

Marko TMUŠIĆ, Ph.D

Associate Professor, University of Belgrade, Faculty of Political Science, Republic of Serbia, marko.tmusic@fpn.bg.ac.rs, ORCID: 0000-0002-4745-6078.

ECONOMIC ASSUMPTIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION – AN INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS

Summary

The economic assumptions of human rights protection represent a key research area that examines how economic factors influence the realization and protection of human rights. Understanding this relationship is essential for designing policies that ensure not only a legal but also a material foundation for respecting human rights. This paper explores the economic assumptions that support human rights protection, analyzed from the theoretical perspective of institutional economics. It examines various institutional (political and economic) factors that impact the effectiveness of human rights protection, such as institutional structure, political and economic strategies, and the role of state and non-governmental organizations in creating appropriate legal and economic frameworks. Through a review of theoretical and empirical approaches, this paper investigates how economic development, resource redistribution, market dynamics, and economic policies affect the implementation of human rights. Additionally, it considers the relationship between institutional capacities and the ability of states to effectively protect the rights of their citizens. The findings indicate that an adequate institutional infrastructure, combined with well-aligned economic policy measures, serves as a crucial foundation for the long-term protection of human rights. This paper contributes to the understanding of the interdependence of economic and institutional factors in achieving human rights goals.

Key words: human rights economics, institutional analysis, economic growth, institutional economics, political and economic institutions.

1. INTRODUCTION

The protection of human rights represents one of the key challenges of modern societies and requires a multidisciplinary approach to ensure their effective implementation. Traditionally, human rights have been examined within the fields of legal and political

sciences, but a growing body of research highlights the significance of economic factors in shaping institutional capacities for their protection. Economic stability, institutional efficiency, and appropriate resource redistribution policies play a crucial role in establishing a sustainable human rights system.

From the perspective of institutional economics, human rights cannot be viewed in isolation from the economic structures and policies that influence their implementation. The institutional framework, including rules, norms, and organizations, plays a decisive role in ensuring the economic conditions necessary for the realization and protection of fundamental human rights. Issues such as the role of the state in market regulation, the importance of non-governmental organizations, and mechanisms for ensuring economic security become central to analyzing this relationship.

This paper focuses on analyzing the economic assumptions of human rights protection through the lens of institutional economics. Through theoretical and empirical analysis, it examines key institutional factors that enable the effective protection of citizens' rights, including the impact of economic development, resource redistribution, and institutional structures on human rights protection. The goal of this paper is to provide a deeper understanding of the interrelation between economic and institutional factors and their importance in achieving the long-term protection of human rights.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Given that human rights are contextually and legally inseparable from institutions, the theoretical framework for analyzing the economic determinants of their protection is undoubtedly institutional economics. Research within institutional economics primarily focuses on the influence of formal and informal institutions, particularly on how these institutions shape economic interactions and socio-economic development. The fundamental assumption is that institutions cannot be seen, felt, touched, or even measured; they are creations of the human mind (North, 1990, 107). They provide the fundamental structure through which people have historically created order and attempted to reduce uncertainty in everyday life. Hence, the history of a society (or a nation) is, in essence, a story of the gradual evolution of institutions that connect the past, present, and future, where the historical economic performance of a nation can only be understood as a sequence in its overall institutional development (North, 1990, 118).

A closer examination of the impact of institutions on the daily lives of individuals and society as a whole, leads to a further analysis of their relationship with human rights, which are closely linked to the functioning of political and economic institutions, particularly those responsible for their protection and implementation (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). How does this work in practice? If political institutions operate in such a way that all political power is concentrated in the hands of an individual or a small group, it becomes difficult to maintain economic institutions that provide equal opportunities for the

rest of the population. Political institutions determine the distribution of *de jure* political power, which in turn influences the selection of economic institutions. This framework introduces the concept of institutional hierarchy, where political institutions affect the equilibrium of economic institutions, which then influence (or rather, determine) economic outcomes. Good economic institutions are those that ensure the protection and security of property rights¹ and provide relatively equal access to economic resources for a broad segment of society. Conversely, societies in which only a small fraction of the population has well-protected property rights lack strong economic institutions (Acemoglu *et al.*, 2005, 391–395).

The state, therefore, emerges as a field of action for political and economic institutions. More precisely, a key aspect of this analysis is the role of the state in creating the legal and economic framework that enables human rights protection. The role of the state, through institutions, can be simplified as follows: people act and live in a world of institutions. Their opportunities and prospects largely depend on which institutions exist and how they function. Speaking about human rights and freedoms, Sen argues that institutions not only contribute to human rights and freedoms but that their role can be assessed through their contribution to human rights protection (and consequently, to freedom). Thus, viewing economic development as freedom provides a framework for systematically evaluating the role of institutions. While some authors may focus on specific institutions (such as markets, democratic systems, media, or public distribution systems), Sen emphasizes the need to view them together to understand what they can or cannot achieve in combination with other institutions. Only through this integrated perspective can the role of institutions be reasonably analyzed and evaluated (Sen, 1999, 142).

From the standpoint of an efficient economic system, where effective human rights protection is a fundamental component, the goal of every state is not only to correct market mechanisms but primarily to create conditions for their efficient functioning. In this endeavor, the state adopts and implements appropriate antitrust, anti-monopoly, and anti-cartel legislation aimed at ensuring more efficient market operations, fostering competition,

¹ Here, it is worth adding an interesting observation that supports the significance (primarily economic, and consequently status-related, for each individual) of clearly defined property rights. The legal absence (or nonexistence) of such rights can be used to explain why citizens in developing countries and former communist states are unable to enter into profitable contracts with foreigners, obtain loans, insurance, etc. This is because they lack property that they could lose. Since they have no property to lose, only their immediate family and neighbors take them seriously as contractual parties. People who have nothing to lose remain “trapped in the grubby basement of the pre-capitalist world”. On the other hand, citizens in developed countries can contract virtually anything that is reasonable, but the entry price is commitment (obligation), which is better understood when backed by collateral—whether in the form of a mortgage, a lien, or any other type of security that protects the other contractual party (De Soto, 2000, 55).

eliminating monopolistic practices, supporting a competitive environment, and preventing the formation of monopolistic structures. In this regard, the role of the modern state fundamentally boils down to ensuring efficiency, correcting unjust income distribution, and promoting economic growth and stability (Leković, 2010, 154–160). Accordingly, government policies, regulations, and the judicial system play a crucial role in ensuring economic security and equal opportunities for all citizens. The government plays a positive role in stimulating economic development and should not be limited merely to enabling markets to function efficiently. Using public policy terminology, Rodrik states that “...many \$100 bills are left lying on the sidewalk. The role of economists is to point them out, while the role of political leaders is to devise agreements that will allow them to be picked up” (Rodrik, 2007, 4). Naturally, this simplification highlights that the role of the state is far more complex and, therefore, more significant—it should not be reduced merely to correcting market failures (e.g., information spillovers and coordination failures). It entails more than securing property rights; proactive public strategies are needed to stimulate growth and maintain productive economic (and consequently, social) dynamics over time.

One must also acknowledge the increasingly prominent role of non-governmental organizations and international institutions, which is becoming more significant in the context of globalization and the interdependence of economic systems based on the logic of international cooperation. Where there are shared interests among countries, cooperation emerges as a form of “self-interested” response to potential mutual discrepancies. This relationship between “self-interest”, on one hand, and cooperation, on the other, should not be viewed solely through the lens of realism—where cooperation is merely a function of hegemony—nor idealism, which suggests that cooperation is primarily based on self-sacrifice (Keohane, 1984). Regarding international (especially economic) institutions, their role should be to help countries make informed decisions while being fully aware of the consequences and risks involved. This reflects the essence of freedom, which fundamentally represents the right to choose and, more importantly, the responsibility that comes with that choice (Stiglitz, 2002, 88).

Empirical research indicates a strong correlation between economic development and human rights protection. Countries with more developed institutional capacities tend to perform better in protecting the fundamental rights of their citizens (Glaeser et al., 2004). Moreover, some studies suggest that economic crises and political instability can weaken institutional mechanisms for rights protection, further underscoring the importance of economic policies in this context (Przeworski et al., 2000).

The literature review highlights the need for further research on the role of institutions in human rights protection, particularly in the context of economic policy and globalization. The relationship between economic factors and human rights remains a complex and dynamic issue that requires an interdisciplinary approach.

3. INSTITUTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The protection of human rights depends on many factors, but particular importance is rightfully attributed to institutional infrastructure. Generally speaking, state institutions, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a central role in ensuring, protecting, and promoting human rights.

The state has the primary duty and responsibility to protect the human rights of its population. State institutions, including the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, form the foundation for implementing and overseeing human rights². For instance, under international treaties such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), states are required to enact laws that protect human rights and integrate these norms into their national legal systems. Moreover, states must provide effective mechanisms for human rights protection, such as courts, police forces, and specialized human rights institutions. The legal framework, consisting of constitutions, laws, and regulations, enables governments to engage in human rights protection. State institutions, such as ministries of justice, human rights, and social protection, are responsible for formulating and implementing policies that guarantee human rights and ensuring access to justice for citizens whose rights have been violated.

However, even in developed democracies, challenges remain regarding institutional infrastructure and human rights. The existence of legal norms does not necessarily guarantee their implementation, compliance, or enforcement. This does not automatically mean that human rights are genuinely protected in practice. Such challenges are particularly evident in cases of corruption, institutional inefficiency, or the inability of institutions to enforce laws (Tmušić, 2023). Nonetheless, legislative institutions play an indispensable role in ensuring the legal protection of human rights, while judicial bodies are responsible for ensuring fairness in judicial proceedings. Courts, particularly constitutional courts, increasingly appear as key mechanisms for protecting individuals whose rights are at risk.

Beyond the national level of human rights protection, the supranational (international) level is equally significant. International bodies such as the United Nations (UN)³, the Council of Europe, and specialized international organizations dedicated to human rights protection play a crucial role. Mechanisms and institutions, along with accompanying international legal norms, enable monitoring of human rights conditions worldwide and provide a platform for states to act responsibly regarding human rights. Organizations such as the UN Human Rights Committee and the European Court of Human

² Let us recall that the fundamental mechanisms for the protection of human rights are defined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1947).

³ The United Nations has defined a broad range of internationally accepted rights, including civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. It has also established mechanisms to promote and protect these rights and to assist states in carrying out their responsibilities (UN, 2025).

Rights (ECHR) offer legal mechanisms for individuals facing injustices in their own countries.

The United Nations, through specialized agencies like the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), facilitates targeted initiatives and provides technical assistance and training for state institutions to enhance human rights protection. Additionally, the UN directs global attention to human rights violations, offering mechanisms for reporting and sanctioning states that fail to meet their international human rights obligations. In the case of European countries, the Council of Europe, through key mechanisms such as the European Court of Human Rights, plays a significant role in reviewing human rights violations. The European Court issues rulings that can influence (or even compel) states to amend their legislation or practices to ensure better human rights protection. Moreover, it can disseminate its decisions across the European region in the form of guidelines for improved human rights protection (UN, 2025; ECHR, 2025).

This discussion would be incomplete without mentioning international organizations such as the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)⁴, which also serve as significant international actors in promoting human rights, particularly in the context of economic rights. Their policies and assistance frequently encompass not only macroeconomic parameters but also social and living standards in developing countries.

A crucial link between the national and supranational levels of human rights protection is the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), whose importance becomes especially evident in countries with weak state institutions or high levels of repression. In such cases, NGOs often emerge as the “first line of defense” in human rights protection, particularly in monitoring and reporting violations, assisting victims, and mediating between citizens and the state. In most cases, NGOs focus on raising awareness about human rights, educating citizens on their rights and ways to seek protection, and providing free legal aid and other forms of support. At first glance, the influence of NGOs might seem limited, but it is essential to emphasize that their activities can (and sometimes do) shape legislation and advocate for improved human rights protections at all levels. For instance, some of the most well-known international NGOs, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, are recognized for their commitment to fighting human rights violations and strengthening the international legal framework for human rights protection. They primarily achieve this through reports, research, and campaigns that draw international attention to human rights violations, as well as through direct action in regions where human rights are under threat (AI, 2025; HRW, 2025). Through these activities, NGOs often play a crucial role in exposing human rights violations in countries where protection is compromised.

⁴ At the same time, taking into account the “other side” of the World Bank and IMF’s actions, which Stiglitz (2002) argued using examples from certain countries.

These three levels of institutional infrastructure—state institutions, international bodies, and non-governmental organizations—are indispensable for ensuring and protecting human rights. Effective and accountable institutions ensure that human rights are not merely legally recognized but also genuinely upheld in everyday life. However, this is only possible through their coordinated efforts, intentions, and mechanisms.

4. ECONOMIC FACTORS OF EFFECTIVE HUMAN RIGHTS

The economic situation in a country directly influences (or can even determine) the state's capacity to protect and promote human rights. High levels of poverty and inequality can weaken human rights protection mechanisms, while economic stability enables more effective implementation of legal and social policies. Understanding the economic prerequisites for human rights protection is crucial for creating policies that ensure not only legal but also material (economic) foundations for respecting human rights. Developed countries generally have better conditions for protecting human rights because they possess strong institutions and the resources necessary to implement human rights protection policies, while poorer countries face challenges in implementing basic economic and social rights. In this regard, we should particularly emphasize the level of economic development, market mechanisms (their diversity and efficiency), as well as resource redistribution (methods and mechanisms), as economic factors that directly affect the realization and respect for human rights.

The level of a country's economic development is often seen as a foundation for the realization of human rights. Numerous empirical studies (Barro & Lee, 1994; Barro, 1996; Arsić, 2021; Arsić et al., 2011) have shown and proven that countries with higher levels of economic development usually have more resources to invest in social programs, education, healthcare, and infrastructure, which directly contributes to improving the quality of life for citizens and enabling them to enjoy their rights. Thus, countries with a stable economy can more effectively ensure the right to work, adequate housing conditions, and access to healthcare. On the other hand, economic development, in itself, is not a guarantee for respecting human rights. There are examples of countries with high growth rates (high levels of GDP *per capita*) that face severe human rights violations. Therefore, it is crucial for economic growth to be accompanied by a fair distribution of resources and a strong institutional framework that protects the rights of all citizens.

Market mechanisms, such as supply and demand, competition, and free pricing, are basic elements of market economic systems (or, for better understanding, capitalist economies). These can have both positive and negative impacts on human rights. On the one hand, free markets can stimulate economic growth, innovation, and efficiency, which can lead to improved living standards and the realization of economic and social rights (Barro, 1995; Milošević et al., 2018). On the other hand, excessive market liberalization without adequate regulation can lead to increased inequality, labor exploitation, and the

endangerment of social rights. For example, in the context of neoliberal policies, reducing state intervention and deregulating labor markets can result in insecure working conditions, low wages, and limited access to social protection, which directly threatens workers' rights. Such trends have been observed in various countries over recent decades, where the focus on market reforms has often overlooked the social dimension of development (Dobrašinović et al., 2014; Brenkert, 2016).

Resource redistribution through various measures and fiscal policy instruments, such as taxation and public spending, is a key mechanism (and one of the most important and responsible roles of the government in modern economic systems) for reducing social and economic inequalities and ensuring equal opportunities for all citizens (Tmušić, 2011a). In this regard, fair redistribution certainly contributes to improving the right to education, health, housing, and social security. Countries that implement progressive tax policies and invest in public services often achieve better results in the protection and promotion of human rights. For example, Scandinavian countries are known for high taxes that finance extensive social programs, resulting in low poverty levels accompanied by high standards in human rights protection (Kleven, 2014; Kuhnle, Hort, 2004; Sorić, Claveria, 2023). In contrast, the lack of adequate redistribution can lead to increased inequality and the marginalization of certain social groups. In countries with low levels of taxation and limited public spending, higher poverty rates and limited access to basic services can be observed, negatively impacting the realization and protection of human rights (Berg et al., 2018; Doumbia, Kinda, 2019).

Based on the above, we conclude that economic factors, such as the level of economic development, the efficiency of market mechanisms—but primarily, their institutional organization, as well as resource redistribution—have a significant impact on human rights. However, while economic growth can provide the necessary resources for improving the quality of life, the efficiency of human rights realization and protection is undoubtedly dependent on the fair distribution of these resources and adequate market regulation to ensure the protection of all citizens' rights. States, therefore, have a responsibility to create policies that balance economic objectives with the obligation to respect and promote human rights, ensuring that economic development primarily serves as a means to achieve a dignified life for all citizens in the state.

5. ECONOMIC CAPACITIES AND INSTITUTIONAL EFFICIENCY: THE CONNECTION BETWEEN ECONOMIC POLICY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The operationalization of economic factors, briefly outlined in the previous section, is implemented in each country through economic policy. Economic policy represents a set of goals that a state aims to achieve, as well as the measures, mechanisms, and instruments through which those goals will be realized. In this context, the interconnection between economic policy and human rights becomes apparent, as economic decisions, instruments,

and state strategies have a direct impact on the realization of basic human rights. Therefore, the economy does not only affect citizens' standard of living but also their opportunities to realize rights such as the right to health, education, work, and social security. This section will focus on the role of economic policy, primarily as an instrument for the protection of human rights, with an emphasis on the connection between economic capacities, institutional efficiency, and human rights. We will also present some indicative examples – case studies of countries with different institutional and economic approaches to this issue.

As an instrument for the protection of human rights, economic policy becomes a significant factor, especially considering that a properly designed, i.e., realistically conceived economic policy can contribute to reducing poverty, ensuring equal opportunities for all citizens, and providing adequate public services by the state (Tmušić, 2011b). In this context, some fundamental human rights, such as the right to education, the right to health, the right to work, and social security, can be improved if economic policy is used to reduce inequality and ensure the fundamental economic framework for the protection of human rights. More precisely, the protection of human rights cannot be fully achieved solely (and exclusively) through laws and institutional mechanisms (although this is certainly one of the primary conditions). Protection of human rights also requires active economic policy that provides the resources necessary for the realization of those rights. For example, fiscal policy that includes progressive taxation and the allocation of resources toward key social services, such as health care, education, and social protection, directly affects the quality of life of citizens, enabling them to exercise their human rights (Duncan, Peter, 2012; Griffith, 2004). As such, if economic policy is based on proper distribution of wealth and resources, it has the potential to reduce economic and social inequalities and contribute to improving the living conditions of vulnerable groups such as poor populations, minorities, and other marginalized segments of society (UNDP, 2003; Barrientos, 2010).

Economic policy cannot be viewed separately from the institutions that implement it. Institutions – both at the national and international levels – play a fundamental role in implementing economic policy and protecting human rights. Effective institutions, capable of implementing efficient policies, form the basis for the realization of human rights (Easterly et al., 2006). On the other hand, when it comes to institutions, it is necessary to be cautious and analyze their impact on economic policy within a broader political, economic, and social context. One of the characteristics of quality institutions is their durability. They must be more enduring than the policies they implement. Of course, institutions should not be viewed as unchangeable, as they are themselves subject to changes. Institutional changes are one of the evolutionary characteristics of any society and a feature of institutions themselves, and their quality is evaluated, primarily, through (new) institutions that arise from these changes. However, institutions are not “all-powerful”. They are often exposed to strong particular political goals and interests and, in these situations, can be misused. Therefore, there is a delicate nature to institutions, which is, at the very least, dual: on one hand, they form the basis of everyday social, political, and economic activities, representing

the foundation of society, while, on the other hand, they are quite vulnerable to particular political influences. This second nature of political and economic institutions is particularly visible during political cycles (Jakšić, Praščević, 2011). In the context of this analysis, particularly with regard to the protection of human rights, the question arises: where does the strength of institutions lie? What is the foundation of their social significance? One answer could be that institutions must be able to suppress these particular (political and economic) interests by making them external. More precisely, institutions must take precedence over the policies they implement, i.e., to put it figuratively, they must be “the factory of public policies”, not their product. They must be above the policies that should be generated within their precisely defined framework, according to predefined and well-defined rules. This applies to every segment of social (political and economic) life. For example, when talking about economic institutions, their strength is primarily reflected in their recognition of the real economic capacities of the state, which include resources such as monetary and fiscal power and stability, access to international markets, etc., rather than the interests of capital from those operating within the precisely defined rules of existing economic institutions. In these circumstances, the quality of education and health care directly affect their ability (the ability of institutions) to ensure the protection of human rights.

The connection between economic capacities, the quality of institutions, and the protection of human rights can be clearly seen in economically developed countries, which usually have more developed institutions and, therefore, can provide quality public services and better and more efficient protection of human rights. For example, countries that record a high level of GDP *per capita* often have efficient social protection, education, and health systems, which together allow their citizens to enjoy their basic human rights (ul Mustafa et al., 2022; Dhrifi et al., 2021). On the other hand, countries with weak economic capacities face challenges in providing basic services to their citizens, often leading to violations of human rights. In such countries, citizens are affected by poverty, corruption, and weak institutions, and human rights are often not realized in practice, even though laws guarantee them (Batley et al., 2013; Trebilcock, Prado, 2011).

To support the previously made claims, we will present a few of the most indicative examples. Scandinavian countries serve as an example of nations where economic policy has been successfully used as an instrument to protect human rights. These countries are known for their high standards in the field of human rights, as well as for their developed instruments and mechanisms through which their population is provided with comprehensive access to health care, education, social protection, and labor rights (Viljevac, 2020; Miličić, Bežovan, 1997). Sweden is particularly known for its “social contract”, whereby the state takes responsibility for the well-being of its citizens through a comprehensive system of social services. Legislative institutions that guarantee the rights of women, minorities, and vulnerable groups, as well as policies promoting equality in the labor market, ensure high standards of human rights (Blyth, 2001; Bucken-Knapp, 2009).

These countries also have efficient legal institutions that enable citizens to fight for their rights in court. In these countries, economic policy relies on (and generates) high taxes that enable significant investments in public services such as education, health care, and housing, thereby reducing economic inequality and ensuring equal access to basic human rights for all citizens.

On the other hand, Brazil represents an indicative example of a country that faces numerous challenges in terms of realizing human rights due to a high level of economic inequality. While Brazil is an economically developed country, there is a significant gap between the rich and the poor, and the existing institutional infrastructure is often insufficient to address this problem. Although laws exist that guarantee human rights, the existing institutions are not strong enough or effective enough to ensure equal rights for all. The reason lies in their vulnerability and susceptibility to corrupt influence, the weakness of the legal system, and the aforementioned economic and social inequalities. As a result, many social groups, especially the poor, minorities, and peasants, have limited access to basic human rights such as the right to education, health, and work. Although economic growth in recent decades has enabled progress, high poverty and inequality remain significant challenges for this country (Pinheiro, 1998).

In addition to Brazil, India – the most populous democracy in the world – serves as an example of a country with a complex institutional and economic approach to this issue. While significant economic growth has been recorded in India in recent decades, the economic benefits have not been evenly distributed. Poverty, caste-based discrimination, and gender inequality represent significant barriers to the realization of human rights. In this context, the Indian government has undertaken a number of measures to reduce poverty and increase access to education and healthcare, but institutional efficiency and capacity to implement these policies still vary. Moreover, many marginalized groups, such as the aforementioned lower caste groups, continue to face serious human rights violations. The economic policy promoting growth in India often does not consider the needs of these vulnerable groups, leading to further deepening inequality and non-compliance with basic human rights (Witherall, 2017).

Based on the above, we conclude that economic policy and human rights are closely interconnected, and that efficient institutions capable of implementing these policies are of crucial importance for the realization and protection of human rights. Countries with a high level of institutional efficiency and a well-conceived, independent economic policy that takes into account the criteria of social justice and human rights protection ensure better living conditions and greater equality among their citizens. On the other hand, countries with weak economic capacities and weak institutions face numerous challenges in implementing and protecting the human rights of their citizens. The briefly presented examples clearly show that economic policy is a key tool for achieving human rights, but only if it is connected to efficient institutional mechanisms and a careful and responsible approach from its bearers and actors, taking into account the needs of all citizens.

6. CONCLUSION

The analysis of the field of human rights protection requires a multidisciplinary approach, with particular emphasis on the importance of economic factors that play a key role in shaping institutional capacities for their implementation and protection. Relying on the theoretical postulates of institutional economics allows for an understanding of the ways and mechanisms through which economic structures affect human rights, with a special focus on stable institutions, effective economic policies, and equal access to resources. Additionally, institutional economics emphasizes the importance of political and economic institutions in safeguarding human rights. If political institutions allow for a monopoly of power, this may undermine economic institutions and suppress the positive effects they generate. Therefore, it is clear that the state plays a prominent role in creating the legal and economic framework that enables the protection of human rights through market regulation, the development of competition, and economic policies.

On the other hand, the economic situation in a country, particularly the level of economic development, the efficiency and diversity of market mechanisms, as well as the method of resource redistribution (poverty and inequality), when facing poor economic results, can weaken protective mechanisms. Meanwhile, economic stability enables better implementation of legal, economic, and social policies. In short, economically developed countries have greater investments in social programs, education, and healthcare, which improves the quality of life for their citizens. However, it should not be forgotten that high economic growth, in and of itself, does not automatically guarantee the protection of human rights, as it also requires a fair distribution of resources. In this context, efficient market mechanisms, such as competition and free price formation, can positively influence economic growth and living standards. Of course, caution should be exercised when making such assessments, as uncontrolled market liberalization can increase inequality and jeopardize workers' social rights. Therefore, directed resource redistribution, primarily through tax policies and public spending mechanisms, is key to reducing social inequalities and ensuring equal opportunities for all citizens.

The analysis above leads to the conclusion that economic policy and human rights are closely connected, as economic decisions directly impact the fundamental rights of citizens, including the right to health, education, work, and social security. This further implies that there is no effective economic policy without effective institutions, which are crucial for its implementation, all in the aim of reducing inequality and improving living standards. The application of economic policy as an instrument for the protection of human rights is most evident through investments in public services, as well as progressive taxation. In some examples, it can be seen that countries with developed institutions and stable economic capacities, such as the Scandinavian countries, provide a high level of human rights protection, while, on the other hand, countries with weak institutions, such as

Brazil and India, face economic inequalities and difficulties in enforcing laws that guarantee human rights.

It can be concluded that economic growth, by itself, is not enough to achieve human rights—there must also be a fair distribution of wealth, as well as responsible state regulation to ensure that all citizens have access to basic rights and a dignified life. In this regard, economic policy can be a powerful tool for the advancement of human rights, but only if supported by effective institutional mechanisms and a just approach that takes into account the needs of all citizens.

LITERATURE

Acemoglu, D., Johnson, S., & Robinson, J. A. 2005. *Institutions as the Fundamental Cause of Long-Run Growth*. In P. Aghion & S. Durlauf (Eds.), *Handbook of Economic Growth* (Vol. 1). Elsevier, pp. 385-472;

Acemoglu, D., Robinson, J. A. 2012. *Why nations fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty*. London: Profile Books Ltd;

Amnesty International, *Take action for a fairer world*, Available at: https://www.amnesty.org/en/get-involved/take-action/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAiA5pq-BhBuEiwAvkzVZepdoUQVanDLdZy8GnWm4B7oEywgIcW3YNWTI6f1p89inJ3b3dRnoBoCGC4QAvD_BwE (Accessed February 2025);

Arsić, M. 2021. Uticaj istorije državnosti na ekonomsku razvijenost zemalja. *Revija Kopaoničke škole prirodnog prava*, 1, str. 167-188;

Arsić, N., Matijašević, J., Berber, N. 2011. Kriza životne sredine kao problematika ljudskih prava i ekološke svesti. *Pravo – teorija i praksa*, 1-3, str. 23-35;

Barrientos, A. 2010. Social Protection and Poverty. Social Policy and Development – Paper No. 42. United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, pp. 1-49. Barro, R. J. 1996. Democracy and Growth. *Journal of Economic Growth*, 1, pp. 1-27;

Barro, R. J., Lee, J. W. 1994. Sources of economic growth. *Carnegie-Rochester Conference Series on Public Policy*, 40, North-Holland, pp. 1-46;

Barro, R. J., Sala-i-Martin, X. 1995. *Economic Growth*. New York: McGraw Hill;

Batley, R. A., Mccourt, W., Mcloughlin, C. 2013. *The politics and governance of public services in developing countries*. Report No. 79427, Washington DC: World Bank, pp. 1-17;

Berg, A., Ostry, J. D., Tsangarides, C. G., Yakhshilikov, Y. 2018. Redistribution, inequality, and growth: new evidence. *Journal of Economic Growth*, 23, pp. 259-305;

Blyth, M. 2001. The Transformation of the Swedish Model: Economic Ideas, Distributional Conflict, and Institutional Change. *World Politics*, 54(1), pp. 1-26;

Brenkert, G. G. 2016. Business Ethics and Human Rights: An Overview. *Business and Human Rights Journal*, 1(2), pp. 277-306;

Bucken-Knapp, G. 2009. *Defending the Swedish Model: Social Democrats, Trade Unions, and Labor Migration Policy Reform*. New York: Lexington Books;

De Soto, H. 2000. *The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else*. Basic Books;

Dhrifi, A., Alnahdi, S. & Jaziri, R. 2021. The Causal Links Among Economic Growth, Education and Health: Evidence from Developed and Developing Countries. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*, 12, pp. 1477-1493;

Dobrašinović, D., Matić Bošković, M., Prokopijević, M., Plahutnik, A., Radojčić, Č. 2014. *Zaštita konkurencije i suzbijanje monopola*. Udruženje tužilaca Srbije, Beograd;

Doumbia, D., Kinda, T. (2019). Reallocation Public Spending to Reduce Income Inequality: Can It Work? IMF Working Paper WP/19/188, Asia and Pacific Department, IMF, pp. 1-52;

Duncan, D., Peter, K. S. 2012. Unequal Inequalities: Does Progressive Taxes Reduce Income Inequality? IZA Discussion Paper No. 6910, pp. 1-67;

Easterly, W., Ritzen, J., & Woolcock, M. 2006. Social cohesion, institutions, and growth. Working Paper Number 94, The Centre for Global Development, pp. 1-35;

European Court of Human Rights, Available at: <https://www.echr.coe.int/> (Accessed February 2025);

Glaeser, E. L., La Porta, R., Lopez-de-Silanes, F., & Shleifer, A. 2004. Do Institutions Cause Growth? *Journal of Economic Growth*, 9(3), pp. 271-303;

Griffith, T. D. 2004. Progressive Taxation and Happiness. *Boston College Law Review*, 45, pp. 1363-1398;

Human Rights Watch, *Defending Human Rights Worldwide*, Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/> (Accessed February 2025);

Jakšić, M., Prašević, A. 2011. *Politička makroekonomija*. Beograd: CID Ekonomski fakultet;

Keohane, R. O. 1984. *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*. Princeton University Press;

Kleven, H. J. 2014. How Can Scandinavians Tax So Much? *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 28(4), pp. 77-98;

Kuhnle, S., Hort, S. E. O. 2004. The Developmental Welfare State in Scandinavia: Lessons for the Developing World. Social Policy and Development Programme, Paper Number 17, UN Research Institute for Social Development, pp. 1-34;

Leković, V. 2010. *Institucionalna ekonomija*. Kragujevac: Ekonomski fakultet;

Miličić, A., Bežovan, G. 1997. Pokazatelji o sustavu socijalne sigurnosti u nordijskim zemljama. *Revija za socijalnu politiku*, 4(2), str. 149-160;

Milošević, S., Trifunović, D., Popović Markopoulos, J. 2018. Uticaj politike zaštite konkurencije na ekonomski razvoj zemalja u razvoju. *Ekonomski horizonti*, 20(2), str. 157-171;

North, D. C. 1990. *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. Cambridge University Press;

Pinheiro, P. S. 1998. Democratic Consolidation and Human Rights in Brazil. Working Paper No. 256. The Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies, pp. 1-47;

Przeworski, A., Alvarez, M. E., Cheibub, J. A., & Limongi, F. 2000. *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990*. Cambridge University Press;

Rodrik, D. 2007. *One Economics, Many Recipes: Globalization, Institutions, and Economic Growth*. Princeton University Press;

Sen, A. 1999. *Development as Freedom*. Oxford University Press;

Sorić, P., Claveria, O. 2023. Income inequality and redistribution in Scandinavian countries. Working paper 2023/10, Research Institute of Applied Economics, pp. 1-32;

Stiglitz, J. E. 2002. *Globalization and its Discontents*. W.W. Norton & Company;

The Role of Economic Policies in Poverty Reduction. 2003. United Nations Development Programme, pp. 1-11;

Tmušić, M. 2011a. Mesto budžeta u javnim finansijama Srbije. *Godišnjak Fakulteta političkih nauka*, 5(6), str. 347-357;

Tmušić, M. 2011b. Ekonomska politika u funkciji makroekonomske stabilnosti. *Godišnjak Fakulteta političkih nauka*, 5(6), str. 263-280;

Tmušić, M. 2023. Misuse of institutions and economic performance: some evidence from Serbia. *Post-Communist Economies*, 35:6, pp. 546-573;

Trebilcock, M., Prado, M. M. 2011. *What Makes Poor Countries Poor? Institutional Determinants of Development*. Massachusetts: Edvard Elgar Publishing Inc;

ul Mustafa, A.R., Nishat, M. & Abro, A. 2022. Social Protection Spending in Context of Structural and Institutional Performance: A Global Empirical Analysis. *Social Indicator Research*, 163, pp. 875–899;

United Nations, *Human Rights*, Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/human-rights#:~:text=The%20United%20Nations%20has%20defined,in%20carrying%20out%20their%20responsibilities> (Accessed, February 2025);

United Nations, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights> (Accessed February 2025);

United Nations, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Available at: <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2021/03/udhr.pdf> (Accessed February 2025);

Viljevac, V. 2020. Nordijski kapitalizam i socijalna država. *Ekonomska misao i praksa*, 29(1), str. 307-324;

Witherall, J. H. 2017. Economic & Human Rights Development in India: A Look at the Effectiveness of Affirmative Action for Scheduled Castes. Honors Theses. 441, pp. 1-39.

Др Марко ТМУШИЋ*

ЕКОНОМСКЕ ПРЕТПОСТАВКЕ ЗАШТИТЕ ЉУДСКИХ ПРАВА – ИНСТИТУЦИОНАЛНА АНАЛИЗА

Апстракт

Економске претпоставке заштите људских права представљају кључну истраживачку област која проучава како економски фактори утичу на остваривање и заштиту људских права. Разумевање овог односа је од суштинског значаја за обликовање политика које обезбеђују не само правну, већ и материјалну основу за поштовање људских права. Овај рад истражује економске претпоставке које подржавају заштиту људских права, анализиране из теоријске перспективе институционалне економије. Разматра различите институционалне (политичке и економске) факторе који утичу на ефикасност заштите људских права, као што су институционална структура, политичке и економске стратегије, као и улога државе и невладиних организација у стварању одговарајућих правних и економских оквира. Кроз преглед теоријских и емпиријских приступа, рад истражује како економски развој, редистрибуција ресурса, тржишна динамика и економске политике утичу на имплементацију људских права. Такође, разматра однос између институционалних капацитета и способности држава да ефикасно штите права својих грађана. Резултати указују на то да адекватна институционална инфраструктура, у комбинацији са добро усаглашеним економским политикама, представља кључну основу за дугорочну заштиту људских права. Овај рад доприноси разумевању међузависности економских и институционалних фактора у постизању циљева људских права.

Кључне речи: економија људских права, институционална анализа, економски раст, институционална економија, политичке и економске институције.

* Ванредни професор, Универзитет у Београду, Факултет политичких наука, Република Србија, marko.tmusic@fpn.bg.ac.rs, ORCID: 0000-0002-4745-6078.