A Few Cheap Shots At Those Actually Doing the Work

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Three Loosely Related Rants

- Defining “International Research”
- Are We Stalled?
- Challenges of Selling this Work

What is "International Research"?

- Research done outside US?
- Research done outside author's country?
- Research using data from more than one country?
- Research that provides implications for issues related to global information flows?
- Researcher's portfolio of research uses varied sources?

A Framework for Thinking about "International" Studies

- Data from a cross-section of countries to study a question that is directly related to global information/capital flows – Covrig, Defond and Hung (2007)
- Data from one country, but question is related to global info/capital flows – Bradshaw, Bushee and Miller (2004), Skinner (2008)
- Data from one (non-typical) country, question is a general accounting issue – Bernard, Merton and Palepu (1995)
- "Also here" studies - You know who they are

Why Should We Quibble About defining "International"?

- Honestly, "international" has a bad reputation – I believe much is due to the "also here" research
- Motivation is often difficult – "why define research by geographic boundaries?", but we often focus on that
- Keeps authors honest on what can say and what can't – where does generalizing matter, Bernard et al., Bradshaw et al.

Why Should We Quibble About defining "International"?

- By clearly defining, researcher can make best use of design and question – but we often get lost ourselves

- Readers (editors/referees) focus can be lost – Bushman and Piotroski (2006), Skinner (2008)

Are We Stalled?

- Risk of quick consensus/establishing “seminal approach” Bamber, Christensen and Gaver (2000)

Are We Stalled – Two Dominant Approaches

- Institutions studied via cross-country analysis heavily reliant on Law and Finance like approaches – reusing data from other tables, recombine across two papers
  - Are the various findings really independent?
- Multiple variables to measure "quality" of accounting, then compare battery across different regimes

Are We Stalled – Thought Process

- Early "findings" could be reexamined with newer and better data, challenged in individual countries
  - We tend to ignore innovations that suggest early methods may have been flawed; legal origins, conservatism
- Early theories are treated as sacred
  - cross-listing due to bonding as example
- Setting a few "experts" and closing field (the "experts" are not the ones doing this)

Challenges in Selling the Work (Getting Buy In)

- People either are for or against (particularly editors), adding an additional risk
- Every one has an opinion based on country/travels
- New data opens up questions vs. agreed on assumptions in domestic work

Challenges in Selling the Work (Publishing)

- Refereeing is often uneven quality – particularly due to "double challenge"
  - Choose people who know topic, but not international process
  - Choose people who know international, but not topic
- "Self-selection" is used like garlic on a vampire