

Preface

A book is like a tree. The roots of this one can be traced back to my experience as a PhD student, when I bought a small share in a patent right from a patent broker. I learned the hard way how difficult it was to make proper economic calculations and how easy it was to become legally swindled, even though the technology was sound and simple. In fact, 99.6 per cent of my invested financial capital was lost, but my intellectual capital increased since I gained considerable interest, that is, an intellectual interest, in patenting and licensing. During the 1980s, I pursued my concern within this area, as an academic instead of a venture capitalist. Inspired by the late Professor Edwin Mansfield, I made a study of patenting and technology intelligence in twelve large US corporations while at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Sloan School of Management during 1985–86.

The trunk to this book stems from a project conducted in 1992–93 together with Jon Sigurdson and Enrico Deiacò for the Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences (IVA). The project was commissioned by the Swedish Patent Office in connection with its centennial jubilee in 1992, which happened to occur in a pro-patent era and in the midst of the so-called 'patent war' between Japan and the USA. The major focus of the project was intellectual property management in large Japanese corporations, which was judged as representing the best practice, and included a comparison with large Swedish corporations. The project report, IVA (1993), summarizes this comparison along with an analysis of Sweden's patent position in the global patent landscape.

My work with this project then branched out into a deeper study of intellectual property management in Japan during 1994–95, followed by a study of the US situation while residing at the Center for Economic Policy Research at Stanford University in 1995–96. During these years, the work also expanded into a wider context. It gradually became clear to me that the observations in Japan and the USA were symptomatic of a much grander transition into what could be called intellectual capitalism, with technology as a key element according to my interpretation. For that reason, the book needed to be complemented by more comprehensive chapters on the history, theory and future of intellectual property, surrounding the main original study of Japan. As a technology-based state with many technology-based corporations, Japan could be considered a potential spearhead of this transition to a new form of

capitalism. The USA, with technology-based regions such as Silicon Valley, is pushing the frontiers of capitalism in similar directions. Hence, this book has grown more comprehensive and ambitious than initially planned.

Numerous people and organizations have been very helpful, to whom I am deeply grateful. Jon Sigurdson worked with me in the original IVA project, together with Enrico Deiacco as Secretary for the Academy. The steering committee for the IVA project was chaired by the late Bert-Olof Svanholm, CEO of ABB Sweden, and comprised Lars Björklund (Swedish Patent Office), Ulf Rehme (Saab-Scania AB), Jan Uddenfeldt (Ericsson AB), Clas Wahlbin (University of Jönköping), Douglas Wahren (Stora AB), Claes Wilhelmsson (AB Astra) and Jerry Öster (Victor Hasselblad AB). Peter de Bellmond provided valuable assistance from the Swedish Patent Office.

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Several people have spent much of their time and personal intellectual capital on reading and commenting upon the manuscript. Their help has been indispensable in improving the final result. Professor Frederic Scherer has been of

invaluable assistance with his general support and rich comments, drawing upon a long career as one of the leading economists in the field. Professor Erik Dahmén, patent attorney Thomas Ewing, deputy patent commissioner Lars Björklund and former corporate patent manager Gerhard Miksche all made detailed and invaluable comments from various policy, legal, economic, management, engineering and language points of view. Thomas Ewing was moreover very helpful as a research assistant. The same is true for Sven Lindmark and Bo Heiden, who also commented conscientiously from an engineering and management point of view. Magnus Backstad and especially Bo Heiden assisted in data checks and the further collection of various material. Ulla Anson provided secretarial assistance in early drafts of the manuscript. Björn Areskough supplied much help with data organization and statistical analysis. Mats Magnusson has given valuable help in translations from Japanese and Jon van Leuven and Bo Heiden in checking and improving the English language. In finalizing the manuscript, prompt and highly professional service was provided by Eva Burford in word-processing, editorial assistance and many other secretarial capacities. With all this help, I can only claim exclusive rights to any remaining errors.

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Finally, book writing takes its toll on the people closest to you at work and at home. Thank you all for your continuous inspiration and support and your sacrifice and forbearance.

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