

CFP: Special Issue of the Journal of International Business Studies (Deadline 01 Aug 2023)

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CALL FOR PAPERS

Special Issue of the Journal of International Business Studies

INTEGRATING HISTORICAL APPROACHES IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS: MOVING BEYOND
"HISTORY MATTERS"

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Deadline for submissions: August 1, 2023

Introduction

International business in all its forms, whether cross-border activities by multinational companies or non-equity forms of investment, and the international environment it operates in is shaped by the historical legacies of countries and their international relations. The analysis of historical data played an important role in early stages of the development of international business (IB) as a field of research (Dunning 1958; Vernon, 1971). Yet, in recent years historical research on international phenomena that engage with business and management theories is more commonly published outside of IB journals (Gao, Zuzul, Jones, & Khanna, 2017; Lubinski, 2018). Once IB became academically established, interest in historical research waned, despite occasional calls for its revival (e.g., Jones & Khanna, 2006). Even rarer are historical studies in IB that are directly based on archival sources (Bucheli, Salvaj, & Kim, 2019; Minefee & Bucheli, 2021). This special issue seeks to bring together IB scholars interested in exploring how historical approaches can enrich and expand theory development on international business phenomena.

In recent years, IB journals have not seen the same development of historically-informed theorizing as related fields (Decker, Hassard, & Rowlinson, 2021; Maclean, Harvey, & Clegg, 2016; Rowlinson, Hassard, & Decker, 2014). For example, the editors of the *Academy of Management Journal* have, in an editorial, remarked upon "the value of these analyses in making us see the social, cultural, and institutional construction of organizational and managerial phenomena in historical context" (Bansal, Smith, & Vaara, 2018, p. 4). This appreciation is reflected in the substantial number of special issues over the last few years that have integrated historical approaches into key debates in strategy (Argyres, De Massis, Foss, Frattini, Jones, & Silverman, 2020), entrepreneurship (Wadhwani, Kirsch,

Welter, Gartner, & Jones, 2020), organization studies (Wadhvani, Suddaby, Mordhorst, & Popp, 2018), and management theory (Godfrey, Hassard, O'Connor, Rowlinson, & Ruef, 2016), and further special issues currently in progress in family business (Suddaby, Silverman, Massis, Jaskiewicz, & Micelotta, 2021), the history of business schools (McLaren et al., 2021) and occupations and professions (Coraiola, Maclean, Suddaby, & Muzio, 2022). This special issue seeks to open up a similar dialogue between IB scholars and historical researchers.

How history matters for IB research

At its inception, the field of IB paid close attention to the evolution of firms' international activities in their historical context (Vernon, 1971; Wilkins, 1974). Subsequently, however, IB and international business history have often addressed different questions and employed different methods: archival, mostly qualitative, research in the case of business historians, and a variety of mostly quantitative, though increasingly also qualitative, methodological approaches in IB in their historical context. This distinction is increasingly challenged (Buckley, 2016; Burgelman, 2011), but history also matters beyond its potential methodological contribution to IB. Greater attention to history would enable IB scholars to ask questions about change over time and develop theories addressing how and why some of these patterns have become dominant at certain points of time, and why they might be changing. Such theories may include, but are not limited to, institutional theory, organizational learning, knowledge-based view, organizational memory and forgetting, power, and dynamic capabilities.

Engagement with history and historical methods can help IB scholars respond to recent calls for more process-based approaches, qualitative research and an engagement with scholarly work beyond IB (Buckley, 2009; Nielsen et al., 2020; Shenkar, 2004; Welch & Paavilainen-Mäntymäki, 2014). It would also help develop scholarship towards a deeper understanding of phenomena (Doh, 2015) and their context (Meyer, 2015; Tsui, 2004). For example, in their decade award-winning article in this journal, Welch et al. (2011) promoted more contextualized approaches to IB research through a focus on the case method, and in their recent retrospective (Welch et al., 2021) they explicitly highlight historical research as one of four approaches that engage context in their research design.

Aims and scope of the special issue

In the light of these developments in our field and beyond, the time has come to take stock and move beyond affirmations that "history matters" and flesh out the ways in which historical approaches matter to IB research in terms of theory, method, and novel perspectives. Here, we seek contributions that go beyond just analyzing data collected over time (such as survey data collection repeated after a certain number of years) in favour of studies that include the rich historical context into their analysis and theorizing. Historical approaches have the potential to offer new perspectives on the complex, multi-level, and contextually specific nature of multinational activities and the evolution of the global economy. We are particularly interested in contributions that can connect historical approaches with IB debates, and which draw on ongoing conversations in other disciplines and fields. We are interested in both quantitative and qualitative approaches, as well as methodological and conceptual/theoretical contributions. IB scholars who use historical approaches, as well as business and management historians who engage deeply with IB theories, are welcome to submit to the special issue.

Possible examples of research topics that would be suitable for inclusion in this Special Issue include (but are not limited to):

1. **Plurality of historical approaches.** Other management disciplines such as Organization Studies, Strategy, and Entrepreneurship have expanded their use of historical research, as seen in a series of special issues and other contributions. The key theoretical contributions have outlined a spectrum of approaches from more social science-oriented contributions to more historically oriented narratives (Rowlinson et al., 2014; Maclean et al., 2016; Decker et al., 2021). Such work demonstrates that history provides new perspectives on advancing theory or challenging concepts and constructs and poses questions that are under-represented in IB research, such as how processes evolve over time (Gao et al, 2017). Historical approaches enable IB researchers to consider the past as an empirical setting to explore theoretical concerns, which are difficult to adequately study in the present, or which require a long-term perspective, such as global challenges or internationalisation. How can historical approaches benefit process and longitudinal research on IB topics? How can a dialogue between process researchers and historians form the basis for advances in IB theory?
 - **Historical theories of IB.** In recent years, historical research has become more theoretically oriented, driven by key contributions in organization theory, strategy (Argyres et al., 2020), and entrepreneurship (Wadhvani, Kirsch, Welter, Gartner, & Jones, 2020). Increasingly, such contributions are being extended to IB theory (da Silva Lopes, Casson, & Jones, 2019; Minefee & Bucheli, 2021) and this special issue seeks to expand on this interdisciplinary repertoire.
 - **Long Run Change Processes.** IB scholars have investigated environmental change mainly by exploring business responses to clearly identifiable disruptions. Yet, we know comparatively little of the historically embedded, contextually specific co-evolution of multinational organizations and their local, national, regional, and international environment. Emerging economies, in particular, have brought to the fore the importance of understanding the political, social, cultural and economic contexts of business activities (Meyer, 2015; Tsui, 2004). Multinationals often resolve key tensions by shifting the focus of their activities over time to stay aligned with the different trends and concerns in host and home societies. How do international actors and the global economy co-evolve? What factors influence such processes? What is the role of disruptive events (such as disasters, pandemics or wars) vs. slower, more long-term processes in changing international business strategies and practices?
 - **Historical processes in IB and the role of time.** Many key theories in IB, such as internationalisation theory, implicitly or explicitly theorise the passage of time as part of a process that becomes cumulative, experiential and changes organizations both in their structure, strategies and their practices (Verbeke & Kano, 2015; Welch & Paavilainen-Mäntymäki, 2014). How does the historical evolution of organizations shape their operations, structure, and practises? How do international organizations deal with historical legacies, such as colonialism, past wrongdoing, war and conflict, and ideological disagreements?
 - **History as a method for IB researchers.** Historical research routinely covers long time periods in rich and detailed narratives based on archival records that can have a fly-on-the-wall immediacy unmatched by other types of public documents. These “eventful” accounts (Decker, 2022) offer new insights particularly for qualitative longitudinal research to scale up in terms

of time periods covered. Frynas et al. (2017, p. 568) highlighted the potential contribution from historical evidence in studying the “long-term cooperative interactions and reciprocity by the actors involved.” Welch (2000, p. 198) considers archival data as an opportunity to add “empirical depth” and explain “processes of change and evolution”. Buckley (2016, 2020) has also explored the potential for historical methods to expand the types of questions IB researchers can ask. What methodological innovations are required to embed historical approaches into qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method IB scholarship?

- **Historical perspectives on the construction of national and cultural boundaries.** A nation, in IB’s usual meaning, consists of a group of people living within a geographic area who are sovereignly governed by explicit laws and institutions which apply within a national government’s boundaries. Governments historically negotiated these boundaries with governments representing other similarly governed and bounded groups through warfare and treaties. IB scholars, however, are sometimes encouraged to take on the challenge of considering alternative societal boundaries besides nations (Hutzschenreuter, Matt, & Kleindienst, 2020; Peterson, Søndergaard, & Kara, 2018; Tung, 2008). Accepting that challenge suggests the importance of historical analysis for understanding how specific countries came to be legitimated, how countries continue to compete with sub-country and trans-country groups of people having shared political interests, and how alternative groupings support different business practices and transactions across not only country but other boundaries. This special issue supports analyses that make systematic use of a broad range of influential historical perspectives that have been taken to the geographic area they consider and to the construction of national, sub-national and trans-national groupings (Reckendrees, Gehlen, & Marx, 2022). Such submissions would need to show how these groupings, and the contests between them, have continuing implications for cross-border business.
- **Institutions in IB.** IB scholars often turn to institutions to capture aspects of the external environment affecting businesses. Yet, their treatment of institutions has been criticised for being “hobbled by a thin account of institutions and their effect on business performance” (Doh, Lawton, & Rajwani, 2012, p. 27). Institutions are inherently historical in nature, as acknowledged for example in studies on IB in transition economies that emphasize the temporal nature of the institutional environment (Meyer & Peng, 2016). Nevertheless, institutional theory in its variants popular in management research favours ahistorical measurements and tends to ignore their historical evolution. More research is needed, not just on the interaction of different dimensions of institutions, but also on how they affect strategy both in terms of the firm’s home and host economies. How do institutions affecting IB change over time, and how do people and organizations purposefully or coincidentally change them? What new theoretical insights into IB topics can be gained from historical institutionalism, which to date has been little used by IB scholars?

Submission Process and Deadlines

Manuscripts must be submitted through <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/jibs> between July 18, 2023, and August 1, 2023. All submissions will go through the JIBS regular double-blind review process and follow 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).

Workshop and Symposium

We plan to organize a webinar early 2023 for authors interested in submitting to the special issue, which we will advertise widely on scholarly social media and on AIB-L. To help authors who receive an invitation to revise their submission further develop their papers, we intend to organize a paper development workshop in late 2023. We encourage multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural co-author teams.

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About the Guest Editors

Stephanie Decker is Professor of Strategy at Birmingham Business School and Visiting Professor in African Business History at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. Her work focuses on historical approaches in Organisation Studies and Strategy, and she has published in journals such as *Academy of Management Review*, *Human Relations*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Organization*, *Business History Review*, and *Business History*. She is co-editor-in-chief of *Business History*, on the editorial board of *Organization Studies* and *Accounting History*, and Co-Vice Chair for Research & Publications at the British Academy of Management.

Geoffrey Jones is Isidor Straus Professor of Business History at the Harvard Business School in the United States. He researches the history, impact and ecological and social responsibility of business. He is a Fellow of Academy of International Business (AIB), a Fellow of the Japan Academy of International Business Studies, and a Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy. His books include *Multinational and Global Capitalism: From the Nineteenth Century to the Twenty-First Century* (OUP 2005), *Profits and Sustainability: A History of Green Entrepreneurship* (OUP 2017) and *Deeply Responsible Business. A Global History of Values-Driven Leadership* (Harvard University Press, 2023). He has published in *Journal of International Business Studies* and *Strategic Management Journal*.

Klaus Meyer is a Professor of International Business and William G. Davis Chair in International Trade at Ivey Business School, London, Ontario, Canada. He is a leading scholar in international business, focusing on the strategies and operations of multinational enterprises in and from emerging economies. His research emphasizes the role of context on many aspects of management, and the contextual boundaries of theories of management. He is a Fellow of the Academy of International Business (AIB), and in 2015 he received the Decade award of the Journal of International Business Studies (JIBS). He has served as Vice President of the AIB, and as an area editor of JIBS and is currently serving on the Executive Committee of the International Management Division of the Academy of Management. He has published over 90 articles in leading scholarly journals such as *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Strategic Management Journal* and *Journal of Management Studies*, and he published nine books.

Catherine Welch is Chair of Strategic Management at Trinity College Dublin, Ireland and a Distinguished Visiting Professor at Aalto University, Finland. Her research has concentrated on two areas: qualitative research methodology and process approaches to studying firm internationalization. Her work has appeared in leading journals in international business and management. She was the first author on a paper which won the 2021 *Journal of International Business Studies (JIBS)* Decade Award. Catherine is the current Book Review Editor of *JIBS* and a member of the journal's Research Methods Advisory Committee. She is an Associate Editor of *Organizational Research Methods*. She is a Vice-President and co-founder of the Academy of International Business (AIB) Research Methods Shared Interest Group (RM-SIG). She currently serves on the AIB's board as Vice President Programs.

Rebecca Piekkari is Marcus Wallenberg Chair of International Business at Aalto University School of Business, Finland. She is an incoming Associate Editor of the *Journal of International Business Studies (JIBS)* and sits on several editorial boards of IB and management journals. Rebecca's recent research interests focus on translation as a perspective on IB phenomena, the shifting meaning of location for cross-border activities, as well as questions of social sustainability, diversity and inclusion in multinational corporations. She is known for her expertise in qualitative research methods and language-sensitive research in IB. Together with her co-authors she won the 2021 *JIBS* Decade award on theorizing from case studies. Rebecca has also co-edited several handbooks and book chapters on these topics. She is Fellow of the Academy of International Business and the European International Business Academy.