

either delaying or refusing marriage. However, the author leaves out of the discussion whether and how women, in marriage or on the way to marriage, actually fight back by taking actions to claim and defend their property rights. It is hard to imagine the absence of strategic or tactic subversion of male home ownership from women's side when a home property has become such an important source of wealth and financial security in China.

To conclude, the book powerfully brings to light the mechanism of gender inequality in property rights in China. It is forceful in argument and rich and detailed in observation. The use of fresh media reports and vivid personal accounts gives the book lots of 'blood and flesh' and makes it highly readable and reader friendly. It shows how women are shut out of 'the biggest accumulation of residential real-estate wealth in history' (p. 12) and is no doubt a 'must-read' for China studies and gender studies professionals as well as anyone else who is interested in Chinese society, gender relations and, what Lydia H. Liu calls, 'the political economy of gender' in China.

Qi Wang
Associate Professor, PhD
China Study Program
Department of Design and Communication
University of Southern Denmark

W. Richard Scott, *Institutions and Organizations: Ideas, Interests, and Identities*, Fourth Edition, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2014, xiii, 345 pp., references, index, about the author. ISBN 978-1-4522-4222-4 (paperback).

This fourth and updated edition of Richard Scott's book, *Institutions and Organizations: Ideas, Interests, and Identities*, provides the reader with a sophisticated overview of how institutional theory has evolved from the late nineteenth century, where the earliest institutional arguments arose in Germany and Austria as a by-product of the famous *Methodenstreit*, that is, a debate over scientific method in the social sciences. From there the book discusses actor-oriented institutional logics initiated in the mid-1980s, before finally moving towards a new theoretical agenda and framework for institutional theory in the early twenty-first century. Scott suggests turning our attention from the study

of (institutional) structure(s) towards studies of processes, i.e., towards organizing institutions rather than institutions themselves, thus echoing Anthony Giddens, who in 1984 developed and emphasized the notion of structuration over the notion of structures. Taking a point of departure in this more dynamic approach towards institutional theory, Scott concurs with Hoffman and Ventresca (2002) that the analysis of institutions and organizations should adapt a higher and more encompassing level of analysis, thereby emphasizing a shift from structure towards process. By doing this, he draws attention to the empowering as well as constraining effects of institutions on human agency, thus recognizing a dialectical relationship between agency and the reproduction of institutions *per se*.

In order to delineate this theoretical timeline within institutional theory, the book opens with an introductory section on how early institutional theory relates to economics, political science and sociology. It then moves on to discuss how institutional theory got entangled in organizational studies by first discussing early approaches in this connection ending with a discussion of the foundations behind neo-institutional theory. Having thus laid the foundation for the relationship between institutions and organizations, Scott proceeds by formulating two major frameworks. The first one deals with his now classic definition of and distinction between the three key institutional pillars: the regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive. He starts out defining how to perceive institutions and then relates these perceptions to the different pillars in various (societal) institutional contexts. This discussion leads to an analysis of notions of social and political legitimacy, ending with a discussion of the basic assumption associated with each of the three pillars.

The second major framework deals with notions of institutional logics and organization, agency and institutions, identification of various institutional carriers and finally the complexity of handling different levels of analysis in this connection.

Taking a point of departure in these frameworks, the book digs deeper into the construction of institutions as well as processes of institutionalization and de-institutionalization. It ends presenting a dynamic perspective of institutional processes and their connectedness to organizational fields. The latter pay homage to Bourdieu who perceived fields as not being placid and settled social spaces, but rather arenas of conflict in which all players seek to advance their interest and where some actors are able, for longer or shorter periods, to impose their conception of

'the rules of the game'. This laid the foundation for other institutional scholars such as DiMaggio and Powell (1983) as well as for Fligstein and McAdam (2011, 2012).

This book is indeed awesome in its command of the historical as well as contemporary theoretical intricacies behind institutional theory. Its rich insights into the complexities between institutions and human agency are multifaceted and very intellectually stimulating. This intricate relationship points towards a strong cross-disciplinary practice, where international business scholars engage anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists as well as other disciplines from the humanities and social sciences in their work.

The book offers readers a thought-provoking discussion of the relationship between institutions and organizations and how this impacts studies of the emergence of agency-driven strategies based on creative ideas, changing interests and multilayered identities. Perhaps one of the greatest contributions of the book, however, is that it pays homage to a holistic approach in international business studies, thus identifying the way forward for the next generation of theoretical enquiries in this area. This reviewer can recommend this book in the strongest terms possible. It provides a highly rewarding and provocative journey into new roads within international business studies as well as within social science in general.

Michael Jakobsen
Associate Professor
Asia Research Centre
Copenhagen Business School

Works cited

- DiMaggio, Paul J., and Walter W. Powell 1983. 'The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organisational fields'. *American Sociological Review* 48: 147-160.
- Fligstein, Neil, and Doug McAdam 2011. 'Towards a general theory of strategic action fields'. *Sociological Theory* 29: 1-26.
- Fligstein, Neil, and Doug McAdam 2012. *A Theory of Fields*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Giddens, Anthony 1984. *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hoffman, Andrew J., and Marc J. Ventresca (eds.) 2002. *Organizations, Policy, and the Natural Environment: Institutional and Strategic Perspectives*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.