

und Misstrauen den Schlüssel für den Zugang zu Daten und Informanten dar.

Das Werk präsentiert zweifellos einen guten Ansatz zur Überbrückung der Lücke zwischen Theorie und Praxiserfahrung. Erfahrene Forscher mögen hier eigene Probleme wiederfinden, Neueinsteiger erhalten einen weit gefächerten Eindruck über die Problematik der Feldforschung gerade in schwierigen Bereichen.

(Katharina Corleis)

Corinna Küsel, Ulrike Maenner, Ricarda Meissner (Hg.): The Social and Ecological Market Economy – A Model for Asian Development?

Sector Network Sustainable Economic Development Asia, Division 41 Economic Development and Employment, Eschborn: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH, 2008, 438 S., EUR 0,00, pdf-download available at <http://www.gtz.de/de/dokumente/gtz2008-en-market-economy.pdf>

In July 2007 the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) issued a strategy paper entitled “Social and Ecological Market Economy Principles in German Development Policy” (Strategies 158), outlining the principles of the Social and Ecological Market Economy as the model to help shape sustainable development in partner countries. GTZ, as one of the main organisations for the implementation of the ministry’s economic cooperation and development policies, debated the issue and its significance for various Asian countries. It subsequently compiled the papers presented at a meeting of advisers in the field of economic policy and private sector development, and has now published the compilation in the form of a “reader”.

As anyone with experience in the organization of such compilations can amply testify, the sorting, adjusting, culling, abandoning, reformulating, restructuring and editing of papers by individual contributors from varying approaches and differing specializations in order

to create a coherent whole is a thankless task at best, and may well raise the hackles of all the authors at worst. The easy solution is to decide on a number of baskets, into which the papers more or less fall, and to publish them under one cover in the form of a “reader”. In essence, a “reader” leaves the tasks of picking and choosing, skipping inevitable repetitions, and placing the copious material into some kind of overall perspective, to the reader. Fair enough, one might say, and better than keeping the papers under wraps. But GTZ should view this publication as work in progress and not as a final answer to the question posed in its title.

The first basket of “Overall Perspectives” contains two articles. Dieter W. Benecke provides us with the historical and economic basics of the social and ecological market economy, but spends too many pages writing for a readership that is apparently completely ignorant of basic economic relationships. The concept of the model moving left and right on a fixed linear scale between a centrally planned and a free market economy is not very helpful either, since it does not do justice to the very different possible combinations and interactions of government interventions, civil society involvement and individual freedom, and confuses movements in the phase space of a fixed model with the movement of the model itself. Here a distinction between the concepts of framework-creating measures (Ordnungspolitik) and process-steering policy (Prozesspolitik), developed in the German economic tradition, would have been useful.

GTZ’s Director of Planning and Development, Cornelia Richter, was previously Director of the GTZ Asia and Pacific Department. She is therefore well qualified to discuss the specifics of the social and ecological market economy in the Asian context. Furthermore, by referring to Benecke’s paper, she refrains from repeating all the definitions and descriptions of the social and ecological market economy already spread out there. Her reference to shared mental models within a society, which tend to change less quickly than formal institutions, provides a good explanation for the apparent sluggishness of

reforms in Asia, while reminding the reader of the once popular discussion of “Asian values”.

The second basket, entitled “Academic Perspectives”, contains four papers by ten authors. Rather incongruously, the first denigrates the performance of the German economy in the last ten years, the sluggishness according to the authors being attributable in large part to macroeconomic mismanagement, i.e. misguided monetary, wage and fiscal policies, promoted by mistaken reform zeal. So, rather than pointing out to others the direction to follow, German economic policy now finds itself at a crossroads. The lacklustre growth performance is confirmed by the second paper, although the criticism of policies is rather less severe: Asian countries with rapidly growing and increasingly liberalized economies and totalitarian pasts are considered likely candidates for the introduction of social market economy principles. Both these papers concentrate on the German situation and have little to say regarding Asian countries. While erudite, their value for most Asian readers is reduced by the fact that many of the references given are in German. The third paper in this section focusses on poverty and pro-poor growth and presents five case studies of income distribution and poverty in Bangladesh, China, India Vietnam and Indonesia. Finally, a paper on industrialization policies that also examines the so called Asian miracle comes to the conclusion that futile ideological discussions about markets versus states should be abandoned. Instead, one should rather ask how to design and implement industrial policies so as to preclude government failure and to achieve the most appropriate balance of competitiveness, social inclusion, and environmental protection. However, since pay-offs are involved, this will not put an end to ideological discussions. While everybody will agree that such balance should not be “inappropriate”, dissent will focus precisely on what that balance should be. The search for optima always raises questions of preference ranking – for instance between growth and equity, the length of planning horizons, and so on.

The third basket presents Partner Country Perspectives, and is written by academics or government servants of China, Vietnam, Thailand, and India. It is hard to see in what way these four papers are to be distinguished from those in the fourth and final basket entitled Practitioners Perspectives. To be sure, the latter do in general concentrate on the experiences of GTZ projects in the countries concerned. But this begs the question why the general papers on social protection, social and ecological standards, and private sector development are included here. All in all, the fourth basket contains 15 papers, many of which raise pertinent questions and describe important ongoing work in Germany’s economic cooperation with specific partner countries in Asia.

The geographical coverage of Asia remains by necessity incomplete. Although there are occasional mentions of Asian countries in most papers, there are country specific papers and inclusions as case studies on Bangladesh (2), India (3), Cambodia (1), China (5), Indonesia (3), Thailand (2) and Vietnam (5). There are no papers on Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Pakistan, and the so called Asian Tigers Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore are also not included. Perhaps it would have been better to group papers by country rather than by degree of theory or practice, although the amount of overlap and repetition would have become even more pronounced.

Who needs this reader? Because of the very wide economic, social, political, and environmental areas covered in many Asian countries, there are many persons – academics, practitioners and policy makers alike – who will find at least something of interest in this publication. An index and an annotated bibliography would have been helpful for them. However, the number of people who read through this reader from start to finish must surely be restricted to those who wrote, edited, published and reviewed it.

(Hans Christoph Rieger)