Editorial

1 Political consulting and policy advice in the “emerging markets”

The role of emerging markets in economic globalization has been discussed broadly and in a variety of arenas: investment bankers, policy makers from national governments and multilateral organizations, academia think tanks, NGOs and industry bodies have contributed to this debate discussing the implications of the “economic shift”. Whereas this has been covered well and extensively, the political implications of global economic multipolarity have remained underexposed. This edition of the “Zeitschrift für Politikberatung” would like to contribute to this discourse. Our objective is to selectively introduce the political landscape in selected emerging markets, striving to contribute to the debate in academia and raise understanding of the market within the consulting space for opportunities and challenges in some of these markets.

Svenja Falk introduces the theme of emerging markets in her paper on “‘Shift of Power’ or Multipolarity? Reflections on the role of emerging markets in international politics”. What is an emerging market and why have they become important on the global agenda? And more importantly, what are the implications for global politics? The paper argues that their strength is resulting from sustainable economic growth, new consumer markets, access to natural resources and an abundant talent pool. Furthermore, global competition in many industries is changing through “emerging multi-nationals”, led by agile entrepreneurs willing to take risks to aggressively expanding their footprints.

Nandani Lynton focuses on China in her paper on “Cross-Border Business Consulting: The Challenges for European Companies in China”, discussing how crucial it is to understand the direction of political discourse, which, in China, frames almost all decisions. This article identifies and discusses the most frequent issues in cross-border business consulting for organizations as they enter and grow in China. The bottom line is that all topics are ultimately political. The author gives tangible examples and relevant advice to effectively and efficiently do business in China.

Yudhishtir Raj Isar looks at opportunities and challenges for consulting in the policy field of culture from the perspective of UNESCO in his paper on “International organizations and culture: new horizons for policy advice?” He explores the potentials and limits of this domain as regards policy advisory services at the level of multilateral organizations and for this purpose will focus on the priorities and needs of UNESCO. The paper also addresses the disjuncture between claims for culture made on the basis of broad anthropological readings and the far narrower, arts-focussed frameworks in which it is generally addressed both nationally and inter-governmentally.

Louis Perron sheds light on the public affairs scene in the Asia in his paper on “Election campaigns and the political consulting industry in the Philippines”. Discussing the environment in which election campaigns take place, he includes the electoral history, culture and the political institutions and gives particular attention to the importance of religion.

Three profiles of institutions offering policy advice from Germany, China and Latin-America provide evidence how it works in practice. Peter Preetz introduces Giga (German Institute of Global and Area Studies) which combines knowledge on the regions Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East with systematic academic expertise. Zhao Xu talks about Beijing Unirule Consulting Co. Ltd. (Unirule Institute of Economics) which is providing policy advice to the Chinese Government. Mauricio Cardenas and Ricardo Hausmann introduce a regional body, the Latin American and Caribbean Economic Association (LACEA), an international association of economists with common research interests in Latin America with the objective to facilitate exchange between economists and policy makers in selected Latin American countries.

Prema Sargar and Poonam Madan are enlightening us on the market context for public policy work in India. This paper seeks to highlight the milestones, influences and current imperatives in the transition from interest group lobbying to professional public affairs practice in India, an emerging and attractive market for global capital. Another practical report, delivered by Martin Thunert, looks at North African experiences in launching a think tank based on the Information and Decision Support Center in Egypt, an in-house information and policy unit attached to the Egyptian cabinet which supports decision-makers in economic, social and political reforms.

Philip Merkofer and Angela Murphy describe a strategic research project providing policy advice to the South African government on their future skill gaps in the IT sector. This “forum” article offers a perspective on the necessity and value of collaboration between government, industry and educators. Günther Maihold and Raphael Peresson talk about “Politikberatung im emerging market: Mexiko und die außenpolitische Beratung von COMEXI”, introducing an influential policy advisor in international relations. It shows the opportunities and challenges of combining international relations with economic policy.

In the literature section, Nicole Renvert discusses a book on German political foundations (“Frei von den Zwängen der Tagespolitik – Die deutschen politischen Stiftungen im Ausland”) by Swetlana W. Pogorelskaja. Besides that, a press review reveals the most important topics related to political consulting that have recently been reported by the German press.

Svenja Falk who has been responsible for putting together this edition would like to thank authors and contributors to add to this exciting project. Andrea Römmele and Martin Thunert have provided crucial inputs and – as always – Henrik Schober has been pivotal in connecting authors across timezones.

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