



Successive local government institutional reforms in Greece: From regionalization to regionalism?

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ABSTRACT

The system of local government in Greece incurred significant alterations in the last years. Kapodistrias and Kallikrates reforms generated new conditions for regional policy. The aim of this paper is to study the course of local government reforms in Greece in terms of regionalization and regionalism. It is argued that the successive implementation of Kapodistrias and Kallikrates reform are crucial steps from regionalization to regionalism.

Methodology is based on a primary research that took place in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (NUTS II). A closed type questionnaire was distributed in local actors. Results demonstrate that operation of local/regional governments and intraregional cooperation improved significantly by the reforms. Non institutional partners assessed more substantially the provisions of Kapodistrias and Kallikrates reform than institutional partners did. A more interactive framework is required in order local actors of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace to advance the process from regionalization to regionalism.

Keywords: Regionalism, Regionalization, Local Government, Institutional Reforms, Kallikrates.

JEL Classification: R50, H77, R58

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1. Introduction

In the last decades regional analysis focused its priorities on a more complex framework. The traditional territorial interpretations of regional development were downgraded by the relational approaches (Keating, 1997; Mc Leod, 2001). Relational studies of economic geography turn the interest of regional studies into the influence that local actors' cooperation and interaction exercise upon local welfare. Their findings demonstrate that cognitive networks of intraregional cooperation are associated with higher levels of local development (Harrison, 2008).

The relational viewpoint of regional analysis shed strong light on the role that local and regional governments adopt on intraregional cooperation. Powerful regional administrations enable more options for regional planning, as they can forge more easily in local adjustments. The role of local/regional governments in regional planning combined with the intraregional cooperation of local actors are two crucial pillars that discriminate regionalization from regionalism (Deas & Lord, 2006). In regionalism, regional governance incorporates interaction among regional actors, and as a sequence regional policy is exercised by bottom up policies. In contrast, in regionalization, central state decides and implements top to bottom regional strategies (Ioannidis, 2014).

The aim of this paper is to research the course from regionalization by regionalism in the Greek local government system. Successive local government institutional reforms in Greece generated positive conditions for regionalism. The implementation of "Kapodistrias" and "Kallikrates" amalgamated the municipalities and rural communities into enlarges municipalities, institutionalized regions as second level of local government and transferred significant competences from central government to municipalities and regions. After the reforms, important aspects of regional development are government by municipalities and regions.

Methodology is based on a primary research that took place in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (NUTS II). Eastern Macedonia and Thrace encounters significant problems of uneven development (Eurostat, 2013). Therefore, research about the reception of the two reforms by actors of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace can indicate the process from regionalization to regionalism and the transformations that local economic space experienced.

The rest of the paper is articulated as follows: Section 2 studies the debate about regionalization and regionalism, in order to scrutinize the dimensions of the two terms. Section 3 emphasizes on the elements of Kapodistrias and Kallikrates and their linkages with regional governance. In section 4 methodology of the

research is described, where in section 5 empirical results are demonstrated. The paper is completed with concluding remarks and discussion complete in section 6.

2. Regionalization and Regionalism

Regionalization and regionalism are two of the most consequential strands of regional theory (Hadjimichalis, 1986). Beyond a doubt, both of them influenced regional planning and inevitably regional development. Approaches of relational economic geography underlined the importance of formal and informal networks of local actors for regional economic activity (Amin, 2004; Storper & Venables, 2004; Yeung, 2005; Clare & Siemiatycki, 2013). Following this influx of literature, it can be argued that the process from regionalization to regionalism passes through the nodes of intraregional cooperation.

Regionalization is deployed in administrative models that central state has the exclusive jurisdiction on regional policy. Regions and municipalities do not have significant competences and their operation depends on central state as regional policy is exercised by top down policies (Keating, 1997:385). In this regime, the interaction of local and regional actors moves slowly, as regional strategies are sanctioned by the decentralized departments of state. Vital fields of regional governance such as the finance of regions, appointment terms for regional officials, level of competences for local (municipal) and regional (or prefectural) governments are still ruled in regionalism by central government.

Regionalism moves forward on regional policy, as regions have the means to deal with their issues (Deas & Lord, 2006). Central state transfers competences that are associated with regional planning and local affairs, to regional and local governments (Mc Leod, 2001). The intervention of municipalities and regional administration in local affairs signals local actors to cooperate and to interact. Local actors have the potential to configure conditions for regional development. Therefore, path dependence of regional societies in cooperative strategies is one more discreet element of regionalism.

The course from regionalization to regionalism encapsulates the option of alternating regional policy from top-to-bottom to bottom-up strategies (Brenner, 2003; Jones & Mc Leod, 2004). This breakthrough contains the notion that regions are better aware of the advantages and the problems of local economic space and local actors can schedule more effectively local planning (Lovering, 1999).

This paper argues that regionalism is established throughout two vibrant pillars:

1) the first pillar is built by the enhancement of local and regional governments' operation by functional competences. Functional competences are consisted by

the set of powers and jurisdictions that are conveyed in this case, from central government to municipalities and regions. The kind of transferred powers is elaborately determined by diverse factors like demographic, socioeconomic, institutional and cultural characteristics (Wollman, 2004; Kjaer et al, 2010; Rusavy & Bernard, 2012; Kuhlmann et al, 2008).

2) the second pillar is developed on the intraregional cooperative strategies by local actors. Intraregional cooperation is compounded by commonly accepted strategies adopted by local actors in order to generate outcomes that foster regional development. The commitment of local actors (i.e. local governments, scientific and professional confederations, societal organizations), operates as a crucial intangible asset of regional development (Storper, 1997; Kusakabe, 2012; Hazakis & Ioannidis, 2013).

Rationally, the elements of the two pillars interact and shape the ground for regionalism.

Related studies underline the importance for intraregional cooperation, when local governments moderate local affairs by testing the perceptions of local actors. Feiock (2010), inquired the association between the collaboration networks of local officials and regionalism in metropolitan areas of U.S.A. Their results reveal that strong networks of collaboration facilitate the course to regionalism and counterbalance risk. Collective action is directly connected with regionalism, when local and regional governments are entrusted with significant jurisdictions. D' Apolito (2012) studied the progress of regionalism in Youngstown-Warren metropolitan area of Ohio State. In her research regionalism was defined by the consolidation of local governments in a number of services and the advance of intergovernmental cooperation. Results denote that regionalism is improved by transfer of competences to local governments and is intercepted by low levels of intraregional trust. Pluss' research (2013), estimated the role of municipal councillors in Swiss regionalism. Regionalism was weighted by the exerted influence on the local political council, the relations with other municipalities and the cooperation with neighbouring municipalities. Educated citizens assessed negatively the role of councillors in regionalism where in municipalities with higher levels of inter-communal cooperation their assistance was lower.

In parallel, empirical research about regionalism comprises the research about the impact of local governments' systems exercise on intraregional cooperation. Alexander (2013), by his empirical study in Australian municipalities, advocated that reforms did not generate cognitive conditions for trust and reciprocity. In the same direction, Ladner & Fiechter (2012) found that the transfer of competences to Swiss cantons did not improve participation to the commons. Bel et al (2013),

underpinned that reforms of local governments improves options for cooperation in bigger Spanish municipalities, where Sorensen (2007), pinpointed the negative role of population density in Norway in cooperative strategies. Hazakis & Ioannidis (2014b), focusing on the Greek local government system evinced the prevalent role of central government to intraregional cooperation of prefectures and municipalities.

The results of the aforementioned studies give prominence to the cooperation of local actors and local/regional governments. Nevertheless, this issue is directly related to the adopted local governments system for each case (Barnes & Foster, 2012). Therefore, the contentious reading of the two latest local government institutional reforms in Greece can contribute to the understating of the course from regionalization to regionalism.

Kapodistrias and Kallikrates Reforms: Changing the Greek Local Government System

Kapodistrias and Kallikrates reform alternated substantially the Greek Local Government System (Laws 2539/1997 & 3852/2010 respectively). Before the successive implementation of the two reforms, the role of local governments was unequal in the administrative framework (Hlepas, 2010). The huge number of municipalities and local communities i.e. the first level of local government (5.755) and the insufficient adopted competences, hinder decentralization and effective execution of regional policy (Lalenis & Liogas, 2002). Paradoxically, in practice the second level of local governments was divided into two pillars: prefectures and regions. Until 1994 prefects were appointed and not elected by local electorate (Law 2699/1994), while the first regional governors where elected on 2010 (Law 3852/2010). It should be also noticed that municipalities are still financed chiefly by intergovernmental grants (Law 1828/1989).

Kapodistrias reform (Law 2539/1997), aimed primarily to the following objectives:

- ↳ The reduction of the huge number of communities and municipalities (5.755)
- ↳ The improvement of the Greek local government system throughout the advancement of decentralization,
- ↳ The modernization of economic and administrative management of municipalities,

- ↳ The more cognitive cooperation of first tier of local government with the second tier of local government (provinces)

Kapodistrias reform achieved to amalgamate the 5.755 organizations of local government into 900 municipalities and 134 local communities. By the reform, the 90.1% of municipalities and communities was comprised by settlement up to 2.000 citizens. After the reform, the 18% was comprised by settlements up to 2.000, 27.8% included municipalities from 2.001 to 5.000 inhabitants, 36.8% by population from 5.001 to 20.000 and the rest by bigger municipals. Additionally, the modernization of municipalities' operation set the ground for a more flexible management of local affairs. Especially the institutional improvements in economic and administrative fields enabled municipalities to execute investment programs in the short run and to seek financial resources for local development projects. Due to the statute, this strategy could be developed by the cooperation with the second tier of local government (prefectures) and regional administration as well. Cooperative strategies did not exhaust in bureaucratic level as citizens had the right to participate in the annual local assembly.

The most significant advantage of the reform was that upgraded the architecture of local government system (Ioakimidis, 2000). Regional and local planning was improved and economies of scales were attained by the effective exploitation of local comparative advantages (Hazakis & Ioannidis, 2014b). Further, the interaction of citizens that by the reforms belong to different municipalities, upgraded and new forms of social capital constituted (Ioannidis, 2013). Namely forms of bracing social capital appear by actors that up to the reforms belonged to different municipalities. Actors that live in common administrative space (merger municipality), can especially after the implementation of Kallikrates reform interact and to constitute their different interests in resurgent strategies. In this perspective reforms of local government in Greece favored the perspective of generating new networks, horizontal and vertical as well.

On the contrary, the unchallenged disadvantage of Kapodistrias reform was the low level of competences that was transferred from central governments to municipalities and communities and regional policy still was followed the path from top to bottom. Apart from the financial dependence of municipalities form political priorities (Hazakis & Ioannidis, 2014a), central state still was giving the steering for local government (Spanou, 2008; Skamnakis, 2011). As a sequence, municipalities and prefectures did not manage to coordinate their ends and to share their resources.

Table 1: Synopsis of Kapodistrias and Kallikrates Reforms

	Kapodistrias Reform	Kallikrates Reform
<i>Population</i>		
Up to 2.000	18%	8.31%
2001-5.000	27.8%	6.77%
5.001-20.000	36.8%	35.08%
More than 20.000	17.4%	49.84%
<i>Structure</i>		
Municipalities	900	325
Communities	134	0
Regions	13	13
Prefectures	52	0
Regional Unities	0	52
<i>Election of Head Officials</i>		
Municipalities	Direct from Local Electorate	Direct from Local Electorate
Communities	Direct from Local Electorate	-
Prefectures	Direct from Local Electorate	-
Regions	Appointment by Central Government	Direct from Local Electorate
<i>Competences</i>		
Municipalities	Low Level	High Level
Communities	Low Level	-
Prefectures	Moderate Level	-
Regions	Moderate Level	High Level

Source: Ioannidis, (2014)

Successively, Kallikrates reform integrated the amalgamation of 1.034 municipalities and communities into 325 enlarged municipalities. It is note worthy that after the reform only the 8,31% of municipalities have population up to 2.000, where boroughs from 2.001 to 5.000 citizens represent the 6,77%, the

class 5.001-2.000 holds the 35.08% and the rest is represented by bigger municipalities (see table 1).

According to the statute (Law 3852/2010) the key goals of the reform can be summarized as follows:

1. The amalgamation of communities and municipalities into enlarged municipalities (first tier of local government),
2. The substitution of provinces by regions and regional unities (second tier of local government),
3. The significant conveyance of administrative and executive competences from central state to municipalities and regions.
4. The establishment of urban governance structures (Municipal Consultation Committee, Regional Consultation Committee, Municipal Ombudsman and Regional Ombudsman, Improvements in Local Assemblies).
5. The enhancement of intraregional and inter-municipal cooperation in local development strategies and the establishment of cooperation networks between the two tiers of local government (Management of Regional Development Fund).

The core of the reform is the unparalleled amalgamation of municipalities and local communities into enlarged municipalities. Specifically the 900 municipalities and the 134 communities were abolished in order to be generated 325 new and bigger municipalities. The most consequential part of Kallikrates reform however is the institutionalization of 13 Greek regions (N.U.T.S. II), as the second tier of local government. Regions replaced the 52 prefectures and shape the ground for the establishing of regionalism as were reinforced by significant competences.

Further, the central state's withdrawal from a substantial set of powers licensed municipalities and regions to shape their strategies. Municipalities administer fields such as environmental planning, social welfare and educational programs, whereas regions are responsible for regional and spatial planning, management of resources, primary sector, transport services, trade and tourism promotion. These evolvments prioritize the role of municipalities and regions to local planning and development.

On the other hand, law provisions instigate local actors to participate in intraregional cooperative structures like the Regional Committee and Regional Development Fund. Forms of inter-municipal cooperation and inter-graded

cooperation (between regions and municipalities) are also supported, but the most important institutional addendum is the establishment of urban government structures (Ioannidis, 2014). Municipal and Regional Consultation Committees are charged advisory tasks that concern local and regional development issues. Respectively, the seats of Municipal Ombudsman and Regional Ombudsman are staffed by overqualified officials in order to defend the interests of local citizens and local enterprises in the municipal and regional level correspondingly.

The implementation of the Kallikrates reform triggered an interesting debate about its necessity. On the one side met the supporters of the administrative modernization of the Greek local government system. Their basic argument was that the enhancement of decentralization is a crucial step for the redevelopment of the state. In this movement participated apart from politicians, high qualified bureaucrats of local and regional governments, practitioners and young entrepreneurs. On the other side, band together the opponents of state modernization. Their viewpoint accrues from the fact that decentralization does not take into account the local characteristics and the real necessities of small settlements. In this informal group were participated rooters of parochial political movements and members of local cultural and societal organizations. It should be notified however that their opposition was determined crucially by the persisted economic and fiscal crisis (Akrivopoulou et al, 2012).

The implementation of Kapodistrias and Kallikrates reform took place in twelve years. Within a small period of time, the Greek local government system changed fundamentally. It is important to state, that Kallikrates reform executed during a rough economic and fiscal crisis. This fact impacted not only the success of the reform, but the engagement of local actors, as well (Ioannidis, 2014; Hazakis & Ioannidis, 2014).

It should be mentioned that the successive implementation of the two local government reforms, and especially Kallikrates took place in a rough political climate. On the one side stood the established ideology supporting the adoption of Memorandum as the only mean of fiscal crisis interception. On the other side lined the anti-Memorandum block concentrating on the humanitarian crisis of the Greek society as an outcome of the restrained economic policy.

The restrained fiscal policy was executed and in the fields of the two tiers of local government. Specifically, regional policy focused on the reduction of expenses not in a structural perspective but in terms of hard budget constraints. Authorities of the two tiers of local government had to deal with Memorandum provisions without any negotiable prospect. This undermined the engagement and as a sequence the commitment of local actors to a more collective implementation of the reform.

Nonetheless, the unparalleled set of upgrades in the local government map, are outcomes of the two successive local government reforms. This dynamic procedure that started with Kapodistrias Project, recreated with Kallikrates Plan is still an ongoing process. Kallikrates is the greater effort of reorganizing the state, taking into account local and regional governments. The concession of competences to regional and municipal governments foster the course from regionalization to regionalism as decentralized unit can manage their issues. Regional policy is scheduled and implemented by bottom up policies and the dependence from central state is diminished. Another advantage is the advanced ability for local actors to adopt cooperative strategies and therefore to exploit more efficiently local comparative advantages. The absence of spatial and administrative criteria in the amalgamation of some municipalities is the most important disadvantage of the reform, as enough semi - urban municipalities are too big to operate (Ioannidis, 2014). Central state on the other hand, has still persistent involution in salient fields (for instance the financing of municipalities and regions). Additionally, fiscal crisis of Greek state hold back the progress of the reform, by reducing intergovernmental grants.

To summarize, the two successive reforms of local administration in Greece shape the ground for the upgrading of regionalism in Greece. The functional decrease of municipalities, the institutionalization of regions as second level of regional unities and the transfer of competences highlights the modernization of Greek local government system. Thus it can be stated that the necessary pillar of regionalism was built by Kapodistrias and Kallikrates reform. Empirical research that follows tries to answer if the sufficient condition of regionalism was established in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace via the reforms.

Methodology

Methodology was based on a primary research that took place in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace during 2013. A closed type questionnaire was used as methodological tool, in order to comprehend the process from regionalization to regionalism in Eastern Macedonia and Trace. In total, 507 queries were sent to local actors through post and email and 245 were filled, which denotes rate of response equal to 48.32%. The questionnaire was scheduled to estimate the level of the two regionalism pillars by using five Linkert scale (1= minor impact-5=major impact of the reform).

Local actors of different activities and professions were participated in the research. In particular, the sample was constituted primarily by public servants in central, local (municipal) and regional government, and sequentially by self occupied professionals, entrepreneurs, employees of private sector and appointed

persons of local and regional government (see table 2).

Table 2: Professional Characteristics of the Sample

Profession	Number	Percentage
Municipal Government Servant	77	31.4
Regional Government Servant	25	10.2
Central Government Servant	41	16.7
Entrepreneur	19	7.8
Self Occupied	46	18.8
Private Sector Employee	14	5.7
Mayors/ Deputy Mayors	13	5.3
Scientific Associate of Mayors and Regional Governors	5	2,0
Unemployed	3	1,2
Pensioner	2	0.8
Total	245	100

The sample is divided into two major categories. The first is comprised by local actors that have either institutional role in local public affairs, or are members of societal and cultural organizations and have the characteristics of convenience sample (Howitt & Cramer, 2010). In this set of actors are lying executives of local and regional governments, head officials of professional chambers and scientific associations and members of board of directors in societal organizations. The second team is composed by local actors that neither have institutional role nor are members of societal and cultural organizations. This set of actors was collected randomly.

As it can be seen in table 3, the sample members that had institutional role are more in Kallikrates reform era (51.43%), than of those that adopt an institutional role during Kapodistrias reform period (46.53%). On the contrary, local actors that participated in the research activated rather more in societal organizations during Kapodistrias reform (46.53%), than of the respective for the period of Kallikrates reform (44.49%).

Table 3: Sample's institutional Role and Participation in Societal Organizations

	Institutional Role	Non Institutional Role	Participation in Societal Organization	Non Participation in Societal Organization
Kapodistrias Period	46.53%	53.47%	46.53%	53.47%
Kallikrates Period	51.43%	48.57%	44.49%	55.51%

The purpose of this classification is two fold. On the one hand, research tried to estimate potential differences in the perception of the two successive local government reforms by institutional and non institutional actors. On the other, deviations between Kapodistrias and Kallikrates impact on enhancement of local/regional governance and intraregional cooperation. In other words, the key target of this selection was to receive data that concern citizens' engagement in the regionalism process.

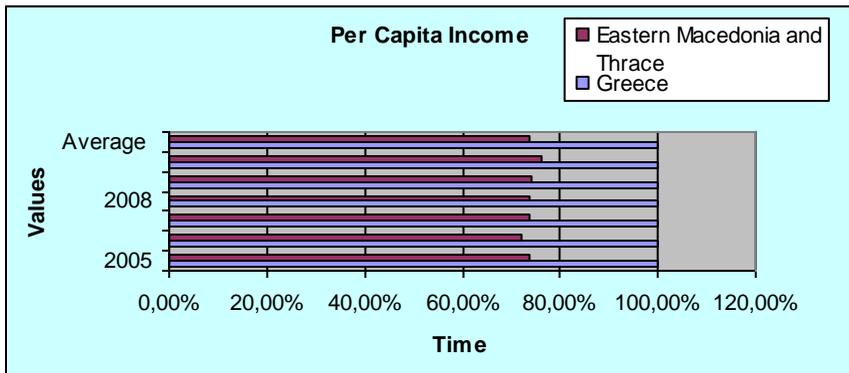
Krishna & Uphoff (1999), revealed the importance of institutional roles, adopted by local actors in public decision making, whereas Blatter (2006) argues that the advancement of institutional actors' role favours regional development. In parallel, the participation of local actors in societal and cultural organizations improves the constitution of social capital (Knack & Keefer, 1997; Arsenault, 2006). Interestingly, Ladner & Fiechter (2012), assessed that the conveyance of powers and jurisdictions to local governments does not enhance the participation of local actors to cooperative projects.

Enhancement of local and regional government weighted by two dimensions: the first captures regional planning and the second local/regional governance. Previous studies provided to the research significant insight, about regional planning and regional governance (Ha and Feiock, 2011; Park; 2005; Caamario-Alegre et al, 2012; Falleth and Hansen, 2013). This pillar of the questionnaire focused on the improvements on the operation of local and regional government by the reforms.

Intraregional cooperative strategies studied by two dimensions, as well: social capital and local entrepreneurship. Social capital is consisted by elements of trust, reciprocity and cognitive networks of cooperation (Narayan & Cassidy, 2001; Beugelsdijk, & Van Schaik, 2005; Pihkala et al, 2007). Regions with

stronger level of social capital have more possibilities to upgrade local welfare. Further, local entrepreneurship that is built on cooperative strategies advances effective exploit of local comparative advantages (Roper, 2001; Steiner & Hartman, 2006; Kauffeld-Monz & Fritsch, 2010). Taking into account that Kapodistrias and Kallikrates reforms upgraded cooperative institutions, the focus on intraregional cooperation offers important information about the process to regionalism.

Figure 1: Comparison of Per Capita Income in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace and Greece



Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority/Regional Accounts

Eastern Macedonia and Thrace is a lagged region as regional per capita income lies between 60% and 75% of EU average (Eurostat, 2012). Comparing regional per capital income of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace with the respective national term, it can be understood that there are persistent traces of lagged development (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2013). Namely, for the period 2005-2010 per capita income for citizens of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace was corresponded to the 73.89% of the national respective.

As regards competitiveness and innovation systems, Eastern Macedonia and Thrace is also a lagged region. Classifying its indexes of competitiveness and innovation in the set of E.U. regions, Eastern Macedonia and Thrace is placed in the last positions. Comparing however these indexes with Greek regions, results are better, especially in the field of tertiary education and technological capacity. Consecutively, it can be stated that Eastern Macedonia and Thrace needs a cognitive framework of cooperation, in order to overcome the problems of uneven development.

Table 4: Comparison of Competitiveness and Innovation

Index	Classification European Union (273 regions)	Classification Greece (13 regions)
<i>Basic Indexes</i>		
Institutions	241	13
Infrastructure	244	7
Health Services	217	12
<i>Efficiency Indexes</i>		
Tertiary Education	230	3
Labor Market	255	11
Market Structure	221	7
<i>Innovation Indexes</i>		
Technological Capacity	240	3
Entrepreneurship	236	11
Innovation	239	9

Source: Eastern Macedonia and Thrace/Regional Strategy of Innovation and Smart Specialization (2013)

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Results of Empirical Research

In the next tables results of empirical research are depicted. Tables 3 & 4 contain the average value for each variable and the t test for contingent deviation

between the affections of Kapodistrias and Kallikrates.

Table 5: Operation of Local and Regional Government

	Kapodistrias	Kallikrates	t test	Minimum	Maximum
<i>Regional Planning</i>					
Spatial Criteria	3.14	3.05	-1.049	1	5
Local Characteristics	2.84	2.64	-2.048**	1	5
Economic Efficiency	2.39	2.17	-3.257***	1	5
Administrative Efficiency	2.63	2.69	0.939***	1	5
<i>Local/Regional Governance</i>					
Regional Unities - Municipalities Interaction	2.74	3.06	4.091*	1	5
Inter-municipalities interaction	2.69	2.73	0.49	1	5
Common Use of Resources	2.44	2.5	0.919	1	5
Knowledge Spill over	2.3	2.34	-0.584	1	5
Note: ***, ** significant at 0.01 level and 0.05 respectively					

The elements of regional planning received more diversified influence than local and regional governance during the implementation of the reforms. Specifically, Kapodistrias reform affected slightly more regional planning than Kallikrates reform did. The implementation of Kapodistrias reform affected more the efficiency of local governments, in economic terms, but Kallikrates reform impacted more in administrative terms. In parallel, the first reform influenced slightly more spatial planning conditions for local practitioners, but not in significant terms. In addition, Kapodistrias reform found to be more associated with local and cultural characteristics of merger communities and municipalities.

On the contrary, the two successive reforms were not so influential in local and regional governance issues. Kallikrates improved more significantly the interaction among municipalities and regional entities. The second reform shaped the ground also for the enhancement of inter-municipal cooperation, the common use of resources among municipalities and regional entities and knowledge networks among the two tiers of local government. Nevertheless, these improvements are trivial and not statistically significant.

Table 6 depicts the respective results for intraregional cooperation. The formation of social capital was more cognitive for the period of Kapodistrias reform. Trust, reciprocity, social networks and public-private were affected significantly more by the first reform. On the contrary, the effect of the reforms to the upgrading of local entrepreneurship was mainly in support of Kallikrates, but the differences were not in this case significant. Results denote that social capital was built throughout the implementation of Kapodistrias, but unfortunately was not integrated by Kallikrates. This result provides the potential for a more cognitive discussion about the further improvements in local government framework.

Table 6: Intraregional Cooperation

	Kapodistrias	Kallikrates	t test	Minimum	Maximum
<i>Social Capital</i>					
Trust	2.8	2.46	-4.413***	1	5
Reciprocity	2.65	2.36	-4.4***	1	5
Social Networks	2.44	2.23	-3.354***	1	5
Public-Private Cooperation	2.7	2.45	-3.307***	1	5
<i>Local Entrepreneurship</i>					
Utilization of Comparative Advantages	2.37	2.27	-1.356	1	5
Cooperation between Firms	2.06	2.11	-0.667	1	5
Innovation Strategies	2.35	2.24	-1.624	1	5
Knowledge Networks	2.03	2.06	0.493	1	5
<i>Note: ***, ** significant at 0.01 level and 0.05 respectively</i>					

By contrast local entrepreneurship was not improved crucially by the execution of the two local government statutes. In fact, the differences between the two reforms are minor and therefore non-significant. This result denotes that in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace exist auspicious fields for upgrading local entrepreneurship, given the shareholding of local government. For instance, the utilization of comparative advantages i.e. investment in branches that operating cost is relatively lower than in other regions, or the construction of knowledge networks among firms and universities, can boost intraregional cooperation.

Table 7: Operation of Local and Regional Government/Institutional-Non Institutional Actors

	Kapodistrias			Kallikrates		
	Institutional Partner	Non Institutional Partner	t test	Institutional Partner	Non Institutional Partner	t test
Regional Planning						
Spatial Criteria	3,25	3,05	-1,311	3,19	2,93	-1,632
Local Characteristics	2,76	2,91	0,965	2,60	2,71	0,731
Economic Efficiency	2,25	2,52	2,228***	2,02	2,36	2,368**
Administrative Efficiency	2,56	2,69	1,032	2,49	2,86	2,687***
Local/Regional Governance						
Regional Unities - Municipalities Interaction	2,75	2,74	-1,114	2,90	3,20	2,091**
Inter-municipalities interaction	2,59	2,78	1,308	2,70	2,74	0,246
Common Use of Resources	2,43	2,45	0,117	2,61	2,42	-1,419
Knowledge Spill over	2,24	2,36	0,873	2,31	2,34	0,299
<i>Note: ***, **, * significant at 0.01 level, 0.05 and 0.1 respectively</i>						

Lastly, it is attempted to study the research by the level of local actors' commitment to institutional partnership. As notified in methodology section, the sample of the research was divided into two main groups: The first was comprised by actors of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace that adopt an institutional

role such as head officials and managers of municipalities and regional unities or leaders of scientific and professional associations (institutional partners). The second was composed by actors of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace that do not have formal institutional action (non institutional partners).

Table 8: Intra-regional Cooperation/Institutional-Non Institutional Actors

	Kapodistrias			Kallikrates		
	Institutional Partner	Non Institutional Partner	t test	Institutional Partner	Non Institutional Partner	t test
<i>Social Capital</i>						
Trust	2,75	2,84	0,625	2,39	2,50	0,934
Reciprocity	2,71	2,60	-0,752	2,43	2,24	-1,459
Social Networks	2,39	2,48	0,622	2,20	2,21	0,107
Public-Private Cooperation	2,61	2,78	1,311	2,37	2,51	1,05
<i>Local Entrepreneurship</i>						
Utilization of Comparative Advantages	2,13	2,56	3,102***	2,15	2,35	1,357
Cooperation between Firms	1,92	2,19	1,895**	1,97	2,22	1,762*
Innovation Strategies	2,26	2,43	1,075	2,16	2,30	0,967
Knowledge Networks	1,97	2,08	0,826	1,98	2,11	1,011
<i>Note: ***, **, * significant at 0.01 level, 0.05 and 0.1 respectively</i>						

Interestingly, non institutional partners are more favourably disposed towards the reforms than institutional partners. In the first pillar of regionalism (operation of local government) non institutional partners estimated that economic efficiency of local governments was improved significantly by Kapodistrias and Kallikrates reform as well. Additionally, for Kallikrates period, perceptions of non institutional actors were more positive about the upgrading of administrative efficiency. Moreover, non institutional actors argued that improvements took place in the field of cooperation among municipalities and regional unities, as results of the Kallikrates reform execution.

Conversely, in the field of intraregional cooperation, results were not so differentiated. For social capital, t tests did not give prominence to diverted options for local actors, as their perceptions about the two successive reforms did not determined by an institutional perspective. For local entrepreneurship, non institutional partners denoted that utilization of comparative advantages was developed more during Kapodistrias and inter firm cooperation was improved by both reforms. Therefore, it can be stated that non institutional actors were affected more by the implementation of the two local government's institutional reforms than their institutional colleagues.

Interest findings were collected also throughout the classification that concerns the participation of local actors in societal organizations (tables 9 & 10). In the field of local government operation, the variable of participation in societal organizations did not exercise any significant influence upon the perceptions of local actors about the reforms.

As regards Kapodistrias reform, actors that were socially activated assessed that regional planning and local/regional governance improved more, that the respective perceptions of non members of societal organizations. The only exceptions of this case appeared for the parameters of local characteristics and the cooperation between the two tiers of local government. This result, even non significance, might due to the fact that members of societal organizations tangle directly with cooperative projects and therefore have intrinsic cooperation.

Concerning Kallikrates reform, the differences between the two groups are also non significant. Eventually, the absence of local actors from societal activities is connected with a more positive stance to the reform. Contrary to the relative findings of Kapodistrias reform, the two exceptions here refer to inter-municipal cooperation and local characteristics parameters: societal participation provides to local actors more substantial perceptions about the Kallikrates reform. Given that the deviations are minor, one might think that the institutional provisions of this reform have shaped slightly the ground for more cognitive cooperation of local actors.

In the field of intraregional cooperation, results are not differentiated crucially albeit only in two cases statistical significant deviations were found between the two groups. The trend denotes that members of societal organizations consider that social capital and local entrepreneurship were influenced by the two successive reforms than the members of the other group. In two cases deviations were statistically significant (trust for Kallikrates reform and utilization of comparative advantages for Kapodistrias reform). Contra wise, in four parameters the absence of social activities connected with a higher validation of

intraregional cooperation (two for both reforms), but differences were minor.

Table 9: Operation of Local and Regional Government/Participation-Non Participation in Societal Organizations

	<i>Kapodistrias</i>			<i>Kallikrates</i>		
	<i>Participation in Societal Organizations</i>	<i>Non Participation in Societal Organizations</i>	<i>t test</i>	<i>Participation in Societal Organizations</i>	<i>Non Participation in Societal Organizations</i>	<i>t test</i>
<i>Regional Planning</i>						
Spatial Criteria	3,15	3,13	-1,152	3,04	3,09	0,298
Local Cultural Characteristics	2,78	2,91	0,85	2,68	2,63	-0,313
Economic Efficiency	2,43	2,35	-0,59	2,15	2,23	0,592
Administrative Efficiency	2,59	2,68	0,724	2,66	2,69	0,228
<i>Local/Regional Governance</i>						
Regional Unities - Municipalities Interaction	2,68	2,82	1,03	3,01	3,09	0,529
Inter-municipalities interaction	2,79	2,59	-1,401	2,75	2,68	-0,457
Common Use of Resources	2,35	2,26	0,702	2,29	2,37	0,684
Knowledge Spill over	2,13	2,08	-0,375	2,27	2,32	0,373
<i>Note: ***, **, * significant at 0.01 level, 0.05 and 0.1 respectively</i>						

Table 10: Intra-regional Cooperation/Participation-Non Participation in Societal Organizations

	Kapodistrias			Kallikrates		
	Participation in Societal Organizations	Non Participation in Societal Organizations	t test	Participation in Societal Organizations	Non Participation in Societal Organizations	t test
<i>Social Capital</i>						
Trust	2,87	2,72	-1,059	2,56	2,30	1,9***
Reciprocity	2,68	2,62	-0,423	2,43	2,22	-1,591
Social Networks	2,51	2,36	-1,052	2,23	2,17	0,446
Public-Private Cooperation	2,74	2,65	-0,653	2,42	2,45	0,188
<i>Local Entrepreneurship</i>						
Utilization of Comparative Advantages	2,52	2,2	-2,295**	2,3	2,19	-0,805
Cooperation between Firms	2,14	1,98	-1,063	2,14	2,02	-0,878
Innovation Strategies	2,34	2,36	0,114	2,78	2,74	-0,225
Knowledge Networks	2,00	2,062,08	0,5	2,22	2,23	0,118
Note: ***, **, * significant at 0.01 level , 0.05 and 0.1 respectively						

Discussion and Policy Implications

Discussion

There is no doubt that Kapodistrias and Kallikrates reforms affected crucially the operation of local government in Greece. The amalgamation of municipalities, the institutionalization of regions as second level of local government and the transfer of competences to local and regional governments amended the system of Greek local government. Local communities and regions garnered the potential to adopt cooperative strategies as a mean to upgrade local prosperity.

Results of the research revealed that regional planning and social capital underwent the most significant impact by the execution of the two reforms. Kapodistrias reform established cognitive levels of social capital and modernized regional planning. Local/regional governance and local entrepreneurship were influenced slightly and mainly by the second wave of the reforms. Nevertheless, according to the results, these effects were not so vibrant.

Taking into account the perceptions of local actors about the procession, it can be stated that the defined goals of the two successive reforms integrated rather more during Kapodistrias reform, than Kallikrates period. The crucial decrease of the enormous number of municipalities was embraced positively by local actors. Doubtlessly, results about Kapodistrias denote that decentralization was proceeding also throughout the modernization of municipalities' management. Evidently and up to a point, the gaps of Kapodistrias reform was fulfilled by Kallikrates implementation by good practices in administrative efficiency and cooperation of the two tiers of local government.

In the dynamic field of cooperation, Kapodistrias reform achieved also more than Kallikrates, especially in the constitution of social capital. This result can be associated with the bigger distance Kapodistrias reform in the reorganization of local government system. On the contrary, the influence that Kallikrates reform exercised on local entrepreneurship is small, but entrenched the role of the two tiers of local government in local and regional development.

The course from regionalization to regionalism in the Greek local government system is slow. Enhancement of local and regional governments and institutionalization of regions as second level of local government took place by the second wave of the reforms. The amendments that were observed by local actors of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace in regional planning and local/regional governance, confirm the necessity of the reforms.

Taking into account that Kallikrates was implemented during the unprecedented fiscal crisis of the Greek state, it can be understood that reform was intercepted by political and economic factors. The rough political climate and the fiscal constraints of Greek state conduced to the indifference if not the opposition of local actors to the reform. This informal institutional twist might be an inaugural point for further discussion about the necessary improvements to the local government system in Greece.

The abovementioned findings denote that Kapodistrias and Kallikrates reform form significant path dependence in the modernization route of Greek local government system. Systemic public policy that scheduled and executed in succession the two reforms reorganized not only the local administrative scheme, but the relations of citizens with regions and municipalities. This interaction was revealed by the diverse and often cross countered results of the research.

Howbeit, bedrocks of cooperation among local actors and institutions were established in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace. The finding about the importance that was attributed to the reforms by non institutional actors, denote that the seeds of modernization of local government and intraregional cooperation are spread to the whole of regional communities and not only to the institutional part. In this classification, there is resemblance with the findings of Krishna & Uphoff (1999), and critical differences with the results of Blatter (2006).

As norms, values and virtues determine the economic activity formally and informally regional economic activity (Ioannidis, 2014), the progress of regionalism requires more coordination among bureaucrats and non institutional partners. Indispensably, the enhancement of regionalism ought to overcome not only the traditional barriers of regionalization, but the “regionally orchestrated centralism” as well (Harrison, 2008).

At the other end of the spectrum, the participation in societal and cultural organizations was interfaced mainly with intraregional cooperation and not to the enhancement of local government. As regards social capital, there is accordance of the results with the findings of Knack & Keefer (1997) and Arsenaault (2006). By contrast, deviations were observed with the results of Ladner & Fiechter (2012) that concern the association among cooperative strategies and advancement of local government’s competences.

Policy Implications

Even though that a significant set of competences were transferred from central government to local and regional governments, still more improvements are necessary. An accented field is the finance of regions and municipalities, where central state still holds the reins. The association of collected public revenues

inside the regional space with the finance of regional and local governments can augment regionalism. This provision has the power to provoke local actors to invest in branches with competitive advantages and sequentially to adopt cooperative strategies.

Under this prospect, a set of policy implications is needed, in order to upgrade the impact of Kallikrates reform on intraregional cooperation and advancement of local government. More specifically regionalism can be amplified by:

- ⇓ The decentralization process ought to include financial decentralization. The enhancement of municipalities and regions in the financial autonomy field, apart from improving regionalism, can also generate strong conditions of local development in the long run. Financial decentralization shall permit regions and municipalities to schedule more effectively investment projects and to utilize local comparative advantages.
- ⇓ The further conveyance of jurisdictions and powers from central government to regions and municipalities can improve bureaucracy, by making local public policy more flexible. Fields of public interest that need more the local/regional power than the central state, are the materialization of infrastructure projects, the management of European Union's funds and the decision making in urban governance issues.
- ⇓ The enhancement of local and regional governance can be further upgraded by the improvement of participation of local actors in local decision and advisory bodies. In this field might be necessary the enhancement of institutional bodies, like the Local and the Regional Assembly in the management of local and regional affairs. Their enhancement might introduce a multidimensional participation of local interest groups (professional and scientific associations, labor and societal organizations) in their proceedings.
- ⇓ The improvement of the terms that shape intraregional cooperation is still a neglected issue. Taking into account local societal and cultural characteristics, regional and municipal governments ought to finance societal organizations that promote local cooperation, by improving local welfare. This kind of public policy will unlock creative movements to participate in innovative strategies for the sake of local development.

Last but not least, municipalities and regions ought to entrust the institutions of Municipal Ombudsman and Regional Ombudsman in their governance. As hitherto, the majority of regions and municipalities did not make use of this provision, it is necessary to invert their strategy in this field.

Eastern Macedonia and Thrace has significant chances to regain regional development. The restructure of its regional space by Kapodistrias and Kallikrates was unique and improved the institutional framework of local government and the terms. The additional enrichment of regionalism relies not only on required public policies, but on the engagement of local actors in its provisions.

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Appendix

The Questionnaire of the Research

Part 1. Personal and Professional Characteristics.

Gender

- Man
 Woman

Age : _____

Education

- Secondary Education Bachelor Degree Master Degree Ph.D.

Professional Experience (in years)

- 1-5, 6-15, 16-25, 26-35, 35+

Profession

- Municipal Government Servant
Entrepreneur
 Regional Government Servant Self Occupied
 Central Government Servant Private Sector
Employee
 Else (please specify _____) Unemployed

Institutional Role

Kapodistrias Period

- Yes
 No

Kallikrates Period

- Yes
 No

Participation in Societal and Cultural Organizations

Kapodistrias Period

Yes

No

Kallikrates Period

Yes

No

Part 2. The Influence of Local Governments Reforms

2.1 Operation of Local Government

The next questions concern the influence that Kapodistrias and Kallikrates reform exercised on the operation of local and regional governments and especially on regional planning and local/regional governance.

Please submit your answer due to the next scale: 1 (minor impact) -5 (major impact).

	Kapodistrias' Influence	Kallikrates' Influence
<i>Regional Planning</i>		
Spatial Criteria		
Local Characteristics		
Economic Efficiency		
Administrative Efficiency		
<i>Local/Regional Governance</i>		
Regional Unities - Municipalities Interaction		
Inter-municipalities interaction		
Common Use of Resources		
Knowledge Spill over		

2.2 Intraregional Cooperation

The next questions concern the influence that Kapodistrias and Kallikrates reform exercised on intraregional cooperation of local actors and especially on social capital and local entrepreneurship.

Please submit your answer due to the next scale: 1 (minor impact) -5 (major impact).

	Kapodistrias' Influence	Kallikrates' Influence
<i>Social Capital</i>		
Trust		
Reciprocity		
Social Networks		
Public-Private Cooperation		
<i>Local Entrepreneurship</i>		
Exploitation of Comparative Advantages		
Cooperation between Firms		
Innovation Strategies		
Knowledge Networks		