

Preface

This book was written because the editors felt that insufficient attention is being given to the quality of growth.

As the signs of negative impact of global climate change are becoming evident, and especially in the aftermath of the global economic turndown, societies had a choice—either reframe their definition of growth, or try to pursue it—growth as we have known it for many decades—via business as usual routes, using metrics rooted in the 20th century. True, there are emerging signs of change. For example, the debate on the post-2015 development agenda is slowly moving towards a greater consensus on the need to focus on growth that generates jobs, reduces inequality, is consistent with a sustainable use of natural resources and generates manageable amounts of greenhouse gases. By and large, however, despite such debate in international arena, politicians both in developed and developing countries alike seem to be choosing the latter routes, pursuing growth as we have known it via business as usual approaches and metrics.

What does the academic world have to say on these issues? Among the various academic disciplines, economists in particular seem to have focused insufficiently on these issues: What are the dimensions of growth quality we should most care about? How to measure such qualities? And what are the tradeoffs between them in the context of different policy regimes and governance structures? And the list of such important research questions goes on.

This collection of papers represents an effort of the researchers of the three institutions—AFD, IDS, and JICA—to contribute to the deepening and widening of international debate on such issues. We hope it provokes policy-makers to think twice about the blind pursuit of “growth at all costs,” and our development community to think seriously about how their day-to-day decisions and activities can contribute, both positively and negatively, to realizing a higher quality of growth.

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