

Book Review

The dynamics of corporate co-evolution: A case study of port development in China, John Child, Kenneth K.-T. Tse and Suzana B. Rodrigues, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2013, Hardback, ISBN 978 1 84980 743 2, £80.00, 304pp.

A new book by John Child and colleagues is always a publishing event in the field of Chinese management studies; the book reviewed here is no exception. The co-authors, John Child, Emeritus Professor of Commerce, University of Birmingham and Professor of Management and University of Plymouth, UK, Kenneth K.-T. Tse, Senior Research Fellow, University of Birmingham, UK and Adjunct Professor, the Chinese University of Hong Kong and Suzana B. Rodrigues, Emeritus Professor of International Business and Organization, Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University, The Netherlands and Faculty of Business Administration, Universidade FUMEC, Belo Horizonte, Brazil have produced a useful piece of research which will be of great use to students and academics, as well as practising managers. All three co-authors have considerable experience in this particular area of study and bring their expertise to bear very expertly. Since they have collaborated together for quite a long time, they have been able to produce a very well-integrated tome. It is neither too long or too short and appears to have been very well-edited by the publishers.

The conceptual focus of this work is corporate co-evolution and the specific area-studies exemplification is on China. Such a theme is a major part of the architecture of organisational studies and has a long lineage. It is specifically an empirical investigation of port-management based on fieldwork in *Yantian*, located in *Shenzhen*, Southern China, just round the corner from

Hong Kong. The researchers try to explain how organizations evolve vis a vis their business environments.

The theoretical framework is solidly anchored in the literature in the field and the co-authors add to it considerably in the course of articulating their research findings. There is much to learn both theoretically and empirically from their endeavours. Since this is a major infra-structural undertaking in this the first Special Economic Zone that *Deng Xiaoping* initially launched in the early 1980s, they are to be congratulated for looking so closely and in such detail at a concrete, impressive example of China's economic achievement and for the breadth and depth of their report. This reviewer has not come across a comparable study on infrastructure in the PRC. This book, in ten clearly written chapters, neatly interweaves theory and practice, ending with a useful list of pointers for managers. It does, however, require a well-grounded background in organisational evolutionary theory in order to make sense of the researchers' deliberations and findings.

The book is well-produced by the publishers, namely Edward Elgar and has a useful appendix and a competent index. It should be useful for third-year undergraduates and management studies as well as economics relating to China and in addition for MBA candidates as a case-study. At the high cover-price, it seems a little expensive in hardback for its potential readers on campus and this reviewer looks forward to a paperback edition. This is a book, however, which can be highly recommended for library-purchase.

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