CALL FOR PAPERS: Special issue of *Journal of International Business Studies*

ADVANCING INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS: INTEGRATIVE KNOWLEDGE AND TRANSFORMATIVE THEORIES

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Introduction

As an academic field of study, International Business (IB) seeks to develop comprehensive understanding about the antecedents and consequences of business activities that cross national borders. Many of these activities occur at multiple levels of observation and are often deeply embedded in interlocking layers of differing economic, social, legal, and political contexts. Because of this inherent complexity, IB scholars might consider adopting an interdisciplinary investigative approach that integrates knowledge from two or more disciplines to develop comprehensive frameworks that have greater explanatory and predictive power than single-discipline based models (Dunning, 1989). This emphasis on the integration or mixing of ideas from multiple disciplines is an important requirement as it distinguishes interdisciplinary research from multidisciplinary approaches, in which a series of separate investigations from different disciplines are conducted independently or sequentially with no effort at integration (Cantwell & Brannen, 2010; Cheng et al., 2009).

The proposed special issue aims to advance interdisciplinary research in IB with the goal of developing integrative knowledge and transformative theories to enhance understanding and improve practice. Our objective is to provide a forum for IB scholars to showcase their best interdisciplinary work, debate the merits of different approaches to interdisciplinary inquiry, and collectively contribute to the development of an interdisciplinary paradigm to guide future research.

Building on the existing literature (e.g., Aboelela et al., 2006; Porter et al., 2006; Rosenfield, 1992; Stokols et al., 2003) and as proposed by Cheng et al. (2009: 1071), we consider interdisciplinary research to have the following three defining characteristics:

1. The research draws on ideas and/or methods from two or more academic disciplines, particularly those based on contrasting assumptions.
2. As part of the investigative process, these ideas and/or methods are integrated or mixed in such ways that together they produce something new and useful (in either solving a problem or advancing fundamental understanding).

3. The resulting product and its value-added contribution could not have been obtained by relying on ideas and/or methods from any discipline alone.

Examples of interdisciplinary research can be found in Herbert Simon’s (1945) work on bounded rationality that synthesizes ideas from cognitive psychology and economics, Douglass North’s (1990) integrative socio-political-economic analysis of the co-evolution of institutions and national development, and Oliver Williamson’s (1981) transaction cost theory that combines ideas from microeconomics, contract law, and organizational behavior.

We encourage submissions that demonstrate synthetic capabilities for the development of integrative themes and theories, particularly those that generate conceptual novelty and variety, not just a better comparative understanding of established theories or ideas taken from different disciplines. We also welcome papers that develop interdisciplinary themes that extend and enrich established IB theories, thus helping to expand their potential application and usefulness. To be considered for this issue, papers must address an issue of importance to IB scholars and provide a clear demonstration of the benefit of the interdisciplinary approach taken relative to addressing the issue from the perspective of a single discipline.

A paper development workshop, for submissions in the revise-and-resubmit stage, will be held in conjunction with the 2013 AIB meeting in Istanbul, Turkey.

Topics

Specifically, the special issue seeks submissions that synthesize ideas from two or more academic disciplines to develop and apply interdisciplinary concepts and/or theories to study important IB phenomena. The phenomena studied can be existing (old) or emerging (new), single- or multi-layer embedded, or manifest in any other form as long as they are international or cross-border in nature and relate to the study domain of the IB field (please see the JIBS Statement of Editorial Policy at www.jibs.net). The following are some illustrative topics suitable for inclusion in the special issue:

- Original research that integrates basic assumptions and theoretical arguments from economics (e.g., agency theory or transaction cost) and sociology (e.g., institutional theory or social network) to study foreign market entry and subsidiary management.
- Investigations that synthesizes ideas from economics, political science, and international relations to study global governance issues and how MNCs respond to the new globally coordinated, regulatory environment resulting from the 2008 global financial crisis.
- Research that draws on linguistics, cognitive theory, or social identity to link cultural context to the behavior of managers and employees in the complex and dynamic environment of the multinational enterprise.
- Interdisciplinary empirical investigations that triangulate qualitative and quantitative techniques in unpacking multiple layers of interrelated contextual processes that affect MNCs operating in national settings with differing economic, political, social, and cultural systems.
- Research that conceptualizes and delineates the salient dimensions (economic, political, social, and cultural) of the changing global business environment since the 2008 global financial crisis and their likely effects on the international competitiveness of firms from emerging economies.
- Studies that examine the interdependence between formal (political/legal/economic) and informal (social/cultural) institutions and how their co-evolution over time affects organizational form and business practice in different nations and societies.
- Interdisciplinary inquiries into the role of religion in the “new terrorism” (Enders & Sandler, 2006) and how it affects international business and MNCs’ response to security threats against foreign investments and subsidiary operations.
Please note that the special issue will not publish submissions that merely show a cataloguing of (or a causal diagram outlining) the various concepts or theories from different disciplines that could explain the phenomenon under study (see discussion of “kitchen sink papers” in Buckley & Lessard, 2005). To be accepted, the paper must include a detailed analysis and delineation of how these concepts or theories are actually synthesized or mixed to develop integrative knowledge that provides a clear value-added contribution to the literature.

Submission Process

All manuscripts will be reviewed as a cohort for this special issue. Manuscripts must be submitted in the window between January 3, 2013, and January 15, 2013, at http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/jibs. All submissions will go through the JIBS regular double-blind review process and follow the standard norms and processes.

For more information about this call for papers, please contact the Special Issue Editors or the JIBS Managing Editor (managing-editor@jibs.net).

References


About the Guest Editors

Joseph L. C. Cheng is Professor of International Business at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He is also Principal Investigator and Founding Director of The CIC Center for Advanced Study in International Competitiveness sponsored by the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC), a university consortium of the Big Ten Conference members and the University of Chicago with a combined annual R&D budget of over $7.5 billion. During the 2011-12 academic year, Cheng is on sabbatical visiting at the University of Michigan Ross School of Business and the Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center at Stanford University.

Cheng received his PhD in Business Administration from the University of Michigan. His current research interests include strategy and organization design for transnational firms, global competition and multinational management, foreign R&D investment, national innovation and technology policies, and Asian economies. He has published in leading U.S. and European academic journals, including the Academy of Management Journal, Administrative Science Quarterly, European Journal of International Management, Human Relations, Journal of International Business Studies, Journal of Management, Management International Review, Management Science, and Organization Studies, among others.

Cheng is a former Chair of the Academy of Management International Management Division, and currently serves as a Consulting Editor for the Journal of International Business Studies and a Senior Editorial Consultant to the European Journal of International Management. He was the lead Co-Editor of the research annual Advances in International Management during 1996-2009, and received the 2009 Leading Book Series Editor Award (with Mike Hitt) from its publisher Emerald Group Publishing.

Julian Birkinshaw is Professor and Chair of Strategic and Entrepreneurship at the London Business School, and co-founder of the Management Lab. He is a Fellow of the Academy of International Business and the Advanced Institute of Management Research (UK). He has PhD and MBA degrees in Business from the Richard Ivey School of Business, University of Western Ontario, and a BSc (Hons) from the University of Durham.

Birkinshaw’s main area of expertise is in the strategy and management of large multinational corporations, and on such specific issues as corporate entrepreneurship, innovation, subsidiary-headquarters relationship, knowledge management, network organisations, and global customer management. He is the author of eleven books, including Reinventing Management (2010), Giant Steps in Management (2007), Inventuring: Why Big Companies Must Think Small (2003), and Entrepreneurship in the Global Firm (2001), and over fifty articles. His research has also been published in such journals as Strategic Management Journal, Academy of Management Review, Academy of Management Journal, Journal of International Business Studies, and Harvard Business Review.

Donald Lessard is the Epoch Foundation Professor of International Management at the MIT Sloan School of Management. He studies project management, global strategic management, and international finance and teaches courses on global strategy and strategic opportunities in the energy sector.

Currently on sabbatical, Lessard has just completed his term as co-chair of the MIT Energy Education Task Force, which has just launched an Institute-wide energy minor for undergraduates that spans
science, technology, and the social sciences and management; and as the faculty director of the Sloan Fellows Program and the newly launched MIT Executive MBA.

He has published extensively on risk management, global strategy, and international corporate finance. His most recent book is Strategic Management of Large Engineering Projects: Shaping Institutions, Risks, and Governance (with Roger Miller, MIT Press, February 2001). Lessard is a graduate of Stanford University (BA Hispanic American Studies), MBA, and PhD (Stanford Business School) and has been on the faculty of MIT since 1973.

David C. Thomas is currently Professor of International Management and Director of the Centre for Global Workforce Strategy at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada. In 2012 he will take up a Professorship in the Australian School of Business, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia. He received his PhD in International Business from the University of South Carolina.


Thomas is currently the Cross-Cultural Management Area Editor of the Journal of International Business Studies and serves on the editorial boards of the Journal of World Business, Journal of Organizational Behavior, and European Journal of Cross-Cultural Competence and Management. His previous academic postings have included positions at The Pennsylvania State University and The University of Auckland, New Zealand, where he was also Director of the Master of International Business Program. He has held visiting positions at Koç University, Istanbul, Turkey, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, the University of Hawaii, Massey University, New Zealand, and ESCEM, Tours, France.