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have today. The effect of electing a candidate is fundamentally different from the effect of choosing a car or a soft drink. Is ambiguity and negativity appropriate, given the importance of elected offices, particularly the presidency?

Overall, this text would be excellent for graduate level courses on voting behavior and rational choice theory. His work is a fine example of how rational choice theory can be integrated with other theoretical frameworks. It is always fascinating to see a theory that turns a question around and attempts to provide a more innovative answer. Even if the answer is somewhat incomplete, it offers new in-roads for future research.

Kerala: The Development Experience. Reflections on Sustainability and Replicability. Edited by Govindan Parayil. London: Zed Books (2000), x, 274 pp.

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Intensive public protest at the 1999 World Trade Organization (WTO) ministerial meeting in Seattle was the first widely publicized indication that the neo-liberal development strategy, which has become a widely shared paradigm especially since the collapse of the Soviet Union, was facing rising opposition. Until then, only little public controversy surrounded the conventional policy prescription for Less Developed Countries (LDCs) provided by the WTO, International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and similar international bodies. This includes opening LDC economies to foreign investments, lowering internal and external trade barriers, reducing domestic subsidies, encouraging corporate and government transparencies, and expanding the private sector. This "New World Order" has, over the years, generated increasing opposition by left-leaning activists and intellectuals, humanitarian and service NGOs, environmentally sensitive groups, and by others concerned with the negative impact of globalization. This opposition is nowadays sufficiently organized to vent itself in public protests whenever international trade and financial bodies meet. Professor Govindan and the other contributors to Kerala: The Development Experience no doubt sympathize with these protests. To them, the Indian state of Kerala represents an alternative development model preferable to the neo-liberal one touted so widely today.

During the International Congress on Kerala Studies (1994), 1,600 local and international participants focused on the special case of Kerala as a development model (the Kerala Model). This led Professor Parayil to the conviction that "there was a need to bring together as a single resource the best theoretical analyses and empirical studies...by experts in the field" [pp. ix-x]. The result is this edited volume.

The aim of the book is to provide "a balanced account of Kerala's development achievements and shortcomings," with special attention being given to whether it can be replicated elsewhere and whether it can be sustained over generations [p. ix]. The book is in fact less balanced than the stated aim. For nearly all of the contributors, the achievements of the Kerala Model outweigh its shortcomings. Moreover, all of them adhere to a left-oriented populist and collective action perspective when formulating solutions to development problems, while being highly critical of those strategies advocated by governments and their international agencies that emphasize the importance of the private commercial sector, free trade, and competitive markets. Finally, sustainability in the human-environmental sense receives only very limited attention. This book is more about socio-economic development than ecological sustainability, and I will review it as such.

Kerala has achieved much since it became a state in 1957. Though lacking a rich mineral resource base and burdened with an high population density, Kerala's 30 million residents along the south-western coast of India resemble in their social indicators First World populations. Infant mortality rates, fertility values, and population growth are low. Long life expectancy and a relatively even sex ratio prevail. Nutritional levels are adequate and health conditions are good due to public distribution efforts and health services. Finally, the proportion of working children is very low, educational/literacy levels are high among both genders, while female status and participation in public life are high. This stands in stark contrast to what is typically found in LDCs, including India at large. The Kerala condition is the result of a number of factors, chief among them being a consistent policy followed by the

center-left government and socially responsible activists to push for social welfare by means of collective action. Not only are the achievements in social welfare noteworthy; so is the fact that Kerala has maintained a civil society in which democratic principles operate within the government. This stands combined with a strong tradition of trade union participation and social activism by NGOs. Given the failings of many LDCs and former Soviet bloc countries, it is no wonder that concerned development specialists, including the contributors of this volume, are convinced that the Kerala Model is a way out of poverty without the, to them, socially disruptive and environmentally threatening policies represented by the New World Order.

While all chapters focus on the Kerala Model, the manner in which they do so differs. Some of the contributors analyze particular groups and institutions within the state in relation to the Kerala Model, while others compare the model to the development experience of “other” countries. Then there are attempts to determine whether the model can be replicated elsewhere and sustained over time. Finally, a number of authors concern themselves with problems the Kerala Model has encountered beginning in the 1980s, and with the efforts undertaken to revive it.

Among the first group of authors, Heller examines social movements among Kerala’s formal and informal sector workers, and notes that there has been a synergetic relation between the state and non-state delivery services due to the fact that the society is mobilized along class lines, yet has retained a “democratically accountable state” [p. 84]. In both the formal and informal industrial sectors there has been a move from radical class struggle to class accommodation; after all, “too much collective action in an economy governed by private investment is a negative-sum game” [p. 85]. Kurien analyzes a community that until relatively recently was outside of the domain of the state’s public action. It consists of the 770,000 marine fishermen along Kerala’s coast. In contrast to most of the state’s residents, in the early 1980s the fishing community had a social profile more akin to a typical LDC population: gender bias, poor health, low literacy rates, high infant mortality, and so on. Why? According to the author, it was not incorporated into the collective action programs for social betterment provided by the government and private organization due to the community’s mode of production (fish as free good) and religious orientations (Hindu, Muslim, and especially, parochial Catholic interests). Following a crisis of over-fishing in the early 1980s, trade unions and others moved in to mobilize the population and to provide social services that presumably improved living conditions (no hard data showing this exist to date). To the author, collective action is the key in the fishing community’s change for the better, not only a committed state. Alexander, finally, identifies kinship as a contributing factor accounting for Kerala’s uniqueness. Unlike the rest of India, the family structure in Kerala stands between the matriarchal and patriarchal extremes, thus resulting in gender equity. This, according to Alexander, helps account for the low fertility and high well-being for which Kerala’s population is known. Of course, it might be pointed out that relative gender equality in countries such as the Philippines has not lead to similar socio-economic and demographic conditions as in Kerala; similarly, male-oriented societies such as South Korea, Taiwan and Sri Lanka have attained equivalent, if not even higher well-being than Kerala.

Several authors examine the Kerala Model by setting it off against other regions. Kannan compares Kerala’s social record with that of six LDCs. Though finding the average per capita income in Kerala low compared to that of most of the LDCs, the social indicators of the state are among the highest. An historical review of this achievement convinces Kannan that poverty alleviation under democracy is possible if done by means of concerted public campaigns and if the active involvement of women is encouraged. When comparing Kerala with “other” countries, Sri Lanka is usually pointed out to be among the few LDCs reaching Kerala’s human development record. Casinader’s chapter does so. While noting similarities between the two, figures he provides [Table 10.2] also indicate that per capita income in Kerala is considerably higher – a fact not explained or discussed by Casinader. Much of his chapter consists of pointing out that the current ethnic conflict between Tamils and Sinhalese in Sri Lanka is increasing the difference in the development experience of that country and Kerala. Shrum and Ramanathaiyer examine Kerala’s record of capacity building in science and compare it with two African countries (Ghana and Kenya). They find that in contrast to the African states, in Kerala a greater autonomy of research exists (yet, 60% of the Kerala scientists, compared to only 25% of the African ones, consider it important to send scientists abroad for training [p. 170]), educational levels are higher, publication productivity is more impressive, and there is a greater tendency for NGOs to be involved in science. The authors laud Kerala as a place second to none where education and knowledge are emphasized.

One theme that runs through much this volume is that the Kerala Model can, and ought to be, emulated elsewhere. However, only one contribution addresses this in detail. Ramachandran does so by discussing the replicability of the Kerala Model in the rest of India. Before doing so, he makes the point that the Kerala Model does not represent unalloyed success; today, high social indicators are combined in the state with low economic growth, low income, high unemployment, and so on. “There are many societies that have achieved these levels and better” [p. 97]. Consequently, Ramachandran reformulates the replicability question to whether public action can ensure

that all of India's states at present levels of income can reach Kerala's human development achievement. The author answers this affirmatively, so long as other states become committed, as Kerala is, to public action for social welfare. What the author does not point out is that such a policy would leave India with the same condition as Kerala currently faces; that is, high human development combined with low economic growth – a combination he criticizes at the beginning of his essay.

There has been a growing concern with the fact that the Kerala Model seems to lead to a condition as described by Ramachandran. Since the early achievements of the model in the 1960s/70s, growth rates have been disappointing, industrial and agricultural output have stagnated, and infrastructure remains underdeveloped. In fact, were it not for remittances from migrant labor to the Gulf States and better food supply on the national level, matters would be worse. Several authors address this crisis of the Kerala Model. They do so by reviewing the attempts by the government and private organizations during the past 20 years to revive development in the state through a series of public action campaigns. This began with mass literacy, group farming, and resource mapping campaigns during the 1987-1991 period. After the Kerala Studies Conference (1994), the renewal effort continued with the People's Campaign for the Ninth Plan. This long-term campaign seeks to have local districts and panchayats make decisions about developmental needs and to provide these grassroots levels with resources to implement solutions. Planning from the bottom became, and still is, the goal of the renewed Kerala Model.

Two chapters examine this recent effort by turning to the concept of sustainability. To Franke and Chasin, sustainability entails the ability to improve or at least maintain material quality of life, entitlements for vulnerable groups, political/economic rights and equality, and productive resources (the only environmental variable) [pp. 16-17]. Kerala's population is adequately provided with all of these elements, which the authors illustrate by describing an average Kerala village. With respect to whether this condition is sustainable, they turn to the People's Campaign for the Ninth Plan that has introduced local development planning and implementation. While noting that it is too early to say whether these reforms have made the Kerala Model sustainable, they maintain that this revival effort by means of public action is better than removing subsidies and opening the economy to foreign investments. In the only truly political ecology chapter of this volume, Véron also uses the concept of sustainability to assess Kerala's recent attempts at renewal. He defines sustainable development in an ecological sense; it must meet the "needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (quoted from the World Commission on Environment and Development) [p. 213]. Véron refuses to employ the often used proxy of low resource use and low population growth to stand for sustainability – after all, this condition could be due to scarcities, poverty, and restricted access to resources. Instead, he turns to the environmental impact of humans as a direct measure of sustainability. He can do so only qualitatively, however, because "comprehensive appraisals of Kerala's environmental condition are absent" [p. 216]. After this disclaimer, he notes that although environmental problems exist – for instance, coastal mangrove areas are being threatened – they seem not to be as bad as they are in many other LDCs. According to Véron, the problem with the current bottom-up approach to development is that it does not ensure empowerment, future generations are not considered in local planning, and temporal/spatial externalities are usually not taken into account. Even though Véron, like Franke and Chasin, points out that it would be premature to actually assess the recent renewal efforts, he does conclude that "Kerala is certainly not yet a model of sustainable development" [p. 227]. He finds the main hope for the future sustainability of Kerala's development to lie with environmentally sensitive NGOs, rather than with the state government or local interest groups.

Törnquist and Parameswaran also assess the 1990s renewal campaigns, though without employing the notion of sustainability. For Törnquist, the recent People's Campaign, even if good in intention, has failed to solve a number of economic problems, such as the negative trade balance and the lack of industrial development; Kerala's economy, in fact, continues to have a colonial flavor by its emphasis on the export of raw materials. He admits that "it remains unclear exactly what the new obstacles to development are" [p. 131], but rather than liberalizing the economy, he feels that the solution lies in politics. In what might sound puzzling to observers who worry about the already highly politicized economic process in Kerala, Törnquist calls for more politics, not less to coordinate the activities between the state, local government, and the civic end for development [p. 138]. To Parameswaran, in turn, the People's Campaign for the Ninth Plan so far has been "more pain than pleasure." "Bringing individual citizens to the centre stage of self-governance is an ambitious, perhaps an unrealistic notion" [p. 247]. He argues for a Fourth World (not in the usual sense of the most destitute of countries) that combines Marxism and Gandhism; a genuine communist society with "an organic world union of self-reliant local communities" [p. 231]. He refers to this utopia, which Kerala should strive for and partly already represents, as a "participative and decentralized new people's democracy" [p. 232]. Among other things, it includes the right to recall politicians at any time (not only during elections), the presence of small-scale private enterprises that do not maximize profit but rather social good, and the existence of wisdom that differentiates needs from greed [pp. 234-239]. As the People's Campaign for the

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Ninth Plan is flawed due to its enemies in the form of “vested interests of politicians, officialdom...and lumpen elements” [p. 247], Parameswaran sees the only hope in the People’s Science Movement (KSSP). This is a teacher-based mass organization in Kerala with some 60,000 members that since the 1960s has been in the forefront, according to the author, in the struggle with the people against corruption in Kerala.

Though a good attempt to describe and analyze the Kerala development experience, this edited volume falls short of what one would expect from a collection that includes the “best theoretical analyses and empirical studies” [pp. ix-x] about this fascinating case. Aside from the fact that the chapters vary considerably in quality, with Véron’s and Kurien’s articles being among the best, the volume has several deficiencies and problems, some of which are relatively focused, others are more fundamental. Turning to the more focused ones first, in certain key areas data are either not available or not provided. For instance, nowhere is the state budget summarized, nor is it shown how it is linked to the national budget of India. This information is essential to evaluate economic sustainability. The otherwise insightful article by Kurien is marred by the fact that he is unable to present numerical data about the present-day human conditions among Kerala’s fishermen two decades after the presumed benefits of social reform took hold among them. Similarly, Véron’s very useful essay is not helped by a similar difficulty; in this case, no quantified data exist about the human impact on the environment. One wonders why attempts are made to assess the Kerala conditions if relevant information to do so is not available.

The inclination of some of the authors to express extreme and tendentious statements reduces the scholarly quality of this work. For example, there exists no “working example of a large sustainable society in the First World” [p. 156]; people both in India and Kerala lack individualistic motivations [p. 138]; the First World has failed, while a limited number of Third World states have succeeded, in particular Kerala [p. 232]. These statements may sound good, they may be politically correct, but hardly any evidence is provided to substantiate them.

Finally, to retain the attention of the reader, it does not help for the chapters to overlap as much as they do. Not only are they similar in their general approval of the Kerala Model and the public action means to construct and maintain it, they also repeat themselves in specific subject areas. The editor’s introduction and several essays describe the Kerala Model, trace its history, and indicate the difficulties it currently faces. The result is that by the mid-point of the book the reader becomes tired of reading yet another list of human development indices found in Kerala and yet another historical review of public action that created the Kerala Model.

More fundamental are two other problems. There is, first, the tendency to compare Kerala with “other” countries. This extends to comparing it even with China and the U.S. Kannan mentions that taking Kerala “out of the national context is not insignificant analytically or qualitatively” [p. 44]. It certainly is not. By comparing a state that is part of a country with independent nation-states is like comparing apples with oranges. They are not equivalent. Kerala is a state of India with a commendable human development record. To compare it to China (or any other large country), and then to point out the wisdom of the Kerala Model is to bias the comparison in favor of Kerala. Far more valid (and fair) would be to compare it with one of China’s better run provinces (or with, say, Connecticut in the U.S.). By the same token, though the authors seem reluctant to admit it (Kannan is an exception), Kerala does receive considerable benefits from being part of India. This ranges from having a large, accessible export market and not having to finance its own defense, to the more abstract benefit provided by India’s constitutional guarantee of upholding democratic processes in the presence of radical political interests in the state. All of these factors should be taken into account before comparing favorably Kerala with “other” countries.

Another problem is that none of the authors consider the neo-liberal path as a possible option. Many contributors point to the current crisis of the Kerala Model reflected by chronic low income and growth, but none suggest that maybe now that human needs have been taken care of and social indicators stand at a high level, it is time that activist lead mass campaigns should step aside for an economically more liberal set of policies. In fact, what is disappointing is not so much that the contributors to this volume see continued public action campaigns as the way to get Kerala out of its crises, but rather that none make clear why at least some elements of the neo-liberal development paradigm should not be seriously considered as policy alternatives. Törnquist comes closest in giving a reason when he points out, without further justification, that “development work goes least well” under conditions of privatization and commercialization because it results in “fragmentation of civil society” [p. 137]. The message of this volume is that to get out of the current crisis of the Kerala Model, it is necessary to employ similar populist, mass action methods used three to four decades ago when the Kerala Model was first constructed. Times and conditions, however, have changed!