

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS



Daniel Rottig, Ph.D.,
Editor

This last issue of 2018 and final issue of the current editorial team focuses on Africa. The issue was co-guest edited by Ifedapo (Dapo) Adeleye, who is an Associate Professor of Practice at Georgetown University in the United States, and Nathaniel Boso, who is a Professor in International Marketing and Entrepreneurship and Dean of the School of Business at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana. The articles were presented and discussed in panel sessions and special forums at the 2018 conference of the AIB Sub-Saharan Africa (now AIB Africa) Chapter that was held in Kigali, Rwanda, and so are the result of wide-ranging discussions and collaborations among local scholars and experts on Africa.

Interactive Lead Article



John Mezias, Ph.D.,
Associate Editor

The first article in this issue, authored by Mark Casson, is part of our interactive lead article series. Mark Casson raises the question of *should we be concerned about IB research?* He briefly discusses contemporary problems in IB research, the most worrying one being the lack of a gold standard for IB scholarship. He discusses the current state of IB research as a direct result of this lack of a gold standard in our field, and lays out ways to raise the standards of IB research. He then concludes with a set of questions to you, our highly valued colleagues and readership. We invite you to respond by submitting your comments through our interactive comments feature on the *AIB Insights* website at <https://aib.msu.edu/publications/insights>. We will publish replies by Mark Casson to your comments in a subsequent issue.

Special Issue on Africa Articles

The second article in this issue, and the first of four articles focusing on Africa, is authored by Nathaniel Boso, Yaw A Debrah, and Joseph Amankwah-Amoah, who ask the question of “Whether and How Africa Matters in IB Research.” The authors answer the first part of their question in the affirmative and propose that the contextual richness of the continent provides invaluable opportunities for future IB research. They further discuss four key thematic areas for Africa studies that provide a rich and unique contextual opportunity to advance IB research, and thus illustrate how Africa can matter in IB research.

The third article, authored by Kevin Ibeh, Dapo Adeleye and Olawale Ajai, points to the recent rise of African MNCs and asks the question of “Whether IB Scholars are Paying Sufficient Attention to this New Phenomenon in Global Business.” The authors present some key indicators for the recent rise of African MNCs, examine the implications of this trend for these companies’ international competitiveness and related opportunities and challenges, and discuss whether and how the IB community can and should embrace African MNC research.

The fourth article, authored by Goriola Olusina Daniel, Theresa Onaji-Benson, and Charles Mbalyohere, is titled “Navigating Institutional Differences in Africa: Moving Beyond the Institutional Voids Perspective.” Based on a multi-case study of six MNCs that entered Uganda’s electricity generation industry (three emerging economy MNCs and three advanced economy MNCs) and quantitative evidence from fifteen South African MNEs operating across Africa, the authors conclude that institutional voids, as conceptualized in Western-based research, are not necessarily a detriment to the success and competitiveness of MNCs that expand to or operate in markets characterized by such voids. Instead, the authors argue that MNCs operating in Africa need to actively manage a complex set of informal and formal institutions that are not necessarily voids and employ non-market strategies. The authors further assert that MNCs from emerging markets are uniquely able to do this due to the fact that they have built extensive capabilities for dealing with the idiosyncratic institutional environment in Africa.

Lastly, the fifth article, authored by Abdoukadre Ado and Ellis L.C. Osabutey, focuses on the Africa–China cooperation. The authors ask the questions of whether this cooperation has been good or bad for Africa—concluding “both”—and whether this partnership has significantly contributed to achieving Africa’s development goals—answering, “wait and see!”. The authors discuss the Africa–China relationship based on a model that conceptualizes Africa’s development and institutional environment, and examine how this partnership may contribute to achieving Africa’s ultimate vision of a prosperous, integrated, and united continent, which is captured by the Agenda 2063.

Daniel Rottig

John Mezias