

The Greek Cadastral Policy Reform During the Recent Economic Crisis: a Case of Vicious Circularity

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SUMMARY

A public policy reform is a deliberate government effort to effect change in a public policy domain and deliver collective goods to citizens. The Hellenic cadastral policy reform (hereafter, “the reform”) aims to replace the existing Land Registry Systems (LRS), the Registrations and Mortgages System (RMS) and the Dodecanese Cadastre (DC) with the Hellenic Cadastre System (HCS) aiming to improve land tenure security. This reform designates new Land Administration Organisations (LAOs’) to operate the new conveyancing system, while phasing out the old ones.

This paper analyses how and why the LAOs’ were supposed to change, following six legislative initiatives partially enacted into law in the period 2009-2018, and discusses these intended changes in light of the conceptual framework of orders of change, proposed by Tsoukas to understand processes of policy reform. The paper is informed by a review of selected official documents, and by in-depth open interviews with members of legislative committees, employees at the Land Administration Organizations, government officials, politicians and other relevant experts.

Findings show that these initiatives encompass drastic organizational changes within a short period, and are marked by complexity arising from the gradual increase in domestic and foreign stakeholders involved, by recursivity in the magnitude of smaller changes that the legislative initiatives induced and included, and conflict as long as the intended changes lead to complications which are less technical and more context-dependent, value-laden and political. Thus, when a reforming government changes state organisations, without seeing the need to change itself, it traps itself in a pattern of vicious circularity (Pina e Cunha and Tsoukas 2015). The case of the Hellenic Cadastral Policy Reform thus contributes to study of vicious circularity and orders of change in the field of Land Administration, Organizational Theory and Public Policy.

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