



Review

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ing. Social processes and forms of authority that produce and sustain NGCs remain unexamined and require further study. New-generation cooperatives have emerged in contexts in which individualist-oriented ethics might seem to mitigate against the formation of collective or cooperative organizations (Merrett and Walzer). Thus, the meanings and reasons members give for forming new cooperative forms is another important and relatively unexamined topic suggested by the current volume. The study of social practices in new-generation cooperatives would extend and complement the economic focus of the chapters included in the present volume. In addition, since NGCs provide a new and viable collective economic form that allows producers to participate in capturing value added later to their own production, the book should serve to bring NGCs to the attention of scholars working in critical postmodern domains who seek to understand and promote the democratization of work and society, which such collective forms of organization allow. NGCs are also of fundamental interest to scholars using action or participatory strategies of research to shape the new forms of capitalist organization that underlie the "new agriculture." The book also poses questions and raises issues that challenge organization theories, however, particularly theories that focus on competition rather than cooperation. In an age in which work organizations are becoming highly individualistic and collective action and cooperation are becoming problematic (Gephart, 2002), the book nourishes the small hope that "with NGCs and their sibling forms of cooperatives, a new era of cooperation has been born" (p. 185).

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Rethinking Strategy.

Henk W. Volberda and Tom Elfring, eds. London: Sage, 2001. 285 pp. \$99.00, cloth; \$33.00, paper.

The goal of this book is to provide ". . . a structured effort to show new directions in strategy." Most of the twenty-one chapters in the volume were papers first presented at a 1995 conference, "Schools of Thought in Strategic Management: Beyond Fragmentation," sponsored by the Rotterdam School of Management and the European Institute of Advanced Studies in Management. The choice of papers comes from the editors' desire to improve the clarity of thinking about strategic management research and to begin to achieve some theoretical convergence in the strategy field. Many scholars have called for more clarity and a more common

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framework in the strategy field (e.g., Camerer, 1985; Teece, 1990). I find this a laudable goal but often a Sisyphean task.

The volume begins with two parts, "Theory, Schools, and Practice" in the strategy field and "Integration Efforts in the Field." These parts are followed by the three themes around which the book is organized: redrawing firm boundaries, developing dynamic capabilities, and finding viable new configurations. The editors suggest that these three themes will allow an opportunity for synthesis in the field to overcome its fragmented state. Each of the parts has several chapters that explore aspects of the respective themes. A chapter with commentaries and rejoinders provides closure for each of the parts.

Some comments on individual chapters are appropriate for prospective readers. The preface and the initial chapter by the editors outline the book quite nicely and present the arguments for readers to continue. I found Spender's chapter 2, "Business Policy and Strategy as a Professional Field," helpful, provocative, and informative.

Part 3, "The Boundary School," has several helpful chapters. Foss's introductory chapter (9) provides a good overview, and chapter 10, by Koenig and van Wijk, is a provocative discussion of trust in alliances. Thomas's chapter (16) offers a critique of the chapters on the dynamic capabilities school and, as such, is a helpful guide to interested readers. I suspect that it's my own taste, but I didn't find the chapters on the configurational school as compelling as I had hoped. I fully agree that the way in which firms organize is a central challenge and decision of senior managers and is worthy of solid theorizing and empirical work. But somehow in this part of the volume I sensed I was caught in a time warp of descriptive stages of the development of firms and how they organize rather than new insights into how configurations affect strategy. There are exceptions to this concern. Chapter 18, by Bailey and Johnson, presents an intriguing methodology for understanding the evolution of the strategy development process. In chapter 19, Lawless suggests how capability profiles may emerge as the result of the economics of a particular industry.

Chapter 21 provides the editors' conclusions as they develop their arguments for the collection of chapters in the volume and their synthesis of the schools of boundaries, dynamic capabilities, and configurations. There's a lot in this chapter; one needs to begin reading it with a fresh perspective and clear mind. The strength of the chapter is the detail into which the editors go in explaining each of the different schools. But this is also its weakness. The chapter seems more like a review than a synthesis, and I found myself more than once wishing for a more crisp, synoptic summary of the primary arguments of the schools and of the chapter.

Readers interested in an overview of important aspects of the strategy field through the mid-1990s will find this book a helpful volume to add to their shelves. The book has several potential audiences that would appreciate its eclectic collection of chapters. Scholars from outside the strategy field may find it helpful to review the diversity of theories, concepts,

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and methodological challenges present in the field. These scholars may ask for a bit of coaching from their strategy colleagues, but it would be a good introduction. Similarly Ph.D. students who are specializing in a more economic approach to the strategy field may find the chapters a helpful overview. Various chapters may also be interesting to Master's degree students taking specialized elective courses in strategy.

Readers searching for a compendium on strategy that would provide an in-depth treatment on the theoretical and methodological issues in research on microeconomic approaches to strategy, organizational governance, top management teams, or network theory will be disappointed. But one needs to draw the line somewhere, and the editors have accomplished a good deal by providing an organizing theme for the chapters in the volume.

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Organization and Management in the Embrace of Government.

Jone L. Pearce. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2001. 162 pp. \$75.00, cloth; \$39.95, paper.

Governments not only shape their country's economy but also their culture and penetrate deeply into the dynamics of organizations. Organizations must be understood within their larger context, in particular in terms of their dependence on government. Unfortunately, like friendship and many other values in life, effective governments are most noticed by their absence, such as in Eastern Europe and China in their transition from Communism. Jone Pearce makes these points with discipline, evidence, and feeling.

Pearce proposes that facilitative governments are supportive of independent organizations, operate through predictable laws and regulations, and are strong, whereas nonfacilitative governments are hostile, erratic, and weak. *Organization and Management in the Embrace of Government* shows that nonfacilitative governments require managers to accommodate to complex dependencies. Chinese managers in private companies, unsure how to cope with many vague and contradictory laws, indicated that they were dependent upon the good graces of government officials more than established state-owned enterprises (SOEs). Hungarian managers reported that personal relationships were especially important in the early years of transition as their government became

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