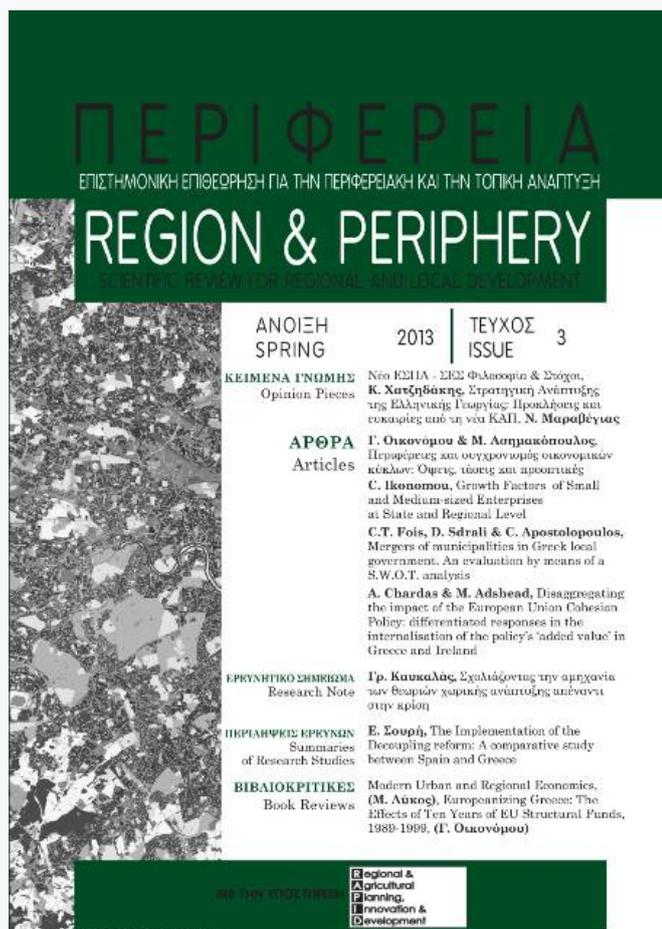


Perifereia | Regional Integration: Politics, Economics, Governance

Τόμ. 3, Αρ. 3 (2013)

Περιφέρεια | Region & Periphery



The Implementation of the Decoupling reform: A comparative study between Spain and Greece

Ευαγγελία Σουρή

doi: [10.12681/rp.18903](https://doi.org/10.12681/rp.18903)

Copyright © 2018, Ευαγγελία Σουρή



Άδεια χρήσης [Creative Commons Αναφορά-Μη Εμπορική Χρήση 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

Βιβλιογραφική αναφορά:

Σουρή Ε. (2013). The Implementation of the Decoupling reform: A comparative study between Spain and Greece. *Perifereia | Regional Integration: Politics, Economics, Governance*, 3(3), 135–140. <https://doi.org/10.12681/rp.18903>

The Implementation of the Decoupling reform: A comparative study between Spain and Greece

**Η εφαρμογή του μέτρου της Αποσύνδεσης στα αγροτικά
προϊόντα: Συγκριτική Μελέτη μεταξύ Ελλάδας και Ισπανίας**

Σουρή Ευαγγελία, Οικονομολόγος MSc

The implementation of the decoupling reform of the Common Agricultural Policy was known to be leading to a considerable reduction of agricultural production in Europe. In an attempt to tone down this effect, European Union gave some degree of flexibility to the Member States to ‘partially implement’ the reform in each sector for a specific period of time. In this essay we attempt to explain why two countries that specialize in almost the same agricultural products reacted in a systematically different way with respect to the implementation of the decoupling reform, having no economic rationale to do so. We employ the theory of collective action as well as the Policy Network approach in order to investigate the behaviour and the role of agricultural interest groups as well as the relationship between the national public and private agents with respect to the final outcome.

The theory of collective action helps us understand whether the various stakeholder groups became organised in order to further their special interests with respect to decoupling reform. We concluded that in Greece collective action did come about in the form of growers’ supporting the implementation of full decoupling, whereas in Spain the fragmentation, both literal and metaphorical, of the farmers’ unions panorama (and also the relative absence of selective incentives) did not allow growers to become engaged in collective action. Considering that a comprehensive explanation should take into consideration the level of influence that each collectively-acting unit had with respect to the policy-making procedure, along with the above theoretical framework, we use the concept of policy networks, which probably played the most crucial role in finding the solution to the puzzle.

Our findings showed that the Greek agricultural network is a relatively closed one, as its boundaries are difficult for outsiders to challenge. Moreover, one could not fail to observe that the pattern of linkages between the non-governmental members of the network is not formally ordered hierarchically, with PASEGES having a de facto leading role regarding farmers’ organizations. Probably the most interesting characteristic of the Greek agricultural network

is the fact that even if not affiliated to any specific political party, PASEGES is highly politicized as indicated by the fact that numerous of its former leaders developed political careers. This reveals the existence of the clientele relations which characterize the majority of Greek policy networks. We therefore conclude that the Greek decision for full decoupling implementation was mainly a result of a clientelistic type of agricultural policy network that this country maintains.

On the contrary, in Spain the transition from a compulsory corporatist system under authoritarianism to a new representative system in a democratic context rendered the development of farmer unions in the country a difficult task. Nevertheless, in the past ten years Spanish agriculture has consolidated a well-structured union panorama around three farmers' unions. However, there is a high degree of heterogeneity among these three unions both with respect to their social base and to their ideological discourse, which can also well explain the 'failure' of collective action to come about on behalf of the Spanish growers. The influence of farmers' unions on agricultural policies in Spain is very limited and their relations with public agents quite problematic. The country maintains a looser network, whose participation in the policy-making procedure is still limited. If identifying, 'sponsored pluralism' as a type of policy network in which the state supports more than a few interest associations in its attempt to maintain its autonomy against pluralistic interests, we could argue that the situation in the Spanish Agricultural network, as this is revealed throughout our analysis, resembles this type. Our study showed that unlike Greece, in Spain the combination of a 'sponsored pluralism' policy network and the lack of a strong selective incentive on the part of the growers, allowed the central government to adopt the solution they thought would best serve the "general interest", without facing significant reaction from the various interest groups.

Bibliography

- Agroktima*, Newspaper published in Athens 06.10.04, article 'Tobacco decoupling, positions of PASEGES, KAPNIKI, HATPI'.
- Albanese F & Capo E. (1992), L'empreinte des clivages politiques. In B. Hervieu and R.M. Lagrave eds. *Les syndicats agricoles en Europe*. Paris L' Harmattan.
- Arriaza M, Gómez-Limón J, Gonzalez J, Ruiz P. (2006), 'Viability of Raw Cotton Production in Spain after the Decoupling of the Subsidies.' Paper Prepared for Presentation at the International Association of Agricultural Economists Conference, Gold Coast, Australia, August 12-18, 2006.
- Arriaza M. (2007), *Minutes of the Cotton Stakeholders' seminar in Spain* (Deliverable6), ISSCRI, Project Acronym: ISSCRI2, Contract No: 044085

- available at http://www.isscri.org/index.php/ssp_isscri2/news_comments/news/seminar_in_spain (accessed 17.08.12).
- Blom-Hansen J. (1997), 'A new-institutional perspective on policy networks', *Public Administration*, Vol.75, pp.669-693.
- Carlsson L. (2000), 'Policy Networks as Collective Action', *Policy Studies Journal*, Vol. 28, pp. 502-520.
- Case C-310/04, Kingdom of Spain v. The European Council. 2004. ECR I-07285. CCAE, Press Release, 22.04.04, at http://www.agro-alimentarias.coop/4/4_3_1.php?id=MTk= (accessed 12/08/12)
- COAG, Press Release, 17.12.04, available at <http://www.coag.org/> (accessed 12.08.12)
- COGEA (Consulenti per la Gestione Aziendale). 2003. *Evaluation de l'Organisation Commune de Marché dans le secteur du tabac brut*, available at http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/eval/reports/tobacco/full_fr.pdf (accessed 25.07.12).
- Collins N. & Louloudis L. (1995), 'Protecting the Protected: The Greek Agricultural Policy Network', *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 2, pp. 95-114.
- Council of the European Union (2004), 2575th Council Meeting – Agriculture and Fisheries - Luxembourg, 21-22 April 2004, 8401/04, (Presse, 112).
- Council of the European Union (2003), 2516th Council Meeting –Agriculture and Fisheries - Luxembourg, 11-12-17-18-19-25-26 June 2003, 10272/03 (Presse, 164). 34
- Council of the European Union (2008), '2881th Council Meeting – Agriculture and Fisheries- Luxembourg 23-24 June 2008', 10590/08 (Presse 169).
- Daughbjerg C. & Swinbank A., (2007), 'The Politics of CAP reform: Trade Negotiations, institutional Settings and Blame Avoidance' *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 45:1-22.
- Eising Rainer (2008), 'Interest Groups in EU Policy-making', *Living Reviews in European Governance*, lreg-2008:4, available at <http://europeangovernance.livingreviews.org/Articles/lreg-2008-4> (accessed 25.07.12)
- Enimeromenos Agrotis*, Newspaper published in Athens 21.05.04, article 'Yes, to the 'sit back' agriculture'.
- Enterna F. and Moyano-Estada E. (1998), 'Reactions of Spanish Farm Cooperatives to Globalization: Ideal Discourse Types', *Journal of Rural Cooperation*, 26:21-35.
- Enterna F, Moyano-Estrada E, Serrano Del Rosal R. (2001), 'Federations of Co-operatives and Organized Interests in Agriculture: An Analysis of the Spanish Experience', *Sociologia Ruralis*, 41 (2):237-250.
- European Commission- DGAGRI/C.3 Table: Tobacco Production Statistics, 2000-2010, available at http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/markets/tobacco/index_en.htm,(accessed: 15.08.12.)

- European Commission (2002), Report to the European Parliament and the Council on the operation of the market in raw tobacco, Staff Working Paper, (SEC (2002) 1183).
- European Commission (2003), Tobacco Regime, Extended Impact Analysis, Staff Working Paper, (SEC (2003)1023).
- European Commission (2003), CAP reform – Tobacco, Olive Oil, Cotton and Sugar Sectors, Communication (COM(2003)554)
- European Commission (2007), Cotton Impact Assessment, Staff Working Paper, (SEC (2007)1481).
- European Commission (2007), Support Scheme for Cotton, Communication, (COM (2007) 701).
- European Commission (2007), Preparing for the Health Check of the CAP Reform, Communication, (COM (2007)722).
- European Commission (2008), The Agricultural Situation in the EU- The 2006 Report- Overview of the implementation of Direct Payments under CAP in Member-states, Staff Working Paper, (SEC (2008) 2382).
- Gorton M., Douarin E., Davidova S. & Latruffe L. (2008), 'Attitudes to agricultural policy and farming futures in the context of the 2003 CAP reform: A comparison of farmers in selected established and new Member States', *Journal of Rural Studies*, 24:322-336.
- Greek Ministry of Agriculture, Press Release, 29.06.05.
- Kenis P & Schneider V. (1991), 'Policy Networks and Policy Analysis: Scrutinizing a New Analytical Toolbox', Ed. B Marin, R Mayntz, in *Policy Networks Empirical Evidence and Theoretical Considerations*, pp. 25-59. Frankfurt, Campus.
- LMC International (2007), *Study on the cotton sector in the European Union*, Final Report Prepared for European Commission, July 2007.
- Louloudis L. & Maraveyas N. (1997), 'Farmers and Agricultural Policy in Greece since the Accession to the European Union', *Sociologia Ruralis*, 37: 270-286.
- Mattas K., Tzouvelekas V., Loizou S. and Polymeros K. (1998), 'The dynamics of crop sectors in regional development: The case of tobacco'. Paper presented at the International Atlantic Economic Society Conference in Rome 16-20 March 1998.
- Mizruchi S. M. (1994), 'Social Network Analysis: Recent Achievements and Current Controversies', *Acta Sociologica*, 37:329-343.
- Minutes of the Hellenic Parliament, 02.07.2004 & 18.02.2005, available at <http://www.hellenicparliament.gr> (accessed 15.08.12).
- Molina O. & Rhodes M. (2007), *The Political Economy of Adjustment in Mixed Market Economies: A Study of Spain and Italy*. Oxford University Press.
- Moyano-Estrada E. (2003), 'The Farm Interest Group System in Spain', Institute of Advanced Social Studies of Andalucía (IESA 02-03), Working Paper.

- Moyano-Estrada E. (1995), 'Farmers' Unions and the Restructuring of the European Agriculture', *Sociological Ruralis*, 35:348-365.
- Naftemporiki*, Newspaper published in Athens 04.12.03, article: 'Tobacco Growers change tactics.'
- Olson M. (1965), *The Logic of Collective Action*. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press.
- Patronis V. (2002), 'Between State and Market Forces: Greek Agricultural Cooperative Organizations in Transition Period', Paper presented in XIIV Economic History Congress, Buenos Aires, 22-26 July.
- Peterson John. (2003), 'Policy Networks', *IHS Political Science Series*, No 90. [Working Paper].
- Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Press Release, 20.10.04.
- Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Press Release, 21.12.2004.
- Tzouramani E, Karanikolas P, Alexopoulos G, Sintori A, & Lontakis A. (2008), 'Mondelling economic Alternatives of Tobacco Producers: The Case of Sheep Farming', Paper presented at the 107th EAAE Seminar, January 30- February 1. Seville. Spain.
- Van Waarden F. (1992), 'Dimensions and Types of Policy Networks', *European Journal of Political Research*, 21:29-52.

Archive of the Hellenic Association of Tobacco Processing Industries (HATPI archive) located in the Association's Head Office, in Thessaloniki, Greece.

- Registration Number: 15a/2005: Press Release – Open letter to the Prime Minister by OPAK Visaltis, 30.01.05.
- Reg. N.: 40a/2005 Memorandum to the Vice-minister of Agriculture by OPAK Visaltis, Kavallas-Paggaiou-Dramas, Tobacco Coop of Voio and Kastoria, 23.02.05.
- Reg. No.: 20/2005: Letter to the Ministry of Rural Development & Food, 02.02.05.
- Reg. No.: 53/2003 HATPI Communication, 26.03.03 and Notes on the meeting of UNITAB and FETRATAB with the Greek Minister of Agriculture, 21.03.03.
- Reg. No.: 70a/2004: PASEGES, Press Release, 12.03.04.
- Reg. No: 74/2004: Letter to the Minister of Agriculture by OPAK Visaltis.
- Reg. No: 89/2004: HATPI Press Release 29.04.04.
- Reg. No: 104/2005: Greek Ministry for Rural Development and Food, Press Releases of 28- 29.06.05.
- Reg. No: 197/2004: Congress of UNITAB in Kavala, Greece, in October 2004. Speech of the President of HATPI, N.ALLAMANIS.
- Reg. No.: 208a/2003: PASEGES, Initial Remarks.

Reg. No: 216/2004: KAPNIKI Petition to the Minister of Rural Development & Food, 08.12.04.

Reg. No: 232/2003: HATPI Letter to the Minister of Agriculture.

Reg. No: 233a/2003: Letter to KAPNIKI by OPAK Visaltis, 05.12.03.

Reg. No.: 233c/2003: Letter to KAPNIKI by tobacco grower's cooperatives Kavalas – Paggaiou -Dramas, 12.12.03.

Reg. No.:350/2004: Letter to the Minister of Agriculture, 26.02.04.

Reg. No: 375/2004: P.K.O, Press Release, 04.05.04.

Reg. No.: 227/2003: Letter to the Minister of Agriculture by Pan-hellenic Ginners, 17.11.03.