EDITORIAL

Letter from the Editor

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With this *Letter from the Editor* I will be concluding my 6 years as the 6th Editor-in-Chief of *JIBS*. It has been an honor and a privilege to be entrusted with editorial leadership of the journal that, since its inaugural issue in spring of 1970 under the editorship Ernest W. Ogram Jr., has served to define international business research. In my second letter from the editor, I noted that 'The ambition of *JIBS* is to become a recognized top tier journal, acclaimed for redirecting International Business research and for defining new directions. Achieving these two goals will require persistence of purpose, time, patience and ... some luck. The outcome of achieving a renewed identity and recognized top tier status for *JIBS* can only enhance the status of our entire AIB community' (Lewin, 2003). History will judge whether during the past 6 years *JIBS* has emerged as the journal publishing research, which has redirected and redefined International Business research. However, it is most gratifying that the 2006 Social Science Citations Impact report ranks *JIBS* 8th in both the Management and Business Journal sections, and that the impact score for *JIBS* increased from 1.25 to 2.254.

In 2002, when I became Editor-in-Chief, *JIBS* was ranked 19th among Management Journals and 22nd among Business journals. I believe that the jump in the ranking is a clear vindication for the editorial strategy and structure that was implemented upon my assuming the *JIBS* Editorship. Specifically, I believe that it is directly related to instituting the decentralized editorial structure, which was intended to greatly increase the variety of papers, the theoretical range, the IB themes and empirical approaches that *JIBS* was open to and able to consider. Other factors that affected the visibility and reputation of *JIBS* and citations are the dramatic increase in submissions, selectivity in accepting papers for publication (equal to that of other top tier journals), frequency of publication and number of published pages (seven issues in 2007 and 1400+ pages), the quality and timeliness of the reviewing process, as well as the variety in types of papers published in terms of subject, conceptual approaches, perspective papers, special and focused issues, and empirical rigor. In my view, the quality of the reviews only ensure that published papers meet the level of craftsmanship expected of papers published in top tier journals; they do not predict citation impact, nor whether a paper will sink without a trace or become (in the metaphorical language of baseball) a single, double, triple or a home run. The ability to embrace variation and editorial risk-taking is the hallmark of interesting and exciting top tier academic journals in the social sciences underlying business research in general and international business in particular. However, as March (2005) argues, most academic journals are susceptible to creeping parochialism and irrelevance. My hope is that succeeding *JIBS* editorial teams will be vigilant in counteracting creeping parochialism.

Of course, strategy and persistence of purpose would have been for naught without the supporting cast of dedicated and talented Departmental Editors (38), Special Departmental Editors (22) working on individual manuscripts and focus or special issue editors (14), Editorial Review Board members (151), consulting editors (20), and lastly Harry Barkema, Kwok Leung, Lorraine Eden and Tomas Hult who have served as Deputy Editors-in-Chief for the past 2 years. I will forever be indebted to them for their collective effort in transforming *JIBS*. Editing is a labor of love and I have been fortunate to have been supported by these dedicated IB scholars who gave of self to rebuild and transform *JIBS* in a short 6 years.

There are two unsung heroes whom I especially wish to acknowledge in this *Letter from the Editor*. They are Ms. Joy Kearney at the Rotterdam School of Management and Ms. Danielle Trojan at the Duke University Center for International Business, Education and Research (CIBER). Joy and Danielle have served as *JIBS* Managing Editors during these past 6 years. Joy, and especially Danielle, have acquired the reputation as the 'mothers' of all *JIBS* authors. The two of them represent the face of *JIBS* to its authors and are on the frontline through every phase of the review process, often under very trying operational conditions. I am most grateful for their contribution to the success of *JIBS*. Additionally, I wish to acknowledge the support of 25 CIBERs for the annual *JIBS* Research frontiers Conference, and last but not least I wish to express my thanks and deep appreciation to Duke University Fuqua School of Business and the Rotterdam School of Management for their significant financial support and other resources that the two schools have provided *JIBS*.

In closing, I wish to consider the challenges facing *JIBS* as the AIB prepares to celebrate its 50th anniversary since its founding in 1959. In recent years the primary growth in the membership of the AIB has been accounted for by new members from countries outside the US and the EU. At the same time, mainline top tier journals have discovered the importance of encouraging publication of IB research, and have been actively soliciting such research (IB research accounted for 15% of all papers published in *AMJ* during 2006). For *JIBS*, the challenge is – and has been – to attract papers by scholars whose work borders on or is relevant to IB, but who tend to publish in academic journals in

disciplines *adjacent to* international business. Specific steps to connect with international scholars in political economy and institutions were represented by the focused issue on 'Three Lenses on Multinational Enterprise: Politics, Corruption and Corporate Social Responsibility'. Another concrete effort involves the upcoming Fifth Annual AIB Conference on Emerging Research Frontiers in International Business, 'Conflict, Security and Political Risk: International Business in a Challenging Environment'. Out of over 80 submissions, approximately 50% were submitted by scholars outside of international business.

During the past 6 years, *JIBS* has published several papers on a topic that has attracted a large number of submissions: consideration of the future research agenda in international business. In this final issue of volume 38, *JIBS* is publishing a focused issue on theme of 'Internationalization – Positions, Paths, and Processes'. The editorial essay by Thomas Hutzschenreuter, Torben Pedersen and Henk Volberda, which introduces the focused issue, develops the argument that IB strategy research – with a few exceptions – does not study managerial intentionality as it relates to strategies of internationalizations. I believe that the role of managerial intentionality (or 'does management make a difference?') is an under-explored research in International Business specifically and in the field of strategy generally.

The issue concludes with a perspective paper 'Beyond Gaussian Averages: Redirecting International Business and Management Research toward Extreme Events and Power Laws,' co-authored by Pierpaolo Andriani and Bill McKelvey, that highlights another possibly important research methodology issue. The authors argue that Pareto-based science and statistics should parallel the traditional dominance of Gaussian statistics (based on independent data points, finite variance and emphasizing averages). The authors question quantitative journal publications' strong bias for empirical research depending on Gaussian statistics. In their view, many IB phenomena represent extreme events that are best studied similarly to the way earthquake scientists study the rare events of very strong quakes (e.g. 9 on the Richter scale). They also argue that many IB research phenomena need to be studied within coevolutionary systems; an argument that is also being advanced by the guest editors of the focused issue.

References

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