

Editorial

Letter from the Editors: 2025 Awards Issue Featuring Peter J. Buckley and Mark Casson AIB Dissertation Award Finalists and Interviews with AIB Fellows Award Recipients

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Since 2013, *AIB Insights* has dedicated an annual issue to the finalists for the prestigious Peter J. Buckley and Mark Casson AIB Dissertation Award. We are proud to feature the 13th such issue, with articles by each of the five award finalists for 2025. For the third year, we also include interviews with the recipients of the AIB Fellows 2025 International Educator of the Year, Brigitte Madrian, and International Executive of the Year, James Lawrence.

The 2025 AIB conference in Louisville offered plenty of food for thought, as evidenced by *AIB Insights*' recent special issue (Volume 25, Issue 5) on the conference theme: Making International Business Scholarship Matter. (See Zaher, 2025, for a review of the conference and Newbury, Dikova, & Rose, 2025, for a summary of the special issue.) As usual, the 2025 AIB conference included many opportunities to challenge our thinking about international business in challenging times. In the second of our *AIB Insights* issues related to the Louisville conference, we are delighted to feature awardees, including summaries of the remarkable doctoral research undertaken by the finalists for the 2025 Peter J. Buckley and Mark Casson AIB Dissertation Award and interviews with the recipients of the AIB Fellows awards.

DISSERTATION AWARD FINALIST SUMMARIES

The five finalists for the 2025 Peter J. Buckley and Mark Casson AIB Dissertation Award are:

- Xuchang Chen, University of Reading (PhD awarded by Peking University)
- Shengwen Li, Western University (PhD awarded by Queen's University)
- Hyewon Ma, Indiana University (PhD awarded by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)
- Yulun Ma, Tsinghua University (PhD Awarded by Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)
- Deepak Nayak, Ohio State University (PhD awarded by Temple University)

Each of these talented young scholars has prepared a summary of their doctoral research, with an emphasis on the insights generated from their work. We are certain that you will enjoy reading about this exciting new research.

Focusing on the impact of the legal environment on international business, **Xuchang Chen** investigates the impact of corporate litigation on firm-level competitiveness, considering the antecedents, outcomes, and consequences of cross-border legal disputes. Taking an integrative perspective yields nuanced insights into the legal, strategic, and economic impacts of such litigation. With a strongly institutional perspective, the three studies in this dissertation address issues of managing litigation risk, the co-existence of liabilities and assets of foreignness, and the potential benefits associated with engaging in litigation.

Shengwen Li studies the impact of globalization on highly-vulnerable individuals, especially women, situated in the fragile contexts that represent the "first mile" – the start of many global value chains, considering conditions under which third-party interventions lead to greater empowerment and lower gender-based violence. Based on data collected in collaboration with a Canadian NGO operating in artisanal and small-scale mining communities in DRC, Uganda, and Zimbabwe, each of the dissertation's three studies considers a specific type of intervention: economic (village savings & loan associations), community governance (mining associations), and rights-based (e.g., gender dialogues and women's rights groups). A key insight is that, while good intentions are necessary, they are not sufficient to effect change.

The winner of the 2025 Peter J. Buckley and Mark Casson AIB Dissertation Award, **Hyewon Ma**, utilizes a real options perspective and the context of the U.S.-China trade war to understand how strategic flexibility can assist MNEs in managing uncertainty under conditions of volatility. Strategic flexibility is found to be a multidimensional capability that can serve as a shield (mitigating the impact of economic shocks via redeployment and contraction), as a sword (making use of policy asymmetries to gain advan-

tage), and as a discipline (preventing behavioral overreach through managerial awareness and governance).

In a multi-method dissertation involving bibliometric analysis, a case study, and quantitative modelling using machine learning, **Yulun Ma** considers several aspects of MNEs' internationalization in the era of digitalization. With essays addressing issues such as knowledge management among Chinese MNEs, ByteDance's (developer of social media platform TikTok) approach to business model innovation, international diversification in the context of digital products, and theoretical approaches to foreign market entry strategy, the work finds evidence of the complementarity of rapid global reach and deep local adaptation for internationalization in the digital space.

Working at the nexus of strategy, international business, and public policy, **Deepak Nayak** investigates, in three essays, how MNEs' innovation strategies change with changes in immigration policy. Studying reactions to U.S. visa regulations, the results suggest that firms' reactions are complex. Immigration restrictions do not necessarily lead to increased domestic employment; MNEs restructure to facilitate more widely distributed innovation systems, with higher coordination costs that hamper innovation. On the other hand, more immigration-friendly policies serve to facilitate skilled-migrant innovators' mobility and bargaining power. Linking social capital and geopolitics offers new insights into talent mobility in the global knowledge-based economy.

We congratulate Xuchang, Shengwen, Hyewon, Yulun, and Deepak, and thank them for sharing their fascinating research with the readers of *AIB Insights*. We acknowledge, on behalf of the AIB community, the selection committee for the 2025 Buckley and Casson AIB Dissertation Award. Members of this committee commit a tremendous amount of time and thought to the two-stage selection process, and we extend our sincere gratitude to Alvaro Cuervo-Cazurra (Chair), Christine M. K. Chan, Bryan Husted, and Elisa Giuliani for their service.

INTERVIEWS WITH AIB FELLOWS AWARD WINNERS

Complementing the five articles authored by the finalists for the 2024 Buckley and Casson AIB Dissertation Award, we also feature interviews with the winners of the 2025 AIB Fellows International Executive of the Year and International Educator of the Year. Each of these outstanding

awardees was selected by a subcommittee of the AIB Fellows, as indicated below.

James Lawrence, a Director of AerCap who has served on 18 public company boards since 1990, was selected as the **2025 AIB Fellows International Executive of the Year**; he is interviewed by AIB Fellows Robert Grosse and *AIB Insights* Editor William Newbury. In this interview, James (Jim) Lawrence discusses his international career development, which includes working for the Boston Consulting Group and then Bain and Company, before cofounding the LEK Partnership in London. He provides insights from his extensive executive experience, which includes roles at Rothschild, Unilever, General Mills, Northwest Airlines, and PepsiCo., along with his board service, which includes Apple, British Airways, Travelers, and Intuitive Surgical, among others. He also provides advice for both international business scholars and students to be better prepared for the current international environment. The selection committee for this award included Rob Grosse (Chair), Paula Caligiuri, Seung Ho "Sam" Park, Rob van Tulder, and Anthea Zhang.

Brigitte Madrian, Dean of the Brigham Young University Marriott School of Business in Provo, Utah, USA, was selected as the **2025 AIB International Educator of the Year** by the Fellows of the Academy of International Business (AIB); she is interviewed by Maria Tereza Fleury and William Newbury. In this interview, she discusses her career background and what led her to become a professor of economics, her path to her current position as Dean of the BYU Marriott, and the keys to Brigham Young University developing a strong program in International Business. She also provides advice to doctoral students and junior scholars regarding important factors for success in the current global environment. The selection committee for this award was comprised of Maria Tereza Leme Fleury (chair), Jonathan Doh, Lilac Nachum, Saeed Samiee, and Catherine Welch.

We congratulate James Lawrence and Brigitte Madrian for their AIB Fellows Awards, as well as all five finalists for the Peter J. Buckley and Mark Casson AIB Dissertation Award. We hope that you enjoy reading our 2025 *AIB Insights* Awards Issue. Please look for more exciting issues in 2026, including a special double issue on International Business In Africa to start the year – and please continue to submit your applied international business research to the journal!

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