

The Role of Experts in the Reform Process in Greece

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This article explores the role of expertise in the reform process in Greece by utilising the advocacy coalition framework. Knowledge, power and policy reform are discussed by comparing three frameworks that place knowledge in the centre of the analysis: advocacy coalitions, epistemic communities and policy transfer networks. The theoretical claims made in this paper are illustrated through a discussion of the 2001 Constitutional Reform and in particular the reform of article 24 on the environment and article 102 on decentralisation of public administration and the strengthening of regional governance. It is argued that the advocacy coalition is a useful framework for studying the role of experts in policy reform although the framework could be strengthened if more emphasis was placed to political, economic and social interests and the way they form belief systems. In particular about Greece, it is claimed that the role of experts in policy reform has increased as part of a general wave towards the modernisation of public administration in Greece.

INTRODUCTION

Where do ideas about policy reform come from and who are the carriers of new ideas at the domestic level? Given the links between modernisation and Europeanisation (Diamandouros 1984; Lavdas 1997: 252-254) it is expected that a lot of the ideas come from Western European countries through processes of policy-learning. At the same time the tendency towards rationalisation of public policy raises the expectation of an increased role for experts in policy reform. Rationalisation during the last decade mainly refers to the adoption of new public management techniques and instruments which presuppose an increased role for experts. A number of theoretical frameworks and concepts such as epistemic communities (Haas 1992), the advocacy coalition framework (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993, 1999) and the policy transfer network (Evans and Davies 1999) have been developed and have focussed on the role of ideas and learning as central factors in policy change. This article compares the three frameworks and explores the role of expertise in the reform process in Greece by utilising the advocacy coalition framework which is here argued to be the most useful of the three. It is claimed that the role of experts in processes of policy reform has increased although evidence of policy-learning is limited. Nevertheless, the dominance of the political parties that has been a central characteristic of the Greek politico-administrative system since the end of the

Second World War (Mouzelis and Pagoulatos 2003) still persists and expresses itself through the participation of certain experts in policy-making.

The argument made in this article is sustained through the discussion of the role that experts played during the latest Constitutional Reform. The 2001 Constitutional Reform was an arena of political debates and of wide participation that aimed at the modernisation of the fundamental basis of the Greek political and administrative systems (see Eleftheriadis this issue; Venizelos, 2002). More specifically, the paper focuses on the findings of primary research that was conducted on the role of experts in the reform of article 24 on the environment, land and urban planning and of article 102 on the decentralisation of public administration and the strengthening of regional structures of governance. Both of these areas have been greatly affected by processes of Europeanisation (Jordan 2002; Committee of the Regions 2000) and as a result an increased willingness for learning and expert participation was anticipated. It will be shown that as expected experts participated in the discussions of both articles but the article on the environment caused a much greater public debate. In both cases the role of political parties was dominant.

The article is organised into three sections. The first section offers a discussion of processes of policy change and policy learning. Section two is an introduction to the role of experts in public policy reforms in Greece. Four types of research organisation are discussed that have emerged in the last twenty years in the Greek political scene. Section three provides a more in depth analysis of the role of experts in policy reform by analysing the processes of changing articles 24 and 102 during the last Constitutional Reform. The advocacy coalition framework is used in order to organise, compare and offer some insights to the case-studies.

KNOWLEDGE, POWER AND PUBLIC POLICY: COMPARING THREE FRAMEWORKS OF ANALYSIS

The discussion of the relationship between knowledge, power and public policy change is old and diverse. Gagnon (1990: 1-18), for example, distinguishes three different pathways within the literature. The first discusses the relationship between knowledge and power as part of a rationalistic paradigm where the state, seeking help, turns to 'scientists'. The second sees an indirect relationship between knowledge and power, where knowledge is diffused and influences power centres as part of a 'common wisdom'. The third understands knowledge and power as organically related and tries to explain the emergence of other power centres such as policy research institutes. In the case of Greece arguments could be used to demonstrate the validity of all three pathways. A rationalistic use of knowledge resources can be observed in the search for ideas that took place after a final decision was made to transfer the Ombudsman institution to Greece. A number of academics, bureaucrats, politicians and civil society organisations participated in a search for ideas and interacted with each other in order to determine what was thought to be the best model for Greece (Ladi 2005). Vassilopoulos (2003: 15) in his discussion of e-government and of the introduction of Information Technologies in Greek public administration provides a demonstration of the second pathway in the literature. He talks about a trend towards e-government among developed Western democracies and about a diffusion of electronic public service delivery models. The discussion of the role of knowledge during the latest constitutional reform offered in this

article sees knowledge and power as organically related. This is demonstrated by the strong links between experts, political parties and policy change.

A variety of approaches such as epistemic communities, advocacy coalitions and policy transfer networks have been developed in order to describe and to analyse networks where possessors of knowledge participate and influence policy learning and policy change. The article focuses on these three approaches and not on the most traditional approach of policy networks because of their special focus on experts and on policy learning. The concept of policy learning does not have a coherent meaning within the literature. It is often linked to the idea of policy change (Bennett and Howlett 1992; Parsons 1995). In order to understand policy change, it is not enough to study social pressures; the role of ideas should also be considered (see Hecló 1974). This is to the purpose of Sabatier's and Jenkins-Smith's (1993) concept of policy-oriented learning, within their advocacy coalition framework. This framework analyses changes in policy objective arising from new experiences or information. But just as policy learning can be seen as a factor in policy change, it can also provoke further policy learning. Rose (1991) argues that dissatisfaction due to changes in the policy environment or in political values leads policy-makers to attempt to find something new through lesson drawing. The 2001 constitutional reform demonstrates a more limited role for policy-learning. Although it took place within a discourse of a need for modernisation and Europeanisation and a general dissatisfaction with the current structures, instances of policy learning were limited. The debates that took place on articles 24 and 102 were more about political choices than about policy learning and 'best practice' because the constitutional reform was more about legitimising and enhancing existing policy practices than about introducing novelties.

What follows is a comparison of the three most relevant frameworks of analysis – epistemic communities, advocacy coalitions and policy transfer networks – in order to extract some useful tools for the exploration of the role of experts in policy reform in Greece. One of the most interesting approaches, the closest to the rationalistic paradigm is that of epistemic communities. Epistemic communities are:

Networks of specialists with a common world view about cause and effect relationships which relate to their domain of expertise, and common political values about the type of policies to which they should be applied (Haas 1989: 16).

What brings these specialists together is their belief that a particular form of knowledge can be applied to policy development. Policymakers turn to experts because of the uncertainty that they have to face. It is possible that policymakers will only use the knowledge that legitimises their decisions, but Haas also (1992: 16) argues that it is probable that epistemic communities will at some point influence policy makers by providing them with alternatives. The primary resource of epistemic communities is their possession of scientific knowledge. Think tanks are described by Haas (1992) as a 'key location' for epistemic communities. Adler and Haas (1992) claim that epistemic communities disperse advice from within their national borders through interaction with other specialists during conferences or via publications. When epistemic communities are transnational they are expected to produce convergence of policy preferences through the

diffusion of knowledge. Further, Adler and Haas argue that if policy diffusion is translated into learning it can mean either the adoption of new practices or new goals.

The problem with the notion of epistemic communities is that it concentrates on knowledge elites who possess scientific expertise, while it is possible to have other kinds of agents, for example groups without any expert knowledge representing oppressed people, interacting within the same framework. Furthermore, when notions such as epistemic communities are used as explanatory models, one should be aware of counterfactuals that are not related to knowledge, but are still important reasons for convergence, for example the structural power of financial sector markets. Finally, the epistemic communities framework does not provide us with an explanation of situations where policy divergence occurs instead of policy convergence.

Another framework central to this discussion is the advocacy coalition framework (ACF). It has been developed as an alternative to the policy cycle approach and to the policy networks model, although its analysis is similar to the latter (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993). Its main contribution is that it tries to explain policy change, not purely as a product of social pressures, but as a process whereby the ideas and beliefs of different agents, active at multiple levels, play a central role (Hann 1995). An advocacy coalition is defined as:

People from a variety of positions (elected and agency officials, interest groups leaders, researchers) who share a particular belief system - i.e. a set of basic values, causal assumptions and problem perceptions- and who show a non trivial degree of coordinated activity over time (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993).

There are two main differences between the ACF and the epistemic communities approach. The first is that members of a coalition are not only people who possess scientific knowledge, but also people from diverse social positions and backgrounds. Consequently, advocacy coalitions are more value-based and epistemic communities are more knowledge-based (Dudley and Richardson 1996: 69). This difference is less important if we consider knowledge to be subjective and often value-driven, but in this case it is still significant as it determines the nature of the 'glue' that bonds the members of the coalition or epistemic community. In the ACF common belief systems bind members of a coalition together. Actors take part in the policy process in order to translate their belief systems into policies. Through that process conflicting strategies proposed by different coalitions appear and they are mediated by another group of actors, the 'policy brokers' (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993). Although the members of an advocacy coalition and the members of an epistemic community are part of the same interest structure and have a common belief about the way policy change should occur, there is a hierarchy of power which is determined by the relevance of their resources to government. For the members of an epistemic community the common resource is knowledge, whereas in an advocacy coalition the resources members possess are diverse but interlinked, depending on the background of the members involved.

In the ACF, one of the main causes of policy change is policy-oriented learning. The members of a coalition try to understand the world better through policy-oriented learning, but at the same time they tend to resist deliberating on information that suggests that their deep or policy core beliefs are invalid. Therefore, policy oriented learning is

normally expected to be able to change the secondary aspects but not the core beliefs of a coalition. However, such alteration can happen due to important changes in environmental conditions (e.g. outbreak of a war). At the same time, ‘across-coalition learning’ can occur as part of the policy-oriented learning process (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993). A criticism of the approach is that as yet there have not been any attempts to study and explain cases where learning does not occur. Additionally, the model sometimes becomes so detailed, that it seems to try to describe the process of policy change, rather than explain it.

The third relevant concept is that of the policy transfer network (PTN).

Policy transfer networks are ad hoc, action oriented phenomena set up with the specific intention of engineering policy change (Evans and Davies 1999).

This concept was developed to make better sense of the process of policy transfer and the role of agents of transfer. In order to do this, Evans and Davies linked the policy network approach, especially Marsh and Rhodes’s (1992) idea of a policy community, to the notion of epistemic communities, and to the policy transfer phenomenon. The main difference between a policy transfer network and a policy community is that the first is an ad hoc, action oriented phenomenon while the latter is a relatively durable decision structure that occupies a permanent position within a particular policy arena. The membership of a policy transfer network is closer to that of an advocacy coalition as the members of a network are diverse, and do not purely possess scientific knowledge, as in the case of epistemic communities. The difference with the advocacy coalition framework is that the policy transfer network model returns to the tradition of the policy cycle and offers a heuristic device through an illustrative sequence of stages for a policy transfer process.

Table 1 summarises the three different frameworks that place ideas and their transfer at the centre of their analysis of policy change.

TABLE 1
COMPARISON OF EPISTEMIC COMMUNITY, ADVOCACY COALITION AND
POLICY TRANSFER NETWORK FRAMEWORKS

	<i>Epistemic Communities</i>	<i>Advocacy Coalition</i>	<i>Policy Transfer Network</i>
<i>Membership</i>	Specialists	Variable	Variable
<i>Cohesive factor</i>	Common world view (emphasis on knowledge)	Common belief system (emphasis on values)	A common interest in policy change
<i>Permanency</i>	Permanent or Ad hoc	Permanent	Ad hoc
<i>Resource</i>	Scientific Knowledge	Knowledge from a broad range of perspectives	Broad expertise
<i>Raison d’</i>	Policy change	Policy change	Policy change

<i>être</i>			
<i>Mechanism</i>	Policy diffusion	Policy-oriented learning	Policy transfer

An assumption that weakens all three models is that their members will act in order to push for policy change. Only, the PTN model acknowledges that the network will not exist unless the actors are pushing for change. Although the frameworks take into account the environment and the importance of structural pressures they mainly analyse instances where networks of actors actually come together aiming at policy change. Inaction and institutional inertia are just as likely, if not more so, than action and policy change. An additional weakness of the three frameworks, but less so of the PTN model because of its emphasis on the resources of the agents, is that they overrate the importance of values and knowledge and as a result they neglect the centrality of political, economic and social interests. In the next section the role of experts in reform processes in Greece is discussed. The political, economic and social interests of the actors involved are taken into account in order to re-examine some of the theoretical propositions presented in this section.

THE ROLE OF EXPERTS IN THE REFORM PROCESS IN GREECE

The focus of this article is on the role of experts in Greece within the networks responsible for policy reform. The term ‘expert’ is used broadly to include research institutes, think-tanks, universities, academics and scientists working in ministries or other public organisations. An overlap of people in different institutions is very common. It is argued that a relatively small elite of experts appears frequently in the policy process in different organisations. A clear political affiliation with a particular political party is also common among these experts. However, this is no surprise given the dominant role of political parties over civil society in Greece (Mouzelis and Pagoulatos 2003).

If we turn back to the three models describing the relationship between policy change and knowledge, the advocacy coalition framework seems to best describe the situation in Greece because of the importance of common belief systems between the members of the coalition, in this case between experts and political parties. Another important aspect of the advocacy coalition framework is that it is permanent. This is a characteristic of the policy process in Greece where alliances are often long standing and not ad hoc interactions aiming at a particular policy transfer. There are two main problems with the advocacy coalition framework: first, it does not predict instances of inaction or of institutional inertia and second, it does not give enough attention to the interests of individual members of the coalition, which could be a significant explanatory factor in the creation of alliances in the Greek political system and elsewhere.

An attempt to map experts outside universities shows that the development of independent research institutes and think-tanks has been limited following the general pattern of a weak civil society and the lack of an associational culture in Greece. By this, it is meant that most of the intellectual activity takes place close to the political parties or in relation to the party competition more generally. Four types of organisations can be observed.

Government-funded Research Institutes

The first type of research institutes that emerged in Greece was funded by the government. Back in the 1960's the Centre of Planning and Economic Research (KEPE, Κέντρο Προγραμματισμού και Οικονομικών Μελετών) was established in order to provide high level economic research and scientific advice to the government (Pagoulatos 2003: 59-60). In the 1980s the government began recognising the increased need for some research input to its work and organisations such as the Foundation for Mediterranean Studies (IMM, Ίδρυμα Μεσογειακών Μελετών) and the Hellenic Centre for European Studies (EKEM, Ελληνικό Κέντρο Ευρωπαϊκών Μελετών) emerged. These organisations are non-profit making. They aim at enhancing research opportunities and they function under the supervision of Ministries. For example, EKEM was founded in 1988. It functions under the supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its main objective is 'the study of issues that are at the heart of developments in the European Union and Europe in general and, consequently affect Greek politics' (EKEM, Information Leaflet). Its research and administrative committee includes academics and diplomats. These research institutes are not policy-oriented per se and their contribution remains academic.

Policy Research Institutes

Within the same decade a small number of non-profit organisations seeking to advise and influence the government has appeared. Organisations such as the Hellenic Foundation for European and International Affairs (ELIAMEP, Ελληνικό Ίδρυμα Ευρωπαϊκής και Εξωτερικής Πολιτικής) which was created in 1988 and the Maragoroulou Institute for Human Rights (IMDA, Ίδρυμα Μαραγκοπούλου για τα Δικαιώματα του Ανθρώπου) which came into existence in 1978 can be classified as such. An emphasis had been placed on foreign affairs related issues with organisations working on areas such as minorities, the relationship with the Balkans and international economic affairs (Day 2000: 121-122). What has been particularly interesting is that most of these institutes are closely linked to universities and attract governmental as well as private funding. As in Italy, their staff is mainly academics also paid by universities and their institutional affiliation is essential for the reputation of the research institutes (Radaelli and Martini 1998: 59-81).

Research Institutes affiliated to Political Actors

In the 1990s socio-political actors such as political parties and the General Confederation of Greek Labour (GSEE, Γενική Συνομοσπονδία Εργατών Ελλάδος) organised in-house research capacity, based on the German model (Thunert 1998). For example, ISTANCE (Ινστιτούτο Στρατηγικών και Αναπτυξιακών Μελετών) is a research institute that was set by PASOK (Pan Hellenic Socialist Movement - Πανελλήνιο Σοσιαλιστικό Κίνημα) in 1995 aiming at providing a forum for political discussion and research in order to inform political practice. New Democracy (Νέα Δημοκρατία, ND) in 1998 established the 'Constantinos Karamanlis Institute for Democracy' (Ινστιτούτο Δημοκρατίας Κωνσταντίνος Καραμανλής) to research a range of social, political and economic issues. In 1990, GSEE created the Labour Institute (Ινστιτούτο Εργασίας) to undertake research and training on labour issues. Again, a high percentage of academics and political activists can be found in these organisations.

Non-Governmental Organisation with a Research Focus

The latest development has been the emergence of a variety of organisations such as the Organisation for the Modernisation of Society (OPEK, Όμιλος Προβληματισμού για τον Εκσυγχρονισμό της Κοινωνίας) and Citizens' Union Paremvassi (Ένωση Πολιτών Παρέμβαση) in the 1990s. Ideologically they belong to the centre-left and they aim at assisting the government to modernise the country (Lakopoulos 16.7.00: 10-11). Even if they do not conduct research themselves, they have an important role in disseminating research findings and in stimulating the debate. They bring together networks of policy-makers, academics and policy activists.

The awareness by political actors of the importance of research as an initiator of policy reform or as a justification for unpopular political decisions has risen in the last twenty years. The role of experts has increased and new research organisations have been created. Nonetheless, the concentration of most of the new roles in an academic and/or political elite raises an interesting question about whether the Greek political and administrative system has been fundamentally 'modernised' or 'Europeanised' in the last decade. The next section looks at this issue in more depth by examining the role of experts during the 2001 Constitutional Reform and particularly the reform of articles 24 and 102.

THE ROLE OF EXPERTS DURING THE 2001 CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

The process of Constitutional Reform started in 1993 and was concluded in 2001. Researching the role of experts during Constitutional Reform is interesting for two reasons. First, it allows us to investigate the relationship between experts and political parties in one of the most fundamental political events of the last decade and second, it offers a broad spectrum of investigation because it includes the codification of policy reforms that have been taking place for a long period. For example, the 2001 Constitutional Reform reaffirms the importance of the Ombudsman institution introduced to the Greek political system in 1997. This article looks at the role of experts in the reform of article 24 on the environment and of article 102 on regional decentralisation of governance. Both of these areas have been greatly influenced by the priorities of the EU and illustrate both an increased willingness to change and increased expert participation in policy (Jordan 2002; Committee of the Regions 2000). Indeed instances of advocacy coalition and expert participation have both increased in comparison with previous Constitutional Reforms (Papadimitriou 2000). More specifically, it is argued that the article on the environment, land and urban planning caused a much greater public debate than the article on decentralisation. In both cases an increased role of experts can be observed, often with strong links to political parties.

The proposals for Constitutional Reform were submitted at the Parliament in 1995 but the Parliament was dissolved before agreeing on reform. The next Parliament in 1996 decided to reform an extensive list of articles. The 2000 Parliament designed, discussed and voted upon the Constitutional Reform. The long lasting discussion of the Constitutional Reform allowed for the participation of a variety of actors such as political parties, experts, the judiciary, local government authorities, trade unions and civil society organisations (Venizelos 2002). The Constitutional Reform was characterised by diverse terms such as 'unnecessary', 'confirmatory', 'dangerous' and 'consensual' (Alivizatos 2001). This range of opinions on how to characterise the constitutional reform was

largely due to alignments or not with PASOK which was the majority party in the reform Parliament. In advocacy coalition language, it depended on which coalition the actors belonged to. The link between political parties, experts and policy reform is striking in the case of the constitution and especially if we take into consideration that Evangelos Venizelos, of PASOK and Prokopis Pavlopoulos from ND are two renowned professors of constitutional and administrative law respectively in Greece.

The Reform of Article 24 on the Environment, Land and Urban Planning

Clauses similar to Article 24 of the 1975 Greek Constitution can also be found in Portugal and Spain after 1974 (Zisi 2002: 21-25) – of course, the three countries have in common the end of dictatorship at that time. The discussion about reform was most heated during the period 2000-2001 (Papadimitriou 2002a: 27-29 and interview with ND MP, 15.9.2003). In this section, the changes that were made in article 24 are first discussed and a link is made to the more general discussion on modernisation and Europeanisation. Second, the emergence of an advocacy coalition against the reform of article 24 and the role of experts within it is then analysed. An initial assessment of the advocacy coalition framework is put forward.

Five main changes took place in article 24 during the 2001 reform. First, the protection of the natural and cultural environment is no longer just a responsibility of the state but is also a citizens' right. Second, the principle of sustainable development is now included in the article. Third, the state has the new responsibility to draw a forest map. Fourth, any change in land and urban planning is a responsibility of the state and aims at the functioning, development and improvement of living conditions. Additionally, planning should be informed by scientific research. Fifth, in an explanatory statement a controversial definition of 'forest' and of 'forestal ecological system' is given. All these changes came into existence after lengthy debate. The advocates of change who were mainly MPs of the ruling party and government officials argued that the amended article would be a step towards modernisation and would follow European and global developments. For example, the inclusion of the value of 'sustainable development' in the amended article 24 was linked to the Rio de Janeiro conference in 1992 which brought the concept to prominence (Interview with a scientific consultant of Venizelos, 17.9.03).

At the other end of the spectrum, it is claimed that a strong advocacy coalition emerged against the proposed amendment and in favour of a greener version of article 24. It included environmental organisations, the majority of the media, left parties, experts and judges from the State Council (Interview with scientific consultant 17.9.2003). Their core belief was the necessity to prioritise the environment over economic interests. The main goal was to leave article 24 intact. They proposed an amendment to enhance the protection of the environment which would have placed a duty on the state to take action in order to stop environmental destruction. Another suggestion was to include a clause on intergenerational responsibility (Greek Association for the Protection of the Environment and of the Cultural Heritage, 12.9.2003). It can be argued that the advocacy coalition existed for a long period because the first discussions about the necessity of a constitutional reform started in 1993 (Alivizatos 2001:14) but the co-operation between its members was intensified the last year before the reform (Interview with scientific consultant 17.9.2003).

Policy-oriented learning is central in the advocacy coalition framework and experts can play an important role. The debate about the reform of article 24 involved an increased role for experts but limited policy-oriented learning. For example, the non-governmental organisation *Law and Nature* (Νόμος και Φύση) actively participated in the debate before and after the reform of article 24 with publications and by organising a conference (Papadimitriou 2002a). Its role was mainly to advocate for a greener article 24 rather than to engage in policy-oriented learning. Two senior researchers from *Law and Nature* argued that civil society activity with respect to the environment has grown stronger in the last decade. As a result the debate about article 24 was vibrant with articles in the newspapers and an Internet campaign led by World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)-Greece (Group Interview with Senior Researchers at *Law and Nature*, 3.9.2003). Additionally, there were many interventions by the judges of the State Council who were much in favour of increased protection for the environment and sustainable development. They could even be described as environmental activists (Deligiannis 2000). Of the four types of research institute described in the previous section only the non-governmental organisation with a research focus participated in the discussion on article 24. It is interesting to look in more depth at the membership of these organisations. An overlap between academics, party members and environmental activists can often be observed. An example of such an organisation in the case of the environment is *Law and Nature*.

The final version of article 24 can be described as a compromise between the government and the advocacy coalition (Interview with scientific consultant 17.9.03). The eventual inclusion of the goal of sustainable development and the recognition of a civil right to environmental protection have been described as a positive contribution to a greener constitution and they fall in line with European and global developments (Papadimitriou 2002b: 160). On the other hand the inclusion of a definition of a ‘forest’ was not welcomed because it could set limits to the areas that are protected by article 24. Table 2 summarises the characteristics of the advocacy coalition that was created in support of an environmental version of article 24. It is interesting to note that the *raison d’être* of the coalition was not necessarily policy change. The argument was often in favour of keeping the status quo rather than reforming article 24 (Kouvelis 2001). Finally, the role of experts within the coalition was important but a closer look at the membership of the various organisations that participated shows that there was an overlap of persons between political parties and influential non governmental organisations. Experts with tight links to political parties had the opportunity to participate in the debate more successfully. At the same time the technical nature of the environmental problem also allowed for some policy-oriented learning to take place and for the participation of more independent experts (Deligiannis 2000). In the next section, the reform of article 102 is discussed, an example of an arena less open to public debate.

TABLE 2
ADVOCACY COALITION FOR THE ENVIRONMENT (ARTICLE 24)

	<i>Advocacy Coalition for the Environment (Article 24)</i>
<i>Membership</i>	Environmental organisations, MPs, media, left parties, experts and judges from the State Council
<i>Cohesive factor</i>	Environmental protection and sustainable development

<i>Permanency</i>	1993-2001 (more intense action 2000-2001)
<i>Resource</i>	Knowledge from constitutional lawyers, environmental scientists, judges etc
<i>Raison d' être</i>	Protection of constitutional status quo or greener reform
<i>Mechanism</i>	Limited policy-oriented learning

The Reform of Article 102 on Local Authorities

In contrast to the reform of article 24, the reform of article 102 on local authorities has been characterised as consensual and to a large extent affirmative of existing legislation and policy practices (Venizelos 2002; Bakogiannis 2002). The stakeholders that participated in the discussion were fewer than in the case of the environment and the changes suggested were moderate and did not cause major conflicts. In this section, the reforms that were made in article 102 are briefly discussed. Then the advocacy coalition that was formed in relation to article 102 is analysed together with a discussion of the increased role of experts within it.

Hlepas (2002: 69-81) discusses the key innovations in the amended article 102. It can be claimed that the main goal was the strengthening of regional governance. Six main changes can be observed. First, central government control over regional government is reduced. The aims of regional government actions' are no longer under the control of central government. It is only the legality of regional government's actions that can be checked. Second, the participation of local professional, scientific and cultural as well as central government representatives in the administration of regional government is no longer permitted. This amendment reinforces the political character of local authorities and the importance of elected representatives. Third, as far as it concerns the organisation of regional government, it is now clear that only two degrees of regional governance should exist. It was decided that a third degree would not be economically and administratively viable for a small country like Greece. It is not clear whether the two degrees would be local councils and prefectures or local councils and regions. Fourth, local authority associations can undertake all types of responsibilities. Central government can also allocate some of its responsibilities to them. Fifth, local authorities have the primary responsibility over 'local affairs', although what is defined as a 'local affair' and which degree of local authority is responsible for what has to be decided by law. Last but not least, the economic independence of local authorities as well as their unprecedented ability to impose local taxes is confirmed. Two proposals were rejected because they were described as being distant from the Greek reality: the inclusion of the principle of subsidiarity and the addition of a clause in favour of local referenda (Venizelos 2002; Hlepas 2002). Judges from the State Council were central in the rejection of the above ideas.

The advocacy coalition pushing for reforms in favour of decentralisation was smaller than in the case of article 24 but its claims were closer to the governments' proposals (Interview with scientific consultant, 17.9.03). The members of the coalition were MPs, elected representatives of local authorities that participated through the Central Union of Municipalities and Communities of Greece (Κεντρική Ένωση Δήμων και Κοινοτήτων, KEDKE), representatives of the prefectures that also participated through their Union of Prefectorial Authorities of Greece (ENAE) and experts acting as

consultants to all of the above. The deep core belief and ‘glue’ between the members of the advocacy coalition was the importance of decentralisation and of strong local authorities. ENAE’s role was less significant because of the ambivalent position of prefectures in the Greek political and administrative system (Interview with Legal Adviser of ENAE 16.9.2003). The advocacy coalition for article 102 existed since 1993 when the discussion about the constitutional reform started but it can be argued that the coalition is even older because the issue of decentralisation is an old problem in Greece. Another difference in the advocacy coalition for article 102 was that its discussions did not reach the general public. Very few public debates took place and they mainly involved discussions between experts (Halazonitis 2002). One important similarity, however, was that the role of experts was central in the process and more important than in the previous Constitutional Reform. Both KEDKE and ENAE asked for assistance from experts in order to effectively advocate their interests. The marginalisation and eventual rejection of proposals such as the inclusion of the principle of subsidiarity was to a large extent due to the influence of experts (Interview with scientific adviser of KEDKE 9.1.2004). Policy-oriented learning was limited because the nature of the question is political and not technical and focuses on the distribution of power between central and regional government. There was no need for a search for ‘best practice’ at this stage of the policy process. None of the four types of research institutes described in this article participated in the process. The experts that participated in the coalition mainly came from universities and connections to political parties were often the criterion and the motivation for their participation. This does not mean that more independent advisors were excluded. Indeed, they participated in the process but they had to adjust to a highly political environment (Interview with scientific adviser of KEDKE 9.1.2004).

Table 3 summarises the advocacy coalition that acted in favour of decentralisation and strong local authorities. Its membership was narrower than in the case of article 24 but it aimed at particular policy changes. The role of experts within the coalition was significant and the majority of their claims were included in the final version of article 102. It can be argued that part of the success of the advocacy coalition was its proximity to the governing party. Policy-oriented learning was even more limited than in the case of article 24. In the next section some more conclusions are offered in relation to the role of experts in policy reform.

TABLE 3
ADVOCACY COALITION FOR DECENTRALISATION (ARTICLE 102)

	<i>Advocacy Coalition for Decentralisation (Article 102)</i>
<i>Membership</i>	KEDKE, ENAE, MPs and experts
<i>Cohesive factor</i>	Decentralisation and strong local authorities
<i>Permanency</i>	1993-2001
<i>Resource</i>	Knowledge and practical information from local representatives, from experts and from the EU
<i>Raison d' être</i>	Policy change
<i>Mechanism</i>	Limited policy-oriented learning

IN CONCLUSION

The study of the role of experts in policy reform in Greece is interesting for both theoretical and empirical reasons. Policy reform in Greece is an area of enquiry that has not been examined in great depth and frameworks such as the advocacy coalition have not been often used in relation to this kind of empirical material. This article offers an initial step in this direction, generating some significant theoretical and empirical conclusions and pointing to a new research agenda, for comparative analysis.

At a theoretical level, the advocacy coalition framework proves to be particularly useful for the organisation, comparison and analysis of case-study material. Its long term perspective on the emergence and existence of coalitions as well as its emphasis on belief systems are two of its most significant variables that prove relevant in this discussion. However, its focus on belief systems is both one of its strengths and one of its weaknesses. It is argued that in order to understand what keeps the members of a coalition together, their political, economic and social interests should be studied. These interests could indeed prove to be the basis of common belief systems that is thought to be the 'glue' of a coalition. A second weakness of the framework is that it assumes that the members of a coalition will actively seek policy reform. Inaction and policy inertia are both goals that have to be taken into account and could add explanatory validity to the framework. Thus, coalitions to ensure continuity may be just as important as those seeking to prosecute change. Finally, policy-oriented learning, an important avenue for the participation of experts in policy reform, is not necessarily central to the process of change. Experts participate in the reform process as advisors or as carriers of new policies even if policy-learning does not take place. An interesting question is when and why policy-learning does not occur and whether we can link it to historical experiences or different choices in policy style.

The most significant empirical conclusion is that the role of experts in the reform process in Greece has increased in the last decade. An awareness of the need to back up policy proposals and reforms with research evidence is predominant among the policy community and political elites. The emergence of new types of government-funded research institutes or research institutes affiliated to political parties and trade unions is a response to this new awareness. Nevertheless, an organic relationship between political parties, experts and policy reform is evident in the discussion of the 2001 constitutional reform. Independent experts participate in the process but it is more common to come across experts with multiple roles in different organisations and with close links to political parties. The advocacy coalition framework offers the tools for mapping and comparing the role of experts in different occasions such as the reform of articles 24 and 102.

The discussion of the reform of articles 24 and 102 also shows that policy-oriented learning is limited in both cases although experts seem to play a significant advisory or advocacy role within the corresponding reforms. An explanation for that is that constitutional reform is a process that by large reaffirms policy practices already in place. It is possible that policy-learning did take place earlier in the process but this is a question for further empirical research. For example that was the case with the introduction of the Ombudsman institution where policy learning did take place at an earlier stage and not during the 2001 Constitutional Reform (Ladi 2005).

Finally, if the reforms of article 24 and article 102 are compared a few more interesting points can be made. The advocacy coalition for the environment was broader and the debate was more public than in the case of local governance. Policy reform was the aim of the advocacy coalition for local governance, while the advocacy coalition on the environment fought in favour of inertia for a long time. In both cases, the rapprochement of the coalitions with political parties and especially with the ruling party was significant for the successful conclusion of their efforts. It can be concluded that although processes of policy reform have been modernised in the last decade, the policy arena is still a political arena and no strong claim can be made for a rationalisation of the policy process where ‘independent’ experts significantly influence the policy agenda. But, how far such a rationalisation could be seen as a good thing, without raising serious issues for democracy remains to be seen?

NOTES

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