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# Not running out of steam after 30 years: The enduring relevance of Central and Eastern Europe for international management scholarship

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## ABSTRACT

Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) is a crucial geopolitical area that has played an important role in the advancement of globalization and the nurturing of international management (IM) scholarship. This article serves as an introduction to a special issue on the topic and argues that CEE remains important for IM scholarship as it provides a critical research context for increasing understanding of IM-related phenomena at various levels of analysis. We discuss the topics most relevant for advancing IM scholarship and group them into three broad themes: macro - state, institutions, and populism; inter-firm - entrepreneurship, internationalization, and business networks; and intra-firm - management practices, leadership, and people management.

## 1. Introduction

Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) is a crucial geopolitical area that has played an important role in the advancement of globalization and the nurturing of international management (IM) scholarship. As [Hartwell and Devinney \(2021\)](#) wrote, “the fall of communism in Central and Eastern Europe and the (soon-to-be) former Soviet Union, coupled with the rise of China and its own rapid institutional changes, unleashed waves of globalization and liberalization in the 1990s and was directly responsible for the third phase of IB scholarship on the political-business nexus.” However, the role of CEE, identified by [Meyer and Peng \(2005: 600\)](#) as “a fascinating research laboratory in which to assess the explanatory and predictive power of different theories”, was questioned a decade later by the same authors. They wrote: “As the field has evolved, the geographic entity ‘CEE’ in 2015 is not as theoretically meaningful as it was in 2005 (or in 1995). This is because of both divergence of countries within the region and convergence of some countries with other countries outside this region (i.e., a number of CEE countries are now full-fledged EU members)” ([Meyer and Peng, 2016: 4](#)). The authors proposed that “the broader notion of emerging economies provides a more appropriate framing for such research” (p. 4). In this introduction to the Special Issue “Thirty Years Later: A Fresh Look at the Central and Eastern Europe Transformation and its

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