

New governance under limited statehood: The case of local government reform in Kosovo

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Abstract

The perspective of local decision-making, allocation and enforcement of power provides a complex and pertinent research portal into Kosovo's transition to democratic statehood. Whilst the realm of local politics has been subject to numerous structural reforms - mostly as a consequence of externally-pursued state building initiatives - weak institutional capacities appear to remain. This is manifest in what appears to be persistent levels of poor implementation of the legislation and the failure of existing structures to be transformed. How can this be explained? Which factors determine progress and the pace of change? What does this suggest about the reforms, the international intervention, and the particular case of Kosovo? Through exploratory case study analysis the thesis examines the progress in establishing and implementing new mechanisms of cooperation between state and non-state actors in the policy field of heritage, youth, environment and social services and the extent to which these mechanisms have introduced and sustained a new decision-making process at the local level.