



EDITORIAL

Footnotes on *JIBS* 1970–2016

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Journal of International Business Studies (2017) **48**, 1037–1044.
doi:10.1057/s41267-017-0127-3

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INTRODUCTION

These footnotes on the *Journal of International Business Studies (JIBS)* 1970–2016 are intended to introduce the journal to scholars outside the international business (IB) discipline. The footnotes include a brief citation and keywords analysis. The citation analysis in the first part highlights the key players and key references in the IB field, and it celebrates the rich history of *JIBS* itself. The second part discusses the main subject matter addressed in refereed *JIBS* articles, through an analysis of keywords. These footnotes are timely as the journal nears 50 years of publication excellence, and an increasing interest in IB phenomena can be witnessed in a variety of management disciplines. We describe the intellectual shoulders upon which authors of future publications in *JIBS*, as well as designers of new IB curricula can stand.

Citation Analysis in International Business

Many prior IB citation analyses have been useful in tracking the impact of an author or journal, or to examine particular themes and their intellectual trajectory over time. One example is Griffith, Cavusgil, and Xu (2008) investigating the IB research agenda and the future direction of IB research based upon emerging themes. Another is Ferreira, Pinto, Serra, and Santos (2013) tracking the impact of a single, distinguished scholar, namely the late John Dunning, and his contribution to IB research. Ferreira, Ribeiro, Serra, and Armagan (2015) subsequently tracked the impact of the most cited and award-winning IB articles, and the related co-citation networks.

Yehekel and Shenkar (2009) provided a citation analysis on *JIBS* itself. They presented information on the knowledge flows into and from IB, using cross-citations between *JIBS* and other leading management journals over a 13-year period preceding their article. The authors found that *JIBS* was initially a net knowledge importer, particularly from the strategy sphere, but later became a net exporter. Servantie, Cabrol, Guieu, and Boissin (2016) conducted a bibliometric analysis of international entrepreneurship articles published from 1989 to 2015, and concluded that international entrepreneurship represents an emerging field, distinct from the

more well-established fields of IB research and mainstream entrepreneurship research.

The comprehensive scientometric investigation by Liesch, Håkanson, McGaughey, Middleton, and Cretchley (2011) of *JIBS* articles covering the 1970–2008 period, was particularly insightful because it documented the evolution over time from a more macro-level orientation, towards a greater focus on firm-level behaviour. Buckley, Doh, and Benischke (2017) have recently criticized this trend, because of a suggested absence of attention to societal ‘grand challenges’. The perceived need for a more dedicated focus on the macro-level has also led the Academy of International Business (AIB) to create a new publication outlet, namely the *Journal of International Business Policy*.

What papers actually discuss, however, may paint a somewhat more complex picture described as follows: Much of the early, explicit focus on macro-level parameters, informed by functional fields such as economics and political science, ultimately made way for work that built upon various strands of institutional theory, with the macro-level remaining equally important but often couched in somewhat more abstract language. Both the economics and sociology strands of institutional theory, as well as other discipline-based theories, found their way into applied management studies and have developed a life of their own, outside of their original home disciplines.

In this realm, Chabowski, Hult, Kiyak, and Mena’s (2010) observation that *JIBS* authors initially cited much work in economics, finance, and marketing, but later built increasingly on work in strategy and management, should not come as a surprise. In fact, the heightened affinity for citing strategy and management literature may well result from this literature’s proximity to – and rather holistic treatment of – empirical phenomena, with bridging silos as a key endeavour.

Consistent with the above, there has never been a real schism, nor even competition, between the micro-level and the macro-level in the IB field. Rigorous research by definition requires a clear focus, and no single article can straddle fully the complexity of any IB phenomenon: What matters from the perspective of building a research community, is the genuine interest in the entirety of the phenomenon at hand, and the respect shown to scholars analysing other facets thereof.¹

In this context, Liesch et al. (2011) made the point that:

The field of international business emerged as a collective effort on the part of scholars from various disciplines who shared an interest in the MNE [multinational enterprise], how to manage its complexity and in achieving a better understanding of its effects in both home and host countries. These questions demanded explanations not existing at the time and provided a *raison d’être* for this new field, inviting contributions from disciplines as diverse as economics, finance, sociology, geography, business history, anthropology, political science and others.

Not much has changed in almost 50 years. Academics originating from disciplinary and functional fields but engaged in somewhat unorthodox research endeavours, still make the choice – just as they did in the 1970s – to join the global community of IB scholars. They do this at the risk of being criticized, and experiencing negative career effects in their schools and in their disciplinary or functional areas. At the same time, the IB research field now boasts an ecosystem of credible publication outlets, with *JIBS* as its intellectual hub. IB research output is crafted within a highly dynamic, social community of unconventional and open-minded academics, many of whom continue to balance successfully their membership in the IB research network with continued scholarship closely aligned with their home disciplinary and functional areas. Many members of the international management division of the Academy of Management and the global strategy interest group of the Strategic Management Society come to mind, with the latter organization even publishing a high-level journal dedicated to IB scholarship, namely the *Global Strategy Journal*.

A small number of business schools also have world-class teaching and research programs dedicated to IB. Many business school Deans who think that a disciplinary focus is the best way to move up in rankings (viewed as critical to competitive success), also do understand the importance of developing genuine expertise on IB-related phenomena, and the consequent, requisite tolerance for a more interdisciplinary focus. Here, the IB field retains an absolute advantage in studying the MNE in all of its appearances, whether Chandlerian hierarchies, business groups, global production networks, family firms, state-owned companies, international new ventures, digitally enabled multi-sided platforms, etc.

In the next sections of this commentary, we identify the essence of the IB research field, informed by analysis of the scholarly output published in *JIBS*, the field’s leading journal.



METHODS

The second author of this commentary accessed the Web of Science (WoS) and engaged in a search involving the entire publication history of *JIBS* from 1970 through to June 2016. This revealed 2,066 pieces indexed, of which 1,474 were academic articles, 317 book reviews, 97 editorial materials, 89 other reviews, and 47 notes. Only the 1,474 academic articles were used in this Commentary.²

Almost all articles, namely 1,465, contained references. There were a total of 80,368 references. This equates to an average of 55 references per article. A small number of these references, namely 982, were not usable for further analysis.³

Usage of WoS analytics revealed the top authors, top countries, and top organizations publishing in *JIBS*. We identified the most discussed topics through the use of keywords, as well as the most highly published authors within *JIBS*. As of 2003, *JIBS* required authors to state keywords at the front of their article. We found 666 articles that contained 6,692 keywords and 3,300 authors across the 1,474 articles (for the 2003–2016 period). Another set of keywords, but assigned by WoS and covering the longer, 1990–2016 period, was also used.⁴ From this second set, we identified thematic clusters.⁵

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Top 25 Authors

A total of 3,300 authors authored the 1,474 articles. We were interested in identifying the most highly published authors in *JIBS*. Using WoS analytics, Table 1 shows that Peter Buckley and Mike Kotabe, two intellectual giants in the IB field, shared the top spot with 18 published articles. The top 5 is rounded out by Chuck Kwok, Oded Shenkar, Paul Beamish, and Yadong Luo. The top 25 authors have contributed a combined 271 (18.39%) publications to *JIBS*.

Top 25 Publishing Countries

Table 2 lists the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and China as the top four *JIBS* contributor nations, representing nearly 9 out of 10 (or 1,313) articles published in the journal. Note that the total number of records in Table 2 is higher than 1,474 because a number of publications have authors affiliated with institutions in different countries.

Table 1 Top 25 most published authors

Rank	Author	No. of articles published in <i>JIBS</i>	% of 1,474
1	Buckley P.J.	18	1.221
	Kotabe M.	18	1.221
3	Shenkar O.	17	1.153
4	Kwok C.C.Y.	16	1.085
5	Beamish P.W.	14	0.950
	Luo Y.D.	14	0.950
7	Pan Y.G.	12	0.814
8	Aulakh P.S.	11	0.746
	Verbeke A.	11	0.746
10	Cavusgil S.T.	10	0.678
	Hennart J.F.	10	0.678
	Rugman A.M.	10	0.678
	Tse D.K.	10	0.678
14	Dunning J.H.	9	0.611
	Makino S.	9	0.611
	Ricks D.A.	9	0.611
	Toyne B.	9	0.611
18	Contractor F.	8	0.543
	Filatotchev I.	8	0.543
	Griffith D.A.	8	0.543
	Meyer K.E.	8	0.543
	Pedersen T.	8	0.543
	Peng M.W.	8	0.543
	Ralston D.A.	8	0.543
	Roth K.	8	0.543

Top 25 Publishing Universities

Which universities publish the most in *JIBS*? More than 3,000 records associated with contributing universities and organizations could be linked to the 1,474 articles. The University of South Carolina contributed more than any other university, with a total of 54 records (Table 3). Most of these universities have a long history in supporting IB research, beyond the publication successes of individual scholars. A key challenge for institutions interested in becoming centres of excellence in IB research, is to understand which historical antecedents and positive forces created intellectual powerhouses in IB such as the ones highlighted in Table 3. Three key ingredients for success appear to be the following: (1) a 'hot group' of a few dedicated scholars with a genuine interest not only in IB research, but also in teaching and service to the field; (2) a supportive and broad-minded Dean or Head of School, who appreciates the stakeholder and societal value of IB scholarship beyond the confines of disciplinary boundaries; (3) a stable resource base of both students specializing in IB, and dedicated financial resources, sometimes through funding from outside of the university, as is the case with

Table 2 Top contributing countries

Rank	Country	Record count	% of 1,474
1	USA	848	57.531
2	Canada	177	12.008
3	UK	152	10.312
4	China	136	9.227
5	Netherlands	71	4.817
6	Australia	58	3.935
7	France	54	3.664
8	Singapore	46	3.121
9	Sweden	34	2.307
10	Germany	30	2.035
	South Korea	30	2.035
12	Spain	26	1.764
13	Denmark	24	1.628
14	Finland	23	1.560
	Israel	23	1.560
16	Belgium	22	1.493
17	Italy	18	1.221
	Japan	18	1.221
19	Taiwan	16	1.085
20	Switzerland	15	1.018
21	Austria	14	0.950
	India	14	0.950
23	Hong Kong	13	0.882
	Norway	13	0.882
25	New Zealand	12	0.814

Note: 144 records did not include country data.

many centres for international business research funded by regional or national agencies.

Most Cited Scholarly Works Within *JIBS*

We identified the most cited pieces of scholarly work referred to in *JIBS* articles, using the 79,386 citations from our own analysis. In Table 4, we show how many citations a particular piece of scholarly work (published in *JIBS* or elsewhere) received in all articles published in *JIBS*. The most cited scholarly work is *Culture's Consequences*, published in 1980 by the Dutch social psychologist Geert Hofstede. Geert Hofstede, Bruce Kogut (with co-authors Harbir Singh and Udo Zander, respectively), and Oliver Williamson each have two pieces of scholarly work in the top 25, and their six publications represent 1 percent of all citations within *JIBS*.

The fascinating insight from this list is that all these scholarly works represent strong contributions to theory. In addition, each piece is either very close to the practice of management or uses very clear language and simple metrics to convey its main intellectual message. These 25 pieces represent the essence of the shared intellectual history of

Table 3 Top contributing universities

Rank	University/organization	Record count	% of 1474
1	University of South Carolina	54	3.664
2	Chinese University of Hong Kong	41	2.782
3	University of Texas	40	2.714
4	Rutgers State University	38	2.578
5	Indiana University	32	2.171
6	University of Pennsylvania	29	1.967
	University of Western Ontario	29	1.967
8	INSEAD	26	1.764
	York University	26	1.764
10	Ohio State University	25	1.696
	University of Reading	25	1.696
12	Tilburg University	24	1.628
13	University of Hong Kong	22	1.493
	University of North Carolina	22	1.493
15	City University of Hong Kong	21	1.425
	Harvard University	21	1.425
	Michigan State University	21	1.425
	New York University	21	1.425
	Northeastern University	21	1.425
	Temple University	21	1.425
	University of Illinois	21	1.425
	University of Miami	21	1.425
23	Georgia State University	19	1.289
	Simon Fraser University	19	1.289
25	National University of Singapore	18	1.221

Note: 142 records do not contain university or organization data.

the IB field. These publications are the foundational, scholarly works that in our view should be the core of any required reading list for aspiring scholars in IB, and that should also be covered in PhD programs in IB research. A few of these pieces, namely the works by Oliver Williamson, Douglas North, Jay Barney, and Wesley Cohen and Daniel Levinthal, clearly amount to theory importing in the IB field, especially since none of these authors can reasonably be categorized as an IB scholar. But their overall intellectual impact on the field has been enormous, and will undoubtedly remain so in the foreseeable future.

Most Discussed Topics Using Keywords: Set 1

As mentioned above, we used two sets of data: One with 666 articles containing 6,692 author-supplied keywords from 2003 to 2016 only (set 1), and another with 1,043 articles containing 8,112 WoS-assigned keywords from 1990 to 2016 (set 2). We performed a keyword analysis, first using the 6,692 keywords separated into single words from the 666 articles as of 2003. Unsurprisingly, Figure 1 shows 'international' (often linked to other keywords such

**Table 4** Most cited scholarly works within JIBS

Rank	Publication	Count	% of 79,386
1	Hofstede, G. (1980). <i>Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values</i> . Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications	237	0.299
2	Kogut, B. & Singh, H. (1988). The effect of national culture on the choice of entry mode. <i>Journal of International Business Studies</i> , 19(3), 411–432	204	0.257
3	Johanson, J. & Vahlne, J.-E. (1977). The internationalization process of the firm - a model of knowledge development and increasing foreign market commitments. <i>Journal of International Business Studies</i> , 8(1), 23–32	170	0.214
4	Buckley P.J. & Casson M. (1976). <i>The future of the multinational enterprise</i> . London: Palgrave Macmillan	160	0.202
5	Bartlett C. A. & Ghoshal, S. (1989). <i>Managing across borders: The transnational solution</i> . Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press	128	0.161
6	Zaheer S. (1995). Overcoming the liability of foreignness. <i>Academy of Management Journal</i> , 38(2), 341–363	100	0.126
7	Hymer S. (1976). <i>The international operations of national firms: A study of direct foreign investment</i> . Cambridge, MA: MIT Press	99	0.125
8	Williamson O. E. (1975). <i>Markets and hierarchies: analysis and antitrust implications: a study in the economics of internal organization</i> . New York: Free Press	95	0.120
9	Hofstede, G. (2001). <i>Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions and organizations across nations</i> (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications	94	0.118
	Williamson O. E. (1985). <i>The economic institutions of capitalism: Firms, markets, relational contracting</i> . New York: Free Press	94	0.118
11	Porter M. E. (1990). <i>The competitive advantage of nations</i> . New York: Free Press	91	0.115
12	Barney J. (1991). Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage. <i>Journal of Management</i> , 17(1), 99–120	90	0.113
	Stopford J. M. & Wells L. T. (1972). <i>Managing the multinational enterprise: Organization of the firm and ownership of the subsidiary</i> . New York: Basic Books	90	0.113
14	Kogut, B. & Zander, U. (1993). Knowledge of the firm and the evolutionary theory of the multinational corporation. <i>Journal of International Business Studies</i> , 24(4), 625–645	89	0.112
15	North, D. C. (1990). <i>Institutions, institutional change and economic performance</i> . New York: Cambridge University Press	86	0.108
16	Cohen, W. M., & Levinthal, D. A. (1990). Absorptive capacity: A new perspective on learning and innovation. <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i> , 35(1), 128–152	85	0.107
17	House, R. J., Hanges, P., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P. W., & Gupta, V. (2004). <i>Culture, leadership and organizations: The GLOBE study of 62 societies</i> . Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications	84	0.106
18	Prahalad C. K. & Doz, Y. L. (1987). <i>The multinational mission: Balancing local demands and global vision</i> . New York: Free Press	76	0.096
	Vernon, R. (1966). International investment and international trade in the product cycle. <i>The Quarterly Journal of Economics</i> , 80(2), 190–207	76	0.096
20	Rugman, A. M. (1981). <i>Inside the multinationals: The economics of internal markets</i> . New York: Columbia University Press	74	0.093
21	Shenkar O. (2001). Cultural distance revisited: Towards a more rigorous conceptualization and measurement of cultural differences. <i>Journal of International Business Studies</i> , 32(3), 519–535	72	0.091
22	Dunning J. H. (1988). The eclectic paradigm of international production: A restatement and some possible extensions. <i>Journal of International Business Studies</i> , 19(1), 1–31	70	0.088
	Dunning, J. H. (1993). <i>Multinational enterprises and the global economy</i> . Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley ^a	70	0.088
	Gatignon, H. & Anderson, E. (1988). The multinational corporation's degree of control over foreign subsidiaries: An empirical test of a transaction cost explanation. <i>Journal of Law, Economics & Organization</i> , 4(2), 305–336	70	0.088
	Hennart, J.-F. (1982). <i>A theory of multinational enterprise</i> . Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press	70	0.088

^a The second edition of John Dunning's magnum opus was co-authored with Sarianna Lundan, the founding Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of International Business Policy (JIBP)*, see Dunning and Lundan (2008) and Verbeke (2008).

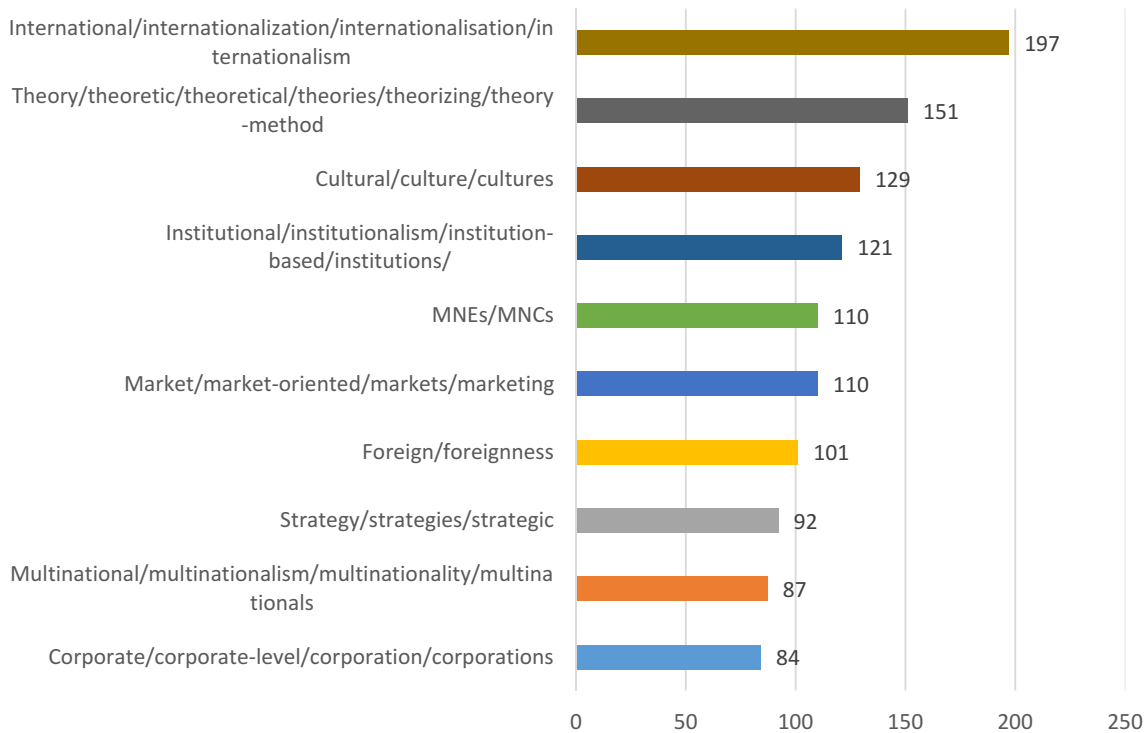


Figure 1 Most discussed topics using keywords set 1.

Figure 2 Most used keywords (separated into *single words*) tag cloud.

as ‘business’, ‘acquisitions’, ‘regulations’, ‘human capital’) as the most common keyword. The tag cloud in Figure 2 shows a visual representation of the separated, single keywords coined in *JIBS*.

Using the same data, a further analysis was performed using the keywords in the context of *the exact phrases* used in each article, *not as separated, single words*. The following are the top ten most used keyword phrases (the data

contained 3,078 keyword phrases): Multinational enterprises (MNEs)/multinational corporations (MNCs) unsurprisingly represent the most used keyword phrase (92 articles) followed by foreign direct investment (FDI) (52), emerging markets (49), China (37), cross-cultural research (36), institutional theory (35), culture (29), cross-cultural management (28), performance (27), and national culture (26).⁶



Most Discussed Topics Using Keywords: Set 2

The WoS data also include another set of keywords for *JIBS* articles as of 1990. This dataset included 8,112 items and allowed identifying clusters of keywords, which appear to revolve around a few major ‘anchor’ keywords, such as ‘firm’, ‘performance’, ‘MNCs/MNEs’, and ‘management’. For example, ‘MNCs/MNEs’ appear to be the anchor for a cluster of keyword phrases that includes items such as United States multinationals, Swedish multinationals, Japanese multinationals, third world multinationals, service multinationals, multinational investment, multinational subsidiary, etc. The keyword ‘management’ is the anchor for a cluster that includes keyword phrases such as human resources management, strategic management, knowledge management, top management teams, managerial ties, risk management, earnings management, operations management, image management, purchasing managers, stakeholder management, environmental management standards, etc. The keyword ‘management’ thus appears to cover several of the functional areas relevant to international business. Interestingly, in terms of trends, published research on firm performance has been steadily increasing since 1996, whereas the published research on MNEs increased substantially as of 2003.

CONCLUSION

In the footnotes above, we have described a few defining characteristics of refereed articles published in *JIBS* from 1970 to June 2016. We identified the most highly published authors, and the top contributing universities and countries. We also identified the most cited scholarly works within *JIBS* itself. We identified key areas of scholarly interest, with the analysis of firm performance, MNEs and various dimensions of international management, both in the strategy sphere and the functional management sphere, as core subject areas.

In an era when some stakeholders are calling for *JIBS* to push outward the boundaries of its intellectual scope, it is important to take stock of what the present intellectual scope actually represents in substantive terms. Understanding what *JIBS* is, as compared with what some would like it to be, is important. Such understanding can provide the basis for useful reflection on the differences between *JIBS* and other journals that aim to contribute to augmenting IB knowledge, whether as

part of the IB research ecosystem, or as outlets with a more partial focus on IB research.

As noted above, Cohen and Levinthal’s 1990 ASQ paper on absorptive capacity, and two of Oliver Williamson’s books feature prominently among the most cited pieces of scholarly work in *JIBS*. Cohen and Levinthal’s work suggests that expanding into other fields of innovative inquiry is greatly facilitated if continuous innovation is performed in one’s own core domain of expertise. Williamson’s oeuvre powerfully demonstrates that diversifying into fields positioned outside of the core can have high costs if organizational gatekeepers do not fully grasp the new environments entered. The lessons from these intellectual contributions are compelling and should guide the governance of *JIBS* itself.

As a final point, the strategy and broader management literatures have recently seen a strong surge in the study of micro-foundations or behavioural drivers beyond the conventional assumptions of trust versus strong-form self-interest. This new focus is, perhaps paradoxically, consistent with Buckley et al.’s (2017) call for doing research on ‘grand challenges.’ Much work is being conducted on the implications of an expanded bounded rationality concept, some of this in line with the work of recent Nobel prize winners in economics, such as Daniel Kahneman and Richard Thaler. The IB context provides an unparalleled empirical setting for exploring additional micro-foundations, especially those related to commitment failures in MNEs, and more broadly in international transactions.

Here, explicit analysis of micro-foundations can support macro-level policies to mitigate institutional frailties. It can also improve the design of incentive structures and routines to improve economic actors’ responses to society’s grand challenges. At the same time, a focus on micro-foundations will facilitate much needed managerial governance redesign to overcome the MNE’s compounded vulnerabilities to unreliable economic actors, with many new challenges arising in the digital age. The alleged benefits arising from digitalization and supposedly global connectivity have been heralded in recent IB research papers, but little attention has been devoted to the potential costs and negative performance effects thereof. A micro-foundational research agenda will contribute immensely to addressing in a balanced fashion, the new governance challenges of the digital age.⁷

NOTES

¹As one example of the richness that can be brought to the analysis of a phenomenon by investigating both its macro-level and micro-level expressions and impacts, see Verbeke and Kano (2013) on the ‘trading favors’ phenomenon.

²All the metadata (e.g. author, abstract, keywords, cited references) were downloaded from the WoS and saved in an Excel file for subsequent analysis. As all metadata linked to each article are contained in a single cell, the data preparation involved decomposing the data into various cells, e.g. with the keywords or the cited references.

³These references revolved around numbers or unusual characters; e.g. ‘2-#’ or ‘42615’) and were excluded. A further 566 references were in the format ‘Year, Author’ (such as ‘2009, Economist’). These were changed to the format of ‘Author, Year’, consistent with the other references, and included in the analysis.

⁴In WoS, ‘DE’ is the field tag used to refer to author-supplied keywords, whereas ID is the tag for WoS-assigned keywords known as Keywords Plus[®].

⁵The various analyses in the paper used Excel, Text Analyzer (text counts), Wordle (tag cloud), and Gephi (visual networks).

⁶Note that terms representing synonyms or highly related subject matter were counted within the same keyword phrase. For example, ‘cross-cultural management’ also includes ‘cross-cultural research’, ‘cross-cultural experiments’, and ‘cross-cultural research/measurement issues’.

⁷The work by Nicolai Foss and his co-authors on micro-foundations is particularly important in the strategic management field, see *inter alia* Abell, Felin and Foss (2008). For analysis of the broad challenge of bounded reliability in the IB research context, see Kano and Verbeke (2018a, b), building upon Kano and Verbeke (2015).

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