



Conditions of civic development in small rural communities – Anavra – Goura

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Research questions and methodology

Research questions

- Can planned intervention trigger development of civil society?
- What conditions promote or hinder civic development?

Methodology

- Direct observation
- Semi structured interviews



Civil society and related notions

- **Civil society**
- **Social capital**
- **Third sector**
- **A synthesis**

Social capital

- **Coleman**: People's capacity of cooperation with a view to achieving **collective action**
- **Putnam**: norms of reciprocity and **voluntary membership** of citizens which facilitate coordinated action that can improve the efficiency of society with a view to **serving public interest**. Essential ingredient: trust. **Grassroots development**
- Positive and negative social capital.
- negative social capital : the case of Greece??

Third sector

- Etzioni:
- a field between the market and the state
- **voluntary**
- Non-profit
- **Pursuit of public interest**



Civil society

- A field between private and political society .
Main features:
 - Wide spectrum of organisations and institutions
 - Active membership in public affairs –
participatory democracy
 - Absence of violence (physical and verbal) –
teaching consensus through debate (civility)
 - Serving common good



Civil society, third sector, social capital: a synthesis

- Common features:
 - Intermediate field
 - Participation in public affairs
 - Promotion of democracy
 - Voluntarism
 - Interpersonal trust
 - Serving common good

Giddens: Democratisation and decentralisation entail civil society renewal agenda

- **Means:**
 - **Partnership between government and civil society**
 - **Development of local initiatives**
 - **Involvement of third sector**
 - **Democratisation of the family**
 - **Protection/regeneration of local, physical public sphere for the promotion of social interaction and sociability: existence of safe public spaces where people can meet and interact**

Anavra - 1991

- Almost complete lack of basic infrastructure and services
- Pursuit of individual interest through clientelist relations
- Absence of collective action with a view to serving public good
- Absence of vision
- Poverty
- Resistance to change



Anavra 1991-2010: development of civil society

- **The reformer**
- **Creation of a physical public sphere:** livestock parks, road system, squares, folclore museum, library, school building, modern assembly room, gym, soccer and basketball facilities, environmental & cultural park.
- **Participatory democracy:** villagers' assemblies
- Development of social and political trust – a “**culture of trust**”
- Initiation to decent political dialogue (**civility**)



Anavra 1991-2010: development of civil society

- Cultural and educational events (**social interaction – connection with outside world**)
- Development of **collective will**
- Development of **cooperation and reciprocity**
- Founding of **Women's Association**
- Change of women's position, contributing to what Giddens refers to as **democratisation of the family**
- Huge increase of income (**prosperity**)

Nonetheless:

- Agricultural-Livestock Credit Cooperative and Cultural Association became inactive
- Gradual withering of Women's Association

Reasons:

- Low interpersonal trust
- Persisting parochial perceptions
- Lack of interest due to high income – EU subsidies

Anavra 2011-2014

Territorial consolidation → Anavra becomes part of a larger entity: Municipality of Almyros →

- Absence of the reformer
- The Municipal Authorities neglect the physical public sphere of Anavra
- Lack of participatory democracy
- Lack of cultural – educational events



Anavra 2011-2014

- Anavriots did not claim their rights: lack of grassroots initiative for collective action
- Impediment of civil society development

Possible reasons

- Absence of a transformational leader - reformer
- Revival/persistence of old perceptions
- Negative role of the Municipal Authorities

Anavra 2011-2015

- Two new voluntary organisations – dissimilar activities
 - **ANAVRA ZO** (founded by the retired reformer) – Keeps alive the achievements of the reform period
 - **CULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF WORLDWIDE ANAVRIOTS** (grassroots initiative) Organises mainly traditional cultural events



Conclusions

- Putnam's theory about grassroots development of civil society does not apply in Anavra. It was the local government leader that initiated and enhanced the process.
- Traditional perceptions can affect negatively the creation of social capital and the development of civil society.
- The role of government and the wider sociopolitical milieu influence the creation of social and political trust.