

# Preface and acknowledgements

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International business has become one of the most important fields of economic activity in today's globalising world economy. When business firms extend their operations across borders to become transnational corporations, they are often entering into host business environments that are fundamentally different from their home countries in terms of institutional and market structures, industrial organisation, social relations, and cultural practices. To overcome these barriers to globalisation, transnational corporations (TNCs) need actors who are creative, proactive, adaptive, and resourceful in different countries; these are all aspects of transnational entrepreneurship that pushes international business activities beyond just managing across borders. Sometimes, these actors in TNCs are the owners or founding *entrepreneurs* themselves. They often participate actively in the establishment and management of foreign operations. More commonly, these actors in transnational operations are *intrapreneurs* or professional managers who are neither founders nor owners, but are given much autonomy to initiate new practices and to manage transnational operations. They may be equally entrepreneurial in their approach to ensuring successful cross-border operations. Engaging in international business poses a serious challenge to founders and managers of TNCs. It is clear that an understanding of the nature, *modus operandi*, and performance of these entrepreneurs and/or intrapreneurs is vital to the success of international business operations by any TNC.

If conducting business across national boundaries is rather difficult, it is perhaps even more difficult to write a book about what makes some entrepreneurs more successful in their international business activities. I have always been interested in why some people are more successful than others when they go abroad to establish their businesses. As I read from leading international business journals, I found it hard to accept that most existing studies focus on the firm rather than the individual entrepreneur. The more I read in international business studies, the more disillusioned I got. The outcome of this disillusionment then is this book! I was so frustrated about the lack of attention to entrepreneurs in international business studies that I end up writing a book about it.

Although the intellectual performance of this book remains to be judged by readers, I am indebted to many people and organisations, just like any

transnational entrepreneur reported in this book. First of all, I am very grateful to my university, National University of Singapore, for generously funding this research (RP960045 and RP970013). The highly efficient and able research assistance by Wan Menghao and Elen Sia was critical to the completion of this project. My publisher, Edward Elgar Publishing, has also been very encouraging and forthcoming. I must admit that the project was invigorated immediately after a memorable discussion with Mr Edward Elgar in my office in Singapore! An anonymous reviewer has also offered important comments that resulted in significant restructuring and revisions of the original book manuscript. The editorial and marketing team in Edward Elgar has been highly professional. My thanks go to Joanne Betteridge, Julie Leppard, Emma Meldrum, Karen McCarthy and, last but not least, Dymphna Evans. I would like to thank Peter Buckley for putting my book in his highly successful series on New Horizons in International Business.

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Henry Wai-chung Yeung  
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