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A New Generation in International Strategic Management

Edited by

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Edward Elgar

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Preface

In years of working with doctoral students and junior colleagues at the University of Utah and after serving on doctoral and junior faculty workshops at conferences, I became convinced that an increasing number of young researchers were working in the area of international or global strategic management, even though many of these individuals might not consider themselves primarily as international business scholars. These emerging scholars offer growing interest in theoretical ideas such as real options theory, agency theory, or knowledge-based strategy theory. They address new phenomena such as the rising strategic importance of alliances and networks, the potential for regional clusters replacing nations as the primary units of location economics, or the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the global marketplace. They are interested in the interactions of social, cultural, and other humanistic concerns with the economic focus of traditional international business (IB) studies. They have discovered a variety of new empirical data sources and empirical methods unfamiliar to many more established scholars.

Unfortunately for our field, the long delays in moving scholarly work to publication in influential academic journals, the challenge of publishing truly innovative ideas in blind-reviewed outlets, and the limited opportunities for invited publication by less known researchers all combine with the pressures of teaching and beginning a career to force the most original and innovative ideas from these individuals to be disseminated slowly at best and perhaps to never see the light of day. When I was approached by Alan Sturmer of Edward Elgar Publishing to do an edited volume, I determined to limit contributors to the junior faculty and doctoral candidates whom I was meeting. The consequence is that the lead authors in this book were all pre-tenure at the time the project began – though several of them have been promoted since then. A few of them have become widely appreciated in the last few years, but I think their contributions to this volume show that all of them have interesting ideas and great potential for important contributions. And they are not unique – rather, I think, they are quite typical of a much larger set of their contemporaries. They happened to come to my attention at the time that I was recruiting authors, but I hope their contributions will give readers pause to consider both the ideas presented here and the

potential embodied in their own junior colleagues. They give me great hope for the future of both strategic management and international business.

The contributions in this volume are meant to offer new perspectives on international business strategy. Most edited volumes with invited authors seem to be opportunities for the 'usual suspects' among established scholars to offer variations on their already well-known concepts or to state opinions supported more by reputation than by research. The hope behind this book is that new perspectives stated in less practiced tones will both inform and inspire others among the emerging generation of international strategy scholars. The authors are new and emerging scholars, and the only guidance given them was to address a topic that interested them, was not well developed in the literature, and that they felt was sufficiently beyond current thinking to be difficult to publish in peer-reviewed journals. The result is a set of chapters with truly original thinking – concepts that won't be seen in the journals for years. After reading these contributions, I came to the conclusion that often stated fears of the demise of meaningful scholarship addressing international strategy are misdirected. Traditional concepts may be mature, even declining, but new ideas are evolving as fast as the global market itself. We just need to pay more attention to the new generation of scholars.

Steve Tallman
University of Richmond, 2007