

THE INCIDENCE OF DEMOCRATIC ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS IN INDUSTRIALIZED, TRANSITION AND DEVELOPING ECONOMIES

THE CASE OF ALBANIA

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Abstract

This article asks two questions:

- (1) What are our theoretical expectations about the incidence of economic democratic organizations in transition and developing economies?
- (2) What do the data show about the incidence of democratic economic organizations in transition and developing economies such as Albanian economy?

Since the collapse of communism in 1991, the Balkan nation of Albania has made great strides establishing democratic institutions and fostering economic growth. Civil society organizations are maturing and are poised to play important roles in national level advocacy and government monitoring. Grassroots non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and citizen groups are becoming active in pressuring politicians for change. Many are now in position to build on influence gained through local advocacy efforts and develop them into campaigns with national reach. Equally important is the role of investigative journalists, who are gaining increased freedom from political and private interests through a new union and job contracts that protect their rights.

The objectives of the democratic and economic organizations are to advance educational and scientific profile and understanding, in the field of the promotion of free enterprises, limited government and personal responsibility as pertaining to Albania; to publish, to

conduct seminars, and to engage in such other and further means as may be necessary and proper to accomplish the foregoing objects and purposes.

Poverty is the biggest challenge for the country. It has its own dynamics. Due to large population movements, especially by our male population, poverty has become gender-specific in rural areas. Agriculture is very important to the local economy but many obstacles hinder further agricultural development, including extreme land plot fragmentation, lack of modern agriculture means, migration, lack of markets, and difficult legal procedures for land transactions. As a result, unemployment is a great challenge. Albania also has a tremendous infrastructure problem, particularly in the roads, power, and waste management systems.

I think the most important lesson is the fact that local people can be part of the governing process by monitoring and participating in it. Due to these organizations the local stakeholders has the opportunity to give feedback to the central government about important issues affecting their own lives and our region's economic and social development. Without the alliance of non-profit organizations and the business community it is impossible to win social battles. Our community, especially civil society organizations, has become aware of the significant role the democratic economic organizations have, and now are striving to enhance the cooperation and networking between one another. There is a feeling of solidarity within the community, and the local government now considers community based groups an important actor in the decision making process. Civil Society has understood its role as a potential partner in decision-making and the country's development.

Keywords: democratic economic organizations, transition economy, developing economy, expectations, objectives, poverty reduction, community.

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