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The development of IB as a scientific field

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ABSTRACT

International business (IB) is today an established field in business studies with two professional associations and numerous academic publications. However, it is much younger than many other fields in the management area. Although economists were focusing on international issues even before, it was not until after the Second World War that IB started to emerge as a scientific field. The purpose of this paper is to analyse this development from the early days up to the present time. In so doing, using a theoretical framework, it focuses on the organizing of the field, i.e. how early informal contacts eventually led to the formation of formal organizations, the launching of journals, and with the passage of time the publishing of handbooks. The paper provides empirical evidence of all these steps. In this way it presents data on significant contributions to the field.

1. Introduction

After the Second World War international trade and foreign investments increased rapidly due to the removal of barriers related to the flow of goods and capital between countries. This increased internationalization is also reflected in a research community where the Academy of International Business (AIB) will celebrate its sixtieth anniversary in 2019 and its younger sister, the European International Business Academy (EIBA), turned forty in 2014. Hence, the age of both organizations clearly shows that the field of international business (IB) is a post-war phenomenon. Most descriptions of the development of the field state that it emerged in the 1950s, mostly as a result of the increasing internationalization of firms (Hambrick & Chen, 2008). Early inspiration was also given by Penrose (1959) and Hymer (1960). As noted by Shenkar (2004), other business disciplines, however, lacked interest in international issues, and the opportunities to publish were rare. Consequently, “IB was forced to develop a secluded and protected market by launching its own outlets and institutions” (Shenkar, 2004, p. 161). Interest from students also grew, and in higher education the field was introduced in the mid-1950s, when Columbia University presented the first master’s programme in IB. Other prominent universities soon followed.

However, it took some time to delineate the field. According to Niamat Elahee (2007), the first study to identify the boundaries of IB was done by Nehrt, Truitt, and Wright (1969), who categorized the research until then into five areas: (1) International business strategy and structure, (2) Functional aspects of international business, (3) International business and national environments, (4) Cultural factors,

and (5) Others. They also set criteria for what type of investigation should fall within the IB boundaries. Other ways of categorizing IB research followed. Vernon (1994) proposed three areas: (1) International trade, (2) MNEs and (3) Comparative national business systems. Buckley (2002), for his part, described an evolution in research from a focus on explaining flows of FDI (Post-WWII to 1970) to strategy and organization of MNEs (1970s–1990s) and globalization and new forms of IB (mid 1980s–2000). While Buckley was worried that IB research might be “running out of steam” and need to identify a new important research question, Peng (2004) argued that there is one question that has always been and will continue to be the most relevant and fundamental: “What determines the international success and failure of firms?” Referring to Buckley (2002, p. 370) he argued that “the way forward is, paradoxically, to look back” (Peng, 2004, p. 106).

Some researchers express concerns that the IB field is waning in importance. For instance, Hambrick and Chen (2008) noted that IB departments at several business schools have been absorbed into other units. They also point to the fact that business schools nowadays often have interdisciplinary units for international issues instead of specific IB departments. According to Shenkar (2004) the strategy field could be considered a main competitor, although he argued that “strategy is ill equipped to handle the challenges of a global economy” (Shenkar, 2004, p. 167). Instead he put forward the importance of developing the competitive edge of IB by combining knowledge and creating a unified knowledge platform. A recent review of research in international strategic management (see White, Guldiken, Hemphill, He, & Khoobdeh, 2016) illustrates a substantial increase in articles within this fairly new field of research that combines insights from strategic management and

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international business.

The above demonstrates that IB, since its early days has been, and still is, a continuously developing field, for which it is of great importance to trace its roots in order to fully understand its scope. This paper therefore aims at providing an analysis of two aspects of the development of the IB field. First, the organizing of the field, and second the production of the field. The first aim implies a focus on how the field has developed from a fairly loose structure towards a rather strong academic community with professional meetings, journals, and extensive publishing of articles and books. This is a development that IB shares with many other scientific fields. A recent study of corpus linguistics (Engwall & Hedmo, 2016) demonstrated how that particular field started through academic entrepreneurship and has become successively more organized.

The second aim implies an extensive analysis of publications in the IB field. For this purpose we have undertaken a bibliometric analysis of publications before 2015, focusing on selected keywords associated with the IB field. In this way we will show how the organizing has resulted in a considerable growth of publications, as well as how different approaches in the field are associated with each other.

For our analysis we have taken advantage of earlier overviews such as Toyne and Nigh (1998), Toyne and Nigh (1999), Buckley (2002), Shenkar (2004), Buckley and Lessard (2005), Griffith, Cavusgil, and Xu (2008), Roberts and Fuller (2010), Seno-Alday (2010), Zettinig and Vincze (2011), Oesterle and Wolf (2011), and Michailova and Tienari (2014) as well as autobiographical descriptions from pioneers in the field, such as Fayerweather (1994) and Dunning (2002), which have provided valuable insights.

2. A model of the organizing of scientific fields

The literature on scientific innovation has long stood on Thomas S. Kuhn's classical work *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Kuhn 1962), and its presentation of the way in which new ideas replace old views. As the title of the book indicates, it presents a view that scientific innovations occur through revolutions, and these are often associated with one person. This image of the individual revolutionary that breaks away from the establishment is also reinforced by various prestigious prizes such as the Nobel Prize. However, empirical evidence seems to indicate that new ideas seldom appear in isolation but instead simultaneously in several places. An eminent example from Kuhn's own book (1962, Chapter VI) is the discovery of oxygen, where at least three persons were simultaneously working on the problem in the eighteenth century: the Swede Carl Wilhelm Scheele, the Englishman Joseph Priestly, and the Frenchman Antoine Lavoisier.

A significant change since the time of the discovery of oxygen is the expansion of the scientific community worldwide. This means, according to a general model presented in Engwall and Hedmo (2016), increased opportunities for innovators to find colleagues abroad working along similar lines and to overcome resistance from their close peers by establishing *informal networks* internationally (Fig. 1). As new approaches gain ground, these informal networks are likely to become *formal organizations* with statutes for governance, elections, boards, presidents, and fees. This bottom-up process may result in a number of organizations supporting and communicating new approaches as well as competing for academic prestige. A major means for these organizations consists of the organizing of various kinds of academic

meetings. For most professional academic organizations, with the passage of time these meetings become more and more regular and advanced. In this way they turn into significant places for the meeting of colleagues, for the presentation of papers, and for interviewing job candidates.

A further significant step in the development is constituted by the publication of *journals*. One reason for this is of course that a journal is a very concrete sign of the establishment of a new field. However, another very significant reason for the establishment of new journals appears to be that scholars in the new field feel that they are rejected by the established journals. The model is based mainly on empirical observations. Theoretically it is associated with the literature on institutional entrepreneurship within institutionalism (cf. e.g. Battilana et al., 2009; David, Wesley, & Haveman, 2013; Garud, Jain, & Kumaraswamy, 2002; Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006; Maguire, Hardy, & Lawrence, 2004; Tracey, Phillips, & Jarvis, 2011).

As a field develops, journals and textbooks are followed by other means of communication. In the present day, electronic discussion forums have thus become increasingly important. Among printed publications there has been a strong trend for some time among publishing houses to ask a few experts in a field to edit *handbooks* with chapters on various aspects of the field. In this way the establishment of the field is manifested in a way that is profitable for the publishing houses.

In the following we will use the described model for our analysis. In so doing, we will first focus on the various steps of organizing the field (professional associations, journals, and handbooks). Then in a subsequent section we will analyse production of the field before presenting conclusions.

3. Organizing the field

3.1. Professional associations

In accordance with our expectations the IB field has become organized through professional associations. As is well-known to all IB scholars, the two most significant ones are the Academy of International Business (AIB) and the European International Business Academy (EIBA). However, there are also a number of other such organizations, among which Australia and New Zealand International Business Academy (ANZIBA, founded in 1997) is the most prominent (see www.anziba.org). Here we will limit the discussion to AIB and EIBA, however.

3.1.1. Academy of International Business

Founded in 1959 AIB was the first professional organization gathering scholars of international business (For an account of the first 25 years of AIB, see Fayerweather, 1986). In early 2017 it had 3517 members from 86 different countries. A bit more than one third (35%) were working in North America, about 25% each in Europe and in Asia, and 15% on other continents (<https://aib.msu.edu/statistics.asp>). In view of its geographically diverse membership, AIB rotates its conferences among continents. In addition, in early 2017 AIB had eighteen chapters, fourteen of them outside the United States.

Among its members, AIB has since 1977 elected AIB Fellows, who are "distinguished AIB members recognized for their contributions to the scholarly development of the field of international business". By

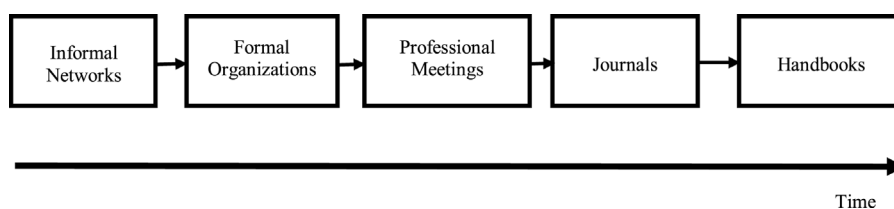


Fig. 1. A model for the organizing of scientific fields.

early 2017 AIB had appointed 148 Fellows, 96 of whom are active. In this group the dominance for North America is much stronger than for the membership as a whole: as many as two-thirds come from that part of the world. This is also natural, since AIB was founded in the United States and is one of a number of academic professional associations in that country. It can even be argued that other professional associations constituted role models for AIB. For instance, the system of AIB Fellows was copied from the Academy of Management (founded in 1936), after Jean J. Boddewyn was elected an AoM Fellow in 1974 (for the history of AIB Fellows, see [Boddewyn & Nehrt, 2005](#)). Similarly, the initiator, John Fayerweather, has pointed to the inspiration from the American Marketing Association (founded in 1937) in the process of creating AIB ([Fayerweather, 1974, p. 70](#)). According to [Fayerweather \(1974\)](#) the idea of an association for international business appeared in 1958 in response to correspondence with colleagues and initiatives taken within the American Marketing Association. This in turn led to his assembling of 14 professors and 4 businessmen to constitute an organization. In the process the name of the association turned out to be a particularly difficult issue, and after two ballots it was decided to adopt the name Association for Education in International Business (AEIB). Having solved also other organizational problems such as statutes, “the formal birth of the organization [occurred] at 2:15 p.m. on December 28, 1959 in the Willard Hotel in Washington” with 33 members present ([Fayerweather, 1974, p. 78](#)). The membership has thus grown more than a hundred fold since the foundation.

In 1973 AIB changed its name to the present one, that is, moving from being an “Association” to an “Academy” (probably again being inspired by the Academy of Management) and dropping “Education” from its name (see the [JIBS Spring issue, 1973](#)). However, it does emphasize education in its objectives (our italics):

- facilitating the exchange of information and ideas among people in academic, business, and government professions who are concerned with *education* in international business
- encouraging and fostering research activities that advance knowledge in international business and *increase the available body of teaching material*
- cooperating, whenever possible, with government, business and academic organizations to further the internationalization objectives of the AIB

Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that research constitutes a significant focus of AIB, particularly after the foundation in 1970 and later development of the *Journal of International Business Studies* (see further below). In terms of research orientation, it is worth noting that AIB covers a number of specializations in the management area. This is evident from [Table 1](#), which shows the research interests held by more than 250 AIB members. However, it is also evident that business

Table 1

Topic with more than 250 AIB members having that interest.
Source: <https://aib.msu.edu/statistics.asp>.

Research Interest	Members
Business Policy – Business Strategy	1038
Management – Cross-Cultural Management	884
Economics – Theory of FDI and the MNE	631
Organization – Inter-firm Organizations (JV, Alliances, Networking)	535
Marketing – International Marketing Management & Strategy	532
Business Policy – Global Competition & Markets	524
Management – Entrepreneurship	516
Business Policy – Business Policy & Developing Countries	390
Management – Comparative Management	354
Marketing – Export/Import: Foreign Market Entry Modes	331
Economics – International Trade	294
Country or Area Study – Other Asia & Pacific	283
Business Policy – Business/Government Interaction	270

strategy, management, economics, organization, and marketing are dominant.

The frontrunner as professional association in the field, AIB, thus has a nearly sixty-year record, with a considerable growth in membership during its existence. Starting out as an organization in the United States, over the years it has attracted members from all over the globe. However, North Americans still dominate, and even more so when it comes to AIB Fellows. Having started out with a focus on education and with closer links to practical managers, AIB currently appears to be more research oriented than earlier, a development that can be observed in many scientific fields.

3.1.2. European International Business Academy

The European follower of AIB, the European International Business Academy (EIBA) was founded in Brussels in 1974, fifteen years after AIB. Its foundation was very much linked to the European Institute for Advanced Studies in Management (EIASM), which was created in 1971 with support from the Ford Foundation in the United States. It was originally intended to provide a US-type doctoral programme in management but instead became first a research institute with visiting faculty and doctoral students, and later a hub in a European network for research cooperation through professional organizations, workshops, and doctoral seminars. In addition to EIBA, it was instrumental for the foundation of a number of other professional associations: the European Group of Organization Studies (1973), the European Association for Research in Industrial Economics (1974), European Finance Association (1974), the European Marketing Academy (1975), the European Accounting Association (1977), the European Operations Management Association (1993), and in 2000, the European Academy of Management ([ngwall, 2009](#)). And, there can be no doubt that the role models for these professional associations were the frontrunners in the United States.

According to its website (www.eiba-online.org), in early 2017 EIBA had more than 500 members from about 50 countries. In terms of disciplinary background, EIBA members “come from a wide variety of disciplines and functional backgrounds and share the common purpose of using an international context to cross the intellectual boundaries that so typically divide institutions of higher education”. This open attitude is also expressed in the EIBA Statutes:

aims to foster a professional environment open to academics and practitioners interested in the greater field of international business and its applications, with a view to promoting, disseminating, and stimulating high quality research and education in the field throughout Europe and abroad.

Like AIB, EIBA arranges annual meetings and issues publications (see further below). It has also taken inspiration from AIB in electing Fellows. Such elections have taken place since 2001, when John Cantwell, John H. Dunning, Seev Hirsch, and Reijo Luostarinen became the first Fellows. In the case of EIBA the number of Fellows is restricted to twenty, which means that new Fellows can only be elected when a Fellow has deceased. Among the twenty living EIBA fellows, only five (Peter J. Buckley, John Cantwell, Pervez Ghauri, Jean-François Hennart, and Klaus Macharzina) are also among the 87 AIB Fellows. Earlier the deceased John H. Dunning and Danny van den Bulcke also had this double fellowship. Even counting these two, the overlap between the two associations in terms of key figures is thus only 8%.

The largest share of the EIBA Fellows comes from the Nordic countries (6), followed by Western Europe countries (4), while three each work in the United Kingdom or in Southern Europe. Two Fellows are from Eastern Europe and two from outside Europe. As a matter of fact, the latter two were elected in the very first group. They are Seev Hirsch from Israel and John Cantwell, who in 2002 moved from the United Kingdom to the United States. So the Fellows elected after 2001 have only been European.

3.2. Journals

The two associations AIB and EIBA both have their journals. For AIB it is the *Journal of International Business Studies* (JIBS) and for EIBA the *International Business Review* (IBR). In addition, AIB publishes JIBS Book Reviews (online book reviews), AIB Insights (4 issues a year), AIB Newsletter (4 issues a year), and Conference Proceedings (annually). EIBA for its part publishes, in addition to IBR, the newsletter *EIBAZine*, since 2004, and, starting with [Benito and Greve \(2007\)](#), the anthology series *Progress in International Business Research*. However, for both organizations their respective journals constitute the most significant publication.

3.2.1. The Journal of International Business Studies

The first issue of JIBS was published in 1970. It was simply the proceedings from the AEIB meeting in December 1969. For over thirty years, the journal was then published in a collaboration between the Academy and various universities (where editors were located): Georgia State (1970–1975), Rutgers (1975–1984), University of South Carolina (1985–1992), Western Ontario (1993–1997), and Georgetown (1998–2002). As of 2003, JIBS is published by Palgrave Macmillan. At the same time the number of issues per year was increased to six from four, which had been the case in the period 1990–2002, preceded by three annual issues 1978–1989 and two issues 1970–1977. Further increases occurred in the 2000s, first to six in 2003, to seven 2007, to eight 2008, and to nine in 2009. As a result 198 issues of JIBS have been published from its foundation in the 1970–2014 period that was used for our analysis below. The last year in this period its two-year impact factor was 3.563 and the five-year impact factor 6.067

3.2.2. The International Business Review

IBR was started in 1992 as the *Scandinavian International Business Review*. The initiative was taken by the present editor Pervez Ghauri, at the time in Oslo, who felt a need for a European journal ([Ghauri, 2014](#)):

At that time there was an increased feeling and even openly expressed feeling that American journals do not publish European papers. And that Americans are very parochial, they publish papers only with American data, so there was a need for a journal.

Ghauri managed to gather an extensive editorial board with members such as Mark Casson, Tamer Cavusgil, Philip Kotler, Jagdish Shet and Finn Wiedersheim-Paul as well as Peter J. Buckley and Kjell Grønhaug as associate editors. The journal was published the first year by MCB Publications, and was after that transferred to Elsevier, which suggested that the prefix “Scandinavian” should be dropped. The number of issues per year was three in 1992–1993, increased to four 1994–1995, and has since 1996 been six. The last year for our analysis below (2014), its two – year impact factor was 1.713 and five-year impact factor 2.433, that is, less than half of those for JIBS.

All in all, 125 issues have been published in the period 1992–2014. Not all of these were published under the EIBA label, however. It was not until 2001 that it was agreed that IBR would become the official journal of EIBA. This occurred in competition with *Management International Review* (see further below), whose the leadership was less eager to become the EIBA journal, however ([Ghauri, 2014](#)).

3.2.3. Other journals

Together, JIBS and IBR demonstrate through their development how the field of IB has attracted increasing academic attention. However, these two journals have not been alone in publishing papers in the IB area. If we add to our analysis the other four journals used by [Griffith et al. \(2008\)](#) in their study of themes in IB, the *Management International Review* (founded in 1961; 2014 impact factor 1.118); the *Columbia Journal of World Business* (founded in 1965, from 1997 named *Journal of World Business*; 2014 impact factor 2.388); the *International Marketing Review* (founded in 1983; 2014 impact factor 1.865); and the

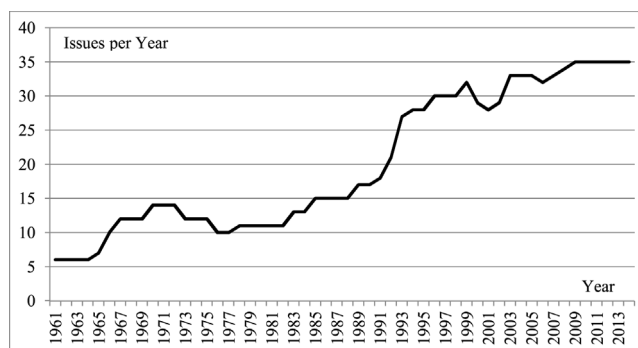


Fig. 2. The development of the total number of issues of six IB-oriented journals before 2015.

Journal of International Marketing (founded in 1993; 2014 impact factor 3.100), the growth is even more impressive. [Fig. 2](#) shows that although there were some increases in the total number of issues in the late 1960s and the early 1970s, the real take-off occurred from the early 1990s and onwards, with the addition of the *Journal of International Marketing* and the *International Business Review* as well as successive increases in the number of issues per year. All in all, this resulted in a total number of issues of the six IB-oriented journals before 2015 of 1085. As we will see below, when we look into the production of the field, IB research has also found its way to several other outlets.

The dynamics of the field is further demonstrated by some additional journals: the Elsevier journal the *Journal of International Management* (founded in 1994; 2014 impact factor 1.648), the ANZIBA (see above) journal the *Asian Business and Management* (founded 2002, 2014 impact factor 0.490), and the *Global Strategy Journal* (founded 2011; 2014 impact factor 3.694) founded by the Strategic Management Society and published by Wiley.

3.3. Handbooks

In terms of Handbooks in the IB field, a number of volumes have been published over the years. The first appears to be [Walter and Murray \(1982\)](#). It came out in a second edition in 1988, before getting four successors in the 1990s: [Gray, McDermott, and Walsh \(1990\)](#), [Kirpalani \(1990\)](#), [Punnett and Shenkar \(1995\)](#), and [Tung \(1998\)](#). In addition, [Buckley and Ghauri \(1993\)](#) and [Ghauri and Prasad \(1995\)](#), which contain a collection of significant IB papers until the early 1990s, should be mentioned.

After the turn of the century, an Oxford Handbook appeared ([Rugman & Brewer, 2001](#) with [Rugman, 2009](#) as the second edition). The first edition was followed by more specialized handbooks from other publishers, such as [Marschan-Piekkari and Welch \(2004\)](#) on qualitative research methods in IB, [Stahl and Björkman \(2006; second edition 2012\)](#) [Stahl and Björkman, 2006](#) on international resource management, [Verbeke and Merchant \(2012\)](#) on international strategic management and [Wood and Demirbag \(2012\)](#) on institutional approaches to IB. The publication of the above-mentioned handbooks is a further indication of the institutionalization of the field.

Among the general handbooks mentioned, [Rugman \(2009\)](#) is the latest and could be considered as covering significant developments of the field until recent times. In so doing, it particularly focuses on the multinational enterprise, providing sections on the history and the theory of the MNE, strategies for the MNE, and managing the MNE. In addition it offers sections on the political and regulatory environment, regional studies from Asia, and methodological issues.

An analysis of the name index of [Rugman \(2009\)](#) provides some interesting information about the IB field. All in all, 2317 authors are mentioned 5117 times in the volume, that is, 2.2 times per author on average. As already pointed out by [Simon \(1955\)](#) the distribution of

Table 2

Authors mentioned more than seven times in Rugman (2009).

Name	Total	Name	Total
Rugman, Alan M.	64	Brewer, Thomas L.	10
Dunning, John	63	Cavusgil, S. Tamer	10
Kogut, Bruce	41	Dorfman, Peter W.	10
Hennart, Jean-François	39	Geringer, J. Michael	10
Porter, Michael E.	39	Graham, Edward M.	10
Casson, Mark	38	Hanges, Paul J.	10
Vernon, Raymond	33	Katsikeas, C. S.	10
Cantwell, John	32	Khanna, Tarun	10
Wilkins, Mira	32	Kindleberger, Charles	10
Verbeke, Alain	31	Krugman, Paul R.	10
Bartlett, Christopher A.	29	Oxelheim, Lars	10
UNCTAD	29	Teece, D. J.	10
Child, John	27	Westney, D. Eleanor	10
Buckley, Peter J.	26	Yoffie, David B.	10
Caves, Richard E.	25	Hedlund, Gunnar	9
Ghoshal, Sumantra	25	Inkpen, A. C.	9
Kobrin, Stephen	23	Kuemmerle, W.	9
Young, Stephen	20	Lessard, D. R.	9
Beamish, Paul W.	19	Morck, Randall	9
Graham, John L.	19	Nakata, C.	9
Doz, Yves L.	18	Pettigrew, A. M.	9
OECD	18	Piscitello, L.	9
Prahalad, C. K.	18	Redding, Gordon	9
Jones, Geoffrey	17	Winter, Sidney G.	9
Kotabe, Masaaki (Mike)	17	Yan, A.	9
Luo, Yadong	16	Chang, S. J.	8
Wells, Louis T. Jr.	16	Craig, C. Samuel	8
Hamel, Gary G.	15	Grant, Robert M.	8
Hyer, Stephen	15	Helpman, Elhanan	8
Peng, M. W.	15	Johanson, Johny K.	8
Hofstede, G.	14	Kolk, Ans	8
Eden, Lorraine	13	Meyer, Karl E.	8
Yeung, Bernard	13	Nohria, Nitin	8
Birkinshaw, J. M.	12	North, D. C.	8
Nelson, Richard R.	12	Powell, Walter W.	8
Stopford, John	12	Rodrigues, Suzana B.	8
Williamson, Oliver E.	12	Scott, W. Richard	8
Chandler, Alfred D.	11	Spar, Debora L.	8
Tallman, Stephen B.	11	Stonehill, A.	8
Zaheer, Srilata	11	Yip, George S.	8

citations is skewed: 1486 (64%) of the cited are only mentioned once, while 1014 account for 75%, 345 for 50%, and the forty scholars cited more than seven times (Table 2) for 25%. Among the latter there are a large number of well-known scholars, with Rugman himself at the top, and almost on par with him, the father of the eclectic paradigm, John Dunning. The two at the top are followed by eight scholars mentioned more than thirty times: Bruce Kogut, Jean-Francois Hennart, Michael Porter, Mark Casson, Raymond Vernon, John Cantwell, Mira Wilkins, and Alain Verbeke. Among them, Michael Porter must be considered more of a generalist applying industrial organization to corporate strategy, while the others are well-known names in the IB field. The same is true for the seven scholars following with between twenty and thirty citations: Christopher Bartlett, John Child, Peter Buckley, Richard Caves, Sumantra Ghoshal, Stephen Kobrin and Stephen Young. And so on.

Needless to say, the figures, and the rankings of individual scholars, in Table 2 have to be interpreted with care due to the tendency of self-citations. Nevertheless, the name index can help us to estimate the degree of integration in the field. It can be measured by the slope of the regression line fitted to a plot of the frequency and the share above the same frequency in double logarithmic scale (Simon, 1955; Engwall, 1995). The larger the slope, the less integrated is the field, and vice versa. As shown in Fig. 3, the regression coefficient (with a negative sign) for the distribution of the cited authors in the Handbook is 1.54.

In comparison with other estimates of the integration in the management field (Engwall, 1996), the figure obtained is lower: estimates for fifteen key management journals 1981–1992 and for the

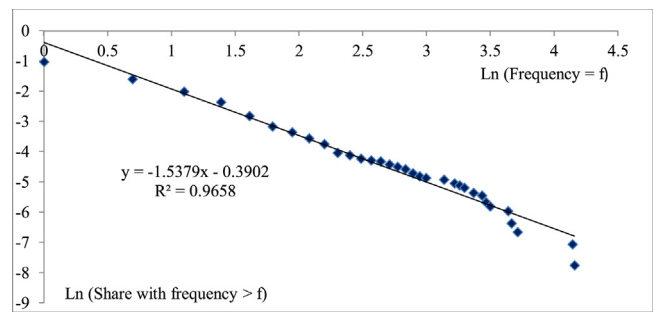


Fig. 3. The cumulative distribution of citations plotted in double logarithmic scale.

Scandinavian Journal of Management 1984–1992 yielded the values 2.41 and 1.89, respectively. This means that IB as a field is more integrated than management in general.

4. Production of the field

In this section we will move the analysis a step further by looking into the production of the field. In so doing, we have searched Science Citation Index-EXPANDED, Social Science Citation Index, and Arts and Humanities Citation Index for titles until 2014, using the search algorithm “International OR Multinational OR Transnational OR Global OR Foreign AND Business OR Corporation OR Firm OR Enterprise OR Investment”. This means that, in relation to the earlier study of IB publications by Griffith et al. (2008), our population is more extensive in two ways. First, we have not restricted the analysis to IB journals as they did. Second, we have covered a period longer than their study’s 1996 to 2006. Similarly, our population is more extensive than the one used in Peng and Zhou (2006), which is limited to three top international journals and six top strategic management journals for the period 1991–2000. Furthermore, our analysis will supplement the discussions in Buckley and Ghauri (1993), Buckley (2002), Buckley and Ghauri (2004), Buckley and Lessard (2005) and Forsgren (2013/2008); Forsgren, 2013 on the past and future of IB.

Our search of IB publications before 2015 resulted in 8791 articles and reviews distributed over time in the way shown in Fig. 4. It demonstrates that there were rather modest publications before the mid-1960s, a rise to about one hundred publications a year from the early 1970s until the mid-1990s, then growth until a decade ago, when publishing took off to reach a maximum of 524 publications in 2011.

About one third of the 8791 IB publications had never been cited, while the most cited publications had been cited almost two thousand times (Table 3). At the top, we find two articles that have become classics: Johanson and Vahlne (1977) on the internationalization process and Vernon (1966) on internationalization and the product cycle. The top ten also contain papers on multinationals (Kogut & Zander, 1993; Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000, Hitt, Hoskisson, & Kim, 1997),

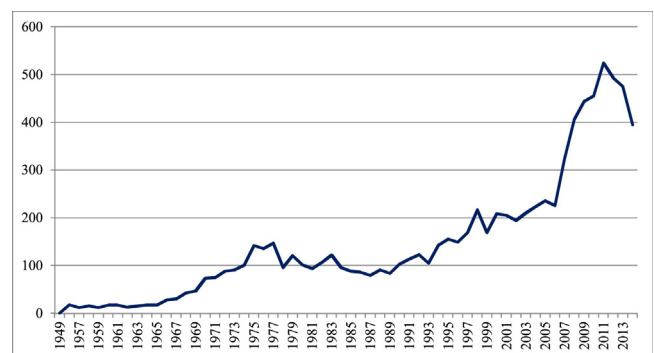


Fig. 4. Number of publications per year found in the IB search before 2015.

Table 3

The ten most cited articles in the IB search population until 2014.

Rank	Publication	Cited
1	Johanson and Vahlne (1977). “The internationalization process of the firm: a model of knowledge development and increasing market commitments”. <i>Journal of International Business Studies</i> , 8: 23–32.	1870
2	Vernon (1966). “International investment and international trade in the product cycle”. <i>Quarterly Journal of Economics</i> , 80: 190–207.	1832
3	Kogut and Zander (1993). “Knowledge of the firm and the evolutionary theory of the multinational corporation”. <i>Journal of International Business Studies</i> , 24: 625–645.	956
4	Gupta and Govindarajan (2000). “Knowledge flows within multinational corporations”. <i>Strategic Management Journal</i> , 21: 473–496.	828
5	Borensztein et al. (1998). “How does foreign direct investment affect economic growth?”. <i>Journal of International Economics</i> , 45: 115–135.	684
6	Aitken and Harrison (1999). “Do domestic firms benefit from direct foreign investment? Evidence from Venezuela”. <i>American Economic Review</i> , 89: 605–618.	660
7	Johanson and Wiedersheim-Paul (1975). “The internationalization of the firm: four Swedish cases”. <i>Journal of Management Studies</i> , 12: 305–323.	647
8	Hitt et al. (1997). “International diversification: Effects on innovation and firm performance in product-diversified firms”. <i>Academy of Management Journal</i> , 40: 767–798.	609
9	Zahra et al. (2000). “International expansion by new venture firms: International diversity, mode of market entry, technological learning, and performance”. <i>Academy of Management Journal</i> , 43: 925–950.	604
10	Caves (1971). “International corporations: industrial economics of foreign investment”. <i>Economica</i> , 149: 1–27.	591

foreign direct investments (Borensztein, De Gregorio, & Lee, 1998; Aitken & Harrison, 1999; Caves, 1971), internationalization (Johanson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 1975 and Zahra, Ireland, & Hitt, 2000). Together these ten titles nicely reflect the key areas of the field.

Using the methodology described above for the Rugman Handbook, we calculated an estimate of the slope of the regression line in a double logarithmic scale and arrived at a similar result: 1.57 in comparison 1.54 for the Handbook. This again confirms that the IB field is more integrated than the management field in general. A further indication of this is constituted by the top references used in the 8791 IB publications (Table 4): with the exception of the 1950s, the top references from the following decades are titles in IB. The exception is Penrose (1959), which has provided a general framework for research in IB. Then, until the 2000s we find the well-known IB contributions by Vernon, Johanson & Vahlne, Dunning, and Helpman. A particularly interesting feature in Table 4 is the development for Johanson and Vahlne (1977), which after a slow start has received increasing attention. In addition, in the 2010s (before 2015) there is an indication of a new feature in the IB field: Chinese authors at the top, with an article on FDI in China.

Further conclusions can be drawn from a first author co-citation analysis (Fig. 5). We find John Dunning at the centre surrounded by a number of well-known IB names such as Bhagwati, Casson, Hymer, Johanson, Krugman, Nelson, Stopford, and Vernon. To the left there is a strategy-oriented cluster, related to Dunning, with Kogut at the centre. Similarly, to the right, and also related to Dunning, there is a more economics-oriented cluster with Caves at the node.

An analysis over time reveals that early works inspiring the IB field were Penrose (1959) and Hymer (1960) (Fig. 6, left part of diagram). They found followers in Vernon (1966, 1971), Kindleberger (1969), and Caves (1971). In a second cluster, further to the right, we find Caves (1974), Hymer (1976), Buckley and Casson (1976), Johanson and Wiedersheim-Paul (1975), Williamson (1975), and Johanson and Vahlne (1977). Throughout we see the central role of John Dunning

through Dunning (1977, 1981, 1988, 1993). However, the latter part of the map also demonstrates the influence of later publications of Johanson & Vahlne as well as Caves (Johanson & Vahlne, 1990 and Caves, 1996).

5. Conclusions

Our analysis has demonstrated how IB has developed from its infancy in the 1950s to start a take-off in the 1990s to become a lively, productive scientific field in the 2010s. In the process two professional associations have been founded: one in the United States in 1959 (AIB) and one in Europe in 1974 (EIBA). Both organizations have experienced considerable growth in membership, but it is clear that AIB is the dominant one, with six times more members than EIBA. Although Europeans are members of AIB, the overlap between the two organizations in terms of key figures (Fellows) is small. This circumstance, more specifically the difficulties in publishing European IB studies, also appears to be a significant motive for the creation of a European IB journal (IBR) in 1992. This time, too, the Europeans followed the Americans, who had founded JIBS as early as 1970. We have also demonstrated the dynamics of the field through the foundation of a number of journals, both in the United States and Europe, independent of the two professional associations mentioned. In the European case, we have even seen how the *Management International Review* was on the market long before the association EIBA.

The foundations of both the professional associations and the journals are significant features for the development of scientific disciplines. That is also the case for a further developmental step: the publishing of handbooks. Since 1980s a number of such publications have been edited. Their publication constitutes yet another validation of the institutionalization of the field. By means of an analysis of index entries of one of them, we have shown that the IB field – even though IB scholars come from many different sub-fields – is more integrated than

Table 4

The most cited works in IB publications during different decades from different decades until 2014.

Cited decade	Cited Work	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s	Total
1950s	Penrose (1959). <i>The theory of the growth of the firm</i> . Oxford: Basil Blackwell	1	5	11	68	62	147
1960s	Vernon (1966). “International investment and international trade in the product cycle”. <i>Quarterly Journal of Economics</i> , 80: 190–207.	23	36	59	125	55	298
1970s	Johanson and Vahlne (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: 23–32.		4	43	192	199	438
1980s	Dunning (1981). <i>International production and the multinational enterprise</i> . London: Allen & Unwin.		39	53	101	48	241
1990s	Dunning (1993). <i>Multinational enterprises and the global economy</i> . Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.			49	152	82	283
2000s	Helpman, Melitz, and Yeaple (2004). “Export versus FDI with heterogeneous firms,” <i>American Economic Review</i> 94:300–16.				47	112	159
< 2015	Luo, Xue, and Han (2010). “How emerging market governments promote outward FDI: Experience from China”, <i>Journal of World Business</i> , 45: 68–79.					23	23

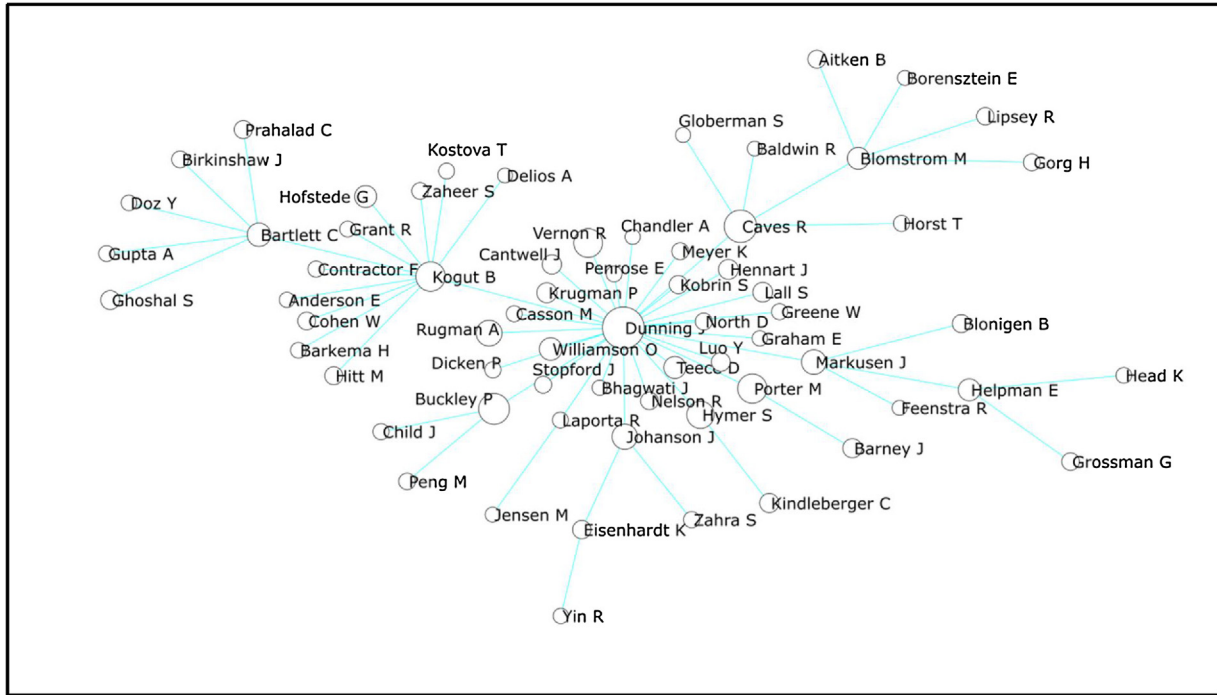


Fig. 5. A first author co-citation map.

management studies as a whole. This result was confirmed when we have extended our analysis to a population of almost nine thousand articles dealing with IB issues. This analysis provided evidence of central scholars in the field and how they are related to each other. Old influences emanate from Penrose (1959), Hymer (1960), Vernon (1966) and Kindleberger (1969). Then, in a second wave, we find the emerging Uppsala School on internationalization (Johanson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 1975 and Johanson & Vahlne, 1977), Buckley and Casson (1976) on

multinationals, Caves (1971, 1974) on foreign direct investments, but also the more general research by Williamson (1975) on markets and hierarchies. In the following stage, the impact of the eclectic approach is evident not only through several works by Dunning (1977, 1981, 1988, 1993), but also studies from the Uppsala School (Johanson & Vahlne, 1990), economic analysis of multinationals (Caves, 1996), and the knowledge-based approach (Kogut & Singh, 1988 and Kogut & Zander, 1993). More generally, we have seen in the IB field a division

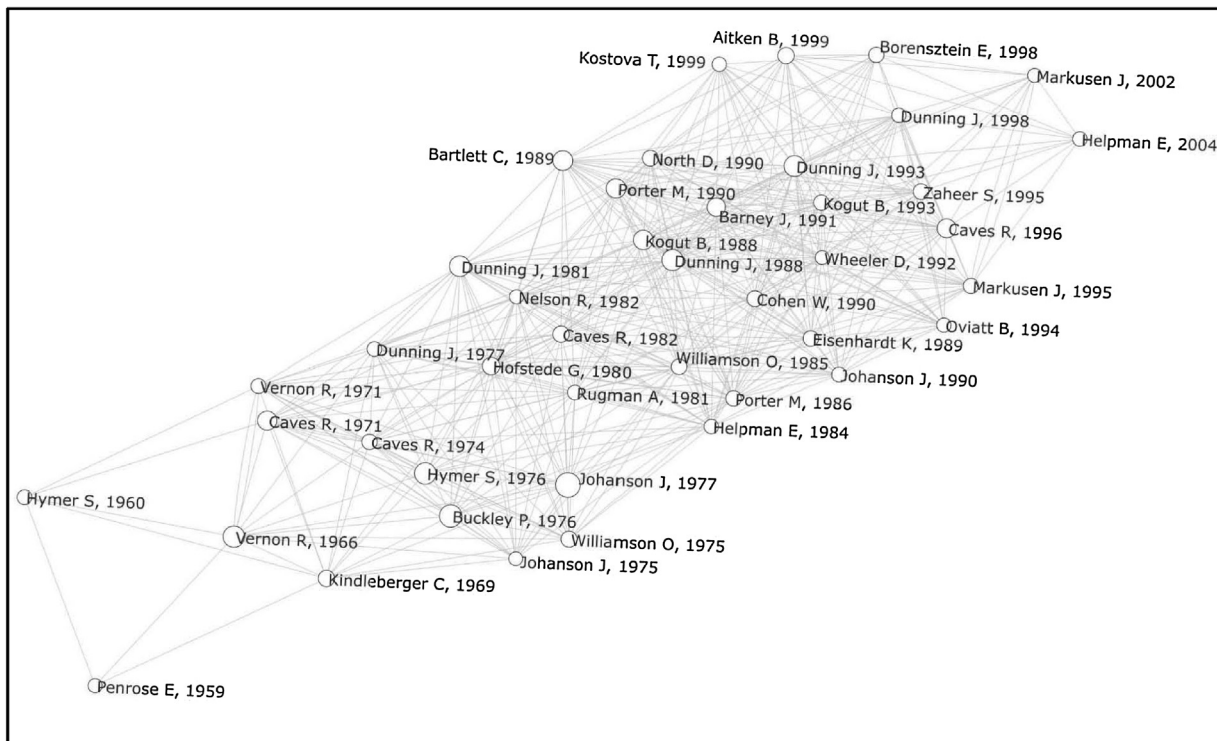


Fig. 6. The storyline of IB research using median (= 11 years) time lag time lag between co-cited authors and cited year.

between more economics-oriented research and work grounded more in organization theory. In terms of research problems, it is clear that various aspects of multinationals are in focus, as are internationalization processes. More recent research also appears to pay more and more attention to emerging markets, and much more can be expected in the coming years. For instance, while internationalization processes mainly have been described from the perspective of Western firms, outward foreign investments from emerging markets, such as China and India, are rapidly increasing. And it is not only the big BRIC countries that are of interest; many other developing countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America are becoming more influential and attractive markets. Hence, we should expect a shift in focus from a Western perspective dominated by the United States and Europe to a more global one encompassing emerging markets.

It is also of interest to further study the impact of the technological development, not least the development of Information and Communication Technology, on internationalization processes. How has this influenced, for instance, the pace of internationalization? Do traditional models with an emphasis on small steps and incremental learning capture this new phenomenon? And what about the importance of national borders and cultural differences – do such differences become more, or less, important in a world where transportation and communication are so much faster? More demands are also placed on multinational firms to act responsibly and ethically and contribute to a sustainable world.

For the future it should also be noted that the tone towards the increasing internationalization and globalization is becoming more skeptical, i.e. that “there is also a strong and growing perception that globalization brings more costs and risks than benefits” (Collinson, 2017, p. 7). Many nations, not least the United States, have thus become more inwards-oriented and economic protectionism with increasing trade barriers is threatening the flow of goods and investments. Therefore, as pointed out by Buckley, Doh, and Benischke (2017), it is urgent that IB scholars put more focus on “grand challenges” – such as migration, terrorism, climate change, poverty and mass entrepreneurship – which are issues transcending national borders and which are likely to have implications for IB theory.

Together our study of the organization and production of the IB field as well as the later development and new challenges point to the need to follow the further development of the IB field carefully. The challenges for IB scholars are considerable, but so are the opportunities. No doubt, we have only seen the beginning.

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