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Ling Eleanor Zhang • Anne-Wil Harzing
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Managing Expatriates in China

A Language and Identity Perspective

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Preface

We have always been fascinated by language and identity issues. The three authors of this book, two ethnic Chinese (Ling and Shea) and one Dutch national (Anne-Wil), all speak English as a second language; we have also all been “expatriates” and “repatriates” throughout the past ten years of fieldwork on which this book is based. Each one of us has lived and worked in more than three countries and in more than two languages.

Our constant reflection on our own experiences in coping with the changes in our working lives and attempts to understand how to meet the demands of our changing work environments have helped us stay passionately engaged with business expatriates in our research projects throughout the years.

At the beginning of this book journey, Ling and Shea were both located outside China working with Western scholars in Finland, the USA and Australia. Thus, seeking answers on how Western, Indian and overseas Chinese expatriates are viewed in China also held up a mirror for them to reflect on their own acculturation and expatriate work experiences in Finland and Australia. Later, they both repatriated to China for a period of time, which gave them further inspiration and the exposure to understand China through both local and foreign eyes.

While experiencing a repatriation shock themselves, Ling and Shea started to question and investigate further how work life might play out for non-Chinese individuals in a contemporary and rapidly changing

China. The frequent and at times almost daily exchanges with Anne-Wil, based first in Australia and then in the UK, ensured the book incorporated a non-Chinese perspective as well.

We hope that we have done justice to the multifaceted phenomenon of expatriates and their language and identity struggles in China.

Helsinki, Finland
London, UK
Melbourne, Australia
May 2017

Ling Eleanor Zhang
Anne-Wil Harzing
Shea Xuejiao Fan

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website (www.harzing.com) with resources for international management and academic publishing, including the Journal Quality List and Publish or Perish, a software program that retrieves and analyses academic citations.

Shea Xuejiao Fan is Lecturer in International Business at the School of Management at the RMIT University, Australia. She is interested in research on identity and expatriate–host country employee interactions in multinational corporations (MNCs), and identifying the mechanisms when people with diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds interact in an organisational context, such as ethnic identity confirmation, cultural frame switching, and implicit theory related to ethnicity and race. Her work has been published in academic outlets such as *Human Resource Management* and *Journal of World Business*, and media outlets such as *The Conversation* and *Australia China Quarterly*. She was nominated for the International Theme Committee-Emerald Best International dissertation at the 2015 Academy of Management Annual Conference. Her paper on ethnic identity confirmation, a topic related to Chapter 6 in this book, received the Journal of Global Mobility Best Paper Award at the 2016 EURAM (European Academy of Management) Annual Conference.

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