

companies are necessarily less efficient than private ones, arguing that ‘there is no empirically established relationship between the relative share of public ownership and economic performance’ (p. 71).

Di John makes a distinction between the challenges of the first, ‘easy’ stage of import substitution and those associated with its more advanced stage, and then attempts to determine the regime types that are compatible with each one. He does not consider populist policies, or even corruption, as inherent impediments to the successful implementation of import substitution during its initial stage. In response to economic stagnation in the 1960s, the Venezuelan government began to adopt the more ambitious goals of ‘big push’ industrialisation associated with the second stage, which included exports and mass production of steel and aluminium. According to the author, the political fragmentation and polarisation that set in after 1968 undermined the government’s efforts to promote targeted growth and other second-stage goals. Di John advocates a neo-corporatist-type arrangement as most suitable for the second stage, since major actors including political parties, state managers and business and labour leaders can reach consensus on large-scale projects. Ironically, Di John views the Punto Fijo Pact of 1958 based on consensus from above as ideal, even while political scientists over the last two decades have generally held it responsible for the elitist democracy that produced the legitimacy crisis leading to Chávez’s election in 1998. In short, Di John presents a nuanced, well-documented analysis of Venezuelan political economy and history, and in so doing questions widely held assumptions regarding the nation’s status as an oil exporter.

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Guillermo Guajardo Soto (ed.), *Innovación y empresa: estudios históricos de México, España y América Latina* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México and Fundación Gas Natural, 2008), pp. 395, pb.

Ibero-American business history has experienced belated but vigorous growth over the past two decades. In Spain the discipline has a more highly developed profile in the international academic community than it does in Latin America, where Mexico, Argentina, Colombia and Brazil are ahead in this field of scholarly endeavour. Three respected international journals have focused on Ibero-American business history in recent years: *Business History* devoted an issue to Spain in 2010, and *Business History Review* and *Entreprises et Histoire* had special editions on Latin America in 2008 and 2009 respectively. In Latin America, however, business history scholarship is lacking when it comes to the history of innovation and technology in companies and economic groups. This new volume compiled by Guillermo Guajardo Soto, a Chilean scholar based in Mexico, is a step toward filling this void.

The collection, whose title may lead one to believe that Mexico is not part of Latin America, is the product of an international seminar held in 2006 at UNAM in Mexico City. Self-described as both a comparative and interdisciplinary work (p. 17), the book serves the latter purpose better than the former. In terms of comparative research the seven protagonists from seven different sectors in four countries (Spain, Argentina, Brazil and Mexico) are perhaps too disparate, although the editor deserves credit for bringing them together in one volume and for contributing a

well-crafted and provocative introductory essay. What he fails to provide, however, is a framework for in-depth comparison of these seven large companies operating in different sectors, different countries and different hemispheres.

Of the 11 chapters, four are about Spain, four about Mexico, two about Argentina and one about Brazil. Altogether, with one exception, it is a satisfying group of case studies, rich in historical perspective and unifying themes: internationalisation, technology, innovation of varied types and, more generally, business strategy as a response to changing public policy and political instability, especially in the second half of the twentieth century. The action takes place in several different industrial and services sectors: petroleum, railways, tourism, international air transport, agriculture, iron and steel, apparel, fuel pipelines and industrial works.

The seven chapters about major enterprises in Latin America's largest countries (Argentina, Brazil and Mexico) explore aspects of their business development that depart from the familiar terrain of many of the region's scholars in terms of historical periods, sectors and main actors. For example, these studies are more concerned with the twentieth century than the much-documented nineteenth century. They deal with large, domestically financed economic groups and companies instead of foreign capital and the multinational corporate presence that has drawn the most mainstream interest. Such is the case with the study on Techint, Argentina's largest industrial conglomerate, profiled by Claudio Castro, and a chapter by the book's editor, Guillermo Guajardo Soto, about two state agencies created in the mid-twentieth century to meet the innovation requirements of Mexico's two largest railway and petroleum enterprises. The Gerdau group, Brazil's second-largest and the world's 13th-largest steel producer, comes under scrutiny in a chapter by José Lanes de Melo, a Brazilian business historian.

While export commodities do not receive specific attention, the book documents important advances in internationalisation by other businesses in the region, among them an Argentine company, Vassali, a leading combine manufacturer and the subject of a chapter by Marcelo Rougier. Complementarity between multinational milk companies and a conglomerate, the industrial group Lala, in central and northern Mexico is the subject of an essay by anthropologist Hernán Salas. Rounding out the Latin American selections is an excellent review of the literature on recent Mexican business history by Carlos Marichal.

The chapters about Spain, taken as a whole, provide valuable insight not only into the accelerated changes, business growth and internationalisation that have occurred since the nation's entry into the European Union, but also into the vibrant world of Spanish business historiography. Gabriel Tortella, a renowned economic historian, contributes a chapter about the transformation of monopolies and public entities into large, market-driven petroleum companies. Internationalisation takes centre stage in a study of railway equipment manufacturers over the past half-century by Miguel Muñoz. The rapid globalisation of Inditex-Zara, the clothing giant, which has expanded to 64 countries in less than two decades through technological innovation in production and sales, is the subject of a chapter by Luis Alonso Alvarez. Finally, a contrasting (failure versus success) look at the growth and expansion of two Spanish multinationals in the service sector, Iberia airlines and the Meliá hotel group, and their competitive edge in location, ownership and internationalisation, is the work of a business historian, Javier Vidal.

Generally each chapter draws on the specialised bibliography of its respective country/sector. Because the source works are in Spanish, this volume puts many of

them on the radar of the international business history community for the first time. Although only a few of the articles cite specific archival sources, their authorship by professional economic/business historians implies that they meet the standards of historical research. Evidence of the authors' familiarity with the latest theoretical literature in business history and international business is somewhat uneven among the chapters, and is generally more prevalent in the chapters on Spain.

Attentive readers may observe that the authors generally do not exhibit familiarity with the economics literature on innovation, except for Nelson and Winter's book. There is no mention, for example, of the neo-institutionalist or growing neo-Schumpeterian literature. Also missing is any cross-referencing with the edited volume by López and Valdaliso (1997) on technological change in Spain; similarly, recent works on Latin American economic groups are not considered. While some chapters address 'soft' management innovations, they fail to reference the corresponding Latin American bibliography in management studies.

Despite these shortcomings, however, this collection as a whole is a welcome addition to the historical literature on internationalisation and innovation in large-scale enterprises in Spain and Latin America.

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Raúl García Heras, *El Fondo Monetario y el Banco Mundial en la Argentina: liberalismo, populismo y finanzas internacionales* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Lumiere, 2008), pp. 222, \$21.00; £13.50, pb.

The title of this book might suggest that Raúl García Heras will discuss the recent 2001 financial crisis in Argentina and the subsequent repeated negotiations between President Eduardo Duhalde and agents of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, but as an economic historian, García Heras returns to the roots of the relationship between Argentina, the Paris Club and the international financial institutions. Essentially, this work is a history of this continuing relationship that began in the mid-1950s. This is a largely under-examined period in the literature, and a reader might ask why we are only hearing about it now. However, as the author points out, this period has been neglected in the academic literature largely because of a lack of accessible sources. The book thus benefits from the recent opening of archives pertaining to the negotiations between Argentina, the IMF, the World Bank and US private banks. As such, García Heras is a pioneer in writing the first historical study on this topic.

His main argument, woven throughout the book, is that political and economic policies coming from and applied by international financial institutions to open markets in Argentina in order to build a soluble and sustainable economic policy were a failure from their very beginning in the mid-1950s. Such policies were also aimed at helping Argentina to establish ties with the international financial community, and this effort seemingly failed because of a variety of internal political and economic factors that were either misunderstood or largely ignored by international creditors. Arguably, some leaders within the Argentine government also ignored signs of potentially failing policies because the aid packages and restructuring programmes did initially provide short-term relief and recovery. Another feature of this book is the description of the relationship between Argentina and the Paris Club,