

Book Review : Comparative International Management
by Carla Koen

หนังสือที่น่าสนใจ : การจัดการเปรียบเทียบระหว่างประเทศ
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Comparative management is a study of management and organization in different societal settings. This comparison focuses on the interplay between social institutional settings on the one hand, and various management and corporate forms and process on the other hand. Comparative management has responded to the extension of global corporate activities with an outpouring of observation, research and advice. Comparative analysis can address large versus small companies, manufacturing versus service companies, profit versus non-profit organization, successful versus unsuccessful companies and one managerial system versus another (Nath, 1988; Chen, 1995). Comparative management, cross-national management,

cross-cultural management, and comparative organizational behaviors can sometimes be used synonymously, because cultural context is mainly used for comparisons of management systems between countries (Redding, 1994; Cray & Mallory, 1998; Pudelko, 2007). By identifying either similarity or difference, comparative management usually aims at devising the most effective corporate strategy and structure possible and makes the most effective use of human resources in different cultures (Ronen, 1986).

Comparative management and international business are quite different; though, closely related. While comparative management is primarily concerned with studying the similarities and differences

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among managerial processes in different countries, international business focuses on studying issues and problems that involve the management and activities of multinational corporations (MNCs) (Nath, 1988; Chen, 1995). Hence, comparative management is not primarily interested in the specific issues arising from cross-border business activities. For example, the question of political conflicts between host-country national governments and MNCs, such as the protection of intellectual property, trade barriers and local environment, are unlikely to receive major attention in comparative management, as it does in international business (Nath, 1988). With the increasing complexity of international environments, markets and personnel, foreign MNCs to operate within their boundaries, hints that they have become more organisationally complex than the more domestically oriented firms and they may develop distinctive routines and competencies as a consequence (Whitley, 2001). In general, comparative management and international business are interrelated and overlapping. An international manager can learn a lot from comparative management before dealing with different cultural settings or systems.

As a comprehensive review of comparative management, Koen (2005) has done an excellent job by trying to revive comparative management back into

international business. As the most updated literature review, her book is prone to be one of the classic books in comparative management. As many scholars (e.g. Ronen, 1986; Redding, 1994; Cray & Mallory, 1998; Bhimani, 1999) have done this work before, this book summarizes the state-of-the-art theoretical development of this field. Apart from the twelve chapters in the book, the introductory chapter starts with the theoretical debate between universalistic and particularistic premises and the implication of globalization for comparative management. Chapter 1 discusses the economist's versus the sociologists' stance on how the economy has an influence on culture and societal environment. Chapter 2 inquires into the relationship between national culture and management consisting of methodological dilemma, cultural clusters, an alternative between etic and emic approach and the influence of national culture on cross-cultural negotiation. Chapter 3 investigates organizational culture concerning the emic and etic approaches to the research streams, multi-level shaping of culture, cultural issues in N&A, industry culture, strategies and economic performance, and how to create, consolidate and change organizational culture. Chapter 4 applies institutional analysis to the relationship between national diversity and management, and compares new institutional theories, especially

between societal effect (SE) and national business system (NBS). Chapter 5 examines how to manage human resources in terms of work relationship, employment relationship and reward structure. Chapter 6 explains corporate governance with a societal comparison among major capitalist models. Chapter 7 explores the characteristics and types of production systems, and their relations with the societal environment. Chapter 8 compares national innovation system on the basis of technological advancement and institutional involvement in major capitalist countries. While Chapter 9 discusses structural issues in MNCs, such as internationalization process, coordination and control, knowledge management, and management of cultural and institutional difference, Chapter 10 scrutinizes strategy issues in MNCs. To balance the need between to compete and to cooperate, Chapter 11 depict network and cluster of economic activities from a theoretical perspective ranging from network to cluster to innovative milieu. Finally, to explain the relationship among globalization, convergence and societal specificity, Chapter 12 links corporate governance, the personnel, and industrial relation systems together.

This book introduces the state-of-the-art theoretical perspectives and development of international business issues to comparative management theory.

It imports a sociological perspective to broaden comparative management framework, especially SE and NBS approaches. Moreover, it includes new topic in this field, such as corporate governance, national innovation system and network and clusters of economic activities.

Nevertheless, this book can be improved if it includes the theoretical development of comparative management in North America. It does not examine the pioneer work in comparative management, such as Harbison and Meyers (1959), Kerr et al (1960), Farmer and Richman (1965) and Negandhi and Prasad (1971). Their work becomes classic books as referred in subsequent literature in this field, such as Fukuda (1988), Nath (1988), Chen (1995), Ronen (1986), Redding (1994), Cray and Mallory (1998) and Bhimani (1999). The book mainly discusses only theoretical development in Europe. However, her review implies that the development of comparative management theories in North America has come to a halt since the work of Negandhi and Prasad (1971), whereas its counterpart in Europe has sprung up since Whitley (1992) has begun to develop NBS by importing institutional approach from comparative sociology.

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