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The Rise of the Global Company

This is the first full account of how an influential form of commercial organization – the multinational enterprise – drove globalization and contributed to the making of the modern world. Robert Fitzgerald explores the major role of multinational enterprises in the events of world history, from the nineteenth century to the present, revealing how the growth of businesses that operated across borders contributed to an unprecedented worldwide transformation and deepening interdependence between countries. He demonstrates how international businesses shaped the economic development and competitiveness of nations, their politics and sovereignty, and the balance of power in international relations. *The Rise of the Global Company* uses the lessons of history to question prominent contemporary interpretations of multinationals and their consequences, and offers a truly wide-ranging survey of multinational enterprise, spanning two hundred years and five continents.

ROBERT FITZGERALD is a Reader in Business History and International Management at Royal Holloway, University of London. He is the author or co-author of six books, including *Doing Business in Emerging Markets: Opportunities and Challenges*, Rowntree and the Marketing Revolution, 1862–1969 (Cambridge University Press, 2007 and 1995), *The Growth of Nations: Culture, Competitiveness and the Problems of Globalization*, and *British Labour Management and Industrial Welfare, 1846–1939*. He is also the editor of seven books, including *Remaking Management: Beyond Global and Local* (Cambridge University Press, 2008).

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ROBERT FITZGERALD

Royal Holloway, University of London



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Contents

<i>List of tables</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>Preface and acknowledgements</i>	xi
1 Multinationals, states and the international economy	1
International business and the historian	1
Box 1.1 Understanding the past, interpreting the present?	4
Transnational history and global forces	6
Meanings: globalization and multinationals	9
The international economic system, nations and firms	15
History and perspective	21
2 Empires of business: 1870–1914	24
Multinationals and empire	24
Multinationals and economic transformation	29
Mercantilism and opium	34
The new international system	39
Trade patterns	42
National policies and tariffs	44
Trade expansion	46
Foreign direct investment	49
Multinational organization and activities	56
Box 2.1 Multinational theory and competitive advantage	62
The Raj and multinational investors	65
China and the trading imperative	68
Commodities and colonizing South East Asia	70
British business rule in South East Asia	74
Netherlands and German business in Asia	76
Indian and Chinese traders	80
The Americas and non-colonial investments	84
Banana republics	89
International rivalry and business in Africa	93

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 978-0-521-84974-6 - The Rise of the Global Company: Multinationals and the
 Making of the Modern World
 Robert Fitzgerald
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

vi	<i>Contents</i>
	International outrage and Africa 98
	Trade and multinational banking 102
	Cosmopolitan financiers 108
	Japan's industrialization and international business 111
	Canals, railways and sovereignty 117
	Engineering, construction and utilities 123
	The industrialized countries and manufacturing 126
	Technology and brands 132
	International oil 137
	Petro-diplomacy 144
	Multinationals: 1870 to 1914 148
3	The reverse gear?: 1914–1948 156
	Ending the first global economy? 156
	First setback: the Great War 162
	War and sequestration 168
	War and empires 173
	US leadership and automobiles 178
	Management transfer and automobiles 184
	National policies and industrialization 190
	Japan and the multinationals 196
	Multinational investment strategies 201
	Internationalizing brands 206
	Trade, services and utilities 210
	Controlling natural resources 215
	Controlling oil 222
	Second setback: the Great Depression 226
	Manufacturers and the Depression 230
	Industry and politics 232
	Resources and sovereignty 240
	Third setback: the Second World War 245
	Multinationals: 1914 to 1948 253
4	Cold War and the new international economic order: 258
	1948–1980 258
	Superpowers and the international system 258
	International economic institutions 263
	Trade, output and foreign direct investment 267
	Assembly line and party line 274

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-84974-6 - The Rise of the Global Company: Multinationals and the
Making of the Modern World
Robert Fitzgerald
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

<i>Contents</i>	vii
American autos and Europe	277
US oil and chemicals in Europe	283
US industry and national markets	287
Host governments and US multinationals	293
Discovering and organizing the multinational	298
British and Netherlands multinationals	306
Europe and the small economies	315
Return of the European multinational	320
Canada, Australia and international business	331
Japan, trade and industrialization	338
Box 4.1 Economic development, trade and the multinational	344
Trading companies and colonialism's legacy	346
Finance multinationals	355
Service multinationals	365
Capitalism and the Communist bloc	369
Sovereignty versus property	376
Post-war Asia and Africa	382
Mineral diplomacy in Asia and Africa	386
Post-war Latin America	400
Multinationals: 1948 to 1980	411
5 Global economics?: 1980–2012	415
International economy phase IV?	415
Global trends	417
Global governance	431
Global services	437
Trade and transport	440
Banks, deregulation and the global market	448
Banks and international business strategy	452
Banking, regional patterns and acquisitions	454
Insurance	458
Leisure and retailing	460
Telecommunications, media and utilities	462
Battle for resources and oil	467
The oil majors	469
Developing-economy oil companies	473
Mining, competition and politics	477
Manufacturing trends and global value chains	482

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978-0-521-84974-6 - The Rise of the Global Company: Multinationals and the
Making of the Modern World
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Frontmatter
[More information](#)

viii	<i>Contents</i>
Global business organization	485
Box 5.1 Emerging-economy multinationals	492
Dragon multinationals	492
Multinationals: 1980 to 2010	496
Conclusion: International business in time	501
<i>Notes</i>	511
<i>Bibliography</i>	538
<i>Index</i>	573

Tables

2.1	Regional GDP per capita averages, 1820–1929 (1990 \$US)	<i>page 28</i>
2.2	Value of world exports, 1820–1992 (1990 \$USm)	42
2.3	Location of British overseas assets in 1914 (%)	50
2.4	Sectoral distribution of total British assets in 1914 (%)	50
2.5	Sectoral distribution of British FDI in 1910 (%)	51
2.6	Location of British FDI assets in 1910 (%)	53
2.7	Estimated stock of accumulated FDI by country of origin, 1914–38	54
2.8	Estimated stock of accumulated FDI by recipient economy or area, 1914–38	55
2.9	Number of overseas banks and branches, 1912	103
3.1	World output and exports, US\$bn (1990 = 100), 1913–50	159
3.2	Shares of world trade, 1913–37 (%)	160
3.3	Export shares of commodities, by value, 1913–37 (%)	161
3.4	Estimated stock of accumulated FDI by country of origin, 1938–60	162
3.5	Estimated stock of accumulated FDI by recipient country or area, 1938–60	163
4.1	World merchandise exports and GDP, 1820–1992 (1990 \$US)	267
4.2	Outward stock of FDI by major home countries and regions, 1960–80 (\$bn)	270
4.3	Inward stock of FDI by major home countries and regions, 1960–80 (\$bn)	271
4.4	Outward stock of FDI by home countries (%), 1960–80, and inward stock of FDI by host countries (%), 1960–80	273
4.5	Outward stock of developed economies in the USA and Western Europe (%), 1960–80	273
4.6	Percentage of US FDI in Europe, 1950–70	274

4.7	Distribution of world outward FDI stock by sector (%), 1978	274
4.8	FDI in the USA, 1950, 1970 (\$USbn)	306
4.9	Outward FDI stock by sector: France, Germany and the Netherlands (%)	315
4.10	FDI assets held by Swedish multinationals (%), 1960–74	315
4.11	FDI assets held by German industries (%), 1961–75	321
4.12	Foreign and US investment in Canada by industry sector (%)	332
5.1	Merchandise export growth, 1960–2006: average annual (%)	418
5.2	Average annual change (%) in exports, world GDP, FDI flows, and FDI stock, 1986–2006	418
5.3	World merchandise exports, 1983–2006: region and selected country	419
5.4	Growth of commercial service exports per person (%), 1990–2009	420
5.5	Largest exporters of merchandise and commercial services, rank, country, and %, 1990–2006	421
5.6	World GDP, merchandise exports, service exports, and outward FDI stock, 1983–2003	422
5.7	Foreign direct investment, 1990–2009, US\$bn, 1,000s employees, and %	423
5.8	Outward stock of FDI by major home countries and regions, 1980–2005 (\$bn)	424
5.9	Inward stock of FDI by major home countries and regions, 1980–2005 (\$bn)	426
5.10	FDI stock, 1990–2010 (%)	428
5.11	Assets and sales of foreign affiliates headquartered in developed economies and in DTEs, 1995 and 2005, as % of world trade	429
5.12	Assets, sales, employment and TNI of foreign affiliates headquartered in developed and developing economies	430
5.13	World outward FDI stock by sector and industry, and world inward FDI stock by sector, 1990 and 2005 (\$m and %)	441

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[More information](#)

Preface and acknowledgements

I began writing this book with a number of objectives. I wanted to offer a comprehensive survey of the development and impact of modern multinational enterprise, from its origins to contemporary times. I hope that the story that emerges will appeal to any reader with an interest in history or world affairs, as well as offering insights for the specialist. I decided on a largely chronological account. There was the solid reason that such an account did not exist for a general history of multinational enterprise, and chronological narrative – describing the sequence of events, and connecting the context and the detail – is a fundamental part of an historian's toolkit. It was always apparent that it would be impossible for one book or one author to cover every aspect of multinational enterprise over the span of 200 years and more. I have focused on showing the major role of multinational enterprises in the events of world or international history. Empires, nation states, government policies, wars, and differences in economic development have been critical to the evolution of multinational enterprise, and to the ability of multinationals to exploit their competitive advantages and to fashion global networks. By the end of the book, I trust the reader will have a clearer notion of the when, where, why and how of multinational enterprises over their long history.

In so far as I have been able to achieve any of my aims, I should acknowledge a number of debts. I have to thank Cambridge University Press, Michael Watson, the History editor, for his many valuable insights and useful advice on everything, from content to structure and language, and my excellent copy-editor, Pat Harper. I received a great deal of help from companies, archives and libraries that answered my enquiries. I am grateful to several anonymous referees, who raised questions of the original proposal and the final manuscript. I owe special thanks, however, to Mira Wilkins for spending so much time reading my manuscript, and I benefited greatly from her analytical precision and acknowledged standards of scholarship. I would also like

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Robert Fitzgerald