# SOCIETY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



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## INSTITUTIONS, SOCIETY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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## Introduction: Institutions, Society, & Economic Development

ternational Conference of Political Economy (ICOPEC) aiming to identify and analyze state of affairs relevant to our age was organized for the first time with the theme "International Political Economy: Adam Smith Today" in 2009. Following the success of the conference IJOPEC Publication that aims at searching economic and political alternatives became the main supporter of ICOPEC conference by publishing selected papers of the conference in 2010. Consequently, ICOPEC conferences became conference series and the main theme of the 7<sup>th</sup> conference held in 2016 was defined as "State, Economic Policy, Taxation and Development". IJOPEC Publication has undertaken to publish the papers, presented at this conference in English and Turkish, as five e-books. *Institutions, Society & Economic Development* is the second volume in this five e-books series. The purpose of the volume is to provide an easy to understand introduction about the interaction between institutions and society in terms of economic development.

The main premise of this volume is that economic development and well-being of nations are beyond the simple measures represented by the national accounts. It is multidimensional in terms of both indicators and determinants. Economic development and the success of economic policy designed to accomplish developmental aims can be seen as a product of political interactions between citizens and rulers, and social interactions among the member of society in broad terms. As structures or mechanisms of social order, institutions govern the behavior of a set of individuals within a given community. In the words of North (1990: 4), "Institutions are the rules of the game in a society, [...] the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction. [...] They structure incentives in human exchange, whether political, social or economic".

As Acemoglu and Robinson (2008: v) indicate, the economic institutions we have that shape directly our world derive from political institutions and the distribution of political power in society. North (2003) suggests that "[I]nstitutions exist to reduce uncertainty in the world. In a world without institutions we would not know how to deal with each other. Institutions are the incentive systems that structure human interaction. They can make predictable our dealings with each other every day in all kinds of forms and shapes. They thereby not only reduce uncertainty in the world but allow us to get on with everyday business and solve problems effectively."

There is wide-ranging evidence that institutions matter a great deal in determining the level of economic development of a country since they determine the volume of interactions available, the benefits from economic exchange and the form which they can take. Institutions conducive to economic development reduce the costs of economic activity. They lower transaction costs by providing common legal frameworks (e.g. contracts and contract enforcement, commercial norms and rules), and they encourage trust by providing policing and justice systems for the adherence to common laws and regulations. Cross-country analyses use indicators such as degree of protection of property rights, the rule of law, and civic liberties and find that they are strongly correlated to economic performance.

This volume covers diverse topics related to opportunities and challenges for economic development. Chapters provide a thought-provoking overview of academic thinking about the role of institutions in economic development. Some of the chapters are of interest to researchers working in the relatively new area of institutional change and governance. There is an emphasis on the importance of the institutional context, drawing on examples mainly from Asian and European countries. The authors use clear formalism. The approach in the book makes the chapters easy to follow not only to academics but also to government officials, development agencies, practitioners, and undergraduates whose only prior exposure to economics is at the introductory level.

The first chapter has been written by *İsmet Göçer* and *Sedat Alataş*. They analyze the relationship between institutions and income in a sample of 14 Asian countries over the period 1995-2015. The results of the study indicate that in

contrast to conventional empirical results, the impact of property rights on income is negative in Central Asian Turkic Republics. Hence, it is concluded that well-functioning property rights may not always be sufficient to increase income per capita in Central Asian Turkic Republics, while it promotes income per capita in South and East Asian countries.

In the second chapter, *Sedat Alataş* and *İsmet Göçer* examine the perspective impact of geography, integration, and institutions on income over the period 2005-2011 based on the average cross section data. Methodologically, they utilize two estimation techniques: Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) and Two Stages Least Squares (TSLS). According to the OLS estimations, the countries with stronger institutions, more open economies and more distant from the equator are likely to have higher levels of income. On the other hand, in contrast to OLS estimates, TSLS estimates show the importance of integration, rather than institutions, in explaining income differences. More specifically, when integration variable is added, geography and institutions appear in wrong sign or do not have additional power in explaining income.

In the third chapter, *İzzettin Önder* and *Aynur Uçkaç* evaluate the theories of development and then the specific case of Turkey is presented to display the relative role of the government against the world dominated by countries with greater economic power. The study assumes that such a general view may reflect not only how the issue of underdevelopment is perceived by developed countries but also the specific nature of remedies suggested to such countries according to their perspectives and interests.

In the fourth chapter, *M. Nergis Ataçay* assesses the China's economic performance with two approaches. The state-centered approach which asserts that the state is the most important actor and it is totally autonomous focuses on the impact of reforms on the capacity of the Chinese state. Two opposing assertions have emerged within the approach. Some of the authors state that the capacity of the Chinese state has increased through its effective bureaucratic apparatus during the reform period, while the others strongly argue that reforms have weakened the Chinese state. According to the study, the relation between the Chinese state and transforming economic and social structures cannot be ignored when China's reform experience is taken into consideration, because this relation has an impact on the reforms and their consequences, while it has also been shaped by the reforms.

In the fifth chapter, *Ömer Faruk Battrel* focuses on the Turkish experience of economic regulation since the 1980s. In theory, the most prominent and effective regulatory instrument to correct imperfection in markets is disclosure. Contrary to conventional wisdom, Turkish regulation is control-oriented. In Turkey, despite introducing regulatory boards in energy, telecommunication, and banking, sectors are still characterized by monopolistic competition structure and the regulation purpose which is to avoid information asymmetries has not been achieved yet.

In the sixth chapter, *Aysel Arıkboğa* deals with the alteration in fiscal policy design and to discuss the coherency of these changes with the human development approach. The effects of fiscal policies on the human development process are generally analyzed in terms of the public expenditures. According to the study, the progressivity of the tax structure would be an effective tool. Just the opposite, however, the Turkish tax structure exhibits a regressive character. Moreover, indirect taxes have long been favored in Turkey and effective tax rates remained low. International tax competition, on the other hand, reduced effective tax rates.

In the seventh chapter, *Aynur Uçkaç* emphasizes the importance of human capital. The only explanatory difference between the developed and developing countries is the high qualified human capital. That both human development indicators and Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) degrees are discouraging elements for Turkey. According to the results of the study, Turkey should give more attention to human capital issues primarily for the purpose of economic and social development. However, the training schedule is required to improve the quality of education and development.

In the eight chapter, Sevda Akar and M. Mustafa Erdoğdu examine the social expenditures, which are a large part of public expenditures, have significant effects on social life and the society. The study investigates the public and social expenditures in Turkey and European Union (EU) countries to identify the trend of future expenditure pressures during 2006-2014 periods. These expenditures in Turkey have benchmarked against the EU countries focusing on expenditure levels, composition, and status in 2008 financial crisis and its aftermath. The policy difference shows that EU countries pay more attention to social equity. In order to provide the maximum degree of benefit from social expenditures; Turkey should take the more effective pension measures and should create the fairer income tax.

In the ninth chapter, Müge Yetkin Ataer and Gözde Nalbant Efe demonstrate the general level of public social expenditures in Turkey and trend of this expenditure in recent years are examined and comparatively analyzed with

developed and developing countries. For the 2006-2013 period, the share of countries' public social expenditures in GDP and total public expenditures are determined by using Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG) and utilizing IMF Government Finance Statistics Database. The result of the study shows that the share of total public expenditure of the total social spending in Turkey has almost continuously increased. When Turkey's status compared to developing countries, it is seen that the average of social expenditures more than 5%. But Turkey's average is behind 4% of developed countries.

In the tenth chapter, *Kaan Yiğenoğlu* argues that the feasibility of various policies, including technology and industry to increase the international competitiveness of Turkey. In the study, it has been scanned of global competitiveness index which is published by World Economic Forum. According to the Global Competitiveness Report which is released by World Economic Forum, Turkey was ranked 51 in 2015. According to the results of the report, the most powerful component is the market size in Turkey. The weakest component, on the other hand, is the efficiency of the labor market.

November 2016

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# INSTITUTIONS, SOCIETY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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