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Historically, a broad spectrum of the local business and cultural community of West Sweden, including this foundation as well as entrepreneurs, foundations and multinational enterprises has supported the development of our group, the Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Their support has been vital to developing a long-term intellectual platform for advanced teaching, societal interaction and research at the School of Business, Economics and Law [Handelshögskolan] at University of Gothenburg, as well as for creating global contacts with leading international researchers and young scholars. Gothenburg is a small but cosmopolitan town, dominated by trade and the harbor and by connections between people and organizations that continue to foster creativity and local innovation for broader appeal.

Let us try to explain how the support of our business and cultural community has stimulated our work historically and today in a complex set of ways, which weave together excellent research, advanced education, and impact on society.

An important aspect is due to the historical direct support of Carl Bennet AB, SKF Group and Volvo Group. Together, they donated funds to develop the professorship awarded to Maureen McKelvey, the chair professorship in innovation and industrial management [industriell ekonomi] at the School of Business, Economics and Law [Handelshögskolan], University of Gothenburg, Sweden. Due to the initiatives of Professor Rolf Wolff, Dean of the university, these three companies – one entrepreneurial and two multinational enterprises – invested in the university and subsequently recruited Professor McKelvey in 2007 from her contemporary professorship in economics of innovation at Chalmers University of Technology, also in Gothenburg.

Another important aspect was the financing of the Visiting Professor’s
Program (VPP) at the School of Business, Economics and Law. The VPP was initiated through the leadership of Professor Wolff, working together with the local Gothenburg and Swedish business and cultural community, to promote excellence. The VPP was run by the Graduate School, then headed by Professor McKelvey, as part of a strategy focusing upon scientific quality and internationalization. Most importantly for this book, Professor Sharmistha Bagchi-Sen, Professor of Geography, State University of New York, Buffalo, US, was selected and became a Visiting Professor here. She visited annually for three years and became involved in research and advanced teaching and supervision of graduate students. Professor Bagchi-Sen would also like to acknowledge the support from the State University of New York, as well as thank them for making this international exchange possible. Financiers for VPP (2009–2013) were: Carl Bennet AB; Elanders AB; SKF Group; The Sten A. Olsson Foundation for Research and Culture; Stena AB; and Volvo Group. Subsequently, Professor Bagchi-Sen was also elected to the international academic advisory committee (IAAC) here.

Many interesting individuals have contributed to stimulating discussions about what Asia – and internationalization – means for Swedish society and globally. Moreover, this local community wants professors at the university to aim higher, impact society, stimulate young people, and – as is particularly relevant to this book – understand the complex structural transformation taking place today in Asia. In turn, this book enables us to interact with society, including businesses, policy-makers and students.

This long-term support is extremely important, including an emphasis on intellectual development and a mission for excellence. The support in turn enables us to develop organizational structures to train young people and find ways to for them to contribute to the wellbeing of the broader society.

This long-term support has thus led to relevant developments in our field at the University of Gothenburg, whereby we have developed a strong team at the Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (IIE) in the Department of Economy and Society. We interact regularly with local and global companies and policy-makers; we grant advanced degrees, including PhD degrees in innovation and entrepreneurship; and we run two successful Masters of Science degree programs, Innovation and Industrial Management (IIM) and Knowledge-Based Entrepreneurship (KBE). These programs are run in English, attract both Swedish and international students, and extend over two years, including the writing of the Masters of Science theses.

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