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A Welcome from the President of AIBRP

On behalf of the Officers of the Association of International Business Research and Practice, it is my distinct pleasure to welcome you to the 36th Proceedings Volume of the International Business track, held in conjunction with the MBAA-International annual conference in Chicago. This volume represents the culmination of a successful exchange of research, innovative ideas, and invaluable teaching best practices. We extend our sincere appreciation to all the dedicated individuals who organized the sessions, and, most importantly, to our contributors whose insightful work has made this publication possible. Your commitment to advancing the field of international business is truly commendable.

Kingshuk Mukherejee
June 2025

A Note from the Proceedings Editor

Welcome to the latest volume of our 36th edition of Conference Proceedings, a testament to the vibrant scholarship and diverse perspectives shared at our 2025 AIBRP meetings in Chicago. We are pleased to present this selected collection as a snapshot of contemporary thought in international business and pedagogical innovation.

This edition features four compelling main articles that delve into some of the most critical and dynamic issues facing today's global landscape. From the “Action and Reaction to Trade Restrictions: US-China Trade” offering historical and real-time insights into the high-stakes competition shaping the trade revolution and national security, to “A Systematic Review of the Role of Social and Cultural Issues on Digital Economy in African Emerging Markets” that meticulously uncovers gaps in our understanding of cultural influences on digital engagement across that continent. We also explore a timely and hopeful topic in “The Returning Syrian Diaspora: A Cultural Assessment and Implications for Entrepreneurship” providing an essential cultural lens on the potential for rebuilding a war-torn nation. Finally, “The Role of Fintech in Reshaping Global Financial Governance” offers an analysis of how disruptive financial technologies are challenging established norms and demanding adaptive regulatory frameworks worldwide.

In addition to these foundational pieces, this volume includes selected abstracts of presentations covering a broad spectrum of international business topics and innovative teaching techniques for faculty. Each offers a glimpse into cutting-edge research and pedagogical strategies, reflecting the breadth and depth of AIBRP's commitment to advancing knowledge and practice.

This collection will offer valuable insights for academics, practitioners, and students alike, fostering a deeper understanding of the forces shaping our global economy and the pedagogical approaches that prepare the next generation of international business leaders. Thank you for joining us on this intellectual journey.

Gaye Acikdilli
June 2025

Proceedings of the Association of International Business, Research, and Practice 2025 Conference

This volume represents a curated selection of papers and abstracts at our annual meeting. Each contribution reflects our commitment to fostering an understanding of global business research and teaching aligning with AIBRP's core mission.

To ensure quality and relevance, our track chairs and the editorial team screened all articles submitted for the conference. Papers ultimately selected for publication in these Conference Proceedings have been reviewed for pertinence to our track themes and overall accessibility. Authors have updated their work based on comments from track chairs and constructive feedback received from participants during the conference sessions. We extend our sincere gratitude to all the reviewers whose efforts were instrumental in maintaining the standards of these submissions.

Beyond full-length papers, this publication also features diverse contributions, including case studies and abstracts of impactful presentations, highlighting the breadth of scholarship within our field. All authors whose contributions appear in these proceedings presented their work at the 61st MBAA International Conference in Chicago. Please note that AIBRP assumes no responsibility for the views expressed by individual authors.

For Future Contributors:

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Vision

The vision of AIBRP is to provide a forum to stakeholders from Society, Business, Government, and Academia to share ideas, interests, research themes, and transformational insights that will shape the future of International Business education and practice.

Mission

The mission of AIBRP is to contribute to the wider society by supporting research and scholarship in international business, helping to build capacity in both international business education and practice while providing opportunities for development, policy engagement, and transformational educational experience to all its members.

Strategy

AIBRP sponsored conferences and meetings are designed to provide participants with the opportunity to present their work in a collegial setting, obtain constructive feedback, advance research toward submission to professional journals as well as interact with world-class scholars, panelists, and keynoter speakers.

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ACTION AND REACTION TO TRADE RESTRICTIONS: US-CHINA TRADE

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to explain the dynamics of the many actions and reactions to trade restrictions in US-China trade. The reality has become more complex as the two largest economies compete for leadership in high technology. This competition has become increasingly focused on which country will lead in the production of the advanced computer chips that will guide the AI revolution. Moreover, national security issues drive this competitiveness. This involves a larger historical context. The story involves a China that is a rising power and seeking to exercise great influence in Asia sometimes making neighbors exceptionally uncomfortable. Under President Trump the US started a trade war with China. The Chinese leadership has responded with restrictions on cooperative trade measures, and a crackdown on Chinese entrepreneurs. The authors use public documents and historical data. In terms of historical context, the authors use data based on interviews conducted by the authors on-site in China between 1988 and 2018. Moreover, the authors have conducted interviews in Washington DC think tanks in the summers of 2022, 2023, and 2024.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to explain action and reaction to trade restrictions in US-China trade. Tariff talk has created great fear of a global trade war. This raises the huge broader question of isolationism vs. internationalism. First came tariffs on Chinese imports, then several rounds of sanctions and an outright embargo on exports of state-of-the-art computer chips. The strategy was to deter, counter, and stymie Xi Jinping's China – an effort that started with President Trump and has escalated under the Biden administration.

The real question is will these changes in trade restrictions have the expected effect? Or will the outcome be something unexpected? Whenever you change the rules, the outcome can never completely be predicted. The aim here is to examine instances of actions or reactions to current restrictions by the US. How did the parties adjust to the changed situation? The examples presented will show anticipated, but also some unanticipated outcomes as individual companies, governments and countries adjust to changed situations.

Recently this competition has moved into a new phase dominated by communist party political control in China. The Biden administration has increasingly emphasized national security and industrial policy over international market forces. Moreover, the incoming Trump administration has promised additional higher tariffs on China.

First came tariffs on Chinese imports, then several rounds of sanctions and an outright embargo on exports of state-of-the-art computer chips.

The strategy was to deter, counter and stymie Xi Jinping's China – an effort that started with President Trump and has escalated under the Biden administration.

The question is, will these changes in trade restrictions have the expected effect? Or will the outcome be something unexpected? Whenever you change the rules, in the positive or negative, the outcome can never completely be predicted. In some cases, the action or reaction to the changes can be quite surprising. The aim here is to examine instances of actions and reactions to current restrictions by the US. How did the affected parties adjust to the changed situation? The examples presented will show anticipated, but also some unanticipated outcomes as individual companies, governments, countries adjust to changed situations.

Is National Security at Stake?

The escalation of import tariffs, export controls, and embargos on certain technologies to China are bound to bring sooner or later retaliatory action from Beijing. One of these actions, coming in 2023, surprised the markets around the world. China announced that it would restrict the export of two niche industrial metals: Gallium and Germanium (Burton, 2024). These metals are used in the production of everything from military satellites to missiles to night-vision goggles. Although easing the restrictions on the export of these metals somewhat in the meantime, China's move caught Washington off guard. Did this come as retaliation to the US attempt to cut China off from advanced-level chips by refusing to sell them to China and also asking US allies not to supply the advanced technology to China?

Beijing's decision to limit exports of Gallium and Germanium sent a wake-up call to the White House. According to former officials at the Pentagon's Defense Logistics Agency, which manages the US stockpile, the US faces serious shortages of these raw materials (Burton, 2024). The US reaction is to create an alternative, or China-free metals supply chain. US officials are negotiating with allies and Western mining companies to increase investment in copper- and cobalt-rich Congo. The Biden administration also intends to join forces with the European Union to gain some control over global supplies. So far, China's dominance remains unshaken as the major source of the metals in the world (Burton, 2024).

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this research is twofold. First, the authors use contemporary public documents and history. In terms of historical context, the authors use interviews and presentations by scholars at the Wilson Center, The Center for Strategy and International Studies, and the Atlantic Council in Washington, DC in the summers of 2022, 2023, and 2024. In terms of historical context, the authors also use data based on approximately 350 confidential interviews conducted on-site in China between 1988 and 2018.

There are two subsections that follow – one dealing with recent history and one dealing with current interactions. In both cases the question is do changes in trade restrictions have the desired effect of consequences? The following examines the outcomes.

Action and Reaction: Some Significant History

The historical context generally provides expected consequences as the US and China compete. However, this history also provides a few surprises as explained below.

It also underlines the question of isolationism vs. globalism. China initiated decoupling well before the trade war began. The US and China are locked into substantial interdependence. US companies like Apple continue to have huge investments in China. China buys and holds trillions of dollars of US debt. For years both countries sought to avoid conflict over major issues like Taiwan (on-site interviews).

At the same time both countries have their problems. China has long had a serious and an increasingly urgent overhanging debt problem. This debt problem has long existed at the local level as well as the national level (on-site interviews). China also has a long developing demographic problem as a result of the one child policy. This has resulted in an older population that needs support and too few young people to work the economy (on-site interviews). Additionally, general news reports that the Chinese GDP growth has slowed to under 5 percent. This is dramatically lower than under the regime of Deng Xiaoping. Deng's pro-market reforms beginning in 1978 provided China with incentives to grow 10 percent a year for thirty years (on-site interviews). When first visiting China in 1988, per capita annual income was \$300 (on-site interviews). Now, over 30 years later, per capita income is comparable to several European countries.

Policy is always important in China. Under Xi Jinping politics trumps economics. A "Tech War" between the two countries has emerged including China's long-standing drive to advance artificial intelligence and 5G (on-site interviews). For years the Chinese president has developed economic policy to reduce China's reliance on the US. He established China's expansionist policies in the South China Sea. Established separate trading arrangements with the countries in Southeast Asia and initiated the "Belt and Road" to advance Chinese influence. The "Made in China 2025" campaign, aimed to propel China to the forefront in technology and advance a separate trading system from the US (Geib and Pfaff, 2020). According to the China scholar Elizabeth Economy, the Chinese leadership has alienated many potential allies with its aggressive expansionist policies in terms of politics and economics. This includes the "Belt and Road" plans as well as interventions in the South China Sea and "bi-lateral" economic treaties with Southeast Asian nations.

China scholar Elizabeth Economy states, "Chinese officials and scholars appear assured that the rest of the world is onboard with Xi's vision, as they trumpet, 'The East is rising and the West is declining' yet many countries increasingly seem less enamored of Xi's bold initiatives, as the full political and economic costs of embracing the Chinese model become clear" (Economy, 2022). Xi's success would seem in great part whether he could adjust to the "blowback" (Ibid).

There is at least one more important historical dimension. Xi Jinping has long been conducting a crackdown. It began as a supposed campaign against "corruption" but morphed into a campaign against political opponents (on-site interviews). Elizabeth Economy argues the following: "In recent months, Xi has alarmed global leaders by cracking down on China's world-class technology sector, eradicating the last vestiges of democracy in Hong Kong, and flexing China's military muscles..." (Economy, 2022).

Another important China scholar supports the view of Elizabeth Economy. Daniel Rosen states the following: "The pattern of macroeconomic policy in the Xi era is clear: each attempt at reform has produced a miniature crisis that has threatened to become a bigger one, prompting the CCP [Chinese Communist Party] to revert to what it knows best – command and control" (Rosen, 2021). Rosen goes on to explain that the real story about the so-called reform effort is that despite claims to the contrary "Xi

has tried but largely failed to push ahead with the (reform) agenda that Deng launched in 1978 and that Xi's predecessors all sustained" (Ibid).

China is unique in the breadth of its industrial policy. For years the government concentrated on modernizing traditional industries such as shipbuilding and petrochemical production.

In 2010 seven new strategic industries, from alternative energy to biotechnology, became targets. In 2015, China revealed its latest policy, a program called "Made in China 2025." The initiative specifies ten sectors that will be at the heart of the plan. Highlighted are sectors such as new-energy vehicles, high-tech ship components, new and renewable-energy equipment, high performance medical devices, industrial robots, large tractors and harvesters, mobile-phone chips, and wide-body aircraft (The Economist, 2017).

"Made in China 2025" is part of the Xi government's drive to develop or acquire its own technology and promote its own companies to rival the West's. Singled out are industries in the future ranging from robotics, electric cars, to Artificial Intelligence (AI). President Xi told the Party Congress, "China will support state capital in becoming stronger, doing better, and growing bigger, turn Chinese enterprises into world-class, globally competitive firms" (Lindblad, 2017). The program directs cities and companies to shift out of low-cost, labor-intensive manufacturing and into higher value-added production. State planners want companies to become globally competitive not only in established industries such as autos, but also dominate in new areas such as drones and AI (Roberts, 2017). The new industrial policy set forth is aimed at raising productivity in every part of the Chinese economy. The policy is geared toward every part of production, including improving quality of human talent, how capital is used, and how technology is developed (Ibid).

US Response

The US response to China's protectionist policies was to start a trade war. The US response was somewhat unexpected in terms of its economic and political intensity. Moreover, the tariff talk began to ignite fears of a global trade war. Under President Trump the US started the trade war in 2018 by imposing 25 percent tariffs on \$34 billion of Chinese exports. Beijing retaliated with levies on an equal amount of American goods. On July 10th, 2018, the US threatened tariffs on an additional \$16 billion of imports from China. As of October 2018, US had imposed tariffs on \$250 billion in Chinese imports (Orlik, 2018). After the escalation of the trade war, a trade deal was reached in January 2020. President Biden has not substantially changed the situation. This rivalry creates tensions across the relationship. It particularly impacts the tug of war over technology.

Current Impact of Action and Reaction over Trade Restrictions

Is national security at stake? It is an unexpected consequence that the trade war so quickly became a national security issue for both countries. The escalation of import tariffs, export controls, and embargos on certain technologies to China are bound to bring retaliatory action from Beijing sooner or later. China initiated unexpected responses. One of these actions, coming in 2023, surprised the markets around the world. China announced that it would restrict the export of two niche industrial metals: gallium and germanium (Burton, 2024). These metals are used in the production of military satellites to missiles to night-vision goggles. Although easing the restrictions on the export of these metals somewhat in the meantime, China's move caught Washington off guard.

Did this come as retaliation to the US attempt to cut China off from advanced-level chips by refusing to sell them to China and also asking US allies not to supply the advanced technology to China?

Beijing's decision to limit exports of Gallium and Germanium sent a wake-up call to the White House.

According to former officials at the Pentagon's Defense Logistics Agency, which manages the US stockpile, the US faces serious shortages of these raw materials (Burton, 2024). The US reaction is to create an alternative: a China-free metals supply chain. US officials are negotiating with allies and Western mining companies to increase investment in copper and cobalt rich Congo. The Biden administration intended to join forces with the European Union to gain some control over global supplies. So far China's dominance remains unshaken as the major source of the metals in the world (Burton, 2024).

Trade, Industrial Policy, and National Security

It was unexpected that both countries would so quickly turn their attention over trade for national security. After the last Communist Party Congress in 2022, a shift in China's industrial policy took place. Like a changing of the guards, a generation of pro-market officials was pushed out. With their departure, the pro-market economists of the past few decades no longer influence reforms and help shape US-China relations. Now China will be guided by party rule, adherence to the party line, and an emphasis on national security (Orlik, 2022). Already the past couple of years the influence of pro-market thinking had been declining in China governance, and now will be diminishing even further.

A similar shift is taking place in the US. Rather than working on expanding the global economy, both countries are trying to protect what they have. It is not economics, but national security officials calling the shots. That is not a positive development for the relations between the world's two largest economies and the rest of the world. These shifts will have profound consequences (Ibid).

Faced with allies worried about the consequences of a fragmented world, the Biden administration is working hard to emphasize that it is not seeking a rupture between the two economies (Donnan, 2023). US officials stress that there is no change in China policy. It is focused on limiting the country's access to critical technologies such as advanced semiconductors, which could be used for military purposes (Ibid).

According to National Security Secretary Sullivan the policy shift under Biden is "setting into a new status quo that's just different – more sustainable, long—term, one in which important decisions about the allocation of economic resources are no longer left to markets" (Ibid). President Biden said in a document on October 12, 2022, that "we are in the midst of a strategic competition to shape the future of international order" (Flatley, 2022). He was outlining his national security strategy by emphasizing to maintain an enduring competitive edge over China. The battle is being fought with special intensity over computer chips.

The US strategy has expanded beyond tariffs, quotas, and content requirements to include export controls, foreign investment controls, and denial of access to key financial networks (Ibid). Export controls have increased in importance to US foreign policy. They are playing a central role as the US increases pressure on China.

Using export controls against China is difficult. Before the controls, the US exported \$154 billion to the country. Many US businesses consider the Chinese market vital. And US businesses could be harmed if China retaliates by tightening restrictions. Beijing already warned of less access for US and allied companies to the Chinese marketplace (Bremmer, 2021). There is debate about whether export controls

are effective and even what they are exactly supposed to achieve. Is the US hoping to keep China from developing the technology that the US and its allies now possess? Or does it just mean a delay to keep as large a lead as possible? Even if the controls may slow the progress, it is impossible to prevent China from developing its own capabilities in all areas (Martin, 2023).

Reaction to US Policy

Policies designed to enhance US capabilities in leading industries are causing friction with allies. South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and French President Macron were expressing alarm at the international fallout of the US-China rivalry and President Biden's "Made in America" policies (Crawford, 2023). Japan has expressed its resentment that the US administration is disregarding its sovereignty (Bloomberg News, 2022). Europe and South Korea – important trade and security partners for the US – are among the most exposed to the Biden administration's agenda of supporting strategic industries and artificial intelligence (AI) while working to limit China's efforts to make advances in those fields for military purposes (Crawford, 2023). This newly muscular American industrial policy is already warping global supply lines. The US protectionism sets the US at odds with its international commitments but also is disregarding the free-trade principles of the WTO. Europe, e.g., may well respond with "buy European" policies which may eventually cause rounds of retaliation and counter retaliation (Bloomberg Opinion, 2022).

Two laws approved by Congress in 2022 are meant to enhance domestic production and clean energy technologies. Both laws are already influencing global supply lines. So does the infrastructure bill signed by President Biden in 2021. The bill requires that all iron, steel and other construction materials used in public works projects be made in the US (Crawford, 2023). The funds made available by these US measures have affected plans by overseas businesses in order to take advantage of them (Ibid).

To counter the impact of the US legislation, the EU is lining up massive subsidies. Canada's government offered incentives worth as much as C\$13 billion to land a Volkswagen battery plant which might have been destined for the US. The diversion of corporate investment is one consequence of the Biden administration's effort to integrate domestic and foreign policy. The South Korean President warned that the "economic war" of government subsidies and tax perks could leave all nations worse off (Ibid).

Effects on Corporations

Corporate leadership faces substantial unexpected challenges. Tariff talk has created global trade war fears. Consequently, CEO's have been scrambling to create new supply chains. The sweeping new curbs on the sale of semiconductors and chip making equipment to China are upsetting Beijing and making key allies choose sides. The export controls require American chip producers to get a Department of Commerce license to sell certain advanced products to China. The restrictions affect other nation's companies as well. ASML Holding NV, a Dutch company, which has a virtual monopoly on a machine needed to make the most advanced chip, hinted that it may resist the restrictions. Its Chief Executive expressed that as a European based company with limited US technology in its system, ASML can continue to ship all non-EU lithography systems to China (Bloomberg News, 2022). The pressure on Japan's Electron Ltd., another key industry player, has Tokyo expressing its resentment.

The new US legislation such as the Chips and Science Act and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and the funds coming with them are affecting overseas business. To take advantage of the legislation, Swedish battery maker Northvolt AB, e.g., said it would prioritize expansion in the US over Europe (Crawford, 2023). Germany's Volkswagen AG is opting to build a \$2 billion factory for its new electric Scout brand in South Carolina (Ibid). This diversion of corporate investment is one consequence of the Biden administration's efforts to integrate domestic and foreign policy. South Korea has its own concerns regarding Washington's policies.

The IRA will penalize Hyundai and other South Korean car manufacturers because they do not manufacture Electric Vehicles (EV) in the US. Therefore, their cars do not qualify for the federal tax credits on EV purchases (Ibid). There is generally a deep concern among Korean companies about what is seen as "discriminatory" elements in Biden's policies.

The US chip measures will lead to increased competition with China in computing, biotechnology, and clean energy tech. This means that relations between the two countries will become more difficult and will affect countries such as South Korea, India, Singapore, and Malaysia, which are already walking a fine line seeking constructive relations with both Washington and Beijing (Bloomberg News, 2022).

On the corporate side, due to the events of the past couple of years such as increased tariffs, snarled supply chains, factory shutdowns under Beijing's Covid Zero policy and rising geopolitical tensions, US executives have increased their pledges to reduce their reliance on Chinese suppliers. However, quitting China is not easy. Seeking alternative suppliers outside China, corporations find that few factories outside China have neither the machinery nor the skilled workforce to produce what is needed (Newmann, 2023). China's advantages are so great that some US companies have returned at least a portion of their production there. And as it turns out, even when companies move manufacturing out of China, they often end up working with Chinese owned suppliers or sourcing components and materials from the country because many Chinese companies have set up shop abroad to diversify their own production and benefit from lower labor costs (Ibid).

Action and Reaction: Unexpected Consequences

The rapid expansion of controls was unexpected. Trump's constant talk of further raising tariffs against China has already caused increased instability in the relationship. Moreover, the Biden administration moved to expand the countrywide chip-level export controls to restrict high-bandwidth memory, a type of memory that is critical for AI applications. The October 2022 and October 2023 export controls restricted the export of advanced logic chips to China. The controls also restricted the export of US components to semiconductor production facilities in China that were involved in the production of advanced chips (CSIS). However, this still enabled China to access a type of memory chip that is critical for modern AI computing (CSIS).

The December 2024 controls change that by adopting for the first time countrywide restrictions of certain advanced components essential for AI. According to CSIS, "the goal of these controls is to degrade China's AI industry." One target is China's Huawei (Ibid). These controls also apply to countries that might sell to China like Iran, Russia, North Korea, and Venezuela (Ibid).

Action-Reaction: Unexpected Consequences

President Trump's campaign statements, past policies, and recent decisions show substantial contradictions. In the first place Trump initiated a trade war by leveling tariffs on China during his first term in 2018. The Biden administration retained the tariffs. In his recent campaign Trump promised to raise those tariffs. The Trump cabinet nominees including Marco Rubio, the secretary of state nominee, are China hardliners.

At the same time, in a huge unexpected surprise, President elect Trump invited President Xi of China to his inauguration. Xi did not attend. At the same time Trump has many times touted his good relationship with Xi and his high respect for the Chinese leader.

Another unexpected consequence of action-reaction over trade is the Chinese president's strong initiatives to avoid a trade war through negotiations with the Trump team. Rather than a harsh hard line from the Chinese leadership there has been a veritable flurry of invitations to negotiate. In a communication with the US-China Business Council Xi said the two sides should "choose dialogue over confrontation, win-win cooperation over a zero-sum game." At the same time Xi repeated a commitment to open up the China market including US businesses (CNBC, Dec. 13, 2024). Moreover, the numerous Beijing messages reflect a sense of anxiety according to Kenneth Jarrett, a senior advisor at Albright Stonebridge Group (Ibid).

Another unexpected aspect of the action-reaction over trade is the continuous unusual extreme effort of the Chinese leadership to avoid a trade war. This no doubt has much to do with a slowing Chinese economy. In a December 2024 address to a meeting of heads of major international economic organizations, Xi said, "There will be no winners in tariff wars, trade wars, technology wars" (Ibid). Moreover, Chinese regulators have announced an antitrust investigation into Nvidia.

There is also a potential unexpected severe world-wide slowdown triggered by action-reaction spinning out of control as US tariff policies cross China's red lines. For example, Chinese leadership could devalue currency creating more demand for exports but also more financial instability and unpredictability (The Economist, Dec. 1, 2024. How China will Strike Back at Trump). China may also expand business visas to a variety of other countries making it more competitive for US companies (Ibid).

An unexpected response on the part of the US includes seeking corporate help in limiting AI advanced chips to China. In a surprising and creative move the Biden administration will empower companies like Google and Microsoft to act as gatekeepers for highly sought-after access to AI chips. Under the plan companies would have to report information for example relating to China to the government to further national security interests (Reuters, Dec. 13, 2024).

CONCLUSION

Action and reaction over trade restrictions in US-China trade has produced expected as well as unexpected consequences. This reality needs to be understood in the broader context of a tug of war over technology. This reality also needs to be understood in the broad context of isolationism vs. globalism – a challenge for leadership. China did seek to decouple from the US before the Trump tariffs. Then came the tariffs on China imports in 2018. Then came several rounds of sanctions and an outright embargo on exports of state-of-the-art computer chips. The question is will these changes in trade restrictions have the expected effect or will outcomes be something unexpected?

The authors examine expected and unexpected outcomes. One of the major unexpected outcomes has been the rapid emergence of national security issues. For example, in a surprise move in 2023 the Chinese leadership announced that it would restrict the export of Gallium and Germanium. These metals are used in the production of everything from military satellites to night-vision goggles.

In response there was an unexpected rapid US response. US officials in negotiations with allies and western mining companies moved to increase investment in mineral rich areas as far away as Congo.

Expected reactions include the Biden administration effort to limit Chinese access to advanced AI computer chips in the national security interest. Moreover, in a surprisingly rapid advance of industrial policy the Biden administration coordinated over \$65 billion in investments in advanced AI chip production facilities in Arizona and elsewhere.

In terms of clearly unexpected consequences, Trump invited President Xi to his inauguration.

At the same time the Chinese leadership has been frantically seeking to initiate negotiations over the possibility of expanded Trump tariffs. As we have described, China has narrowed its vision by initiating the following: subsidies, Made in China 2025, The Belt and Road initiative, buying locally to promote national security, and using selective access to its domestic market. Both countries are practicing national security driven industrial policy. Will this work for economic development in the long run?

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THE RETURNING SYRIAN DIASPORA: A CULTURAL ASSESSMENT AND IMPLICATIONS FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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ABSTRACT

This paper assesses the cultural values of Syrian people anticipating a return to their homeland following a 14-year civil war and international sanctions that have decimated its economy. The paper provides insight into a displaced refugee population spread across many countries that reaches into the millions. The anticipated return of these Syrians follows a lightening offensive by opposition forces that ousted Syrian’s leader, Bashar al-Assad, on December 8, 2024. The analysis also provides implications for entrepreneurship that could help rebuild the war-torn country and restart its crippled economy. The cultural assessment was conducted using the 5-D Hofstede model of cultural values. It compared the cultural orientations of the Syrian diaspora with those in the countries where the displaced people settled over the last decade and with the USA. This paper also contrasts the cultural orientations of the victims of the Syrian diaspora hoping to return to their homeland with the data on Syria originally obtained by Hofstede in 1980. The results suggest that the returning displaced Syrians have some of the cultural values important for country-changing entrepreneurship.

Keywords: Cross cultural management, cultural values, entrepreneurship, Hofstede, national culture, Syria

INTRODUCTION

Syria is a country once governed by France following World War I. The French administered it under a mandate until 1946 when it ultimately gained independence. Uniting with Egypt in 1958, the country was called the United Arab Republic until it separated in 1961, establishing the Syrian Arab Republic (CIA World Factbook, 2025).

From 1946 onward, Syria was ruled by Hafez al-Assad, who died in 2000. After Hafez al-Assad's death, his son, Bashar al-Assad, was elected president in an uncontested election. A politically divided country, Syria became a victim of the Arab Spring. Anti-government rebels protesting the rule of al-Assad were met with harsh resistance by the Syrian army. In the chaos of the rebellion terrorist organizations such as ISIS and al-Nusra joined in a struggle to capture control of the country. The bloody civil war resulted in the Syrian diaspora with millions of people fleeing their country (Kahn and Khan, 2017). Many fled to Germany, Iraq, Jordan, and Turkey. Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany, welcomed the refugees. In 2018, an estimated 5.6 million Syrians fled their country according to the United Nations Higher Commission for Refugees (UNHCR, 2018).

The diaspora into Turkey and other countries caused a massive humanitarian crisis. Over the years the Syrian pound's value has been drained with inflation reaching into double digits. Reuters news agency reports that the Central Bank of Syria currently has \$200 million in foreign exchange reserves compared to \$17 billion in 2010 (Kozul-Wright, 2025). Among the challenges faced by the country is a need for funding, peace and security. The World Food Program estimates that more than 3.1 million Syrians do not have enough food to eat (WFT Syria, 2024). Most of the country's oil and gas wells, electrical grids, roads, farmland, and infrastructure have been destroyed. Syria has been further crippled by wide ranging Western sanctions imposed on the country and on Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), the main group that overthrew Bashar al-Assad. HTS is now leading Syria's transition away from the corrupt system that gave loyalists to the Assad family not only privileged access to government contracts, but also control over key industries. The corruption extended into al-Assad's lucrative production of Captagon, an illegal addictive amphetamine used widely in the Gulf States (Kozul-Wright, 2025).

Early observers of the political situation were unable to see an end to the hostilities and predict a return of the Syrian refugees to their homeland (Kirisci, 2017; Vignal, 2018). However, much has quickly changed since December 2024. Now the imperative is to stabilize HTS, the caretaker government seeking to introduce a free-market system, overhaul the tax system, and allay concerns about goods shortages. The role of entrepreneurship to buttress HTS's efforts to rebuild Syria's economy is vital. The question is whether the Syrians returning to their homeland have the cultural orientation to facilitate the process.

While Syrian refugees are sometimes labeled in the news as a problem, it is important to remember the hardships they faced in leaving their country during its brutal civil war. Losing their homes, escaping destruction, and confronted with trauma and even death, they arrived in the refugee camps of their host countries with determination to make the most of their new sanctuaries. Many in Egypt, Lebanon, Turkey, and other countries have taken the initiative to start businesses, becoming immigrant entrepreneurs. Evidence suggests that some of the Syrian diaspora has the motivation and mindset to engage in various types of entrepreneurship (Bayram, 2019). With the ouster of the al-Assad regime and recent positive changes that have occurred, it is likely that many of the displaced Syrians will return to their homeland. The question is whether they have the cultural orientation to foster the kind of entrepreneurship necessary to rebuild their society and their country. While the data collected in this study are drawn from Syrians in a refugee camp situated in Turkey, they are representative of the country's newer generation. It is

appropriate to generalize from this sample to the nearly 5.6 million people in the Syrian diaspora and to the greater population of Syria. The following section highlights some of Syria's history and geography.

Highlights of Syria's History

Syria is a country in the Middle East that has seen invasions and occupations over centuries from Romans, Mongols, Crusaders, and Turks. It is home to diverse ethnic and religious groups. The country has a population of 22.1 million and covers a land area of 185,180 sq. km. – approximately the size of the state of Washington. The capital of the country is Damascus and the native language spoken is Arabic

Syria's history dates back to 3500 BC with the Kingdom of Ebla, the earliest recorded indigenous civilization in the region. The area was conquered by the Greeks under Alexander the Great in 330 BC and became part of the succeeding Seleucid Empire. In 63 BC, Roman general Pompey the Great annexed Syria and it becomes a Roman province. Following the Arab conquest of Syria in the 7th Century, the Umayyad caliphs made Damascus the capital of their empire. In 1175 AD Syria was largely conquered by the Kurdish leader Salah ad-Din, the founder of the Ayyubid dynasty. It was later invaded by the Turks and Mongols and became part of the Ottoman Empire. In World War I the Ottoman Empire fought on the side of Germany and Austria-Hungary. It was defeated, resulting in the loss of control of the entire Near East to the British and French. In 1918, Arab and British forces captured Damascus, ending 400 years of Ottoman rule. With the fall of France in World War II, Syria was controlled by Vichy France until the British and Free French forces invaded it in the 1941 Syria-Lebanon campaign. In 1946 France left the area and its troops and Syria became independent. The period following independence was characterized by instability and periodic coups until the late 1960's. In 1967 Egypt, Jordan, and Syria were defeated in the Six-Day War with Israel, with the Golan Heights being seized by Israel. Three years later, Hafez al-Assad came to power in a coup and this began the reign of terror and corruption lasting until 2024 with the ouster of Bashar al-Assad (BBC News, 2025).

Highlights of Syria's Geography

Syria is rich in natural resources, including oil, natural gas, phosphate, agricultural lands, and other major minerals. Situated in the Middle East, it is characterized by fertile plains, high mountains, and deserts. After years of civil war, Syria has a number of resources that have survived the economic sanctions restricting trade with the European Union, the Arab League, and other nations, including the US and countries in Europe as well as Asia. Oil is one of the major contributors to the Syrian economy. It is a small producer of oil, accounting for about 0.5% of the world's production. It is estimated that Syria has about 2.5 billion barrels of oil reserve, which is slightly larger than all of its neighbors, except Iraq. Natural gas is abundant in Syria with about 8.5 trillion cubic feet of it. It is Syria's most abundant natural resource, which is used locally for domestic electricity generation. Agricultural land is another one of Syria's natural resources. According to a 2014 report by the World Bank, it is reported that 76% of Syria's total land area, estimated at 139,210 square kilometers, is agricultural soil. About 25% of Syria's total land area of 185,180 square kilometers, about 25.4% or 4.6 million hectares is arable land. Syria is also rich in several metallic and non-metallic mineral resources. It is one of the major producers of cement in the Middle East. Syria's mining sector also produces steel, salt, gypsum, chrome ore, marble, and industrial salt. These minerals, however, are produced in small quantities and do not significantly contribute to the economy (World Atlas, 2019).

Assessment of Cultural Values

This study compares the cultural values of the Syrian diaspora contemplating a return to their homeland with that of neighboring Middle Eastern countries and the USA. The inclusion of data from the United States on the five Hofstede dimensions is appropriate to facilitate understanding for readers of this paper in the USA. It is also appropriate because the USA is recognized as the most entrepreneurially oriented country in the world.

To the extent that the data from the Syrian refugees resemble the cultural orientation of Americans, Syrians will likely be successful at entrepreneurship to rebuild their country and their devastated economy.

The study uses the classification model of Geert Hofstede for cultural comparisons. Hofstede's model is one of the most popular and far-reaching frameworks for the understanding of national cultural differences. His framework explains the dimensions that account for differences between cultures of individuals from different countries. Hofstede was a psychologist who directed the personnel research division at IBM-Europe. Having developed a "values" survey, he conducted a study of the employees in 72 national subsidiaries of IBM during the early 1970s. His findings changed the view of managers and the work of managing across national cultures (Hofstede, 1980a).

From his study of IBM employees, Hofstede identified four cultural dimensions that impact work-related values in different countries. Theories of organizations and management, in his view, were not universal. They were bound by culture. He argued that managerial behavior thought to be appropriate in one culture might be inappropriate in another culture. As such, effective managerial behavior should be predicated on a firm understanding of cultural values (Hofstede, 1980a; Hofstede, 1980b; Hofstede, 1983; Hofstede, 1993; Hofstede, 1994; Hofstede, 1997; Hofstede, 2001). Hofstede's work has been widely cited in various academic disciplines (Kirkman, Lowe and Gibson, 2006) and is often used to explain organizational behavior from a cross-cultural perspective.

Hofstede's research originally identified four dimensions of culture - power distance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, and uncertainty avoidance. Power distance refers to the degree to which members of a society expect power to be shared among them. Cultures with high power distance expect that people with power will be treated differently than those without power. Status differentiation in high power distance cultures is prominent and acceptable. In low power distance cultures power differentials are not expected, nor considered desirable. Individualism is a dimension that refers to the importance of the individual over the group in terms of societal focus. Individualistic cultures place an importance on people's rights and responsibilities and expect societal members to take care of themselves. This is contrasted with collectivism in which the societal focus is on the group. One's identity is determined by group membership. In collectivistic cultures the group responds to the needs and interests of its members. Masculinity (now referred to as "motivation toward achievement and success") refers to the extent to which a culture values competition, assertiveness, and the acquisition of material goods. This is contrasted with femininity, which values nurturing, relationships, and a concern for others. Uncertainty avoidance is the last of the four dimensions. It refers to a culture's collective tolerance for ambiguity. In high uncertainty avoidance cultures rules and regulations are established to reduce the uncertainty of the future. In such cultures people feel more comfortable in having assurances of what will happen in the future. In low uncertainty avoidance cultures change and ambiguity are not considered a threat.

Collaborating with Hofstede, Michael Bond developed a fifth dimension to the model (Hofstede and Bond, 1988). Originally called Confucianism dynamism, this dimension is now more frequently referred to as long-term orientation. It reflects the extent to which a society encourages and rewards future-oriented behavior such as planning, delaying gratification, and investing in the future. The Hofstede team further uncovered another dimension of national culture referred to as indulgence/restraint (Minkov and Hofstede, 2011; Minkov, 2013). This dimension assesses the extent to which a society permits or suppresses the expression of human desires. Indulgence/restraint was not included as a variable in this study due to the lack of comparative data.

The more established five-dimensional (Five D) Hofstede model was used to assess the cultural orientation of the Syrian diaspora summarized in this paper.

Hofstede's work gained great popularity in cross-cultural research and attracted competing models and critics. Other popular models of cultural classification have been developed and evaluated including the Schwartz theory of basic cultural values and the Globe Project (Moalla, 2016). Critics of the Hofstede model have expressed concerns about the generalizability of the findings, the level of analysis, the assumption of political boundaries of countries as cultural entities, and the validity of the survey instrument itself (Blodgett, Bakir, and Rose, 2008; Mc Sweeney, 2002; Smith, 2002). Others have challenged the assumption of the homogeneity of each culture studied (Sivakumar and Nakata, 2001). Venaik and Brewer (2013) are critical of both Hofstede and the GLOBE investigations and caution against using their findings in marketing management research and practice. The fifth dimension, long-term orientation (LTO), has been challenged on the grounds of conceptual validity (Fang, 2003). Grenness (2012) points out the problem of the ecological fallacy in Hofstede's work in which the predominant traits of a culture are generalized to individuals within that cultural group, and not accounting for individual differences. Beugelsdijk, Maseland and Van Hoorn (2015) have suggested that cultures change over time and the original Hofstede rankings may be dated. Some have even questioned the validity of a national culture and the value in predicting organizational behavior (McSweeney, Brown and Lliopoulou, 2016).

While Hofstede's critics have some reasonable concerns over his studies, his research represents the oldest and most comprehensive analysis of cultural values. It would be difficult to find a theory of cultural classification without critics and limitations. Overall, Hofstede's approach may be "blunt" to use the words of Jackson (2011), but it provides useful insight into understanding important cultural values.

This paper provides a glimpse into the cultural values of the Syrian diaspora and compares it with the values of neighboring countries and the United States. The cross-cultural comparison shows that displaced Syrians contemplating a return to their home country share an orientation somewhat conducive to entrepreneurship. It is not greatly dissimilar to the orientation of Americans, whose nation is recognized as the most entrepreneurially invested country in the world (Jones, 2024). By having an understanding of the cultural dimensions of its people, countries can work with organizations to foster and effectively support entrepreneurship that facilitates the development of trade, restoration of infrastructure, and rebuilding of economies. Proper management of national culture dimensions has been positively related to firm success (Li, Lam, and Qian, 2001) and profitability (Martins and Lopes, 2016).

METHOD

This investigation of cultural values was conducted in a non-governmental organization (NGO) operating in a refugee camp in Turkey. It involved surveying 59 adults living in the camp. The sample

consisted of 38 males and 21 females whose age ranged from 20-49. The respondents' median age ranged from 25-29.

Cultural values were measured in the study using Hofstede's Values Survey Module (VSM 94). The items in the VSM 94 measured the culture of the Syrian diaspora using the 5-D model of Geert Hofstede, which includes the dimensions of power distance (PDI), motivation toward achievement and success (MAS), individualism (IDV), uncertainty avoidance (UAI), and long-term orientation (LTO). Value scores were determined using the formula found in the VSM 94 Manual.

The scores for the value dimensions obtained in this study were compared to the scores obtained by Hofstede (geert-hofstede.com, 2024). Comparisons were made with select countries including Iraq, Turkey, Jordan, and the USA. Scores for the value dimension from all of the countries came from Hofstede's published results. In addition, the results were compared with the data from Hofstede's original study of Syria.

RESULTS

The survey results indicate that the Syrian diaspora is high in power distance, moderate in individualism, very high in motivation toward achievement and success, moderately low in uncertainty avoidance, and high in long-term orientation. There were differences in the cultural dimension scores of the soon-to-be returning diaspora compared to the scores of Syrians analyzed in the original Hofstede study. Figure 1 shows the scores for the diaspora on the five cultural dimensions compared to the original Hofstede study. In the graph the line representing the data from the original Hofstede study is shown in green and the line representing the data from the current study of the soon-to-be returning diaspora is shown in blue. The graph shows significant differences in the scores for uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation, and motivation toward achievement and success. Questions can be raised about why these values are different, with one possible answer being that years of internal conflict and years of living outside of their homeland in a refugee camp altered the cultural values of the Syrian diaspora. Regardless of the reason, the current values of this population should be compared with the cultural values of neighboring countries and that of the USA, a nation categorized as the most entrepreneurial place in the world. This is important because if the soon-to-be returning Syrian diaspora has a cultural orientation resembling the USA, it will likely be positioned to engage in much-needed entrepreneurship necessary for rebuilding their country and their economy.

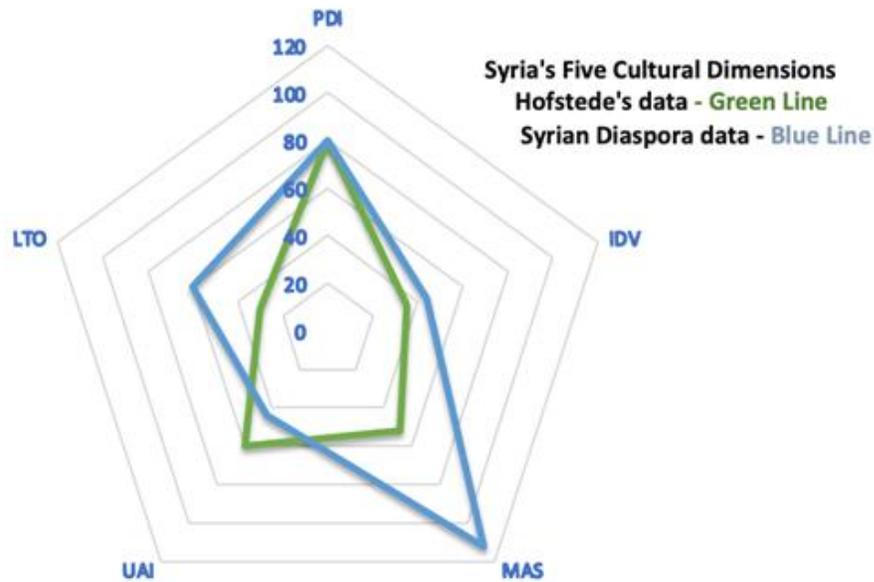


Figure 1. Cultural dimension scores for the Syrian diaspora and from Hofstede’s original study

Power Distance

The data indicate that the Syrian diaspora has unique cultural dimension scores. It is high in power distance with a PDI score of 80. This suggests that members of the diaspora place a low value on equality among societal members. Figure 2 shows the PDI scores for the Syrian diaspora along with those for neighboring countries and the USA. It shows that with respect to power distance, the Syrian diaspora ranks most closely to Jordan and Turkey, but differs significantly from the USA. High power distance scores indicate a preference for power concentration and a more autocratic approach to management. The diaspora score on this cultural dimension is inconsistent with an entrepreneurial mindset.

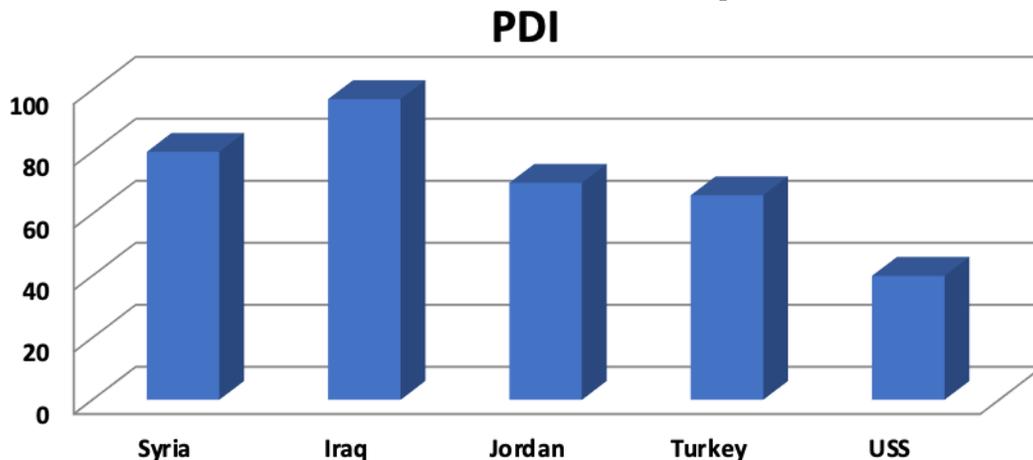


Figure 2. Power distance scores for the Syrian diaspora and other countries

Individualism

The data indicate that the culture of the Syrian diaspora is somewhat individualistic with an IDV score of 44. Figure 3 shows the IDV score for the diaspora along with the comparison countries. The score is similar to that of Turkey, and somewhat higher than for Iraq and Jordan. It differs from that of the USA. Individualism in the USA is among the highest and contrasts with the Syrian preference for slightly more collectivist behavior. Moderate collectivist values place a stronger emphasis on the group rather than on the individual. Individualism is strongly correlated with an entrepreneurial mindset.

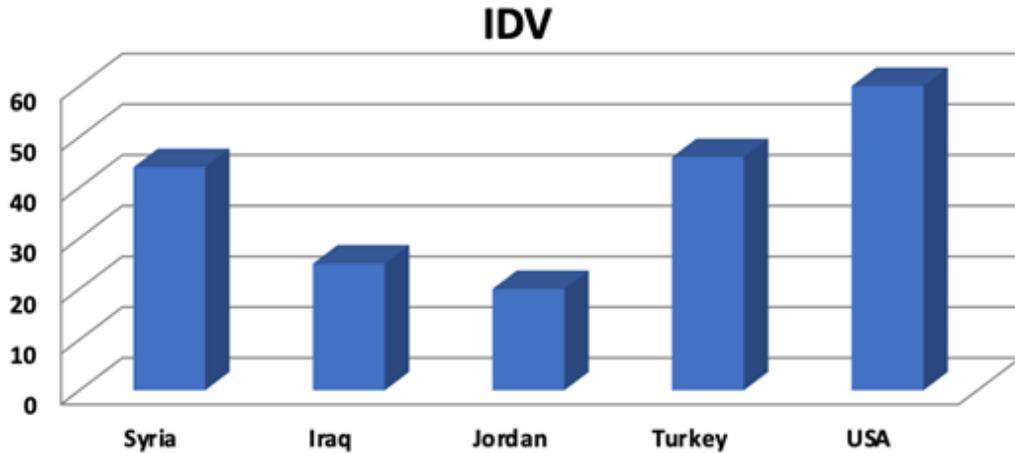


Figure 3. Individualism scores for the Syrian diaspora and other countries
Motivation toward Achievement and Success

The data indicate that the Syrian diaspora has an extremely high regard for masculine values with an MAS score of 112, one of the highest in the world. Figure 4 shows the MAS scores for the diaspora along with the same comparison countries. The data reveal significantly higher masculinity among the Syrian diaspora than in any of the other comparison countries. Very high MAS scores indicate a very strong preference for materialism, rigid role relationships, competitive behavior, as well as aggressiveness in organizations. This cultural orientation is likely associated with an entrepreneurial mindset.

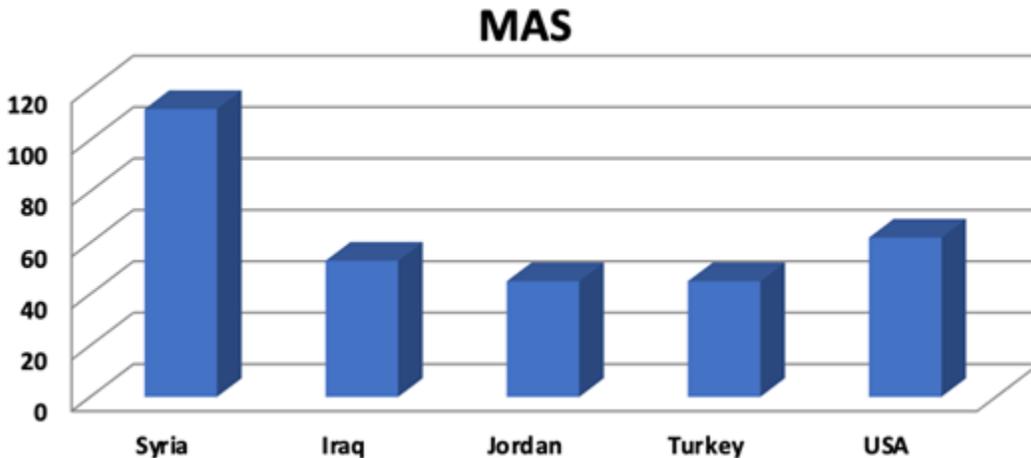


Figure 4. Masculinity scores for the Syrian diaspora and other countries

Uncertainty Avoidance

The data indicate that the Syrian diaspora is relatively low in uncertainty avoidance with a UAI score of 44. As shown in Figure 5, the diaspora has the lowest UAI score among the select countries, contrasting most significantly with Iraq and Turkey. A moderately low uncertainty avoidance culture is accepting of change and comfortable with uncertainty. Rigid rules and procedures in a country or in an organization are not seen as necessary or desirable. The UAI score for the Syrian diaspora is almost identical to that of the USA and is one correlated with an entrepreneurial mindset.

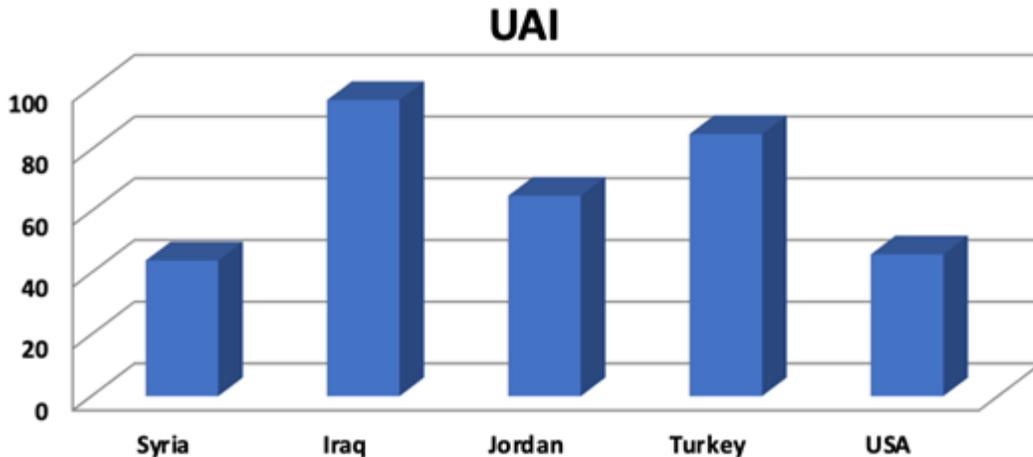


Figure 5. Uncertainty avoidance scores for the Syrian diaspora and other countries
Long-Term Orientation

The data indicate that the Syrian diaspora has a culture with a somewhat long-term orientation towards time with an LTO score of 60. As shown in Figure 6, the diaspora's time orientation is higher compared to its neighboring countries. However, people in the Syrian diaspora have LTO scores somewhat similar to the score of 50 for the USA. Cultures with a high LTO score are not overly concerned with the present and do not expect quick results. Thinking is long-term in nature and the managerial focus is not generally on present conditions and problems. Long-term cultures target their energies on what can be achieved in the long run. It is thought that the soon-to-be returning people of the diaspora have the cultural orientation toward time consistent with an entrepreneurial mindset.

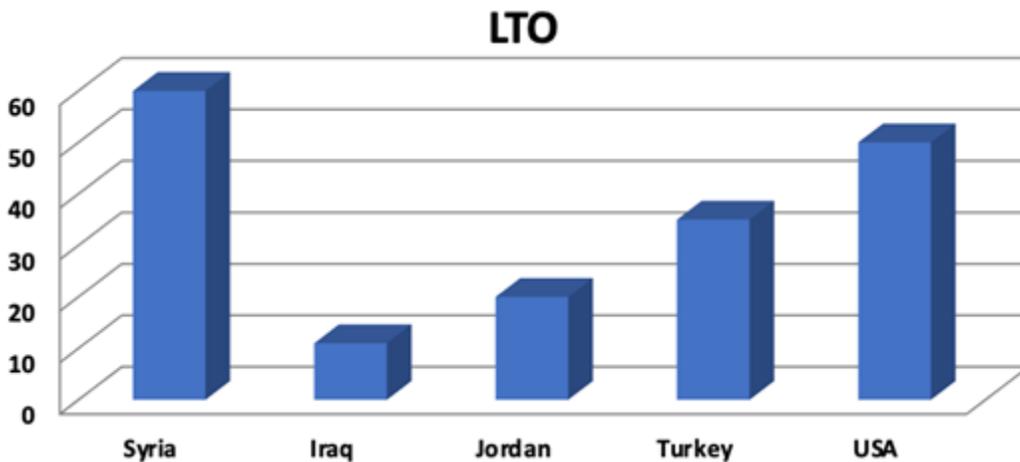


Figure 6. Long-term orientation scores for the Syrian diaspora and other countries

Implications for Entrepreneurship

Understanding national culture and the values, beliefs, and assumptions of people in organizations and in a particular country is critical to the promotion of effective and harmonious relationships. Relationships and their cultivation are important to the practice of entrepreneurship. One's values system drives attitude, thinking, decisions, behaviors and actions. According to Scarborough (1998), value systems are inextricably linked to national culture.

The 5.6 million people of the Syrian diaspora have at least two options for life moving forward. They may (1) return to their homes in Syria now that the civil war is over or (2) stay in the countries where they presently reside. Moving to another country may not be an option using political asylum as a basis in that the al-Assad regime has been deposed and HTS is being recognized as a more progressive caretaker government poised to resuscitating the Syrian economy.

With the cross-cultural analysis summarized in this paper, particularly examining the orientation of the USA, it seems that people from the Syrian diaspora have values consistent with entrepreneurship. Several of the cultural dimensions found among the Syrian diaspora are similar those found in the USA, which suggests that Syrians have a mindset conducive to entrepreneurship.

These authors believe that the refugee Syrians who were unwillingly dispersed throughout the world will opt to return to their homeland. This sentiment has been articulated throughout this paper by referring to the people participating in the study as the soon-to-be returning Syrian diaspora. These authors predicate their belief on the fact that the HTS government has implemented changes making a refugee return to Syria more desirable. HTS wants to develop the free market system in the country, starting with the appointment of a new Central Bank governor, Maysaaa Sabine, the first woman to take this important role. According to Reuters, HTS also wants to restructure the financial ministries and overhaul the tax system by the end of the year. Mohammed Abazeed, the caretaker finance minister, said that he expects to have "a well-designed tax system that takes the interests of all taxpayers into account" (Kozul-Wright, 2025).

In a statement by Oman Dahi, a professor of economics at Hampshire College in Massachusetts, the imposition of sanctions by western nations needs to be addressed. He states, "in addition to war-related costs, sanctions drained business activity and shrunk the government's tax base" (Kozul-Wright, 2025). Syria's tax revenue to GDP ratio fell from 11 to 5 percent in 2021, representing approximately \$4.5 billion – one of the world's lowest tax shares. HTS is hopeful that the new administration in the USA will lift economic sanctions against Syria. Suggesting that the USA is willing to engage with the HTS government, on December 20, 2024, Washington removed a \$10 million bounty for Ahmed al-Shara, commander-in-chief of Syria's new administration.

Oil and hydrocarbon are major components in Syria's economy. The country lost \$91.5 billion in the 10-year span between 2011 and 2021 due to years of civil conflict. The country's energy infrastructure needs rebuilding because it is operating well below capacity, resulting in significant public finance losses. The Syrian gas and oil fields are mainly under the control of US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces in the northeast part of the country. Transferring these resources back to Damascus will be critical to the financial reconstruction effort, estimated to cost between \$250 and \$400 billion (Kozul-Wright, 2025).

Given that Syria is endowed with natural resources, has a 94 percent literacy rate – one of the highest in the region, and enjoys a strategic position on the Mediterranean Sea, it is a country ripe for entrepreneurial development.

With a progressive and people-oriented government at the helm, the soon-to-be returning Syrian diaspora are well positioned to help address their country's critical needs, bolster their decimated economy, and re-engage in a new life as entrepreneurs.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This paper assessed the cultural values of the soon-to-be returning Syrian diaspora using the 5-D classification of Geert Hofstede. The data collected from a group of displaced Syrians living in a refugee camp were compared with published data for Iraq, Jordan, Turkey, and the USA. The newly collected data were also compared with those originally reported by Hofstede, with this analysis showing significant differences for several dimensions including motivation for achievement and success as well as orientation towards time. In general, the data reveal that the Syria diaspora have a high score for power distance and an extremely high score for masculinity, now called the motivation for achievement and success. A possible reason for the shift in cultural dimension scores over time might be the conflict that has plagued Syria since the 2011 start of its civil war. The data also reveal a somewhat lower score for individualism and uncertainty avoidance with a higher than moderate score for orientation toward time. These data were examined with an eye as to whether the soon-to-be returning Syrian diaspora have an entrepreneurial mindset. The people of the diaspora have cultural dimensions scores somewhat similar to those of the USA, a country recognized for its strong orientation towards entrepreneurship.

In conclusion, this study suggests that the people of the Syrian diaspora, who are likely to be returning to their homeland, will find a climate of peace, a government aiming for equitable treatment, and an environment amenable for the resuscitation of the economy and reconstruction of infrastructure. With an optimistic outlook, the people of the diaspora are culturally disposed to engagement in entrepreneurship. With an anticipated end to the sanctions, favorable governmental policies toward business, and a positive attitude toward contributing to their society, a new Syria is destined to emerge. The Syrian diaspora will be ready to reintegrate and start a new life. Their anticipated entrepreneurial efforts are likely to yield substantial social and economic dividends.

Limitations

It would be idealistic to think that the current study was designed and implemented with such precision to be devoid of any limitations. Unfortunately, such is not the case. For one thing, sample size presents a problem. Although the study had 59 respondents, a larger subject pool would increase the generalizability of the findings to a greater segment of the Syrian diaspora. A second problem relates to the possible impact of the respondents' situation and environment on the assessment results. Participants in the study were people who fled their country to live in a Turkish refugee camp. While this sample does not represent the whole of Syria, it is reasonably representative of the people likely to return to their homes and to engage in entrepreneurial actions so as to improve their country and their lives. Only time will tell how many refugees sufficiently trust the new HTS government to provide the stability, peace, and fairness necessary to begin a new life dedicated to entrepreneurship and economic rebuilding.

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Entrepreneurship in Mexico: An American Perspective

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Abstract

This research reviews entrepreneurship literature and presents observations about entrepreneurship of an American business professor completing a sabbatical in Oaxaca, Mexico. It relates the professor's entrepreneurship observations in Oaxaca and Puebla to the existing research literature on international entrepreneurship generally and specifically to research on entrepreneurship in Mexico and the United States.

Entrepreneurship in the Post-Soviet Era: A Comparative Study of Perceived Leadership Traits in Entrepreneurs from Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, Romania, and Russia

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Abstract

As businesses scale internationally, understanding the historical, cultural, and economic contexts for different countries becomes essential in navigating entrepreneurial success. This paper defines and compares the key characteristics of successful entrepreneurs across Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, Romania, and Russia. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study identifies five key traits of successful entrepreneurs in these countries—empathetic and authentic, unshakable resolve, fresh perspective, selflessness, business agility and foresight—and explores their varying significance across countries based on geopolitical and cultural factors. The findings illustrate how entrepreneurial traits are shaped by historical contexts, such as the level of assimilation into Soviet influence, and cultural dimensions unique to each country. The study contributes to cross-cultural entrepreneurship literature by highlighting how perceptions of leadership and entrepreneurial success are deeply rooted in the geopolitical and cultural fabric of nations.

From Knowledge to Impact: How Absorptive Capacity and Green Entrepreneurship Drive Circular Economy Practices with Supplier and Customer Collaboration

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Abstract

This study explores how firms can enhance circular economy practices (CEP) through absorptive capacity, environmental collaboration with suppliers and customers, and green entrepreneurship orientation. Based on the resource - based view and dynamic capabilities theory, hypotheses were tested using quantitative data from a questionnaire survey, analyzed via SPSS 26.0. Results show that green absorptive capacity (GAC) positively impacts CEP and green entrepreneurship orientation (GEO), with GEO partially mediating GAC's effect on CEP. However, supplier environmental collaboration and customer demands negatively moderate GAC's influence on GEO. The study suggests firms should boost GAC, communicate with customers, and collaborate closely with suppliers for mutual benefits in green transition

Canada-US Trade Relations: From Reciprocity to USMCA and Back Again?

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Abstract

Canada-US trade relations in the 21st century are affected by economic nationalism, protectionism, concerns over border security, and geopolitical tensions. There is also a risk of North American disintegration. This paper examines the historical, economic, and political grounds for dealing with these challenges and outlines prospects for the future relationship.

The historic process linking the national economies through the Reciprocity policy to reduce trade barriers, and gradually forming cross-border supply chains, took place during the last two hundred years. It has never occurred in a linear progression and has always been a highly debatable, fragmented, and controversial process affected by the size of the U.S. economy and American trade policies.

The future trajectory of Canada-US trade relations depends on the actual implementation of policies suggested by President Trump, the response of the Government of Canada, and more importantly, the reaction of the broad constituencies affected by these measures.

The reality is that the U.S. and Canadian industries are deeply integrated and underpin North American supply chains and competitiveness. The future of trade relations between Canada and the United States depends on constructive collaboration between governments and businesses in both countries to ensure compatible regulations, mutual investments, and public support.

An Investigation of Supply Chain Problems and Opportunities in Africa

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Abstract

Supply chain problems in Africa are complex and multifaceted and some of the major challenges are: Poor Infrastructure, Political and Regulatory Uncertainty, and Cultural and Language Barriers. On the other hand, Africa is poised to become a global supply chain powerhouse, with numerous opportunities for growth and development. With its rich natural resources, growing population, and emerging middle class, Africa can be an attractive destination for businesses looking to expand their supply chains. In this study, we explore key opportunities for supply chain development in Africa such as: Abundant Natural Resources, Growing Population and Consumer Demand, Emerging Middle Class and Diversification of Economies. This study recommends strategies for success such as building strong relationships with local partners and stakeholders, investing in infrastructure and in the training and development of local talent, and leveraging technology. We also conclude that optimizing supply chains in Africa requires careful planning, strategic investment, and a deep understanding of the local market. We also recommend countries in Africa needs to conduct regular risk assessment and develop contingency plans to mitigate the impact of supply chain disruptions, and should implement environmentally sustainable practices throughout the supply chain.

The 2025 U.S. Regulation Framework for Artificial Intelligence Diffusion: Implications for International Business

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Abstract

This paper examines the evolution of U.S. artificial intelligence policy through three key regulatory frameworks: the Biden administration's Executive Order 14110, the Bureau of Industry and Security's Framework for Artificial Intelligence Diffusion, and the Trump administration's Executive Order 14179. As the global AI market expands toward a projected \$1.8 trillion by 2030, these regulatory changes directly impact international business through a tiered global structure that restricts technology access based on geopolitical considerations rather than market forces. This stratification creates differentiated business environments across regions, requiring multinational firms to develop market-specific strategies and restructure global operations and supply chains. The paper maps these impacts on cross-border trade, innovation networks, and competitive positioning while exploring implications for international business education. Findings suggest curricula must integrate AI governance knowledge with traditional international business concepts to prepare future leaders to navigate technology-specific export controls, manage compliance across fragmented regulatory landscapes, and develop adaptive strategies for AI-driven international competition in an increasingly complex global economy.

Keywords: artificial intelligence regulation, international business education, export controls, technology governance, AI diffusion framework, global trade policy

The managerial relevance of academic research in International Business: An exploratory study

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Abstract

As an applied discipline, part of International Business (IB) academia's mandate is to engage in research projects to improve managerial thinking and practice. However, academic researchers, industry analysts, and business journalists have consistently observed that, in general, practitioners in IB are not aware of Academic Research in IB (ARIB) and, even if they are aware, do not find ARIB relevant and useful to their practice.

Our research seeks to explore the phenomenon of managerial relevance of ARIB from the perspective of the producers of ARIB. We seek to find answers to broad questions like:

1. Do the researchers believe their own research has managerial relevance?
2. What is the purpose of ARIB? To aid in IB decision-making? To build theory?
3. Should academic reward structure in IB take into consideration the relevance of research to practice? To what extent?
4. If managerial relevance is a goal for ARIB, how to achieve that?

METHODOLOGY

We will conduct an online survey of all academic researchers who have published research articles in all the issues in the years 2023 and 2024 in the following three highly rated journals in the IB field:

- Journal of International Business Studies
- Journal of World Business
- International Business Review

CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The research presented at the AIBRP conference is part of a larger research project on the managerial relevance of ARIB. We should be able to gather valuable insights from the survey that we will use to design appropriate empirical research with hypotheses to be tested on the issues discussed.

Cultivating Global Consumer Insights in the Consumer Behavior Course

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Abstract

In an increasingly interconnected and volatile global economy, consumer behavior is no longer a localized phenomenon. It is a state of constant flux, shaped by shifting geopolitical trends, digital acceleration, and evolving cross-cultural preferences. For future marketers and business leaders, the ability to monitor these global shifts is crucial — not only for predicting demand, but also for cultivating the cultural intelligence necessary to navigate international markets with accuracy and empathy.

This presentation outlines a redesign of the undergraduate Consumer Behavior course. The objective is to go beyond the traditional domestic buyer focus and incorporate a research-oriented global perspective. The initiative aims to equip students with a toolkit for navigating the complexities of the international marketplace, with a specific focus on the intersection of cultural anthropology, macroeconomics, and global trade dynamics.

The redesigned course pivots from theory-heavy traditional approaches to cover the material to incorporate a dynamic exploration of global drivers, including:

- * Analyzing how demographic shifts and trade policies redefine purchasing power and consumer priorities.
- * Enabling students to synthesize disparate international business elements into a cohesive behavioral model.
- * Utilizing real-world examples to contrast distinct purchasing patterns and cultural nuances across emerging and developed markets.

The primary pedagogical objective is to move students beyond ethnocentric bias toward an appreciation of international diversity. By doing so, the course prepares them to proactively address the challenges and opportunities inherent in the global consumer landscape.

The session will explore the longitudinal benefits of this internationalized approach, offer ideas for selecting case studies, and share evidence-based strategies for enhancing student engagement and critical thinking.

A Systematic Review of the Role of Social and Cultural Issues on Digital Economy in African Emerging Markets

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The systematic review reveals a comprehensive analysis of research conducted across various African emerging markets, including Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Nigeria, Ghana, and Kenya. By incorporating studies from multiple countries, the review offers a broad perspective on the influence of social and cultural issues on the digital economy. The findings indicate that social factors significantly impact digital engagement, with community dynamics, cultural norms, and social networks playing critical roles in shaping how populations interact with digital technologies. Notably, the review highlights that while 95% of the included articles are published in high-quality Q1 journals, there remains a noticeable gap in the literature concerning cultural issues within the digital economy. Most studies tend to focus on organizational and technological aspects, often overlooking the cultural dimensions that can greatly influence digital adoption and engagement.

The analysis also identifies key trends in the data, with a growing scholarly interest in the interplay between social issues and digital initiatives. However, the literature reveals a lack of comprehensive studies explicitly connecting cultural factors to digital economy outcomes. This gap underscores the need for longitudinal research to examine how social and cultural dynamics evolve alongside the digital economy. The review also indicates that disparities exist across different regions, calling for more granular studies that investigate variations in cultural attitudes towards digital technology. Overall, these insights emphasize the importance of understanding social and cultural contexts to inform policies and strategies that can enhance the effectiveness of digital economy initiatives in Africa.

Key Words: Social issues; cultural issues; digital economy; emerging markets; Africa.

Engaging Students and Transforming Learning in International Business Education: Leveraging Case Competitions and Simulations

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Abstract

This interactive presentation explores the powerful pedagogical potential of integrating case study competitions and business simulations within international business curricula. It delves into the benefits of experiential learning, demonstrating how these dynamic approaches cultivate critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, and decision-making skills within a global context. The presentation showcases how case studies and simulations effectively bridge the gap between theoretical concepts and real-world business challenges.

Participants will explore a range of simulations suitable for diverse international business topics, from market entry strategies to global supply chain management, and receive guidance on selecting simulations aligned with specific learning objectives and student levels. Emphasis will be placed on designing compelling learning experiences, with attendees developing plans for integrating case competitions and/or simulations into their courses using provided templates and resources.

The presentation also covers best practices for implementation, including student preparation, effective assessment methodologies, and insightful debriefing techniques. Attendees will gain practical strategies and actionable resources to implement these tools in their classrooms, fostering enhanced student learning by promoting critical thinking, problem solving, and teamwork.

Ultimately, participants will gain a renewed perspective on teaching international business through active and engaging learning methodologies, acquiring valuable insights and resources to engage students in the dynamic field of international business effectively.

Accessibility in Virtual Businesses: Exploring Strategies for Accessible Digital Workspaces and Its Benefits on Customer Experiences

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Abstract

Virtual businesses and startups are reshaping the business landscapes with several businesses operating from ghost offices or having only digital presence on social media. This strategy of building virtual businesses poses several benefits including low start-up cost, reduced running costs, time management, and human resource management. Some other benefits include the wide reach of customers across the globe, since digital spaces are not limited to any set country or location. Despite these benefits, virtual business owners are still charged with the tasks of being competitive, effective customer relations and long-term viability of their businesses. As such, it is important to cater for a variety of people, able or disabled - physically disabled or cognitively disabled. The goal of this study is to explore effective strategies for accessible virtual business. The study will examine strategies for implementing accessible standards into virtual business by leveraging the use of Artificial Intelligence and Assistive Technology to create accessible businesses and improve customer experience. Through a thorough analysis of effective practices in leading and managing virtual business, the study aims to provide actionable insights to business leaders on digital accessibility for improved customer service and to create a more inclusive digital ecosystem.

THE ROLE OF FINTECH IN RESHAPING GLOBAL FINANCIAL GOVERNANCE

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ABSTRACT

Financial technology (fintech) has emerged as a disruptive force, transforming the landscape of global financial governance. This paper examines the role of fintech in reshaping regulatory frameworks, financial inclusion, cross-border transactions, and risk management. By leveraging technologies such as blockchain, artificial intelligence (AI), and big data analytics, fintech companies are challenging traditional financial institutions and regulatory bodies. The study explores how fintech fosters transparency, reduces transaction costs, and enhances efficiency in financial systems. It also highlights regulatory challenges and potential risks, including cyber security threats, regulatory arbitrage, and systemic risks. The paper draws upon recent literature and case studies to provide an in-depth analysis of fintech's impact on global financial governance. The findings suggest that while fintech offers significant opportunities for innovation, it also necessitates adaptive regulatory approaches to ensure financial stability. The paper concludes with recommendations for policymakers, financial institutions, and fintech firms to promote a balanced approach to innovation and regulation, ensuring the sustainable development of the global financial ecosystem.