



EDITORIAL

Letter from the Editor

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What are future big questions in international business research? Has the international business agenda run out of steam? When is an article not appropriate for JIBS? These are some fundamental questions that IB scholars have been engaging in with me since the first Annual JIBS Conference on Emerging Research Frontiers in IB and the AIB Annual Meeting in Monterey.

With this issue, JIBS continues the dialog around these basic issues. The issue features the Perspective paper 'Globalisation, Economic Geography and the Strategy of Multinational Enterprises' by Peter Buckley and Pervez Ghauri, and a commentary by Michael Peng. The paper and the commentary attempt to address the issue of future big questions in IB research.

Continued discourse on these issues is very important for the future vitality of IB scholarship. However, it is also important to recognize that new theories, new paradigms or new empirical approaches emerge from the way in which we structure the market for ideas in our multidisciplinary field. My interpretation of the discussions of what or where are future big questions for international business research is that the field of IB is poised to cross the threshold to break out from long-established orthodoxies and that the IB community of scholars will be experiencing a period of intellectual ferment of new ideas and exchanges with scholars in the social sciences with interest in globalization. Many scholars expect that the Internet will give rise to experiments with new organizational forms that exploit bottom-up self-organizing processes and that redefine the meaning of managing across time and across geography. It is safe to assume that the field of IB will witness a renewed vigorous process of combining and recombining the old with the new.

The new editorial structure of JIBS composed of nine editorial areas guided by 22 departmental editors has one major purpose. It is intended to greatly increase the range and variety of topics that could be considered under the banner of international business research. The editorial policy is very clear about the broad definition of IB scholarship that JIBS is open to.

The Journal of International Business Studies (JIBS) solicits and welcomes research across the entire range of topics encompassing the domain of international business studies. The journal's scope includes research on multinational and transnational business activities, strategies and managerial processes that cross national boundaries, joint ventures, strategic alliances, mergers and acquisitions interactions of such firms with their economic, political and cultural environments, as well as cross national research involving innovation entrepreneurship, knowledge based competition, judgment and decision making, bargaining, leadership, corporate governance and new organizational forms. JIBS welcomes theoretical and empirical papers that

advance social scientific research on international business. JIBS is a methodologically pluralistic journal. Conceptual and theory-development papers, empirical hypothesis-testing papers, mathematical modeling papers and case studies are especially welcome.

JIBS has special interest in research addressing important issues that transcend the boundaries of single academic disciplines and managerial functions. Therefore JIBS welcomes inter-disciplinary scholarship and commentaries that challenge the paradigms and assumptions of single disciplines or functions.

For me, as Editor in Chief, the critical signals that will drive the market for ideas in IB are 'research across the entire range of topics encompassing the domain of international business studies' and 'theoretical and empirical papers that advance social scientific research on international business'.

Note that the editorial policy does not require or expect that papers published in JIBS be judged by their relevance to the practice of management. There is no doubt that many of us yearn to have our research recognized and to be of relevance to the world of practice, and there is no doubt in my mind that IB research has been and will continue to be of great relevance. For now, my only observation is that relevance in our community is multidimensional. For some years now as IB departments have been disbanded in business schools, our community has lost relevance in the eyes of our other colleagues. One source of relevance is our ability to compete in the market for ideas. Are peer-reviewed IB papers considered on a par with the best peer-reviewed publications of disciplinary and functional area journals? Other journals are now actively pursuing international research. For example, the editorial statement in the *Academy of Management Journal* (AMJ, 2003, 46, 679–683) is a strong argument for furthering the internationalization of AMJ. As AMJ and other top tier journals attract and publish international research, they legitimize IB research but they also escalate the competition in the market for IB research. The implications for JIBS are clear. The boundaries of what constitute the domain of IB are undergoing change and it is altogether clear that JIBS must be proactive in this process if it is to maintain its leadership position.

The world of practice has its own processes for determining what management research in general and IB research specifically is of relevance to management. Management consultants and leading-edge practitioners have been appropriating concepts and ideas that have first appeared in JIBS and in other journals. The applications are found in such contexts as marketing, supply chain management, global sourcing, alliances or, more broadly, inter-firm international networks, global knowledge management, FDI and economic geography.

Admittedly, the process of distillation, application and diffusion is quite lengthy. Often it can also be very frustrating when concepts or ideas that we deem to be important fail to gain traction in the world of practice. However, the world of practice is continuously fishing in our market for ideas and follows its own processes for selecting concepts, constructs, frameworks and measures considered to be useful. This is a strong form of validating the managerial relevance of our research. Our competitive advantage, however, is in developing intellectual capital as it affects thinking about issues of globalization and international business and in teaching our research to our students. It is our students who are the change agents and who are best positioned to experiment and apply advanced ideas acquired during their time as students.

The initial collection of Perspective papers that are currently under review or scheduled to be published in future issues grew out of the first Annual JIBS Conference on Emerging Research Frontiers in IB. The second JIBS Conference on Emerging Research Frontiers in IB will continue to push the boundaries of IB research. However, I wish to stress that JIBS solicits and welcomes Perspective papers from any source and that JIBS is open to diversity of research approaches on IB. If JIBS is to become known as the premier source of new ideas, it must focus on encouraging variety in ideas, theories, contextual research and empirical rigor. In short, JIBS and the AIB must create and become known as the locus of a robust and dynamic market for IB ideas.