

OVERVIEW OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMIC RESEARCH ACTIVITIES ON CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE IN GERMANY

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Summary:

For the progress of the transformation-process in Central and Eastern Europe, the knowledge and exchange of information is of special importance. In this paper, a short description of a questionnaire is given which took place in August 1993 in Germany to give an overview and a platform of exchange of information. It was asked for German research activities on agro-economical problems in Central and Eastern Europe. The results of the questionnare are analyzed by categorizing the projects by economic disciplines. The supply of research activities gives an idea where further research could be thought of, but may not give information about a demand of further research activities. The paper and more information at ARGE in Kiel can facilitate research coordination, support interpersonnel or interregional scientific coordination and show the main activities of German Universities and other research institutions in order to provide a "guide" for visiting scientists.

Anotace:

Pro další úspěšný postup procesu transformace ve Střední a Východní Evropě má mimořádný význam vzájemná výměna zkušeností a informací. Tato práce uvádí stručný popis dotazníku použitého v srpnu 1993 v Německu pro šetření poskytující celkový přehled situace ve výzkumu a platformu pro vzájemnou výměnu informací. Toto šetření bylo prováděno pro účely výzkumné činnosti v Německu týkající se ekonomických problémů v zemědělství ve Střední a Východní Evropě. Výsledky dotazníkového šetření jsou analyzovány na základě kategorizace projektů podle jednotlivých ekonomických disciplín. Ze získaného přehledu výzkumných činností lze odvodit představu o tom, kterými směry by se mohlo výzkum perspektivně ubírat, nemusí však poskytovat informace o tom, po kterých výzkumných aktivitách bude v budoucnu skutečně poptávka. Cílem tohoto stručného příspěvku - k němuž lze další informace, které lze získat v ARGE v Kielu - je zabezpečení koordinace výzkumu, podpora interpersonální a interregionální vědecké koordinace a rovněž poskytnutí přehledu o základních výzkumných aktivitách universit a ostatních vědeckých institucí v SRN jako určitého "vodítka" pro pracovní a studijní pobyt odborníků z jiných zemí.

Keywords:

Research activities, Categorization of research, German Projects, Central and Eastern Europe, Analysis of a survey

Klíčová slova:

výzkumná činnost, kategorizace výzkumu, významné projekty SRN, Střední a Východní Evropa, analýza průzkumu

1. Introduction

Research results are the basis of political consultings for economical efficient structured transformation processes in Eastern Europe. In the presence of continuous scarcity of capital, uncertainties and inefficiencies due to wrong incentives and decreasing social acceptance of transformation the duration of transformation processes is of increasing importance for their outcome.

Fast transmission of research results into practice is saving economic resources and thus would accelerate the transformation process in Central and Eastern Europe. In these countries, the agricultural sector is of special importance: It is in this sector, where those countries are supposed to have comparative advantages (cf. e.g. ANDERSON, 1992, p 35, KLODT, 1991, pp 9-15) and, furthermore, these advantages can be realized within a relatively short period of time. Thus, there is a strong need for transparency of agricultural economic (agro-economic) research activities concerning the former centrally planned countries, as well as for a good performance of the results obtained. This Conference in the Czech Republic is a very good platform for responding to these needs.

Our contribution will be this survey of German research activities on agro-economical problems in Central and Eastern Europe. Additionally to ongoing projects, activities which will soon be started have been taken into account.

The objective of this paper is not only to provide an overview of current research in Germany, but also to

- facilitate research coordination,
- support interpersonnel and interregional scientific cooperation,
- show the focal points of German Universities and research institutions in order to provide a "guide" for visiting scientists and
- point out areas where further research could be thought of.

The basis of this survey is a questionnaire which was sent to selected scientists and research institutions in August 1993¹⁾. The background of the selection of institutions addressed and the

data processing will be described in Chapter 2. The analysis of the questionnaire will be prepared in Chapter 3. The final Chapter 4 provides an evaluation of research activities concerning Central and Eastern European countries.

2. Methodology and data of the survey

The questionnaire took place in August 1993, the answering time was one month. It was asked for projects which are or were actually running or had been finished since the 01.01.1992. To exclude smaller projects like diploma-theses, workouts or smaller articles, ARGE asked to preclude projects with less than 3 months of working time.

It was asked for

- the person responsible for the project (project leader),
- the institution running the project,
- the main actor(s) within the project (person in charge),
- the project-name or title,
- a short description of the procedure of the project,
- the (planned) beginning- and finishing-time of the project,
- the country (-ies) the project is dealing with,
- the data sources,
- the publications concerning the project - if available,
- other information.

The questionnaire is relatively short due to

- the available time for answering and analyzing the data,
- the aim of getting only an information "platform" from which further information could be made available if necessary.
- the costs of the questionnaire.

The institutions which were asked to answer the questionnaire were not selected in the meaning of "have all and reject some" for one reason. It was more an adding up of three groups of institutions.

The base group of institutions ARGE was regarding to in this project were those considered almost exactly one year earlier (July 1992) by a study of ISERMEYER (1992). In this study he was asking for agro-economic projects concerning the restructuring of the agricultural sector in the former GDR (Neue Länder). He wrote to 111 persons and/or institutions:

- 63 professors or leading scientists in Germany, working on agricultural or horticultural economy at German universities
- 16 leading scientists of governmental bodies and institutions

- 4 private research institutions
- 6 ministries of agriculture (in the Neuen Länder)
- 5 building-and loan-associations
- 17 other institutions which are presumably principals of projects or dealing with information and/or documentation on projects.

The second group of institutions is built by those economic departments of German universities which are dealing with the field ARGE was interested in. For that purpose, those universities of a directory of German scientific institutions (RABE 1992) were selected which were mentioned with keywords like "Eastern-Europe", "Market- Transformation" etc. To this group belong 58 institutions.

The third and last group of institutions and persons ARGE was asking to take part on the questionnaire were those they met and got contact with during their work with their own projects. They differ in their character, but could be described as private or official bodies on all levels, in some cases rather specialized in special items concerning the special projects of the members of ARGE. This group counts 51.

Summed up, 220 organizations, institutions and persons received the questionnaire of ARGE. It is sure that not all important and/or relevant of those were reached, but this questionnaire should be a reasonable good starting point for further data- and information- collection.

3. Results of the Survey

In this chapter an evaluation and presentation of the first and early results of the survey on research projects with reference to transformation of Central and Eastern Europe is given. The full version of the paper with all background information like research institutions and persons carrying out the projects will soon be available at ARGE in Kiel.

The first analysis has been carried out in three steps:

- (1) First, a scheme was defined for classification of projects.
- (2) Second, the projects are classified in the defined scheme.
- (3) Finally, the results of the classification of the projects will be analyzed and discussed concerning the possible areas of further research. This outlook for the future is already part of chapter 4.

To give an idea of the classification scheme, an overview of the categories with the keywords (as examples, in italics) belonging to each research area is provided.

1. General on agricultural economics
development of agricultural economics
2. Analysis of economic policy on the agricultural sector

a. In general

agricultural policy in general, monitoring of agricultural sector, food policy

b. Analysis of ordnungspolitik

agricultural adjustment acts, role of state in transformation

c. Analysis of structural policy

problems of agricultural structure, factor subsidies, problems of rural areas

d. Analysis of market and price policy

problems of EC-Common Agricultural Policy

e. Analysis of regional policy

Comparison between regions

f. Analysis of money and currency policy

interest rate policy, exchange rate policy

g. Analysis of environmental policy

environmental damages

3. Analysis of financial and social policy within the agricultural sector

poverty, tax policy on agricultural sector, income and asset distribution

4. Analysis of trade policy on the agricultural sector

a. Analysis of international trade in general

foreign trade in agricultural commodities

b. Analysis of potential EC-Integration

impacts of EC-membership, association agreements

c. Analysis of international cooperations

foreign direct investments, possibilities for international cooperation

5. Analysis of agricultural business (business administration)

a. Analysis in general

problems of information, problems of processing industry

b. Analysis of production economics

optimizing problems, agronomic problems

c. Analysis of organisation and cooperations

problems of property rights, transformation of collective farms, cooperatives, legal forms of enterprises

d. Analysis of marketing

marketing for regions

6. Statistical information on the agricultural sector

creation of data banks, monitoring on agriculture

The research projects are classified in the defined scheme. This classification scheme is an attempt to categorize the projects, being aware the problem that some of the categories are not clearly to separate from each other. The results of classification obtained (see Annex I) will be shortly discussed in chapter 4.

Just for your information, the numbers of the countries the projects were dealing about is given. The countries most dealt with is - not astonishing - Germany, here the former GDR (21 projects), followed by the states of the CIS (18), Hungary (12), Poland (11) and former Yugoslavia (9), followed again by The Czech Republic (8) and The Slovakian Republic (7).

4. Assessment and Further Outlook

Of the 220 institutions and persons ARGE sent the questionnaire to, 97 answered. This means a response rate of 44 %. In all, 64 projects concerning Middle- and Eastern Europe were reported by only 20 answerers, 77 of 97 answerers were not running a project as described in the questionnaire.

The projects reported sometimes concerned to more than one item of the classification scheme. For this reason, one project may be numbered more than just once. In all, the 64 originally reported projects are analyzed here as 82 projects. This inaccuracy may be excused by a lack of knowledge of "what's behind the title" of a project. The results of this part of the analysis will be interesting anyway (see Annex I).

Dominating were projects on the analysis of the economic policy in the agricultural sector. 36 of 82 projects or 44 % were classified here. As a subgroup of this, structural policy is the main theme.

Furthermore, agricultural business questions are in the centre of interests. 22 projects or 27 % belong to this point, with general (10) or organisational questions (8) being the biggest subgroup. German agricultural economists care relatively less - if you can say so - about international agricultural trade. Only 11 projects or 13 % are reporting about this question.

What is the result of this short analysis? It is sure that a demand of scientific activities cannot be deduced from the observed supply, especially in this case, where only German institutions and persons were taking part in the survey. The international division of labour in science let us expect a specialization in certain fields (or countries, as mentioned earlier).

Due to the special aspects of the transformation and restructuring of the agricultural sector of the former GDR in agribusiness and structural policy, it is possible that the German agricultural economist shows more interest in those research items when dealing with other parts of Europe.

Further information will be available as a special report at ARGE - Agricultural Economic Research Group on Central and Eastern Europe - in Kiel.

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ANNEX I

Classification results

classification number of projects

1. General on agricultural economics 3
2. Analysis of economic policy on the agricultural sector 36
 - a. In general 7
 - b. Analysis of ordnungspolitik 5
 - c. Analysis of structural policy 15
 - d. Analysis of market and price policy 4
 - e. Analysis of regional policy 1
 - f. Analysis of money and currency policy 2
 - g. Analysis of enviromental policy 2
3. Analysis of financial and social policy within the agricultural sector 1
4. Analysis of trade policy on the agricultural sector 11
 - a. Analysis of international trade in general 6
 - b. Analysis of potential EC-Integration 3
 - c. Analysis of international cooperations 2
5. Analysis of agricultural business (business administration) 22
 - a. Analysis in general 10
 - b. Analysis of production economics 4
 - c. Analysis of organisation and cooperations 8
 - d. Analysis of marketing 0
6. Statistical information on the agricultural sector 9

ANNEX II

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