Acknowledgements

Early career researchers are often advised not to waste their time on book chapters, not to mention editing or writing entire books. Given that books or chapters in books do not count in academic career progression, they are often regarded as activities that simply distract our attention from what we should be focusing on, namely getting published in top-tier refereed journals. We have already challenged this view once by editing the Handbook of Qualitative Research for International Business, published in 2004. Now we are following it up with what is not a second edition of the Handbook, but rather a more focused volume devoted solely to the most popular qualitative research strategy in international business (IB), namely the case study.

In retrospect, what have we gained from the two book projects? We believe that the two books have opened up a new debate about the (mis)use of qualitative methods in IB and international management (IM) research. We are very pleased to see that this debate continues and gains prominence at international conferences and in special issues of journals. This would not have been possible without the support of contributors to both the previous and present volumes. They did not just write their individual chapters, but also, in the case of many, attended panel sessions at various conferences. We would also like to thank the conference audiences who provided us with feedback along the way, as well as those who were involved in the conference sessions as participants or conference chairs.

Specifically, in 2006, at the annual conference of the European International Business Academy (EIBA) in Fribourg, Switzerland, Stephen Young chaired a session in which we presented the initial idea of the case study as a disciplinary convention. Emmanuella Plakoyiannaki, one of Stephen’s collaborators, was in the audience and this encounter marked the beginning of our very fruitful research partnership with her. We are extremely grateful to Stephen for connecting us with Emmanuella and for his support and encouragement in our efforts to raise the profile of qualitative methods in IB in general and case research in particular. In 2009, Stephen organized and co-hosted the annual conference of the Academy of International Business (AIB) UK and Ireland Chapter at the University of Glasgow in Scotland. Thanks to Stephen, we were allocated an entire
Rethinking the case study

track devoted to case study methodology together with Emmanuella, and in our sessions several book contributors presented their work: Margaret Fletcher, Leila Hurmerinta, Fiona Moore, Niina Nummela and Ayse Saka-Helmhout.

In a Professional Development Workshop of the Academy of Management (AOM) in Philadelphia in 2007, Raza Mir presented an early version of his chapter. We would like to thank Stuart Macdonald for coming up with a catchy title for this workshop, namely ‘Making case study research count: best practices and future directions’. Later in the same year the EIBA conference was organized in Catania, Italy; Ricardo Morais as well as Asta Salmi took part in our special session on case studies. At the following year’s EIBA conference in Tallinn, it was the turn of Ed Clark, Margaret Fletcher, Emmanuella Plakoyiannaki and Anna Soulsby to present their work.

In 2008 the annual conference of the AIB was organized in Europe, this time in Milan, Italy. Our panel – entitled ‘How to theorize from fieldwork?’ – turned out to be an important theme for our book, for teaching and for later publications. As well as Mary Yoko Brannen and Gabriel Szulanski presenting their chapters, Lorraine Eden, then Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of International Business Studies, shared her experiences and observations about publishing qualitative research, particularly case studies. In this session, she announced that JIBS would have a special issue devoted to ‘Qualitative Research in International Business’, for which Mary Yoko Brannen became one of the guest editors. Yves Doz acted as discussant of the panel and reflected upon the panellists’ contributions in the light of his career as a prominent case researcher.

The AOM held its annual meeting in Chicago in 2009 and, in response to an initiative from Jane Salk, we co-organized a panel entitled ‘Making the case: rhetoric, rigor and “getting it right” with case study research’. We would like to thank her for her passionate presentation on how much the case study has lost during the process of making itself ‘legitimate’ as a scientific research strategy. We would also like to thank her for the opportunity to develop, in the panel proposal, many of the ideas that we later fleshed out in our introductory chapter to this book.

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