

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

**STUDYING INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS  
THROUGH MULTIPLE LEVELS OF ANALYSIS**

---

**Special Issue Editors:**

- Victor Cui (University of Manitoba, Canada, [victor.cui@umanitoba.ca](mailto:victor.cui@umanitoba.ca))
- Dana Minbaeva, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark, [dm.si@cbs.dk](mailto:dm.si@cbs.dk))
- Rajneesh Narula, University of Reading, UK, [r.narula@henley.ac.uk](mailto:r.narula@henley.ac.uk))
- Ilan Vertinsky (University of British Columbia, Canada, [ilan.vertinsky@ubc.ca](mailto:ilan.vertinsky@ubc.ca))

**Deadline for submission:** December 23, 2019

**Research Background**

The objective of this special issue is to broaden and deepen our understanding of how the acquisition and protection of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) affects international business, using multiple levels of analysis. Intellectual property is a key aspect of firm-specific advantages (FSAs), and the exploitation and augmentation of such FSAs is often crucial to a firm's competitiveness (Narula, 2014; Verbeke, 2013). At the same time, the attractiveness of countries (or regions and cities within countries) as destinations for MNEs is shaped by their capacity to provide access to relevant location-specific advantages associated with intellectual property (Belderbos, Leten, & Suzuki, 2013; Cantwell, Dunning, & Lundan, 2010). Firms seek to locate their competence-creating activities in close proximity to knowledge infrastructure (Castellani, Jimenez, & Zanfei, 2013). A related key location advantage is country-level institutions associated with adequate IPR protection (Nandkumar & Srikanth, 2016). Equally important are micro-level factors such as access to and retention of human capital, which are key to firm's knowledge-intensive capabilities (Cascio & Boudreau, 2016; Tung, 2016). IPRs matter therefore both for firm strategy and evolution, as well as for policy makers, who are concerned about the optimal level of IPR protection. Insufficient or poorly enforced IPR protection can affect locational attractiveness. Excessive IPR protection can have the same effect, when used as a strategy tool by shelter-seeking firms to raise artificial entry barriers against rivals and potential entrants.

Prior studies have explored international IPR violation and protection at both macro (e.g., national) and micro (e.g., firm or unit) levels of analysis. Macro-level research has paid attention to the drivers of IPR violations and the mechanisms of circumventing IPR protection (e.g., Ginarte & Park, 1997, Maskus, 2014; Mertha, 2007; Saggi, 2002). A recent debate published in JIBS exemplifies this line of research, focusing on institutional factors that facilitate or hinder

IPR protection at the international level (Brander, Cui, & Vertinsky, 2017; Peng, Ahlstrom, Carraher, & Shi, 2017).

At the micro-level, researchers have maintained that knowledge spillovers and misappropriation are prevalent because of inter-firm competition, colocation, alliances, as well as employee mobility (Berry, 2014; Hamel, Doz, & Prahalad, 1989; Inkpen, Minbaeva & Tsang, 2018; Narula & Santangelo, 2009; Shaver & Flyer, 2000). Researchers have studied various mechanisms, such as governance modes (Freitas, Geuna, & Rossi, 2013), strategic location (Zhao, 2006), strategic patenting (Hall & Ziedonis, 2001), and litigation (Lerner, 1995) to protect MNEs' IPRs. Some researchers have also argued that knowledge leakage may even be beneficial for MNEs by developing a reputation for cooperation, which may generate reciprocity (Inkpen, Minbaeva & Tsang, 2018; Sofka, Preto & de Faria, 2014). The structure and organization of MNE networks also matter in shaping their intellectual property-based FSAs, as well as the efficacy of individual R&D units. This includes managing interactions with external partners as well as intra-MNE knowledge flows (Salter et al 2015, Bogers et al 2018).

A number of studies have considered the extent to which direct IPR protection mechanisms and associated institutions shape the propensity of MNE subsidiaries to effectively engage in innovation (Santangelo, Meyer, & Jindra, 2016), both internally and with external partners (Athreya, Batsaki, & Singh, 2016, Martínez-Noya & García-Canal, 2018). Policy issues include determining the optimal level of IPR protection to attract and embed inward FDI (Wu, Ma, & Zhuo, 2017), although it is still a matter of debate whether there is a compatibility between the optimal level of IPR protection needed for development more generally (Fagerberg, Srholec, & Verspagen, 2010; Kim, Lee, Park, & Choo, 2012; Sweet & Maggio, 2015) and promoting MNE activity (Crisuolo & Narula, 2008; Narula, 2003).

While prior studies indicate that IPR protection involves factors at both macro- and micro-levels, most have investigated the phenomenon at a single level. The complexity of interactions across levels calls for more comprehensive frameworks that allow the development of theoretical arguments specifying the underlying mechanisms that act at and connect multiple levels. For example, knowledge protection and acquisition strategies of MNEs may adapt in different ways to differences and changes in IPR policies in various host countries. Similarly, the increased active involvement of some governments, not just as protectors of IPRs of companies and individuals, but as strategic participants in the “knowledge protection and acquisition game” may also affect the IPR strategies of MNEs, as well as undermine international IPR protection institutions. Moreover, MNEs can influence the “knowledge game” through the employment of various “non-market strategies” targeted at different host-country governments and reshape the dynamics of the system. To understand such complex relationships, research is needed to unpack the interactions of factors across levels. Making balanced policy proposals for countries in an era of complex knowledge sharing strategies among networks of different actors also requires a more holistic approach. Multi-level research logic also permits more nuanced refinements to international business theory (Narula & Verbeke, 2015). This special issue aims to encourage a more holistic view. Micro-level studies on IPR explicitly need to take on board the macro-level, beyond cursory observations in the discussion and conclusion section, and vice versa for the more meso- and macro-oriented studies. The objective is to greatly improve precision in the analysis of dynamic contexts in which IPR protection matters and is beneficial for the actors (country, industry, firm, etc.).

This special issue is open to IPR-related IB papers conducted at any level, but where explicit linkages are developed and explored to other levels. We are interested in papers that conceptually develop multi-level explanations and intentionally avoid the use of explanatory shorthand by correlating mono-level variables. We encourage submissions that theoretically accommodate a nested, complex and adaptive system view on MNEs. We welcome empirical papers across a variety of methodologies, including process research, qualitative studies, etc. We welcome papers utilizing formal multi-level modeling which are appropriate to analyze the impact of high-level variables (e.g., various national IPR protection regimes) on low-level variables (e.g., knowledge acquisition and protection strategies of MNEs in these policy environments) (Peterson, Arregle, & Martin, 2012).

### **Aims and Scope**

We are interested in research that examines the joint impact of macro IPR protection regimes and MNEs' knowledge acquisition and protection approaches on key international business decisions and outcomes of MNEs. We particularly welcome multidisciplinary research that expands current themes by incorporating insights from a broader range of disciplines, e.g., political science, sociology, economics, innovation, HRM, and business strategy. Below we offer eight possible themes as examples of the types of topics we would like to include in this special issue. They are by no means exhaustive.

- 1) *Location choices in international expansion for knowledge exploiting and knowledge augmenting FDI.*  
Topics may include choices of locations among nations, clusters of nations, or within-nation regions (Zhao, 2006), for FDIs made by emerging market multinationals (EMNEs) or developed country multinationals (DMNEs).
- 2) *Entry mode choices of large MNEs and international new ventures (INVs).*  
Example topics may include choices of entry modes, and comparison of entry modes between EMNEs and DMNEs, between different types of INVs, or between established and new firms (Oxley, 1999; Phene & Tallman, 2012).
- 3) *Non-market strategies in home and host environments.*  
Topics may include different forms of non-market strategies, e.g., CSR, political activities (Liu, Luo, & Cui, 2018; Mellahi, Frynas, Sun, & Siegel, 2016) that MNEs undertake, both in home and host countries.
- 4) *Strategy adaptation to low IPR protection environments.*  
Topics may include, for example, alternative strategies to protect and acquire IPRs, and to obtain data, by EMNEs and DMNEs, as they enter low IPR regimes (Baldwin & Henkel, 2015).
- 5) *Autonomy, roles and corporate governance of MNE subunits.*  
Topics could include the intentional and unintentional knowledge leakage from knowledge transfer between MNE units, teams, and individuals (Inkpen, Minbaeva & Tsang, 2018; Minbaeva, Pedersen, Bjorkman, & Fey, 2014), as well as governance mechanisms relevant

for IPR-related processes such as subunits' structure and design, composition of board of directors, top management team, executive compensation, etc.

6) *Alliances, M&A and external network management.*

Possible topics could include MNEs' and subsidiaries' alliance formation and portfolio management, cooptation (Cui, Yang, & Vertinsky, 2018, Wang, Wang, Yang, Jiang, & Cui, 2016), M&A strategies, as well as subunits' and individuals' embeddedness (Meyer, Mudambi, & Narula, 2011) in the alliance and competition networks in host-countries.

7) *Participation in clusters.*

Example topics could include the strategies of international agglomeration (Martin, Salomon, & Wu, 2010), inter-firm interactions in clusters in host countries, and their effects on firm IPR acquisition and protection.

8) *Organization of the R&D function.*

Topics include R&D team composition, compensation (Yanadori & Cui, 2013), talent acquisition, development, and retention (Kehoe & Tzabbar, 2015), as well as global and semi-global R&D configurations (Crisuolo & Narula, 2007).

## **Workshop and Symposium**

To help authors develop their papers, we will organize a paper development workshop in the summer of 2020. Furthermore, we plan to have a symposium at a major academic conference in 2021 for the final selected papers for publication, aiming to increase their visibility and impact.

## **Submission Process and Deadlines**

All manuscripts will be reviewed as a cohort for this Special Issue. Manuscripts must be submitted between November 15 and December 23, 2019, at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/jibs>. All submissions will go through the JIBS regular double-blind review process and follow the standard norms and processes. For more information about this Call for Papers, please contact the Special Issue Editors or the JIBS Managing Editor ([managing-editor@jibs.net](mailto:managing-editor@jibs.net)).

## **References**

- Athreye, S., Batsakis, G., & Singh, S. 2016. Local, global, and internal knowledge sourcing: The trilemma of foreign-based R&D subsidiaries. *Journal of Business Research*, 69: 5694-5702.
- Baldwin, C. Y., & Henkel, J. 2015. Modularity and intellectual property protection. *Strategic Management Journal*, 36: 1637-1655.
- Belderbos, R., Leten, B., & Suzuki, S. 2013. How global is R&D? Firm-level determinants of home-country bias in R&D. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 44: 765-786.
- Berry, H. 2014. Global integration and innovation: Multicountry knowledge generation within MNCs. *Strategic Management Journal*, 35: 869-890.
- Bogers, M., Foss, N. J., & Lyngsie, J. (2018). The "human side" of open innovation: The role of employee diversity in firm-level openness. *Research Policy*, 47(1), 218-231.

- Brander, J. A., Cui, V., & Vertinsky, I. 2017. China and intellectual property rights: A challenge to the rule of law. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 44: 765-786
- Cantwell, J., Dunning, J. H., & Lundan, S. M. 2010. An evolutionary approach to understanding international business activity: The co-evolution of MNEs and the institutional environment. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 41: 567-586.
- Cascio, W., & Boudreau, J. 2016. The search for global competence: From international HR to talent management. *Journal of World Business*, 51(1): 103-114
- Castellani, D., Jimenez, A., & Zanfei, A. 2013. How remote are R&D labs? Distance factors and international innovative activities. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 44: 649-675.
- Criscuolo, P., & Narula, R. 2007. Using multi-hub structures for international R&D: Organisational inertia and the challenges of implementation. *Management International Review*, 47: 639-660.
- Criscuolo, P., & Narula, R. 2008. A novel approach to national technological accumulation and absorptive capacity: aggregating Cohen and Levinthal. *The European Journal of Development Research*, 20: 56-73.
- Cui, V., Yang, H., & Vertinsky, I. 2018. Attacking your partners: Strategic alliances and competition between partners in product markets. *Strategic Management Journal*. Forthcoming.
- Fagerberg, J., Srholec, M., & Verspagen, B. 2010. Innovation and economic development. In *Handbook of the Economics of Innovation* (Vol. 2, 833-872). North-Holland.
- Freitas, I. M. B., Geuna, A., & Rossi, F. 2013. Finding the right partners: Institutional and personal modes of governance of university–industry interactions. *Research Policy*, 42: 50-62.
- Ginarte, J. C., & Park, W. G. 1997. Determinants of patent rights: A cross-national study. *Research Policy*, 26: 283–301.
- Hall, B. H., & Ziedonis, R. H. 2001. The patent paradox revisited: An empirical study of patenting in the US semiconductor industry, 1979-1995. *RAND Journal of Economics*, 32: 101-128.
- Hamel, G., Doz, Y. L., & Prahalad, C. K. 1989. Collaborate with your competitors and win. *Harvard Business Review*, 67: 133–139.
- Inkpen, A., Minbaeva, D. & Tsang, E. 2018 Point-Counterpoint on Knowledge Leakage. Forthcoming in *Journal of International Business Studies*
- Kehoe, R. R., & Tzabbar, D. 2015. Lighting the way or stealing the shine? An examination of the duality in star scientists' effects on firm innovative performance. *Strategic Management Journal*, 36, 709–727.
- Kim, Y. K., Lee, K., Park, W. G., & Choo, K. 2012. Appropriate intellectual property protection and economic growth in countries at different levels of development. *Research policy*, 41: 358-375.
- Lerner, J. 1995. Patenting in the shadow of competitors. *Journal of Law and Economics*, 38: 463-495.
- Liu, H., Luo, J., Cui, V. 2018. The impact of internationalization on home country charitable donation: Evidence from Chinese firms. *Management International Review*, 58: 313-335.
- Martin, X., Salomon, R. M., & Wu, Z. 2010. The institutional determinants of agglomeration: A study in the global semiconductor industry. *Industrial and Corporate Change*, 19: 1769-1800.
- Martínez-Noya, A., & García-Canal, E. 2018. Location, shared suppliers and the innovation performance of R&D outsourcing agreements. *Industry and Innovation*, 25: 308-332.
- Maskus, K. 2014. The new globalization of intellectual property rights: What's new this time? *Australian Economic History Review*, 54: 262-284.

- Mellahi, K., Frynas, J. G., Sun, P., & Siegel, D. 2016. A review of the nonmarket strategy literature: Toward a multi-theoretical integration. *Journal of Management*, 42: 143-173.
- Mertha, A. 2007. *The politics of piracy: Intellectual property in contemporary China*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Meyer, K. E., Mudambi, R., & Narula, R. 2011. Multinational enterprises and local contexts: The opportunities and challenges of multiple embeddedness. *Journal of Management Studies*, 48: 235-252.
- Minbaeva, D. B., Pedersen, T., Björkman, I., & Fey, C. F. 2014. A retrospective on: MNC knowledge transfer, subsidiary absorptive capacity, and HRM. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 45: 52-62.
- Nandkumar, A., & Srikanth, K. 2016. Right person in the right place: How the host country IPR influences the distribution of inventors in offshore R&D projects of multinational enterprises. *Strategic Management Journal*, 37: 1715-1733.
- Narula, R. 2003. *Globalization and technology: Interdependence, innovation systems and industrial policy*. Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Narula, R. 2014. Exploring the paradox of competence-creating subsidiaries: balancing bandwidth and dispersion in MNEs. *Long Range Planning*, 47: 4-15.
- Narula, R., & Verbeke, A. 2015. Making internalization theory good for practice: The essence of Alan Rugman's contributions to international business. *Journal of World Business*, 50: 612-622.
- Oxley, J. E. 1999. Institutional environment and the mechanisms of governance: the impact of intellectual property protection on the structure of inter-firm alliances. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 38: 283-309.
- Peng, M. W., Ahlstrom, D., Carragher, S. M., & Shi, W. 2017. An institution-based view of global IPR history. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 48: 893-907.
- Peterson, M. F., Arregle, J., & Martin, X. 2012. Multilevel models in international business research. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 43: 451-457.
- Phene, A., & Tallman, S. 2012. Complexity, context and governance in biotechnology alliances. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 43: 61-83.
- Saggi, K. 2002. Trade, foreign direct investment, and international technology transfer: A survey. *The World Bank Research Observer*, 17: 191-235.
- Salter, A., Ter Wal, A. L., Criscuolo, P., & Alexy, O. (2015). Open for ideation: Individual-level openness and idea generation in R&D. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 32(4), 488-504.
- Santangelo, G. D., Meyer, K. E., & Jindra, B. 2016. MNE subsidiaries' outsourcing and insourcing of R&D: The role of local institutions. *Global Strategy Journal*, 6: 247-268.
- Shaver, J. M., & Flyer, F. 2000. Agglomeration economies, firm heterogeneity, and foreign direct investment in the United States. *Strategic Management Journal*, 21: 1175-1193.
- Sofka, W., Preto, M., & de Faria, P. 2014. MNC subsidiary closures: What is the value of employees' human capital in new jobs? *Journal of International Business Studies*, 45: 723-750.
- Sweet, C. M., & Maggio, D. S. E. 2015. Do stronger intellectual property rights increase innovation? *World Development*, 66: 665-677.
- Tung, R. 2016. New perspectives on human resource management in a global context. *Journal of World Business*, 51: 142-152
- Verbeke, A. 2013. *International business strategy*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

- Wang, Y., Wang, N., Yang, Z., Jiang, L., & Cui, V. 2016. Managing relationships with power advantage buyers: The role of supplier initiated bonding tactics in long-term buyer-supplier collaborations. *Journal of Business Research*, 69: 5587-5596.
- Wu, J., Ma, Z., & Zhuo, S. 2017. Enhancing national innovative capacity: The impact of high-tech international trade and inward foreign direct investment. *International Business Review*, 26: 502-514.
- Yanadori, Y. & Cui, V. 2013. Creating incentives for innovation? The relationship between pay dispersion in R&D groups and firm innovation performance. *Strategic Management Journal*, 34: 1502–1511.
- Zhao, M. Y. 2006. Conducting R&D in countries with weak intellectual property rights protection. *Management Science*, 52: 1185-1199.

### **About the Guest Editors**

**Victor Cui** is Associate Professor at the Asper School of Business of the University of Manitoba. His research focuses on knowledge creation, protection, and acquisition within R&D units, in inter-firm collaboration and competition, and under various national IPR protection regimes. He has also studied MNEs' corporate social responsibilities. His research has been published in *Strategic Management Journal* and *Journal of International Business Studies*. He is serving on the editorial board of JIBS.

**Dana Minbaeva** is a Professor of Strategic and Global Human Resource Management and the Vice-President for International Affairs at Copenhagen Business School. Her research on strategic international HRM, knowledge sharing and transfer in multinational corporations has appeared in such top international journals as *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Human Resource Management*, and many others. Professor Minbaeva published more than 50 articles in international peer reviewed journals, numerous book chapters and reports. She received several national and international awards for research achievements and knowledge dissemination, including the prestigious JIBS Decade Award 2013. Dana Minbaeva is the founder of the Human Capital Analytics Group: [www.cbs.dk/hc-analytics](http://www.cbs.dk/hc-analytics).

**Rajneesh Narula** is the John H. Dunning Chair of International Business Regulation at the Henley Business School, University of Reading, UK. His research and consulting have focused on the role of multinational firms in development, innovation and industrial policy, R&D alliances and outsourcing. He has published over a 100 articles and chapters in books on these themes. He is an area Editor of JIBS. He holds honorary appointments at UNU-MERIT, Norwegian School of Business, Urbino University and Oxford University.

**Ilan Vertinsky** is Vinod Sood Professor of International Business Studies, Strategy and Business Economics in the Sauder School of Business at UBC. He is also an associate of the Peter Wall Institute of Advanced Studies and a former Distinguished Scholar in Residence of the Institute. He has received his PhD from the University of California, Berkeley. Prior to his appointment at UBC he served on the Faculty of Northwestern University. He has published more than 250 refereed journal articles, book chapters and books in strategy, international business and management, economics, marketing and operations research. He currently serves as an area editor of JIBS.