

What do we know about African businesses?

OVERLOOKED...

Labor intermediation in the local political arena: Local labor recruitment on the Nachtigal dam project in Cameroon

Simon Wuidar & Ludovic Bakebek.

This article discusses the labor market intermediation practices that develop in the context of the Nachtigal hydroelectric dam construction project in Cameroon. Based on ethnographic research, the results show the importance of local contexts in the recruitment processes, with an emphasis on the political and social structures pre-existing the projects. More precisely, our results shed light on complex processes of labor intermediation by confronting the classical literature on labor market intermediaries with a socio-anthropological approach, focusing on local socio-political arenas. This article contributes to the literature on labor intermediation in Sub-Saharan Africa by discussing the importance of the politicization of recruitment projects, the emergence of new intermediary actors, and the adaptation of the HR function that results from the structuring of these local arenas.

What the reterritorialization dynamics of three franchised companies in Burkina Faso, Niger, and Ethiopia tell us about the complexity of African entrepreneurship

Roberta Rubino.

In this article, we propose to make a contribution to the current debate on businesses in emerging Africa, based on the study of an international franchise formed by a French parent company and its network of partner companies in Burkina Faso, Niger, and Ethiopia. Far from being a simple cohabitation of individuals or professionals who cooperate, this international franchise is presented as a place in which a multiplicity of behaviors, values, and habits, pre-structured by belonging to specific contexts, which may be national, professional, or organizational, confront each other.

In this framework, attention will be focused on the dynamics of reterritorialization by which African franchised firms adapt to the particular spatiotemporal fields of rationalized and standardized manufacturing processes designed elsewhere. Through the description of the technical practices, organization, logic, and rationality of the African partners' activities, we will highlight the characteristics of their own local realities, and the inescapable influence they exert on their enterprises.

How traditional African firms work: A modeling attempt in Sub-Saharan Africa

Jean Biwolé Fouda & Geneviève Causse.

In an economic and social world that is evolving, notably because of globalization and the responsibilities now incumbent upon the company, the traditional mode

of operation of the Western company is sometimes questioned. The model of the African company then arouses curiosity and raises the question of how it functions. We try to answer this question by studying the case of fourteen small businesses selected in three countries of the continent (Burkina-Faso, Cameroon, Togo). A distinction is made between the modern African enterprise, which is similar in some respects to the classic enterprise model, and the traditional African enterprise. These two variations of the African enterprise model have in common a strong hold of the community/family/ethnic group on all facets of enterprise management, the art of adapting to the present situation, a simple organizational structure, and an influence of the invisible world on its activities.

IN QUEST OF A THEORY

Decolonizing management: Between false debates and real controversies, the contributions of three thinkers from the "South"

Yves Livian.

Postcolonial thought is currently the subject of two types of debate: debates in France on its supposed omnipotence and on the origins and activism of its authors... and debates that have agitated the media and do not touch the substance of the original themes of this current.

And also more essential questions that are interesting for those who want to contribute to a "decolonization" of management sciences and management.

In this article, we first seek to take stock of these debates, between media agitation and important controversies.

The aim is to show, by avoiding a North-South controversy, that some authors from the "South", in this case G. Spivak, A. Quijano, and A. Mbembe, provide answers that can be used to solve the problem. Mbembe, provide answers that may be useful to these questions in the field of management sciences.

TRIAL BY FACT

The reasons for the formalization of informal enterprises in African countries: A study of two enterprises in Niger

Istifanous Ado & Richard Soparnot.

The informal sector continues to dominate the economies of developing countries. After more than half a century of work, researchers have not reached a consensus on the definition of this sector, on the methods of its evaluation, and even less on the formalization strategy to adopt. Today, more than ever, the issue of formalizing informal enterprises is essential, as it is a prerequisite for the economic takeoff of the countries concerned. This is why we have examined the question of why informal entrepreneurs decide to formalize their activities at a given time. To answer this

question, we used the life-story method, as it allows us to faithfully trace the trajectories of the cases to be studied in order to enumerate, through a qualitative analysis, the different reasons for formalization. Our results reveal three main reasons: forced formalization; defensive formalization; and offensive formalization. Beyond the policy measures for formalization that are so far transcendental, the results of this study show the need to adopt an inclusive approach, involving informal enterprises in the search for solutions that affect them. This requires a micro, meso, contextualized analysis that gives the management researcher full legitimacy to take on the theme of formalization of informal enterprises.

Feedback on a university entrepreneurial project: The case of a Cameroonian business school

Emmanuel Kamdem & Blaise Marie Ouafu.

The liberalization of university education in Africa in the early 1990s has given rise to various entrepreneurial vocations. These have led to the creation of management training institutions, mainly by university professors and/or private sector business leaders, in order to improve the quantitative and qualitative supply of management training. Thus, the African entrepreneurial environment has witnessed the gradual emergence of a new category of private entrepreneurs in a sector hitherto exclusively dominated by public academic institutions. The main objective of this article is to present the experience of a private Cameroonian business school, the Institut Supérieur de Management et de l'Entrepreneuriat (IME) of Douala. This experience shows the difficulties and opportunities of creating a private company dedicated to university education in the Cameroonian context; with a strong orientation towards international university partnerships. The discussion of the case study allows us to understand how these difficulties were managed, under different constraints (environmental, sectoral, organizational, individual). This discussion also makes it possible to decipher the levers mobilized to successfully face these constraints.

Africa in search of the “ideal manager”: What it means to run an “African” business

Serge Alain Godong.

Is it possible for African managers to coexist with the demands of Western-style rationality – which pushes for the preservation/maximization of corporate interests and profit – with African cultural traditions based rather on the preservation of “brotherhood,” “kindness,” “sharing,” and “generosity,” the moral basis of the sustainable social contract of community life? What are the points of compatibility between these two poles of attraction that would make a reasonable and appropriate practice of capitalism possible? In this article, we show the forms of implementation and practice of capitalism on this continent, as well as the contradictions that still exist today in the definition of the role of African leaders, and which remain a challenge for the managers of tomorrow.

MOSAICS

Hervé Dumez

“On Peter Robinson's *Flying Blind. The 737 Max Tragedy and the Fall of Boeing*” (US: New York; Doubleday) 2021.

Nicolas Berland

“On Emmanuel Kamdem, Françoise Chevalier & Marielle A. Payaud's *La recherche enracinée en management. Contextes nouveaux et perspectives nouvelles en Afrique*” (FR: EMS Éditions) 2020.

Michel Villette

“On Benjamin Rubbers' *Faire fortune en Afrique. Anthropologie des derniers colons du Katanga*” (FR: Karthala) 2009.