote their shared values and beliefs, leading to new preference formation and identity change. The presence of these factors facilitating change significantly determines the nature and extent of the domestic impact of Europeanisation. Also, the existing political culture might favour or otherwise the associated processes of building consensus and the share of responsibility or cost. A consensus-oriented or consociational culture will better accommodate adaptational pressure, actors will avoid the exercise of veto and will share the responsibility and cost of new policy. An unsociational, pluralist, competitive or fragmented politico-administrative or governance culture will more often than not oppose change. These two strands of new institutionalism presented expect and converge to similar results in the cases of low and medium pressure for adaptation, irrespective of the presence of domestic mediating factors. Where the two perspectives diverge in their predictions is the case of high adaptational pressure, given facilitating factors. Rationalist institutionalism expects transformation hinging on the rearrangement of power and associated resources, whereas constructivism predicts a state of institutional inertia, unless an external

shock further mediates change, due to the time needed for novelty to diffuse domestically through socialisation. Lastly, Börzel and Risse emphasise a crucial point in understanding the domestic impact of the European Union in that Europeanisation yields a differential domestic impact in member states, in terms of mode or modality, causality, time and pace (ibid.:60, Börzel and Risse, 2000:6-7, Featherstone 2001: 5, 15-17, 336, Featherstone 2003:9-12, Radaelli, 2003:44). Indeed, few authors expect increasing convergence among member states in policies, politics or polities.

2. The Europeanisation of Greece

The Greek case generally suggests a highly ‘top-down’ process of change, a high degree of misfit and a gradual convergence between rhetorical endorsement of European integration discourse and practice and institutional internalisation in terms of norms, rules, regulations and policies. Ioakimidis (1996:34-35) describes this domestic context as constituted by a pro European, modernity espousing section of the Greek polity, geared up in endorsing and internalising European novelty, and another part, characterised as ‘helleno-centric’, wishing for continuity in rejecting, opposing or at best cautiously allowing for change. Examination of the years leading to the start of the timeframe examined here (1994) further reveal a problematic relation of Greece with the EU and the international system. Greece, an associate member country of the Community since 1961, suffered a dictatorial military regime between 1967 and 1974. The regime fell as there was severe deterioration in Cyprus with the Turkish military deployment in the northern part of the island that summer. The Greek application for EU membership was submitted in 1975, upon the restoration of democracy and the cease of armed conflict in Cyprus. The newly founded socialist party PASOK and the Greek Communist Party opposed the idea of membership for Greece and of further European integration. A favourite catchphrase of the epoch quoting,

“the EEC and NATO, one and the same syndicate” (“*EOK kai NATO, to idio syndikato*”) sums up the approach and basis of the larger part of the Greek Left. Debate on membership centred however on recent experiences of alleged intervention in domestic and national affairs and the division between East and West, rather than argumentation looking at the socio-economic characteristics across Greek territory and the possible impact of membership³. Greece then joined the (then EEC) EU in 1981 and that year was marked by what proved to be a durable *change de cours* in domestic politics. Greek socialists assumed power and firstly submitted a special aid memorandum based on the country’s ‘peculiar’ socio-economic and geographical profile, only to find in later years that increased EU correlation and funding support would only render some of their policy goals possible and indeed keep up with membership further (Andrikopoulou, 197-200, Papageorgiou and Verney, 1992:144-145, Featherstone, 1996:4, Ioakimidis, 1996:43). PASOK’s “3rd road to democratic socialism” as a domestic and foreign policy mix lead to alienation with Europe and deterioration of Greek competitiveness and the macro-economy. In the background, the application, pre-accession procedure and membership contributed to the stabilisation of democracy, the new republic and its institutions. Administrative adaptation was noted in efforts for the country to adequately manage with membership rights and obligations and later as various public administration tiers collaborated with European institutions and created links with counterpart organisations in other member states. PASOK’s policy reorientation after 1985 in espousing the SEA and the Single Market programme only served to expose the degree of mismatch with European structures and the main areas that needed be addressed. These have been highlighted as the absence of

³ A somewhat parallel approach underpinned the reception of the Greek application for membership in western Europe. European leaders were stressing the significance of the country for European culture and civilisation, whereas administration and people were largely unaware of the actual current social and economic conditions of the country (Pettifer, 1996:18).

planning for policy, the narrow legitimisation with and engagement of society in governance and the reform of the state, which by that time, given the history of conflict at the vicinity, ever-increasing public expenditure, the regulation of production since WWII and clientelism between state officials and the citizen, had evolved into an over-centralised entity, mainly located within the capital area, of gigantic proportions and reach (Ioakimidis, 1996:40-44, Alogoskoufis, 2000:141-142, Roccas and Padoa-Schioppa, 2001:52, 57-59). Economic stabilisation programmes were agreed in 1987 and later in 1991 by the conservative government. Apart from macro-economic measures these provisioned the reduction of the roles and size of the largely ineffective and inefficient public sector as part of the domestic economy. Both programmes were not seen through, adaptation however advanced on the other fronts. Stable democratic governance was indisputably attained by 1989-1990 as the exchange of office between the two main parties and an interim period marked by the participation of the Communists in central governance substantiate. EU regional policy prompted change as Greece had to provide for the subnational administrative apparatus needed for IMP implementation and a regional delimitation was in place in 1986. In total, the ten year period leading to the 2nd EU regional policy programming period (1994-1999) provides evidence of a shift from rhetorical to structural internalisation of policy outlook, objectives and instruments. After 1994, the Greek socialists term of office is characterised by a different mindset to the one of the 1980s. Especially after the deterioration of Papandreou's health and the rise of Simitis at the top of PASOK's partisan hierarchy by early 1996, the attainment of the Maastricht criteria and EMU participation gradually, yet emphatically, became an aim of national strategic importance and a beacon for all policy-making⁴, with the realisation that the country's

⁴ See for example the prime minister's parliamentary defence speech of the 1997 yearly budget (Simitis, 2002:89-104)

future marginalisation in Europe was at stake (Pagoulatos, 2001:192, 199-200, Ioakimidis, 2001:81).

Ioakimidis argues that, between 1994 and 1999, Europeanisation has been evident in the further liberalisation of the Greek economy, mainly through the descent of the economic role of the state by means of disbanding a plethora of regulations hindering competition, the liberalisation of the banking system with the divestment of state-owned financial organisations, foreign investment, the incorporation of EU legislation safeguarding transparency and the unimpeded operation of markets through the regulation and promotion of competition. Moreover, with regard to state governance functions, the case of Greece is suggestive of a bi-directional competence flow as a consequence of further integration and EU membership. If membership primarily entails the transfer of jurisdiction at EU level, there can be an opposite process of downward flow where new competence is endowed to a member state not having developed such legislation. EU membership has enabled Greece in particular to address earlier policy inconsistencies and develop six new government policy domains (Ioakimidis, 2001:83-84). These are regional policy, environmental, professional development and training, research and technology, consumer protection and cross-border (linked to the re-orientation of Greek foreign policy in the latter half of the 1990s⁵) co-operation policies. Furthermore, the independence of the Bank of Greece, a prerequisite for any country wishing to join the single currency, is quoted as the most eminent example of break-up with statism in the Hellenic institutional realm. Pagoulatos (2001: 203-204) also notes the importance of capital market growth up to 1999 in cultivating a collective popular stake in and support for the improvement of the macro-economy. Further, in the context of the Hellenic CSFII implementation, new

⁵ Walldén offers an incisive analysis of cross-border activity between Greece and the Balkan neighbours of the country in the 1990s (Walldén, 2000:439-443).

operational units of special remit were created to take on specific tasks⁶, evidence of further improvement in managerial and operational independence and expertise on behalf of the public sector (Ioakimidis, 2001:88, Simitis, 2002:36). With regard to regional or cohesion policy, the programming logic and co-operative outlook needed on behalf of both central national and subnational officials and the multi-dimensional character of regional programming posed further challenges to the Greek public administration and provided further ground for change. Ioakimidis (2001:84-86) goes as far as to claim that structural policy "...has generated the dynamics and conditions for introducing a systematic policy of regional decentralisation and reinforcing the powers and autonomy of the regions.", "...have compelled the Greek state and the governing political elites to cede considerable chunks of power, resources and autonomy to the regions..." and that "...[regional development] programmes evolved into the most important instruments for the economic invigoration of the regions, thus contributing immensely to the implementation of decentralisation and regional autonomy" (bracketed words inserted here). Another prominent feature is a reported process of social evolution. Numerous social associations, such as non-governmental organisations and interest representation groupings have recently been noted in Greece, challenging earlier topical reports⁷ of a weak and fragmented civil society. National policy-making process began to offer a participatory podium to society, as major pressure groups and socio-economic associations, such as the Union of Greek Industrialists (*SEV*), the General Labour Confederation of Greece (*GSEE*) and the 1994-founded

⁶ The same contributor notes however that these improvements did not go hand-in-hand with the enhancement of operational efficiency in public administration. We shall return to this point in the context of researching regional policy implementation in chapters 3, 4 and 5.

⁷ On aspects of Greek civil society and social capital endowments see Mossialos and Mitsos (2000:3-5, 16-17,) and the work by Paraskevopoulos (1998:136-140, 200:220-221).

Greek Economic and Social Committee were frequently invited to come up with formed opinion on policy issues and more often than not started producing their own, regular, policy review and recommendations documentation (Ioakimidis, 2001:88-89, Economic and Social Committee of Greece, 2001). In this period under study, Greek economy and policy-making has been reported as not at odds anymore but in step and tune with the Single European Market and the global economy (Ioakimidis 2001:78, 82, 88, Simitis, 1995:67-70, Simitis, 2002:163-168).

3. The Research Design

The analysis by Ioakimidis (2001) of the 1994-1999 period suggests a unambiguous re-delimitation of the boundaries and reach of the state and a sizeable temporal, modal and causal compromise of statism in Greece. In evaluating whether such a proposition may or not hold at the regional level, one needs to examine the most inclusive form of European policy implemented in the region. That is the ROP as part of CSFII, where regional actors formally engage in policy⁸. Secondly, a review of that analysis may well show prior to any empirical considerations that this compromise has mainly taken place within the Greek capital area, leaving the regional case under study largely unaffected. The alleged re-organisation of the Greek socio-economic context firstly entailed (a) a redefinition of the regulatory regime in the domestic economy. In the first instance, such change can be claimed to be tangible nationwide, however it arguably relates more with the industry and services sectors, especially as land reform started in 1999 remains to be concluded. Epirus is a predominantly agrarian regional economy, hence the effect of this change is judged as minor when compared to other more advanced regions of Greece and certainly with the capital area.

⁸ Sectoral nationwide CSF programmes are executed centrally and do not involve structured regional socio-economic representation and participation.

Secondly, (b) the re-organisation of state functions and institutional competencies can be again said to chiefly affect socio-economic realities in capital region of Attica, since the Hellenic Republic entails a minimum regional subnational apparatus. Concerning new fields of policy, this research further shows that, while new environmental legislation has been brought in inconsistently, professional development and training has been mostly introduced as part of regional policy and has not enjoyed the emphasis it would deserve as a development determinant. In particular, such regional projects were very few and unco-ordinated. Equally, there was limited programme action for networking and links between research, technology and production. While there has generally been progress on cross border co-operation, this has not yielded any substantial developmental contribution towards upgrading the profile of Epirus. With regard to (c) EU regional policy, territorial reorganisation of powers and change in the otherwise thin subnational institutional context, the reader will also need to be reminded of the limitations in implementation in earlier periods (Papageorgiou and Verney, 1992:140-141, 145-146, Nanetti, 1996:77-81) and will shortly review the contribution of this research. Fourthly (d), an assessment will be made to the extent that the redefinition of state-society relations holds for this regional context. Finally, this paper offers no evidence on consumer protection policy.

The regional profile of Epirus is that of a mountainous region in the north-west of Greece, situated between the country's main mountain range, the Pindus, and the Ionian Sea on the west. The northern international border separates the region from northern Epirus, which is Albanian territory and has a large Greek-speaking population. Epirus is characterised as an *enclave periphery* (Rokkan and Urwin, 1983:61-65) in that, apart from the general lack of infrastructure and the sea border with the Italian regions of Puglia and Calabria, it also orders the regions of Western Macedonia and Continental Greece that are equally underdeveloped. In the period 1983-1995 Epirus had

been identified as the poorest region in the EU, ranking at the bottom of the respective GDP per capital league table (Bache, 1998:117). The largest town is Ioannina and the other urban centres are Arta and Preveza. Of the total area of Epirus 77% is mountainous, 13% semi-mountainous and only 10% lowland and fit for cultivation; 23% of the region is covered by forests. Thanks to abundant rainfall and snowfall throughout the year the region has large rivers, its climate is mainly continental or mild Mediterranean in the plains and coastline. The economic backwardness of the region and the substantial migration⁹ to urban centres is attributed to this land profile. Communications are very problematic with no rail and inadequate road network. Development efforts have been based on the air connections of Ioannina airport and the international sea routes between the port of Igoumenitsa and Italy, which acquired additional importance in the 1990s due to the Balkan conflict. The main economic activity has been agriculture (42% of employment) with the secondary (craft industries, silversmiths, weavers, traditional furniture etc.) and tertiary sectors absorbing 20% and 38% of employment respectively (European Union, 1993:296-299). The region has had a weakly woven socio-economic infrastructure, whose density is linked to the perceived inattention to the region on behalf of the centre and the regional actor participation in the central governance system at the start and end of the period under study (table 3.1 overleaf).

Our research aimed at recording the main issues relevant to programme management within the administrative context of 1994-2002 and to capture the main outcomes of the ROP implementation process related to governance and institutional performance. Interviews have been held with members of the Epirus regional programme Monitoring Committee.

⁹ In 1991 the population of the region was roughly the same as in 1951 (European Union, 1995).

1993	Parliament	Cabinet
Epirus	12	2 ministers
Total	300	44
2002	Parliament	Cabinet
Epirus	12	1 deputy minister
Total	300	49

Table 3.1¹⁰: Regional Actor Participation in Central Government 1993 - 2003

This committee sat twice a year to carry out the tasks of examining progress of programme implementation against ROP objectives, review compliance with regulations and complementarity with other Community policies, co-ordinate support, publicity and technical assistance measures and report to the CSF Monitoring Committee (European Commission, 1994:114-115). The Committee comprised regional socio-economic groups representatives, 2nd and 3rd local government tier representatives (the four prefects and representatives of the four unions of municipalities and communities), Hellenic ministerial and European Commission executives along with the management and evaluation consultants. The Region General Secretaries chaired the committee with the aid of the co-ordinator of the ROP regional

¹⁰This table has been compiled by the author by recourse to data in the web site of the Hellenic Ministerial Council Secretariat, [www.ggys.gr](http://www.ggys.gr/goverments.php?ord=num) (<http://www.ggys.gr/goverments.php?ord=num>, accessed 02/02/05 and 03/02/2005).

secretariat (until April 2000 where the ROP Managing Authority took over programme implementation and closure in 2002).

Group	Respondents (#)	
	Actual	Maximum
Prefecturers (or Prefects)	4 (Four)	5 (five)
Local Union of Municipalities and Communities Representatives	7 (Seven)	7 (Seven)
General Secretaries of the Region of Epirus	2 (Two)	3 (Three)
General Secretariat of the ROP (1995-2000)	4 (Four)	4 (Four)
MA executives (2001-2002)	9 (Nine)	9 (Nine)
Socio-Economic Institutions Representatives	4 (Four)	6 (six)
Ministerial Executives (central government)	4 (Four)	5 (five)
European Commission Executives	2 (Two)	3 (Three)
Consultants	2 (Two)	2 (Two)

Table 3.2: Numbers of Respondents per Group, ROPII Epirus

Between 1994 and 2002, sixty three (63) individuals came to be appointed as members of the monitoring committee. When asked, thirty five (35) declared that they had regular attendance of more than four consecutive sessions in the period 1995-2001 and thus having a minimum longitudinal experience with the programme. Twenty nine (29) regular monitoring committee members and nine (9) MA executives were interviewed. The table above (table 3.2) depicts the number of respondents belonging to each respondent group. The

responses of these thirty seven¹¹ (37) interviewees are discussed henceforth. Secondly, a presentation of the quantitative data of ROP2 Epirus is given, based on an analysis of aggregate project tables, the Collective Decisions on Prefectural Projects CSF2 (CDPP2 or *SANA2*) table for each of the four prefectures, the Collective Decisions on Regional Projects CSF2 (CDRP2 or *SAEP2*) tables and the Collective Decisions on Projects by Ministries (CDPM-2 or *SAEY2*) for the region.

4. The Epirus Regional Operational Programme 1994-1999/2002

The most frequently reported difficulty associated with the execution of the programme, that of consistent delays in implementation, observed by 28 respondents, does not leave much room for debate on the relevance to this regional context of alleged improvements in the state structure and institutions. The weakness reported by the Hellenic public sector, central administration—ministries and agencies, to respond to or deliver within any deadlines set and at a certain level of quality standard with regard to its output or contribution within the wider context of programme administration, has been reported as the primary cause by the majority in all respondent groups. One particular example given in the context of the Epirus ROP have been the efforts by ROP General Secretariat executives to furnish the agroalimentary enterprise of the area with quality standardisation and protected name of origin processes. There was no legal framework in place and, “in the jointly responsible ministries, there was complete ignorance on such issues and ample unwillingness to discuss them”. The next in importance cause for delays have been conflicts with Greek legislation; all

¹¹ The total number of respondents is thirty eight minus one, since one MA employee had served in the ROP General Secretariat before April 2000 (actual date of appointment in the MA: March 2001).

respondent groups suggest that the legislative framework of implementation has been inadequate from the start and local actors and services were not at familiar with processes and procedures of public tenders, project work, auditing and licencing. A limited number notes reform and adjustment efforts in the course of the programme. Also, programme documentation has been rather inadequate, “*due to poor recruitment of prefectures and local government structures*”, one of the universally accepted truths and seen as an antecedent condition in this study. Respondents showed concern for discrepancies noted between what was planned as programme actions and what was finally delivered. The main reasons mentioned again point to the Hellenic public sector weaknesses (“bureaucracy” and slow responsiveness to resolution of issues) in acting as a catalyst to the local development process, inconsistencies with Greek legislation along with their comments about the aims of the programme being unclear and the programme lacking coherence. Furthermore, about half the respondents refer to environmental policy issues, again attributed to the public sector limitations and problematic legislation, while very few and disassociated responses relate to the promotion of equal opportunities policy as part of the programme. With regard to the effectiveness of regional policy *per se*, research has looked at the extent that the programme has actually covered the needs of the region as put together with the composition of the programme. Respondents were asked to submit their aggregate reflection on the advance of each of the programme objectives during programme lifecycle, based on their life experience in the region and using the decimal scale 0.10 to 1.00 with the following degree set of qualitative response granularity: {0.00: not at all, 0.25: barely, 0.40: some impact noted, 0.70: largely, 1.00: fully}. Table 4.1 depicts the response mean, variance and the response quotient (how many respondents felt capable of submitting a response) for every objective. This table enables one to draw a set of conclusions about ROP efficacy.

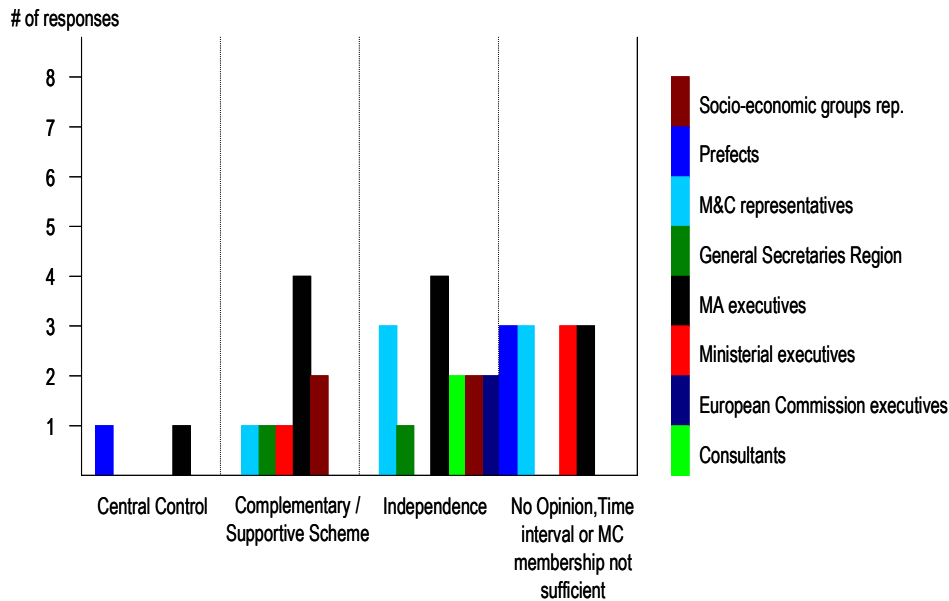
Programme Objective		Response		
		Mean	Variance	Quotient
a.	Infrastructure improvement towards intra- and interregional connections development	0.78	0.06	37/33
b.	Improvement of health services and environmental protection	0.74	0.08	37/33
c.	Enhancement of agricultural products and services competitiveness	0.52	0.12	37/31
d.	Actions in mountainous areas for preserving the population and developing local products, thus allowing for the enrichment of economic activity	0.49	0.11	37/30
e.	Linking the economy of Epirus with neighbouring economies in Greece and the Balkans (Albania), introduction of new technology and innovation and of links between research and production	0.40	0.09	37/28
f.	Continuous professional training of the workforce, mainly in modern production techniques	0.41	0.08	37/30

Table 4.1: ROP Policy Effectiveness - Aggregate Results

It transpires that objectives or aims (a) and (b) on transport and service infrastructure were given most attention. Response variance and quotient are low for these, hence a large number of respondents felt that these aims have been advanced to a satisfying degree. Objectives (c) and (d), relating to the part of the programme designed to address the prominent sector of the economy of Epirus (agriculture) and actions needed in rural areas, receive a mixed and critical reaction, as implied by the numeric data. The last two objectives, having to do with the extraversion of the region and other developmental determinants are seen as advanced in an inadequate and fragmented manner, as implied by the mean, the relatively higher variance and response quotients. The unfavourable conditions to the north of the region, as Albania has been presenting one of the most calamitous socio-economic environments in the Balkans, and the inconsistent introduction of vocational training policy relate to the scores of objectives (e) and (f). Comments to these responses point to the magnitude of the ROP budget, considered rather undersized compared to the needs of the region as understood by some respondents.

Our research has also examined the transition from the regional policy management structure in place until the year 2000 to the one established for CSF III, namely the termination of the programme General Secretariat overseen by the MOU and the introduction of and entrusting of programme implementation to the regionally based Special Management Services (renamed to Managing Authorities in 2002), overseen by the CSF Managing Authority, a team within the Ministry of the Economy and Finance. Inquiring whether the SMS/MA operates better as an independent service or one under central administrative control, respondents emphasise bureaucracy as an issue, claiming however that the new regime presents itself as a more efficient scheme. About half, among them the consultants and European Commission executives, point to the direction of independence, stating that the MA should be supervised by the Regional General Secretary, or generally

that more responsibilities up to full functional/hierarchical independence should be awarded. The need for employing personnel with development policy and public sector working experience for these public bodies, since “they are directly accountable to the choices of the local community” has been stressed. Most MA and central ministries executives point to an organic link between the MA and central administration, where either the MOU or the CSF team can have a co-ordinate or supportive role in technical, material and human resources, whilst the MA is allowed to mature in operational capability. Graph 4.1 below depicts the variation of these results.



Graph 4.1: Preferred Institutional Framework for the MA

The extent and attributes of the territorial balance of power reorganisation in the Greek politico-administrative system is reflected in the respondent comments about the impact of the programme on centre-periphery relations. Impact is first of all judged as positive due programme goals and aims met to

a certain extent, “a serious mechanism of implementation, inspection and co-ordination of project delivery was developed...” locally, available credits were absorbed and that, through the realisation of the partnership principle, the region gained stature within the Greek governance system. The ROP contributed to the establishment of dialogue between centre and periphery and through the ROP the region acquired a programming and planning mentality. Nevertheless, decentralisation was not essentially achieved and the region’s competences in programme management were not catered for in the framework of the ROP. Intra-regional friction between the Region and local authorities and politicisation of implementation are also noted, as the Regional General Secretary appointed by central government in the ROP midterm rather forcefully accelerated programme implementation and allegedly steered the whole process towards political gains. When asked about the party that prevailed in disagreement, the majority of respondents point to the Region and /or central government, with the opinion of the MEF enjoying utmost prevalence. Only three respondents note a climate of common ground, while others note that “the immediate next level of governance” had the upper hand, “the one having the political power”, or “depending of the balance of power each time but in general the Ministry’s point of view overpowered the others”. Responses of the two General Secretaries of the Region of Epirus, as well as those of the central ministries executives are more articulate in this matter. “The ROP confirmed the need for *rapprochement* between centre and periphery for Epirus, simultaneously uncovered the region’s disadvantage and that in the end there was no liberalisation from ‘the Greek (negative) confidence syndrome’”. Doubts are expressed whether the Greek CSF II in total was a success for Epirus. Ministries executives note that a spirit of co-operation was noted between the local and central levels’ public service personnel. Nevertheless, “Epirus was not set in the first priority group”, or “the centre tried to bring about

extroversion”, but “the Region of Epirus failed to do so”¹². Further, MA executives provide a substantiated middle ground for the above, in that they note the improvement of infrastructure, the promotion of decentralisation against the Region’s exercised authority and links to central government and that the ROP has been of lesser magnitude compared to the needs of the Region which have since earlier times been very great. On aggregate, while the region has gained in governance and socio-economic competence as a result of CSF II ROP implementation, these remained limited given the management approach by central government and the effect and contribution of the programme towards socio-economic development of the region. It is in the C-P front however that positive attributes with regard to programme implementation are reported. These are programme completion and its fund absorption that reached 114%, very good communications and collaboration among management and evaluation consultants, European Commission executives and the rest of the members of the monitoring committee. Some respondents also suggest that in the end a good climate of co-operation prevailed intraregionally and among the Region, Prefectures, Municipalities and Communities (a comment rather equally weighted among respondent groups).

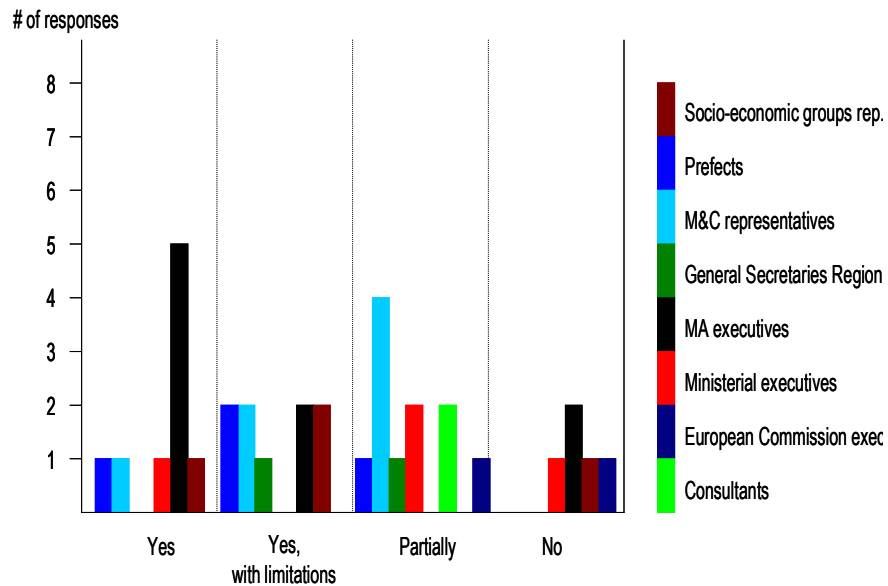
The provision of EU regional policy for the participation of local socio-economic organisations in programme implementation was further challenged by domestic context specificities. During the CSFII ROP in Epirus it transpires that participation on behalf of local groups and associations was indeed noted, albeit to a limited degree. Proposals were in principle taken into account and accommodated to an extent, however this accommodation did not necessarily lead to synthesis during programme

¹² Although the Ministry of the Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works had two seats in the Epirus monitoring committee, no ministerial member of staff was ever appointed as a committee representative.

composition and implementation. Socio-economic organisations in turn are referred to as possessing little knowledge about the state of development of region and country and documenting their proposals inadequately; opinions coming in particular from small communities and secondary professional associations (e.g. the Union of Hotel Owners) “were completely ignored”. Furthermore, ministerial executives are rather united in mentioning that socio-economic groups were given the podium and listened to, but “their priorities were not in line with those of the ROP as planned”. Respondents note that despite monitoring committee membership had been guaranteed according to CSF regulations, there were instances of individual decisions taken by civil servants at central government and at the Region and still many needs were left unrecorded or unaddressed. Moreover, despite the emphasis on infrastructure (see further), the ROP included actions on business, innovation etc. and socio-economic groups are reported as completely absent from those parts of the programme. Socio-economic organizations representatives themselves say that only those suggestions satisfactorily documented were indeed taken into account, but after two or three sessions organisations were not present anymore due to their (unconfessed but otherwise well-known¹³) inability in knowledge and technical resource to partake in discussions on equal standing. A manifestation of their discontinuous participation in the MC was evident when asked to participate in our research and reporting that between 1994-1999 five or six different people were appointed as representatives; many of them did not feel capable of an interview about the ROP¹⁴.

¹³ No evidence has been found that socio-economic institutions (local government, professional associations or unions etc.) received training in any form so that they would be better equipped to fulfil their new role in local regional policy.

¹⁴ A good example is the Technical Chamber of Greece – Epirus Section. The former and current chairmen had to sit down together and prepare the questionnaire-interview schedule, as they both served as regular members in the committee, but each felt that their own experience was rather inadequate.



Graph 4.2: Socio-Economic Groups Accommodation: Response Variance

Graph 4.2 above depicts this variation of responses¹⁵. The most recognizable socio-economic partner in the Epirus ROP II, both in terms of monitoring committee and programme participation (contractor or consultant) has been the University of Ioannina. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Greek Economic and Technical Chambers – Epirus Sections then follow. Other bodies have been the Educational Institute of Technology (TEI) of Epirus and the Workers’ Centres. There are also sporadic references to

¹⁵ Here, the many “Yes” occurrences on behalf of MA executives rather reflect the difference in expectations of what accommodation of local organizations constitutes in the ROP framework. Only four MA executives, under the capacity of employees of the ROP General Secretariat, participated in monitoring committee sessions. Their responses are divided in that two answer negatively to this question while the other two note that there was participation of these groups.

organisations that are not formally included in the monitoring committee, such as farmers’ unions and the olive oil producers’ association, ecology groups, the *Rom* union, various central government (General Secretariat of Research and Technology), as well as other organisations outside Epirus, in Central Macedonia (Federation of Industries of Northern Greece, Aristotle University) or Western Greece (the BIC of Patras). Respondents also suggest that participating institutions and contractor companies have mainly been organisations based in Epirus and note that publicity has been generally good both in the capital and within the region, suggesting an ample regional dimension in programme implementation.

Once quantitative data obtained by the MA IIS were verified with the programme management consultant, a simple categorization of projects was done based on each project first order effect or outcome in the local economy, centering on two key principles. Firstly geographical categorization of projects in tables supplied to us was taken only as indicative and a new geographic categorization was provided, purely based on geographical project scope, prefectural or regional. The second principle relates to the outcome of a project in terms of direct, new and invariant (not seasonal) employment generation. Projects were categorised in terms of their (i) entailing purely infrastructure, (ii) being of infrastructure leading directly to new and invariant (not seasonal) employment generation and (iii) not related to infrastructure (other determinants of development)¹⁶. In the infrastructure “**In**” category, projects that relate purely to infrastructure (new or extensions/improvements of roads, bridges, ports, dams, reforestation, natural resources preservation etc.) are included. In category “**IE**” all programme actions that entailed infrastructure build and lead to invariant

¹⁶ This judgement has been based on standard engineering project management knowledge. In cases of difficulty, project content was verified with either the MA or the management consultant

(not seasonal) employment generation are grouped (new or extensions of schools, hospitals, biological sanitation, snowfall management stations, public-private tourism facilities etc.)¹⁷. Lastly, in category “O” (“other”) projects that did not involve infrastructure and focused on other developmental determinants, in particularly promoting major socio-economic characteristics (local production base, forms of tourism, handicraft industries) of the region, were classified: livestock and local product improvement, standardisation, public-private partnerships, new institutions, professional training, social inclusion, all actions specific to the promotion of culture (subgrouped within category **Oc**, athletic centres, historic bridges, churches, monasteries refurbishment etc.) and any actions specifically and directly leading to innovation and networking¹⁸. The tables that follow correspond to projects financed through prefectural funds, the regional and central ministry funds and reveal a number of important features of programme implementation. First, emphatic concentration of funding is evident in the “In” category irrespective of governance tier financing. Infrastructure projects amount to 253, 1 and 355 funded by the prefectures, the regional fund and central ministries respectively. Table 4.4 also implies that central administration funded the better part of innovative projects focusing on other developmental determinants. In total, infrastructure projects totalling 609 amount to 73% of all programme implementation. Infrastructure works leading to new employment sum up to 109 projects (13% of all), whilst 120 non-infrastructure programme actions have been classified accordingly as 14% of programme implementation and chiefly

¹⁷ Here the assumption is that for every new building constructed, institution established or machinery bought, there are the corresponding, directly generated, new employment positions to be filled.

¹⁸ Any such actions involving infrastructure build were still classified under “O” (e.g. the new facility for KEPAVI, the Centre for Traditional Handicraft Industries in Ioannina).

relating to the promotion of local culture and socio-economic potential. Little was hence done in the ROP framework to lay emphasis on other developmental determinants for the region, such as the enhancement of entrepreneurial and public sector/local government competitiveness by encouraging innovation, research, education and networking.

Category	In (infrastructure works - new/ext./impr.)	IE (infrastructure leading to new employment)	O (other)
Prefecture			
<i>Arta</i>	47	10	2 (2 Oc)
<i>Ioannina</i>	89	20	7 (6 Oc)
<i>Preveza</i>	50	15	4 (2 Oc)
<i>Thesprotia</i>	67	10	1 (1 Oc)
Total	253	55	14 (11 Oc)

Table 4.2: Prefectural Fund Projects Categorisation per Prefecture

Secondly, the Epirotic Regional Fund has financed a mere one project during the 8-year programme lifecycle. This fund was only created only as late as 1999 and is further evidence of the unwillingness of central administration to proceed with institutional innovation locally. The majority of projects, as evident by the population of table 4.4, have been funded by central ministries. Furthermore, what also transpires from the project tables as given to us is that state services and organizations enjoy the lion’s share of implementation of the regional operational programme, while the private sector comes out as having a essentially fragmented and limited participation. Programme project beneficiaries particularly, the entities that receive funding

and are responsible for project implementation are invariably public entities, whilst private organizations are observed mainly as contractors.

Category	I (infrastructure works - new/ext./impr.)	IE (infrastructure leading to new employment)	O (other)
Prefecture			
<i>Arta</i>	1	0	0
<i>Ioannina</i>	0	0	0
<i>Thesprotia</i>	0	0	0
<i>Preveza</i>	0	0	0
Total	1	0	0

Table 4.3: Regional Fund Projects Categorisation by Prefecture

Category	I (infrastructure works - new/ext./impr.)	IE (infrastructure leading to new employment)	O (other) of which Culture and ROP()	
Prefecture				
<i>Arta</i>	83	12	18	8
<i>Ioannina</i>	115	18	31	16
<i>Preveza</i>	73	12	16	4
<i>Thesprotia</i>	74	11	14	3
<i>Regional</i>	9	1	26	0 (23)
<i>Unaccounted for</i>	1	0	1	0
Total	355	54	106	31 (23)

Table 4.4: Centrally Funded Projects Categorisation by Prefecture

5. Conclusions

Our evidence suggests that the regional case of Epirus largely negates claims advanced that Greece has shown significant adaptation to European practice during the country's course towards EMU in the years 1994-2000. Firstly, it has been shown that the reforms introduced in reaching this national objective for Greece have first and foremost touched on the socio-economic realities of the capital area and have been to a large extent irrelevant or not applicable in the region under study. The limitations of the most inclusive and relevant incidence of European policy in the region, the Regional Operational Programme and its implementation in Epirus were then discussed. Our research has shown that the unwillingness of the Hellenic public sector to promote regional development within the structured framework of the Structural Funds, let alone the inability to adequately furnish the local development process, has curtailed the regional fortunes of Epirus. Concurrently, regional actor participation in Hellenic central governance has decreased. Taken together, these underscore the centripetal nature of the politico-administrative structure and, quite possibly, its premacy over subnational governance. After two periods of European regional policy, namely the IMPs and CSFI, the partnership principle still did not fully materialise and elements of institutional innovation, such as the creation of the regional fund, were held back by central government. The programme itself has heavily focused on transport and service infrastructure. Actions relating to agriculture and the rural economy are not thought of having a definite sizeable impact. Initiatives towards innovation and networking within the region and with neighbouring regional economies have not (and perhaps could not) have advanced to an agreeable extent. Hence, the great needs in infrastructure of the region may largely have been met, however few efforts that were noted towards bringing the regional profile and state of development forward remained intermittent and of rather low impact and participation. Lastly, the fact that regional public entities have been the ones

that principally benefited from the programme raises considerable concern about a renewed role of the state in the context of the *regional* economy and the exact relation of EU regional policy, as conceived and implemented thus far, with economic liberalisation.

The other central agent or apex involved in MLG, notably the European Commission, has had an equally problematic performance. Despite intentions of the organisation to press for the enhancement of partnership and better implementation during the 2nd programming period (Marks, 1993:397), a lack of high level programme management becomes apparent as the Commission, during the six-year period 1994-1999 did not seek to address programme weaknesses. There was no provision for training or scientific resource provision so that local socio-economic groups could respond to their role in a more inclusive manner, while the ROP itself was left to subside to a mere construction programme rather than an integrated development effort. In a time of renewed scientific interest in what drives development in the regional context with the emergence of the new economic geography literature in the mid-1990s, this is judged as a significant shortcoming. Marks (1993:397) discusses the fact that DG 16 (now DG REGIO) has been understaffed for the period, employing 500 managers for the management of 200 programmes and a budget of ECU 6 billion (also in Goldsmith, 2003:121). In their evaluation of the EU regional policy, Bachtler and Turok (1999) note that the European Commission has indeed found it difficult to operate such an extensive policy framework across much of European Union territory with a relatively limited number of professional staff. There have been instances however where the Commission has tried to bring about greater dynamism and innovation in the development process, avoid policy routine and help shape programme content, whilst in some regions it specifically demanded that support for roads or other basic infrastructure be reduced in importance (Bachtler and Turok, 1999:352-354, also in Bachtler

and Turok, 1999:11). There is no evidence that such initiative has taken place in the case of Epirus.

Regional policy has generally induced a degree of formal regionalisation in Greece, judged as limited when compared to similar processes in other European partners of the country, and further provided stimuli for Europeanisation and related change across Greek territory, after having joined the Communities in 1981 as the most centralised member state of all (Ioakimidis, 2001:78). Our evidence however comes nearer to other reports that the country has shown poor or very poor adaptation to European structures (notably Leonardi and Paraskevopoulos, 2004:343-344, 346). The mediating factor for change has been present as political elites united before EMU and undeniably Greece has come closer to its European partners by following a path of economic liberalisation and finally joining the single currency. However, the limitations discussed here can only characterise the impact of Europeanisation in this regional context as problematic accommodation; if extended, the result of Greece's Europeanisation in the 1990s can only be termed as absorption at best.

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