Preface and acknowledgements

There are several different ways of explaining how this book came to be written and – more important – why it should be read. I could say that it is a manifesto for international business research in the New Millennium. I am sure that some authors will be ‘hyping up’ their books in this way. The truth is, however, that the book would have been written whether there was a New Millennium to celebrate or not. Alternatively, I could say that it is the sequel to my book on The Organization of International Business, published five years ago. That would be half-true. Unfortunately, though, sequels are rarely as good as the originals, as they tend to be produced by people who are running out of fresh ideas. I hope that this isn’t true in the present case, but the reader can judge for themselves.

The whole truth is, I think, that I wrote this book for my own benefit, which is possibly one of the worst reasons there is for writing a book. Certainly, I have enjoyed writing the book – apart from the tedious though essential task of polishing up the final drafts and chasing up missing references. Writing is a form of therapy, as far as I am concerned – though not so far as my family are concerned, who find that it only exaggerates my antisocial tendencies. I would not wish to claim, however, as one rather arrogant economist once did, that ‘I wrote this book because I like writing books’. Apart from the need for therapy, I wrote this book because I felt that the various papers and articles I had written over the past five years reflected a reasonably coherent view of recent trends in international business. This view, I felt, could not be fully articulated within the constraints of a single paper. The full expression and development of the view required the space permitted by a book.

The book is based mostly, though not entirely, on this previously published work. This material has been thoroughly revised and rewritten during the preparation of the book. A number of the original papers were co-authored, and I would like to thank my co-authors for their substantial intellectual contributions, and also for agreeing to their work being revised and published in its present form. The co-authors’ names are listed on the Contents page and in the headings of the individual chapters of the book. I should also like to acknowledge the co-operation of the publishers of the original material.
None of the material in Chapters 3 and 7 has appeared in print before, but Chapters 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 are based on previously published work. Many professional colleagues have contributed comments on the drafts. I would like to thank the following people in particular for their support and encouragement, as well for their advice and criticism: Tom Brewer, John Cantwell, John Dunning, Jose Paulo Esperanca, Peter Gray, Stephen Guisinger, Bruce Kogut, Ram Mudambi, Bob Pearce, Filipe Ravara, Alan Rugman, Ana Tavares, Christine Weisfelder, Eleanor Westney, Bernard Wolf and Bernard Yeung. I should also like to record my appreciation of the intellectual contribution of the late Gunnar Hedlund, whose untimely death has been such a loss to the profession. He and I shared a strong interest in the internal organization of the multinational enterprise and, although we approached the subject from very different methodological standpoints, we always found plenty to talk about when we met. He is sadly missed by his many friends.

All the previous papers that form the basis for chapters in this book have been radically revised and rewritten.


Chapter 3 is entirely original.


Chapter 8 is a revised version of a paper presented to the Annual Conference of the Academy of International Business, Vienna, October 7–10, 1998. Another version of this paper forms the basis for the Introduction to Mark
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Mark Casson