
Sustainability and Possibilities in Ovacik Experience: A Case of a Solidarity Economy

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Résumé

The background idea of this paper is that there are emerging local and global responses to the ongoing economic and social problems created by the capitalist economic paradigm. The elevating economic inequalities within and among the different economies and the antidemocratic forms of governances as a byproduct of it, prepared the economic, social and political context for the new and re-new attempts to live in a better society. The destructive consequences of a exploitive capitalism for people and the nature introduced some new and radical forms of production, distribution, ownership, governance and entrepreneurship. It seems, all these promising attempts reflects a strong desire to build a more equitable distribution, democratic self-governance and sustainability. The existing and potential good and bad outcomes concerning these aims will be an extremely important issue on the way to creating a free and equal society.

To that end, this paper aims to explore and present the underlying dynamics and the resulting experiences of a solidarity economy realized in a small district in Eastern Turkey. The joint candidate of Turkish Communist Party and The Federation of the Democratic Rights won 2014 local elections in Ovacik district of Tunceli province, with a program bought by the 36.1% of the total votes in the district. The major promises of the new mayor was mainly to build a public committee for decision making, openness concerning the municipality accounts, free public transport, cheap water, introducing the state-owned lands to public agriculture, educational, food and agricultural supports for the demanding citizens of the district. After four years of the elections, we observe a growing collaborative economy with increasing production levels and improving distribution is achieved. The production took the form of production and consumption cooperatives in the meantime (2017) and the products reached beyond the borders of the district.

This paper will provide the economic and political improvements of 4 years Ovacik experience and question the main achievements and failures of this self-governing solidarity economy concerning its ties and departures from the capitalist economic and political structure. The main concerns are the sustainability, resilience and further possibilities for building a just society.

Mots-Clés: solidarity economy, Ovacik, Turkey, selfgovernance, cooperative

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