

Book Reviews

Stütting, H.-J./Dorow, W./Claassen, F./Blazejewski, S. (eds) (2003): Change management in transition economies: Integration corporate strategy, structure and culture. Palgrave-Macmillan, Houndsmill

The book is a sample of 16 articles dealing with different aspects of change management in transition economies. It is based on three main topics:

- The political and economic conditions and constraints, with special reference to Poland
- A case study on strategic management change in Beiersdorf-Poznan
- Different concepts of strategic concepts of strategic approaches towards organisational change including aspects of entry strategies, marketing strategies, investment strategies, leadership and HRM, changing rules and organisational identities, mainly in Polish enterprises.

The book starts surprisingly with a claim on the part of the editors that “less has been written about management challenges and the problems of changing state owned enterprises...”. After 8 years of JEEMS, and a lot of special issues having been published in several journals such as Organisation Studies, International Studies on Management and Organisation, Journal of World Business and also a lot of books in this field, e.g. Johnson/Loveman’s 1994 book on Poland or others as Edwards/Lawrence and Clark/Soulsby, who all have addressed the management strategies and changes in transforming societies, one would expect a more precise definition of the special contribution of the book.

The first part of the book is devoted to a description of the environment in CEE countries but mainly with a focus on Poland. A lot of statistics concerning the development of the economy, the Polish-German relations and the process of privatisation are presented. The latter gives quite a good overview about the Polish way of privatisation and restructuring. More interesting and close to the topic are the contributions of Brada and Martin. They claim a path dependency in the restructuring process respective of some continuities in the system of employment and industrial relation, but also specific aspects of a Polish shape and towards the Western modernity.

The Beiersdorf case in the second part delivers in a comprehensive and complex form a very interesting description of the process of strategic change process in a CEE enterprise influenced by a mother company. It forms one of the most valuable contributions of the book not mainly due to its contribution to the

scientific discussion, rather as a result of the rich material delivered by the authors.

The last part of the book certainly is “multidimensional” but also bit (too) heterogeneous. The contributions on entry strategies and developments in the retail sector support give some empirical data, where especially the analysis of entry motives form by Emes is of great value. In general the contributions are more on the surface of the organisational changes, therefore lacking deeper theoretical reasoning.

Only the article of Meyer/Jensen on foreign investor strategies applies different theoretical models in its FDI typology. They also ask for the impact of FDI on institutional changes at the level of industries. Two other interesting articles are from Konecki/Obloj. The changes in the organisational ideology and in the dominant logic of thinking and acting are in the very center of fundamental organisational changes in transitional economies. They refer to these changes as cultural changes which require special attention from the management beyond marketing or investment or privatisation strategies, which can only be seen as initial impact on the process. Leadership changes could also support this process as the contribution of Reber/Auer-Rizzi suggest.

Summing up, the book is a useful resource especially for students who are interested in the Polish case of organisational change in transforming societies and its consequences on marketing and investment. Especially the case study on Beiersdorf seems very useful for these purposes. For academics, the book could serve as first hand information on enterprise change and its environmental conditions in Poland. A few articles may provide deeper insights, but a generalisation or an overall theoretical frame got lost in this “multidimensional perspective” of partly single aspects

Rainhart Lang, Chemnitz University of Technology