

Below is a summary of different ideas that I am trying to conceptualize:

Summary

Overuse and destruction of natural resources of Albania have been massive in the last 18 years. While the country has gone through several transformations in the political, economic, and social life, little attention has been paid to the driving forces and mechanisms of resource use and management. Here I explore the evolution of the relationship between communities and the state and how it has shaped natural resource use and management in the last 18 years. I try to build a chronology, identifying the main characteristics and the pathways of change.

Massive destruction of forests, water irrigation systems, and other resources managed by the state occurred in the 90s in Albania. The anger and frustration with the repressive system was directed towards natural resources and what can be defined as 'state symbols'. 'Armed' with their physical power, people took a stand against the state. The existence of a legal vacuum, accompanied by instability, served as an incentive of overusing natural resources for personal / household benefit. Destruction continued. Later on, it was not an anti-state movement driven by anger but rather driven by the interest of becoming rich quickly. Households that were able to benefit the most and accumulate wealth quickly (mostly by illegal means) were also able to establish connections with the government, advance their interests, and exploit common property and state property. Persistently, some are becoming very close to the political system and seek to advance their interests and the interests of their kinship and others are excluded and have no voice. Divergent use and management of natural resources has emerged as an outcome of multiple factors, including power distribution at the local level.

Summary

The process of rule change at the local level is the main focus of this paper. While many authors focus on the impact of institutional rules on local development outcomes, little research has focused on how resource users change rules over time (Ostrom, 2007). Albanian villages would offer a good case for studying the process of rule change, given the institutional changes that have happened in the last two decades. Focusing on the water irrigation system in Albania, the objective here is to examine (formal and informal) rules of water use and management in Albanian villages and how water users have responded to the new rules introduced by the state.
Methodology: Case studies (north and south)

Summary

Assemblies were very powerful governing bodies in the Northern Albania in the 19th & 20th century. Most of our understanding on the work of assemblies is based on the work of Edith Durham (1863 – 1944) and Margaret Hasluck (1885 – 1948). In the work of both authors assemblies are represented as structures that were led by honorable people who ensured peace and security in the North. Communities, led by the elders and bajraktars, had developed conflict resolution mechanisms, monitoring and sanctioning procedures for community members and the outsiders. Assemblies ceased from functioning when communism came into power. The focus of this paper is examining the process during

which assemblies ceased from functioning and the dynamics that characterized the relationship between the state and assemblies. Methodology: Utilizing information from the archives of the National Library of Albania. Interviews.

Summary

The benefits of increasing the autonomy of local groups (e.g., water user associations) to decision-making are well evidenced. Here I examine some of the difficulties of establishing and enhancing the capacities of local groups in Albania in the context of decentralization (e.g., self-perception of power, capability, and responsibility). Based on the difficulties identified, I discuss implications to the efforts of allocating power at the local level.