



# In which way the governmental and institutional changes in the resource use of a common good affect the local communities? Evolution and perspectives from Southeast Albania

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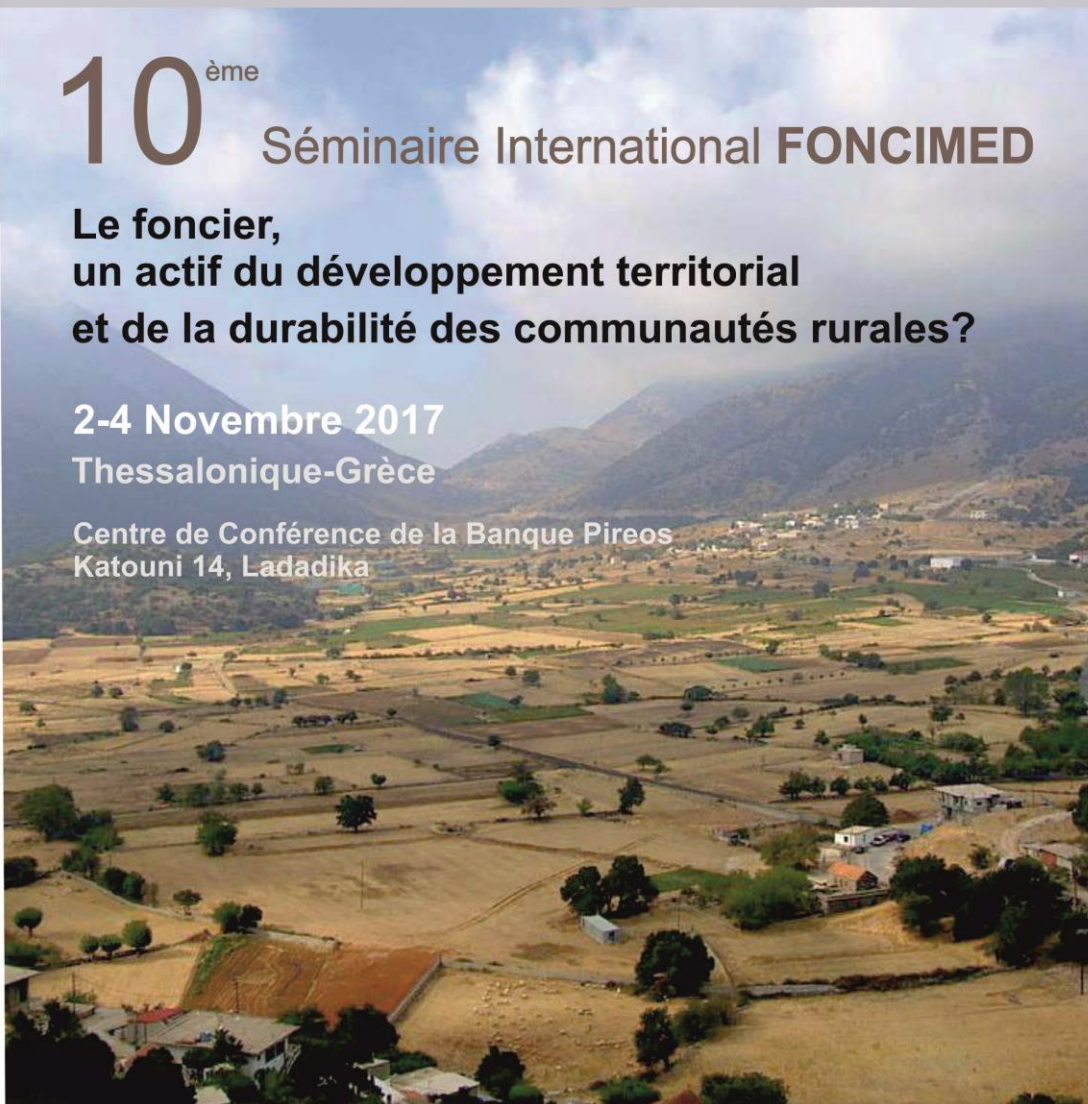
## **Actes du FONCIMED2017** Résumés étendus

# **10<sup>ème</sup>** Séminaire International **FONCIMED**

**Le foncier,  
un actif du développement territorial  
et de la durabilité des communautés rurales?**

**2-4 Novembre 2017**  
**Thessalonique-Grèce**

**Centre de Conférence de la Banque Pireos**  
**Katouni 14, Ladadika**



### Séance 3- Le foncier comme bien commun

## In which way the governmental and institutional changes in the resource use of a common good affect the local communities?

### Evolution and perspectives from Southeast Albania

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### Contextualization of the problem and main objectives of the communication

One of the most well-known mountain territories for the dairy products in Albania is the municipality of Vithkuq, Southern Albania. The last years the increase of the livestock production (Bombaj et al., 2017) has created an increasing demand for greater pastures. The pastures that are in common use are recognized as communal pastures. The recent territorial reform implemented by the government in 2016 has changed the rules of the common use of these pastures. Local breeders need to pay for a resource which was free before. Consequently, our research question is to analyse in which way the territorial reform affect the local communities in the considered study area.

According to (Hardin, 1968) when a resource is open access, each user can use without limit this resource, leading to his disappearance. As a possible solution to this tragedy, as highlighted by (Ostrom, 2014), the communities can find adequate ways to manage their common resource. Ostrom underlines the fact that expectations of rising resource prices encourage better management

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by the users. In a community when a free resource becomes a paid resource the local users may be not able to cope with the new situation and the common resource can be useless to them.

The objective of this paper is to analyze the dynamics of the pastures management in a mountainous area of Southern Albania after the fall of communism in 1991 and to identify the recent management issues of the pastures that are in common use. We rely on the original example of the municipality of Vithkuq in the Southeast of Albania, to discuss how local breeders use the pastures as a common, and how the recent governmental and institutional changes in the resource use affect the pasture management at the local level.

## Methodology and sources used

The method uses two approaches. The first is the agrarian diagnostic approach as an effective way to characterize the farming system of a given territory (Cochet, 2011). The second is the Likert method to analyse the current dynamics of the pasture management after the institutional changes in the resource use.

Our method was conducted in four stages:

Stage 1. Literature research and landscape analysis to determine the villages that use and contribute to the common management of the pastures. Fieldwork<sup>7</sup> based on personal field observations, in two phases; first, structured and semi-structured interviews addressed to regional authorities; second; structured and semi-structured interviews with key members of the selected villages.

Chart 1. Sample survey

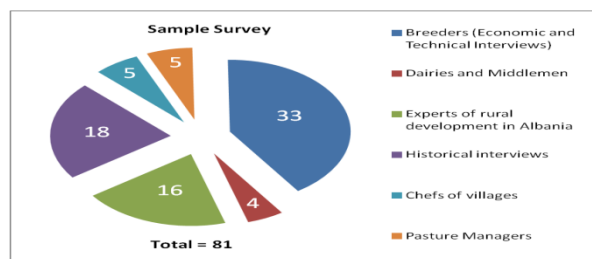
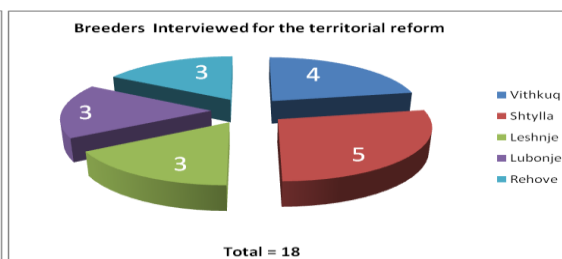


Chart 2. Breeders interviewed for the territorial reform



Source: Authors survey

Stage 2. Historical analysis and characterization of the local production systems. Using this approach, it was possible to get a global and detailed description of the pastures management system and production systems specificities in the selected villages. Difference in pasture use by

<sup>7</sup> See chart 1.

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different villages was observed. Villages having the same livestock systems have different pasture use access.

Stage 3. Questionnaires<sup>8</sup> regarding the current dynamics and possible perspectives after the governmental and institutional changes in the resource use. The two set of six questions dedicated to the reactions and the future pastures use by the breeders were based on the different situations observed in different villages. The breeders (see chart 2) have been chosen according to three criteria: First, the production system that uses communal pastures. Precisely the non-transhumant sheep system and the non-transhumant cow system. This choice has been made respecting a representativeness of the livestock systems. Second: villages concerned by the collective management of the communal pastures. Villages concerned by the collective management of the communal pastures (Vithkuq and Shtyllë). Third: villages not concerned by the collective management of the communal pastures. In these villages have been chosen breeders who are affected by the reform and who will have to pay what was previously free.

Stage 4. Analysis of the results and discussion. Having a global and detailed description of the nature of the pastoral management system in the selected villages the results allow discussing contemporary developments which affect the pastures as a common good and the local breeders as concerned actors.

## Conclusion

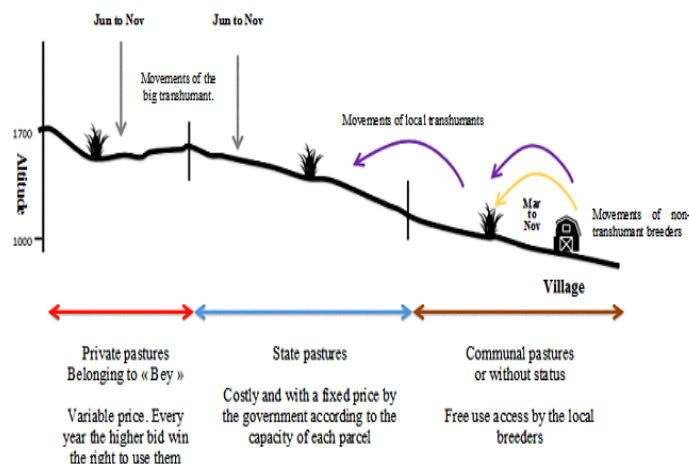
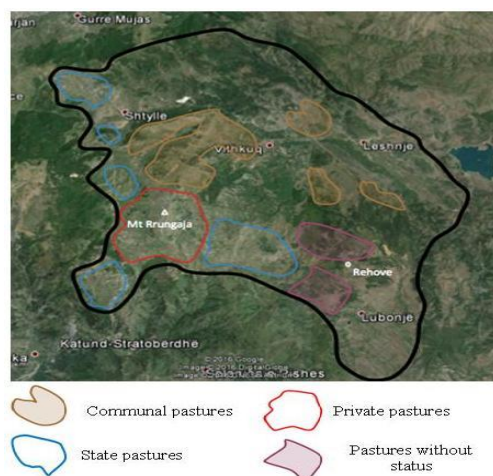
The local production system depends from the pastures available in the municipality, especially during summer. Large specialized farms demand more pastures during summer which creates competition among breeders for this resource. The "massif of Rungaja" is one of the rarest cases when a single owner has more than 1000 ha of pastures in a massif where communal pastures and private pastures intersect.

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<sup>8</sup> Applying the Likert method, see chart 2.



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Source: (Gontard, 2016)

Local breeders, who do not transhumance, from March to November, bring their flocks daily to pasture closer to the villages and return them to their stable at night. The big transhumants coming from southern Albania settle on the private pastures of « Bey » (shown in red) and partially on the state pastures (shown in blue), located far away from the villages (see figure 2). The local summer transhumants settled mainly on the state pastures located as close as possible to their village. Some use the highest communal pastures.

There is a collective organization at the village level where breeders organize to manage the communal pastures. These are small herd size breeders. Therefore the guarding of their small herds is regularly organized in collected herds. Only two villages (Vithkuq and Shtyllë), made use of the communal pastures (625 ha) from March to November.

In these villages two different types of collected herds using the communal pastures coexist:

(1) The non-transhumant sheep system. Being the most common system it includes families having double activity or retired breeders who keep a small herd and a plot of land. The breeders gather their herds in collected herds to take them together to the pasture. The breeders being in the non transhumant sheep system have 12 to 50 sheep. Their collected herds range from 150 to 200 sheep and corresponding on average to 15-20 families. There is a rotation for the guarding according to the number of animals per breeding: one day of guarding for 10 head of sheep.

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(2) The non-transhumant cow system. It is the equivalent of the non-transhumant sheep system but specialized in cattle. The breeders being in the non transhumant cow system have 1 to 2 cows. They gather their herds in collected herds to take the cows together to the communal pastures every day. For the bovine herd is one day of guarding for one cow.

The two main villages (Vithkuq and Shtyllë) where the communal pastures are located are more interested in the short term to a collective way of renting pastures but only in one village a group has been created. In this village the major factor explaining the immediate creation of the group is the competition with the big transhumants coming from southern Albania demanding pastures that are located close by to their communal pastures.

Table 1. Reaction of local breeders after the reform

	In total = 18 Breeders				
	1 = Strongly disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Neutral	4 = Agree	5 = Strongly agree
As a breeder, you are well informed about the modalities of the reform			1	5	12
You are of the opinion that this reform will have positive effects on the common management of the pastures, that is to say it allows a better management of this resource in association with your breeding colleagues		1	2	7	6
The reform has prompted you to regroup with your fellow breeders to rent pastures together		1	5	7	5
The reform has positive effects on the maintenance of mountain pastures, and on the number of animals you can grow there			9	8	1
The district of Korça is the most efficient institution to manage the common pasture on which you are used to go to your animals	5	7	6		
The reform allows a better cohesion between the breeders to share the estives		2	4	7	5

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Table 2. Resource use plan for the future

	In total = 18 Breeders				
	1 = Strongly disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Neutral	4 = Agree	5 = Strongly agree
<b>Resource Questions</b>					
The group is an effective way to rent pastures			5	2	11
Conflicts between locals and transhumants are lower if renting is done by a group of farmers than by a single one			5	1	12
The group helps to a better coordination between breeders and local and regional institutions		3	1	13	1
Renting pastures together cements confidence among the breeders to take care of the problems of management of the pasture of the zone		1	2	3	12
Without ensuring the use of pastures the future of livestock is threatened					18
It will be possible to organize in spite of the conflicts between my family and the neighbor (or neighbors).		1	2	10	5

Source: Authors survey

In conclusion, communal pastures are important for breeders who have small herds and do not perform transhumance. The new rules create barriers for them for the use of the communal pastures. The changes affect the farming system of the breeders that need to adapt their production strategies and pasture management plans. Nevertheless, the recent changes can be a way for breeders to organize themselves not only to collectively manage the communal pastures but also to promote their products together. The Ostrom grid for collective common goods management analysis will clarify the breeder's behaviour for the new rules of pastures access.

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