Foreword

The arch-fathers of the social sciences saw entrepreneurship as an essential part of their views of how economic life functions – and then, amazingly, the entrepreneurship view disappeared for more than a century from scholarly texts. The world was simply too busy inventing large business to pay attention to entrepreneurship. There were notable exceptions including Knight (1921) and Schumpeter (1934); yet, it took the information and telecommunication technology (ICT) revolution and the fall of the Berlin Wall in the late 1980s to bring scholars and politicians alike to the realization that entrepreneurship not just matters, but is crucial.

At the 1983 annual Babson meeting, Hoy and Carland differentiated between entrepreneurs and small-business owners; Carland et al. (1984) elaborated on this. Yet, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the word ‘entrepreneurship’ was frequently interchanged with ‘small business’. The focus was on the role that small businesses played in a world dominated by their large counterparts. The more research was devoted to this role the more it was shown that small businesses did not just play a role complementing that of large businesses but that their role was fundamental, such as for innovation and employment. Wennekers and Thurik (1999) noted that the 1980s and 1990s saw a re-evaluation of the role of small firms and a renewed attention to entrepreneurship. Given that Schumpeterian (1934) innovators were relatively few, Dana wrote, ‘The flagships of entrepreneurship are small and medium enterprises’ (1999: 25).

By the turn of the millennium, focus shifted from small businesses to start-ups and new ventures. Their potential to produce and nurture creativity, experimentation and learning was immense. However, what is a small new business without the *persona causa* – the entrepreneur? Again, the focus shifted from the business to the person. Then it appeared as though academia had invented the field of entrepreneurship. The field had long been there, but under different denominators. There is no better way to show the pervasiveness and the richness of the field of entrepreneurship as by this *Encyclopedia*. It shows two things simultaneously. Its pervasiveness: there is no subfield in the social sciences where the entrepreneurship view is absent. It is often central – without it there are gaps in scientific modeling and thinking – and dynamic – it is often both a cause and a consequence of other major phenomena. It is rich in that the entrepreneurship perspective contributes to theory development in subfields. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, entrepreneurship scholars used social sciences to explain the entrepreneurship view. More recently, social sciences use entrepreneurship to further develop their own subfields.

I can think of no better illustration for both developments (the change from the business perspective to the person perspective and the change from the entrepreneur as the starting point to the subfields of the social sciences as the starting point) than this *Encyclopedia*. If ever the phrase ‘essential reading’ is applicable, it is concerning Léo-Paul Dana’s *Encyclopedia*. It is easy to predict that scores of young researchers will read this

second edition practically cover to cover to find their way in the fascinating terrain of entrepreneurship research.

Professor A. Roy Thurik
Erasmus School of Economics in Rotterdam, The Netherlands
and Montpellier Business School, France

REFERENCES

- Carland, J.W., F. Hoy, W.R. Boulton and J.A.C. Carland (1984), 'Differentiating entrepreneurs from small business owners: a conceptualization', *Academy of Management Review*, **9** (2), 354–9.
- Dana, L.-P. (1999), *Entrepreneurship in Pacific Asia: Past, Present & Future*, Singapore, London and Hong Kong: World Scientific.
- Knight, F.H. (1921), *Risk, Uncertainty and Profit*, Boston, MA and New York: Houghton Mifflin; Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Schumpeter, J.A. (1934), *The Theory of Economic Development: An Inquiry into Profits, Capital, Credit, Interest, and the Business Cycle*, trans. R. Opie, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wennekers, S. and R. Thurik (1999), 'Linking entrepreneurship and economic growth', *Small Business Economics*, **13**, 27–55.