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Ioannis Chorianopoulos

University of the Aegean, Greece

Abstract

This paper discusses rescaling trajectories in the European Union (EU), focusing on Greece. Two consecutive state spatial restructuring waves are noted in Greece the 1980s and the 1990s, both resting upon, but failing to mobilize, local socio-political responses. The limited success of these endeavours, it is argued, reflects path dependency in scalar arrangements and the arrested state of local relational dynamics. During the past decade, a third and comprehensive attempt at rearticulating established formations of state spatial organization has been launched, marked by the construction of new state intervention scales at the subnational and EU levels. The perception of cities and regions as 'action spaces' and the promotion of 'place-based' and 'networking governance' initiatives suggest rescaling intentionality. In light of the narrow involvement of localities in the process, rescaling reflects centralist steering and the markings of EU policy prioritizations, aimed at triggering a competitiveness-oriented locational policy. This paper explores the path-dependent evolution of state spatial forms in Greece, commenting on the context-specific risks associated with the competitiveness shift.

Keywords

competitiveness, governance, Kallikratis Plan, local authorities, path dependency, state rescaling

Introduction

In recent years, changes in the 'globalizing economy' have initiated a critical reassessment of the relationship between state, space and territoriality. The expansion of the role of multinational corporations and finance since the early 1970s, and the rapid development of transportation and communication technologies that facilitated the 'global' flows of goods and information, are key indicators of the challenges faced by the nationally defined and territorially delineated socio-political compromises of the post-war era (Keil and Mahon, 2009). Global economic integration, however, was made

possible only 'through a shift in policy orientation as governments everywhere have reduced barriers that have curbed the development of domestic markets and their links to the international economy' (World Bank, 2000: 1). It is this particular dimension of globalization that suggests the involvement

Corresponding author:

Ioannis Chorianopoulos, Department of Geography, University of the Aegean, Geography Building, University Hill, Mytilene 81100, Greece.

Email: ichorian@geo.aegean.gr

of state agency in the process (Perrons, 2004). The reconstitution of the nationally centred regulatory order is manifest in transformations of state spatial organization that privilege both supranational and subnational governance forms (Brenner, 2004). In the first case, large-scale territorial institutions such as the North American Free Trade Agreement, the European Union (EU) and Mercosur include multiple state structures in novel political-economic regulatory arrangements. In the second case, a variety of decentralized policy initiatives have been introduced in cities and urban regions, aiming at enhancing local competitive attributes (Jessop et al., 2008). What we are witnessing, in other words, is a 'reshuffling of the hierarchy of spaces' (Lipietz, 1994: 32), where the 'national' is redefined in relation to other scales of supranational and subnational geographical organization, as a means to displace or resolve crisis tendencies and manage regulatory problems (Brenner, 2009a).

The discourse on 'scale' is part of an attempt to analyse and understand the aforementioned economic and socio-political changes. As a concept, 'scale' is defined with respect to the perceived hierarchy of fixed political-territorial units and the vertical structure of institutional organization platforms. In this frame, national and local states are approached as scalar – areal and hierarchical – expressions of social practice, discourse and power. The material and discursive meaning of such institutionalized regulatory platforms, however, has to be constantly re-conceptualized (Paasi, 2004). In this light, enhanced local authority mobilization and networking experimentation have recently attracted scholarly attention. Interaction between scalar entities such as local authorities, it is argued, co-constitutes the regulatory traits of the constitutive parts, suggesting the relevance of the relational dimension in scalar conceptualization (Howitt, 1998).

Geographical scales, concrete and relational, contain and enable particular forms of political and socioeconomic activity, and they are as 'anchored', 'fluid' or contested as the social relations that mould them. In this respect, 'rescaling' is understood as a state-promoted attempt to capture and influence processes of change (Smith, 2003). Rescaling reflects intentionality behind particular policy innovations

and territorial regulatory experimentations, a range of actions currently directed towards pinning down the global economy. Scale formation is visible through the very effects of the policies selected to promote it. Rescaling, however, is dependent upon the degree to which policy spaces are 'unbounded', policy arenas reconstructed and actors aligned along new governance forms (Gualini, 2006: 22). The conceptualization of scale, in other words, is approached as a historically contingent process; one that is defined contextually, reflecting the dynamism of specific socio-political settings and struggles (Paasi, 2004).

This paper explores state rescaling in Greece and it is organized as follows. I start by sketching the regulatory configuration of the post-war socio-political compromises in Western Europe, commenting on the concerted wave of reforms that have resulted in its reconstitution since the 1980s. I then look at Greece. In the second part I explore the primacy particularities of the national scale in the country's post-war regulatory contour, underscoring its divergence from the contemporary, ideal-typical, West European examples. In the third part I discuss the challenges posed to the Greek regulatory order by the country's accession to the EU (1981). Two distinct phases of state spatial reorganization are noted in the following years, both resting heavily on local authority boundary redrawing. The limited success of these endeavours in triggering change, it is argued, reflects path dependency in scalar arrangements (Brenner and Theodore, 2002) and the arrested state of local relational dynamics. In the final part, I discuss the latest (2010) rescaling attempt in Greece, a political response to regulatory challenges that radically alters the geographical dimensions of state power. The paper underscores the influence exerted by the EU on the reorientation of spatial development strategies in Greece. The attempted construction of new scales of urban-regional, metropolitan and transnational (inter-urban) intervention, however, rests upon and faces the challenge of mobilizing local forces as constitutive rescaling agents. In light of inherited scalar configurations, the competitiveness orientation of this shift entails the risk of inadequate local responses and an increase in socioeconomic disparities.

'Scaling' and 'rescaling'

'Spatial scales' are perceived as the provisionally balanced and relatively stabilized outcome of socio-economic and political processes and goals to which, in turn, they recursively contribute (Swyngedouw, 1997). In this context, the post-war socio-political compromises in West European countries involved corporatist relations of collective bargaining and a system of social insurance that, together with advanced credit policies, guaranteed aggregate demand and allowed the full development of mass production (Jessop, 1991: 136–7; Lipietz, 1992: 6–7). Domestic monetary regulation – controlling the money supply and interest rates – was supported by an internationalized economic configuration that guaranteed a relatively stable system of fixed exchange rates, which, together with the gradual reduction of trade barriers, facilitated the geographical expansion of investment, production and trade (Baillie and McMahon, 1989). The ideal-typical profile of actions of the local state at that time, in turn, spatialized and underpinned the national 'compromises', creating local spaces of regulation (Goodwin et al., 1993). It is this regulatory contour, featuring the primacy of the national scale as a coordinating unit, that is being reconstituted, creating a 'scalar flux' (Jessop, 2000). The abolishment in the 1980s of an array of high-profile metropolitan political-administrative institutions in EU member states¹ attests to the changing modes of spatial intervention and the recalibration of internal governmental hierarchies (Brenner, 2003; Salet et al., 2003; Heinelt and Kübler, 2005). Institutional dismantling was succeeded by a concerted wave of reforms that, albeit contextually specific, centred along the following lines:

- *Fiscal discipline and devolution of regulatory responsibilities to subnational authorities.* The 1970s global economic crisis was addressed by national authorities with concerted fiscal retrenchment measures. Public expenditure cutbacks reduced central government grants to subnational authorities (Johnston, 1985). Simultaneously, a wave of fiscal decentralization is noted in EU member states, manifest in the devolution of regulatory
- tasks – and the ensuing financial burdens – to subnational political-administrative tiers. In order to respond to this double financial challenge, local authorities were impelled to streamline administrative structures and rely more on local sources of revenue (Brenner, 2004). Enhanced administrative efficiency was sought through the adoption of leaner and market-oriented approaches to service provision. The economic development objective, in turn, assumed place-specific forms of intervention, aiming at enhancing local competitive attributes (Swyngedouw et al., 2002). In this process, new forms of participatory governance emerged, mobilizing the involvement of a broader spectrum of local public and private sector actors in policy-making (Chorianopoulos and Iosifides, 2006). The 'localized' promotion of economic development centres on new business formation and small business expansion – emphasizing indigenous skills, innovation and entrepreneurship – while more subsidies are targeted at the creation of local alliances with universities, chambers of commerce, local companies and unions (Wilson et al., 1997). Moreover, ad hoc and politically unaccountable regulatory schemes, such as urban development corporations and growth promotion alliances, contribute essentially to the shaping of local policies (Edwards, 1997). The diversion of resources towards entrepreneurial targets, taking place at the expense of local collective consumption and social welfare priorities, accentuates social and spatial polarization, giving rise to 'dual city' phenomena (Castells, 1989; Swyngedouw, 1992).
- *Dominance of urban regions and competitiveness-oriented approaches in national spatial planning policies.* The comprehensive view of the national economy informing redistributive spatial planning targets has shifted gradually during recent decades towards the territorial competitiveness goal. In this light, national spatial planning frameworks are privileging particular territories, deemed as regional engines of national economic growth. Prominent examples of the so-called 'leopard skin' or

'metropolitanized' approach to national spatial planning (Bozzi, 1995) come from the blueprints of Denmark (1992), Germany (1993) and the Netherlands (1990) (see Faludi and Van der Valk, 1994; Brenner, 2004). State-sponsored, large-scale and place-specific infrastructure developments, promoted to enhance the supranational competitive advantages of strategic locations, are characteristic examples of this trend. Landmark projects – such as the UK's London Docklands (1980s) and the Danish Oresund Link (1990s) – implemented and managed outside the respective local authority structures, are proliferating in the EU, signalling a clear break from the 'universalist' model of public infrastructure provision of the post-war period (Swyngedouw et al., 2002).

The 'construction' of new scales of state intervention is, according to these views, a medium and a product of political-economic coordination strategies aiming at addressing emergent regulatory challenges. Rescaling, however, does not occur in a vacuum. Previous scalar configurations – and the geographical and institutionalized commitments that grew out of them – strongly influence the direction of current restructuring attempts (Pierson and Skocpol, 2002). This is the case in EU member states where the post-war institutional architecture was dismantled in the 1980s, to be rearticulated, subsequently, along competitiveness lines. This is also the case in Greece, where the scalar configurations of the post-war era circumscribe current rescaling choices.

The Greek regulatory order in the post-war period

Greece participated in the productivity increases of the post-war era, exhibiting high growth rate indicators based on industrialization (World Bank, 1984: 221 and 259). Two key attributes, however, differentiate the national development path from the ideal-typical contemporary West European political-economic examples: the role of urbanization in influencing and supporting industrialization; and the particularity of the inter-scalar architecture of the time.

First, for two decades (1950–70) Greek cities displayed annual population increases that exceeded 3 percent on average (CEC, 1992a). Throughout this time, the working population engaged in service activities surpassed the numbers employed in the secondary sector (World Bank, 1984: 221). The limited indications of internal economies of scale in manufacturing and the scanty signs of localization economies affecting the spatial pattern of industrial development point to urbanization as a determining factor in supporting industrialization (Leontidou, 1990). In light of the incapacity of national authorities to meet the acute housing needs of the incoming population, urbanization was tacitly facilitated by the relaxation of planning controls and the proliferation of illegal housing construction in the peri-urban zones, assuming the form of unordered urban sprawl (Pagonis et al., 2008). The land-use planning role of local authorities, in this context, was constrained.

Second, the dominance of the national scale in the country's political-economic organization was underscored by political repression and limited organized representation of interests. The civil war (1945–9) and the military dictatorship (1967–74) framed an era of civil rights restrictions and authoritarian rule. Control by the national authorities over local-level polity and policy was attained through the appointment of mayors and public sector officials (Hlepas, 1997). Moreover, the narrow financial and technical resources at the disposal of the local level, and the constrained local authority leverage to utilize sources of revenue in accordance with needs, suggests the limitations of the subnational scale as an institutional locus in the promotion of development strategies (Chorianopoulos, 2008).

The rigid regulatory features of this scalar configuration, together with socio-political mobilization, resulted in the fall of the dictatorial regime in 1974. Accession to the EU seven years later (in 1981) marked, schematically, the beginning of a rescaling process in which developmental strategies were also articulated at the supranational scale. In the following years, European economic integration and, in particular, the Single European Act (1986), by promoting the removal of protectionist barriers to trade and investment, accentuated the importance of place specificities in development prospects (Cheshire,

1995). The EU policy response to the increase in spatial disparities took the form of a European regional policy. This, in turn, triggered a restructuring response in Greece. However, the starting point of this endeavour – the particularity of the country's scalar and sub-national socio-political context – was not in tune with the competitiveness call.

The first wave of state spatial restructuring in Greece

The fall of the military regime (1967–74) was followed by an enhanced interest in local political realities and processes. Thus, the national parliament, in one of its first acts since the return to democracy, reintroduced the direct election of local councils and mayors by universal suffrage (GGN, 1975). The date set for local elections (April 1975) preceded the constitutional reform which re-established democratic rule (June 1975), underscoring the importance attached to the local level in the new regime's search for legitimization (LAI, 2008). The subsequent expansion of local-level structures and functions is related in the literature to the contemporary move of the state into areas of collective provision. The distinct qualities of this process, however, are primarily associated with the state/bureaucratic forms of clientelism (Mouzelis, 1986; Gillespie and Gallagher, 1989). In light of the non-proportional voting system at national and local levels, the process of establishing new municipal bureaucratic and service provision structures was managed and controlled primarily by the two main governing parties (Ignazi and Ysmal, 1998). This facilitated the emergence of vertical networking dependencies, linking national political parties to local administration. Local-level resources, in turn, were put to use for the development of clientelistic relations of electoral support (Ioakimidis, 1984). 'Party-machine clientelism' (Lyberaki and Tsakalotos, 2002) is characterized by the preferential treatment of party supporters, facilitating the promotion of favouritism in the local policy agenda (Giannakourou, 2004). Such traits snare the representational role of local authorities, leading to fragmented and disjointed policy regimes (Chorianopoulos, 2002).

Pressure for reforms deriving from a fast-changing supranational environment, therefore, was transferred to a distinct local socio-political reality, a process also influenced by the priorities of the political party in office. The rise of the Socialist Party in government (1981) responded to EU restructuring calls and advanced an interventionist agenda based on the 'endogenous development model' of place-specific and widely negotiated compromises (Garofoli, 1992). In an era relatively close to the country's democratization, strengthened participation enhanced the party's appeal, creating the conditions for a leading presence on the local political scene. A combination of social democratic aspirations and political tactics aiming at establishing vertical networking dependencies, therefore, framed the 1980s' reorganization of the Greek political-administrative structure. The focus of this endeavour, portrayed diagrammatically in Figure 1, was on the local level.

In an attempt to strengthen the involvement of citizens in local affairs, municipalities were asked to divide their area into districts. Residents, in turn, would elect a 'district committee' that would assume an advisory role in council proceedings (GGN, 1982a). Simultaneously, concerns were raised regarding municipal space fragmentation. The presence of a large number of 6022 local authorities (communes and municipalities)² was viewed as an obstacle to cost-efficiency in service provision, questioning, simultaneously, the capacity of the respective tier to devise and implement development plans (GGN, 1984). Neighbouring municipalities, therefore, were grouped by the Ministry of Spatial Planning into a total of 1116 'geographical units'. This territorial subdivision was not vested with power. Its launch aimed to act as a catalyst, orienting municipal action towards collaboration. Once within a geographical unit, municipalities were asked to join forces voluntarily and create 'development associations' – inter-municipal ventures capable of capturing and boosting the growth dynamics of broader economic areas. More characteristically, prospective municipal amalgamations within a geographical unit were encouraged by the national authorities and supported by financial incentives (GGN, 1986).

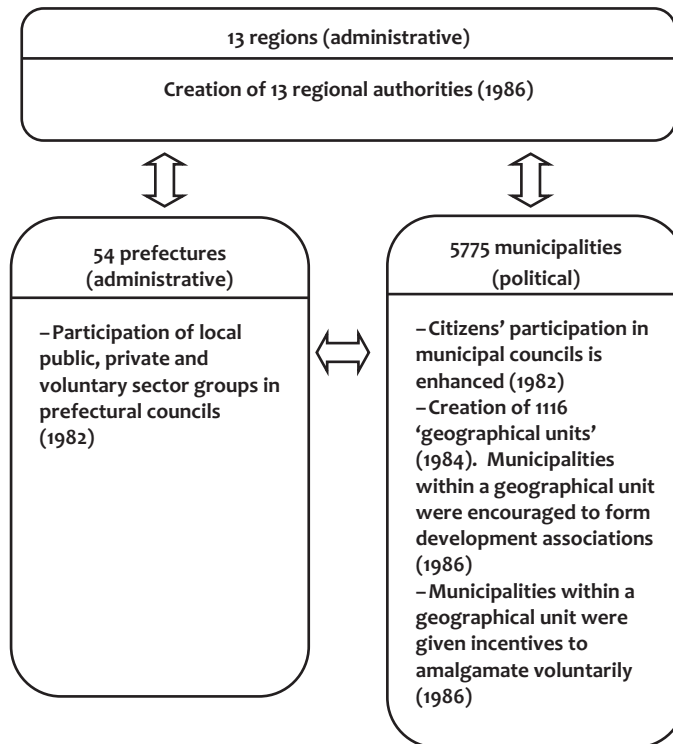


Figure 1. State spatial restructuring (1980s)

Changes were also introduced at the prefectural level, at the time an administrative arm of the state apparatus. The make-up of the 54 prefectural councils was modified (1982) to include public, private and voluntary sector participants, enhancing collaboration and the role of the tier in development planning (GGN, 1982b). The 1980s, however, was also an era of emerging European spatial development policy. Structural Funds requirements and, in particular, the search for territorial subdivisions capable of administering European regional policy objectives altered the Greek spatial tier hierarchy, with the establishment of regional administration (1986). The 13 regions were directly accountable to the national authorities and chaired by an appointed secretary. The regional council, however, involved municipal and prefectural authority representatives, providing an overriding decision-taking planning platform (GGN, 1986).

The effects of this reform wave on local realities were marked by the unobstructed establishment of regional administration. The socio-political restructuring goals did not fare equally well. The 'district committees' initiative faded out soon after its launch, owing to organizational shortcomings and a weak public response. Also, voluntary inter-municipal cooperation developed tentatively. A total of 572 development associations were set up in the medium term, representing less than half of the country's municipalities. Moreover, municipal amalgamation motives proved insufficient and ineffective, as only 400 (out of 6022) local authorities chose to merge (LAI, 2008). In the following years, a good deal of attention was paid to local authority amalgamation incentives, the more so since the EU was gradually upgrading the role of the tier in development policies.

The EU and the city in the 1990s: local development

Reflecting contemporary concerns about the declining competitiveness of the European economy, the White Paper on 'Growth, Competitiveness, Employment' highlighted the importance of a shift towards flexible and decentralized policy initiatives (CEC, 1993a). The quest for enhanced economic potential, it was argued, drew attention to the local political level, identified as the most appropriate in generating cooperation processes and endogenous, place-specific development paths (CEC, 1993a: 9).³ Following a brief period of experimentation with innovative urban programmes, the increased importance of the local level in EU development plans was reflected in the Maastricht Treaty (CEC, 1992b). The revised framework regulating the relationship between Community, national and local-level authorities reaffirmed the 'subsidiarity' principle: EU urban policy goals and programmes were to be adjusted at member state level to existing political-administrative structures and realities. The subsidiarity concept, however, also recognized key local authority aptitudes in the pursuit of European socioeconomic objectives and, by supporting direct links between the Community and the local level, upgraded the role of the latter tier in EU structural policies (CoE, 1994: 29). The launch of decentralized policies, in turn, was followed by a marked broadening of the 'partnership' principle, to incorporate 'competent authorities and bodies, [as well as] economic and social partners, designated by the member State at national, regional, local or other level . . . in pursuit of a common goal' (CEC, 1993b: 48 – Article 4 of Framework Regulation). The incorporation into a single EU urban programme of relevant stakeholders and interest groups denoted the endorsement of 'governance' policies in EU spatial development interventions. Drawing from the experience of selected European cities that managed to address deindustrialization successfully, collaboration was viewed as a catalyst to restructuring, prompting synergistic responses to local challenges (Camagni, 2002). The prioritization of 'governance' policies was applied explicitly at the urban level in the mid-1990s with the launch of the URBAN Community Initiative (1994).

As the EU launched local-level programmes, 'subsidiarity' constitutes an indirect call to rescaling. The perspective adopted, however, centres on local authorities and encouraged the creation of territorially defined (local) cooperation platforms. Extra-local linkages that would reconfigure orderings among scales were emerging but were not strongly supported at this stage. The Greek national authorities responded to EU local development calls by launching a second wave of state spatial reorganization. In a manner similar to the EU, however, the areal and the hierarchical dimensions of rescaling predominated over the relational ones.

Second wave of reforms: 1994–8

The economic downturn affecting most European economies in the early 1990s and the contemporary Greek fiscal crisis were addressed by the re-elected socialist government (1993) through a combination of 'developmentalist' policies and expenditure controls. The prominent example of the former type of action was the candidacy for hosting the 2004 Olympic Games, a place-specific and centrally executed urban initiative, aimed at enhancing the competitive advantages of the county's capital city. Following the example of similar state-financed mega-projects noted in EU member states, spatial planning regulations hindering the development of the respective infrastructures were bypassed by the introduction of area- and project-specific institutional forms (Chorianopoulos et al., 2010). Efforts to restrain expenditure in turn – reinforced by the convergence criteria for entering the European Monetary Union (CEC, 1992b) – centred on the realm of public service provision. The quest for cost-effectiveness in municipal services, therefore, was renewed at the beginning of the decade, complemented by a political agenda advocating the development merits of decentralization and local-level cooperation. Three key changes introduced in the 1990s aimed at promoting the above goals.

The first was related to the transformation of the 54 administrative prefectures into political bodies, with a directly elected Prefect and Council (1994). The duties of the new prefectural authorities were

development oriented, focusing on the provision of physical infrastructure and services that municipalities faced pragmatic (financial and organizational) difficulties in assuming (GGN, 1994). Prefectures therefore provided a politically accountable mid-level planning tier, bridging municipal with regional authority actions. It was the municipal tier, however, that was once again the focal point of reforms.

National territory was re-divided in 1994 by the Ministry of Spatial Planning, this time into a total of 492 units, called 'area councils', following a set of static, socioeconomic and population-related criteria. Each area council comprised a cluster of municipalities, providing a new territorial reference for municipal collaboration. Participation in the previous territorial scheme that supported joined municipal ventures (the 'development associations') presented a haphazard response record and was abolished (1994). 'Area councils' were expected to define development priorities for the municipalities concerned, assume the implementation of EU-funded policies, and consult prefectures on future plans of action. Moreover, in contrast to previous national government attempts, municipal collaboration within an area council was obligatory, although specific funds had to be earmarked for this purpose in the respective municipal budgets (GGN, 1994). However, area councils did not get to stand the test of time. The national government returned to the amalgamation theme three years later (1997) with a new set of proposals.

According to public consultation documents, municipal cooperation was an essential but not a sufficient condition for triggering change. The reliance of amalgamations on local initiative, it was argued, as opposed to the assumption of the overall responsibility for the process by the national authorities, toned down the urgency of reforms, enabling opt-out municipal strategies (MoI, 1997a). National authorities, in other words, decided to take matters into their own hands, compelling change. The sequence of activities revolved around two stages.

In the first stage, reform aimed at creating new (larger) local authority units, whose scale would be 'adequate enough' to support cost-efficient service delivery and to influence local development dynamics. The national authorities suggested 'area councils' as the preferred municipal territorial scale,

simultaneously calling on local authorities to put forward plans for mergers. Municipal discussions were organized at the prefectural level and resulted in concrete amalgamation proposals submitted to national authorities.

The second stage, defined as 'an executive bureaucratic operation', involved solely the national authorities, which operated unfettered. Municipal merger proposals provided a reference point: area councils (492 units) and geographical units (1116 units) were the two ends of the ideal-typical territorial spectrum, upon which the administrative boundaries of new municipalities were to be drawn (MoI, 1997a).

Restructuring started in 1997 and culminated a year later with the holding of local elections in the new, amalgamated, municipalities (October 1998). As seen in Figure 2, the number of municipal units was reduced to 1034 (as opposed to 5775), and a five-year plan was announced (1997–2001), facilitating transition (MoI, 1997b).

The opening phase of the supporting plan focused on the reorganization of infrastructure and service provision,⁴ alongside the emerging municipal requirements and necessities (MoI, 1997b). The redeployment of municipal functions, in other words, was examined subsequent to the amalgamations, a line of action suggesting hastiness and the impromptu qualities of the process. More characteristically, new municipal boundaries were unexceptionally defined by the aggregate administrative limits of the municipalities that were unified. An attempt to specify and fix the 'never perfect' and 'ever-changing' functional limits of a locality, it was argued, would only 'add confusion to reforms', raising local objections (MoI, 1997a). Thus, the realization of the preferred spatial scale or size in the new municipalities became the main target, overshadowing arguments in favour of a boundary redrawing exercise that would focus on capturing local socioeconomic dynamics. Instead, the relational dimension of restructuring was limited and ladder-like, referring primarily to enhanced interaction between the municipal and prefectural authorities. Emphasis was also placed on intra-municipal participation dynamics, a policy prioritization that underscored the 'bounded' approach to rescaling.

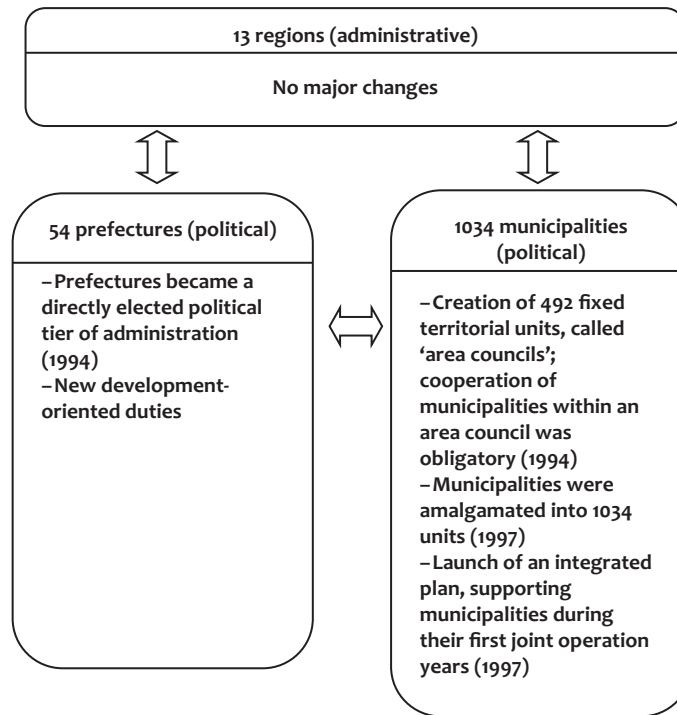


Figure 2. Second wave of state spatial restructuring (1990s)

As the experience of similar amalgamation reforms in EU countries had shown, the existence of a narrower proportionate relation between voters and elected representatives influenced public participation in local affairs negatively (CoE, 1995: 37–41). In order to promote the articulation of political demand, the old (merged) municipalities were transformed into ‘districts’ – a sub-municipal tier equipped with public deliberation platforms and decision-taking powers, headed by a locally elected council member. Decisions reached at district level were binding and were to be incorporated into the annual municipal plan of action (MoI, 1997b).

The key motivation prompting change since the late 1990s has been the emergence of an EU spatial planning perspective, an intervention rationale that rested on the dynamics of economic integration. Attention therefore has shifted gradually from attempts focusing primarily on strengthening the competitiveness traits of individual territorial

units towards ones that also fostered cross-border, inter-urban and inter-regional relations (Faludi, 2007). This, in turn, has challenged the regulatory capacity of national scalar architectures with rigid characteristics. The unpreparedness of Greek spatial planning structures to meet the exigencies of time triggered a new restructuring wave.

Third reform period: 1999–2010

The only field in which integrated national spatial plans were undertaken in Greece was regional programming, shaped by EU Structural Funds requirements. The launch of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) (CEC, 1999), a non-binding reference document seeking to facilitate cooperation on spatial planning among EU member states and local authorities, revealed the absence of relevant policy structures in the country

(Giannakourou, 2005). The Greek spatial planning framework was launched the same year (1999), featuring a tiered perspective that mirrored the organizational principles of the ESDP's preamble, the 'Torremolinos' Charter on European Spatial Planning (CoE, 1983). This was organized as follows:

- (a) the national spatial planning framework set at the national level, aiming to provide strategic guidelines in response to EU and domestic priorities, for example those described in the ESDP;
- (b) specific planning frameworks set at the national level, concerned with the provision of general guidelines for the location of specific sectors of economic activities, such as the industrial, tourism-related or renewable energy investments and infrastructures;
- (c) regional planning frameworks, aiming to provide general guidelines for the alignment of regionally decided goals with nationally set targets, which did not include the detailed land-use planning of the general spatial plans at the municipal level.

Planning policy implementation, however, was irregular and not effective. The majority of regional plans (12 out of 13) were decided and drawn by 2003, guided by a draft national planning framework (Melissas, 2007). The national framework was subsequently amended and formally adopted in 2008 (GGN, 2008). Facts on the ground also failed to meet expectations. At the end of 2009, only 31 (out of 1034) municipalities had proceeded with designating permitted land uses for the sum of their territory (TEE-TCG, 2009). As a result, the launch of development initiatives, founded on the assumption of a functioning spatial planning framework, fared poorly. The National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF, 2007–13), for instance, in an attempt to strengthen complementarities and foster cooperation between Greek cities, selected particular urban areas as 'development poles' (Ministry of Economy and Finance, 2006). This competitiveness-oriented strategy, although financially supported by the EU, has not produced any tangible plans of action at the time of writing. Other subnational performance indicators were equally alarming.

A medium-term evaluation report on the impact of the territorial restructuring in the 1990s stated the following:

- The quest for larger municipalities with, on average, higher population figures did not yield the expected results. In 2009, '[a] total of 53% of municipal units [had] less than 5,000 inhabitants, while an extra 25% [had] less than 10,000 inhabitants' (MoI, 2010a: 4). Consequently, only 212 municipalities [out of 1034], were eligible to formally administer NSRF or other EU funded projects' (MoI, 2010a: 4). Overall, the tier lacked the organizational capacity and the territorial/operational scale necessary to devise and implement development plans. As a result, local efforts were diverted from the articulation of locally defined growth strategies to the relegation of ad hoc claims to higher-level authorities (MoI, 2010b).
- Central government grants and transfers accounted for, approximately, 60 percent of municipal income (Chorianopoulos, 2008: 330). Reliance on national government spending decisions, in turn, sustained vertical networking dependencies, perpetuating clientelistic networks of electoral support. Moreover, municipal budget structure rigidity allowed limited room for influencing the investment layout of local income, inhibiting endogenous development endeavours (CoE, 2001).
- Prefectures, in general, were ineffective in promoting concerted local development strategies, owing to, among other factors, municipal fragmentation. Additionally, the incompatibility of the prefectural territorial scale, at NUTS 3 level, with the majority of participants in the Committee of the Regions (CoR), at NUTS 2 level, hindered the tier's involvement in an influential EU spatial policy platform (MoI, 2010b).
- Regional authorities, according to the EU norm, were equipped with an adequate territorial scale to oversee, regulate and implement spatial development policies. As administrative authorities, however, Greek regions could not

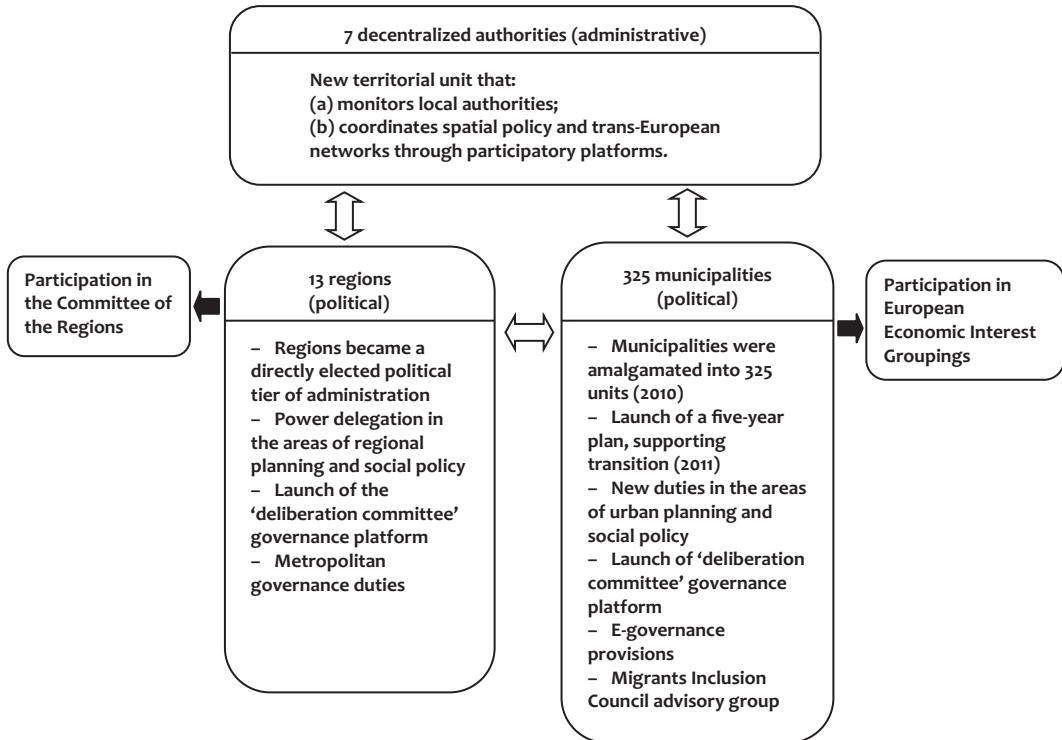


Figure 3. Third wave of state spatial restructuring (2000s)

participate in the CoR, and lacked, simultaneously, the socio-political legitimization necessary to perform their role as nodes that coordinate and direct local development efforts (MoI, 2010b).

- The participatory record of public, private and voluntary sector interest groups in all subnational participatory platforms was deemed unsatisfactory, a governance trait that also underscores the absence of synergistic responses to socioeconomic developmental challenges (MoI, 2010b).

The fact that GDP per capita in 8 out of the 13 Greek regions was below the Structural Funds threshold of 75 percent of the EU average brought into question the adequacy of subnational spatial arrangements in Greece in promoting development goals, setting the stage for yet another restructuring wave.

The challenge of rescaling

Discussions on the prospective reform were launched in 2009, coinciding with concerns about rising government deficit and debt levels, and the return of the Socialist Party to office. The public consultation process lasted for seven months and culminated in May 2010 when the thorough reorganization of state and local authority structures was voted upon in parliament. Fiscal retrenchment was stated to be a key reform goal, manifest in the abolition of approximately 4000 (out of 6000) local authority legal entities, enterprises and corporations (MoI, 2010b). The territorial and regulatory dimensions of the so-called Kallikratis Plan were also wide-ranging and extensive, as portrayed in Figure 3.

Starting from the first local authority tier, the number of municipalities was reduced from 1034 to 325. Following the example of the previous amalgamation in 1997, municipal boundaries were once

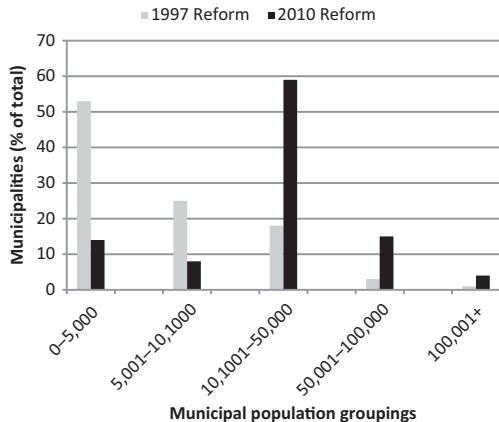


Figure 4. Distribution of municipal units by population
Source: KEDKE (2011).

again defined by the aggregate administrative limits of the unified municipalities, while a series of socio-economic, demographic and land-related criteria guided the merger process. As seen in Figure 4, the average population size of the first local authority tier increased considerably.

Municipalities were also entrusted with new competencies in the areas of urban planning, education and welfare policies, a decentralization move accompanied by enhanced financial autonomy. Aiming at avoiding power centralization, merged municipalities were accommodated in the new structures as districts. At this level, a directly elected district council manages local affairs and forwards local decisions at the Municipal Council. An equally drastic approach was adopted regarding the remaining political-administrative tiers.

Prefectures were abolished and their powers were delegated to municipal and regional authorities. Regions, in turn, were transformed from an administrative arm of the state into political authorities, with a directly elected head and council. The administrative limits of the 13 regions did not change. The experience of the regional bureaucracies in regulating and administering EU spatial development policies and the active involvement of the tier in the current Structural Funds' programming period (2007–13) were the main arguments in support of this choice. Regions, therefore, retained their key role in NSRF processes, while also assuming the duties of the

decentralized branches of national ministries in the areas of social and health policy. Moreover, regions undertook metropolitan governance functions in the country's two largest cities, Athens and Thessaloniki. Four metropolitan committees have been formed for this purpose in each region, focusing their activities on transportation, the environment, civil protection and urban planning (MoI, 2010b). Last, a five-year transition plan was announced, supporting the restructuring process with additional resources at both regional and municipal levels.

The monitoring role of the new structures was assigned to seven decentralized administrations, a new territorial unit of the Greek state with a head appointed by the national leadership. In this context, the newly established Administration Council features the involvement of the local authorities and assumes the coordination of spatial planning policies in the area. Enhanced participation, viewed as a key reform goal, was promoted at all local authority levels (MoI, 2010b).

In an attempt to trigger collaborative arrangements, a deliberation committee was set up in both municipalities and regions. This development-oriented governance platform engages key local stakeholders, and a quarter of its members are randomly recruited individual citizens. Focusing on municipalities, the committee's advisory task is supported by extensive e-petition and e-governance provisions, as well as by the Migrants Inclusion Council, a consultative body that reports on the socioeconomic challenges faced by this particular population group (MoI, 2010a). Such structures are seen as responding to topical EU spatial governance concepts, whose developmental efficacy is unquestionably acknowledged in the respective reports. The proposed changes, in fact, were justified by explicit reference to EU texts and parallel developments at the European level.

EU influence and political intentionality

The documents that introduced the latest state spatial restructuring in Greece drew from the European Charter of Local Self-government (CoE, 1985) and the Commission's White Paper on European Governance (CEC, 2001), focusing on the principles of 'political accountability' and 'citizens' involvement' in local

affairs. The ideal-typical local authority profile constructed was subsequently contrasted with the reality on the ground in Greece. The argumentation concluded by stating as the overarching goal of the reform ‘the attunement of the Greek governance model to the EU “*aquis*” of member states and regions’ (MoI, 2010b: 8). The directions of this exercise, in turn, were sought in the Committee of the Regions’ White Paper on Multilevel Governance (CoR, 2009), whose targets and recommendations were closely followed.

The above notions steered the reform towards the realization of two objectives. The first was the delegation of power, accompanied by a clearer delimitation of responsibilities for the administrative tiers concerned. State authority duties, as expressed in the range of powers reserved for the seven decentralized administrations, have been narrowed down, centring on monitoring performance and ‘coordinating’ the overall structure. Also, the developmental role of municipalities and regions has been upgraded, underscored by enhanced participatory structures (CoR, 2009: 20). The second objective promoted by the reform centred on ‘ensuring the involvement of new municipalities and regions as real partners in . . . the EU multi-level governance model’ (MoI, 2010b: 11 and 12). Distinct aims are explicitly stated for each tier, mirroring the CoR’s vision of local responsiveness to globalization challenges. Thus, for example, decentralized administrations are to ‘fine-tune’ regional decisions on the Trans-European Transport Networks, and local and regional authorities are encouraged to get actively involved in European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). Moreover, the establishment of localized Stability and Growth pacts responds directly to the CoR’s calls for ‘multilevel written agreements, [that] help ensure that regional and local plans are taken into account in national plans’ (CoR, 2009: 23). Such reform orientations highlight the rescaling qualities of the latest attempt at state spatial restructuring.

Conclusion

Rescaling is approached in the literature as a fluid and goal-seeking restructuring process, aiming to address quandaries in the territorial regulation of

development processes. The centrality of state agency in the process is manifest in the launch of novel initiatives and experimental practices that transcend the reallocation of formal state powers. The changing reality of socio-spatial relations rearticulates the meaning of policy spaces. The transnationalization of spaces of competition, fostered by supranational regulatory spaces such as the EU, sets off a quest for ‘spaces of competitiveness’: new governance arenas capable of addressing the ‘growing contradiction between abstract flows in space and concrete valorization in place’ (Jessop, 2002: 107; Brenner, 2001).

The multi-scalar dimension of EU policy practices is also influencing processes of subnational empowerment, redefining the role of the national state in policy-making. The launch of inter-regional and cross-border networking initiatives since the late 1980s⁵ exceeds the logic of formal cooperation among mutually exclusive territorial units. Such initiatives (a) mobilize the involvement of a wider range of local public, private and voluntary sector actors in policy-making; (b) redirect policy intervention goals to reflect developments, opportunities and constraints that emerge at the European scale; and (c) are increasingly influenced by EU-wide decision-making platforms, organizations and interest representations⁶ that redefine the spatial rationale of regulation, making reference to a European type of spatiality (Gualini, 2006; Heinelt and Niederhafner, 2008).

What has been witnessed during the past three decades in Greece is an attempt by the national authorities to restructure state spatial organization. The general orientation of the reforms resembles and follows the ideal-typical rescaling example noted in EU countries since the 1980s. The country’s accession to the EU underscores the supranational dimension of the reforms. Consecutive waves of territorial governance experimentation, in turn, aimed at advancing the local competitiveness goal. The fixation with redrawing local authority boundaries in the 1980s and 1990s reflects the perceived importance of territory as a coherent whole, acquired through a prolonged approach and analysis of jurisdictionally demarcated areas as integrated units. Socioeconomic indicators are gathered at such levels, advancing an

essentialist view on territory as a socioeconomic 'container' (Brenner, 2009b). In the Greek case, however, the spotlight on re-territorialization also reflects path dependency in state spatial organization and, in particular, the hierarchical national regulatory traits.

Greek municipalities were broken up into the thousands of units that survived until the 1990s as part of an inter-war effort to curb their influence on national politics (MoI, 1997b). Fragmented municipal territory, however, is one of a number of parameters that elucidate the rigid and centralized characteristics of Greek scalar architecture. Key among them is the turbulent and authoritarian national politics that shaped and perpetuated central control over local affairs throughout the post-war period. During this time, regions were not established, the prefectural tier was administrative, and municipalities were not equipped with the powers necessary to influence the physical or the socioeconomic prospects of their territory. Subsequently, since the mid-1970s, control of the local political scene by the main national parties upheld vertical networking dependencies, arresting the development of local relational dynamics. Underdeveloped relational assets and lagging regulatory experience shed light on the unwillingness of local societies to act in response to the restructuring waves that followed the country's entry to the EU. In fact, opposition to reforms was rather limited, expressed primarily through the following types of actions and arguments:

- (a) NIMBYist actions by localities demanding to be exempted from the amalgamation process; and
- (b) objections against the two-round voting system, according to which a single winning party secures 60 percent of municipal and district council seats (MoI, 2010a).⁷ The process, it has been argued, prevents smaller parties and coalitions from having an effective political presence, contradicting the participatory goal underlining all restructuring attempts (Portaliou, 2010). Instead, it grounds and affirms, locally, the dominance of the two-party system of national politics.

Proposals suggesting different reform directions, although present throughout this period, did not get

adequate public support (Hlepas, 2003). The fact that all reform waves were initiated in periods of heightened fiscal austerity backed up their justification, expediting the process. The social democratic rhetoric of decentralized development and enhanced participation, albeit controversial, alleviated concerns about their repercussions (Andrikopoulou and Kafkalas, 2004). At the same time, the emphasis placed by national authorities on boundary redrawing proved inadequate in triggering the redefinition of local political-institutional arenas.

The latest rescaling attempt also rests heavily on territorial reorganization, and reasserts through the electoral system the dominant role of the main national parties in local politics. Conversely, it is also characterized by the promotion of place-based and networking governance initiatives. Localities have been perceived as 'action spaces' and have been mobilized as political actors (Schmitt-Egner, 2002). The dynamism of the process set in motion is acknowledged. The associated risks, however, have not been discussed. Greek local authorities had little influence on rescaling directions, being steered primarily by national authorities and the EU spatial development discourse (Kokx and Kempen, 2010). Exposure to competitiveness, however, presupposes an active local response. Effective local competitiveness strategies build upon indigenous capabilities, with local authorities acting as a catalyst in a quest for differential advantage. In the absence of this, the competitiveness literature stresses the unevenness of local development prospects (Turok, 2009). Therefore, the task of capacity building in Greece – the mobilization of local societies into non-hierarchical, diffused, participatory and self-reflexive modes of governance – should be adequately considered and supported (Chaskin, 2001; Innes and Booher, 2010).

Notes

1. Reference here is to metropolitan institutions that were introduced in the post-war period as part of an attempt to promote interterritorial redistribution and generate economies of scale in public service provision. Examples of such institutions abolished in the 1980s include the Greater London Council, the English metropolitan counties, the Madrid Metropolitan Area Planning and Coordinating Commission, the Barcelona

- Metropolitan Corporation, the Greater Copenhagen Council and the Rijnmond in Rotterdam (Brenner, 2003: 301).
2. Because the key difference between municipalities and communes is population scale, the term ‘municipalities’, as adopted in this text, refers to both categories of the first subnational political-administrative tier (GGN, 1980). The second tier corresponds to prefectural authorities and the third to regional authorities. The term ‘local authorities’, in turn, defines all subnational political units.
 3. The upgraded importance attached by the EU to local authorities is approached through the analytical framework of ‘globalization and the shift from industries to services [that] . . . enhanced the importance of space for economic development [and] . . . reinforced the potential of cities as autonomous creators of prosperity’ (CEC, 1997: 6 and 8). Cities, in this light, are viewed as ‘the main source of prosperity [because] . . . they contribute disproportionately more to regional or national GDP compared to their population’ (CEC, 1997: 4).
 4. Reorganization included: (a) the creation of new municipal departments with upgraded responsibilities in land-use planning and economic development; (b) the launch of physical infrastructure projects related, primarily, to environmental protection and public transport (site protection, waste disposal and recycling facilities, new transportation routes, hubs and stations); and (c) the restructuring of social service provision in line with the new municipal requirements (daycare centres, nursery and crèche facilities) (MoI, 1997b).
 5. Reference here is to inter-urban and inter-regional networking initiatives such as INTERREG, RECITE and URBACT, as well as to the introduction into the mainstream of EU structural policies (2007–13) of the Territorial Cooperation Objective.
 6. Such as the Committee of the Regions, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, EURO CITIES and METREX.
 7. If no political party has an absolute majority of votes in the first round, then the two parties with the most votes proceed to a second round, from which all others are excluded.
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