

Letter to the editors of the special JIBE issue on 'Africa in the New Global Order – Rethinking Theories, Strategies, Policies, and Partnerships'

Dear Editors,

We sincerely thank the reviewers for their constructive and insightful comments on our paper proposal – submitted in February 2026 – relative to corporate philanthropy dynamics in Africa. We have oriented the manuscript accordingly and address each point below.

1. Thematic alignment with IB and global dynamics

Comment: Strengthen links to MNE strategy, global integration, and Africa's repositioning.

Response:

We have reinforced the positioning of the paper within International Business (IB) and development debates. The *Introduction* now more explicitly connects the study to IB literature on non-market strategies and multinational enterprises. Morocco is more clearly embedded in broader African and global transformations. In particular, we propose using the notion of “institutional projection” to designate processes whereby firms actively contribute to diffusing norms, practices, and development models across borders. Moreover, the *Discussion* (section 5.2) now explicitly addresses regional integration, geoeconomic dynamics, and Africa's repositioning in the global economy.

2. Methodological clarification

Comment: Provide more details on the sample and analysis.

Response:

Our paper includes a dedicated methodology section (section 3). We now clearly specify the 50 interviews and their distribution across actor categories involved (Table 1). The analytical strategy has been clarified, detailing the coding process and the three analytical dimensions (mechanisms, institutional pillars, multi-scalar dynamics).

3. Theoretical framework and distinction between firms

Comment: Better align with IB theory and distinguish domestic vs foreign firms.

Response:

We have strengthened the theoretical framing by more explicitly linking institutional theory with IB perspectives on non-market strategies. We introduce a distinction between (i) domestically embedded firms, which use philanthropy as a mechanism of coordination and institutional structuring, and (ii) foreign subsidiaries in Morocco, which rely more on standardized CSR (and not philanthropic) practices driven by legitimacy concerns.

Methodological clarification:

At this stage, we did not conduct interviews with foreign multinationals operating in Morocco. Their practices are analysed indirectly through the perspectives (and verbatim) of local actors: NGOs, corporate foundations, experts. In contrast, our dataset includes interviews with

representatives of Moroccan firms operating in Sub-Saharan Africa, allowing us to directly analyse the articulation between philanthropy and regional expansion. This approach provides a field-level perspective on interactions and practice diffusion, consistent with our analytical focus.

4. Policy and strategic dimension (soft governance)

Comment: Clarify the role of philanthropy as soft governance and its link to Morocco's repositioning.

Response:

This dimension has been strengthened. We clarify the mechanisms through which corporate philanthropy operates as soft governance: structuring action arenas, coordinating actors, and diffusing norms. Section 4.4 explicitly links philanthropy to economic diplomacy and regional expansion, while the *Discussion* and *Conclusion* articulate policy implications and the role of firms as institutional intermediaries.

5. Overall contribution

Comment: Strengthen theoretical and policy contributions.

Response:

The contribution is now more explicit. The article reconceptualizes corporate philanthropy as institutional co-production, highlights its multi-scalar nature and introduces institutional projection as a mechanism of transnational influence. Policy implications are clarified, particularly regarding governance, coordination, and power asymmetries.

We thank the reviewers again for their helpful comments and remain at your disposal for any further revisions or clarifications that may be required.

Best regards,

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