



Defining the boundaries of international business policy research

Ari Van Assche¹ · Valentina De Marchi²

Published online: 31 January 2024
© Academy of International Business 2024

Introduction

It is a privilege to be entrusted with the leadership of the *Journal of International Business Policy* (JIBP). Only 7 years ago, JIBP was merely a concept note that came out of the 2016 Academy of International Business (AIB) board meeting in New Orleans. Today, JIBP has turned into an upwardly mobile journal that is recognized in both academic and policy circles. It stands out from mainstream international business journals, which mainly publish business-oriented studies, and distinguishes itself from policy-focused journals, which often overlook the role of international business. In 2023, JIBP received its inaugural Journal Citation Reports impact factor of 7.9, placing it in the top quintile of business journals and fourth among international business publications. The average Altmetric score of its articles—which captures the attention and engagement that manuscripts receive on social media and in the news—surpasses that of other international business journals, signaling its high-impact potential. We are grateful to the former Editor-in-Chief, Sarianna Lundan, and her editorial team for skillfully piloting JIBP on its maiden voyage and handing us a journal with solid foundations.

Nevertheless, important challenges remain for JIBP to maintain its progress towards acknowledgement as a leading journal. First, the field of international business policy research is far from mature. As we have ourselves noticed from the submissions and reviews that we have received, many scholars struggle with the definition of international business policy and the delineation of the research field.

What makes research policy-relevant? When are we able to say that a particular public policy is truly related to an international business issue? What constitutes adequate policy recommendations? Clarifying these questions is important to further develop the research field. Second, the community of scholars that conducts international business policy research is considerable, but scattered across disciplines (e.g., development studies, economic geography, economics, international business, international relations, law, political science, sociology), which rarely interact. This fragmented nature of the research community, combined with the still narrow inroads that JIBP has made in fields cognate to international business, limits the possibility to attract the best research to JIBP. Third, more needs to be done to strengthen the appeal of our publications to policy professionals so that JIBP's goal of serving society by publishing impactful research for the betterment of international business policy can be realized.

A new Editorial Team presents the opportunity to explore fresh approaches to tackle these challenges. Furthermore, it offers a chance to contemplate emerging developments in the profession and society that influence the Journal. To help us in this reflection, over the past few months we have discussed JIBP's mission, scope, and performance with people in different communities—members of the outgoing and incoming editorial teams of JIBP; established scholars and rising stars in the AIB community; editors and researchers in the fields of economics, geography, sociology, legal studies, and international development; and policy professionals in national and international organizations. We are grateful to our colleagues for their frank discussions and candid advice regarding the future steps for JIBP.

This editorial presents the key conclusions from our reflections and outlines the strategic directions that we will take for the coming 3 years (2024–2026). To become the world's leading journal for policy-relevant research on international business issues, we recognize the need to strengthen JIBP's appeal in both the academic and policy communities. We will achieve this by pursuing three objectives in the next editorial term: (1) cultivate JIBP's identity by defining the

✉ Ari Van Assche
ari.van-assche@hec.ca

Valentina De Marchi
valentina.demarchi@esade.edu

¹ Department of International Business, HEC Montréal, Montreal, QC, Canada

² Department of Society, Politics and Sustainability, ESADE Business School, Universitat Ramon Llull, Barcelona, Spain

boundaries of international business policy research; (2) nurture, empower, and expand the cross-disciplinary community of scholars that work on international business policy; and (3) boost the journal's impact and recognition in policy circles (see Fig. 1).

Cultivating JIBP'S identity

The core of JIBP's value proposition has since its inception been to publish *policy-oriented research on international business issues*, which we plan to maintain. A missing piece in this value proposition, however, is a clear definition of international business policy that helps outline the boundaries of the research field. Several JIBP editorials have offered early descriptions of the term with the purpose of establishing the field, differentiating it from business-oriented international business scholarship, and distinguishing it from research on institutions. Lundan (2018), for example, describes international business policy as the areas of public policy that relate to international business. Along the same lines, Clegg (2019) defines international business policy as a "change [in public policy] intentionally instigated by a government to have an action upon the decision making and behavior of firms within the international business domain." As the field matures, it is necessary to provide scholars with more guidance regarding the questions that fall within the scope of the research field.

A good starting point for developing an actionable definition of international business policy is treating it as a subset of public policy (Van Assche, 2022). Public policy is commonly described as the course of actions that public entities take to address one or more societal challenges (Smith & Larimer, 2018). This definition is instructive since it highlights two constitutive characteristics of international business policy. First, it refers to *public policy actions* conducted by public authorities at the local, national, and international level (left-hand side box in Fig. 2). These actions can take different forms, including the enactment of regulations, the formulation of guidelines, the signing of international agreements, the intervention in markets through state ownership or

public procurement, and more. Second, it focuses on tackling *public policy challenges* at the societal level—both grand and mundane—that require collective engagement (right-hand side box in Fig. 2). These challenges encompass a wide range of areas, including economic development, social justice, environmental protection, technology, security, education, and healthcare. Both the public policy actions and challenges can occur at different levels of geographical aggregation—local, regional, national, or international. For example, public policy scholarship may evaluate the effects of the Paris Climate Agreement, which is a legally binding international treaty, on global greenhouse emissions. However, it may also examine the impact of city-level public procurement practices on local innovation for reducing emissions.

A second step is to delineate the sub-area of public policy that international business policy covers. Political scientists typically classify public policies according to the domain that policymakers try to shape or alter in their quest to address public policy challenges. For example, trade policy covers the set of public actions that influence a country's international trade. Industrial policy describes the mix of instruments that public entities use to shape or alter the development of industries. Extending the same logic to *international business* allows us to provide a formal definition of international business policy (also adding the middle box to Fig. 2):

International business policy is the mix of actions that public authorities take to shape or alter cross-border business transactions with the goal of addressing public policy challenges.

This definition offers the benefit of presenting a clear overview of key research domains that fall under the scope of international business policy. In this editorial, we highlight four research areas that we consider to be particularly relevant for JIBP. In Fig. 2, we use arrows to depict each research domain:

1. The relation between international business and public policy challenges (arrow 1 in Fig. 2).
2. The impact of public policies on cross-border business transactions (arrow 2 in Fig. 2).
3. The influence of international business on the formulation of public policy (arrow 3 in Fig. 2).
4. The effectiveness of international business policies in addressing public policy challenges (arrows 4 in Fig. 2).

Relation between international business and public policy challenges

Scholars and policymakers have long recognized the transformative impact that international business has on societies



Fig. 1 Incoming JIBP editorial team's main objectives

Fig. 2 Delineating the field of international business policy research



(Buckley et al., 2017), underscoring the importance of understanding the complex interactions between international business and public policy challenges for policy debates. International trade has been associated with economic growth, productivity improvements, and technological innovation (Helpman, 2011); but it has also been linked to labor market polarization (Autor et al., 2016), the emergence of pollution havens (Berry et al., 2021), and the rise of populism (Rodrik, 2018). Global value chains have been connected to industrial and social upgrading (Gereffi, 2019), but they have also been related to territorial exclusion (Bair & Werner, 2011) and weaponized interdependence (Farrell & Newman, 2019). Multinational firms have been lauded for facilitating the global diffusion of sophisticated technologies and practices (Archibugi & Iammarino, 2002), but they have also been accused of exploiting foreign and domestic labor, avoiding taxes, and dodging government regulations (Cuervo-Cazurra et al., 2021). There is therefore a general recognition in academic and public policy circles that a deep understanding of the intricate interplay between international business and public policy challenges—the good, bad, and ugly sides of it—is critical for the identification and formulation of effective international business policies (arrow 1 in Fig. 2). JIBP endeavors to become a central outlet for academic discussion in this research domain.

A high-profile area of study in this regard is the connection between international business and what the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres labels “the Four Horsemen” of public policy challenges that threaten human progress: surging geopolitical tensions, the climate crisis, deepening global mistrust, and the downsides of technology.¹ Concerns about global decoupling have intensified amid rising geopolitical tensions, including strained relations between the United States and China, Russia’s military intervention in the Ukraine, and the Israel–Palestinian conflict (Witt et al., 2023). The climate and biodiversity crises are reshaping the natural environment, with extreme weather events becoming more frequent and severe (Masson-Delmotte et al., 2021) and with biodiversity loss occurring at an unprecedented level in the history of mankind

¹ We have put the gendered term in brackets to refer to the original wording of the author. For broader reference see: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/01/1055791>.

(Habibullah et al., 2022). Social discontents with globalization are fueling waves of populism, led by politicians who claim that the global system is unfair (Rodrik, 2018), and technological advances are moving faster than our ability to understand, predict, or reliably control (Bremmer & Suleyman, 2023). In all four cases, international business has been proposed as both a contributor and possible remedy for the underlying challenge (Pinkse & Kolk, 2009; van Tulder & van Mil, 2022; Verbeke & Hutzschenreuter, 2021). More scientific research from across disciplines is needed to study these relations.

International business not only relates to global threats but also to global opportunities, for example, in connection with human development. Human development, which lies at the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals, focuses on improving human conditions, not only in terms of real income growth, but also social indicators such as health, education, equality, and human rights (Sen, 2000). Scholarship has long demonstrated the symbiotic relationship between international business and these social indicators (Sachs, 2006; Wettstein et al., 2019; van der Straaten et al., 2023). More research is needed in this area to develop effective international business policies that can foster long-term sustainable development which recognizes the interconnections between people, the planet, and the economy. Building on an impactful special issue on Sustainable Development Goals that JIBP published in 2021 (Van Tulder et al., 2021), we aim to keep the Journal at the forefront of international business policy research on the topic.

JIBP also aims to attract research that connects international business to more mundane local public policy challenges. A public policy challenge does not have to be global or grand in nature for it to be relevant for our Journal. We encourage scholars to explore how international business influences localized public policy concerns such as the dire working conditions in the first mile of commodity supply chains, grass roots resistance against foreign investment projects, the genesis and evolution of industrial clusters, and the development of sustainable cities, among others. In many cases, studying these issues requires the analytical focus to expand beyond the influence of multinational enterprises and their global value chains, to also encompass

the actions by non-governmental organizations, cooperatives, and civil society organizations (Alford, De Marchi & Krishnan, 2023).

Impact of international business policy on cross-border business transactions

Understanding the impact of public policy on international business is essential during both the process of policy formulation and policy evaluation. *Ex ante*, it helps policymakers assess the likelihood that international business policy actions can address a public policy challenge. *Ex post*, it aids them in evaluating the intended and unintended consequences of policy actions. A second research theme in which we encourage publications in JIBP is thus the impact of public policies on cross-border business transactions (arrow 2 in Fig. 2).

Several recent policy initiatives have in this context attracted considerable media attention, with uncertain implications for international business. Industrial policies such as China's Made in China 2025 and the United States Chips and Science Act are one type (Luo & Van Assche, 2023). Governments worldwide are increasingly intervening in the private sector through subsidies, tax credits, and investment screening aimed at assisting domestic firms in achieving economic and non-economic objectives that markets alone are unlikely to accomplish. Another type of policy intervention is climate, energy, and critical minerals policies such as the American Inflation Reduction Act, Canada's Critical Minerals Strategy, the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, the European Green Deal and its related Taxonomy Regulation, and Japan's Green Growth Strategy (Bass & Groggaard, 2021). These policies attempt to address climate change by, among other things, deterring carbon leakage and strengthen clean energy supply chains for decarbonization and security. A third is sustainable supply chain policies such as the European Union's Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive and the Commonwealth's Modern Slavery Act, which require multinational firms to establish due diligence procedures to address adverse impacts of their actions on human rights and the environment, including along their value chains worldwide (LeBaron, 2020). A fourth is public procurement policies which have flown under the radar in international business scholarship but can be used as a potent international business policy tool to address public policy challenges (Van Assche et al., 2023).

Understanding the strategies, organizational structures, and systems of multinational firms will be important in analyzing these relations (Lundan, 2018). JIBP encourages the submission of manuscripts that study the ownership, location, control, and sustainability strategies that multinational firms adopt to cope with new international business policies,

and that evaluate the unintended consequences that these policies entail.

Impact of international business on public policy

The interaction between public policy and international business also operates in the reverse direction. Multinational firms are powerful entities with strong ties with national governments and international organizations. They can use their political clout to shape public policies in their favor (Boddewyn, 2016). At the same time, multinational firms and their global value chains are also at the center of public discontents with globalization, leading to political pressures by key societal groups for international business policy reform (Roberts & Lamp, 2021). JIBP encourages the submission of articles that investigate the multi-faceted influence of international business on the formulation of public policy (arrow 3 in Figure 2).

A first key research area in this regard is the study of the multinational firm as a distinct political actor. Multinational firms are known to use corporate political activities such as lobbying, information sharing with political or regulatory actors, and participation in policy working groups to shape public policies (Lawton et al., 2013). They also leverage promises of foreign direct investment and job creation to secure favorable policy outcomes (Vernon, 1971). JIBP is interested in publishing on the political strategies that multinational firms adopt to influence international business policy. Do these strategies differ from those used by domestic firms? Does a multinational firm's engagement in international trade, foreign investment, and global value chains lead to distinct policy preferences on issues such as trade liberalization, migration, investment protection, or global data governance? We also look forward to receiving manuscripts on the impact that these political actions have on public policy outcomes. For example, do the corporate political actions of multinational firms influence the scope and stringency of international business policies (e.g., due diligence regulations, export controls, free trade agreements) and what does this mean for the efficacy of such policies to address public policy problems?

Many other stakeholders have interests in advancing international business policy reforms. Social movements, non-governmental organizations, purely domestic firms, and academic expert groups, among others, have their own views about different facets of international business and engage governments and international organizations to alter international business policies (Teegen et al., 2004). JIBP aims to attract more research that analyzes how non-state and non-business actors develop views and preferences about international business, what political actions they take to influence policy formation, and how effective these actions are in shaping international business policies.

Effectiveness of international business policy in addressing public policy challenges

A final research area that is central for JIBP pertains to assessing the effectiveness of international business policies in tackling public policy challenges (arrow 4 in Fig. 2). This research area, which can be tackled both positively and normatively, is central for the development of an overarching international business policy theory (Buckley, 2018). It encompasses the previous three research domains as policy efficacy hinges on three key factors: a strong link between international business and a specific public policy concern (theme 1), a demonstrated influence of an international business policy on cross-border business transactions (theme 2), and a sustained commitment of political and non-political actors in embracing that public policy (theme 3). It helps identify better policies by directly evaluating if international business policy tools adequately address public policy challenges through the shaping and altering of international business. Questions in this research domain include—but are not limited to—the impact of the Global Minimum Tax on the mitigation of profit shifting; the ability of the European Union’s cohesion policies to reduce economic, social, and territorial disparities; the effectiveness of modern slavery legislation in addressing forced labor and human trafficking; the ability of mandatory sustainability disclosures to improve the sustainability impact of multinational firms and their global value chains; and the effect of Aid for Trade in reducing trade costs in Least Developed Countries.

Why delineating the field matters

In some ways, our delineation of the field of international business policy research is broader than what we have heard some colleagues express. International business policy scholarship is not confined to public policy challenges that are grand or global in nature (e.g., carbon leakage), but can also relate to local public policy concerns (e.g., smart cities). International business policy research does not restrict itself to public policy tools that specifically target cross-border transactions (e.g., trade or foreign direct investment policy), but also evaluates how domestic environmental or labor regulations shape or alter international business. International business policy studies do not limit themselves to studying laws and regulations. Indeed, public authorities can try to influence market outcomes through public procurement, public–private partnerships, state-owned enterprises, and sovereign wealth funds, among other tools, in the process influencing multinational firms and their global value chains. And international business policy research does not solely study the public policy actions of national governments. It focuses on the policy decisions of any entity that performs a public function, which can be local governments, public

companies, international governmental organizations, and many more. Rather, the boundary of the field is delineated by the presumed or real ability of public entities to address public policy objectives by shaping or altering international business through their actions. JIBP’s goal is to publish the finest research that helps understand this, even if public policy is not the primary driver or the outcome in a study’s research design.

In other respects, our description of the field of international business policy research is narrower than some scholars may think. Since the field’s aim is to look at international business from a public policy perspective, it imposes a clear litmus test for publishing in this domain: each article must showcase how its ideas matter for public policy discussions, and not simply relegate it to a discussion of policy implications in the conclusion. It must explain how the study is relevant to policy debates when motivating the research gap in the introduction and when interpreting the results to produce useful and applicable knowledge for the readers. Ultimately, we believe this litmus test, which we have already started applying for JIBP publications, is what distinguishes policy- and business-oriented manuscripts on international business issues: the first aiming at influencing the public policy debates, the second at illustrating relevance for managers.

Unpacking international business policy is liberating in many ways and helps cultivate JIBP’s distinct identity as the journal that studies policy-oriented research on international business issues. First, it encourages researchers to explore new topics and angles that have too long been overlooked. The world cloud in Fig. 3 showcases the potential that this unleashes. It presents the key themes that the members of the incoming editorial team and review board deem most significant during the upcoming editorial term. The most popular topics such as inequality, due diligence, investment screening, and gender have largely flown under the radar in traditional international business and policy journals, at least in terms of how they relate to cross-border business transactions. Second, it motivates scholars to better match their research with the needs of public authorities which are constantly seeking new evidence-based knowledge to address public policy challenges.

Pathways for engaging with the research themes

To ramp up JIBP’s engagement in the four highlighted research themes, we have three actions underway. First, we have created the position of perspectives editor, occupied by Rajneesh Narula, who will handle the Commentaries and Perspectives pieces submitted to the Journal. Both article types have been upgraded with new objectives and guidelines. *Commentaries*, typically around 4000 words in length, aim to inspire new thinking on current policy debates and nascent policy challenges. *Perspectives* are

policy-oriented panels at the network of AIB conferences and to develop deeper cooperation with several AIB Shared Interest Groups whose focus naturally gravitates towards public policy questions and who have active membership in developing countries (e.g., Emerging Markets and Sustainability).

Conducting research on international business policy has never been exclusive to international business scholars. The citation pattern of JIBP articles from the past five years reflects the cross-disciplinary appeal of the Journal. For instance, based on Scopus Crossref metrics, four of the five most cited JIBP articles as of November 2023 were authored by leading scholars outside of the field of international business (Evenett, 2019; Gereffi, 2019, 2020; Rodrik, 2018). In addition, Scopus Crossref metrics show that JIBP receives a disproportionately high portion of citations from journals in disciplines other than the usual suspects of “Business, Management, and Accounting” and “Economics, Econometrics, and Finance”. Indeed, the share of citations from articles in “Social Science” journals was 43% for JIBP compared to 25% in leading international business journals.²

We aspire to redouble JIBP’s efforts to engage with scholars from cognate fields. To name just a few related disciplines with which stronger collaboration can be fruitful, we want to engage with global value chain and international development scholars who, among other things, have developed a deep interest and expertise in understanding the motives, possibilities, and limitations of multinational enterprises to address labor and environmental violations in their supply chains (e.g., Locke et al., 2009; Ponte, 2019) as well as the complex interplay between private and public governance in driving upgrading in a polycentric trade context (e.g., Nadvi, 2008). We seek links with trade economists and economic geographers to better analyze the relation between international business policy and the spatial distribution of activities, including on topics such as regional and global inequality (e.g., Iammarino et al., 2019; Milanovic, 2016) and decarbonization (e.g., Coe & Gibson, 2023; Grubb et al., 2022). We aim to build a conversation with political scientists and international relations scholars who, among other things, are exploring the connection between international business and national security from different perspectives, including on the decline of the liberal international order (e.g., Ikenberry, 2018) and the drivers of weaponized interdependence (e.g., Farrell & Newman, 2019). And we wish to explore with innovation scholars how mission-oriented

innovation policies (e.g., Mazzucato, 2018) and technology-forcing regulations (e.g., Lee et al., 2011) influence the geography and type of innovation activities that multinational firms conduct. Currently, these research communities rarely interact with each other. The prize of developing these cross-disciplinary connections out of a field that is currently highly fragmented is more than worth the effort for JIBP.

Pathways for bridging communities

The Incoming Editorial Team of JIBP is our springboard for launching and building a dynamic cross-disciplinary research community. Our Team comprises a versatile group of area editors who collectively embody the thought leadership, multi-disciplinarity, and diversity that JIBP should embrace. Our area editors are all accomplished researchers who are recognized across disciplines and have broad experience engaging with international organizations and national governments. The Team is one of experts steeped in a wide variety of research methods (both quantitative and qualitative) and disciplinary perspectives. This signals our encouragement to authors to seek the best tools, methods, and perspectives from across disciplines to conduct their analysis.

We aim to develop stronger cross-disciplinary linkages by growing the presence of JIBP’s Editorial Team in conferences outside of the field of international business such as in the American Social Sciences Association Annual Conference (ASSA), Association of American Geographers (AAG), the DRUID Annual Conference, the Geography of Innovation Conference (GEOINNO), the International Studies Association (ISA) and the Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics Conference (SASE). We also seek to expand the Team’s participation in cross-disciplinary panels and events that provide the opportunity to showcase the conversations happening in JIBP.

JIBP stands for the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusiveness. Our Editorial Team exemplifies this through a balanced representation in terms of gender and geographical origin: nine women and nine men, and 50% of area editors originating from outside the high-income countries of the world. Seven of the fourteen area editors already conducted editorial work on the Outgoing Team of JIBP, which provides continuity to the Journal.

As we redouble our efforts to engage with international business scholars worldwide, we acknowledge that international business policy topics are intricate matters that can be viewed from many angles. These topics elicit vastly different research questions and approaches, akin to a kaleidoscope, as one turns the perspective from a developed-country scholar to that of a researcher from a developing country; as one shifts the viewpoint from a senior professor to a junior academic; as one takes a different gender lens on a topic; and

² We conducted our comparison with *Journal of International Business Studies*, *International Business Review*, *Global Strategy Journal*, *Journal of World Business*. Note that Crossref may associate journal articles with multiple disciplines, inflating the share of citations that a specific discipline receives.

as one takes different perspectives on politically sensitive global challenges. Our aim is to make the research community around JIBP an inclusive platform where these different views are welcomed and encouraged, and where we can make respectful efforts to draw insights from each perspective, in order to combine them into a coherent understanding of complex issues. An editorial on pluralistic perspectives to international business policy is on its way.

To build the community we have set out demands for the highest standards of journal management. On top of these standards, we will set new specifications for publishing best practices through forward-thinking about the myriad impacts that beset journals today. Our core values of transparency and ethics are integral to this goal. We stand for open and transparent research practices in pursuing excellence, and we are working on a research data policy that will satisfy the requirements of the Level 1 Transparency and Openness Promotion (TOP) Guidelines. This will require authors to make mandatory data availability statements, encourage them to place these in open repositories, and welcome the submission of replication studies to the Journal. As an AIB Journal and member of the Committee on Public Ethics (COPE), JIBP has already pledged to abide by the AIB Journals Code of Ethics and COPE's Code of Conduct. We propose to further our commitments to integrity by developing robust processes that are in line with COPE's Best Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors. We recognize that this is a fast-moving target since the norms on issues such as the use of AI in data management are still under debate, and there are important cross-country and cross-disciplinary differences in ethical practices. We commit to investing in fully grappling with these vexed topics appropriately.

Boosting impact

JIBP's purpose is to serve society by publishing high-quality research that effectively and positively informs policy debates. To achieve this, it is essential to strengthen our links with public policy professionals, drawing their attention to new publications that can enhance their policy insights. Thus, a key strategic priority for JIBP is to develop practices that can help attract, nurture, and boost research that makes a difference in public policy circles. That is, we aim to boost "impact", which the United Kingdom's Research Excellence Framework (REF) defines "as the effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, *beyond academia*" (highlights added; REF, 2021).

Academic publications can have different types of impacts (Wickert et al., 2021). We recognize that *scholarly impact* is a key pathway for transferring knowledge to non-academic communities. In this context, we seek to intensify our efforts

to include JIBP in the most important journal lists, as it is expected of leading academic publications. These lists play a crucial role in determining where researchers submit their manuscripts, but also which publications get read by a wider academic audience. In the next editorial term, we will double down on our efforts to seek JIBP's entry into the Social Science Citation Index, the ABS Academic Journal Guide, and the ABDC Journal Quality List, among others.

Beyond the scholarly measures, merit lists and rankings, we bind ourselves to boost the *societal impact* of publications in JIBP. This is not an easy task. Many policymakers perceive the academic world as an ivory tower that is interested in self-subsistence more than in real-world problems. We recognize that the current publication system has several flaws that hinder societal impact: lengthy publication times, excessive emphasis on impact factors, and challenges of translating academic insights into practical lessons. Our goal for the next editorial term is to develop new and robust impact pathways that transforms the Journal's potential to influence policy discussions into a reality.

Pathways for developing societal impact

Knowledge Mobilization is a first impact pathway that will allow us to extend and deepen the exposure of policy practitioners and the public-at-large to insights published in JIBP. To achieve this, we have created the new position of outreach mobilization editor in our Editorial Team, which is taken up by Maria Alejandra Gonzalez-Perez. In addition to her role as area editor, she oversees the Journal's strategy to create an engaged policy community around the JIBP's social media accounts and to develop outreach activities with this community. Together with Professor Gonzalez-Perez, we will carefully reflect on the new formats and best practices that we can harness to disseminate the work we publish more effectively.

Policy Insight Development is a second impact pathway that we prioritize, on which several initiatives are on the way. A hurdle that JIBP faces is a tail of variability in the quality of policy insights that are provided in submissions. In this tail, we find discussion sections that parachute in so-called "implications for policy" that are often more theoretical than practical, or that are presented as an afterthought in the conclusions. Only very rarely are they concrete enough to be used by policy professionals. We have addressed this lack of practical orientation by adding a Policy Advisory Committee within our Editorial Team that includes (ex) policy practitioners from the European Commission, International Labour Organisation (ILO), Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), United Nations Economic and

Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the World Bank. Our Policy Advisory Committee guides us on how to attract, review, and enhance policy-relevant research. It also works with the Area Editors to develop best practices in terms of the presentation of policy insights.

A third impact pathway that we want to develop is *Policy Dialogue*. JIBP has the potential to serve as a platform for connecting academic and policy communities through various means such as invited commentaries and appearances in joint workshops or conferences. These initiatives can serve as catalysts for impactful, policy-relevant research by raising scholars' awareness of the research issues that interest policy practitioners and by bringing new evidence-based findings to the attention of policymakers. UNCTAD's 8th World Investment Forum, held in Abu Dhabi on October 16–20, 2023, encapsulates how our Editorial Team has spurred true Policy Dialogue via AIB's partnership with UNCTAD. In collaboration with JIBP's Policy Advisory Committee member, Dr Amelia Santos-Paulino of the UNCTAD Secretariat, members of the JIBP Editorial Team organized four panels on the conference theme of "Investing for Sustainable Development". These panels showcased the work of both IB scholars and practitioners. In addition, members of the JIBP Editorial Team participated in the academic opening panel, the academic closing session, and in the "fire-side chats" that paired academics with practitioners to informally discuss a topic in the broad area of the conference theme. In this new editorial term, we will promote policy dialogue further through deepening JIBP's collaboration with UNCTAD and other international organizations.

Measuring the effectiveness of our impact pathways requires expanding JIBP's key performance indicators beyond traditional bibliometric measures like impact factor or article influence score. One scholars-to-society measure to which we now pay more attention is Altmetric, which captures the visibility and engagement that publications receive across social media, news outlets, blogs, and other online platforms. While we recognize the concern that Altmetric data can be manipulated (Williams, 2017), and that the metric therefore requires careful interpretation, it can help us identify articles that receive disproportionate engagement outside of academia. This allows us to document the platforms and communities where they have traction and evaluate the drivers of their appeal. For example, we have used this approach to detect that the top 10 JIBP articles in terms of citations have been mentioned in outlets of international organizations such as the World Economic Forum³ and the

³ «How emerging economies can overcome the private sector's risk perception» available at: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/09/how-emerging-economies-can-overcome-the-private-sector-s-risk-perception/> and «5 ways multinational corporations can have a greater impact on the SDGs», available at: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/>

OECD⁴, in specialized media such as *Harvard Business Review*⁵ and *the Conversation*⁶, and in generalist newspapers such as the *Bangkok Post*⁷ and the *Los Angeles Times*⁸, to name just a few.

Concluding (or rather beginning)

The strategic direction that we have set out for JIBP is ambitious but realistic. We believe it to be the starting point of a new path for the Journal and for the field of international business policy that will lead to more sound, evidence-based, multi-disciplinary, and impactful research. We look forward to working with scholars across academic fields and with policy communities at the local, national, and international level to develop JIBP into a platform that publishes the finest research for the betterment of international business policy.

References

- Alford, M., De Marchi, V., & Krishnan, A. (2023). Drivers, tensions and trade-offs in achieving social and environmental upgrading in global value chains. In *Research handbook on international corporate social responsibility* (pp. 43–60). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Archibugi, D., & Iammarino, S. (2002). The globalization of technological innovation: Definition and evidence. *Review of International Political Economy*, 9(1), 98–122.
- Autor, D. H., Dorn, D., & Hanson, G. H. (2016). The China shock: Learning from labor-market adjustment to large changes in trade. *Annual Review of Economics*, 8, 205–240.
- Bair, J., & Werner, M. (2011). Commodity chains and the uneven geographies of global capitalism: A disarticulations perspective. *Environment and Planning A*, 43(5), 988–997.

Footnote 3 (continued)

[2021/09/5-ways-multinational-corporations-can-have-greater-impact-on-the-sdgs-sustainable-development-goals-mnocs/](https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/09/5-ways-multinational-corporations-can-have-greater-impact-on-the-sdgs-sustainable-development-goals-mnocs/).

⁴ «Are emerging economies already engaging with Industry 4.0 technologies?» available at: <https://oecd-development-matters.org/2022/07/28/are-emerging-economies-engaging-with-industry-4-0-technologies/>.

⁵ «The state of Globalization in 2021», available at: <https://hbr.org/2021/03/the-state-of-globalization-in-2021>.

⁶ «Pays émergents: l'économie informelle, un avantage concurrentiel pour les exportateurs», available at: <https://theconversation.com/pays-emergents-leconomie-informelle-un-avantage-concurrentiel-pour-les-exportateurs-178917>.

⁷ «International Trade: is it a help or a hindrance», published 22/6/22, available at: <https://www.bangkokpost.com/opinion/opinion/2331193/international-trade-is-it-a-help-or-a-hindrance->

⁸ «Op-Ed: How liberalizing economic trade could reduce inflation and supply chain woes», available at: <https://news.yahoo.com/op-ed-liberalizing-economic-trade-100559834.html?guccounter=1>.

- Bass, A., & Grøgaard, B. (2021). The long-term energy transition: Drivers, outcomes, and the role of the multinational enterprise. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 52(5), 807–823.
- Berry, H., Kaul, A., & Lee, N. (2021). Follow the smoke: The pollution haven effect on global sourcing. *Strategic Management Journal*, 42(13), 2420–2450.
- Boddeyn, J. J. (2016). International business–government relations research 1945–2015: Concepts, typologies, theories and methodologies. *Journal of World Business*, 51(1), 10–22.
- Bremmer, I., & Suleyman, M. (2023). The AI power paradox: Can states learn to govern artificial intelligence-before it's too late? *Foreign Affairs*, 102, 26.
- Buckley, P. J. (2018). Towards a theoretically-based global foreign direct investment policy regime. *Journal of International Business Policy*, 1, 184–207.
- Buckley, P. J., Doh, J. P., & Benischke, M. H. (2017). Towards a renaissance in international business research? Big questions, grand challenges, and the future of international business scholarship. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 48, 1045–1064.
- Clegg, J. (2019). From the editor: International business policy: What it is, and what it is not. *Journal of International Business Policy*, 2, 111–118.
- Coche, E., Kolk, A., & Ocelík, V. (2023). Unravelling cross-country regulatory intricacies of data governance: The relevance of legal insights for digitalization and international business. *Journal of International Business Policy*, 1–16.
- Coe, N. M., & Gibson, C. (2023). Progress in economic geography? Decarbonising Global Production Networks (GPNs). *Progress in Economic Geography*, 1(1), 100002.
- Cuervo-Cazurra, A., Dieleman, M., Hirsch, P., Rodrigues, S. B., & Zyglidopoulos, S. (2021). Multinationals' misbehavior. *Journal of World Business*, 56(5), 101244.
- Evenett, S. J. (2019). Protectionism, state discrimination, and international business since the onset of the Global Financial Crisis. *Journal of International Business Policy*, 2, 9–36.
- Farrell, H., & Newman, A. L. (2019). Weaponized interdependence: How global economic networks shape state coercion. *International Security*, 44(1), 42–79.
- Gereffi, G. (2019). Global value chains and international development policy: Bringing firms, networks and policy-engaged scholarship back in. *Journal of International Business Policy*, 2, 195–210.
- Gereffi, G. (2020). What does the COVID-19 pandemic teach us about global value chains? The case of medical supplies. *Journal of International Business Policy*, 3, 287–301.
- Grubb, M., Jordan, N. D., Hertwich, E., Neuhoff, K., Das, K., Bandyopadhyay, K. R., & Oh, H. (2022). Carbon leakage, consumption, and trade. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 47, 753–795.
- Habibullah, M. S., Din, B. H., Tan, S. H., & Zahid, H. (2022). Impact of climate change on biodiversity loss: Global evidence. *Environmental Science and Pollution Research*, 29(1), 1073–1086.
- Helpman, E. (2011). *Understanding global trade*. Harvard University Press.
- Iammarino, S., Rodriguez-Pose, A., & Storper, M. (2019). Regional inequality in Europe: Evidence, theory and policy implications. *Journal of Economic Geography*, 19(2), 273–298.
- Ikenberry, G. J. (2018). The end of liberal international order? *International Affairs*, 94(1), 7–23.
- Krammer, S. M. (2023). Chip war: The fight for the world's most critical technology. *Journal of International Business Policy*, 6(4), 541–545.
- Lawton, T., McGuire, S., & Rajwani, T. (2013). Corporate political activity: A literature review and research agenda. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 15(1), 86–105.
- LeBaron, G. (2020). *Combatting modern slavery: Why labour governance is failing and what we can do about it*. Wiley.
- Lee, J., Veloso, F. M., & Hounshell, D. A. (2011). Linking induced technological change, and environmental regulation: Evidence from patenting in the US auto industry. *Research Policy*, 40(9), 1240–1252.
- Locke, R., Amengual, M., & Mangla, A. (2009). Virtue out of necessity? Compliance, commitment, and the improvement of labor conditions in global supply chains. *Politics & Society*, 37(3), 319–351.
- Lundan, S. M. (2018). From the editor: Engaging international business scholars with public policy issues. *Journal of International Business Policy*, 1, 1–11.
- Luo, Y., & Van Assche, A. (2023). The rise of techno-geopolitical uncertainty: Implications of the United States CHIPS and Science Act. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 1–18.
- Masson-Delmotte, V., Zhai, P., Pirani, A., Connors, S. L., Péan, C., Berger, S., & Zhou, B. (2021). Climate change 2021: The physical science basis. *Contribution of working group I to the sixth assessment report of the intergovernmental panel on climate change*, 2.
- Mazzucato, M. (2018). Mission-oriented innovation policies: Challenges and opportunities. *Industrial and Corporate Change*, 27(5), 803–815.
- Milanovic, B. (2016). *Global inequality: A new approach for the age of globalization*. Harvard University Press.
- Nadvi, K. (2008). Global standards, global governance and the organization of global value chains. *Journal of Economic Geography*, 8(3), 323–343.
- Pinkse, J., & Kolk, A. (2009). *International business and global climate change*. Routledge.
- Ponte, S. (2019). *Business, power and sustainability in a world of global value chains*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Roberts, A., & Lamp, N. (2021). *Six faces of globalization: Who wins, who loses, and why it matters*. Harvard University Press.
- Rodrik, D. (2018). Populism and the economics of globalization. *Journal of International Business Policy*, 1, 12–33.
- Sachs, J. D. (2006). *The end of poverty: Economic possibilities for our time*. Penguin.
- Sen, A. (2000). A decade of human development. *Journal of Human Development*, 1(1), 17–23.
- Smith, K., & Larimer, C. (2018). *The public policy theory primer*. Routledge.
- Teegen, H., Doh, J. P., & Vachani, S. (2004). The importance of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in global governance and value creation: An international business research agenda. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 35, 463–483.
- Thakur-Weigold, B., & Miroudot, S. (2023). Supply chain myths in the resilience and deglobalization narrative: Consequences for policy. *Journal of International Business Policy*, 1–13.
- Van Assche, A. (2022). International Business policy: A primer. In *The new frontiers of international business: Development, evolving topics, and implications for practice* (pp. 179–193). Springer.
- Van Assche, A., Pasha, A. A., Cernat, L., & Voss, H. (2023). From the editor–Governments as buyers: The international business implications of public procurement. *Journal of International Business Policy*, 1–14.
- van der Straaten, K., Narula, R., & Giuliani, E. (2023). The multinational enterprise, development, and the inequality of opportunities: A research agenda. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 1–19.
- Van Tulder, R., Rodrigues, S. B., Mirza, H., & Sexsmith, K. (2021). The UN's sustainable development goals: can multinational enterprises lead the decade of action?. *Journal of International Business Policy*, 4, 1–21.

- Van Tulder, R., & van Mil, E. (2022). *Principles of sustainable business: Frameworks for corporate action on the SDGs*. Taylor & Francis.
- Verbeke, A., & Hutzschenreuter, T. (2021). The dark side of digital globalization. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 35(4), 606–621.
- Vernon, R. (1971). Sovereignty at bay. Pelican.
- Wettstein, F., Giuliani, E., Santangelo, G. D., & Stahl, G. K. (2019). International business and human rights: A research agenda. *Journal of World Business*, 54(1), 54–65.
- Wickert, C., Post, C., Doh, J. P., Prescott, J. E., & Prencipe, A. (2021). Management research that makes a difference: Broadening the meaning of impact. *Journal of Management Studies*, 58(2), 297–320.
- Williams, A. E. (2017). Altmetrics: An overview and evaluation. *Online Information Review*, 41(3), 311–317.
- Witt, M. A., Lewin, A. Y., Li, P. P., & Gaur, A. (2023). Decoupling in international business: Evidence, drivers, impact, and implications for IB research. *Journal of World Business*, 58(1), 101399.

Publisher's Note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Ari Van Assche (PhD, University of Hawaii at Manoa) is full professor in international business and director of the International Institute of Economic Diplomacy at HEC Montreal. He is the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of International Business Policy. He specializes in the organization of global value chains and their implication for public policy.

Valentina De Marchi (PhD, University of Padova) is associate professor in environmental innovation at the Department of Society, Politics and Sustainability at ESADE Business School. She is deputy editor of the Journal of International Business Policy. She specializes in innovation for the environment in the context of global value chains.