BOOK REVIEW

Journal of International Business Studies (2004) 35, 75. doi:10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8400064

The international business field has long been dominated by economists and scholars originating from functional business disciplines. Yet the phenomena that we are studying are also of interest to other social sciences, such as sociology or even philosophy. A different disciplinary perspective may shed new light on core issues in international business.

One such core issue are strategic alliances. Economic and managerial perspectives of alliances have recently been brought together by Farok Contractor and Peter Lorange in *Cooperative Strategies and Alliances*, reviewed in JIBS no. 5/2003. A complementary, sociological perspective is offered by Mark De Rond's study on *Strategic Alliances as Social Facts: Business, Biotechnology and Intellectual History*. He focuses on social processes surrounding the establishment of alliances, which might explain why alliances are popular despite often disappointing performance. Does he succeed in broadening the research agenda?

Klaus E Meyer
JIBS Book Review Editor

Strategic Alliances as Social Facts: Business, Biotechnology and Intellectual History

Mark de Rond

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2003

Reviewed by: Eero Vaara

Ecole De Management De Lyon, Stratégie et Organisation, EM Lyon, PB 174, 69132 Lyon Ecully, Cedex, France
E-mail: vaara@em-lyon.com

Journal of International Business Studies (2004) 35, 75–77. doi:10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8400063

Strategic alliances are strange contemporary phenomena in the sense that they do not appear very successful, yet this does not seem to reduce their popularity. Their fad-like popularity, their apparently poor performance and the fact that they often cross international borders make them specifically interesting phenomena to be studied by international business scholars. In fact, this is one of the topics where IB scholars have in many ways contributed and even led the research efforts in management studies (e.g., Contractor and Lorange, 2002). However, this area of research, like so many others in management research in general and IB research in particular, has been dominated by overly rationalistic ideas and positivistic models. This has meant that the social aspects of these essentially social phenomena have ironically received very little attention. Like many others, I have been therefore eagerly waiting for fresh perspectives, embedded in sociological and philosophical thought, to strategic alliances. I was therefore very happy to get this opportunity to read Marc de Rond's recent book that promises to look at alliances as 'social facts'.

The book is a bold attempt to open up new perspectives to alliance research. Specifically, the objective is to unravel the social