

**CALL FOR PAPERS**  
**Special Issue of the *Journal of International Business Studies***

**MULTILEVEL EMPIRICAL RESEARCH IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS**

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**Deadline for submission:** April 30, 2010

**Tentative publication date:** Fall 2011 or Spring 2012

**Introduction**

This special issue seeks to promote and shape the future direction for multilevel quantitative research in the field of international business. Multilevel research investigates phenomena at several levels of analysis – such as individuals, groups or subsidiaries, firms, networks or business groups, industries or organization sets, and countries and regions – to illuminate the multiple causes or consequences of behaviors at and across these levels. This allows us to better analyze international business actions within a comprehensive and integrative framework. Multilevel conceptual models are common in international business, but empirical research has usually tested them at a single level of analysis at a time. The single-level approach creates several statistical problems including spurious disaggregation (where researchers disaggregate higher-level data to use a non-multilevel method), misestimated precision and ignorance of intra-class correlation, which increase Type 1 and Type 2 errors. In fact, multilevel methods have been almost ignored in quantitative international business.

The purpose of this special issue is to narrow the gap between theoretical models and quantitative methods in international business research. We want to showcase high-quality multilevel quantitative studies, to encourage international business researchers to apply these methods, and to underline their value in studying new international business topics or renewing the analysis of older ones. Hence, we seek original empirical contributions using multilevel quantitative methods to extend international business research. As a result, this special issue should set a definite standard of the use of multilevel methods in high-quality IB research that uses such data, and serve as a milestone for the development and spread of these methods in IB.

**Special Issue Theme**

Multilevel research has gained visibility in management research since its first formal introduction to management in an *Academy of Management Review* special issue in 1999 (edited by Klein, Tosi and Cannella). It took years to transfer this idea to research practice, leading to a special issue in the *Academy of Management Journal* in 2007 (edited by Hitt, Beamish, Jackson and Mathieu). Now, there is a consensus that this type of research improves our understanding of managerial issues (see Hitt et al., 2007). This consensus has been reinforced by the development of statistical software dedicated to multilevel quantitative methods (including HLM, MLwIN, SuperMix, etc.) and by the addition of multilevel capabilities in general software (such as Stata). These developments have enlarged the types of multilevel methods that are available to researchers and made their use easier.

Surprisingly, when we consider publications in international business, it is manifest that, despite this consensus and the availability of these methods, they have been largely ignored. For instance, less than 5% of the articles published in JIBS since 2002 use these methods. In fact, most international business researchers keep testing multilevel models with non-multilevel methods, limiting the development of more elaborated research frameworks and questions (Arregle, Hebert, and Beamish,

2006). Beyond the crucial point of methodological validity, the use of multilevel methods would also allow researchers to develop (and test) more comprehensive models looking at level-1, level-2 or level-3 variables, and their interactions.

This gap is even more striking if we consider the nature of international business. As an integrative field, international business should cut across macro/micro divisions. By definition international business researchers have to deal in their frameworks with individuals, subsidiaries, MNEs, industries and networks, countries and regions, etc. Therefore, by design, international business researchers work very often on multilevel research models. Hence, the objective of this special issue is to generalize the use of multilevel quantitative methods and thereby narrow the gap between theory and evidence to decisively bring multilevel quantitative methods into the mainstream of international business research.

### **Topics for the Special Issue**

This special issue will consider only multilevel quantitative papers. We hope to include various forms of multilevel quantitative research that advance our understanding of international business phenomena. All the different academic disciplines belonging to international business (human resources management, strategy, marketing, organizational behavior, finance, etc.) are relevant. Although articles for the special issue must demonstrate a good mastery of multilevel quantitative methods, they must first and foremost contribute strongly to international business research. They should address international business issues considering different levels of analysis in a single theoretical and empirical model. Multilevel methods are increasingly sophisticated, so we look for submissions that give theoretical meaning to higher-level constructs and do not treat them as categorical variables as was done in simpler moderated regression models. They encompass a diversity of specifications such as linear and logistic regression, Bernoulli, Poisson and negative binomial, tobit, survival analysis, latent variable analysis etc., that can be used to address these questions. The latest methods can consider 2 or 3 levels of analysis with nested or cross-nested data structure, and accommodate network data.

For instance, and just as an illustration, MNEs often aggregate or amass investments within a country or region to exploit their advantages, yet they may also make arbitrage decisions by terminating a subsidiary in one country and relocating to another country within the same or another region. These aggregation and arbitrage decisions are taken for subsidiary or country-level issues (e.g., number of existing subsidiaries in the country, role and importance of a subsidiary, country's attractiveness or resources), but also for region-level and corporate-level reasons (e.g., corporate-level international strategy, portfolio of subsidiaries, international experience, parent-firm's performance). Therefore, these decisions result of choices made at different levels of analysis. Applying multilevel methods, it would be possible to develop hypotheses about the role of variables at these different levels of analysis in the same theoretical model and test them.

A second illustration is the broad range of multilevel issues in cross-cultural research. These include issues in the construction of measures of values developed at the level of individuals as compared to measures developed at the level of societies or nations. For example, what is the relationship between measures of commonly used constructs like individualism or collectivism that are designed for individuals in comparison to constructs with similar labels that are designed for nations and similar large collectivities and institutions. Cross-cultural questions also include problems of how to assess measure equivalence between different levels and what equivalence at different levels implies. They also include issues of the theoretical meaning and quantitative assessment of relationships between cultural measures at the nation, region or other higher level on the one hand and either *levels* of individual or group level variables (e.g., societal culture predicting leadership) or *relationships* between individual or group level variables on the other (e.g., societal culture predicting the relationship between leadership and performance).

We encourage prospective authors to address a variety of questions while applying multilevel methods in an international or comparative context.

**Submission Process**

All manuscripts will be reviewed as a cohort for this special issue. Manuscripts must be submitted in the window between April 7, 2010 and April 30, 2010, at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/jibs>. Please select the option from the special issue drop-down menu on Manuscript Central that identifies your paper as a submission for the “Multilevel Research & IB” special issue, and include the words “Multilevel Research and IB Special Issue Submission” on your title page. All submissions will go through the JIBS regular double-blind review process and follow the same norms and processes. As manuscripts are accepted for publication, they will be posted in the Advance Online Publication system on <http://www.jibs.net>.

For more information about this Call for Papers, please contact the Special Issue Editors or the JIBS Managing Editor ([managing-editor@jibs.net](mailto:managing-editor@jibs.net)).