


# Chapter 10

## Organizational Culture as a Driver of Reform in the Greek Public Health Sector

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter aims to examine the role of organizational culture in shaping performance, innovation, and change within the public sector. Focusing on four distinct cultural types—hierarchical, market-oriented, participatory, and adaptive—the review seeks to understand how these models operate in diverse public administration contexts, with particular emphasis on their presence and impact in the Greek public sector. Globally, hierarchical cultures dominate traditional public bureaucracies, while market and adaptive cultures are increasingly promoted for their alignment with performance-based management and innovation. Participatory cultures are linked to inclusive governance and employee engagement. In Greece, the literature reveals a prevailing hierarchical culture, often characterized by centralized control and formalism. However, recent administrative reforms and digital initiatives have begun to introduce more adaptive and participatory elements into public management.*

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-2600-0246-9.ch010

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Organizational culture is one of the major factors that are complex and have a significant impact on the performance of an organization, especially in public sector healthcare organizations (Braithwaite et al., 2017; Zhang & Reay, 2024). The public health system in Greece has undergone significant changes over the last decade, accompanied by economic austerity, structural reforms, and shifts in societal expectations (Karagianni et al., 2021; Sepetis et al., 2024). Knowing the organizational culture in such a situation is a must for the healthcare sector to deliver better services, improve employee satisfaction and guarantee sustainable organizational development (Goula et al., 2021; Roussou et al., 2020).

Since the 2008 crisis, the Greek healthcare system has been in turmoil, facing major reforms due to the enforced Economic Adjustment Programmes (Lionis et al., 2018). The changes have redrawn the maps of organizational structures, the flow of resources, and the social relations in the workplaces of public hospitals and healthcare facilities (Karagianni et al., 2021). Even though these revolutionary reforms shook the system down, the role of the organizational culture has turned out to be the main determining factor of the reform success or failure and healthcare organizations' overall resilience, adaptability, creativity, and their ability to provide high-quality care (Goula et al., 2021; Sepetis et al., 2024; Bawa, ; Viterouli et al., 2024).

The role of organizational culture in healthcare environments is a fundamental factor that, apart from improved functioning, has a considerable impact on patient safety, care quality, and staff well-being (Braithwaite et al., 2017; Zhang & Reay, 2024). Studies have shown time and again that the culture inside an organization essentially affects the coordination of care, the engagement of employees, the capacity for innovation, and organizational learning—agreed upon by all as core components of the healthcare system of the future (Curry et al., 2018; Shortell et al., 1995). In Greece, where public hospitals are run according to the hierarchies of the old bureaucratic systems, analyzing the current cultural norms is a prerequisite for implementing change management strategies and creating an atmosphere for continuous improvement (Bellou, 2008; Roussou et al., 2020).

The current chapter focuses on organizational culture in the Greek public health sector, primarily in institutions such as hospitals and healthcare facilities. It brings together the recent academic research published in SCOPUS and ABS-indexed journals to offer an extensive review of the cultural aspects, implementation, and empirical results in the healthcare sector of Greece, referring to the works of Goula et al. (2020, 2021), Kapetaneas et al. (2015), and Roussou et al. (2020). The chapter aims to enhance both the theoretical understanding and practical application of organizational culture concepts in the public healthcare systems of the Mediterranean region. It offers a vast range of insights to policymakers, healthcare administrators, and

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