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978-0-521-12555-0 - A Family Business?: The Making of an International Business Elite

Jane Marceau

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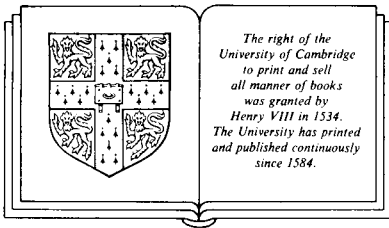
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JANE MARCEAU

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For Alex, who teased me about this book until I finished it.

For John, who will publish only other authors.

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Preface

The research on which this book is based grew from an interest in the processes of social and economic change and continuity in Europe. Stemming from an initial concern with education as a mechanism of the reproduction of social inequality, the project developed into a much broader analysis of a three-way relationship: between organisational change in the context of economic shifts, the restructuring of the upper class in Europe and the use of a particular educational credential in the intra-class exclusion strategies developed in response to new conditions. In the light of these combined interests, the arena for the research had to cross national frontiers and include the international aspects of the social restructuring of the business class which are too often neglected by observers looking exclusively at the changing economic base.

This book presents the findings of two studies, carried out between 1973 and 1980. The project as a whole was made possible by two grants, the first from the (then) Social Science Research Council in Britain and the second from the *Commissariat Général du Plan*, through its social and economic research arm, the CORDES, in France.

The study focused on the background, education and careers of students and alumni of the Institut Européen d'Administration des Affaires (INSEAD) coming from twelve national origins. The physical field of the inquiry was as international as the population at the centre of the study. The research was based on archival records held in France, on questionnaires and on interviews carried out in cities across Europe and in the United States, while the results of the survey were analysed in Australia.

A project of this kind demands the time, patience and cooperation of many people, to whom I owe a great debt of appreciation. First and foremost, as the study principally concerned the Institute's students and alumni, I must express my thanks to two successive Deans, Dean Berry and Uwe Kitzinger, and their staff at INSEAD, at Fontainebleau. Without their encouragement and cooperation nothing would have been possible. Students and alumni of the Institute also spent much time answering what must sometimes have seemed

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excessively personal and occasionally irrelevant questions and talking with considerable patience to the researchers in the study, both indirectly through their replies to the questionnaires and directly in interview. Multinational managers are by definition extremely busy and those concerned frequently spent several hours helping us to understand their complex lives and careers. Thanks, too, must be expressed to their spouses for themselves contributing so much to our understanding of multinational families. I have to apologise to them. My own international career has complicated the production of a promised short report on the study. I hope this book will be some compensation.

The gathering of the data was long and complex and many people assisted with it at different times. They included Marie-Paule Leblond, Ursula Thanheiser, Jane Canva, Janet Massey, and Vincent Delbos. Interviews with alumni were carried out by Bernard Hucher, Nicole Celle, Christine Patte, Clotilde Giry and Pandelis Mitropoulos. Typing and retyping of questionnaires was most efficiently and kindly done by Christine Poirot.

In France, the study could not have been carried out at all without the efficient and helpful cooperation of the administrative staff at the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, who guided me through the intricacies of the spending of French public research monies.

In Australia, my heartfelt thanks must go to Michele Robertson who with the utmost patience not only corrected my naiveties about quantitative research but did all the computing on which the report is based. In Australia, too, my appreciation must also go to four very efficient people, Betty Gamble, Vivien Read, Jill Deck and, above all, Anabel Murray, who deciphered my handwriting and typed against deadlines with great goodwill. The final preparation of the book owes much to their skill.

Finally, I should like to emphasise that the project as a whole could not have been conceived without the intellectual stimulation provided by members of the Centre de Sociologie de l'Education et de la Culture, including particularly Pierre Bourdieu, Monique de Saint Martin, Luc Boltanski and Claude Grignon. Their work provided the framework for my own and they will immediately see the debt mine owes to them. I hope they will not be too displeased with the result. From another perspective, my friend Pascale Gruson was a most helpful and encouraging colleague.

My thanks and appreciation then must go to all these people. Responsibility for shortcomings and errors remains, of course, my own.