

**Abstract for the Cassino Conference**

## **Trends in social capital and subjective well-being in Europe**

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Recently Bartolini, Bilancini and Pugno (2008) have shown that the decline in social capital in the US during the last 30 years, accounts for a large part of the negative trend of the average American happiness. In which way social capital trends can explain subjective well-being trends? There is still not an answer to this question. By now, many researches analyse subjective well-being trends in western countries, while studies about social capital trends focus mainly on USA. In particular, we have only a few and very fragmentated informations about the social capital trend for European countries. This aspect prevents us from the building up of a more general framework to answer our former question. The aim of this paper is three-fold: 1) finding out trends for different proxies of social capital in 12 European countries using World Values Survey data between 1980 and 2000; 2) finding out subjective well-being trends for the same countries in the same period using WVS and Eurobarometer data; 3) comparing social capital and subjective well-being trends in order to draw informations on their possible relationships. Our results are encouraging: although the pattern of social capital trends in Europe follows different trajectories for different countries, we find evidence of a probable relationship between social capital and happiness.