

2.1 Local Governance and Democracy

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Forms of Participatory Democracy in Greece: The case of *Participatory Budgeting*

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«The implementation of the doctoral thesis was co-financed by Greece and the European Union (European Social Fund-ESF) through the Operational Programme «Human Resources Development, Education and Lifelong Learning» in the context of the Act “Enhancing Human Resources Research Potential by undertaking a Doctoral Research” Sub-action 2: IKY Scholarship Programme for PhD candidates in the Greek Universities».



KEYWORDS Local Governance, Citizen Engagement, Participatory Democracy, Participatory Budgeting

Abstract

This study is set out to explore the Forms of *Participatory Democracy* in Greece and especially the process of *Participatory Budgeting* in the city of Athens. *Participatory Budgeting (PB)* is an innovative process that was first developed and implemented in 1989 in Porto Alegre, Brazil. *PB* is a valuable tool for public policies as it enables all social groups in shaping public policies and enhances inclusive participation. In recent years, at European level there has been a wider effort to involve citizens in the development of their areas at regional, municipal, neighborhood level through the Digital *Participatory Budgeting*. The Digital *Participatory Budgeting* is a collaborative platform where citizens are directly involved in the allocation of public resources (CEMR, 2017). Creating a digital collaborative platform through which citizens propose, update, co-decide in an ongoing negotiation with local authorities, is probably one of the best solutions to face the contemporary challenges in a modern urban environment (Benouaret *et al*, 2013).

This paper begins with a short review of the literature regarding the meaning and the concept of *Participatory Budgeting* process. Subsequently the second part includes the forms of *Participatory Democracy* in Greece (local councils, public meetings, local referendums etc.). Specifically, the institutional framework in local affairs and the expansion of *Participatory Budgeting* in the city of Athens. The implementation of such tools as *Participatory Budgeting* is at an initial level in Greece. Additionally in recent years there has been a wider effort from municipal authorities to enhance citizen engagement.

The municipality of Athens initiated *PB* in previous years, but it was a pilot program and not a long-term process. At present the municipality of Athens promotes the implementation of the "Local Watch" project. The aim of the project is to operate a digital platform where citizens will co-design the environment of the platform and create a space of accountability for elected representatives, but also a tool for citizens to express their opinion on municipal budgeting. Other municipal authorities that have experimented in *PB* process in the city of Athens are the municipality of Chalandri, the

municipality of Kifissia and the municipality of Agia Paraskevi.

Introduction

Rhodes (2007) defines *Governance* as a process that the boundaries between the public, the private sector and the various organizations of the Civil Society are no longer distinct but are constantly changing and overlapping. As a result, Governance enhances the “lack of democracy” (the democratic deficit) and indicates the need to invent new ways of participation and therefore legitimization of public policies (John, 2001). Citizen organized networks for reciprocity and solidarity have a strong effect in the efficiency of governments, while the quality of governance appears to be significantly determined by the long tradition of citizens involvement or absence in a region (Putnam, 1995).

In recent years there is a wider effort to enhance citizen participation in urban planning and especially in the formulation and implementation of public policies. According to the literature the best way to foster or to build the trust between the government and the citizens is to promote better access to the right information and to enhance transparency, legitimacy, and accountability. Additionally, it is very important for citizens the connection between the allocation of public resources and the realization of the results and subsequently for the trust between the citizens and the public authorities. The tendency to emphasize in results rather than the quality of services and activities is a practice that it is not citizen oriented (Schick, 2011).

Participatory Budgeting is a process that promotes the direct democracy. The residents are the key players in urban planning because they know better than anyone the nature of the problems and needs in their area. Their knowledge is a valuable import in the implementation of public policies but also for the quality of life at a local level. The literature review shows that local governance would be more effective if the needs, priorities, and various interests of Civil Society are considered by the local authorities (Bugs *et al.*, 2010; Harvey, 2013; Kearns, 1995; United Nations, 2018).

A series of recent studies have indicated the need to strengthen *citizen engagement*, a new form of democracy as highlighted by Mellouli *et al.* (2014), which requires citizens participation in decision making process. The concept of *citizen engagement* refers to the involvement of citizens in public policies through Information and Communications Technology (ICT). It also includes the meaning of citizen-centricity and community empowerment in the sense of responsiveness, consultation, collaboration, and participation (Rose *et al.*, 2015). Castelnovo, Misuraca, and Savoldelli (2015) emphasize at the use of ICT that led to a qualitative improvement in the relationship between citizens and elected officials. The authors conclude that the creation of a collaborative environment is one of the main differences between e-government and smart government.

The Council of Europe (2017) suggests that citizen participation concerns various types of participation, such as 1) access to information (free of charge offline and online, available to all social groups), 2) consultation (meetings using digital tools, provision of the necessary feedback), 3) dialogue and 4) active participation. Citizen participation according to the European Commission's White Paper on Governance refers to increasing participation in all stages of public policies. The concept of *good governance* includes the following principles:

- Transparency
- Participation
- Accountability
- Effectiveness
- Cohesion

As has been previously reported in the literature the provision and exchange of information (sharing data) is a key factor for the cooperation and interaction between government and citizens (Scholl *et al.*, 2014). However, the active participation of citizens is not only about access to information, information sharing, consultation, dialogue, but it is mainly based on the direct participation of citizens, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Civil Society (CSO) in decision-making process (Council of Europe, 2017). The critical point for enhancing *citizen participation* is to increase citizens capacities on ICT in order to participate at all stages of public policies (Pérez *et al.*, 2015). The increasement of *citizen participation* depends on a series of factors. The citizens must have at their disposal 1) the necessary resources, skills, information, and knowledge, 2) they must feel that they are an important part of a group or the community where they live, 3) they should be involved in the processes through social networks and 4) the participation should be direct and not through representatives (CEMR, 2017).

Citizen participation presupposes the political will of the government authorities to distribute power among all the actors involved in the formulation and implementation of public policies. The poster highlights the fundamental point that participation without redistribution is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless (Arnstein, 1969).



French Student Poster. In English, I participate; you participate; he participates; we participate; you participate . . . They profit.

AIP JOURNAL JULY 1969

Source: Arnstein, 1969

Literature Review

Gooch D., *et al.* (2018) argue that *citizen participation* through participatory governance processes is one of the key factors that characterize a city as smart. *Smart governance* consists in creating an environment of cooperation between the interested parties by using new technologies and is a key element for the creation of smart city (Pavleas *et al.*, 2014).

Participatory Budgeting is a process of direct democracy and is implemented through offline and online processes. Sintomer *et al.* (2008) identify specific criteria to distinguish *Participatory Budgeting* from other participatory processes. The main differences included as follows:

1. The citizens direct involvement in the allocation of public budget
2. The involvement of elected authorities in PB processes (more effective at regional, local or city level but not at the neighborhood level)
3. *PB* process should be a continuous long-term process and not a pilot program
4. Another distinguishing criterion is the necessary feedback in all phases of *PB*

PB is an innovative process, which was first developed and implemented in 1989 in Porto Alegre, Brazil. *Participatory Budgeting* in Porto Alegre, Brazil emerged on a period of transition and democratization of the country (Harvey, 2013; Sintomer et al, 2012; Wampler 2000). The local authorities through the process aimed to distribute a greater share of public spending to the most deprived neighborhoods. For example, in recent years in the city of Paris the allocation of public budget for the *Participatory Budgeting process* has specific criteria such as the 30% of the available amount is given to the low-income districts. In the first two years of the implementation of the program in Porto Alegre (1989-1992) no less than 1,000 citizens participated, while in 1992 the number increased to 20,000 participants (Shah, 2007).

The expansion of *PB* is divided into three phases. By the 1990s, *PB* had expanded to several Latin American countries. For this countries *PB* becomes a policy instrument for social justice, *good governance* and dealing with phenomena like clientelism. The second phase of *PB* is placed after the 1990s, a period in which *PB* gains the interest and the attention of international organizations, as a tool that deals with phenomena of clientelism, social exclusion that strengthens transparency, accountability, *good governance* and leads to Sustainable Development. (Blair, 2013; Ganuza et al, 2012; Shah, 2007).

The financial crisis in 2008 caused significant socio-economic changes. The emerge of anti-austerity movements brought into the public debate the demand for greater participation in public policies. In this context, the importance of *Participatory Budgeting* emerged and expanded to thousands of cities. In 2015, the Decide-Madrid platform, an open-source software, was created in the city of Madrid, with the aim of enhancing transparency and participation in decision-making. Major European cities today, such as Paris, Madrid and Barcelona implement the Participatory Budgeting process both at neighborhood and city level, through traditional forms of participation (face to face meetings, local councils etc.) or digital platforms. Spain has one of the highest growth rates of Participatory Budgeting at European level, with the first programs initiated in 2001. The city of Barcelona is also a pioneer in the *PB* process. In the city of Barcelona, the digital platform DECIDIM (in Catalan means we decide) was created. Participatory Budgeting is part of the project in an effort by municipal authorities to strengthen democracy and good governance. The DECIDIM platform is the official digital platform of the municipality of Barcelona for participatory democracy, a bottom-up process in the context of the municipality's long-term strategy. The DECIDIM platform promotes the involvement of citizens in a multitude of participatory processes, with the aim of creating a new generation of policy networks (Stark, 2017). In Barcelona, "The New Citizen Participation Regulations" were instituted in 2017 due to a participatory process. The new regulations establish Committees which are independent from municipal authorities. These are 1) the Protection Committee: solves issues related to violation of participation rights, 2) the Participatory Process Advisory Committee: supports the participatory process, 3) Monitoring Committees: the competencies are the advice and control on matters related to the quality and methods are used in the participatory processes. The City Council and the citizens are consulted on issues 1) territorial, at neighborhood, district and city level, 2) sectorial, depending on the field of action such as culture, education, transport, social welfare, etc.

In France, Participatory Budgeting was introduced in several cities. In most cases out of a total of 25 *PB* processes, the 21 *PB* processes are the initiatives of politicians that belong to parties with a left-wing ideology such as the Socialists, the Environmentalists, the Communist Party etc. (Cabannes, 2017). The city of Paris initiated Participatory Budgeting in 2014 while the Digital Platform was implemented in 2015 with a significant increase in citizen participation. In Paris there are *PB* processes at different levels of participation 1) 1 *PB* per area for local projects, 2) 1 *PB* in the whole city, 3) 1 *PB* in schools, 4) 1 *PB* for social housing. In 2014, 40,000 citizens voted on 15 proposals submitted by the City Council (Cabannes, 2017). In the city of Paris, the citizens make proposals in the following areas: economy and employment, culture, transport, education,

environment, social cohesion, health, smart city etc. In the city of Paris, 5% of the municipal budget is given to *PB* processes and there is a political will to increase this amount to 25% of the municipal budget.

Portugal is one of the European countries with a long experience in Participatory Budgeting programs. At the local level, more than 80 programs are implemented in municipalities throughout the country. In Portugal, an attempt is made to adopt PB program for the first time at the national level, although its application around the world is recorded mainly at the local level (Portugal Participatory Budget, 2017). In 2018, €5 million were given, and citizens can propose ideas and projects in all areas of public policies. The main objectives concern the educational importance of PB, the cooperation between citizens and government authorities to co-produce projects in both at local and at national level. The process includes two phases 1) the proposal phase and 2) the voting phase. Citizens have the right to two votes, one for programs and projects at the district level and one for programs and projects at the national level. Citizens can choose to participate in the vote either through the official website or via SMS (Portugal Participatory Budget, 2017).

Wampler (2000) defines *Participatory Budgeting Process* as an innovative process of planning and implementing public policies. PB is a process that enhances inclusive participation, social justice, and good governance (PB: Seven Defining Characteristics, 2012; Wampler, 2000). Public authorities have the responsibility to create and operate a process that promotes the inclusive participation (the involvement of all social groups). Thus, the process must combine different tools and processes (e.g., online, offline, face to face meetings, public assemblies, local councils, digital tools etc.). In addition, the public authorities must organize a campaign in the initial phase of *Participatory Budgeting* in order to inform citizens about all aspects of the process. In particular, citizens must understand the main purpose of the project and the importance for local democracy. Similarly, through a manual or other processes they should be aware of the operation of the program the new ways and forms of participation and the potentials for an inclusive participation. Additionally, it is a process which is characterized by its significant pedagogical importance. People are better educated in public policies. They can better understand the stages of a public policy and the link between resources and outcomes. Citizen participation in local affairs through PB is not limited to issues that focus on their neighborhood but analyze issues of general interest that concern the entire municipality, region, or the whole city- level (Shah, 2007).

A series of recent studies has indicated that *Participatory Budgeting* process varies from place to place. The design of PB processes can combine different tools of consultation, participation, and representation in compliance with the wider socio-economic, political, and institutional environment (Secchi, 2017; Shah, 2007; The Democratic Society, 2019; Wampler, 2000). However, the main stages of an annual PB process are as follows:

- Proposals- ideas (from citizens or group of citizens based on the needs of their area, crowdsourcing)
- Evaluation of proposals by the technical services (integrated approaches)
- Voting on the proposed and technically evaluated projects
- Implementation of the selected projects
- Control and feedback at all stages of the process

(Birskyte, 2013; World Bank, 2006)

Local Government

According to article 102 of the Constitution (1975/1986/2001/2008/2019) the administrative organization of the state in Greece is organized based on the decentralization system. Municipalities and regions constitute the first and the second level of self-government, based on Law 3852/2010

(Kallikratis). In compliance with Article 102 of the Constitution (1975/1986/2001/2008/2019) and the European Charter of Local Self-Government that has been ratified by the Law 1850/1989 (Government Gazette 144 A') the municipalities and regions are a fundamental institution. The two degrees of self-government are based on a relationship of solidarity and mutual cooperation. According to the current Constitution (1975/1986/2001/2008/2019) on article 102, par. 1: "The administration of local affairs belongs to the local self-government organizations of the first and second degree". The central bodies provide the general direction, coordination and control of the actions of the regional bodies. Decentralized Regional bodies to which decisive powers have been transferred to exercise policy in a specific geographical unit.

Forms of participatory democracy in Greece

Municipal Consultation Committee

At the local level in Greece, a municipal Consultation Committee is established in accordance with article 75 of the Kallikratis administrative reform, based on Law 3852/2010 (Kallikratis). The Consultation Committee is established two months after the election of the municipal authorities. A necessary condition is that the population of the municipality is over 10.000 inhabitants. The municipal council needs a majority of 2/3 of its members to establish the Consultation Committee.

The committee's term of office does not exceed 2.5 years and may be established in smaller municipalities by the decision of the municipal council. The members of the Consultation Committee include the representatives of the municipal authorities and the representatives of the local society (e.g., trade associations and bodies, sports clubs, voluntary organizations, local associations etc.) and the citizens representatives who undertake the 1/3 of all its members (the selection is made by a lottery). The committee is chaired by the mayor or the deputy mayor, meets in public, consults, and gives opinions on matters of budget, local development and technical program and on issues of general local interest. The members of the Committee participate voluntarily and unpaid. Due to the Law 4555/2018 (Kleisthenis I), the Municipal Consultation Committee is established in municipalities with a population greater than five thousand 5,000 inhabitants and not 10,000 based on Kallikratis reform, by decision of the municipal council. In the Consultation Committee the mayor, the vice-mayors, the presidents of the legal entities of the municipalities, the presidents of the communities in the municipalities and the representatives of the political factions participate without the right to vote. The Consultation Committee as mentioned above gives opinions on the development programs, action programs, functional and technical programs of the municipality.

Assembly of local community residents

In municipal and local communities, according to the article 85 of Law 3852/2010, the assembly of residents of the local community meets at least once a year. The president of the local Community Council in collaboration with the competent deputy mayor call the local bodies to a meeting in order to submit their proposals to the relevant municipality based on the needs of the local community. The proposals of the local bodies focus on issues of local development, the promotion of the brand name of the municipality and subsequently the increase of the tourism and also with the aim to provide social or other services such as better services for all social groups of the local community. According to the Law 4555/2018 (Kleisthenis I) in communities of more than 2,000 residents, the meetings can be held per district, parish, or other suitable subdivision.

Local referendum

The Code of Municipalities and Communities refers to the conduction of a local referendum. The first degree of self-government has the potential to declare a local referendum for matters that the responsibilities belong to the municipalities. The majority of the 2/3 of the members of the municipal council is required. The referendum requires the participation of the 50% of the registered in the electoral rolls in order to be valid.

Municipal and Regional referendum

The Kleisthenis reform according to the law 4555/2018 in article 133, aims at strengthening of the local participatory mechanisms. The central political government introduce the municipal and regional referendum. The subject of the municipal and regional referendum concerns every issue except national security, foreign policy, and fiscal management. The nature of the referendum (deliberative or decisive) is determined by its declaration. A municipal referendum on any matter other than the aforementioned exclusions, even if it does not fall under the competence of the local authorities, takes place after a decision of the 2/3 of the members of the municipal council or after a request of at least 10% of the registered citizens. Only citizens who have the right to vote in the municipal or regional elections participate in the conduct of the referendum.

Participatory Budgeting in the city of Athens

In the city of Athens and in the broader area of the Attica Region, the PB process is at an initial stage with few examples of implementation. In the region of Attica, in all Regional Units (RU) (RU North Sector of Athens, RU South Sector of Athens, RU of Central Sector of Athens, RU of West Attica, RU of East Attica, RU of Piraeus and RU of Attica Islands) only the municipalities of Kifissia, Agia Paraskevi, Chalandri, Athens and formerly the municipalities of Korydallos, Kaisariani and Byron, etc. have established PB programs.

The Municipality of Athens

The Municipality of Athens in 2018 launched the process of Participatory Budgeting for the first time. The municipality of Athens consists of seven Municipal Communities. The municipal authorities through the PB process aim at enhancing citizen participation in local affairs. Citizens are invited to participate in open face-to-face meetings in each of the seven Municipal Communities to express their opinions and highlight the issues they want. However, the process is at initial level and citizens can only consult with the local authorities who have the competence to make decisions on local affairs and the allocation of public resources. In 2019, in the same context, the Participatory Budgeting electronic platform is launched, through which citizens can submit their proposals for the problems and needs of each Municipal Community. The submission of proposals in this project was not limited to citizens only but was also extended to visitors to the city. However, this pilot program did not subsequently become a long-term process in the municipality of Athens. The new mayor in the municipality of Athens that emerged in the local and regional elections in 2019 continued the meetings in the municipal communities, however the platform for Participatory Budgeting was a short-term process. In the context of strengthening the participation of the municipality of Athens the new municipal government will implement the LocalWatch project within the Active Citizens Fund program of the European Economic Area (EEA) 2014-2021. The above program will create a digital platform for participation and accountability between citizens and municipal authorities. The platform will provide tools that are co-designed by citizens through participatory design workshops to 1) control the municipal elected officials, 2) co-shape municipal policies and organize voluntary actions, 3) evaluate municipal policies, 4) to have a say in the

municipal budget (Participatory Budgeting).

The municipality of Kifissia

The municipality of Kifissia belongs to the regional unit of the Northern sector of Attica. The municipality of Kifissia has implemented the Participatory Budgeting process. According to the official website of the municipality, in 2016 the amount of €250,000 was allocated equally to the three municipal units of the municipality (Kifissia, Nea Erythraia, Ekali), while in 2017 the amount raised to 330.000€.

The implementation stages of Participatory Budgeting in the municipality of Kifissia are divided into 4 phases:

1st stage: citizens participate in local assemblies where they are informed, discuss and elect their representatives.

2nd stage: through continuous meetings in local assemblies, citizens prioritize their needs, lead to a submission of proposals and finally vote on the proposals of their representatives.

3rd stage: it concerns the study of proposals and the setting of priorities. The Municipal Council approves the proposals of the citizens.

4th stage: implementation of the proposals. In this phase, the planned studies have been carried out and the projects proposed by the citizens have been approved by the municipality and are being implemented.

As stated in the website of the municipality, a local assembly is defined as the organized consultation of citizens or the management of citizens on matters of concern to the local community, in which they live, reside, or provide work. These assemblies propose on issues such as small technical projects, actions, and original ideas of the citizens for their area. These proposals will be evaluated and costed by the municipality's technical service. This institution of direct democracy and popular participation does not substitute or replace the municipal authority. The purpose is through the cooperation of municipal authorities and citizens to highlight the needs and problems in order to achieve the prioritization of the citizens' needs and to provide the desired solutions.

The municipality of Chalandri

The municipality of Chalandri belongs to the regional unit of the Northern sector of Attica. According to the official website of the municipality, the citizen participation pilot program is an ongoing process. The citizens, in cooperation with the municipality, participate in the prioritization of the municipal budgeting and the technical program. The aim of the process is through the cooperation between the citizens and the local authorities to lead to decisions and to the implementation of projects that will have an impact to a better quality of life and a more sustainable development.

The process in the municipality of Chalandri includes the residents' coordination committee which is divided into three smaller local assemblies. When the consultation process is completed, the Coordinating Committee records all the submitted proposals. The following phase is the evaluation of the proposals by the municipality's technical service. In the next phase the citizens participate in an Assembly in order to discuss and decide which of the technically approved proposals will choose to implement in the municipality. The announcements of the Coordinating Committee are posted on the official website of the municipality under the link "The city for the citizens". The municipal Consultation Committee is also set up in the municipality with the competence to express an opinion on issues of great local importance. Additionally, the municipality invites citizens to an open consultation on quality of life and environment issues.

Discussion

Participatory Budgeting is a process of direct democracy that has spread to thousands of cities worldwide. As such, it is a valuable tool for enhancing transparency, accountability, democracy and building trust between citizens and government. However, many authors emphasize to the disadvantages that occur in the process. According to Wampler (2000) a disadvantage of PB programs is that citizens do not have the opportunity to be involved in the formulation of public policies that affect their daily lives. Wampler through empirical research found out that people who participated in PB programs, when were asked to identify the most basic needs at the neighborhood level, most of them answered it was the unemployment. The conclusion is that citizens seek changes in a broader socio-economic context. Another disadvantage highlighted is that the process needs a strong institutional framework to defense any attempt of citizens manipulation.

Furthermore, the PB process is criticized in terms of the changes it causes in the relations between government authorities and citizens, with the PB being a policy tool that deprives one of the main responsibilities of the elected officials, to decide on issues related to their responsibilities. Citizen participation in decision-making is viewed with skepticism, which harkens back to post-war theories of democracy where participation in decision-making should be the right of the minority (Pateman, 2012). The digital gap or digital illiteracy is a fact that needs to be addressed by the designers of a digital participatory platform. Consequently, the implementation of a participatory process raises concerns and questions for the necessary inclusive participation of all social groups that legitimize citizen participation. These are issues of essential importance for the design and effective implementation of these innovative solutions and for enhancing participation.

As aforementioned the participation of specific groups that does not include a representative part of society, has a negative impact in the PB processes, that strengthens the inequalities and enhances the lack of trust in democratic institutions. The PB process must be a continuous and long-term process not a pilot program. (Sintomer *et al.*, 2012). The imposition and dominance of specific groups is a significant risk for PB processes. According to Blair (2013), the greater the influence and participation of citizens in setting priorities and making decisions, the lower this risk. Participation in decision-making strengthens both the feeling of responsibility and trust and the reliability in the specific process.

Conclusion

In recent years, a wider effort has been made at the European level, for the participation of citizens in local development at the municipal, regional and neighborhood level through the digital Participatory Budgeting. The creation of digital platforms is expanding and gives the opportunity to citizens through technology to set priorities and decide the allocation of the available resources in their area. Large European cities such as Paris, Madrid, Barcelona etc., have experimented in this process both at the neighborhood and city level. The process is a fundamental part of their vision for more participatory cities. Every process is adopted based on the various conditions and socioeconomic context in every city. In most of the above cities the process is implemented with traditional forms of participation, as well as through the use of technology with significant results in terms of responsiveness and citizen participation.

Participatory Budgeting can become a new tool of participative democracy in most municipalities in Greece. The literature review shows that a critical point is the further research on participatory tools and mechanisms in European cities as well as the Greek experience. The main goal is to lead to a more effective participatory governance model. The PB process is at an initial level in Greece with a small number of municipalities to having experimented with such promising participatory

programs.

As stated by the 2030 Agenda for "Sustainable Development" one of the main goals is to strengthen inclusive participation and representation at all levels. The Digital Participatory Budgeting in Greece could emerge as a valuable tool for local authorities. The wider application in an area with special geographical characteristics (mountainous, insular) gives the opportunity to strengthen citizen participation through digital tools. It can also constitute a policy instrument that based on the true needs of the residents can improve the quality of life and promote the Sustainable Development goal.

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Municipality of Athens: official website

<https://www.cityofathens.gr/>

Municipality of Kifissia: official website

<https://www.kifissia.gr/>

Municipality of Chalandri: official website

<https://www.chalandri.gr/>

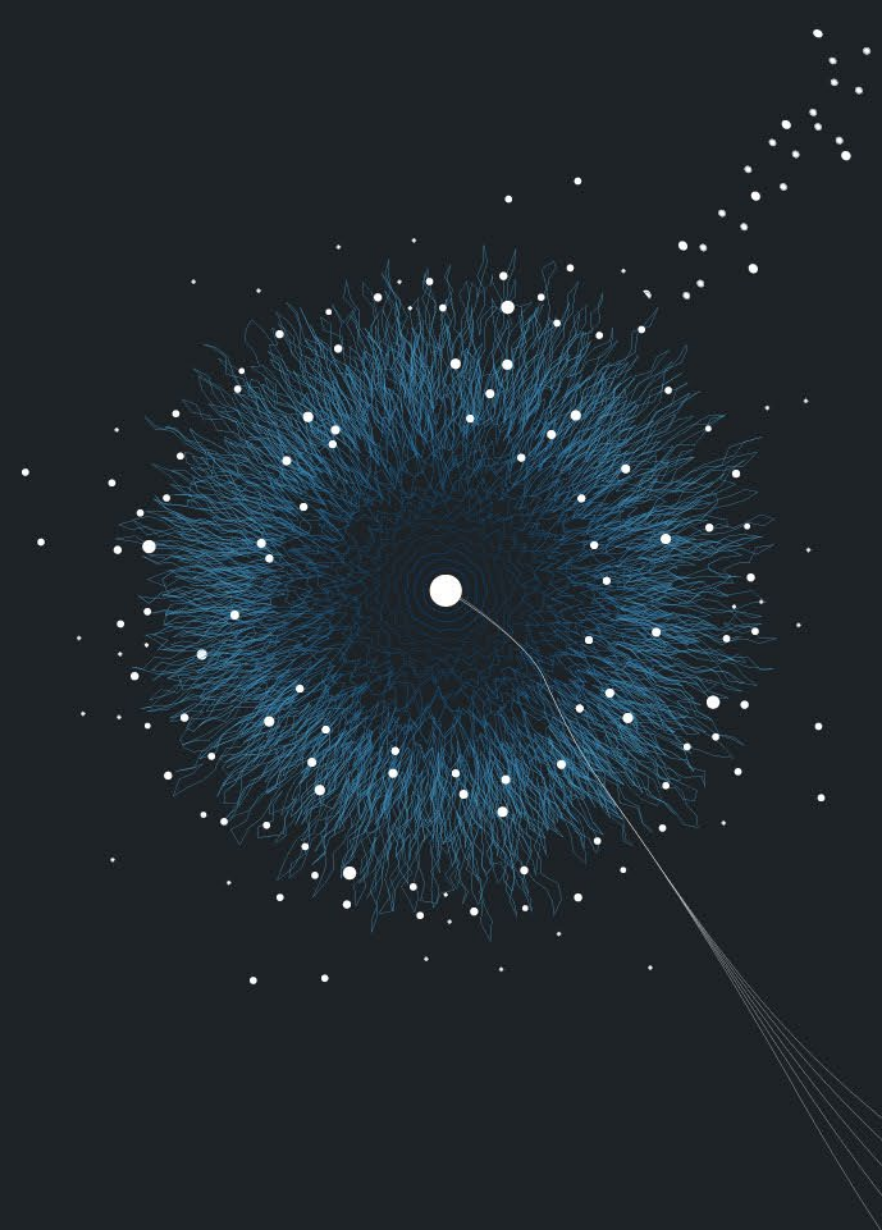
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Faculty of Geoinformation & Earth Observation (ITC)

Department of Urban & Regional Planning and Geoinformation Management

LAND REFORMS REVISITED

THE HELLENIC LAND ADMINISTRATION REFORM
AS A WICKED POLICY PROBLEM



EVANGELIA BALLA, JAAP ZEVENBERGEN, MAFALDA MADUREIRA

th
Biennial PhD
Symposium on
**Contemporary
Greece & Cyprus**

**26 May
2023**

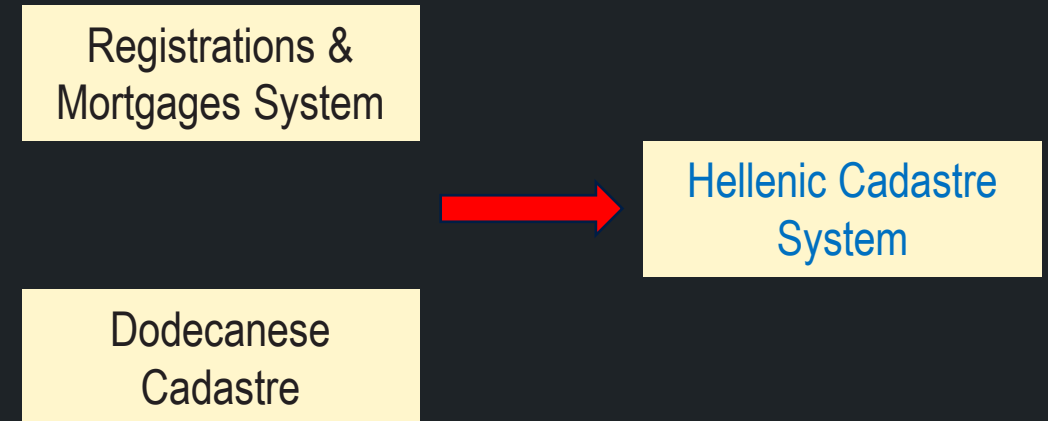
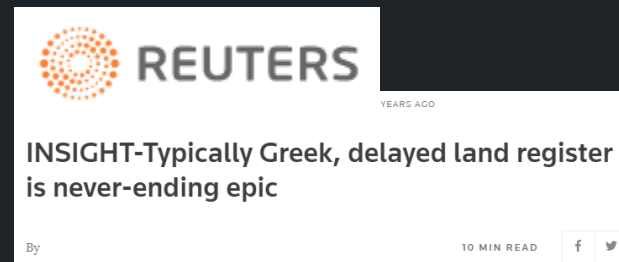
**HELLENIC
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OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE

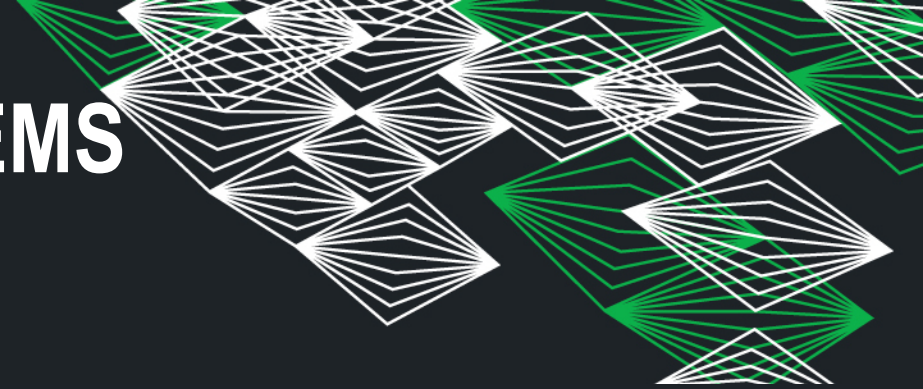
**UNIVERSITY
OF TWENTE.**

1. INTRODUCTION

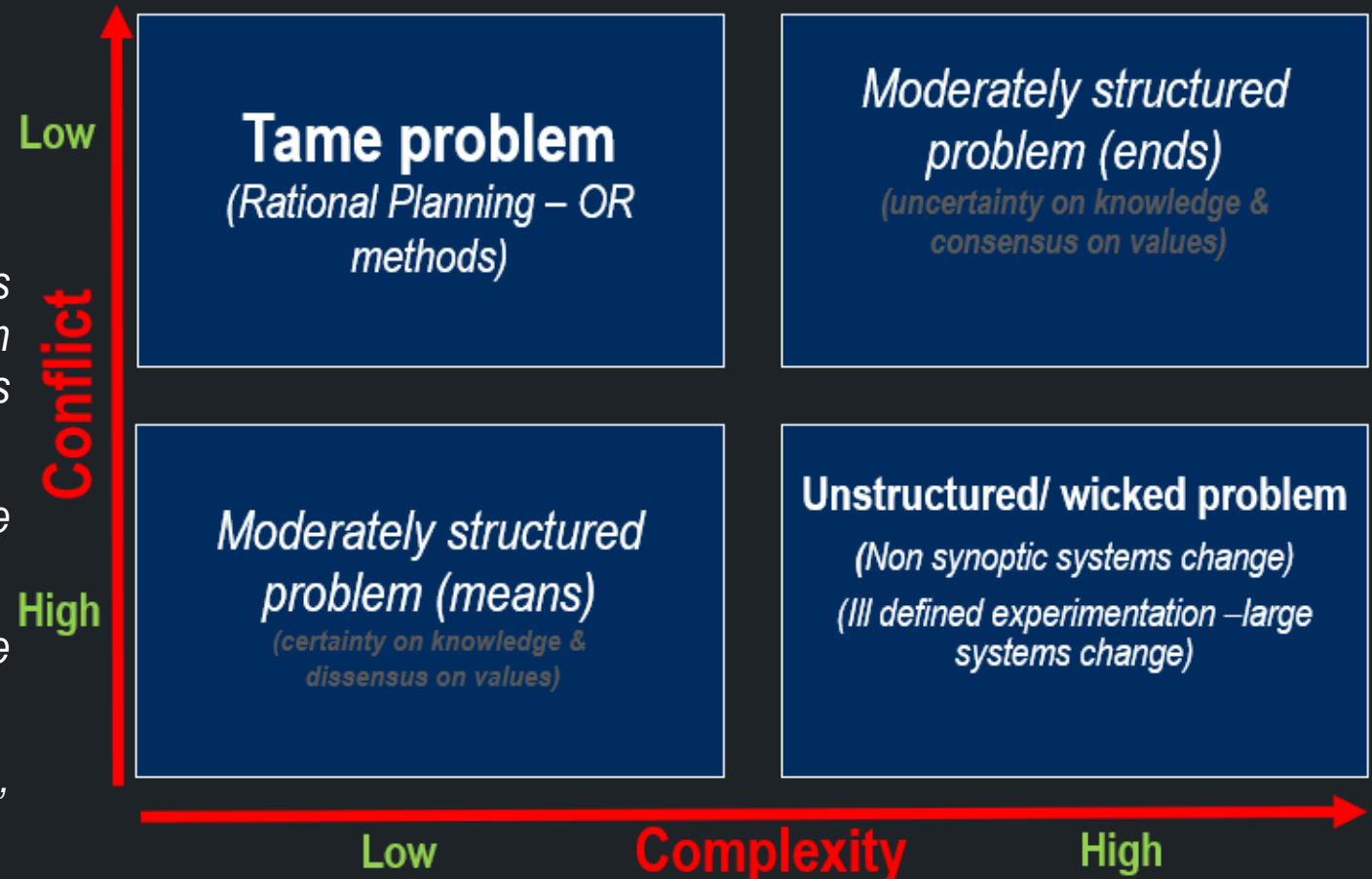
- ❑ **Background:** Land Reforms are inherently wicked due to the complex people-to-land- relationships and their interrelation with the broader political, socioeconomic, cultural and historical context (Palmer et.al., 2009).
- ❑ **Gap:** A systematic study on the complex nature of land reforms is missing
- ❑ **Empirical case:** the Hellenic Land Administration Reform: from Registrations & Mortgages System (RMS) and Dodecanese Cadastre (DC) to the Hellenic Cadastre System
- ❑ **Argumentative paper** which reflects on recent findings from Balla, et.al, 2021, 2022, 2023
- ❑ Interdisciplinary field of **land administration, public policy, and public administration**



LITERATURE REVIEW: WICKED PROBLEMS



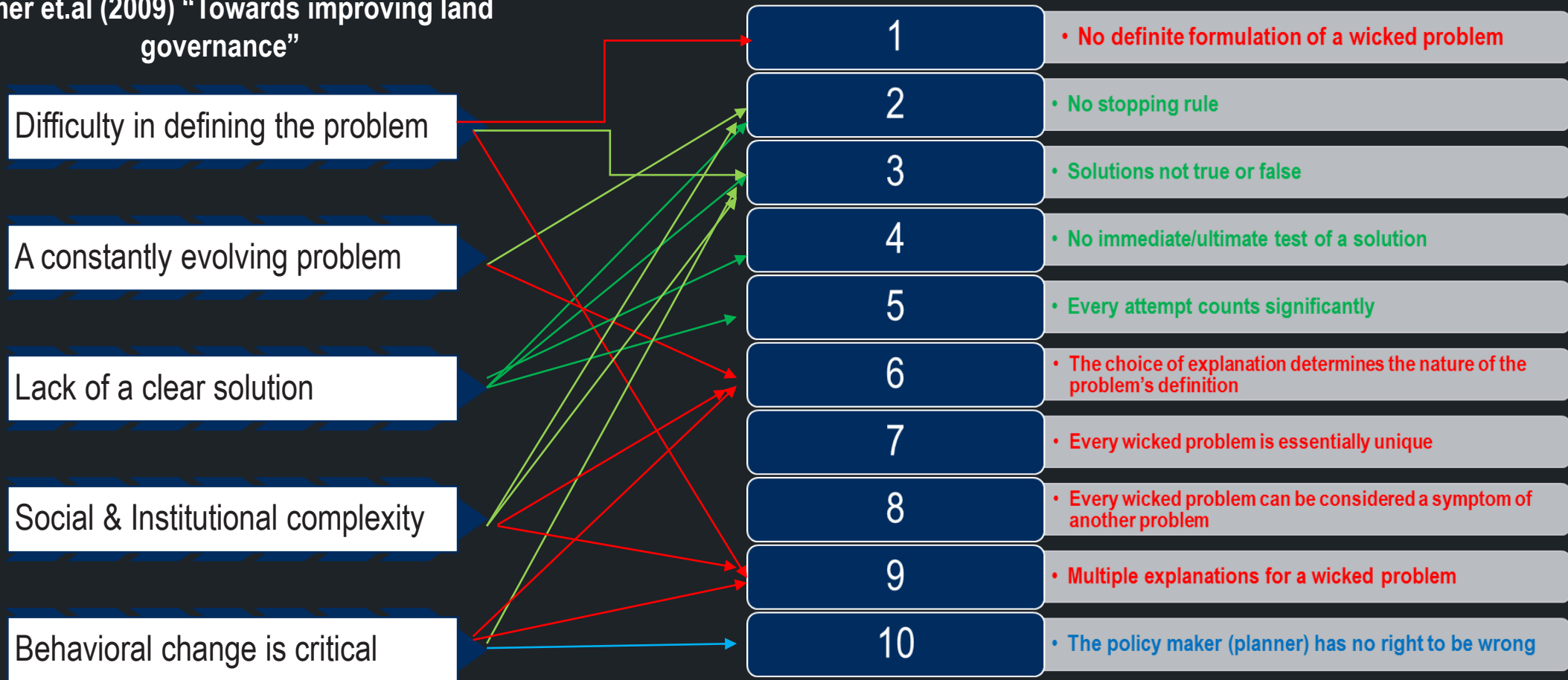
- 1967 University of Berkeley California
- Nasa technology > in the world of urban (social) problems
- 1967 Churchman – Prof. of Systems Science
- 1973 Rittel & Webber – School of Architecture
- “..problems which are ill-formulated, where the information is confusing, where there are many clients and decision makers with conflicting values, and where the ramifications in the whole system are thoroughly confusing”
- “proposed solutions often turn out to be worse than the symptom”
- “no solutions in the sense of definitive and objective answers”
- Pava (1981, 1986), Papoulias & Tsoukas (1994, 2012), Hirschmoller & Hoppe (1995), Roberts (2000) etc.



LITERATURE REVIEW: WICKEDNESS OF LAND REFORMS

FOOD & AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION
Palmer et.al (2009) "Towards improving land governance"

Dilemmas in General Theory of Planning (Rittel & Webber, 1973)

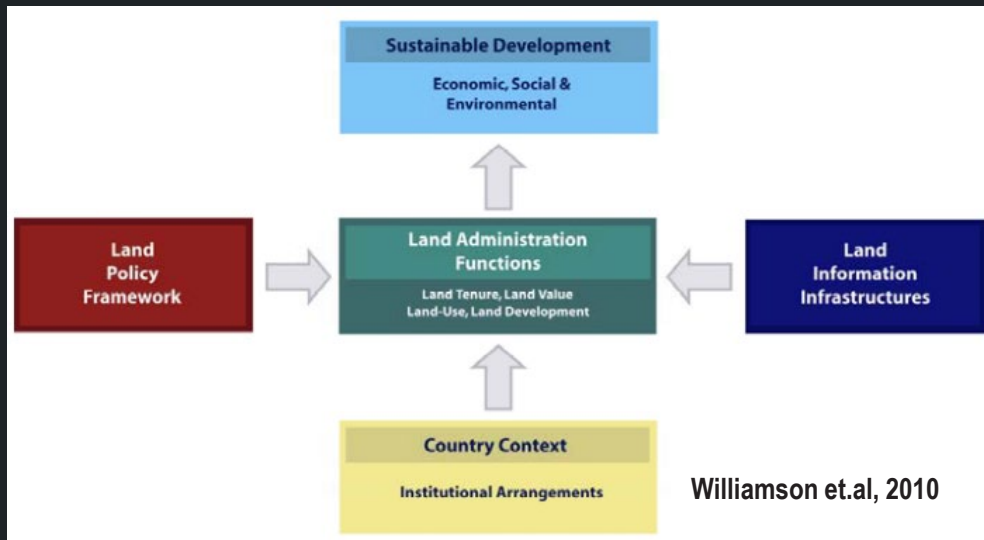
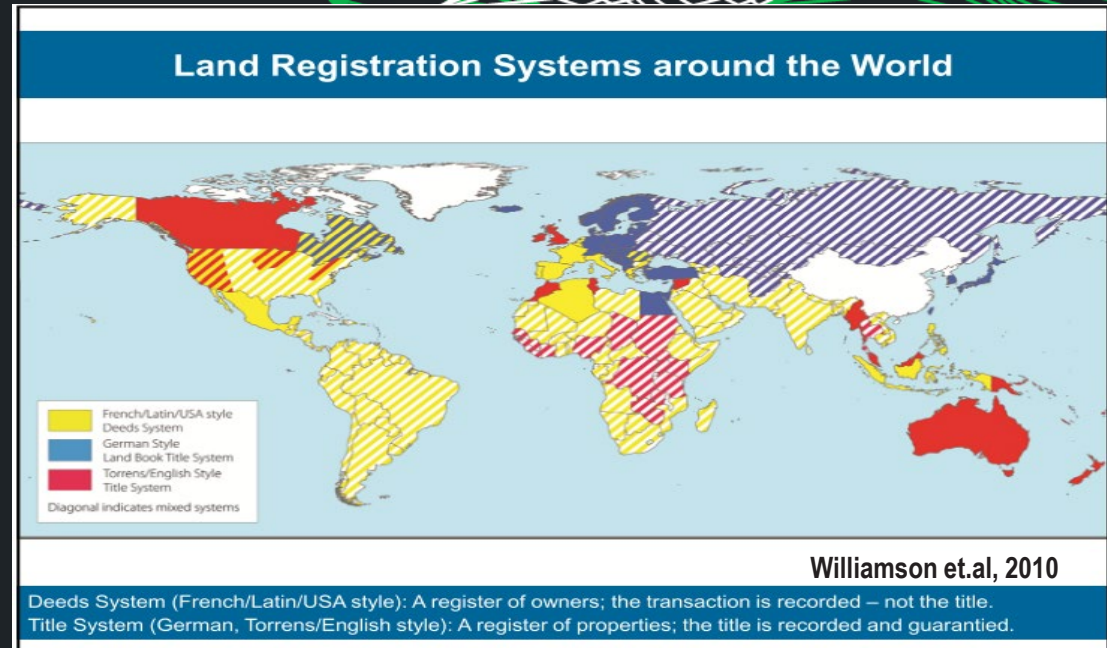


problem related traits

Solution related traits

DISCUSSION

- Land Registries : owner with the right (who?) > benefit of the citizen
- Cadastres: owner with the parcel (where? how much?) > benefit of the State
- French/Latin (Deed), German/Torrens style (Title)
- **Mid 90's** > Land administration theory – LAS - the **multipurpose engine of governments**
- LAS are critical to the organization and effectiveness of formal land markets.
- **Cadastral Systems** – the engine of LAS - identification of land parcels and registration of land rights (*FIG, Cadastre 2014 > ideal cadastral system*)



Style of System	Land Registration	Cadastre
French/Latin/US	Deed System Registration of transactions Notaries, Registrars, Lawyers, Insurance Companies (US) Ministry of Justice	Land taxation purposes Spatial reference for taxation purposes only – not necessary of surveyors Ministry of Finance or a tax authority
German	Title System Land Books maintained by district courts Titles are based in cadastral identification. Registered titles guaranteed by the state. Neither boundaries nor areas guaranteed	Land and property identification Fixed boundaries determined by cadastral surveys carried out by licensed surveyors Cadastral registration prior to land registration Ministry of Environment or similar
Torrens	Title System Land records maintained at the LR Office Registered titles usually guaranteed as to ownership. Neither boundaries nor areas guaranteed	Fixed boundaries – cadastral surveys- (Torrens) General boundaries – in large scale topographic maps. Cadastral registration integrated into land registration

Williamson et.al, 2010

DISCUSSION



Land Registry Policy Domain (LRPD)

Land Records for legal purposes → conveyancing
registration of deeds to serve the need of publicity

Balla et.al, 2021

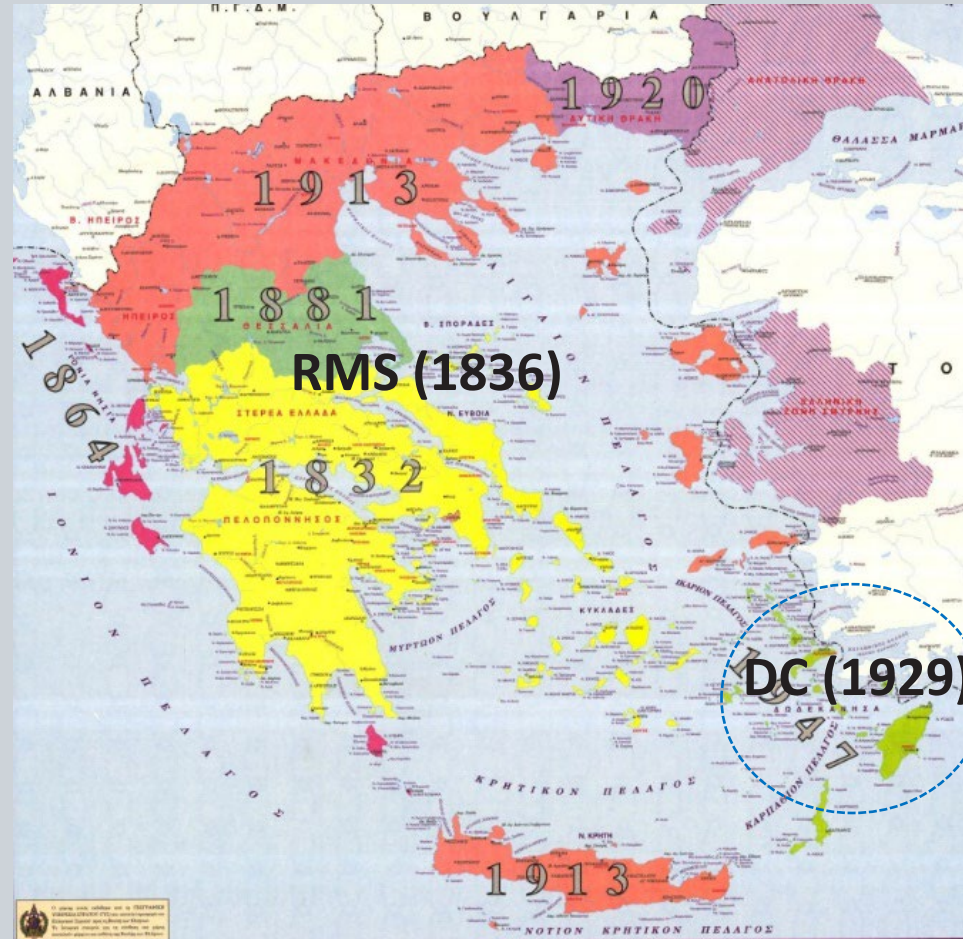
First Civil Code 1836 influenced by the Napoleonic Civil Code
(New - German Influenced 1940)

1836 «*about Mortgages*»
1856 «*about registration of properties*»

392 Mortgage Offices:
Public,
Private and Notary Run

RMS: Persons and paper based Deed LRS (98,7% area, 98% pr.rights)

registration ► judicial act



Dodecanese Cadastre:
Title paper based LRS
(1,3% total area, 2% total property rights)

2 Cadastral Offices
(Rhodes, Kos – Leros)

Gradual annexation of new territories > impact on the classification of private/public land

Complex land tenure
Widespread Informality
Formal, informal land rights

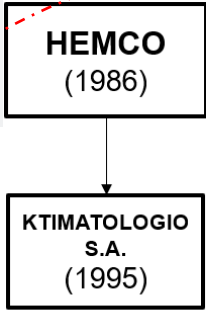
High % of forests (~60%)
Long seashore (~13k km)

↓
Public property



Balla et.al, 2021

Land Administration Policy Domain > 1994 onwards



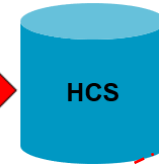
To establish & operate Cadastral Offices (L.2664/1998)

Min. Environment



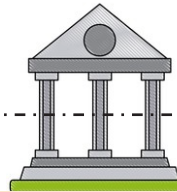
L.2308/95

Cadastral development process



to replace

Min. Justice



392 Public, Private, Notary run MOs

Organizational Values & Culture

changes in the constitutive rules of the institutional field

3rd order: Policy Reform

2nd order: organizational transformation of Public, Private and Notary-Run MOs'

1st order: problem-solving of existing systems (RMS –DC)

Land Administration Policy Domain 1836-1994

Land Registry Policy Domain (LRPD)
Land Records for legal purposes > conveyance registration of deeds to serve the need of publicity

- Civil Code 1836 influenced by the Napoleonic Civil Code
- 1836 «About Mortgages»
- 1856 «About Registration of properties»
- 390 Mortgage Offices: Public, Private and Notary Run
- RMS: Persons and paper based Deed LRS (98,7% area, 98% p:rights)
- Dodecanese Cadastre: Title paper based LRS (1,1% total area, 2% total property rights)
- 2 Cadastral Offices

To be operated transitionally by MOs
(Interim) Cadastral Offices supported by KT

DISCUSSION

“The absence of a complete and operational land registry in Greece has been a longstanding source of uncertainty and disruption for both public and private purchasers/sellers of land. The current situation adversely impacts major infrastructure projects the sale or privatisation of public real estate where land title is not clearly secured. To illustrate the dimension of the problem, it is estimated that the land title has not been clearly established for half of the real estate assets transferred to the privatisation fund for sale. “

EU, Task Force for Greece, 2nd Quarterly Report, March 2012, p.27

[Complex and inefficient Spatial Planning and]
Lack of a complete and operational Land Registry as impediments for growth
 included in the
 Growth enhancing structural reforms

M1 (2010): to complete the Cadastre by 2020

Open Access Feature Paper Article

Too Much, Too Soon? The Changes in Greece’s Land Administration Organizations during the Economic Crisis Period 2009 to 2018

by Evangelia Balla, Jaap Zevenbergen, Ana Mafalda Madureira and Yola Georgiadou

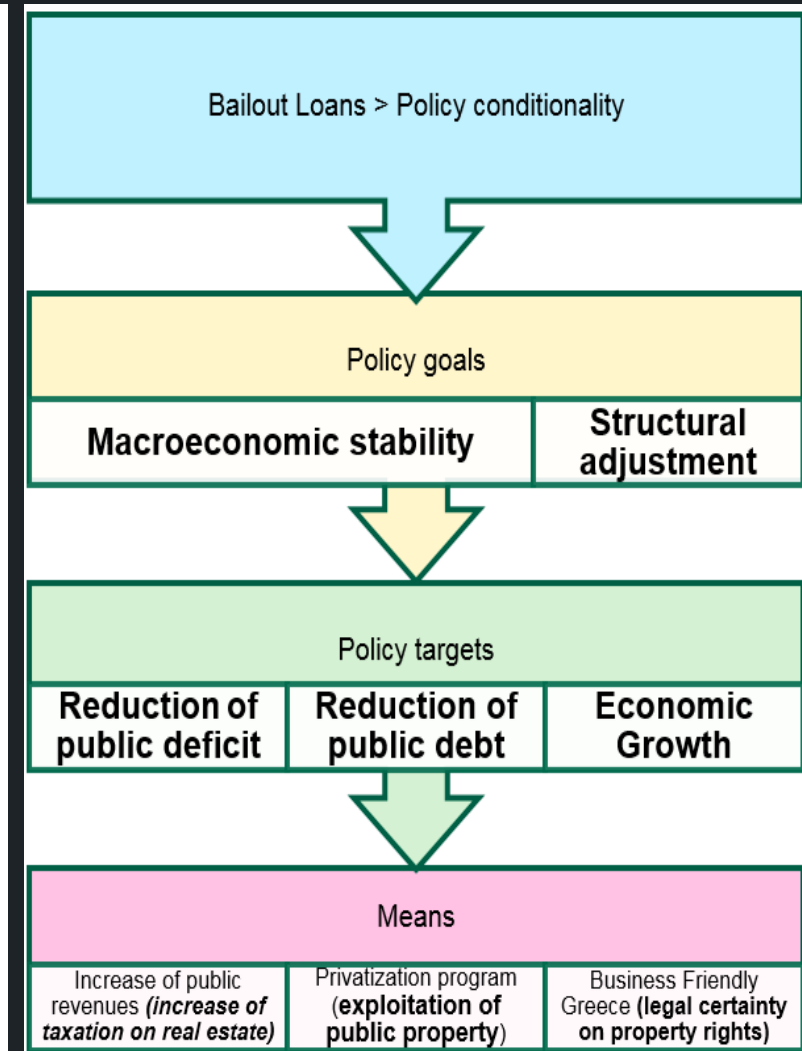
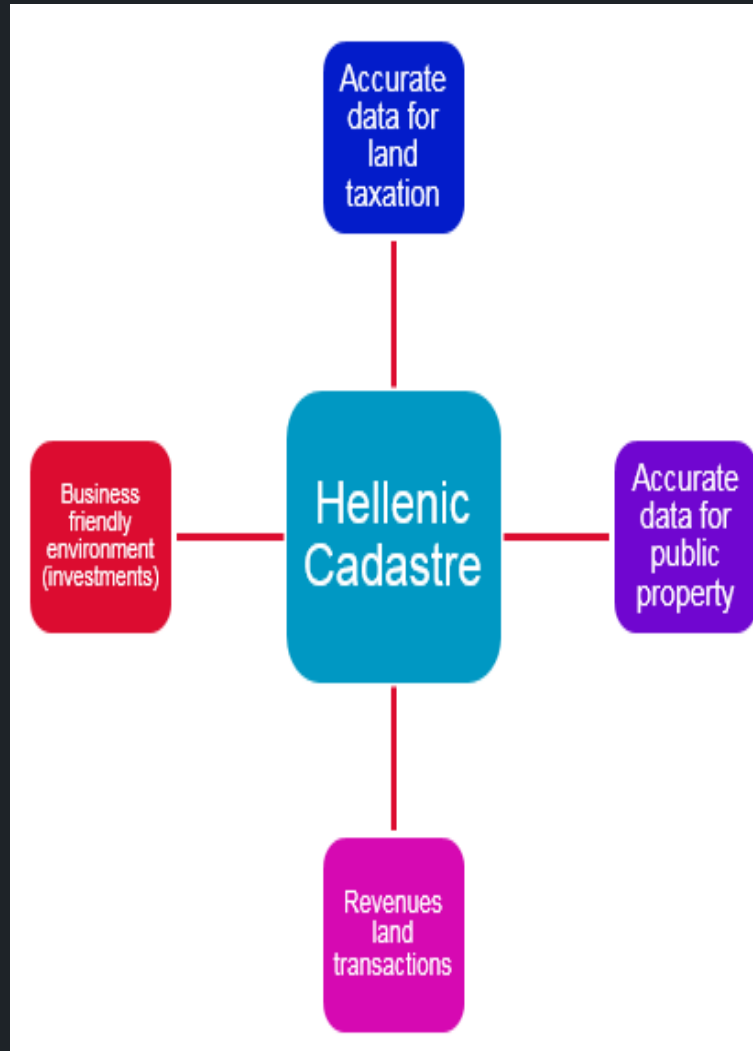
Faculty of Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation (ITC), University of Twente, P.O. Box 217, 7500 AE Enschede, The Netherlands

* Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.

Academic Editors: Chryssy Potsiou and Gerhard Navratil

Land 2022, 11(9), 1564; <https://doi.org/10.3390/land11091564>

Balla et.al, 2022

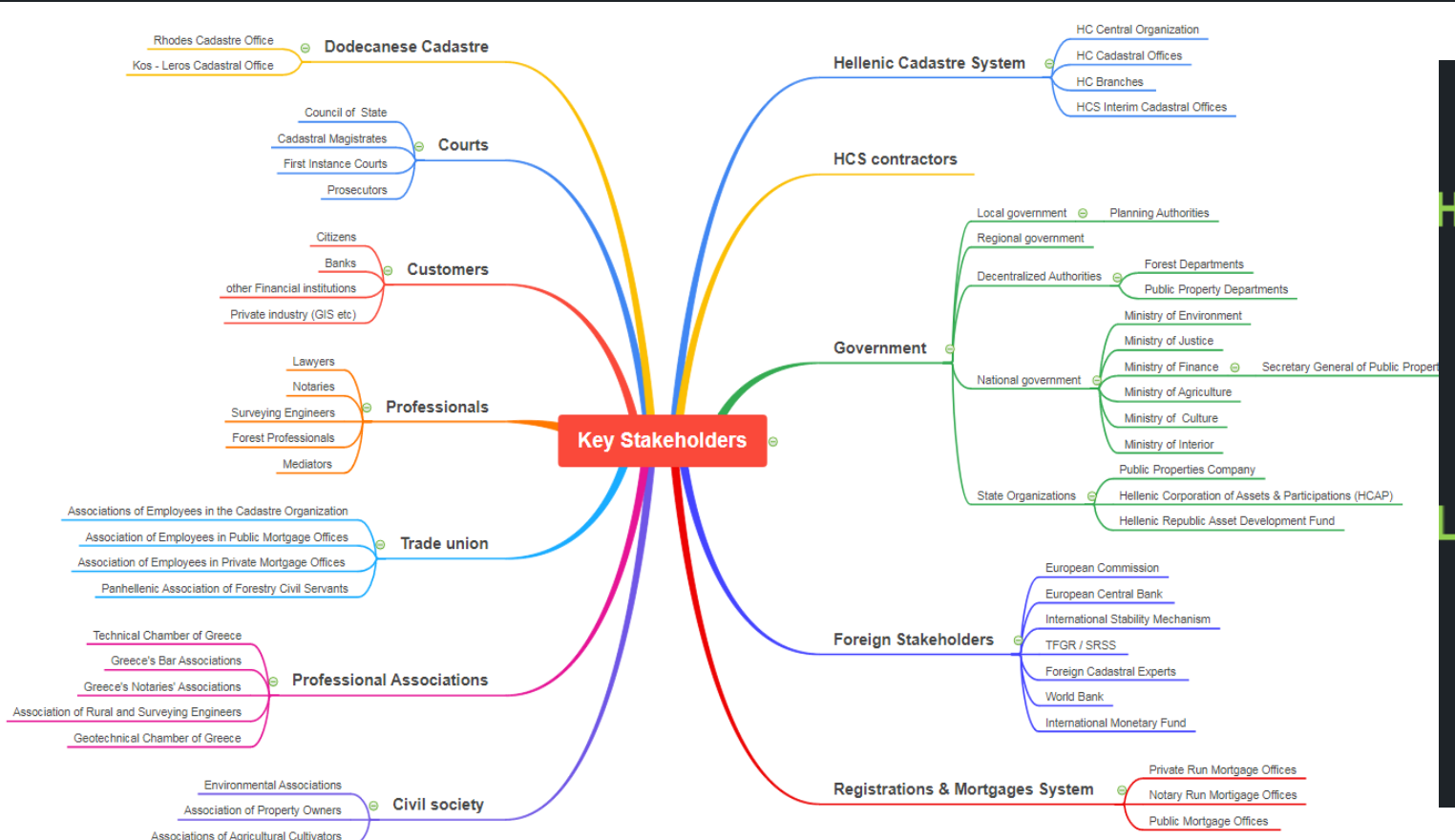


DISCUSSION

EA P	Law	Land Registry System	Intended Effect	Actual Effect	Type of Change	Organizational Transformation	Order of Change
M2	4164/2013	HCS	Rationalization efficiency	Public organization abolished Transfer of responsibilities happened but was not adequately embedded Increase in efficiency not measured	Organizational change in the organizational structure of the HCS subdomain	Public to agency	2nd in the subdomain of the HCS
M2	4277/2014 (Article 52)	HCS	Pilot for evaluation	No actual effect No evaluation took place	----	Public to public	--
M2	Draft Law 2014	RMS, DC, HCS	Modernization, rationalization transparency, effectiveness,	The law was not enacted	Problem solving (Procedures, new administrative routines, uniform land transaction fees)	---	1st
-	Draft Law 2016	RMS, DC, HCS	ensure the public interest, transparency, effectiveness Ensure job positions of employees of private MOs Sustainability of private MOs	The law was not enacted	Organizational change in the organizational structure of the RMS & DC subdomain (values, culture)	Private to public	2nd in RMS and DC
-	4456/2017 (Article 32)	RMS	Sustainability of Private MOs	20 Private MOs converted to 16 Public MOs Private employees became public servants Temporary execution of registration in 15 MOs by non-competent judicial employees	Organizational change in the organizational structure of a small part of the RMS subdomain (values, culture)	Private to public (Conversion of private MOs to public MOs)	2nd in a small part of the RMS subdomain
M3	4512/2018	RMS, DC, HCS	Rationalization Uniformity, transparency, effectiveness	Public organization created Employees from NCMA SA transferred to public organization Private & public MOs under merger and conversion process to be incorporated into the authority of the public organization Employees of the MOs to be transferred to the new cadastral offices & branches	Organizational transformation in the organizational structure of the whole land administration policy domain (procedures, values, culture)	1. Private to public (392 mostly private MOs to 17 Cadastral Offices and 75 Branches) 2. Agency to public (NCMA SA to Hellenic Cadastre)	2nd in RMS, DC, and HCS

DISCUSSION

Balla et.al, 2023



Ackermann and Eden, 2011

CONCLUSION

- The HLAR exhibits the characteristics of wicked policy problem: complexity and conflict
- large-scale systems change and is path-dependent
- Every solution has irreversible consequences – no way to return to the original state
- redefinition of power structures within the transforming systems
- multiple public and private actors with conflicting interests and values
- Land Reforms > vulnerable in Black Swans (Taleb, 2010)
- Greece's crisis > complexity & conflict escalated
- The promised benefits of the HLAR were aligned with the objectives of the Economic Adjustment Programs
- Policy conditionality > critical juncture – policy window > accelerator
- Legislative overregulation > complexity and conflict > unanticipated effects in the policy domain
- normative and coercive isomorphic mimicry
- The HLAR is recursive
- Empirical evidence in land reforms' wicked nature - SDG 1.4.2.
- Wickedness of the HLAR > symptom of the wickedness of land tenure?
- Strategies to address wickedness in land reforms ?
- Leadership?
- End of Reform or No stopping rule ?
- Incrementalism, evolutionary land governance vs. big bang approaches ? (big development vs. small development).
- “Crisis framing” and land governance?
- costs and benefits of a (the) land reform?



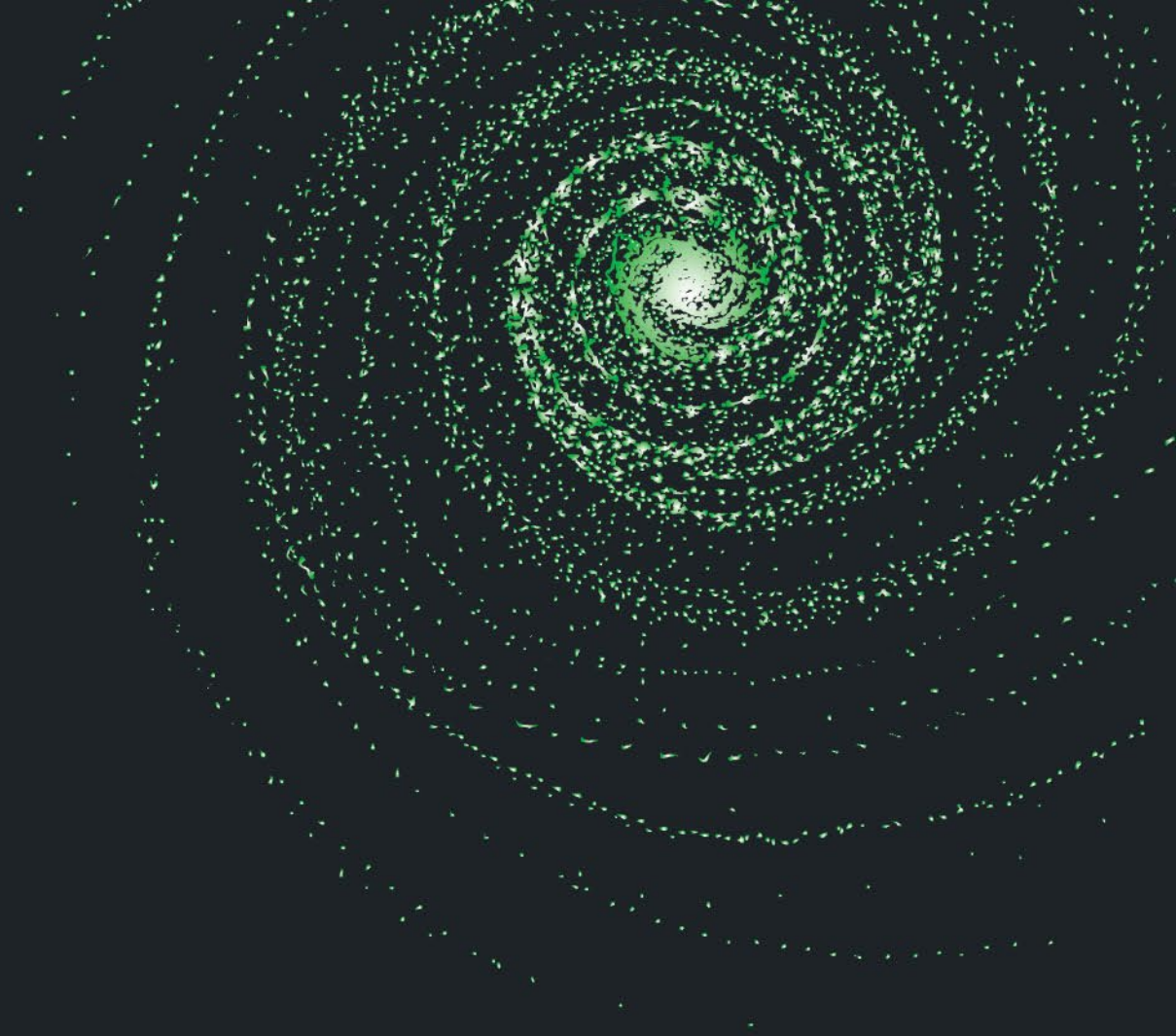
"Look, I've not tamed the whole problem, just the growl; the beast is still as wicked as ever", C. West Churchman, 1967

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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UNIVERSITY
OF TWENTE.



10TH HO PHD SYMPOSIUM
26 MAY 2023



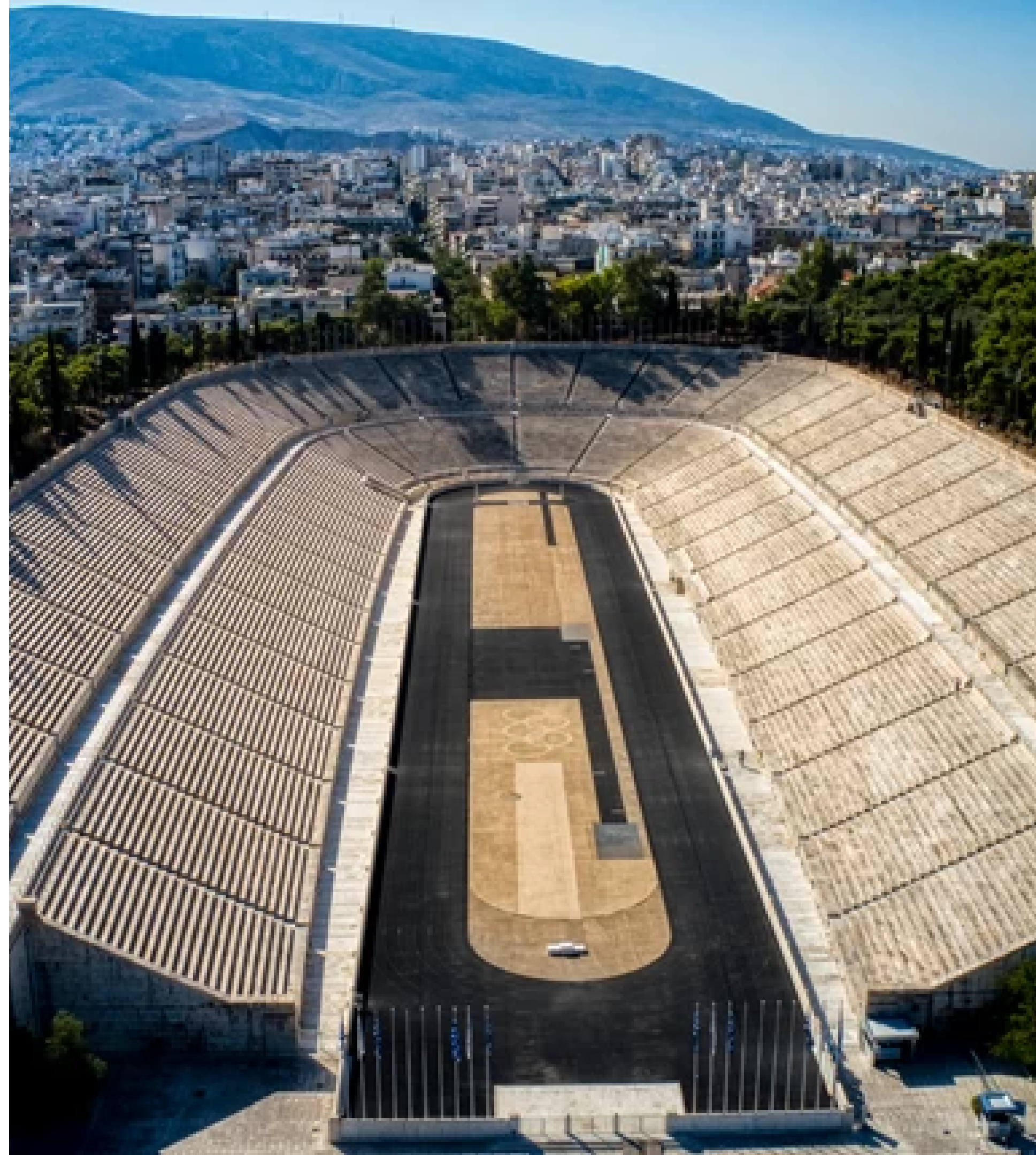
Author: Margarita K. Chomatianou
Supervisor: Despina Catapoti
Affiliation: Department of Cultural Communication & Technology

Cultural heritage in smart city (SC) Athens;

An interpretive **policy analysis**

WHAT IS IT ABOUT

This paper looks into the **role and positioning of cultural heritage in the smart city (SC) agenda implemented by the Municipality of Athens**. It is one of the three case studies conducted for the PhD thesis *'Reapproaching urban intelligence; smart cities, cultural mediation and lost connections'*. All three of them analyse the SC agendas employed by different Greek cities seeking to pinpoint the positioning of cultural heritage in their strategies.





RESEARCH QUESTIONS

(i) whether and to what extent **cultural heritage informs the smart city (SC) agenda** implemented by the Municipality of Athens

(ii) what are the **key areas** that shape the overall policy

CONTENTS

TOPICS AND HIGHLIGHTS

methodological choices

findings

discussion

conclusions

call for further research

DOCUMENTS IN REVIEW



ATHENS
DIGITAL
ROADMAP
2018



ATHENS
DIGITAL
LAB'S
OFFICIAL
WEBSITE



ATHENS
PARTNERSHIP'S
OFFICIAL
WEBSITE



ATHENS
PARTNERSHIP
2018 ANNUAL
REPORT



'TRANSFORMING
ATHENS INTO A
DIGITAL CITY'



CHIEF
DIGITAL
OFFICER
INTERVIEW
2018



FORMER-CHIEF
DIGITAL
OFFICER
INTERVIEW
2022



WHY INTERPRETIVE POLICY ANALYSIS (IPA)

The specific method has been selected as it **draws attention to the underlying meanings and essential drivers embedded in-between policy lines.** Ultimately, by employing this method the research seeks to contribute to **closely reading cultural heritage policies within the Greek SC policy framework while making the ideas presented 'more explicit'** (Yanow, 2000, p. 49).

First & second cycle coding (example)

Document in review:
Athens Digital Roadmap (2018)

01 Vision	2.1 Goals	2.1.1 Roadmap	
		2.1.2 Municipality	2.1.2.1 Access
			2.1.2.2 e-Government
			2.1.2.3 Education
			2.1.2.4 Engagement
			2.1.2.5 Innovation
	2.2 Priorities		

Assigning text segments (example)

Document in review:
Athens Digital Roadmap (2018)

2.1 GOALS

ROADMAP

Commit to actions that will be implemented in 2018 to **provide residents with better services** and more **efficient and direct communication** with the Athens Municipality (p. 8).

Invite **government institutions** to **deepen collaboration** for a digital Athens (p. 8).

Share our plan with the **business community** and create **new opportunities** for investment (p. 8).

Enhance **transparency** and encourage **active engagement** (p. 8).

Form **new best practice standarts** for the municipality (p. 8).

Reduce bureacracy by providing new options for municipal digital services (p. 8).

MUNICIPALITY

Our shared goal is to **strengthen the Municipality** of Athens and **empower Athenians** by expanding access to Internet across all neighborhoods, attracting new investment, and creating jobs (p. 5).

The goals set by the Athens Municipality are to **attract more ivestment, create more jobs, and support the city with know-how and best practices** (p. 8).

PER PRIORITY

ACCESS

E GOVERNMENT

EDUCATION

ENGAGEMENT

INNOVATION

FINDINGS

1/2

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IS PRIORITISED MAINLY OUT OF NECESSITY

Digital transformation, when initiated by city governments is prioritised mainly out of necessity to keep up with global trends and market needs.

DIGITAL INITIATIVES PILOT SOLUTIONS BASED ON AVAILABLE TECH

Pilot digital initiatives are often designed based on (a) **the pressing need to innovate** and (b) **the available resources and expertise** rather than on coordinated plans addressing site-specific issues.



FINDINGS

2/2

In the documents, '*culture*' describes different concepts ('culture of openness', 'culture of innovation'). The times that the term is used to introduce any arts-based and heritage-related activities or programs fall under broader strategies from different policy areas (i.e. tourism, engagement).

Seen through the scope of engaging citizens and visitors, cultural planning seems to gain **an enhanced sense of urgency** along with some new goals:

(a) contribute to meeting certain numbers and indicators such as the 'national tourist goal'

(b) add value to any city-branding and place-making policies in place

POSITIONING

Figure 1. Visualisation of culture heritage's positioning in 2018 Athens Digital Roadmap

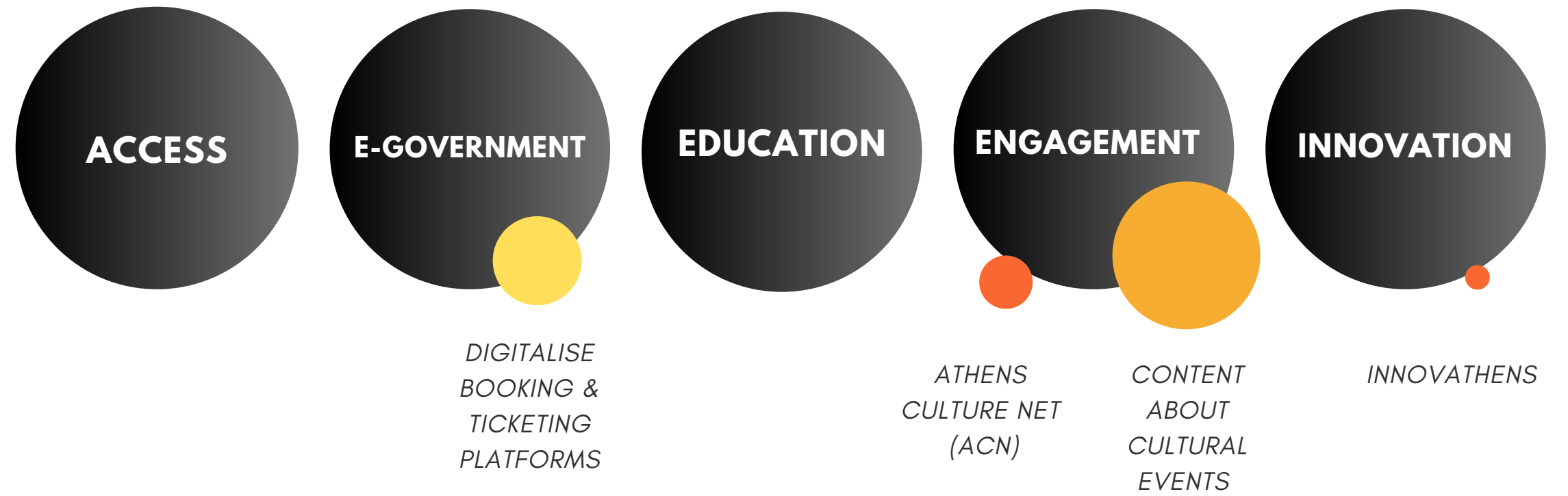
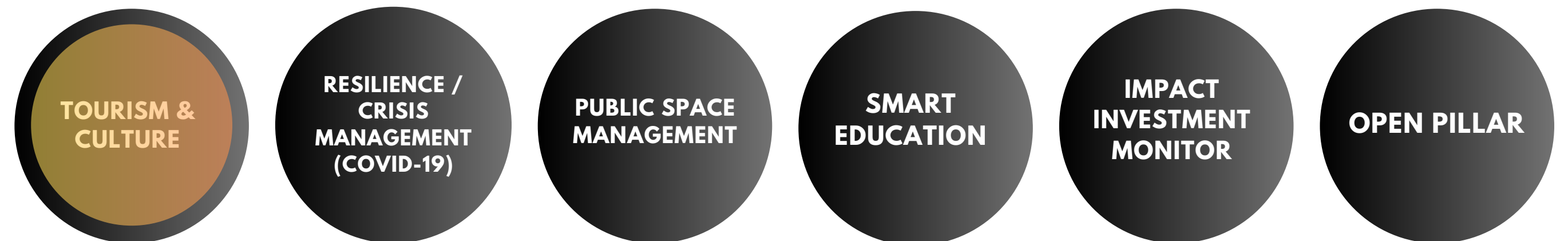


Figure 2. Visualisation of culture heritage's positioning in Athens Digital Lab's strategy



KEY POLICY AREAS



INFRASTRUCTURE

The inadequate resources and infrastructure in the service of the Municipality, at least up until 2007, established their advancement as one of the over-arching priorities.

DIGITAL LITERACY

The barely sufficient roles within the Municipality and the employees' relatively limited level of digital literacy stressed the need of creating a shared understanding.

TOURISM

Cultural heritage is the medium to reach specific audiences and achieve fixed targets.

CITY BRANDING

Among the key objectives of the overall strategy is to establish Athens '*as an all-year destination*'

MR. CHAMPIDIS:

“..when appointed, it felt ‘like a Czechoslovak Admiral [..] (cc: an admiral) because you are in charge, a Czechoslovak, because you don't have a navy’ ”

CHAMPIDIS, K. (2022) INTERVIEWED BY MARGARITA K. CHOMATIANOU, 26 OCTOBER.



OVERVIEW

INFRASTRUCTURE- FOCUSED APPROACH

Despite the principal objective of SC agendas to increase social participation and citizen engagement, we observe an infrastructure-focused approach in the case of SC Athens

PRIORITISATION OF DIGITAL LITERACY

Insufficient technological literacy (esp. among the Municipality's workforce) was among the factors significantly defining the SC strategy's objectives.





EXTERNAL 'AGENTS OF CHANGE'

corporate giants vs local authorities vs cultural policy (Microsoft, NOKIA, IBM, etc.)

THE 'MONOPOLY' OF DONORS

exclusive donations vs cultural ownership

**CALL FOR
FURTHER
RESEARCH**

The role of the Greek region in poverty reduction

Ioannis Radin, PhD candidate

University of Thessaly, Department of Planning and Regional Development

Abstract

Greece has implemented extensive decentralisation reforms over the past 25 years. The two main reforms were the Kapodistrias Plan (1998) and Kallikrates Project (2011). These reforms merged municipalities, introduced new responsibilities and created the second tier of local government: the 13 Greek regions. Despite the reforms, decentralisation indexes such as the Regional Autonomy Index (RAI) portray Greece as a highly centralised country in comparison to its EU counterparts. This paper examines the role of the Greek region in the implementation of poverty alleviation policies and the main difficulties faced by regional governments. Competences are shared between the central government and the subnational levels, leading to a labyrinthine system. Another key finding was the importance of EU funds and the social cohesion policy which play a crucial role in the poverty reduction strategy of the regions.

KEYWORDS: Greece, Regional Policy, Decentralisation reform, Poverty reduction, European Social Fund

1. Introduction

The overarching aim of this paper is to critically assess the role of the Greek region in the implementation of poverty reduction policies, which has not yet been examined systematically.

In economic development literature, we often encounter the argument that decentralisation and poverty reduction are linked. Decentralisation is thus proposed as an instrument to address economic and spatial inequalities through improved accountability and responsiveness to local needs (Johnson 2002). The argument in favour of decentralisation is based on the traditional theory of fiscal federalism, as laid out by Musgrave (1959) and Oates (1972). Their reasoning is grounded in the hypothesis that the local government's role is to provide goods and services which increase economic welfare more effectively than under national provision. This discrepancy in welfare is caused by the allocative efficiency of representative local democracy: local governments are better at tailoring the goods and services that they provide to the preferences and needs of the public.

Defining poverty is crucial for planning policies that can alleviate it and identifying its causes. The definition of poverty has evolved and changed substantially over time since its first modern study (Alcock 2006). As poverty is closely tied to its measurement, its causes and solutions require an understanding of the links between them (Ruggles 1991). However, the definition of poverty has not evolved in a vacuum; it is an outcome closely tied to the structures of power and political discourse. Those that control significant political power (i.e. banks, corporations, political and economic leaders, even philanthropists) are in a position that permits them to be more capable of shaping ideas than those who lack such power (Hulme 2015: 56-58).

According to Townsend (1979: 31) poverty is defined as: "Individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary ... in the societies to which they belong". Townsend's definition highlights the main issues with defining poverty: poverty is linked to subsistence, a family that lacks food can be categorised as poor, poverty is a lack of access to some activities that are deemed key for a person's quality of life; poverty is relative to the society one belongs to, a person may live in a relatively wealthy society yet he may also be poor.

Tselios and Rodríguez-Pose (2022: 19) summarised the link between decentralisation and poverty reduction as "At the regional level, the effect is more uniform. Greater local autonomy is fundamentally linked with lower poverty and social exclusion in all regions, regardless of their governance level. This implies that decentralisation can lead to a greater responsiveness to the needs of the poor and the socially excluded within regions across the whole of Europe, although the aggregate impact at country level only emerges when we move up the governance quality scale."

The first section examines the Greek context and its characteristics, the high degree of centralisation and the concentration of activities in the Capital region of Attica (and Thessaloniki's Central Macedonia to a lesser extent), the state's difficulty in allowing the expression of significant autonomous interests at the sub-national level and the struggle to create meaningful links with the lower tiers of governance. A brief historical overview of the main decentralisation reforms in Greece is also presented.

The next sections will briefly present the main research findings, such as the importance of EU policy and the main barriers to regional social cohesion policy in Greece, including the lack of data, unclear and conflicting responsibilities for the local authorities and the lack of bonds between the regions and their citizens.

This paper's research methods are qualitative because of the nature of the research question which leads to a path of collecting empirical material to more accurately understand the unique idiosyncrasies of Greek regional governance.

2. Methodology

This qualitative study used semi-structured interviews and a review of relevant documents. Members of the Regional Councils were purposively sampled from across the Greek Regions to participate in the interviews. All interview participants were treated anonymously. The sample consists of elected politicians who are senior members of the Social Policy or Economic Committee of a Region and, thus, are experts on the policies implemented by their region. The collected data were analysed, categorised, and themed. This inductive method of transcript analysis helped to identify common themes and patterns across the data.

Admittedly, access to elected regional politicians in senior positions proved to be a time-consuming and arduous process. Contacting them by email would rarely yield a response; thus, a snowball method of purpose sampling often proved useful, as regional counsellors would recommend other members of the council who they deemed experts on regional social policy and help provide access to them for the interviews.

A total of 21 interviews were conducted, representing the regions of Attica, Central Macedonia, Eastern Macedonia – Thrace, Crete, Northern Aegean, Western Greece, Central Greece, Epirus and Thessaly.

Ethics approval for the study was obtained from the University of Thessaly.

3. The Greek Decentralisation Context

Greece is one of the most centralised and unitary states in the European Union; thus, the Greek state has been characterised for most of its history by a reluctance to cede a significant share of political power, decision-making, and resources to decentralised administrative structures and local governments (Hlepas 2010; Verney and Papageorgiou 2007)

Even though elected offices have existed since the founding of the country their institutional framework was limited and fragmented, the local level was often a subject of control and supervision by the centre (Verney and Papageorgiou 2007). Mouzelis (1995) describes the Greek political system of the nineteenth and early twentieth century's as 'decentralised clientelism'. The vast majority of decentralisation reforms in Greece took place after the country's accession to the European Community in 1979 and the decades of the 80s & 90s were a time of great administrative reform (Karanikolas and Hatzipanteli 2010).

Loughlin (2001: 272) argues that this strong centralism is a result of the way the Greek state was created and expanded "Of Greece's current geographical territory only 36% has been part of the state since independence; the rest was added after peace treaties with the last addition being as recent as 1947. This national liberation struggle and the existence of military threats led the Greek state to emphasize centralisation and territorial unification in their political ideologies".

Moreover, the Greek Decentralised administrative system and the wider administrative law, since its inception in 1830 were based on France's. This French influence culminated with the adoption of the 'prefet' system, which meant that until the regional elections of 1994, Greece's regional governors and/or 'préfets' were selected by the government of the day. Greek 'préfets' were political appointees entrusted with the task of monitoring the elected mayors in their own 'prefecture' (Getimis and Demetropoulou 2005; Lalenis, 2002). In this context, today's seven 'decentralised administrations' can be understood as a legacy of 'prefecture' system and a compromise of the long historical tension between elected officials and appointed officials in charge of Greece's sub-national authorities (Christofilopoulou, 1990; Lalenis and Liogkas 2002).

Furthermore, it should be noted that the same pattern of dependence of the local government on the state is reproduced by the region in its relations with the state in the area of its jurisdiction. Indeed, as it is organised on the model of the central administration, it also reproduces its basic problems. The organizational problems of public administration (mismanagement, bureaucracy, clientelism, transactionalism, etc.) are likewise reproduced in local governments, but also in their relations with citizens and the policies it implements (Petraikos and Psycharis 2016).

The lack of meaningful welfare mechanisms has also led to the utilisation of the Greek administrative system as compensation (Pagoulatos 2003). Territorial factors are often ignored and the concentration of activities in the capital region was favoured (Artelaris 2021). In other EU countries spatial agglomeration manifests in a north-south (Italy, Spain) or east-west (Germany) dualism, while the Greek spatial agglomeration pattern exhibits a dualism of Attica (and its nearby satellite regions of Central Greece and Peolopponese) and the non-Attica regions (Gezici and Hewings 2007).

Another Greek peculiarity is the lack of regional pressure for decentralisation. Unlike countries such as Spain or Belgium, there are no significant regional movements in Greece pushing for more autonomy and decentralisation reforms (Lalenis and Liogkas 2002). European Islands are often governed by special statutes of autonomy (political, administrative or fiscal) which take into consideration their insularity, the Italian islands of Sicily and Sardinia are special regions and are such examples, which is not the case in Greece. The islands are mostly considered regular regions like any other (Loughlin 2001).

Regional authorities gained various administrative competencies over time and as a result of pressure from EU authorities (Siminou, 2007). The 13 regional administrations have also absorbed EU funding provided by the Union's regional strategy since its inception in 1986. However, the majority of powers remain largely in the hands of the central government. Most crucially, on certain policy matters, there are shared competences between the central government and sub-national authorities, allowing the central government to participate in the day-to-day management of regional and local issues (European Commission, 2018).

The main decentralisation reforms in Greece during the EU era were as follows:

- 1) 1986, the establishment of administrative regions
- 2) Kapodistrias in 1998, which sharply reduces the number of municipalities and communities [from 5775 (441 municipalities and 5382 communities) to 1033 (900 municipalities and 133 communities)] and regional governors are appointed by the state.
- 3) Kallikrates in 2011, municipalities are further decreased to 325 and regional governors are directly elected.

Table 1. Elements of Kapodistrias and Kallikrates reforms (Ioannidis 2015: 6)

	Kapodistrias 1998	Kallikrates 2011
First tier of local government	900 municipalities and 133 communities	325 municipalities
Second tier of local government	52 prefectures	13 regions
Regional Authority	13 regions	13 regions, now second tier of local government
Election system	Direct election for mayors, presidents of the communities and prefects. Appointment of regional governors by the state	Direct election for mayors, presidents of the communities and regional governors.
Level of Competences	Low level of competences for communities, municipalities and prefectures. Regional governors implement the rule of the state	High level of competences for municipalities and regions. Cognitive conditions for local actors to participate in the commons
Main source of financing	Intergovernmental Grants	Intergovernmental Grants

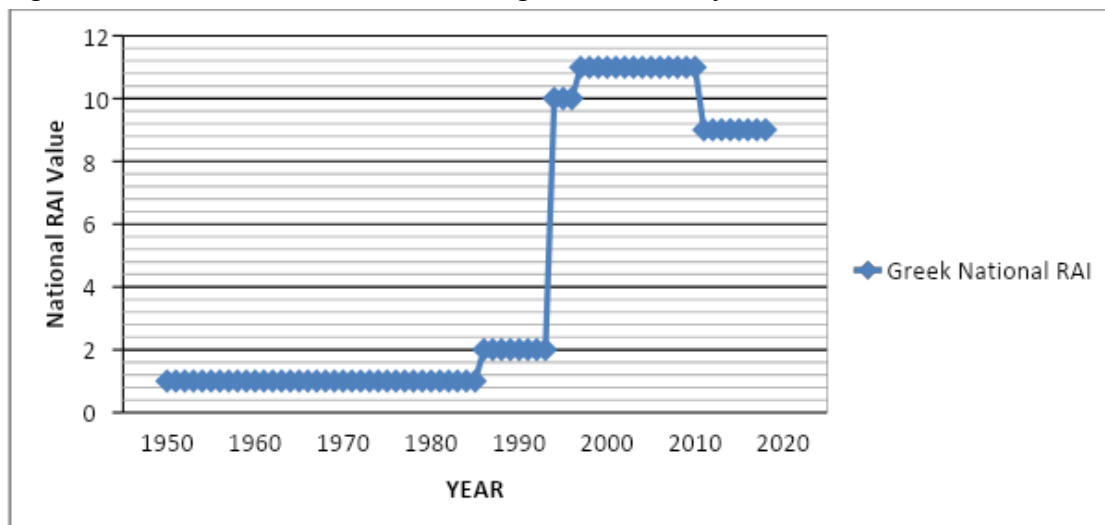
Although the Kapodistrias reform (Law 2539/1997) merged 5.755 municipalities and rural communities into 900 larger municipalities and 134 enlarged communities their competences did not expand. The low level of responsibilities local governments had combined with the prefecture system creating a complicated and restrictive bureaucratic environment; thus the engagement of local actors and their voices was limited (Sofianou *et al* 2014). Despite only a small part of the important responsibilities of the central bodies was transferred to the region, the creation of an intermediate level of power, with an administrative body and decision-making powers on several issues was an important institutional change. The emergence of the region as the new and only, pole of the decentralised system in Greece, also served as an institutional and political counterweight to the state at the regional level, following the transformation of the state prefecture into a second-tier Local Government, a phenomenon that can be described as decentralised concentration (Petrakos and Psycharis 2016).

The potential of municipalities after the Kapodistrias reform remained limited, their resources were few and their dependence on the region and central state was high. Local authorities do not have fiscal autonomy but are instead financed through a labyrinthine system and there is very little fiscal decentralisation (Psycharis *et al.* 2016). Often, local government functions, for many issues, as a branch of the state, dealing with its affairs at the local level, but without ensuring a corresponding transfer of resources, infrastructure, etc. (Chortareas and Logothetis 2016).

Kallikrates, however, is a more comprehensive decentralisation strategy that restructures the Greek state in favour of local administration (Akrivopoulou *et al* 2012). The expansion of local and regional power, as well as the subsequent creation of institutional bodies such as the Regional and Municipal Consultation Committees are the two most essential foundations of the reform. Local actors have the ability to participate at the local and regional levels by addressing and resolving issues that are relevant to them. Nevertheless, the statute did not anticipate any improvement in local government funding, and the central government remained the primary promoter throughout the intergovernmental grant procedure (Hazakis and Ioannidis 2014).

Indexes that measure decentralisation, such as the Regional Authority Index (RAI) illustrate changes in the Greek local government. The RAI is an annual measure of the authority of regional governments in 81 democracies or quasi-democracies over the period 1950-2018. The dataset encompasses subnational government levels with an average population of 150,000 or more. Regional authority is measured along ten dimensions: institutional depth, policy scope, fiscal autonomy, borrowing autonomy, representation, lawmaking, executive control, fiscal control, borrowing control, and constitutional reform. Primary sources (constitutions, legislation, and statutes) are triangulated with secondary literature and consultations with country experts to achieve reliable and valid estimates (Hooghe *et. al* 2016; Hooghe *et. al* 2021).

Figure 1. The evolution of the Greek Regional Authority Index



Source: Data from Hooghe *et. al* 2021

Figure 1 shows the high degree of centralisation that has been exhibited historically in Greece and the rarity of decentralisation reforms. The decrease in the RAI value after 2010 was due to central authorities enforcing stringent fiscal restraint on sub-national levels of government once the financial crisis broke out, which further increased the centralisation of decision-making. Subnational governments are subject to new fiscal regulations limiting debt under Law 4111/2013, and they must obtain permission from the Minister of Finance before obtaining any loans.

The complex web of relations between central administration, decentralisation and local government reveals not only how the administration is organized, but also how the political system, which is based on centralized structures, operates. The Greek system of administrative organization is heavily linked to the system of political organization (Petraikos and Psycharis 2016). From 1974 to 2012 (with the small exception of a nine-month-long period in 1988-1989, when unstable coalition governments were formed) Greece was governed by single-party majority governments. The centre-right New Democracy (ND) and the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK, a centre-left party) alternated in power for nearly four decades (1975-2011). Thus, the Greek political system was a series of rotating governments where the ruling majority exercises power in a 'winner takes all' way, without having to include the opposition (Hlepas and Getimis 2011). This 'winner takes all' mentality was also transferred to the elected sub-national government tiers. Furthermore, the winner of elections used to populate public administration, public bodies and state agencies with political appointees (Sotiropoulos 1996), which led to a highly politicized bureaucracy (Makrydemetres *et al.* 2014; Sotiropoulos 2000; Sotiropoulos 2004).

The reliance on pro-government civil servants and mistrust of other civil servants that were appointed by previous governments created an unusual framework where ministers, on the one hand, formulated public policies and on the other hand, supported by groups of political appointees, also closely monitored the implementation of policies (Spanou and Sotiropoulos 2010).

Another factor that influences Greek sub-national politics is opportunistic budget management by local politicians with deviations during election years. In election years local government expenditures are increased, which improves the probability of reelection (Chortareas *et. al* 2016). The phenomenon of increased expenditures towards the end of the term are not unique to the municipal level but are also often encountered in the regional tier.

4.1 The role of the region in poverty reduction and social cohesion

Greece is characterised by a lack of clarity pertaining to the responsibilities and functions assigned to each tier of governance, which creates confusion and uncertainty even for elected officials (Sotiropoulos 2007). The second interview subject from the region of Attica remarked that: "The first thing to when appointed to a regional office is consulting a lawyer". The excessive legalism which is widespread in the Greek administrative system creates a fragmented and complex way to navigate the institutional framework (Spanou 1998).

An interesting perspective on the unclear responsibilities of each tier of governance was provided by the second interview subject from the region of Epirus: "Usually both central political and local government commitment is always, we would say, in a positive direction. After all, it could not be otherwise, because we would not have

elected officials and any authority would not exist if it did not have a positive approach to improving the situation, but there is a great discrepancy between what has been announced and what is desirable, feasible or practical, and this is indeed due to the legislative gaps which do not specify, give a great deal of room for interpretation or initiatives, and the initiative in local government is not bad, but it should be within a well-defined framework”.

The framework of responsibilities and functions of each governance tier is so confusing that even the regions acknowledge it as a major challenge in official documents. For example, the region of the North Aegean in its Regional Operational Program (2021: 11) when describing the administrative capacity and governance challenges argues that: “Despite the importance of multilevel governance, the distribution of responsibilities between the different levels of governance is often, in practice, a difficult issue. The role of the beneficiaries is highlighted as a crucial parameter in the implementation of public policies. Therefore, the effective organisation & shielding of this level of administration, taking into account the insularity of the North Aegean Region, is a crucial aspect of success in the implementation of public policies. Therefore, for the 2021-2027 period in the North Aegean Region, the need to activate and strengthen the Local Government & in particular the strengthening of the capacity of the Beneficiaries as a critical parameter in the planning & effective implementation of development guidelines & implementation of their projects” .

A difficulty encountered when analysing official documents provided by the region is that the extent of the region’s involvement in a project is often unclear. The regions present programs that are implemented by the central state or municipalities as their own even if their participation is minimal. One such example is the institution of the Community Centre that was designed by the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity, and established in municipalities and funded by the NSRF 2014-2020, but which is also included in the Regional Operational Plan. The need to conduct fieldwork and interviews to untangle conflicting information already became apparent in the early stages of the research process.

The region’s main policy document is the Regional Strategy for Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction (RSSI). The RSSI is the territorial elaboration of the National Strategy for Social Inclusion.

The three pillars of the strategy are:

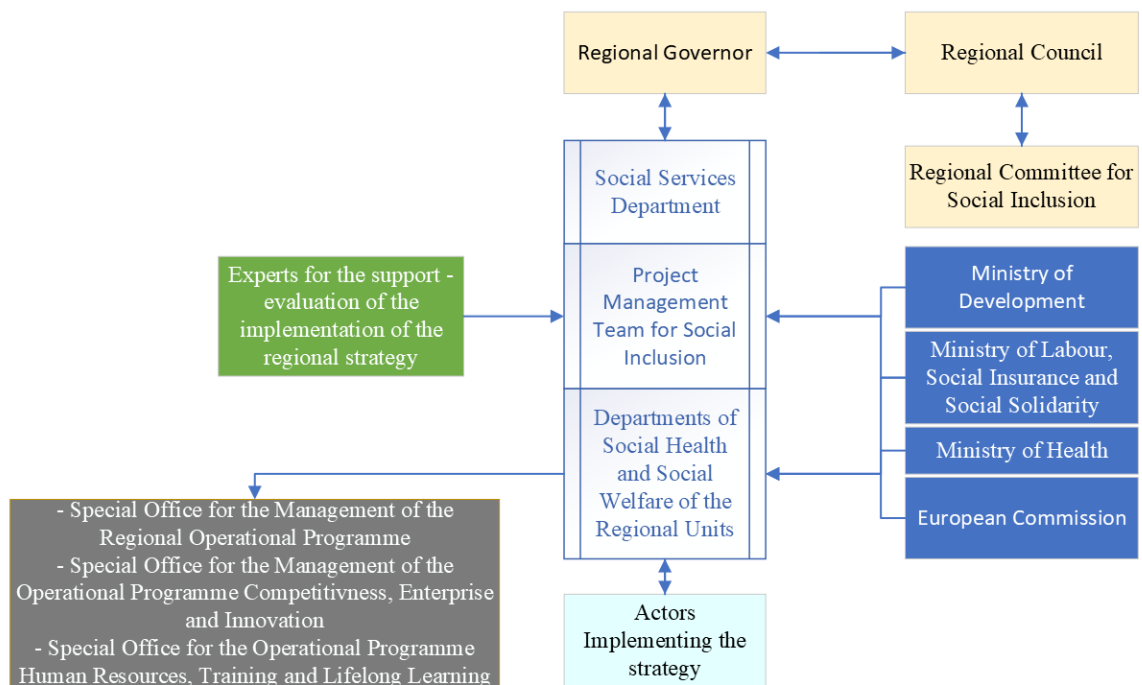
1. Poverty reduction
2. Access to services
3. Inclusive labour markets

The 13 Regional Strategies are approved by the European Commission as a self-obligation to the activation of Thematic Objective 9 (promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and discrimination) of the European Structural and Investment

Funds (ESIF) by the Regional Operational Programmes (ROP). Thus, the pillars of the RSSI reflect Thematic Objective 9. A key element in the design of the Regional Social Inclusion Strategies is the use of multiple synergistic sources of funding for the implementation of the Strategy, of which the main source was the European Social Fund resources (Region of Central Greece, 2023).

The Regional Strategies attempt to identify the population groups that are most vulnerable and affected or threatened by social exclusion and poverty in their area. Based on this analysis the regions outline a strategy of interventions that are required to meet the needs of vulnerable groups (e.g. the long-term unemployed, people living with aggravated health conditions, unsuitable housing conditions, people discriminated against on the basis of membership of religious/cultural groups, low level of educational attainment etc.).

Diagram 1. The monitoring structure of Crete's Regional Social Inclusion Strategy



Source: Region of Crete (2015: 27)

Diagram 1 presents the monitoring structure of the Regional Social Inclusion Strategy for Crete. The monitoring structure is similar in the other Greek regions. The Regional Committee for Social Inclusion attempts to add a place-based element to the strategy with the goal of considering the local needs and traits of each region. The members of the Committee include representatives from the Region, all mayors of the region and representatives of the main socio-economic actors of the region appointed by decision of the Regional Governor (in particular representatives of the social stakeholders, the local academic community, local chambers of commerce, the Metropolises and local voluntary organisations. The Ministries are included for the

purpose of coordination and monitoring based on national poverty and exclusion targets.

The sources of funding for the Strategy correspond to a mix of public and private external resources, including, in order of priority:

- a) resources from the national budget
- b) resources for the benefit of the local authorities (Central Autonomous Funds and revenues from contributions)
- c) EU Cohesion Policy resources
- d) resources from General and Specific Programmes of the European Union
- e) resources from the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism
- f) resources from other International Organisations
- g) resources from International Agreements / Cooperation Protocols
- h) private resources in the framework of the development of Corporate Social Responsibility actions by professional associations and enterprises
- i) private resources in the context of social contribution actions (donations and sponsorships).

The lack of regional own resources is apparent. The budget for the poverty reduction interventions comes mainly from national or EU resources, which shows a low-level of ability by regional governments to implement independent policies. The third participant from Central Macedonia put the issue as follows: “Regions have grants, not revenues like municipalities. They should be given revenue but there should be control and clear powers and responsibilities so that the incompetence or otherwise of local authorities is made clear.”

The majority of programs that are implemented by the region are either initiated by the Greek state or the European Union, but the legal framework allows the region to take some small initiatives. For example, the region of Central Macedonia carries out in full a programme that provides vulnerable individuals and families with vouchers for items sold at farmers’ markets. Regions also cooperate with churches in organising charity drives for a plethora of causes.

The first interview subject from Central Greece described the role of the region as follows: “The aim is always to meet the needs of our fellow citizens belonging to vulnerable groups, promoting social cohesion, while enhancing the creation of a wider network of cooperating municipalities and institutions”.

The role of the Greek region in the implementation of poverty reduction policies is difficult to define and sporadic in nature; however, it is slowly becoming more prominent. The second interview subject from West Greece noted: “In the last 2.5 years the protection and competence framework has grown considerably. A wide range of responsibilities has begun to unfold. For the first time at the regional level, a comprehensive plan for social issues is being implemented with the social inclusion strategy, the regional social inclusion observatory that we have put in place, as a

guide. For the first time we are combining social actions not only within our operational programme but more broadly”.

The first interview subject from the region of Crete summarised the main poverty reduction programs of a region as:

1. Regional Operational Programme
2. Public Investment Programme/Development Planning/Sustainable Development
3. Sectoral programmes
4. local development programmes
5. Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD)/ Social programme of the Social Welfare Directorate

Poverty is not only impacted by strict anti-poverty initiatives and welfare policies, but the wider regional development strategies of a region also have an impact on poverty that is more indirect and difficult to assess by regional governments. Many of the interview subjects approached the issue of poverty alleviation through the lens of charity. The regional government provides an x amount of food bags to a number of beneficiaries. This approach can limit the potential role of the region.

The vast majority of the interview subjects expressed the opinion that the region plays a role in the implementation of poverty alleviation policies in cooperation with the state. This role of the region is gaining momentum and in the 2021-2027 programming period the role of the region is further augmented, which is reflected in their Regional Operational Programmes. West Greece’s Regional Operational Programme (p. 32) states: “Enhancing and modernising social solidarity mechanisms are key choices to reduce income inequality, the risk of poverty and social exclusion. Ensuring universal access to basic goods and services, taking action to tackle educational and housing segregation, developing care services with a focus on the family and the community, are steps in this direction, alongside the creation and modernisation of social welfare and care infrastructures”. Similar passages can be found in all 13 Regional Operational Programmes. However, only the future will tell if these statements are simply lip service or a sign of actual change in Greek regional policy.

5. The importance of EU policy and funds

Fieldwork interviews and the analysis of official documents highlighted the importance and close bond between EU policy and Greek regional policy; culminating in the 13 Regional Strategies for Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction being approved by the European Commission. When prompted about the role of their region in implementing poverty reduction policies, regional counsellors would regularly first mention European programmes and goals.

The European Cohesion Policy has had a major influence on Greece's regional strategy. The regional allocations and programs of the European Structural and Investments Funds (ESIF) and, to some extent, Greece's own Public Investment Program implicitly supports regional development in the absence of a clear regional development policy (PIP). Therefore, it is necessary to concentrate on the management of EU funds in the nation to enhance multi-level governance for regional development in Greece. The impact of European money has been crucial in assisting Greece in modernising its institutions and governance frameworks for regional development (Petraikos and Psycharis 2016). One common argument expressed by regional counsellors during the interview process was that the region itself as an institution exists because of EU mandates and obligations.

Perhaps the main tool Greek regions have to tackle the issue of poverty is the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD). As the second expert from the region of West Greece characteristically argued: “FEAD is the largest social program in our country and the most important social safety net. It appeals directly to the wallets of families who were facing living problems which are fundamental rights, when these rights are threatened as a society we are probably going in the wrong direction. It is the only means we have as a region to relieve our citizens.”

The assistance that is provided by the FEAD is material; food and other hygiene items such as soap, shampoo or even clothing. The first interview subject from the region of Attica acknowledged that providing a bag of food to vulnerable groups once in a while is not enough. What is needed is “a concerted effort to make it not just about the bag but about rehabilitation, about helping people become an active citizen. Supporting them psychologically and so forth”.

6. The barriers to implementing poverty reduction policy by the region

This section briefly presents the main difficulties encountered in implementing poverty reduction policies according to the interviewed regional counsellors.

The first barrier that was mentioned is the heavily centralised nature of the Greek state. As the second interviewee from Central Macedonia characteristically argued: “At the moment the Regions function mainly as handlers of the central administration at the local level. In order to become more socially oriented, it is necessary to change the legal framework governing them, and for them to become more independent in their policy implementation, both administratively and financially, but supervised by the central state”.

The second issue that Greek regions must solve is their lack of data, which inhibits them from planning comprehensive strategies. Law 4445/2016 (Government Decree A 236/19-12-2016) National Mechanism for Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation of Social Inclusion and Social Cohesion Policies, created the institution of the Regional Social Inclusion Observatory, which seeks to effectively monitor and coordinate the objectives specified in the framework of the Regional Strategy for

Social Inclusion. The Regional Observatory is concerned with the local needs of social protection, welfare and solidarity and maps the spatial dimensions of poverty and social exclusion. However, the interview subjects evaluate the Observatory's results as mixed. The interviewees proposed further cooperation between regional observatories and local actors and institutions such as universities, to enhance the Observatory's role.

A third barrier proposed by the interview participants was the lack of bonds between the regions and local communities. It was argued that, due to its relative recentness as an elected tier, the region has yet to build meaningful relationships with citizens.

However, views on the capacity of the region to implement poverty reduction initiatives were mixed. Some interviewees argued that their region has the necessary number of qualified employees to implement the existing and future programmes, while others expressed the view that their region is understaffed and the existing personnel lacks the necessary skills. The first interviewee from Epirus argued that: "I think the organisational issue is a big one. The utilisation of the potential that we have, I maintain that we have potential in the region even though we have had departures without replacing employees, that is, if I go back to 2012 we had 900 people in the region, at the level of the region of Ioannina, Preveza, Arta ... Now we have dropped to 650, without having been substituted. Yes then it's not enough when you don't replace those who are retiring, then it's not enough and you have to go to the market but it's not bad to go to the market as long as the market knows that it's not coming to impose its own rules on you, you will make the rules. I want this from you and I pay you for it." The issue of the civil servants and the general capacity of the region highlighted the differences between them. One interview subject from East Macedonia – Thrace claimed that only Attica, Central Macedonia, Crete and Thessaly have the ability to effectively implement the poverty alleviation strategies proposed by the state and the European Union.

7. Policy implications and limitations

This paper has discussed regional policy, but the regions are not monoliths; there are significant differences within their areas and these differences influence how and where poverty is exhibited. For example, coastal areas in Epirus are experiencing economic growth due to increased tourist activity, while much of the rural and mountainous hinterland is being left behind. Regional policy has the difficult task of balancing these discrepancies and planning accordingly.

There are also different political dynamics within the various regions, one of which is West Greece, where the urban area of Patras struggles for political dominance with the regional units of Aetolia-Acarnania and Elis. Many of the interview subjects expressed a sentiment that some cities or regional units are favoured by the regional government, either because of their significant population and voting power or because they are the region's head hometown. If the Epirus regional government

decides to locate an initiative in Arta, the politicians of Preveza may express their discontent.

Regions need to attempt to increase their support for projects that support economically weaker and rural municipalities, which necessitate technical assistance. The Greek region could play a more significant role in coordinating anti-poverty initiatives between the municipalities within their jurisdiction.

Therefore, the legal framework needs to be simplified. Under the existing system decentralised authorities must review the decisions made by the regional government which is a source of delays and complications. The public procurement process could also be modernised to decrease the dead times from the notice of the project to contracting, which according to interview subjects from West Greece hindered the effective utilisation of the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived.

Different local government capacities must be considered by the central government. Regions such as Northern Aegean have difficulty attracting qualified personnel and overcoming coordination issues resulting from their insular nature.

Another, factor that could lead to more efficient regional anti-poverty strategies is the use of EU funds and guidelines to motivate better integration and coordination. The majority of current regional policies are influenced by EU policies, and they are frequently implemented through a combination of numerous (often isolated or contradictory) projects, which results in poor organisation and higher administrative costs.

The growing importance of the region in poverty alleviation and their more systematic approach to the issues with the creation and collection of data is an opportunity for further research of a more quantitative nature.

The lack of representation of the municipal tier is a limitation of this study. Municipal politicians have a different and perhaps more critical role of the region. Similarly, a survey of citizens could provide valuable information on the extent of the public's awareness of the region's poverty-reduction initiatives.

8. Closing remarks

Historically the involvement of the Greek region in poverty alleviation was limited and their focus was mostly on other policy areas such as infrastructure investments; however, there was a slow change in the latter half of the 2010s which was accelerated by the pandemic. Currently, regional governments are becoming more involved in poverty-reduction initiatives and it has become part of their political discourse. It should be noted, however, that the majority of those interviewed perceive the fight against poverty mainly in terms of welfare. Few cited entrepreneurship, employment and rural development programmes as programmes that contribute to the alleviation of poverty.

The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan set out the ambitious goal of reducing the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU by at least 15 million, including at least 5 million children compared to 2019. The national target for Greece is to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion by 860.000 (EU 2023). The existence and implementation of the ‘National strategic policy for social inclusion and poverty’ is a necessary condition under the NSRF 2021-2027. Thus, the involvement of the regions is part of a wider strategy and agreed upon goals.

This paper identified some barriers that the regions will have to surpass to accomplish their poverty alleviation role successfully. There is a need for a well-defined legal environment in which the responsibilities of each governance tier are clear and simple to understand. Regions must promote partnerships with each other, communities and other local actors to better evaluate their needs and implement their planned strategies more effectively. The increased advisory role of the Regional Poverty and Social Exclusion Observatory is an encouraging sign that regional governments are beginning to approach the poverty issue more methodically and carefully.

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