

Foreword

Titilayo Seriki has developed a new theoretical approach to explain the success of teams operating within the complex societal context of sub-Saharan Africa. While prior literature often suggests that organisational and national contexts are highly significant to team process and outcomes, these factors are seldom specified and their possible influence seldom studied. The cross-level character of this research framework (analysis of interrelationships between societal, organisational, and team levels) is a novel and necessary contribution to the research on teamwork and project management.

The author focuses on sub-Saharan Africa as a region of increasing economic importance. International organisations consider Africa as a market for expansion due especially to its wealth of natural resources as well as its immense growth opportunities. A deeper knowledge of the cultural and institutional environments is needed to design appropriate business strategies and internal processes within the organisation. Based on existing literature, Dr. Seriki logically hypothesises chains of influence from the societal context to the innovation team, via the organisation as a mediator. The identification of common societal forces across sub-Saharan Africa and the analysis of consequences for organisations and teams provide a valuable contribution to the management literature, especially given the recent interest in the region by countries such as China.

Dr. Seriki conducted in-depth case studies in Nigeria and South Africa – the economic power houses of sub-Saharan Africa – to test and refine her theory. Individual case reports are brief and concise, while additional information is offered in the appendix. The interpretive analysis across cases shows clearly that, like anywhere else, high quality of teamwork is decisive for a team's innovative performance, but also that the antecedents of teamwork in the sub-Saharan setting are not identical to those in other societal contexts.

The research for this book benefits from Dr. Seriki's very competent conduct of the conceptual and empirical analyses. Moreover, the book itself is evidence of the author's strong identification with the sub-Saharan regional context, and her immer-

sion in it. Thus, this book offers clear benefits for management scholars as well as practitioners interested in management in sub-Saharan Africa.

Prof. Dr. Martin Högl

"The darkest thing about Africa has always been our ignorance of it"

George H. T. Kimble (Geographer, born 1912)

Acknowledgements

It has been a privilege for me to be able to dedicate the past three years to studying a topic that is close to my heart. I would like to thank all those who made this possible:

First of all, my thanks go to my supervisor and mentor during this research project, Prof. Dr. Martin Högl. I greatly appreciate your openness, your time, and all the valuable advice you have given me.

I also thank Prof. Dr. Hans Georg Gemünden for encouraging me to take up these studies as soon as I mentioned my ideas to him. Without this, I may never have begun this research journey. Thank you!

Being able to exchange ideas with and seek advice from a person experienced in international management research, who is also a "fellow-African", has been very important for me and for the progress of this work. A big thank you to Prof. Dr. K. Praveen Parboteeah.

I herewith also thank those that enabled me to carry out the empirical part of this research study: the leaders and members of all participating organisations. These are a lot more organisations and people than those explicitly mentioned in this text. Thank you very much indeed for openly sharing insights and information with me.

It has been great to have colleagues undertaking similar research projects, with whom I have been able to discuss difficulties, develop solutions, and have a good time. The whole team at the WHU Chair of Leadership and Human Resource Management, thank you for being not just colleagues but friends.

On the private side I extend my sincere thanks to all my friends who listened and cheered me up during tough phases and to my family for making me realise the significance of diversity-related issues for teamwork. Thank you all for being there for me throughout this research project. Your thoughts and prayers are indispensable for me.

Papa, thank you for leaving ideas with me and pointing out the research route. I will always wish we could still have discussions. Mama and Efrén, thank you especially

for proof-reading my text. Eva, thank you for sharing your experience with me at the right moments. Peter, thank you for your unconditional, unwavering love and support. What would I do without you?

H. Titilayo Seriki