

Volume **15**PROGRESS IN INTERNATIONAL
BUSINESS RESEARCH

TRIBUTE VOLUME: **D. ELEANOR WESTNEY**

The Multiple Dimensions of Institutional Complexity in International Business Research

EDITED BY

THE MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS OF INSTITUTIONAL COMPLEXITY IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS RESEARCH



PROGRESS IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS RESEARCH VOLUME 15

THE MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS OF INSTITUTIONAL COMPLEXITY IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS RESEARCH

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United Kingdom – North America – Japan India – Malaysia – China Emerald Publishing Limited Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2021

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-80043-245-1 (Print) ISBN: 978-1-80043-244-4 (Online) ISBN: 978-1-80043-246-8 (Epub)

ISSN: 1745-8862 (Series)



ISOQAR certified Management System, awarded to Emerald for adherence to Environmental standard ISO 14001:2004.

Certificate Number 1985 ISO 14001



CONTENTS

List of Figures	ix
List of Tables	xi
List of Contributors	xv
INTRODUCTORY SECTION	
D. Eleanor Westney: A Biography <i>Elizabeth L. Rose</i>	xvii
Chapter 1 Institutions 2.0: Which Institutions Matter in	
IB Research? Alain Verbeke, Rob van Tulder, Elizabeth L. Rose and Yingqi Wei	1
PART I	
THE GREAT NEW CHALLENGES FOR IB RESEARCH – ESSAYS IN HONOR OF D. ELEANOR WESTNEY	
Chapter 2 International Business and Multi-level Institutional Change: Looking Back and Facing Forward D. Eleanor Westney	23
Chapter 3 Global Strategic Analysis and Multi-level Institutional Change Donald R. Lessard	45
Chapter 4 Is a Networked World Economy Sustainable? Stephen J. Kobrin	63
Chapter 5 Network Effects and Multi-level Dynamics in the Internationalization of Digital Platforms: A Reflection Mauro F. Guillén	71

vi CONTENTS

Chapter 6 Renewing the Relevance of IB: Can Some History Help? Geoffrey Jones	77
PART II	
HOME COUNTRY INSTITUTIONS AND INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS	
Chapter 7 Managing Around Populism Timothy M. Devinney and Christopher A. Hartwell	95
Chapter 8 Institutions, Corporate Governance, and Internationalization of State-owned Enterprises in a Varieties of Capitalism Framework Sergio Mariotti and Riccardo Marzano	107
Chapter 9 Business Group Affiliation and Export Propensity in New Ventures Jonas Eduardsen, Svetla Marinova, Božidar Vlačić and Miguel González-Loureiro	129
Chapter 10 Product and Process Innovations and the Institutional Context of Transition Economies: The Effects of External Knowledge Virginia Hernández, María Jesús Nieto and Alicia Rodríguez	155
PART III	
HOST COUNTRY INSTITUTIONS AND INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS	
Chapter 11 Corporate Anti-corruption Policy, Investment Motives, and Foreign Location Choice Guoliang Frank Jiang and Michael A. Sartor	173
Chapter 12 Host Government Intervention and FDI Inflow: An Empirical Investigation Gilbert Kofi Adarkwah	193
Chapter 13 Stakeholder Responses and the Interplay Between MNE Post-entry Behavior and Host Country Informal	
Institutions Elina Pelto and Anna Karhu	219

Contents vii

Chapter 14 Old Risks, New Reference Points? An Organizationa Learning Perspective into the Foreign Market Exit and <i>Re</i> -entry Behavior of Firms	I
Irina Surdu and Edith Ipsmiller	239
Chapter 15 Intangible Assets of MNE Foreign Subsidiaries: The Role of Internal Financial Resources and Host Country Institution	
Quyen T. K. Nguyen	263
Chapter 16 How Do SMEs Face Institutional Challenges in China?	
Noémie Dominguez and Ulrike Mayrhofer	287
PART IV	
MULTI-COUNTRY AND BELOW-COUNTRY LEVEL INSTITUTIONS AND INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS	
Chapter 17 International Services: The Interface between Service Characteristics, Policy, and Institutions Kristin Brandl, Peter D. Ørberg Jensen, Andrew Jones and Patrik Ström	299
Chapter 18 Creating a Typology of International Alliances with City-level Distance Measures	
Juliane Engsig, Bo B. Nielsen, Paul Chiambaretto and Andry Ramaroson	311
Chapter 19 Successful and Unsuccessful Radical Transformation of Multinational Mobile Telephony Companies: The Role of Institutional Context	
Frank Elter, Paul N. Gooderham and Inger G. Stensaker	339
Chapter 20 A Note on Changing Regulation in International Business: The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and Artificial Intelligence	
Aldo Alvarez-Risco and Shyla Del-Aguila-Arcentales	363

viii CONTENTS

PART V

INSTITUTIONS AND SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES

Chapter 21 Environmental Sustainability Strategy and International Performance: A Review of Literature and a Conceptual Model	
Leonardo B. Barbosa, Jorge Carneiro, Camila Costa,	
Filip De Beule, Rafael Goldszmidt and	275
T. Diana Macedo-Soares	375
Chapter 22 Embeddedness and Interactions in New Public Environmental Management Governance: International and Intertemporal Evidence on Voluntary Standards Marcus Wagner	399
Murcus wagner	377
Chapter 23 Environmental Concerns – Uniting Generations for a Global Cause in Turbulent Times Susana C. Silva, Paulo Duarte, Carla Martins and	
Paulo Collaço	417
Chapter 24 The Diffusion of Corporate Sustainability in Global Supply Networks: An Empirical Examination of the Global Automotive Industry	
Bruno Barreto de Góes, Masaaki Kotabe and	
José Mauricio Galli Geleilate	435
Index	459

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 3

Fig. 1.	Interconnected Levels of Analysis for Global Strategic	50
Fig. 2.	Management (Lessard, 1998). RAT Framework: Relevant, Appropriable, Transferable	50
Č	(Westney, 2017).	51
Fig. 3.	CAT Framework: Complementary, Appropriable, Transferable (Westney, 2017).	51
Fig. 4.	RATs in Relation to Key Strategic Activities (Thun & Samel, 2020).	52
Fig. 5.	Sources of Value from Going Global and Being Global (Lessard, 2016).	54
Fig. 6.	RATs/CATs and the Value of Internationalization (Lessard, 2016).	55
Fig. 7.	Multiple Layers of Institutions, Markets, and Technologies Affecting Global Manufacturing (Lessard, 2014).	56
Fig. 8.	Change Over Time of Multi-level International Business Contexts.	58
	CHAPTER 7	
Fig. 1.	Average Vote Share of Populist Parties in Europe, 1990–2018.	96
	CHAPTER 8	
Fig. 1.	Joint Effect of Corporate Governance and Variety of Capitalism on the Internationalization of State-owned Enterprises.	120
	CHAPTER 9	
Fig. 1.	Average Marginal Effect of Business Group Affiliation at Various Firm Sizes.	143
	CHAPTER 12	
Fig. 1.	Growth of Investment Agreements and ICSID Cases 1972–2017.	195
Fig. 2.	Inverted U-shaped Relationship between Host Government Interference and FDI.	207
Fig. 3.	Inverted U-shaped Relationship between Host Government Interference and FDI by Income Group.	209

x LIST OF FIGURES

	CHAPTER 13	
Fig. 1.	The Role of Stakeholder Responses in the Interplay between an MNE and Informal Institutions in the Host Field.	224
Fig. 2.	Stakeholder Responses to Lidl's Entry into Finland and the Interplay between Company Activities and Informal Institutions.	232
Fig. 3.	Stakeholder Responses to Fazer's Entry into Russia and the Interplay between Company Activities and Informal	232
	Institutions.	233
	CHAPTER 14	
Fig. 1.	Foreign Market Entry-Exit-Re-entry Decision-making Map.	243
	CHAPTER 18	
Fig. 1.	Predicted Means of the Five Identified Classes at the City Level.	323
	CHAPTER 19	
Fig. 1.	An Overview of Telenor Group Holding (January 2020).	351
	CHAPTER 21	
Fig. 1.	Descriptive Summary of Selected Studies for this Literature Review.	382
Fig. 2.	Generic Conceptual Model of the Determinants and Consequences of the Adoption of Environmentally	
	Sustainable Strategies.	390
	CHAPTER 24	
Fig. 1.	Network-related Firm Attributes and Corporate Sustainability Diffusion.	440
Fig. 2.	Power Structures Within Buyer–Supplier Relationships Based on Resource Dependence Asymmetries.	441
Fig. 3.	Relative Network Position.	441 444
Fig. 4.	Network Data Structure.	446
Fig. 5.	Degree versus Eigenvector Centrality.	448

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 3

Table 1	Eleanor Westney's Multi-level Framing of International Strategy (Westney, 2017).	53
	CHAPTER 9	
Table 1	Variables Included in the Analysis.	140
	Correlations.	141
Table 3	Results from Logistic Regression (Baseline = Independent	
	SMEs).	142
	CHAPTER 10	
Table 1.	Correlation Matrix and Descriptive Statistics.	163
	Results – Product and Process Innovations.	165
	CHAPTER 11	
Table 1	Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations.	183
	Mixed Logit Models of Location Choices for Production	103
	Entries.	184
	CHAPTER 12	
Table 1	Variables, Definitions, and Data Source.	200
	Countries with the Most Frequent Number of HCDS Cases.	201
	Descriptive Statistics and Correlations.	204
	Results of 2SLS Regression of Host Government	
	Intervention and FDI Inflow.	205
	Results by Income Groups.	208
Table 6.	Estimation with Lagged Dependent Variable.	211
	CHAPTER 14	
Table 1.	Summary Statistics and Correlations.	252
	Sample Key Characteristics.	253
	OLS Regression Results for ALL Firms.	254
Table 4.	OLS Regression Results for LowEXP and HighEXP.	255

xii LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 15	
Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Pearson Correlations.	273
Table 2. Multiple Regression Results.	275
Table 3. Two-stage Least Square (2SLS) Regression Results.	277
CHAPTER 18	
Table 1. Levels of ISA Predictors.	317
Table 2. Variable Presentation.	321
Table 3. Model Selection.	321
Table 4. Latent Class Marginal Probabilities.	322
Table 5. Typology of International Alliances with City-level	227
Distance Measures.	327
CHAPTER 21	
Table 1. Patterns of Conceptualization of Environmental Sustainab	oility
Strategies.	383
Table 2. External Factors Influencing the Adoption of Environmen	
Sustainability Strategies.	385
Table 3. Internal Factors Influencing the Adoption of Environment Sustainability Strategies.	tai 386
Table 4. Competitive Advantages Arising from the Adoption of	380
Environmental Sustainability Strategies.	388
Table 5. Performance Indicators Most Used in Environmental	200
Sustainability Strategy Studies.	389
CHAPTER 22	
	404
Table 1. Items Used for Calculation of the Dependent Variable. Table 2. Pooled Estimation in Europe for 2001	404
Table 3. Estimations by Country in Europe for 2001	408
Table 4. Pooled Estimations in Germany for 2001–2016 and	100
2001/2011, respectively.	409
Table 5. Estimations by Year in Germany for 2001 and 2011	410
CHAPTER 23	
Table 1. Hypotheses.	425
Table 2. Constructs and Items.	426
Table 3. Sample Characterization.	427
Table 4. Item and Scale Statistics.	428
Table 5. Hypothesis Analysis.	428

List of Tables xiii

CH	Αl	РТ	$\mathbf{E}\mathbf{I}$?	24

Table 1.	Ranking of Auto Manufacturers by Motor Vehicle	
	Production (2014).	446
Table 2.	OLS Regression Results: Effects of Resource Dominance,	
	Resource Substitutability, and Network Centrality on	
	Corporate Sustainability Diffusion Performance.	451



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D. ELEANOR WESTNEY: A BIOGRAPHY

Elizabeth L. Rose

This volume is in honor of Professor D. Eleanor Westney, who is Sloan Fellows Professor of Strategy and International Management Emerita at MIT Sloan School of Management (U.S.) and Professor Emerita at York University (Canada), where she was the Scotiabank Professor of International Business and Professor of Organization Studies at the Schulich School of Business at York University (Canada) from 2007 to 2014. It is my pleasure to provide a brief introduction to a scholar who is widely respected – and widely beloved – with in the International Business (IB) community.

Like so many of the key contributors to IB, Eleanor entered the field as something of an "academic immigrant". An organizational sociologist who had combined Sociology with Japanese Studies throughout her undergraduate, masters, and doctoral programs, she found that her knowledge of Japan provided a natural segue into IB in the early 1980s, at a time when academic and managerial interest in the success of Japanese multinational enterprises (MNEs), especially relative to U.S.-based companies, was very strong. Her sociological research on how Japanese organizations emulated western models in the Meiji period provided a useful base for addressing how western companies might then learn from Japan. She has gone on to make deep and lasting contributions to her adopted field, bringing a sociological perspective to various aspects of cross-border organizational learning, including the internationalization of research and development activities, with an emphasis on the evolutionary and institutional theoretical lenses for studying the MNE.

Although she has spent most of her adult life in the U.S., Eleanor is proudly and resolutely Canadian. She was raised on a dairy farm near Toronto. (This is a fact that I learned during a dinner when she and another person at the table – also with farming experience – were discussing silage. Having grown up in suburban New York, I finally had to ask, sheepishly, what on earth silage was.) She studied at the University of Toronto, earning a BA and an MA in Sociology and Japanese studies. After a stint working at the Canadian pavilion at Expo'70, the World's Fair in Osaka (she learned Japanese as an undergraduate) she headed to the U.S. – specifically, Princeton University, where she earned a PhD in Sociology. Her first academic position was in the Department of Sociology at Yale University. She then shifted to MIT, which served as her academic home for most of her career, before returning to Canada to join the Schulich School of Business at

York University and be closer to her family. She has held visiting appointments at Hitotsubashi University, University of Tokyo, University of Michigan, and Aalto University.

Throughout her career, Eleanor has engaged deeply with the academic community, through a variety of organizations, with a strong focus on helping to develop the next generation of scholars. She served as Chair of the International Management Division of the Academy of Management, and was named the Division's Eminent Scholar in 2013. She was elected a Fellow of the Academy of International Business (AIB) in 1997, and served as Dean of the AIB Fellows from 2008 to 2011. Among her other honors, Eleanor has been awarded an honorary doctorate from the Stockholm School of Economics.

Eleanor is renowned for her remarkable ability to synthesize apparently disparate lines of discussion; this is informed by the fact that she is a voracious reader with extremely eclectic tastes. She is unfailingly generous with ideas and comments, and has a well-deserved reputation for being able to frame questions in ways that provide stunning clarity to students who are struggling with their research, while simultaneously offering a wealth of ideas for future research that have the potential to drive a full postdoctoral research agenda. I have lost count of the number of times that students have referred to suggestions that Eleanor had made to them years earlier; her impact on young researchers around the world is both vast and deep.

Perhaps the best way in which I can convey the esteem in which I hold Eleanor Westney is to share what I consider to be the best compliment that I have ever received in a professional context – being told that I have done something that reminds a colleague of Eleanor.

On behalf of my co-editors of this volume – Rob van Tulder, Alain Verbeke, and Yingqi Wei – it is a real pleasure to honor Eleanor with Volume 15 of the *Progress in International Business Research (PIBR)* series. Like the scholars to whom previous *PIBR* volumes have been dedicated (Danny Van Den Bulcke, Alan Rugman, Lou Wells, Rosalie Tung, Lorraine Eden, and Peter Buckley), Eleanor Westney has made – and she continues to make – an indelible mark on the field of International Business.