Morgan State University, in collaboration with Howard University, North Carolina A&T and University College Dublin,

Presents
CALL FOR PAPERS
Of the
Fourth Biennial (2025)

"Out of (and Into) Africa" International Business Conference

Date of Conference: November 10-11 (Monday-Tuesday), 2025
Venue: Online (zoom)

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: **July 31, 2025**

Email submissions to: Africa.Conference@morgan.edu

Conference Theme:
Going Africa-Centric: African Paradigms in International Business

Conference Chair:
Dr. Omar J. Khan, Morgan State University (*omar.khan@morgan.edu*)

Program Chairs:

Firm Strategy and Tactics:
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African Consumer Marketing:
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Society and Institutions:
Dr. Hakeem Tijani, Office of Global Partnerships-Africa, Morgan State University (hakeem.tijani@morgan.edu) and Mr. Rodney Smith, Center for African Studies, Howard University (rodney.smith@bison.howard.edu)

Following the success of the first three "Out of (and Into) Africa" conferences, we are now excited to launch the 4th edition of the biennial "Out of (and Into) Africa" conference series. The 2025 edition will be characterized by an **online conference format, multiple Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HCBUs) organization, and international partnerships.**

Background

Online delivery of the last two conferences generated greater (and more impactful) scholarly participation from the African continent and other parts of the world, and we will continue with this format. The multi-HBCU scope and international scope in conference organization further enhances reach and attractiveness of this conference.

To be clear, submissions are invited from ALL academic institutions across the world, provided the scholarship has a clear African focus. This international business conference series is Africa-centric.

Despite promising social economic development in Africa and foreign marketers' enthusiasm toward its future growth, there remains limited firm or consumer research for marketing practitioners. Extant literature shows knowledge/application on African firm strategy and consumer behavior is fragmented. **We set the following three goals for the conference:**

1. Reviewing current knowledge on African consumers, marketing, firm strategy, and societal policies - highlighting gaps in our knowledge and understanding of international business with an African focus.
2. Bringing to light contributions/paradigms originating from Africa, and developing an agenda for future research
3. Fostering collaborations among firm strategy, consumer marketing and public policy researchers with similar interests.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic (starting 2020), African consumer and business spending was expected to grow beyond $4 trillion, with a striking demographic dividend indicated by a massive expected working-age population larger than either China or India by 2034, abundant resources, and fast-paced growth. While the recent pandemic caused a recessionary environment across the continent, it also created opportunities (and challenges) for entrepreneurship and small & medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Innovative solutions including products/services have been introduced in various countries across the continent - which may have far-reaching implications, in the long run, in Africa and across the globe.

Additionally, in 2015, the United Nations developed 17 sustainable development goals (UN SDGs) to solve "grand challenges". These UN Grand Challenges represent common issues faced worldwide, including ending poverty and hunger, promoting good health and well-being, ensuring inclusion and equity, gender inequality, among many others (United Nations, n.d.). There have been multiple calls for individuals, communities, organizations, and institutions to actively work on developing solutions and achieving the 17 UN SDGs across Africa. One example of a trend in Africa is brain drain, which is the migration of employees from one country into another. Brain drain has become a trend among professionals, such as medical practitioners, within the continent of Africa, migrating into non-African continents and leaving organizations short-staffed and clients (or patients) lacking the care they need (Ebeye & Lee, 2023). Such a trend negatively affects the African continent and highlights the need to work on UN SDGs.

The past decade has witnessed cross-fertilization of African-born entrepreneurship and innovation into other parts of the world, along with growth opportunities for MNCs and SMEs into Africa. Indeed, there have been important calls from academia for making a serious effort to "bringing Africa in" (George, at al. 2016).

The time is ripe for an updated showcase of scholarly insights regarding international business in this still under-studied continent - including, and especially, insights and strategy/tactics that **originated** from Africa. Lutz (2009), for example, utilized Ubuntu philosophy in understanding a theory of global management. Indeed, with the demographic explosion coming from developing countries, it is imperative to examine more non-Western contexts in depth (Wickert, et al, 2024). Thus, our theme this year is ***Going Africa-Centric***. This conference series marks a significant step toward creating a sustained effort among HBCUs - with Morgan leadership - to connect with Africa in business-related research at both the micro and macro level.

The interests of Africa, Africans and the entrepreneurial processes/innovations/paradigms created in Africa are at the very core of our 2025 conference. How businesses communicate entrepreneurial opportunities and significance of nonmarket strategies for SMEs (see Oriaifo, Oliveira, and Ellis, 2019), for example, are well worth our investigation. We encourage all researchers to go Africa-Centric with us and submit their related research and ideas, particularly with societal drivers (like religion) more prominent and significant in Africa (Barnard & Momabolo, 2022). Research themes that could be particularly relevant to this conference include the following, ***as they pertain to*** **firm strategy, businesses in Africa, African marketing, and interplay with society and institutions**:

1. African Consumers and Markets
2. African firms, corporations, co-ops, and organizations
3. Returning to Africa: Starting New African Businesses
4. Technical and Vocational Training in Africa
5. Technology, Innovation, and Marketing within Africa
6. Higher education in Africa and Global Partnerships
7. Africans and the Triadic Relationship
8. Study Abroad and Study-Differentiated Experiential Paradigms
9. African Leaders Contextualized: Biographical Discourse
10. Internal Migrations in Africa and Their Implications
11. African non-profits and NGOs: impact on business development
12. Africa and Global Politics
13. Philosophy and Theories of Afrocentrism
14. Afro-Politanism and Global Africa; Africa's Global Footprint
15. Theorists and Idealists

Submission Options and Guidelines:

1. Full Paper Submission Guidelines: Each paper is to have a separate cover page with each author's name, affiliation, and email. Multiple authorships should indicate the contact person. Authors should avoid revealing their identities in the body of the paper. The title of the paper should appear on the first page of the manuscript, followed by a 150-word abstract, single spaced. The body of the paper follows right after using double spacing and adhering to APA style. The *maximum* paper submission length is 7,000 words including references, tables and figures using 12-point font

2. Working Paper or Extended Abstracts: Working papers or extended abstracts, which focus on research in its early stages, should not be less than three pages and should not exceed 3,000 words including references, tables and figures using 12-point font. Please follow the formatting guidelines specified for competitive refereed papers. Include a separate cover page with the name, affiliation, and email address of each presenter.

3. Panel, Special Session, & Workshops: Proposals should not exceed 2 double-spaced pages. Include a separate cover page with the name, affiliation, and email of each presenter. Include description of the panel, along with themes and presentation approach/focus. Each person listed on a panel, special session, or workshop proposal must register for and attend the conference.

Note: Registration for the conference is required for all attendees, including presenters. <u>Registration is free of charge.</u>

Research track suggested focus areas: Include, but are *not limited to*, the following (other ideas are invited as long as an **African focus** is emphasized and/or leveraged):

1. **The Firm Strategies and Tactics division/program** invites submissions exploring the creation and development of firm-level strategy, advantages/disadvantages, solutions/innovations, and international business management implications for multinational corporations (MNCs) or small/medium sized enterprises (SMEs). Topics in this program **include**, but are **not limited to**, the following areas: African paradigms in developing business, small business development strategies and tactics, MNC strategies and tactics in Africa, Family-owned firms and internationalization, B2B marketing and supply chain management, international entrepreneurship and born-globals.

2. **The Consumer Marketing program** advocates for research efforts from diverse perspectives to address important theoretical and substantive issues faced by African consumers and marketing practitioners today, ranging from the continuing concern of pandemic and regional conflicts to economic volatility. We **encourage** multi-method/multi-paradigmatic approaches to tackle, but are **not limited to**, the following topic areas: Arts, culture and consumption, Consumer psychology and behavior, Services, retailing, and customer experiences, Consumer well-being and pandemic effects, Social media and digital marketing, Emerging middle-class and Bottom of Pyramid (BOP) consumers, AI and consumer behavior(s).

3. **The Society and Public Policy division/program** seeks to interrogate public policy and societal institutions' role, effect and changes that are intertwined with business and entrepreneurship development in building sustainable African International Businesses. Potential topics include, but are **not limited to**, the following: Environmental, Social, and Governance Issues; Public and private enabling institutions; Governmental supports and barriers; how can corporations tackle grand challenges like those relating to climate action and life below water?; Africa has gained attention with young adults' expertise in technology- how can these talents be used to address UN SDGs?

For further information on past editions of this conference series, please visit any of the following two institutional webpages: morgan.edu/sbm/africaconference, or cfas.howard.edu/OutofAfrica.

Submission Process:

**<u>Submit works by deadline directly to the conference submissions email:</u> africa.conference@morgan.edu
<u>Submit any of the following</u>**: complete papers, working papers, extended abstracts and/or panel proposals in WORD or PDF format. *In the subject line* of the email please indicate the appropriate program/division as well as shortened title of submission. At least one author for accepted submissions must register and attend the online Conference. Any general **questions** should be emailed to the Conference Chair.

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<u>Submission Deadline: July 31, 2025</u>

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All submissions will go through a double-blind review process. Reviewers will evaluate each submission on the basis of a) quality of the research, b) contribution to the field, c) interest and relevance of the topic to the conference, and d) coherence and readability.

To *volunteer to serve as a paper reviewer*, please contact the conference chair. Please include "reviewer volunteer" in the subject line.

Thank you and we look forward to a most productive 2025 "Out of (and Into) Africa" Conference!

References:

Barnard, H. and Mamabolo, A. (2022), "On religion as an institution in international business: Executives' lived experience in four African countries," **Journal of World Business**, 57: 101262.

Ebeye, T., &amp; Lee, H. (2023). Down the brain drain: a rapid review exploring physician emigration from West Africa. **Global Health Research and Policy**, 8(1), 23.

George, G., Corbishley, C., Khayesi, J., Haas, M., & Tihanyi, L. (2016), "Bringing Africa In: Promising Directions for Management Research," **Academy of Management Journal**, 59 (2), pp. 377-393.

Lutz, D. (2009), "African Ubuntu Philosophy and GlobalManagement,"**Journal of Business Ethics**, 84:313–328.

Oriaifo, J., de Oliveira, R., & Ellis, K (2020), "Going above and beyond: How intermediaries enhance change in emerging economy institutions to facilitate small to medium enterprise development," **Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal**, 14:501–531.

United Nations. (n.d.). Sustainable development goals: 17 goals to Transform Our World. **United Nations**. https://www.un.org/en/exhibits/page/sdgs-17-goals-transform-world.

Wickert, C., Potocnik, K, Prashantham, S., Shi, W., & Snihur, Y. (2024),"Embracing non-Western Contexts in Management Scholarship," **Journal of Management Studies**, 61:8, doi:10.1111/joms.13048.