

# **International Business Research and Scholarship in the Middle East: Developments and Future Directions**

Pawan Budhwar<sup>1</sup>, Vijay Pereira<sup>2</sup>, Yama Temouri<sup>1,3</sup>, and Hoa Do<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Aston Business School, Aston University, Birmingham, UK

<sup>2</sup>NEOMA Business School, Reims Campus, France

<sup>3</sup>Khalifa University, Abu Dhabi, UAE

<sup>4</sup>Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, UK

## **Abstract**

In this introduction we review the extant literatures that highlight the importance of the Middle Eastern institutional and cultural context in shaping business's (IB) strategies and practices across several countries. Drawing on the literature, as well as the six articles included in this special issue, we are able to (1) outline the state of socio-cultural, historical and economic forces that shape international business in several Middle Eastern nations; (2) utilize institutional theory to evaluate the constraints of international business practices in the Middle East; and (3) highlight the key challenges and gaps faced by IB practices in the Middle East. Based on this, we subsequently propose an agenda for future research in order to lay the foundation for international business scholars to advance the theorizing and application of IB practices in the Middle East context.

**Keywords:** Middle East; international business; institutions; culture; Covid-19; MENA; GCC

The Middle East region has unique and interesting implications for scholarly interest. Firstly, the literature focusing on the Middle East has used several different terms to name the region, including the Middle East, Greater Middle East, Near East, the Arab World, Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Arabian peninsula, South-West Asia, Levant (Budhwar, Pereira, Mellahi, and Singh 2019). These different terms are important because in spite of certain commonalities in terms of social, cultural and historical characteristics, each member country has undergone its own socio-economic and historical developments, thereby differentiating themselves from one to another in content (Budhwar and Mellahi 2018). Secondly, this region also attracts a large number of expatriates from around the world to work in both domestic firms and multinational corporations (MNCs) (Budhwar et al. 2019). However, it is important to note that certain workplace cultures, such as family networks and open relations and informal relations, are practiced by Middle Eastern organizations in order to build trust (Metcalf 2008). This cultural attribute may have important implications for studying international business (IB) topics such as international human resource management (IHRM), firm internationalization and expatriate management. Finally, although the Middle East is usually known as the land of crude oil and gas, the levels of economic development, industrialization and diversification in this region vary from country to country (Budhwar and Mellahi 2018). For example, some countries, such as Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, and the UAE, are listed as high-income nations while others, such as Algeria and Jordan, are considered as low-income ones. Therefore, due to its rich historical and institutional attributes and a varied pattern of economic development, as well as the many other different facets of the business environment that include the role of religion and the workforce, this region provides a unique and interesting context for exploring and examining existing and new IB issues (Afiouni et al. 2014; Budhwar et al. 2019).

Given the limited existing literature on the Middle East on the one hand, and the growing geo-political and economic importance of the region on the other hand, there is a significant need for further development of theoretical and empirical insights into the Middle East. For example, it is not clear what is the impact of cultural and institutional conditions on the developments of IB in the Middle East and whether there is a differential institutional effect vis-a-vis the developments of IB across countries. More specifically, the impact of the rapidly changing institutional conditions on socio-cultural elements, such as employee relations/unions within firms and how to manage expatriates, have yet to be explored (Budhwar et al. 2019; Metcalfe 2008). Another area that has received little attention in the literature is the nature, intensity and suitability of contingencies of management methods and approaches employed within firms as well as the context-specific nature of the HRM function in the region (Afiouni et al. 2014; Budhwar and Mellahi 2018). Finally, we also know relatively little about how institutional attributes affect IB activities such as innovation and internationalization strategies in the Middle Eastern context.

This special issue attempts to fill some of the above-mentioned gaps in the literature. This introductory article, together with the six articles that are included in the special issue, use the institutional perspective to provide a review of the extant literatures and to highlight the importance of institutional and cultural conditions in shaping developments in the field of IB across countries in the Middle East. We seek to pursue three key aims. First, this article outlines the state of socio-cultural, historical and economic institutional conditions in a number of Middle Eastern nations that play an instrumental role in studying IB practices in this region. Second, we take institutional theory and synthesize the different insights from early work to systematically review and evaluate the constraints of IB practices in this context. Last, based on the analysis of

current state of IB studies in the region, this article highlights the key challenges and gaps faced by the application and analysis of IB practices in the Middle East. We subsequently propose an agenda for future research in order to lay the foundation for IB scholars to advance the theorizing and application of IB practices in this context.

### **An overview of the articles**

The six articles in this special issue offer theoretical and empirical insights into the unique challenges and opportunities for MNEs in the Middle East. More specifically, the included articles bring forward insights about sustainable international business practices in the MENA region, such as the drivers of CSR measurement and investment in the UAE, the nature of the association that corporate ethics and CSR have with organizational citizenship behavior, the extent to which firms in the Middle East engage in CSR reporting, the influencers of strategic change processes in the Oman, entry mode strategies in the UAE and Saudi Arabia and a systematic review and integrative framework of the past, present and future of mergers and acquisitions (M&A's) in the MENA region.

In the first article titled: "The Perceived Value of Measuring the Impact of CSR Performance on CSR Investment: Evidence from the UAE," Pietro, Mura, Mellahi, Rettab, and Pereira examine drivers of CSR measurement and investment in CSR. The authors employ survey data for explore the links between three underlying motives for measuring CSR performance and the impact thereof on CSR investments in 307 firms in Dubai and the UAE. Their results show that while CSR measurement is a significant driver of CSR investments, there are varied associations between the level of complying with regulation, provision of management support and increase in stakeholders' satisfaction and the investment in CSR practices. The authors offer several theoretical and practical implications that are based on their results.

In the second article titled: “Effect of Corporate Ethics and Social Responsibility on OCB: The Role of Employee Identification and Perceived CSR Significance,” El-Kassar, Yunis, AlSagheer and Tarhini explore how organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) is related to corporate ethics and CSR in the Lebanese context. The authors derive a conceptual framework which includes the resource-based view of the firm and social identity theory. Based on this framework, the authors collect data by distributing a survey instrument to alumni from one of the leading universities in Lebanon who are employed in various companies and in different sectors in Lebanon and the region. One of the main results of the study is the set of perceptions of the respondents that are mediating and moderating the relationship between CSR and OCB.

In the third article titled: “Prevalence of CSR Reporting in Arab Countries: Exploratory Study and Causal Analysis,” Ismaeel, Abdul Hadi and Zakaria explore the prevalence of CSR reporting practice of Middle Eastern firms in thirteen countries. Based on listed company information, the authors are able to show that CSR reporting is still at its early stages in the region. This is based on their results which show that CSR reporting is driven by linkages and openness to the global economy or by high public visibility, influenced by firm size and certain industry affiliation. However, belonging to environmentally sensitive industries does not seem to have an effect on CSR reporting. These findings support the view that CSR reporting is a global practice that is adopted by companies in developing countries either to respond to global stakeholders or to imitate a global trend.

In the fourth article titled “Exploring Influencers of Strategic Change Processes in the Omani Context”, Al Jahwari and Budhwar explore the major influencers of strategic change processes in five government businesses in Oman in an attempt to contribute to the literature on organization change, strategy, leadership and HRM. The analysis is based on in-depth interviews

with forty-two senior managers and employees from different organizational divisions. The study utilizes the process approach and the contingency perspective to highlight the main influencers of multiple strategic change processes. The findings of this study reveal that, in the Omani context, people's needs, leadership style, change management and implementation approach and HRM practices are the main influencers of strategic change processes. Further, people's needs are found to moderate the effect of the three other main influencers on organizational, behavioral and financial outcomes.

In the fifth article titled: "Market Entry Strategies in the Middle East: Unveiling the Sponsorship Strategy," Youssef and Diab utilize a qualitative approach to understand a unique market entry strategy of MNEs entering Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Based on semi-structured interviews of senior managers, the authors show that in addition to traditional entry modes, MNEs have developed ways of forming joint ventures with individuals rather than with corporations. The authors label this entry mode as a 'sponsorship' strategy from which they derive a number of implications for research and practice.

In the sixth article titled: "Past, Present and Future of Mergers and Acquisitions in the MENA Region: A Systematic Review and Integrative Framework", Batistti et al. identify a gap in the review literature in the context of business strategies of mergers and acquisitions (M&A's) in a Middle Eastern context. They contribute by investigating the theoretical and practical aspects of M&A's and their diffusion and features in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, not clearly described in the literature, to date. The authors argue that this lack in clarity is the result of the recent transformation that member countries have been going through since the 2008 global financial crisis. They employ a systematic review of 37 articles on M&A and examine the characteristics of M&A operations in the MENA region. Based on this analysis,

they then map the extant literature on the topic and present an integrative framework of these characteristics for researchers to further explore and expand the boundaries of the domain.

### **The Middle Eastern context: An institutional lens**

Given the various terms used to represent this region, we follow Budhwar et al. (2019) in consistently referring to the Middle East and analyze 10 countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the MENA nations. These countries include Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Overall, the Middle East has a population of more than 380 million and possesses about 65% of the world's known oil reserves (Budhwar et al. 2019). The Middle East is also known as the birthplace of the three main monotheistic religions, namely, Islam, Judaism and Christianity.

Given that the Middle East is institutionally complex in nature, we utilize the core tenet of institutional theory (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Powell and DiMaggio 2012; Scott 2008) to provide a holistic literature review about the developments of IB strategies and practices in the Middle East over the last few decades. We build upon early work (Budhwar and Mellahi 2018; Budhwar et al. 2019) to better understand the institutional context of the Middle East by incorporating both the old and new institutionalism. With respect to the former, we take into account: (1) normative (i.e., cultural values that are characterized by commonly shared assumptions and beliefs, norms reflecting lifestyles); (2) regulatory (including topics such as legal frameworks, governance bodies), and (3) cognitive (i.e., shared social knowledge) aspects of the environment. With regard to the latter, we consider the isomorphism of organizational policies and practices in a particular context as well as three mechanisms, namely, coercive, such as political impact of key institutions, mimetic, such as the external forces that create

uncertainties and affect organizational performance, and normative, such as acceptable routines and standards that influence institutional behavior (see Budhwar et al. 2019 for details). We argue that the mechanisms of isomorphism play a vital role in shaping and influencing the developments of management practices in the Middle East environment.

On the basis of the above theoretical grounding, as well as the ideas initiated by other recent work (see Do et al. 2020; Kim and Bae 2017), our review turns to the institutional context of the Middle East, including government, regulatory agencies, economic and political ideologies, cultural values and forces in the external environment. Although the Middle East is known to have Muslims, Christians and Jews, Muslims make up 95% of the total population (Budhwar et al. 2019). In regard to the political ideologies of the region, each nation follows its own form of government, such as constitutional monarchies (Jordan and Morocco), parliamentary republics (Algeria and Egypt) and traditional monarchies (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE,). It is also important to acknowledge that socio-economic developments of each Middle Eastern country vary from one country to another (see Table 1 for details). These institutional conditions make the Middle East a unique and interesting region that could impact the process of socio-economic developments at large, and IB practices in particular.

Some nations, such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE, have made a significant progress in economic development and have become high-income countries, while others, such as Algeria and Jordan, still remain low-income ones. Our review demonstrates that despite its limited progress in IB research in the region, the study of the field in this context is still underdeveloped in comparison with its potential in terms of quantity and quality of research, theorizing and methodology. This region offers significant opportunities and areas for further research into the antecedents, challenges, effects and nature of different IB practices in the Middle East (Budhwar



et al. 2019). More work is needed not only on how institutional forces influence IB practices in the region, but also on theorizing how new themes of research, such as IHRM, expatriates, MNCs subsidiary management, innovation strategies and firm internationalization, can be incorporated in IB research.

**INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE**

**Table 1:** Key issues, ideologies and institutionalism in Middle Eastern nations

Country	Period	Key Historical Aspects	Dominant Ideologies	Institutional Attributes	Key Sources
Bahrain	1971	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Independence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dependence on mainly oil industries</li> <li>▪ Traditional monarchy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Underdeveloped organizations including the government</li> <li>▪ Poor administrative reform</li> <li>▪ Very modest oil income</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Budhwar et al. (2019)</li> <li>▪ Common (2008)</li> </ul>
	1970-2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ First Parliament election</li> <li>▪ Governmental reform</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Constitutional building</li> <li>▪ Oil and petroleum production</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Unstable society</li> <li>▪ Violence</li> <li>▪ Poor bureaucracy reform</li> <li>▪ Underdeveloped enterprises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Metcalfe (2007)</li> <li>▪ Peterson (2004)</li> </ul>
Algeria	2000 onward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Oil production</li> <li>▪ Services and Tourism development</li> <li>▪ Administrative reform</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Globalization</li> <li>▪ Constitutional monarchy</li> <li>▪ Open and vulnerable economy</li> <li>▪ Industrialization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Governmental efforts directed to reform its bureaucracy but remain unsuccessful</li> <li>▪ Still political instability</li> <li>▪ Development of MNCs</li> </ul>	
	Pre - 1975	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ French colonization</li> <li>▪ Wars/Civil war</li> <li>▪ Political instability</li> <li>▪ Poverty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Islamic characteristics</li> <li>▪ Nationalism</li> <li>▪ Dependence on agriculture</li> <li>▪ Centrally planned economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Underdeveloped organizations (government, market and enterprises)</li> <li>▪ High poverty rate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Budhwar and Mellahi (2007)</li> <li>▪ Randani, Mellahi, and Guernat (2016)</li> </ul>
	1975 - 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High rate of poverty</li> <li>▪ Risk of food production reduction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dependence on oil production and prices</li> <li>▪ Modified socialist economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Underdeveloped organizations (government, market and enterprises)</li> <li>▪ Political uncertainty</li> <li>▪ Standard of living improved</li> </ul>	

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Privatization</li> </ul>		
	2000 - Present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Human capital development</li> <li>▪ Poverty reduction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dependence on hydrocarbons, oil and gas prices</li> <li>▪ Open markets</li> <li>▪ Tendency to Internationalize</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All institutions' efforts directed towards economic growth</li> <li>▪ Political instability and uncertainty</li> <li>▪ High unemployment rate</li> </ul>	
Egypt	1952-1973	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Military conflicts</li> <li>▪ War</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Parliamentary republics</li> <li>▪ Transition from Egyptian economy to Arabian socialism</li> <li>▪ Highly centralized economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No clear path of economic development</li> <li>▪ All organizations (i.e., government, companies,...) less developed</li> <li>▪ Advent of mixed enterprises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Kenawy (2009)</li> <li>▪ Shechter (2008)</li> <li>▪ Budhwar and Mellahi (2018)</li> </ul>
	1974-1990	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Economic crisis</li> <li>▪ Slow GDP growth rate</li> <li>▪ External debt crisis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Open door policy</li> <li>▪ Centrally planned model to stop the crisis</li> <li>▪ Dependence on oil exploitation</li> <li>▪ Tourism development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Institutions experienced external debt rise, budget deficit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Budhwar et al. (2019)</li> </ul>
	Post - 1990	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Spring Arab</li> <li>▪ Structural and economic reforms</li> <li>▪ Economic downturn</li> <li>▪ High unemployment rate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ New economic reform</li> <li>▪ Macroeconomic stability policy</li> <li>▪ Economic nationalism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Private firms are enabled to develop and succeed</li> <li>▪ All institutional efforts directed towards economic growth</li> </ul>	

Jordan	Pre-1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Unstable economic development</li> <li>▪ Scarcity of natural resources</li> <li>▪ High rate of population growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Constitutional monarchy</li> <li>▪ Dependence on foreign aid, tourism</li> <li>▪ Close economic model</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All institutions (government, all forms of enterprises) less developed</li> <li>▪ Public debt</li> <li>▪ High rate of unemployment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Madanat and Khasawneh (2018)</li> <li>▪ (Budhwar et al., 2019)</li> <li>▪ Afjouni et al. (2014)</li> </ul>
	1999-present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Starting its reform</li> <li>▪ Economic development</li> <li>▪ High unemployment rates</li> <li>▪ Middle - income nation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Liberal economic model and policies</li> <li>▪ More open market</li> <li>▪ Industrialization</li> <li>▪ Globalization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All institutions started to improve and develop</li> <li>▪ Still experience in public debt, unemployment and poverty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Nusair, Ababneh, and Bae (2012)</li> </ul>
Morocco	1980-2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High rate of population growth</li> <li>▪ High rate of Unemployment</li> <li>▪ Low GDP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Constitutional monarchy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Government failure in creating new jobs for people</li> <li>▪ Other institutions less developed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hassi (2016)</li> <li>▪ Budhwar and Mellahi (2018)</li> </ul>
	2012 - present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Starting its reform</li> <li>▪ Fragmented industry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dependence on agriculture, tourism leather, textiles, and clothing</li> <li>▪ Modernization</li> <li>▪ Development of information technology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All institutions (i.e., government, firms... ) started to develop but still very slowly</li> <li>▪ Not many organizations</li> </ul>	

Saudi Arabia	Pre-1970	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discovery of oil</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Birthplace of Islam</li> <li>Traditional monarchy</li> <li>Dependence on oil production</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All institutions started to develop</li> <li>Advent of oil industry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tlaiss and Elamin (2016)</li> <li>Budhwar and Mellahi (2018)</li> <li>Aifouni et al. (2014)</li> </ul>
	1970 - Present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Gulf war</li> <li>Economic development</li> <li>High unemployment rate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commercialization</li> <li>Internationalization</li> <li>Open markets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All institutions' efforts directed towards economic growth</li> <li>Attraction of MNCs</li> </ul>	
Kuwait	1970-1980	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic development</li> <li>Development of stock market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traditional monarchy</li> <li>Oil production</li> <li>Priority on market capitalization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All institutions (government, oil companies, financial firms) started to develop</li> <li>Positioning itself in the marketplace in terms of oil export, finance, shares...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Al-Sarawi, Jha, Al-Sarawi, and Lyons (2015)</li> <li>Ali and Al-Kazemi (2006)</li> </ul>
	1980-present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Gulf war</li> <li>Economic development</li> <li>Environmental contamination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wealth-management industry</li> <li>Internationalization</li> <li>Open economy</li> <li>Globalization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All institutions developed well</li> <li>Standard of living improved</li> <li>Difficulty in dealing with polluted environment due to oil production</li> </ul>	
UAE	Pre-1970	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decline of pearling industry</li> <li>Low-income country</li> <li>Britain withdrew its treaty from the Trucial sheikhdoms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dependence on crude oil exploitation</li> <li>Traditional monarchy</li> <li>Establishment of a union to protect the group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizations (government, enterprises, oil companies) started to develop</li> <li>Improved quality of life</li> <li>Initial investments in infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budhwar and Mellahi (2018)</li> <li>Waxin and Bateman (2016)</li> </ul>

	1970-2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Independence (1971)</li> <li>▪ Increase in population</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dependence on oil production</li> <li>▪ Industrialization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All institutions' efforts directed towards economic growth</li> <li>▪ Oil companies developed</li> </ul>	
	2000-present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Economic development</li> <li>▪ High-income developing country</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Knowledge-based economy</li> <li>▪ Open market</li> <li>▪ E-government services</li> <li>▪ Priority on tourism development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All institutions (government, private and public enterprises) well developed</li> <li>▪ Infrastructure effectively invested and developed</li> <li>▪ World-class hotels, ports and airports</li> </ul>	
Qatar	Pre-1970	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Poor country</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dependence on pearling industry</li> <li>▪ Petrol-based industry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All institutions (government, market and enterprises, foreign companies) less developed</li> <li>▪ Low standard of living</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Budhwar and Mellahi (2018)</li> <li>▪ Rodriguez and Scurry (2014)</li> </ul>
	1970-1980	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Economic development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Traditional monarchy</li> <li>▪ Petrol-based industry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All institutions (government, market and enterprises, foreign companies) started to develop</li> <li>▪ Improved standard of living</li> </ul>	
	1980-1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Downturn economy</li> <li>▪ Low price for oil</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dependence on crude oil exploitation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Oil companies experienced their hardships</li> <li>▪ Lower income for laborers</li> </ul>	
	1990-present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Economic growth</li> <li>▪ Highest income country</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Economic liberalization</li> <li>▪ Internationalization</li> <li>▪ Globalization</li> <li>▪ Exports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All institutions' efforts directed towards reforms and economic growth</li> <li>▪ All organizations developed well</li> <li>▪ Higher standard of living</li> </ul>	

Oman	1970-1990	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Political independence</li> <li>▪ Underdeveloped nation</li> <li>▪ Modernization of the public sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Islamic and Arab identity</li> <li>▪ Traditional monarchy</li> <li>▪ Oil production</li> <li>▪ More emphasis on public employment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Organizations (government, market and enterprises, foreign companies) less developed</li> <li>▪ Slow modernization due to poor educational levels and overstaffing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Budhwar et al. (2019)</li> <li>▪ Common (2008)</li> <li>▪ Ghouse, McElwee, Meaton, and Durrak (2017)</li> </ul>
	1990-2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Beginning of reforms</li> <li>▪ Developing country</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Oil production</li> <li>▪ Infrastructure development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Organizations such as government, public companies more developed but not private ones</li> <li>▪ Still immature market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Al-Hamadi, Budhwar, and Shipton (2007)</li> </ul>
	2000 onward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High income country</li> <li>▪ Economic development</li> <li>▪ Globalization</li> <li>▪ Industrialization</li> <li>▪ Privatization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Free market</li> <li>▪ Economic liberalization</li> <li>▪ Foreign investment</li> <li>▪ Tourism</li> <li>▪ Higher education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All institutions' efforts directed towards economic growth and industrialization</li> <li>▪ Still underdeveloped private sector</li> </ul>	

## **Constraints of institutional conditions on in management practices in the Middle East**

Given the complexity of institutional environments in the Middle East, we conduct a comprehensive literature review to evaluate the current state of institutional context that influences IB scholarship in this region<sup>1</sup>. First of all, we adopted recent literature review techniques (Budhwar et al. 2019; Lewis, Cardy and Huang 2019) to search and select published articles and studies which are closely associated with key IB themes and terms relevant for our analysis. We reviewed articles that represent the IB scholarship such as IHRM, expatriates, firm internationalization and MNCs across the Middle East. We then supplemented this with varieties of Boolean filter searches using relevant terms of our topics of interest and thematic areas. Finally, we also reviewed articles that relate to and focus on both relevant terms of our topics of interest and 'institutional environments', 'institutional conditions', 'institutionalism' or 'institutions' in Middle Eastern countries. Table 2 outlines the various studies included in our analysis.

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

It can be seen from the various studies in table 2 that IB scholarship in the Middle East is influenced by its institutional context that includes cultural, socio-economic and political forces. Due to institutional differences, IB practices in this region vary from one nation to the next, depending on their cultural values, levels of economic development, political systems, and governance structures. Scholarly evidence further supports that firms tend to respond to the isomorphic forces of their institutional attributes in their pursuit of management/IB practices (Do et al. 2020; Lewis et al. 2019). Our analysis suggests that IB practices are often constrained

---

<sup>1</sup> The brief discussion here is only indicative and not exhaustive, as it only aims to show key areas. A more holistic view that represents a broader literature review can be based on table 2 of this article.



by institutional conditions such as cultural and political constraints on IB practices, institutionalization of IB practices, and others (Lewis et al. 2019). Also, of interest is that countries that are rich in oil and gas, that have reformed their political, socio-economic and legal issues, and are integrating into the world economy seem to have achieved remarkable success. Oman, Qatar and UAE, for example, have become high-income nations. Therefore, firms that operate in these countries tend to effectively invest in IB activities such as internationalization, IHRM and expatriates. In contrast, those countries (i.e., Algeria and Jordan) that are not rich in oil and gas, and have yet to pay much attention to reforming their economic and political factors, still remain low-income countries. In parallel, IB activities of firms in these countries are usually less valued and ineffectively invested. The implications are that firms that are highly embedded in such an institutional context may lose their interest in expanding their international markets in the long term. To this end, there is a dearth of research on IB in these nations, and thus more work is needed not only in identifying the gaps in this context in order to propose an agenda for future research but also in theorizing how institutional conditions influence MNCs business activities.

**Table 2:** Examples of research on Middle Eastern institutional context: implications for IB

Author(s)	Country/Context	Type of Study	Focus of Study	Constraints of Institutional Environments
Al-Husan and James (2009); Al-Husan and James (2007)	Jordan	Triangulation of case studies	IHRM/MNCs	MNCs have difficulty in translating their home country HR practices to host country subsidiaries due to the political influence of key institutions such as the Jordanian government.
Haak-Saheem, Festing and Darwish (2017)	UAE	Qualitative	International HRM	MNCs strategically align their HRM practices with the external environment to gain legitimacy in the host country subsidiaries rather than the home-country's institutional forces such as regulative, cognitive and normative.
Alharbi, Gelaidan, Al-Swidi and Saeed (2016)	Saudi Arabia	Quantitative	International Management	Headquarters struggle to feed their control mechanisms into the subsidiaries because of the host-country's institutional environment such as cultural differences.
Rodriguez and Scurry (2014)	Qatar	Qualitative	Expatriates	The management of expatriates is constrained by the Qatarization institutional factors such as structural constraints and contextual attributes.
Sidani and Al Ariss (2014)	The Gulf Cooperation Council	Qualitative	Talent management (TM)	Firms strategically align their talent management practices with localization rules to gain their legitimacy.
Cuervo-Cazurra (2011)	The Middle East	Quantitative	MNCs/Internationalization	Home-country companies try to develop their necessary knowledge relative to foreign institutional conditions to deal with foreign expansion challenges.

Darrag, Mohamed and Aziz (2010)	Egypt	Quantitative	HRM practices/ MNCs	HRM practices are differently implemented from one country to another because of the national institutional differences.
Abdel-Monem (2012)	Egypt	Quantitative	HRM practices/ MNCs	MNCs attempt to strategically align their HR practices with their business strategies to gain their legitimacy.
Wang, Fan, Freeman and Zhu (2017)	A mixed context including the Middle Eastern countries	Qualitative	Expatriate/MNCs	Home-country expatriate managers have difficulty in transferring interpersonal and communication skills to host-country contexts because of the differences in cultural values.
Forstenlechner and Mellahi (2011)	UAE	Qualitative	IHRM/MNCs	HR practices can secure a degree of social legitimacy and become taken-for-granted. However, the employment level of UAE nationals is not taken for granted, and HR practices tend to be localized.
Demirbag, Apaydin and Tatoglu (2011)	The Middle East and North Africa	Quantitative	Internationalization/ MNCs	That the institutional factors differ from one nation to another influences/determines the survival of the Japanese foreign equity ventures in the research context.
Metcalfe (2007)	Bahrain	Mixed methods	IHRM	HR practices are constrained by its institutional environment such as Islamic values, gender inequality and legal issues.

## **Future research agenda**

On the basis of the above analysis and identified gaps in research in the Middle East, along with its unique institutional attributes, next we provide directions for future research.

### ***Covid-19 and its influence on the Middle East's IB activities***

Covid-19 is greatly influencing all kinds of organizations operating throughout the world regardless of their size, line of business and financial situation. This is especially true in the case of Middle Eastern organizations where oil and gas are the key lines of business for the majority of firms in the region. Covid-19 has a significant influence on the oil and gas industry as its global supply chain is down or disrupted. Firms operating in this region therefore are facing the risk and are most vulnerable to bankruptcy in such uncertain environment (Bapuji, Patel, Ertug, and Allen 2020). In particular, Covid-19 has important implications for research on the topics of resilience and innovation because the pandemic changes the way people work and how organizations manage their staff in order to sustain business growth. The implications of Covid-19 accordingly become the topical need that calls for more research to be conducted in this region. We thus propose:

*Research direction 1.* What are the key challenges that IB is expected to face during and after the Covid-19 pandemic and what are the most effective methods/solutions to address them when it comes to the successful delivery of the localization agenda of MNCs?

*Research direction 2.* How do organizations in the Middle East expect Covid-19 to influence their ability to strategically align HR management practices with their business strategies in order to respond to today's uncertain environments and achieve their set goals?

*Research direction 3.* What are the key drivers that enable Middle Eastern firms to increase their resilience? What are the implications for organizational innovation strategy, HR management and technology support?

***Cross-national comparative study in IHRM practices***

Our literature review finds that MNCs struggle to transfer HR practices implemented in their home-countries to host-country subsidiaries because of cultural differences and other institutional conditions. In this regard, future research should take into account cross-country comparative studies to assess whether and why country-of-origin may have implications for HRM practices in the Middle East. By doing so, MNCs are likely to be in a better position to understand the institutional context in which they are operating, thereby being successful players in the process of internationalization (Budhwar, Tung, Varma, and Do 2017). We also observe that most early work in this regard is based on specific country samples, and thus we know relatively little about the extent to which MNCs standardize their HRM practices across Middle Eastern nations. We therefore propose that future studies should undertake cross-national comparative approach and investigate the impact of institutional conditions on the relationship between HRM and performance in countries characterized by unique institutional attributes. We thus propose the following.

*Research direction 4:* What are the key institutional forces that strongly influence HRM practices across Middle Eastern countries? What adjustments MNCs need to make in order to develop effective HRM practices in their Middle East subsidiaries?

*Research direction 5:* What is the nature and pattern of diffusion of international HRM practices that could be emulated in different global operations of MNCs and introduced into the Middle East? What are the implications of the same for both MNCs and domestic firms in the region?

### ***Internationalization in start-ups and SMEs in the Middle East***

Internationalization is especially essential for firms to expand their foreign market share and position themselves in the global marketplace. This is also apparent in the context of SMEs (small and medium size enterprises), which are generally resource constrained. It is for this reason that internationalization allows firms to be exposed to opportunism (Verbeke, Ciravegna, Lopez, and Kundu 2019; Verbeke and Greidanus 2009). In particular, opportunism can help startup firms, including SMEs, to exploit and expand into foreign markets (Bagheri, Mitchelmore, Bamiatzi, and Nikolopoulos 2019; Zhou, Wu, and Luo 2007), experience new opportunities in foreign markets (Chetty and Agndal 2007; Verbeke and Ciravegna 2018), and have new international partners (Ellis 2011). Scholars also note that there is a close relationship between innovation strategy and internationalization. Firms that invest in their innovative capabilities are more likely to successfully internationalize, and then internationalization allows these firms to increase the returns on their innovations (Hitt, Hoskisson, and Ireland 1994; Kyläheiko, Jantunen, Puumalainen, Saarenketo, and Tuppurä 2011). This view therefore lays the foundations for IB research. However, little attention is devoted to this topic in the Middle East context. We therefore build on this foundation and propose the following:

*Research direction 6:* What are the key challenges that influence internationalization of start-ups, including SME firms, in the Middle East? What are the best ways to enable these firms to successfully internationalize?

*Research direction 7:* How best can start-ups and SME firms in the Middle East prepare for their internationalization journey? What roles do the government and/or policy-makers play in facilitating these firms to successfully internationalize?

*Research direction 8:* What are the key determinants of internationalization in the Middle East?

How, why and when do these determinants influence firm internationalization?

### ***Management of expatriates***

Expatriates are a key players in the Middle Eastern workforce (see Budhwar et al. 2019).

However, our observations suggest that there is no formalized program that focuses on the management of expatriates in the Middle East. Scholars therefore highlight the different issues that expatriates usually face and need to adjust to such as massive cross-cultural differences between expatriates' home- and host-country cultures, short-term work visa and institutional factors, such as Islamic values and demographics (Afiouni, Karam, and El-Hajj 2013; Budhwar et al. 2019; Varma et al. 2016). All of these challenges may create massive integration and diversity management challenges for the HR function (Budhwar et al. 2019). These issues have implications for the HR function, and yet we know little about them in the Middle Eastern context. We therefore propose the following:

*Research Direction 9:* To what extent, and what kind of, institutional and cultural conditions dictate the effectiveness of expatriate management practices across Middle Eastern countries?

*Research Direction 10:* Can standardized expatriate management programs be designed for all Middle Eastern countries? If yes, what would be the template/ key components of such a standardized model? If no, what factors/ frameworks should be taken into account when designing expatriate management programs for each country in the region?

*Research Direction 11:* What training and development programs can be implemented to enable expatriates to adjust and perform well in the work environment of the Middle East?

*Research Direction 12:* Do local firms in the Middle East need to adjust or modify their HR practices in order for expatriates to deliver optimally? Why or why not?

### ***Reconceptualization of institutional theory for the Middle East***

Institutional theory is one of the most dominant theoretical frameworks in management studies. It has been widely applied in different fields of management scholarship such as IB, HRM, strategy and marketing. As institutional theory is in constant evolvement from its early form, it now entails old and new institutionalism (Lewis et al. 2019). Old institutionalism comprises of regulatory, cognitive (focusing on topics like shared social knowledge) and normative (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Scott 2013). New institutionalism argues the isomorphism of organizational policies and practices in a particular context and is built upon three mechanisms of coercive, mimetic and normative forces (Powell and DiMaggio 2012). It therefore “provides a toolkit with which to understand how organizations and individuals are able to escape or redirect the normative, coercive, and mimetic isomorphic forces” (Lewis et al. 2019, 317). Most importantly, scholars suggest that institutional theory should be extended and theorized as a multilevel theoretical lens (Do et al. 2020; Lewis et al. 2019). Despite suggestive hints, institutional theory has yet to be fully applied as a multilevel theory in the Middle Eastern context. For example, relatively little is known about how multilevel institutional theory and/or the mechanisms of new institutionalism are employed in the field of IB in the Middle Eastern context, where it is likely that the multilevel perspective can help us to explore the top-down and bottom-up flows of influence between an organization’s social environment and the individual within the organization (Lewis et al. 2019). On the basis of such assertions, we propose the below:



*Research Direction 13:* How can institutional theory be extended to the multilevel perspective to understand the macro-, meso- and even micro-level contexts of IB related research phenomena such as internationalization, expatriate management strategies and innovation strategies of firms?

*Research Direction 14:* What are the key mechanisms of new institutionalism, such as coercive, mimetic and normative forces, that influence how IB practices respond to environmental perceptions and external environment pressures in the Middle East?

### **Concluding remarks**

This introductory article aimed to evaluate the institutional forces and how they affect the current state of IB in Middle Eastern countries. To provide insights into how the institutional context impacts IB activities, we analyzed the available literature across a number of themes. On the basis of identified knowledge gaps in the literature, we have proposed a set of potential research directions to guide future researchers to advance and develop the IB research stream in the Middle East and contribute to the extant literature. We also note that the Middle East is unique and interesting in terms of its institutional factors that have the potential to explore many important research questions in order to understand the context and draw implications for international management practices. As we write this piece, there are important changes taking place in the Middle East. After decades the region is slowly opening up to better relations with Israel and its advanced technologies, something that was incomprehensible in the foreseeable recent past. The UAE has led the way in opening up and is being followed by other Middle Eastern countries. It would be interesting to see how these developments affect and influence international business in the region with this geo-political change. In conclusion, research along the proposed areas offers a great potential to make useful contextual theoretical contributions,

methodological advancements and meaningful implications. We believe this is a starting point, and more research should be pursued in the future.

## References

- Abdel-Monem, O. 2012. "Measuring the Impact of Human Resource Management Practices on Organization Performance in Pharmaceutical Multinational Companies in Egypt." *Journal of American Science* 8 (11):186-97.
- Afiouni, F., C. M. Karam, and H. El-Hajj. 2013. "The HR Value Proposition Model in the Arab Middle East: Identifying the Contours of an Arab Middle Eastern HR Model." *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 24 (10):1895-1932.
- Afiouni, F., H. Ruël, and P. Schuler. 2014. "HRM in the Middle East: Toward a Greater Understanding." *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 25 (2):133-143.
- Al-Hamadi, A. B., P. S. Budhwar, and H. Shipton. 2007. "Management of Human Resources in Oman." *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 18 (1):100-13.
- Al-Husan, F. B., and P. James. 2009. "Multinationals and the Process of Post-Entry HRM Reform: Evidence from Three Jordanian Case Studies." *European Management Journal* 27 (2):142-54.
- Al-Sarawi, H. A., A. N. Jha, M. A. Al-Sarawi, and B. P. Lyons. 2015. "Historic and Contemporary Contamination in the Marine Environment of Kuwait: An Overview." *Marine Pollution Bulletin* 100 (2):621-28.
- Al-Husan, F. B., and P. James. 2007. "Multinational HRM in Privatized Jordanian Enterprises: An Exploration of the Influence of Political Contingencies." *Thunderbird International Business Review* 49 (6):637-53.
- Alharbi, J., H. Gelaidan, A. Al-Swidi, and A. Saeed. 2016. "Control Mechanisms Employed between Headquarters and Subsidiaries in Multinational Enterprises (MNEs)." *Review of International Business and Strategy* 26 (4):493-516.
- Ali, A., and A. Al-Kazemi. 2006. "Human Resource Management in Kuwait." In *Managing Human Resources in the Middle East*, edited by P. S. Budhwar and K. Mellahi, 79-96. London: Routledge.
- Bagheri, M., S. Mitchelmore, V. Bamiatzi, and K. Nikolopoulos. 2019. "Internationalization Orientation in SMEs: The Mediating Role of Technological Innovation." *Journal of International Management* 25 (1):121-139.
- Bapuji, H., Patel, C., Ertug, G., and Allen, D. G. 2020. *Corona Crisis and Inequality: Why Management Research Needs a Societal Turn*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Budhwar, P., and Mellahi, K. 2007. "Introduction: human resource management in the Middle East." *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 18 (1):2-10.
- Budhwar, P., and Mellahi, K. 2018. "HRM in the Middle East: State of the Field and Directions for Future Research." In *Handbook of Research on Comparative Human Resource Management*, edited by P. S. Budhwar and K. Mellahi, 427-437. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Budhwar, P., Pereira, V., Mellahi, K., and Singh, S. K. 2019. "The state of HRM in the Middle East: Challenges and future research agenda." *Asia Pacific Journal of Management* 36 (4):905-33.
- Budhwar, P., Tung, R. L., Varma, A., and Do, H. 2017. "Developments in human resource management in MNCs from BRICS nations: A review and future research agenda." *Journal of International Management* 23 (2):111-23.
- Chetty, S., and Agndal, H. 2007. "Social capital and its influence on changes in internationalization mode among small and medium-sized enterprises." *Journal of International Marketing* 15(1):1-29.

- Common, R. 2008. "Administrative change in the Gulf: Modernization in Bahrain and Oman." *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 74 (2):177-93.
- Cuervo-Cazurra, A. 2011. "Selecting the country in which to start internationalization: The non-sequential internationalization model." *Journal of World Business* 46 (4):426-37.
- Darrag, M., Mohamed, A., and Aziz, H. A. 2010. "Investigating recruitment practices and problems of multinational companies (MNCs) operating in Egypt." *Education, Business and Society: Contemporary Middle Eastern Issues* 3 (2):96-116.
- Demirbag, M., Apaydin, M., and Tatoglu, E. 2011. "Survival of Japanese subsidiaries in the middle east and North Africa." *Journal of World Business* 46 (4):411-25.
- DiMaggio, P. J., and Powell, W. W. 1983. "The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields." *American Sociological Review* 48 (2):147-60.
- Do, H., Patel, C., Budhwar, P., Katou, A. A., Arora, B., and Dao, M. 2020. "Institutionalism and its effect on HRM in the ASEAN context: challenges and opportunities for future research." *Human Resource Management Review* 30 (4), 100729.
- Ellis, P. D 2011 " Social ties and international entrepreneurship: Opportunities and constraints affecting firm internationalization. *Journal of International Business Studies* 42 (1):99-127.
- Forstenlechner, I., and Mellahi, K. 2011. "Gaining legitimacy through hiring local workforce at a premium: The case of MNEs in the United Arab Emirates." *Journal of World Business* 46 (4):455-61.
- Ghouse, S., McElwee, G., Meaton, J., and Durrah, O. 2017. "Barriers to rural women entrepreneurs in Oman." *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior and Research*.
- Haak-Saheem, W., Festing, M., and Darwish, T. K. 2017. "International human resource management in the Arab Gulf States—an institutional perspective." *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 28 (18): 2684-2712.
- Hassi, A. 2016. *Human resource management in Morocco. In Handbook of Human Resource Management in the Middle East*: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Hitt, M. A., Hoskisson, R. E., and Ireland, R. D. 1994. "A mid-range theory of the interactive effects of international and product diversification on innovation and performance." *Journal of Management* 20 (2): 297-326.
- Kenawy, E. M. 2009. "The economic development in Egypt during the 1952-2007 period." *Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences* 3 (2): 588-603.
- Kim, D.-O., and Bae, J. 2017. *Employment relations and HRM in South Korea*: Taylor and Francis.
- Kyläheiko, K., Jantunen, A., Puumalainen, K., Saarenketo, S., and Tuppurä, A. 2011. "Innovation and internationalization as growth strategies: The role of technological capabilities and appropriability." *International Business Review* 20 (5):508-20.
- Lewis, A. C., Cardy, R. L., and Huang, L. S. 2019. "Institutional theory and HRM: A new look." *Human Resource Management Review* 29 (3):316-35.
- Madanat, H. G., and Khasawneh, A. S. 2018. "Level of effectiveness of human resource management practices and its impact on employees' satisfaction in the banking sector of Jordan." *Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict* 22 (1):1-19.
- Metcalfe, B. D. 2007. "Gender and human resource management in the Middle East." *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 18 (1):54-74.
- Metcalfe, B. D. 2008. "Women, management and globalization in the Middle East." *Journal of Business Ethics* 83 (1):85-100.
- Nusair, N., Ababneh, R., and Bae, Y. K. 2012. "The impact of transformational leadership style on innovation as perceived by public employees in Jordan." *International Journal of Commerce and Management*.

- Peterson, J. E. 2004. "Oman: three and a half decades of change and development." *Middle East Policy*, 11 (2):125-137.
- Powell, W. W., and DiMaggio, P. J. 2012. *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis*: University of Chicago press.
- Ramdani, B., Mellahi, K., and Gueramat, C. 2016. "Human resource management in Algeria." In *Handbook of Human Resource Management in the Middle East*: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Rodriguez, J. K., and Scurry, T. 2014. "Career capital development of self-initiated expatriates in Qatar: Cosmopolitan globetrotters, experts and outsiders." *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 25 (7):1046-1067.
- Scott, W. R. 2008. "Approaching adulthood: the maturing of institutional theory." *Theory and Society*, 37 (5):427-442.
- Scott, W. R. 2013. *Institutions and organizations: Ideas, interests, and identities*: Sage publications.
- Shechter, R. 2008. "The cultural economy of development in Egypt: Economic nationalism, hidden economy and the emergence of mass consumer society during Sadat's infitah." *Middle Eastern Studies* 44 (4):571-83.
- Sidani, Y., and Al Ariss, A. 2014. "Institutional and corporate drivers of global talent management: Evidence from the Arab Gulf region." *Journal of World Business* 49 (2):215-24.
- Tlaiss, H. A., and Elamin, A. 2016. "Human resource management in Saudi Arabia." In *handbook of human resource management in the Middle East*: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Varma, A., Aycan, Z., Budhwar, P., Pichler, S., Uygur, U., and Paluch, R. 2016. "Host country nationals' support to expatriates: an investigation in Turkey." *European Journal of International Management* 10 (6):605-623.
- Verbeke, A., and Ciravegna, L. 2018. "International entrepreneurship research versus international business research: A false dichotomy?" *Journal of International Business Studies* 49:387-394.
- Verbeke, A., Ciravegna, L., Lopez, L. E., and Kundu, S. K. 2019. "Five configurations of opportunism in international market entry." *Journal of Management Studies* 56 (7):1287-1313.
- Verbeke, A., and Greidanus, N. 2009. "The end of the opportunism versus trust debate: Bounded reliability as a new envelope concept in research on MNE governance." *Journal of International Business Studies* 40 (9):1471-1495.
- Wang, D., Fan, D., Freeman, S., and Zhu, C. J. 2017. "Exploring cross-cultural skills for expatriate managers from Chinese multinationals: Congruence and contextualization." *Asia Pacific Journal of Management* 34 (1):123-146.
- Waxin, M. F., and Bateman, R. E. 2016. "Human resource management in the United Arab Emirates." In *Handbook of human resource management in the Middle East*: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Zhou, L., Wu, W. P., and Luo, X. 2007. "Internationalization and the performance of born-global SMEs: the mediating role of social networks." *Journal of International Business Studies* 38 (4):673-90.