

Opinion of Greek Citizens about Infrastructure Privatization

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Introduction

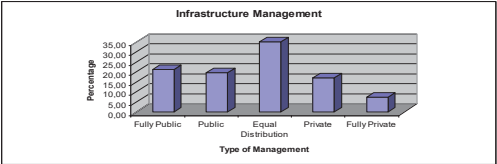
There is a huge demand on public infrastructure and services world wide, while the government budget of any country is always limited. In addition, the public sector often lacks the technologies, skills and expertise required for efficient infrastructure development (Kerf et al., 2018). As a result, many countries are turning to infrastructure privatization or in the public-private partnerships (PPPs). Delivering infrastructure projects through private sector participation via public-private partnerships (PPPs) is arguably an efficient way of fulfilling public infrastructure needs (Mazher et al., 2018). In this study we investigate the opinion of the inhabitants of Athens, the capital of Greece, about infrastructure privatization. This work is focused on the main sectors: transport (ports, airports and highways), education, health, energy, water supply, telecommunications, public administration and municipal services (e.g. waste management).

Methods

The survey was conducted from January to March 2020 in Athens. The data were collected using a structured questionnaire, addressed to the inhabitants of Athens area and the participants' responses were analyzed. Descriptive statistics, chi-square test and Principal Component Analysis (PCA) were conducted to statistically analyse the data and determine the views of the respondents about the privatization of infrastructure and the factors affecting these views.

Results

The results showed that the majority of respondents prefer public management in terms of transport, water supply, education (at all levels), health, energy, public administration and services provided by municipalities (e.g. water management, electric lighting). On the contrary, the majority of respondents are in favor of the private sector in the field of media (television, radio and newspapers), telecommunications and large industries, while maintaining a neutral position in the case of banks.



Conclusions

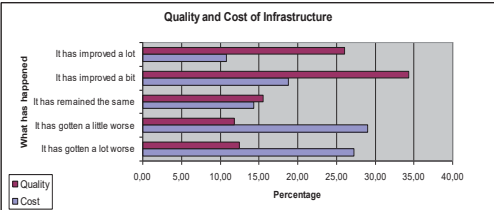
The respondents generally prefer the public nature of infrastructure, although they believe that the quality of infrastructure will be improved in the case of privatization, but the price will be significantly increased.

The respondents with left-wing political beliefs are in favor of public infrastructure management, except in the case of banks.

The respondents are not in favor of PPPs in the case of water and energy, as they consider that the prices if those services are already very high.

Results

Furthermore, the majority of respondents consider that the quality of infrastructure, which has already become private, has improved, but believes that the cost of the infrastructure has deteriorated. Also, in the hypothetical scenario of infrastructure privatization, the respondents believe that the quality will improve in terms of transport, education, health, public administration and municipal services. On contrary, they consider that the cost of these infrastructures will worsen a lot, while they already believe the cost of tolls, highways, water and energy to be high.



Finally, respondents are not in favor of privatization or additional privatization of the port of Piraeus, highways, regional airport, regional ports, energy and water, while they are in favor of public-private partnerships (PPPs) and want PPPs in waste management and airports but not in the case of water and energy.

From the Principal Component Analysis two factors emerged:

Factor1 = Degree of privatization and financing of the infrastructure. From the correlation of the Factor1 with the socio-demographic data, it seems that older people and those who declare a right-wing political position prefer infrastructure projects to be fully private.

Factor2 = In favor of the privatization of the infrastructure. From the correlation of the Factor2 with the socio-demographic data, it seems that older people, people with higher incomes and those who declare a right-wing political position are in favor of privatizing infrastructure.

References

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