

AIB Dissertation Awards: The Early Years (1968-1985)

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LAST YEAR, THE LATE ALAN RUGMAN (2013) published a piece in *AIB Insights* in which he recounted the recent history of the AIB Dissertation Award. In it, Alan describes the decision by the Executive Board of the AIB in April of 1986 as one that “formalized” the awards through the acceptance of a report by an ad-hoc committee established for that purpose and which had proposed a set of guidelines for future awards. Shortly thereafter, beginning in 1987, the awards were named after Richard N. Farmer, the legendary professor of international business at Indiana University, former AIB President, one of the earliest pioneers of our field and mentor to a whole generation of IB doctoral students who lobbied for naming the award in his honor. A quarter century later, the AIB Board renamed the dissertation award in honor of Peter J. Buckley and Mark Casson, two outstanding scholars responsible for the early development of internalization theory, one of the foundational approaches to the study of multinational enterprises.

Rugman’s article provides a rich description of the development of these awards over the past 28 years. He traces their evolution in terms of two important trends: the growth of scholarly work on institutional aspects of international business and the greater importance of work carried out outside the United States in recent years.

Facing a scarcity of data, the article provides no coverage of the early years of the award, that is, beginning with its debut in 1968. There is also an implication that previous awards were somehow ad-hoc in nature. In any event, little information was provided that would allow us to complete the picture on the evolution of doctoral research in our field. Consequently, we have taken on the task of examining these earlier awards, their subjects and recipients, and we have attempted to shed some light on the development of our IB research in these formative years of our Academy.

Methodology

As we sought information on early award years, we ran into a number of obstacles. We relied on John Fayerweather’s history of the AIB’s first 25 years of existence (1986) to find the names of early winners.¹ Since his listing did not include dissertation titles, we searched through the University Microfilms in Ann Arbor, Michigan — both online and in bound volumes — and supplemented this information with Google Scholar searches of, and emails with, past winners.² All early winners

and titles are listed on Table 1, and we are confident that this information is both complete and correct.

We consulted incomplete AIB Board meeting minutes (sometimes undated) to determine procedural changes and policies, and we contacted three former AIB presidents (Jack Behrman, Robert Stobaugh and Art Stonehill) and a former Executive Secretary (James Goodnow), all of whom had been heavily involved in the organization’s early years, to ascertain their recollections. Unfortunately, so many years have transpired that many details were lost. Since we were both involved with the AIB almost from the onset of the dissertation awards, we were able to recall certain things. However, we readily admit that there are gaps in this part of our paper. Perhaps the most frustrating inquiry came as we sought to find out where past winners are today. Many of them “fell off the map” many years ago. We have indicated on Table 1 the “last known” location for all winners, but some of this information is dated and may be incorrect. We also found no record of other finalists, thus perforce we had to depend only on winning dissertations to draw conclusions such as on topics chosen for study. (On reading this, if you find any errors or can fill in any gaps, let us know so that we can make corrections for the AIB archives.)

The Rationale and Early Structure of the Dissertation Award

The earliest reference we could find to the organization of any dissertation awards is in John Fayerweather’s AIB history. He describes the Board’s intention as follows:

[In order] to foster doctoral work, an annual award for a superior dissertation was proposed. The concept was a simple one, which received ready support, and the first award was made in 1968 to J.W.C. Tomlinson...

At the outset there were few candidates and the process was handled rather informally. However, formal procedures were quickly needed, and a set of rules was set forth in 1973. Three senior persons in the field of international business were designated [presumably by the Board] as the Selection Committee. Entries were made by submission of a ten-page summary of the dissertation. From these papers four finalists were selected. Their full dissertations were read by the committee in making the final choice for first and second place awards. With various modifica-

Table 1: Dissertation Award Winners 1968-1985

Year	Winner	Granting Institution	Dissertation Title	AIB Member?	Last Known Position
1968	James W.C. Tomlinson	MIT	A Model of the Joint Venture Decision Process in International Business	no	U. of British Columbia
1969	John D. Daniels	U. of Michigan	Recent Foreign Direct Manufacturing Investment in the United States: An Interview Study of the Decision Process	yes	U. of Miami (emeritus)
1970	José R. de la Torre	Harvard U.	Exports of Manufactured Goods from Developing Countries: Marketing Factors and the Role of Foreign Enterprises	yes	Florida International U. (emeritus)
1971	Jeffrey S. Arpan	Indiana U.	International Intracorporate Pricing: Non-American Systems and Views	deceased	U. of South Carolina
1972	James J. Ward	George Washington U.	Product and Promotion Adaptation by European Firms in the U.S.	no	NA
1973	Lee H. Radebaugh	Indiana U.	Accounting for Price Level and Exchange Rate Changes of United States Firms with Manufacturing Subsidiaries in Brazil	yes	Brigham Young U. (emeritus)
1973	Claude L. Simpson	Georgia State U.	The Export Decision: An Interview Study of the Decision Process in Tennessee Manufacturing Firms	no	Northeast Louisiana U.
1973	Arnold K. Weinstein	Columbia U.	The Overseas Investment Decisions of U.S. Multinational Advertising Agencies	no	NA
1974	Edward B. Flowers	Georgia State U.	Oligopolistic Reaction in European Investment in the United States	no	St. John's U.
1975	Ah B. Sim	UCLA	Decentralization and Performance: A Comparative Study of Malaysian Subsidiaries of Different National Origins	yes	U. of Wollongong
1976	Gerard B. J. Bomers	U. of Washington	Multinational Corporations and Industrial Relations: A Comparative Study of West Germany and the Netherlands	no	Netherlands School of Business
1977	Robert D. Tamilia	Ohio State U.	A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Selected Source Effects on Information Processing in an Advertising Context: An Empirical Study of French and English Canadian Consumers	no	U. of Quebec at Montreal
1978	Michael A. Amsalem	Harvard U.	Technology Choice in Developing Countries: The Impact of Differences in Factor Costs	no	Midsummer Capital LLC (New York), CEO
1978	Ruediger Neumann-Etienne	U. of Michigan	Exchange Risk in Foreign Operations of Multinational Corporations	no	Intertec Group (Palo Alto) Managing Director
1979	Sarkis J. Khoury	U. of Pennsylvania	International Banking, Its Scope and Raison d'Être: A Special Look at Foreign Banks in the United States	no	U. of California, Riverside (retired)
1980	William H. Davidson	Harvard U.	Corporate Experience Factors in International Investment and Licensing Activity	no	MESA Development (Los Angeles), CEO
1981	Viem Kwok	U. of California, Berkeley	An Analytical Derivation of Optimal Joint-Venture Agreements	no	CITIC Resources Hold. Ltd. (Hong Kong) Chairman
1982	Erdogan Bilik	Ohio State U.	Forecasting Accuracy of Forward Exchange Rates and the Efficiency of the Market for Foreign Exchange: An Inquiry into the Performance of the Foreign-Exchange Forecasting Industry	no	Financial Services Professional (Los Angeles)
1982	Douglas W. Nigh	UCLA	Political Events as Environmental Determinants of United States Manufacturing Direct Foreign Investment	deceased	U. of South Carolina
1983	Kate Gillespie	U. of London	Foreign Investment and the Tripartite Relationship: Government, Foreign Investors, and Local Investors During Egypt's Economic Opening	yes	U. of Texas, Austin
1984	John J. Dugan, Jr.	Temple U.	The Relationship between Culture and Managers' Behavioral Decisions: A Two-Country Study of the Preference Formation and Choice Processes (Comparative, Motivation, Expectancy; United States, India)	no	Aviation Consulting Inc.
1985	L. Jeremy Clegg	U. of Reading	The Determinants of International Production: A Comparative Study of Five Developed Countries	yes	U. of Leeds
1985	Leo Sleuwaegen	Catholic U. of Leuven	Location and Investment Decisions by Multinational Enterprises in Belgium and Europe	yes	KU Leuven

tions, this system has continued since then with general success. (pp. 25–26)

At first, the winner and top finalist of the dissertation competition were announced publicly in the program and were asked to present their work at the Annual Meeting of the AIB. For a few years, beginning in 1970, the second place finalist was asked instead to serve as discussant to the winner's presentation of his/her work. Needless to say, this created an awkward situation whereby the second place finisher was tempted to use the occasion to prove to the audience why the winning selection was not worthy of the award. By the mid-70s a more collegial approach was chosen, whereby a number of finalists (initially three, later four) were asked to present at a special session of the Annual Meeting, but no one knew beforehand who had won. It was not until the conclusion of the session that the winning dissertation was announced by the Chair of the committee, who would normally preside over the session.

The structure of the Selection Committee also evolved over time. The initial "three wise men" (all were men in those early days) approach identified by Fayerweather gave way to a process by which a committee chair would be appointed who, in turn, would select the other members.

Although the records of AIB Executive Board meetings are spotty, they yielded some relevant information on the process by which more formal procedures were adopted. For example:

- An item in the minutes of the October 27, 1973, meeting of the Executive Board (p. 4) indicates a decision taken to "award framed certificates to all winners." Prior to this, no certificate or plaque was awarded, and there certainly was no cash prize associated with the award. Both of the authors received their respective plaques only years later.
- The Executive Board minutes of a meeting held in New York City on December 26, 1973 (presumably just before the start of the annual meeting that year), notes that, "There was a discussion of the system of judging dissertations. Bob Stobaugh [then Vice President of the AIB] agreed to draft a set of instructions for future contests, for consideration by the Board."

At the next Board meeting on April 20, 1974, the following guidelines were indeed adopted:

A. Submission

Although traditionally faculty members nominated outstanding dissertations from their respective schools, students may submit dissertations themselves. The only regulation that is adhered to rather strictly is that the dissertation be from international business rather from economics and other fields.³

B. Selection to avoid partiality

It is recommended that the review of the dissertations be by senior people in the field of international business ... [This] will add to the prestige of the award ...

It is recommended that a heterogeneous group of readers be used so as to avoid possible functional bias.

C. Number of winners

... The committee reviewing the dissertations should decide the number of awards and whether any ranking should be made. However, normally one paper (sic) will be selected as a winner and 2 as runners up."

D. Presentation of papers

The winner or winners of the dissertation awards should be present at the annual meeting to present a paper based on his or her dissertation. The paper will conform to the guidelines for submission of other professional papers of the AIB normal paper presentations... As with other papers submitted to the AIB the *Journal of International Business Studies* will have first right to publish an article based on the winning dissertation. This article will be subject to the normal editorial process which is used for all papers submitted to the Journal.

The records appear to indicate that Prakash Sethi was appointed chair of the committee in 1977, and Steve Kobrin in 1978 (no other names were found in the available minutes). Later on, probably starting in 1979, Jeffrey Arpan, himself a winner of the award in 1971, was made a permanent chair of the selection committee, a position he held until 1986. During this seven-year period, three other members rotated in and out on the committee on a three-year schedule. Eventually, beginning with 1987, the current structure by which the longest serving member of the committee became its chair and then rotated out the following year was adopted.⁴ See Table 2 for a list of all committee chairs whose names are available.

Winner Profiles

Before the initiation of the Farmer Dissertation Award, there were 23 dissertation winners from 16 institutions over a 17-year period. The difference between the number of years and winners was due to ties in four different years (1973, 1978, 1982 and 1985). The first 19 winners were all males and all from universities within the United States. This pattern was broken in 1983 when Kate Gillespie became both the first female and first winner from a university outside the United States (University of London). In 1985, two other winners from non-US universities (L.J. Clegg from the University of Reading and Leo Sleuwaegen from the Catholic University of Leuven) were added to the list. Thus, in these early years, women accounted for only 4 percent and non-US universities for 13 percent of winners. In contrast, in the subsequent 28 years the percentage of female and non-US university winners increased to 39 percent each, which undoubtedly reflects the impacts of greater female participation in higher education programs and in the globalization of IB research and AIB membership.

Table 2: AIB Dissertation Award Committee Chairs

1968-69	Unknown
1970	Vern Terpstra, U. of Michigan
1971-76	Unknown
1977	Prakash Sethi, City U. of New York
1978	Steve Kobrin, New York U.
1979-86	Jeffrey Arpan, U. of South Carolina
1987	José de la Torre, UCLA
1988	Yves Doz, INSEAD
1989	Steve Kobrin, The Wharton School
1990	Susan Douglas, New York U.
1991	Don Lessard, MIT
1992	Robert Grosse, Thunderbird
1993	Yair Aharoni, Duke U.
1994	Robert Green, U of Texas, Austin
1995	Alan Rugman, U. of Toronto
1996	Ravi Ramamurti, Northeastern U.
1997	Lee Radebaugh, Brigham Young U.
1998	John Ryans, Kent State U.
1999	Kendall Roth, U of South Carolina
2000	Jean-Francois Hennart, Tilburg U.
2001	Raj Aggarwal, Kent State U.
2002	Nakiye Boyacigiller, San José State U.
2003	Kiyohiko Ito, U. of Hawaii at Manoa
2004	Bernard L. Simonin, Tufts U.
2005	Eleanor Westney, MIT
2006	Cristina Gibson, U of Western Australia
2007	Elizabeth Rose, U. of Otago, New Zealand
2008	Gary Knight, Florida State U.
2009	Mary Zellmer-Bruhn, U of Minnesota
2010	Jennifer Spencer, George Washington U.
2011	Simon Bell, U. of Melbourne
2012	Mike Peng, U of Texas at Dallas
2013	Alan Rugman, U. of Reading

Dissertation Topics

Among the first 23 awards, the topics included work that ran the gamut of functional areas – accounting, finance, human resources, management, marketing and production. They included both comparative and cross-national management studies involving firms from both developed and developing countries. They covered most modes of international business, i.e., trade in both products and services, licensing, joint ventures and wholly-owned foreign operations. Given this diversity, categorizing major emphases is difficult, but we nevertheless identify at least four characteristics of this early work:

1. *Foreign operations in the United States.* Despite most dissertations emanating from the United States, there was considerable interest in non-US companies. Putting this in context, in the immediate post-World War II years nearly all outward FDI emanated from the United States, and it is fairly safe to say that nearly all studies during

that period, both macro and micro, emphasized these outward movements. However, by 1968, the first year of the AIB Dissertation Award, this situation was changing and was quickly reflected in IB research with such topics as FDI into the US (Daniels, 1969), product and promotion adaptation by European companies in the United States (Ward, 1972), oligopolistic reaction by European investors in the United States (Flowers, 1974) and foreign banks in the United States (Khoury, 1979).

2. *Foreign exchange.* Again, this emphasis is best put into context. From 1944–1971, currency rates were fixed to the US dollar, which, in turn, was fixed to a price of \$35 per ounce of gold. During this period, foreign exchange risk was a one-way street as currencies sometimes devalued, but seldom revalued relative to the US dollar. Between 1971 and 1973 this situation changed with the suspension of convertibility of the US dollar into gold and the emergence of the managed float system. Thus, foreign exchange risk became an important issue. Three early dissertation winners (Radebaugh, 1973; Neumann-Etienne, 1978; Bilik, 1982) seized on these changes respectively by studying the effects on accounting for value changes, ways for management to cope with such changes and the performance of the foreign exchange forecasting industry.

3. *Cross-cultural operational differences.* Much of the early work in international business dealt with cross-cultural differences that prompted questions on the universal applicability of management.⁵ Concomitantly, dissertation winners studied variances in how nationalities dealt with transfer pricing (Arpan, 1971), how different MNE nationalities managed differently within Malaysia (Sim, 1975), how French and English speakers within Canada contrasted in their responses to advertising (Tamilia, 1977) and how Indian and US managers' behavioral and decision processes differed (Dugan, 1984).

4. *Dependence on interviews.* While methodology differed among these studies, we could not help but notice when examining their abstracts that a seemingly high proportion of dissertations depended on collecting primary data through company interviews. If correct, there are probably two primary reasons. First, other than the Harvard Business School's multinational enterprise project (founded in the early 1960s) that developed information on the international activities of a large number of US companies, there was scant available data at the firm level from databanks. Second, it is probably safe to say that in the 1968–1985 period there were far fewer academic requests for access to companies and their data (with the implied time necessary for their managers to supply information) than is currently the case. Thus, such primary data collection has become progressively more difficult as companies have rationed their availability.

The Winners Now

In trying to locate early winners, three things surprised us. First, we expected to find most of them through the AIB membership list, but as of May 25, 2014, only seven were still members. Excluding two former

winners known to be deceased, only one-third of past winners remained in the AIB. Second, given the scholarship required for a winning dissertation, we expected that many more than four (17 percent) to have become AIB Fellows in subsequent years. These four took an average of a little over 20 years to be elected to the Fellows after receiving their awards. In contrast, three winners since 1986 are Fellows, and they took an average of 15 years since receiving their awards to gain this status. Third, we have all heard the expression, "Those who can, do; those who can't, teach." But apparently six of the past winners "can do, and don't teach." From all indications, they are all highly successful executives, holding such titles as CEO, Chairman and Managing Director of their respective companies. None of these are currently AIB members.

Recommendations for the Future

Given the importance we attribute to winning the annual dissertation competition, and the impact that such exemplar work can have on future scholars in our field, we believe that the AIB should make a stronger effort to preserve this information and make it available to the membership. For example, we feel that the AIB Secretariat should maintain files (physical or electronic) of dissertations for all past winners and, at a minimum, maintain abstracts for other competitors' submissions. To go even further, archives might include all IB-related dissertation abstracts, and these should be searchable by our members. Given Web-based information sources, this should be doable.⁶

Our Academy should make a strong effort toward retention of past winners. Some alternative practices may include invitations for them to be on special panels (e.g., those now in the private sector may have many useful messages to pass on), getting them involved in reviewing papers and developing special events where past winners and finalists can interact.

In summary, we feel that the collective wisdom and experience of past winners of the dissertation awards is a precious asset that the AIB should try to preserve for future generations of scholars.

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Endnotes

- 1 Fayerweather served as our first President (1960–1961) and also as Executive Secretary (1967–1970).
- 2 We would like to thank Susan Stern at the University of Miami for her valuable work in helping to retrieve abstracts.
- 3 The minutes stipulate that acceptable topics shall be defined according to the "book on international business research by Nehrt, Truitt and Wright (1970)."
- 4 José de la Torre, who had served in the Committee under Jeff Arpan, became the first Chair under this new system in 1987, and then rotated out the following year.
- 5 See, for example, Farmer and Richman (1965), Koontz (1969), and Negandhi and Estafan (1965).
- 6 At one time, *JIBS* published a list of completed IB dissertation titles on a regular basis, but we could find no record of when or why this practice ceased.

John D. Daniels, the Samuel N. Friedland Chair Professor Emeritus at the University of Miami, has served as AIB President and Dean of its Fellows. His dissertation from the University of Michigan won the annual AIB award. He has published articles in *JIBS* during four different decades and won one *JIBS* decade award. His co-authored IB text with Lee Radebaugh and Daniel Sullivan is in its 15th edition and has authorized translations in seven languages.

José de la Torre, Dean (Emeritus) at FIU's Chapman Graduate School of Business, previously at UCLA, INSEAD and Georgia State, and currently at Georgetown University, has published widely in IB strategy, served as director of companies in Mexico, India and Florida, and on business school Advisory Boards in France, Italy, Portugal, Argentina, Uruguay and Cyprus. A Fellow of the AIB, IAM, SMS and BALAS, he was named Outstanding Educator of the Year by the AOM in 2013.