



## critical perspectives on international business

Renewing the call for critical perspectives on international business : Towards a second decade of challenging the orthodox

Joanne Roberts Christoph Dörrenbächer

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# Renewing the call for *critical perspectives on international business*

## Towards a second decade of challenging the orthodox

Joanne Roberts

*Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton, Winchester, UK, and*

Christoph Dörrenbächer

*Faculty of Business and Economics,*

*Berlin School of Economics and Law, Berlin, Germany*

### Abstract

**Purpose** – This paper aims to reflect on the future of *critical perspectives on international business (cpoib)* by considering some key developments in the international business (IB) context since the Journal's launch in 2005. The Journal's mission and scope is refreshed in light of these developments. Changes to the editorial team and editorial advisory board are also announced.

**Design/methodology/approach** – A review of some of the key developments in the IB context provides the background and justification for a revised editorial mission and scope.

**Findings** – Given changes in the IB environment, the need for a journal that takes a critically reflexive view on the activities of IB and issues of relevance to IB is found to be of increasing importance. This finding underlines the need for scholars to undertake empirical and conceptual studies that adopt critical perspectives to identify IB practices that are detrimental to stakeholders broadly defined and to offer alternatives.

**Originality/value** – This is the first effort to reassess and renew *cpoib's* mission and scope in the light of the changes in the IB context since the Journal's launch in 2005.

**Keywords** *critical perspectives on international business*, Editorial advisory board, Editorial team, International business context, Mission and scope

**Paper type** Viewpoint

### Introduction

In 2014, *critical perspectives on international business (cpoib)* celebrated its tenth anniversary with a double special issue that reflected on the development of the Journal since its inception in 2005. The contents of the issue, and particularly our introductory article "Challenging the orthodox, a decade of *critical perspectives on international business*" (Roberts and Dörrenbächer, 2014), took stock of the Journal's progress, its main intellectual challenges and contributions as well as of the evolving geographical distribution of its contributors and readers. Our overall conclusion at this time was that the motivations that led to the foundation of *cpoib* were still valid and that there was much for the Journal to do in the years ahead. Yet, we also contended that the world was a very different place in 2014 compared to 2005. Indeed, according to many



commentators, today's world is contradictory in itself: full of "sufferings, distress, violence and catastrophes" (Chomsky, 2011), stemming from poverty, armed conflicts, environmental degradation and large inequalities, pushed ahead by old and new economic actors, whose activities are insufficiently controlled and democratized by political parties, nation states and civil society actors. Although the realities of the contemporary context were being reflected in terms of the content of the Journal, they were not fully evident in the Journal's editorial mission and scope. Given the importance of the Journal's mission and scope as a key signpost for both new authors and readers, it was therefore vital that the editorial team review and renew them. Hence, during 2015, we undertook a consultation process with *cpoib*'s editorial team, encompassing the associate editors, our book review editors and the editorial advisory board (EAB) members, to solicit suggestions and feedback on how the Journal's mission might be refreshed to ensure that the full range of concerns of relevance to a journal concerned with exploring and advancing a critically reflexive perspective on international business (IB) in all its various forms is properly communicated to prospective authors and readers.

In the course of renewing *cpoib*'s mission and scope, it is important to consider the factors that have influenced the context of IB since 2005. Hence, in this article, we begin by briefly reviewing some of the globally significant developments since the Journal's launch. Our considerations are far from exhaustive, but they do serve to illustrate the dynamic nature of the IB context. Following on from this, we detail the consultation process undertaken to refresh *cpoib*'s mission and scope. A revised mission and scope is then presented. To take forward the Journal's renewed purpose, we have sought to reenergize our EAB and editorial team through the appointment of new members who we introduce in the next section. Then we briefly consider *cpoib*'s future by highlighting areas and issues related to IB that are in need of investigation from critical perspectives, before we close with some final reflections.

### Changes in the international business context

There have been many changes in the global environment since 2005. Hence, it is not possible in this short article to cover every element that has had some impact on IB. However, the purpose here is to identify a selection of major developments to demonstrate a range of key factors that have contributed to the shaping of the IB context during the past decade. A key debate that was underway when *cpoib* was established concerned globalization, including whether it was a new phenomenon, what its consequences were and whether there were alternatives to the neoliberal form of globalization (Hirst and Thompson, 1999; Kingsnorth, 2003; Pilger, 2003). However, as noted in an earlier article by the Journal's editors (Cairns and Roberts, 2011), today globalization is taken as a given. Nowadays, how to survive and prosper in an ever more integrated global economy is the key issue of concern for individuals, businesses and states. The Global Financial Crisis of 2008 (hereafter GFC), the repercussions of which are still reverberating in many parts of the world, illustrated the challenges that the globally integrated economy presents to stability in the twenty-first century (Cairns and Roberts, 2009). While institutions like the World Trade Organization and the World Bank promoted neoliberal policies and the economic benefits of global integration, as the impact of subprime mortgage crisis in the USA disseminated rapidly across the world (Jain, 2009), the negative aspects of a globally integrated economy became devastatingly

evident. What has become painfully clear is that the benefits of integration do come at the risk of endemic crisis. The cost of economic integration has been acutely felt among the European Union (EU) countries, as the euro zone members have sought to sustain their single currency.

More than eight years on from the GFC, its impact is still felt in the continued imposition of austerity policies by many advanced country governments as a means to address the burden of massive national debts accrued largely through the banking sector bailout. Nevertheless, many states continue to pursue the very same neoliberal economic policies, including the use of debt to finance spending, which actually underpinned the last crisis. Hence, the recovery of the countries that were worst affected by the 2008 crisis remains fragile. Indeed, recently, the International Monetary Fund has warned of the threat of stagnation among G7 economies (Elliott, 2015).

Yet, while employment insecurity and cuts in social support and public services impact the majority of citizens in advanced countries post 2008, the world's population of ultra-high-net-worth individuals (UHNWIs), defined as those individuals having a net worth of at least US\$30 million, grew by 6 per cent in 2014 to 211,275 individuals and their wealth increased by 7 per cent to nearly US\$30 trillion (Wealth-X, 2014, p. 9). Accounting for only 0.004 per cent of the world's adult population, these individuals control almost 13 per cent of the world's total wealth (Wealth-X, 2014, p. 9). It is no surprise, then, that the luxury sector is bucking the trend in terms of growth with its value exceeding €850 billion in 2014, having grown at a rate of 7 per cent in the previous year (D'Arpizio *et al.*, 2014, p. 3). As Piketty (2014) has argued, with rising inequalities in both the advanced and developing countries, we are witnessing a reversal of the post Second World War trend towards greater equality of income and wealth (Stiglitz, 2013; Dorling, 2014). While most people in the advanced countries have seen a relative decline in their economic resources since 2008, UHNWIs seem to be unaffected by the GFC. Such developments have implications not only for individuals but also for the nature of the capitalist system, which Piketty (2014) suggests is returning to a form of "patrimonial capitalism" controlled by inherited wealth.

Given that the banking sector was the primary source of the GFC – a sector that is built on trust and subject to regulation – it is not surprising that trust in economic institutions has been severely damaged (Gillespie and Hurley, 2013). Moreover, the rebuilding of trust is not helped by the failure in many cases to punish those responsible for the corrupt activities in the finance sector and the continuation of pre-2008 behaviours as new banking and corporate scandals continue to emerge. Corruption remains a major issue for IB and its stakeholders, as many contributions to *cpoib* have elaborated (Brown and Cloke, 2011). However, perceptions of the sources of corruption have shifted somewhat over the past decade. Whereas in the past the major locations of corruption were viewed as among those countries perceived to have weak institutional context and poor enforcement of the rule of law as identified by organizations like Transparency International, corruption is now seen to be more global in nature and much more widespread. From the corrupt bankers and financial sector workers responsible for the decisions that led to the GFC to the corruption charges against a number of high-ranking FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) officials and the systematic use of banned drugs to enhance performance by members of the International Association of Athletics Federations. Corruption has become a global phenomenon among international organizations of all sorts. Even businesses that were

once highly trusted have been shown to be open to corruption. For instance, in September 2015, VW, one of Europe's largest automobile manufacturers, admitted that as many as 11 million diesel vehicles worldwide had been fitted with software that could cheat nitrogen oxide emissions tests (Howe, 2015). The scale of this VW scandal is such that it brings into doubt the trustworthiness of all the large multinational car manufacturers.

Not surprisingly, a recent survey conducted by YouGov for the Legatum Institute revealed that negative views of big business are widely held (Withnall, 2015). The YouGov surveyed populations in seven nations, including developed countries (Britain, the USA and Germany) and fast emerging countries (Brazil, India, Indonesia and Thailand). The quote below gives the report's summary of the bad news for capitalism:

- There is an almost universal belief that the world's biggest businesses have cheated and polluted their way to success – with barely 10 per cent of respondents in all seven countries surveyed thinking big businesses are “clean”.
- Contrary to overwhelming evidence, substantial majorities in all seven of the nations surveyed agree that the poor get poorer in capitalist economies.
- The populations of Britain, Brazil, Germany and America do not expect their children to be richer, safer and healthier.
- Majorities of the populations in America, Brazil, India, Thailand and Indonesia support protectionist measures to defend their manufacturing industries from low-cost imports and pluralities support restrictions in Britain and Germany – despite their histories as “open economies”.
- Negativity is most pronounced in America than in any other of the six countries surveyed – with deep pessimism about the future combining with suspicion about big businesses' ethics and strong support for protectionism[1].

Such findings reflect the growing scepticism towards capitalism and big business. There is no doubt that trust in big business to do the right thing has declined over the past decade.

In part, the ability of information about the activities of businesses and states to disseminate rapidly through the internet and social media has reinforced this decline in trust. Technologies, which are central to the operation of IB and to the resistance movements opposing transnational capital, have evolved rapidly since 2005. Some of these developments have been traced in the pages of this Journal. For instance, the first volume of *cpoib* included a special issue on “Internet counter-coordination and unionism” (Grieco *et al.*, 2005), and the internet and its use by IB was considered in a 2007 special issue entitled “The Internet and its paradoxical nature in international business” (Sinkovics and Yamin, 2007). It is not possible to consider all the various technological developments that have occurred since 2005. However, a focus on communication technologies will illustrate the implications of these developments for IB.

By 2005, the internet and e-commerce were already well-established; however, with the emergence of Web 2.0 in the early 2000s, the internet moved from being a means of passively consuming content to one that allowed interaction such that users could collaborate to create user-generated content in virtual communities (Benkler, 2006). Social networking companies such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn were either in their infancy or yet to emerge back in 2005. Over the past decade, these social

networking companies have grown significantly in number and in size. For instance, Facebook, which was launched as “The Facebook” by Mark Zuckerberg together with his Harvard College roommates in February 2004, has grown such that as of 30 June 2015, it had 1.49 billion monthly active users, 10,955 employees and a reported revenue of US\$12.466 billion in 2014 (Facebook, 2014, 2015a, 2015b). Although based in the USA, approximately 83.1 per cent of its daily active users are outside the USA and Canada, and the company has offices in over 25 countries (Facebook, 2015a). Facebook is a truly a global company, but it hardly fits the idea of a typical IB organization.

Many of today’s social networking companies first emerged out of non-commercial social activity, but have since succumbed to the logic of the market (Roberts, 2010). In the process, many have become important international companies, with their influence extending beyond the size of their workforce or the revenue that they generate. As an integral part of today’s media environment, such organizations have great political sway with their audiences and they give star bloggers and commentators an enormous reach and influence. While this has the potential for positives such as the exposing of human rights abuses and facilitating the coordination of political resistance as in the case of the Arab Spring (Allagu and Kuebler, 2011), there is also a downside related to the potential for the commercial exploitation of users’ private information. Moreover, state surveillance is greatly enhanced by the widespread use of the internet, email and social networking sites; an issue brought to the world’s attention by the former CIA employee and government contractor, Edward Snowden, who leaked classified information from the US National Security Agency about government surveillance programmes in 2013 (*The Guardian*, 2015). Yet in the era of big data, it is possible for businesses to ascertain a great deal of information about individuals from their interaction with various websites and social networking forums (Mayer-Schönberger and Cukier, 2013). While much concern has been expressed about the state’s ability to monitor individuals through such data, less attention has been devoted to the commercial uses of data collated on individuals.

Growing use of the internet and e-commerce has also raised challenges and dangers not only in terms of data mining and customer privacy but also for companies and their stakeholders in relation to hacking, cyber crime and cyber espionage. For instance, in October 2015, TalkTalk Telecom Group plc, which provides pay television, telecommunications, internet access and mobile network services to businesses and consumers in the UK, announced a major cyber incursion. According to Williams (2015), among the data stolen during the cyber attack were the email addresses, names and phone numbers of 1.2 million customers, together with 15,000 dates of birth, 21,000 unique bank account details and the information for 28,000 credit and debit cards.

Furthermore, the use of internet and mobile technologies has provided platforms for new business models that are being rolled out across the globe, which in the process are disrupting traditional sectors. Two examples that come to mind are Uber and Airbnb. By presenting competition in the taxi and hotel services, respectively, these new international businesses are offering innovative possibilities and increased choice to consumers, while also disrupting the extant business environment. Clearly, technological developments offer opportunity and threats for both IB and its stakeholders.

While social media assisted the downfall of tyrannical regimes in the Arab Spring, the shift towards democracy and economic stability and growth has been far from



smooth for most of the countries involved. Rather, internal divisions have resulted in civil conflicts and consequent economic instability. Social media has been harnessed by factions in civil conflicts and it has been used to support terrorist activities. In 2005, the aftermath of the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Centre was still reverberating, with the subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq in progress. Today these countries remain centres of conflict and instability, together with the civil wars in Syria and Libya, they have provided a fertile ground for the rise of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which is notorious for its brutality, including mass killings, abductions and beheadings (Human Rights Watch, 2015). The influence of ISIS's ideology has disseminated across the Middle East and into Africa, and its consequences reached beyond through, for instance, the flood of people into Europe seeking refuge from the atrocities it perpetrates. Furthermore, through terrorist attacks, ISIS is extending its ability to generate instability more widely. At the time of writing (November 2015), recent terrorist attacks claimed by ISIS included the bringing down of Flight 7K9268 carrying some 224 passengers, mostly Russian tourists, from Egypt's Sharm el-Sheikh resort to the Russian city of St. Petersburg on 31 October 2015; suicide bombers killing at least 43 people and wounding more than 200 in Beirut, Lebanon, on 12 November 2015; and attacks in Paris killing 130 and injuring more than 350 people on 13 November 2015. While such terrorist acts have been a regular feature of everyday life across parts of the Middle East for many years, they are now becoming more geographically distributed. So much so, that the security that was once taken for granted in the cities of Europe is now being brought into question.

Such conflict undoubtedly impacts on IB. While there may be a rising demand for the outputs of security, military and armaments-related IB, such benefits are unlikely to counterbalance the negative impacts of instability and greater risk for IB in general and particularly in sectors like travel and tourism. Indeed, one consequence of the current conflicts is that the EU's unity is being brought into question due to pressures on its core principle of the free movement of people within its borders. In 2015, Europe experienced one of the most significant inflows of migrants and refugees in its history. Motivated by the chance to escape civil war and terror and the hope of a better life, hundreds of thousands of people risked their lives as they fled the Middle East and Africa. It is normal that conflicts, like the civil war in Syria, stimulate the mobility of populations and the establishment of refugee camps supported by international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the UN in regions close to the country of origin. However, today we are witnessing a mass mobilization of refugees into Europe. For instance, the International Organization for Migration estimates that more than 700,000 migrants were detected at the EU's borders between January and October 2015, compared with 280,000 detections for the whole of 2014 (BBC, 2015a, 2015b). Of course, these numbers pale into insignificance when compared to the 4 million refugees fleeing Syria into neighbouring countries.

The dual forces produced by the flood of immigrants together with increased security requirements in the face of the increasing frequency and scale of terrorist attacks may be even more significant for the future development of a unified EU than the recent euro zone crisis. While there are huge potential benefits from immigration for EU countries, especially those with ageing populations, fears regarding social cohesion are being aroused by the speed of the influx of immigrants and the absence of a clear EU wide approach to managing the crisis. All of which plays into the hands of the extreme right,

such as the Front National in France or the Pegida movement in Germany, which tries to gain political capital by fanning the fears of the EU population. Following decades of growing EU integration, are we on the verge of steps towards disintegration? The ability of EU countries' leaders to maintain unity is certainly being tested. Could the situation in Europe signal a more widespread stepping back from economic integration? If left unchecked, the political pressures in the world today are in danger of reversing the trend towards economic integration at a global and regional level.

Of course, the past decade has also seen a significant rise in importance of the emerging economies, especially the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) countries, in the global economy and for IB. Their significance has been reflected in *cpoib* through a number of special issues concerning IB issues in Russia (Michailova *et al.*, 2013), Brazil (Nölke, 2014), and, most recently, firms in Rising Power countries (Yamin and Sinkovics, 2015). Given the significance of BRIC countries to the global economy, it is vital that scholars engage in a critical analysis of their influence on the IB context and on the practices of IB being adopted and deployed in these nations.

For instance, the rise of China to the second largest economy in the world (IMF, 2015) has significant implications for IB, as does the shifting geopolitics of such developments. Yet, China's rate of economic growth has begun to slow with repercussions for the global recovery and the many businesses that have come to rely on the Chinese market. This economic slowdown has contributed to the decline in commodity prices – most visibly in the oil price, which fell from around \$100 per barrel in early 2014 to under \$50 per barrel by the end of that year (*The Economist*, 2014). While cheaper oil has resulted in lower fuel costs benefiting business and consumers alike, the collapse of the steel price and subsequent steel plant cutbacks in production, and even closures, as occurred in the UK in October 2015, have had major negative employment consequences (Bowler, 2015). Such impacts have resulted in calls for protectionist measures against cheap Chinese steel imports from the European and US steel industries (Mukherji *et al.*, 2015). China's influence on the global economy and IB is in need of serious scrutiny from critical IB scholars, particularly given that it remains an authoritarian state, which systematically curbs fundamental human rights when their exercise is perceived to threaten one-party rule (Human Rights Watch, 2015, p. 155). Of course, the Chinese state is not alone in its abuse of human rights. While there is a tendency to regard human rights abuses as something that occurs in the emerging and developing countries, Human Rights Watch (2015) also details such abuses in European and North American countries.

Although many nations within Africa remain marred by conflict, and subsequent human rights abuses, there is growing interest in the continent from IB scholars. For instance, in this issue, there are three articles that concern Africa. In the first, Amankwah-Amoah (2016) considers the historical trajectory of African management research. The relationship between China and Africa is subject to a critical review by Ado and Su (2016), and Jonge (2016) considers Australia–China–Africa Investment Partnerships. The countries of Africa offer many varied opportunities and challenges for IB. Although rich in natural resources, Africa is home to 34 of the world's 48 least developed countries (United Nations, 2015). There is much to be investigated in the context of Africa as a location for inward foreign direct investment and in terms of developing indigenous IB activities. Yet as Ayres' (2012) exploration of mining for conflict minerals in the Democratic Republic of Congo reveals, IB activity can have a



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detrimental impact on humanity in nations characterized by ongoing political instability.

Indeed, conflicts often arise over resources (Klare, 2002). Consequently, conflicts are set to intensify as a result of global climate change. In a recent report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2015) concluded that climate change was already having effects from melting sea ice and thawing permafrost in the Arctic to heat waves, heavy rains and extreme weather incidents. However, the report also argues that climate change threatens global food security. In late 2015, France hosted the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (United Nations, 2015). The key aim of this meeting was to build a “Paris Climate Alliance”, capable of keeping the average global temperature rise below 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels and adapt our societies to existing disruption[2]. While action to prevent global warming involves adaption to new clean source of energy, countries like India and China remain dependent on the use of fossil fuels to support their rapid economic development. Clearly, IB can both contribute to climate change through environmentally damaging practices, but it can also contribute to the initiatives to reduce global warming through the adoption of sustainable and environment-friendly practices. The development of clean energy supplies and production technologies gives businesses scope for improved competitiveness. Yet, the incentives for IB to full engage in such initiatives will depend on appropriate regulation at national and international levels.

National and international regulations as well as institutional contexts are vital factors influencing the development of IB. However, since the late 1970s, the widespread promotion of neoliberal policies has weakened many national regulatory contexts. In the case of labour, this has resulted in the erosion of protection, growing job insecurity and declining working conditions. This trend does not bode well for the strong environmental regulation that is required if global warming is to be alleviated. Yet, as Moen’s (2016) study of the competitiveness of low-cost airlines reveals, national institutional frameworks and labour regulations, specifically related to industrial relations and wage levels, can be harnessed by IB to maintain competitiveness while simultaneously avoiding the race to the bottom that is a characteristic of many highly competitive international sectors. Hence, regulation is not necessarily detrimental to the competitiveness of IB.

Summing up then, international institutions, like the World Bank and the World Trade Organization, have facilitated the dissemination of a neoliberal free market approach across the globe, promoting greater economic integration along the way. Even though the GFC brought the dangers of neoliberal market integration into focus, the drive for integration continues. However, as we have highlighted in relation to the EU, there are challenges to further economic integration. The difficulties in the current international context, including climate change and global terrorism, require nations to engage in unified action, yet simultaneously, the desire for security and stability encourages inward-looking attitudes that encourage disengagement from the path of global integration. As a major force facilitating global integration and a major beneficiary, how might the slowing of integration or even a trend towards disintegration impact on IB?

The various developments highlighted above suggest that *cpoib* must redouble its efforts to scrutinize the activities of IB and to understand how the changing global

context is both influencing and being influenced by IB. Importantly, *cpoib* must continue to address the concerns of all stakeholders, to understand the impact of IB on the everyday lives of people and their environment across the globe. Where extant IB practices are detrimental to its stakeholders, the community of *cpoib* scholars must work to offer alternatives that take account of the interest of all those touched by IB practices. What is evident from the overview of the changes in the IB context is that the concerns of *cpoib* must reflect the concerns of today, not merely pursue those of the past. Moreover, there is also an important role for *cpoib* to play in terms of supporting readers, whether scholars, students or the wider interested public, to develop and extend their appreciation of how their own changing political, humanitarian and consumption practices as well as their evolving engagement with IB influence a wide range of stakeholders.

### **Consultation process**

To ensure that *cpoib*'s editorial mission and scope reflects the changes that have occurred in the IB context since 2005, in the spring of 2015, we began a consultation process with the Journal's editorial team, encompassing the associate editors, our book review editors and the EAB. The purpose of this consultation process was to solicit comments, ideas and suggestions to incorporate into our review process and ultimately into *cpoib*'s renewed mission. We also used the opportunity to ask all members of the editorial team whether they were willing to continue to serve in their current roles. In addition, we welcomed suggestions for new members, especially suggestions for talented early career scholars as well as for scholars that extend the geographical reach of *cpoib*'s editorial team. Over the months that followed, we received a large number of supportive comments about the Journal and its mission and scope. The recommendations, diverse in scope and nature, mostly elaborated on what a critical perspective on IB could mean in today's world.

In addition to recommendations as to which contemporary IB issues need to be addressed from a critical perspective, we also received a number of resignations (mostly due to retirements or other commitments) as well as suggestions for new editorial team members. We thank all those consulted for their invaluable inputs, which have been incorporated into the updated version of the *cpoib*'s mission and scope detailed below.

### **The new mission and scope**

From volume 12, issue 1, we will operate with the following mission and scope both on the website as well as in any published and promotional material. We hope the revised mission and scope will attract authors and readers to join the *cpoib* community and to contribute to the Journal.

#### *Mission*

*critical perspectives on international business* publishes material that critically engages with the broad field of IB including, but not restricted to, issues of globalization, IB strategies, corporate social responsibility (CSR) as well as power relations both within multinational firms and between multinational firms and civil society actors. *cpoib* is the only journal that exclusively supports critically reflexive discussion of the nature and impact of IB activity around the globe from inter-, trans- and multidisciplinary perspectives. With the aim of impacting on business education and management practice, *cpoib* places a special emphasis on empirical, theoretical and conceptual work

that addresses the effects contemporary IB activity has on the individual, specific communities, the environment as well as on the economy and society as a whole. The Journal promotes dialogue and new thinking and encourages authors to creatively and critically question the hegemony of transnational corporations, managerial orthodoxy and the dominant academic discourse.

### *Key benefits*

*critical perspectives on international business* is essential reading for academics with research interests in IB, for business educators willing to teach more than mainstream IB and management and for practitioners seeking alternative perspectives on management practice.

### *Scope*

The Journal is global in scope. Therefore, contributors from outside the industrialized world are particularly welcome, as are manuscripts that address issues of concern beyond the advanced nations. Given its multidisciplinary approach, the Journal addresses a broad range of audiences, such as those concerned with:

- business ethics;
- CSR;
- critical management studies;
- development studies;
- e-commerce and social media;
- economic and business history;
- economic geography;
- emerging market studies;
- environmental studies;
- equality and diversity;
- gender studies;
- global value chain analysis;
- globalization studies;
- international and comparative political economy;
- international and comparative sociology;
- IB strategy;
- international economics;
- international entrepreneurship and born global studies;
- international law;
- international management;
- international relations;
- organization studies;
- philosophy;
- planning;

- post-colonial studies;
- public policy studies;
- research methodologies;
- technology and innovation studies; and
- teaching critical approaches to understanding IB and management.

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## Changes in the editorial team

### *New associate editors*

Due to other professional duties as well as retirement, two of our longstanding associate editors resigned. Dr Jonathan Murphy, University of Cardiff, UK, and Professor Mo Yamin, University of Manchester, UK, served as associate editors since the inception of an associate editor system at *cpoib* in 2010. Moreover, they contributed in manifold ways to the success of the Journal as reviewers, authors and curators of highly recognized special issues. We are deeply grateful to them for their contributions to *cpoib* and we are extremely pleased that they are willing to maintain their connection with the Journal through membership of the EAB. Their associate editor roles will be taken up by Associate Professor Mehdi Boussebaa from the University of Bath, School of Management, UK, and Professor Rudolf R. Sinkovics from the University of Manchester, Alliance Manchester Business School, UK. Both have been connected to the Journal in the past and add nicely to the portfolio of themes and competences represented in our team of associate editors. Short statements about their past links and their future roles as associate editors of *cpoib* can found in [Box 1](#).

### *The new editorial advisory board members*

To widen our reach and to rejuvenate *cpoib*, we have also significantly updated our EAB, exchanging more than one-fourth of its members (see [Box 2](#) for changes to the EAB membership). We thank those leaving the EAB for their tireless support for the Journal. Their encouragement and sustained efforts on behalf of *cpoib* in the critical initial phase of its development helped the Journal to survive and prosper.

We warmly welcome all incoming EAB members. Even though many of the incoming EAB members are younger scholars, they nevertheless have already substantially contributed to *cpoib* in recent years. Moreover, the new EAB members also contribute to a better presence of *cpoib* in the academic communities of Asia, Continental Europe and Latin America.

## **The future of *critical perspectives on international business*: suggestions for prospective authors and guest editors**

The new mission and scope provides some ideas for articles and special issues adding to a list of topics that have not yet received significant attention in *cpoib*, which we identified in 2012 (Roberts and Dörrenbächer, 2012, p. 9). While some of the topics identified have been addressed by an impressive number of six special issues since 2012, some of which have been detailed above as well as two more in the pipeline[3], there remain many other topics in need of consideration. Below we present an updated list of topics that in our view deserve more critically minded research. We would be keen to receive articles and special issue proposals that aim to address these topics. Of course,

**Box 1. New associate editors****Mehdi Boussebaa**

I have been associated with *cpoib* since 2008, as an author, reviewer and, in the last few years, book reviews editor. The Journal occupies a unique and important space and, in my new role, I am keen to help in firmly establishing it as a leading outlet for reflective, critical and interdisciplinary research on international business. I have a specialist focus on globalizing professional service firms and am currently working on new projects examining the internationalization of business schools and the role and impact of English in the globalization process. I use qualitative research methods and my work is informed by a number of theoretical perspectives, including institutional theory, discourse theory, and theories of empire and postcoloniality.

**Rudolf R. Sinkovics.**

I have been on the editorial advisory Board of *cpoib* and in this role have had the aspiration to contribute to the well-being of the Journal in terms of helping good ideas and papers along towards publication. I have guest-edited two special issues for *cpoib* and put in a lot of effort into attracting quality and contemporary manuscripts and inviting contributions from recognized scholars. In that role my ambition was to help to improve the recognition and scope of the Journal within the IB community. With its focus on critical and contemporary topics, *cpoib* occupies an important space within the IB journal landscape. In a meta-rating paper of IB journals we find that *cpoib* is definitely on an upwards trajectory. I am keen to contribute to the further development of the Journal, its recognition as an ISI listed journal and the further progression towards a well-recognized and ranked journal. I have moved into the domain of international business from a functional specialization background in international marketing. In terms of methodologies I have frequently used quantitative, primary data methodologies. Triggered by the complexities around response rates and sometimes limiting response formats I have become increasingly interested in qualitative methodologies and opportunities to establish trustworthiness in interview-based data collection. In my current work I focus on questions of how rising powers firms potentially challenge the rules of the game and move towards responsible and sustainable business.

the short descriptions in the list are open to interpretation and refinement by future authors and special issue editors. Moreover, the list is in no sense meant to be exclusive.

Future articles and special issues of *cpoib* might, among others, cover the following areas:

- (1) IB context:
  - The changing context of IB – from economic integration to economic disintegration? Beyond neoliberal approaches to the global economy.
  - The structures that support IB – including the global governance of trade and investment; issues of power and representation in such structures and their consequences.
  - Fragility and risks in the current global economic framework.
  - Regulation of IB activities; rebuilding trust in IB activities.



### Box 2. Changing editorial advisory board membership

#### Leaving EAB members

- Dr Adrian Carr, University of Western Sydney, Australia.
- Professor David Cooper, University of Alberta, Canada.
- Professor Christopher Grey, Royal Holloway, University of London, UK.
- Professor Margaret Grieco, Napier University, UK and Cornell University, USA.
- Professor Douglas Kellner, University of California Los Angeles, USA.
- Professor Martin Parker, University of Leicester, UK.
- Professor Hugo Letiche, University of Leicester, UK.
- Professor Stephen Andrew Linstead, University of York, UK.
- Professor Robert McChesney, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA.
- Hugo Radice, University of Leeds, UK.
- Professor Rudolf R. Sinkovics, University of Manchester, UK.

#### Incoming EAB members

- Assistant Professor Gabrielle Durepos, Mount Saint Vincent University, Canada.
- Associate Professor Jacky Fok Loi HONG, University of Macau, China.
- Dr Alexei Koveshnikov, Aalto University, School of Business, Finland.
- Professor Steve McKenna, York University, Canada.
- Professor Fiona Moore, Royal Holloway, University of London, UK.
- Dr Jonathan Murphy, University of Cardiff, UK.
- Professor Ajnesh Prasad, EGADE Business School, Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico.
- Professor Rebecca Piekari, Aalto University, School of Business, Finland.
- Associate Professor Paul Sanders, NEOMA Business School - Campus de Reims, France.
- Professor Mo Yamin, University of Manchester, UK.
- Associate Professor Hèla Yousfi, Université Paris Dauphine, France.

- The impact of civil and international military conflicts and global terrorism on IB.
- Technology and IB – biotechnology, genetically manipulated organisms, the global research and development map and its implications, recent changes in communications and transportation as enabling technologies for IB (e.g. China's new silk road project), open innovation.
- IB and the challenges of the cyber environment: social media, e-commerce and virtual communities.

(2) Key concerns:

- IB and global poverty, inclusion of the marginalized in the global north and south in consumption, a critical perspective on micro-finance programmes, issues related to the bottom of the pyramid, etc.

- Global inequalities and their growing scale in both industrialized and emerging economies, the rise of a global oligarchy. IB and austerity, debt and minimum wages.
  - IB and human rights.
  - IB of the environment – global warming, carbon trading, the global recycling and waste disposal sector, renewable energy, sustainable IB, etc.
  - IB and the increasing commodification and globalization of every aspect of social and cultural life, including education and private lives.
- (3) Corporate (mis)behaviour:
- Ethical issues and CSR. IB in relation to all stakeholders – managers, shareholders, workers, consumers, citizens and future generations.
  - Issues of equality and diversity in IB management practice concerning, for example, gender, race, age and identity.
  - IB related to criminal activity – corruption, people trafficking, slavery, sex tourism, drugs, trade in protected species, illegal trade in arms, blood minerals, piracy, the black market, etc.
  - International aspects of tax evasion policies, tax havens.
- (4) Emerging markets:
- BRICs and other groups of emerging economies, including those of, for instance, Bangladesh, Columbia, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Turkey, South Africa, South Korea and Vietnam.
  - IB in, and deriving from, such emerging economies, including the countries of Africa and South America.
  - Emerging market multinationals and the political economy of their market entry.
  - Headquarters – subsidiary relationships in emerging market multinationals, power and politics of post merger integration policies in emerging market multinationals.
  - IB and the shifting political landscapes of emerging countries.
- (5) IB and labour:
- International labour organizations as actors in global production networks.
  - The international labour mobility/immobility and solidarity of workers – from elites to unskilled labour.
  - Critical perspectives on labour and industrial relations in born global companies.
- (6) New forms of IB/under-researched sectors/new actors:
- New and emerging forms of IB, non-profit-based IB. Small and medium-sized businesses and IB, social enterprises and community production in international contexts.
  - Cross-border social media business, socio-political implications of global e-commerce: issues of privacy, data security, espionage, computer, smartphone and social media addiction.

- Under-researched sectors and activities at an international level, for instance, the media industry, global sport events and organizations (e.g. FIFA), health care, higher education, utilities suppliers, nuclear industry, the international businesses of luxury, fashion, art, culture, heritage and tourism, logistics, supply chain management, international offshoring/onshoring and outsourcing/insourcing.
  - IB and the military industrial complex, private military contractors, suppliers, etc. New forms of international military activity and security services.
  - Aid organizations and other international NGOs as new actors in IB.
- (7) Scholarly issues:
- A critical perspective on the meaning of culture in IB.
  - *cpoib* as a teaching resource – developing critical approaches to IB education: crafting syllabi, case studies, in-class activities as well as online-content.
  - Innovative methodological approaches to studying IB from a critical perspective.
  - Developing inter-, trans- and multidisciplinary approaches to IB issues.

### **Final reflections: moving forward**

We hope that the renewed mission and editorial team reinforce and indeed accelerate the upward trend that the Journal has taken over recent years. We are very pleased to report that the Journal has made great progress in terms of its recognition by the academic community. Firstly, *cpoib* has achieved success in several journal rankings:

- In November 2013, *cpoib* was upgraded in the Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) rankings from C to B[4].
- In February 2015, *cpoib* was upgraded from 1\* to 2\* in the UK Chartered Association of Business Schools' new Academic Journal Guide 2015, which will be reviewed in 2018[5].
- Also in February 2015, the 3rd edition of the German journal quality list "Jourqual" (published by the German Academic Association for Business Research) mentioned *cpoib* for the first time[6].
- Furthermore, an increasing number of business schools across the world are using the SCImago[7] ranking to assess the outputs of scholars because it provides a ranking of journals according to impact rather than perceived quality[8]. The SCImago rankings list publications by the SCImago Journal Rank (SJR) Indicator, which is a measure of a journal's impact, influence or prestige[9]. In its 2014 rankings for Business and International Management (the latest year available at the time of writing), *cpoib* is placed in the first quartile at 50 out of 275 journals.

Second, over the past three to four years, we have witnessed a considerable improvement in the quality of articles submitted to *cpoib*, and we anticipate that moving up the journal rankings will further enhance this quality. This is a particular important achievement, as we rigorously apply two key requirements for a manuscript to be

entered into the double-blind peer-review process. First, they have to meet high academic quality standards, and second, they need to exhibit a critical perspective on IB. As a consequence of this positive trend in submissions, we were in 2014, for the first time in the history of *cpoib*, able to slightly increase the number of articles published (from 19 to 20 annually), with a further increase up to 22 articles currently under discussion with our publisher at Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Changes that are being introduced by our Publisher will also enhance the service that we are able to provide to authors over the next year or so. For instance, from volume 12 (2016), *cpoib* authors will benefit from the Emerald Proofing Service. This service will offer authors the opportunity to make minor amendments to their article relating to completeness and accuracy of text, tables and figures prior to publication in print and online. The introduction of this service will bring Emerald into line with other quality academic publishers. In addition, Emerald is also planning the introduction of article-based publishing to its journals, which will allow readers to access articles before they appear in print or online volumes. This will enable authors to disseminate their work rapidly with positive implications for the potential impact of their research.

It is clear that *cpoib* has made much progress since its launch in 2005. With its refreshed mission and scope together with its reenergized editorial team, it is now set to continue on its positive trajectory. As *cpoib* moves forward, there is plenty of scope for its development, and there will no doubt be challenges too. However, the success of the Journal depends on the joint efforts of all members of the editorial team as well as the many authors and reviewers who have contributed to ensuring the academic rigour and contemporary relevance of the Journal. We take this opportunity to thank you all for this support and to ask for your continued efforts to advance *cpoib*'s mission over the coming years.

## Notes

1. See, "What the World Thinks of Capitalism: YouGov's seven nation opinion poll for the Legatum Institute", available at: <https://social.shorthand.com/montie/3C6iES9yjf/what-the-world-thinks-of-capitalism> (accessed 6 November 2015).
2. See [www.cop21.gouv.fr/en/learn/what-is-cop21/cop21-the-stakes/](http://www.cop21.gouv.fr/en/learn/what-is-cop21/cop21-the-stakes/) (accessed 27 November 2015).
3. Other recent special issues include: Critical perspectives on fair trade, edited by Gibbon and Sliwa (2012); Transnational corporations, socio-economic change and recurrent crisis, edited by Ackroyd and Murphy (2013); Critical perspectives on the globally mobile professional and managerial class, edited by McKenna *et al.* (2015). In addition, special issues in the pipeline include: Voices at/from the margins: Articulating the consequences of international business, edited by Ajneesh Prasad and Gabrielle Durepos, to be published in 2016; and Critical perspectives on Global Careers, edited by Steve McKenna and Tracy Scurry, to be published in 2017/2018.
4. see [www.abdc.edu.au/pages/abdc-journal-quality-list-2013.html](http://www.abdc.edu.au/pages/abdc-journal-quality-list-2013.html) (accessed 27 November 2015).
5. See <http://charteredabs.org/academic-journal-guide-2015/> (accessed 27 November 2015).
6. See <http://vhbonline.org/en/service/jourqual/vhb-jourqual-3/teiltrating-int/> (accessed 27 November 2015). As with other journals (e.g. the *British Journal of Industrial Relations*), there was no specific ranking of *cpoib* in Jourqual, as it only ranks journals when they receive more

than 25 evaluations of their academic quality from the participants of the survey underlying this ranking (i.e. members of the German Academic Association for Business Research only). The figures provided on the basis of the overall 18 evaluations *cpoib* received suggest a ranking at the C-level, in an A (best) to D system.

7. The SCImago Journal & Country Rank is a portal that includes the journals and country-scientific indicators developed from the information contained in the Scopus® database (Elsevier B.V.).
8. For instance, George Cairns recently informed us that his current institution, QUT, has moved away from using the Australian Business Deans Council rankings to assess publications internally in favour of the SCImago Journal Rankings.
9. According to the SCImago website, the SJR “expresses the number of weighted citations received in the selected year by the documents published in the journal in the three previous years”, see [www.scimagojr.com/journalrank.php?category=1401&area=1400&year=2014&country=&order=sjr&min=0&min\\_type=cd](http://www.scimagojr.com/journalrank.php?category=1401&area=1400&year=2014&country=&order=sjr&min=0&min_type=cd) (accessed 2 November 2015).

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### About the authors

Joanne Roberts is a Professor in Arts and Cultural Management at Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton, UK. Her research interests include international business, knowledge management, innovation, creativity and critical luxury studies. Joanne has published articles in a wide range of international journals, including *International Business Review*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Journal of Management Studies* and *Research Policy*. Additionally, she has authored and edited a number of books. Her latest sole-authored book is *A Very Short, Fairly Interesting and Reasonably Cheap Book about Knowledge Management* (Sage, 2015), and she has recently co-edited with John Armitage, *Critical Luxury Studies: Art, Design, Media* (Edinburgh University Press, 2016). Joanne is co-founder and co-editor of *critical perspectives on international business*. Joanne Roberts is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: [J.Roberts@soton.ac.uk](mailto:J.Roberts@soton.ac.uk)

Christoph Dörrenbächer is a Professor of Organizational Design and Behaviour in International Business at the Berlin School of Economics and Law (Department of Business and Economics), Berlin, Germany. His current research focus is on management, labour relations and headquarters–subsidiary relationships in multinational corporations. He has published widely in renowned international academic journals, including the *British Journal of Management*, *International Business Review*, *International Journal of Management Reviews*, *Journal of World Business*, *Management International Review* and *Journal of International Management*. He is the founding director of the “Berlin Institute for International Business Studies”. Christoph currently serves as a co-editor of *critical perspectives on international business*.

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