

Foreword

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Attracting and retaining talent has always been a major priority for most organizations. Talent matters, whether it is in a large multinational enterprise, an entrepreneurial start-up or a university business school.

More than ever before, talent is also mobile. Many of the most talented people have the option – and the willingness – to move to whatever locale will allow them to maximize their talents.

In some instances, that locale may in fact involve talented individuals returning home to their country of birth after a period of learning from study/work elsewhere. These returnees represent an important, yet poorly understood, subgroup within every economy.

Such returnee entrepreneurs have experience and are comfortable working in multiple geographies. They bring a perspective home that many locals lack. The ability to understand and bridge how business does or can work in a multi-country context represents a material comparative advantage. An international mentality is distance-reducing, and will often separate the eventual winners from the losers.

Drawing on a conference organized by the lead editor several years ago, Huiyao Wang and Yipeng Liu have compiled a unique collection of chapters that look at the mobility of talented managers across borders. The first part of their book focuses on returnees to China, and also considers the very real public policy implications of such a group for the economy. The second part of the book compares the experience in China with that in North America and Europe.

The need for entrepreneurial ecosystems is well-established. Anything that helps us better understand how to create and manage such systems is welcome. The chapters in this volume move us closer to such an understanding.

Having worked with Dr. Wang on various projects for more than 25 years, I can attest to the energy and commitment he brings to projects

such as this book. As an entrepreneurial returnee to China himself, he brings a unique insight to the furtherance of a broader knowledge of this important area.

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