

knowledge related activities focusing both on internal and external clients and provide a preliminary model. The final paper in this section makes use of a metaphor by seeing the firm as a crucible of resources. The proposition that the most critical competences are accumulated internally and, therefore, to accumulate new capabilities there has to be cooperation between partners is made in this chapter.

The fourth and final section focuses on strategic knowledge management. Sanches proposes a framework for the analysis and use of a firm's knowledge in competence-based competition. He argues that tacit knowledge, which by its nature is not articulated, has limited ability to be used as a competitive tool and proposes a framework for analysing the sources and kinds of knowledge. From this analysis knowledge management strategies can be devised. The following two chapters concern themselves with the relationship between modularity in product design and the management of knowledge. An intra-firm analysis of modularity is provided by Post in his analysis of the Baan company where he found that modularity was an essential element of their strategic management. The proposition of modularity being a route to strategic flexibility is also explored by Lang who illustrates, through a case study, the benefits of modularity in product design, technology transfer and strategic alliances. Furthermore he identifies elements which are important for a successful alliance. Although the last paper incorporates a number of ideas discussed earlier in the book, the final chapter leaves the reader unsatisfied. A concluding editorial which summarizes all the key ideas and draws all the threads together would have provided a better balance to the book.

The series preface purports to develop new theory and applications for the strategic management of 'learning organizations' and to provide a key resource of new ideas. The book is indeed brimming with theories and ideas which are likely to engage the interest of academics and management consultants and generate further research. Practising managers, however, may find the approach in some of the papers over complicated and rooted in too many theoretical perspectives. The repetitions in the various introductions, to some extent, assist with absorption of key ideas. Nevertheless the use of specialist terminology is likely to require simplification for practising managers so that they can unravel what needs to be done in order to reap the benefits of competence-based competition.

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**Management, Education and Competitiveness: Europe, Japan and the United States**

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At certain moments in time in the history of the university, reflective questions arise like 'why do universities exist?' and 'what should universities do?' At these moments philosophers and historians take their chance to rethink or explain the purpose and function of the university. In this respect university-based business education does not differ from other academic fields of study. Since the mid 1980s modern academic business schools have entered a period of critical reflection. Before that time the purpose and function of university-based business schools was hardly challenged. The general underlying assumption was that university business schools

were to educate young, talented people for business at the highest possible level. In short, academic achievement was equated with success in business (Sterling Livingstone, 1971).

In his seminal work on the history of academic management education in Europe, the United States and Japan, Robert Locke (1984, 1989) challenged the superiority of American academic management education and its assumed contribution to economic performance. Locke demonstrated that there were alternative, competing and successful modes for training and educating people for managerial positions (e.g. (West-) Germany and Japan). Moreover he showed that the evolution of these modes was highly dependent on the structure and culture of the national higher education system. Locke's culture-specific thesis gave rise to historical re-evaluations of national systems of management education. (NB. In contrast to European countries, Locke's books have not gained much popularity in the US.)

Rolv Petter Amdam's edited book, entitled *Management, Education and Competitiveness: Europe, Japan and the United States* (1996) should be read against the background of this re-evaluation and Locke's culture-specific thesis. Amdam's book contains a series of articles by contributors from Norway, Sweden, the UK, the Netherlands, the United States, Japan, Italy and Switzerland. As Amdam states in the introduction the book focuses on two main themes. The first is linked to the question of how and why systems of management education have developed differently in disparate countries. Related to this first theme, several authors deal with the question of how, considering their differences, national education systems have adopted the American model of management education.

The second theme considers the relationship between education and business. Both themes were also addressed by Locke's 1989 book, which makes it interesting to discover whether some new theoretical and/or empirical insights are brought forward in Amdam's book. Regarding the first theme and the related question, Amdam tries to revise Byrt's characterization on the process of transferring the American model to other countries as being a kind of 'educational imperialism'. The concept suggests a 'one way' kind of diffusion process with an active transmitter of educational ideas, a passive receiver and a neutral receptive educational context. In contrast the authors focus on the dynamics in the diffusion process by paying attention to the role of the transmitter and the receivers, and the factors (e.g. educational culture) that influence the way in which foreign ideas and educational models are selected, moulded and internalized. It is hypothesized that the extent to which a national system of management education is 'imperialized' by the American model largely depends on the national system's critical capacity to resist or adapt this model to its own needs. Japan is the most well-known example of selecting and adopting foreign ideas without giving up its own educational tradition (Nishizawa).

The case of Norway (Amdam, Byrkjeflot and Halvorsen) is interesting in this respect. The domination of the engineering professions in managerial ranks resisted the American concept of general management as a professional qualification and as a separate academic discipline in its own right. Yet discussions continue as to what extent Norway is losing its strong critical capacity and if it will become a 'victim to American ideology in management' (Amdam). Gemelli's nice historical case study on the impact of the Ford Foundation programmes on the evolution of INSEAD shows another example of strong critical capacity. INSEAD succeeded, by selective imitation, in translating American patterns into its own institutional culture.

Moreover INSEAD successfully internalized a complex environment which is related to different social systems. On top of that it has become one of the most prestigious academic business schools in Europe. The analysis of the Dutch case (De Man) also supports Amdam's theory about strong critical capacity. The Dutch pre-war situation was characterized by two different schools of thought in business studies, a pragmatic and a theoretical/deductive approach and a strong, separate engineering approach to management subjects. According to De Man these different approaches adopted American subject matter but never adopted the American educational philosophy.

The UK shows evidence of a national system with a weak critical capacity. A long-standing mutual misunderstanding between the economic and education system prevented the UK from developing a strong profession with its own educational institutions that could deliver managers for higher positions. At the same time, the British failed in modernizing their traditional 'hands on', in-house approach of corporate training for future leaders, as happened in Germany and Japan (Wilson). Because the UK lacked a critical capacity to select and mould American educational ideas it became subject to 'educational imperialism'.

On the basis of these case studies, one may optimistically conclude that most European countries were, due to their critical capacity, very successful in the selective adoption of American ideas on management education without losing the strengths of their own educational tradition. This may also explain why these European countries, in contrast to the US and the UK, have not experienced a 'crisis of management education'. However the authors are not quite clear in pinpointing which American ideas were successfully adopted, and how, and what the real strengths of the country-specific educational traditions were. In this respect Locke's book of 1989, although sometimes speculative in explanations, has more to offer.

With regard to the second theme in the book, the relationship between management education and competitiveness, Amdam's editorial does not attempt to develop any particular theory. As a consequence, the articles dealing with this theme lack a common perspective on the relationship between management education and competitiveness. Moreover not all articles are written from a historical perspective, which gives the second part of Amdam's book a less coherent character. This does not imply that these articles are less interesting to read. For example, Aaronson's paper is very insightful and informative about recent developments in the American business school world. It shows that in spite of the curricular changes at many American business schools after the 'wave of criticism', changes took place only incrementally and very slowly. 'Why do firms', Aaronson wonders, 'continue to rely on managers educated by a process that removes them from the real world?' Engwall studied the interaction between business and business education by analysing the supply and demand sides of business graduates in Sweden in the course of history. He observed that a gradual 'academization' of Swedish top managers has taken place, and that academic business education has been rather successful in delivering people for top management ranks. Lorange looked to the interaction between business and business schools from a different angle. The traditional gulf between these two should be bridged by establishing close long-term relationships.

The most provocative contribution is Bjarnar and Gammelseater's discussion on management teams. They criticize the traditional concept of management education that has emphasized the individual hero-manager who is expected to possess universal knowledge and skills. Because of this unrealistic assumption the authors

propose that the future belongs to heterogeneous management teams which will be created in business firms and not at business schools. The question then arises as to what is left to the business schools? The future business schools should, according to the authors, aim at developing true experts in the different business disciplines. This training and education should be accompanied with social training for preparing students to work with other experts.

Amdam's book contains a prudently written collection of histories of management education. It fills gaps in our historical knowledge of one of the most ambivalent academic disciplines in the university. However it cannot be compared with Locke's provocative and comprehensive history of management education in the world's leading economic powers. The case studies are quite unrelated to each other; no systematic comparisons are made between the different countries. Moreover the complex relationship between management education and competitiveness remains unexplained. As several authors stated, much more research is needed to shed light on this complex relationship.

Although most authors in the book referred widely to Locke's pioneering work, they did not take up his pivotal and innovative message that differences in the contents of the curricula matter when one tries to relate education to competitiveness. Therefore combining an institutional approach with a content approach to the history of management education is the main challenge for future research.

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### Metaphor and Organizations

DAVID GRANT and CLIFF OSWICK (eds). London: Sage, 1996. 272 pp. £45 (hbk), £14.99 (pbk). ISBN 0–8039–7629–1 (hbk), 0–8039–7630–5 (pbk)

In his essay on the history of scientific objects, Bruno Latour (1996) poses the question whether lactic acid existed before it was 'discovered' by Pasteur in 1857, and comes to the conclusion that it existed insofar as Pasteur was successful in retrofitting it, as it were, into history back to Neolithic times. The reader of the 'Introduction' to *Metaphor and Organizations* could ask, in a similar vein, whether it is possible that Herbert Spencer used the term 'organization' in the sense in which it is used in organization theory as early as 1873 (p. 2), or if this term was effectively launched only in the late 1950s (Waldo, 1961). (Although Barnard (1938) already talks about 'organizations', thus going against the original meaning of the term which connotes a state or an attribute but not a unit. Retrofitting is a rewarding job.)

The collection edited by David Grant and Cliff Oswick contains two kinds of contributions: those that examine how the metaphor fared in organization theory