

CALL FOR PAPERS

Special Issue of the *Journal of International Business Studies*

FAMILY BUSINESS RESEARCH ON INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS IN A CHANGING WORLD

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Deadline for Submission: January 30, 2026

Motivation for the Special Issue

Family businesses, which contribute more than 66% of global GDP, significantly influence the global economy, particularly through their dominance in emerging markets. With the fast development of emerging markets, more family businesses from the Global South have stepped on the international stage. These family businesses have unique characteristics and behaviors that are distinct from those of their peers in more developed countries in the Global North. Yet most of the literature examines family businesses in the Global North. This focus has created an important knowledge gap that leads us to direct attention to family businesses in the Global South to advance existing IB theories and introduce new constructs and theories from other fields that enrich the interdisciplinarity and cross-functionality of the IB field.

We typically divide the world into more developed, wealthier nations that are commonly referred to as the "Global North", where most IB scholars are located, and developing nations or the "Global South". However, this simplistic division is being reconsidered because not all wealthier nations are situated in the Global North while not all developing nations are situated in the Global South. Moreover, countries in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America are growing in political and economic power, triggering a reordering of the global political and economic dynamics, such as power relations and strategic interactions between nations and regions, and policies and approaches to trade, investment, regulations and development. Because family businesses in these regions account for more than three-quarters of all companies and more than half of the largest ones, the previously mentioned global reordering throws a spotlight on family businesses from the Global South as key actors with growing agency to influence the global economy and the contexts in which they operate.

Various theoretical perspectives have been used to study family businesses, including internalization theory, institutional theory, the resource-based view, and behavioral agency theory. For example, family businesses have unique family-based resources that provide firm-specific advantages (Kano, Ciravegna & Rattalino, 2021) and stability-inducing heritage assets (Arikan, Koparan, Arikan & Shenkar, 2019) that are combined with a persistent, long-term approach to internationalization (Calabro, Chrisman & Kano, 2022). To provide another example, research based on behavioral agency theory shows that family owners' pursuit of socioemotional wealth (SEW) – which includes the family owners' preservation of a) control and influence, b) binding social ties with stakeholders, c) identification with the business, d) transgenerational control, and e) emotional attachment (Gomez-Mejia, Makri, & Larraza-Kintana, 2010) – helps explain distinct family firm behaviors and outcomes, including on internationalization (Miroshnychenko et al., 2023). Because family owners tend to be loss-averse regarding their SEW, they display a lower likelihood of internationalization. Moreover, if they internationalize, their internationalization mode, scope, scale and process tend to differ from those of their non-family counterparts (Arregle et al., 2021; Arregle et al., 2017; Debellis et al., 2024; Hennart, Majocchi, & Forlani, 2019; Pukall & Calabro, 2014).

Yet, prior literature has focused on family business behaviors and outcomes in the context of the Global North and overlooked their counterparts from the Global South (Arikan & Shenkar, 2022). Similarly, regions such as MENA, Sub-Saharan Africa, and smaller countries in Asia and Latin America have remained underrepresented in IB research. One notable exception refers to Arregle et al. (2021), who systematically document how family ownership in the Global North and Global South influences organizational internationalization, adding nuance to IB theories. Arregle et al. (2024) argue that there is scope to further integrate research in family business with research in the IB field.

While the unique institutional environment shapes family businesses in the Global South differently from those in the Global North (Eddleston, Sarathy & Banalieva, 2019; Lu et al., 2015), we still lack a deeper understanding of the underlying mechanisms that shape the internationalization trajectories of family businesses from the Global South (Dau, Morck & Young, 2021). These firms leverage the family to grapple with an institutional context characterized by weaker institutions, economic inequality, less access to scarce resources, environmental degradation, human rights concerns, and lower transparency as reflected in the Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index. By virtue of their ability to navigate and fill institutional voids, they can operate under vast uncertainty, and innovate when faced with new challenges. Moreover, they bring these skills from their domestic markets to international markets and acquire new capabilities as they globalize. For example, Dinh et al. (2019) compared the corporate governance of Asian family businesses with those in the West from an institutional perspective. The authors argue that institutional factors in the Asian context, such as political, regulatory, cultural, and social issues, shape the informal governance mechanisms of Asian family businesses. Their findings draw attention to the importance of informal institutions, suggesting that Asian family businesses utilize political connections in response to legal failure and depend largely on personal relationships to mitigate uncertainty. Several

other scholars showed that these unique institutional capabilities can be leveraged in other markets (Cuervo-Cazurra & Genc, 2008). For instance, Carney, Dieleman and Taussig (2016) documented how an Indonesian family business leveraged its experience working with the Indonesian military in its projects in Vietnam, where the military also played an influential role. Lincoln, Gerlach, and Ahmadjian (1996) examined how Japanese family businesses leveraged their historical zaibatsu roots and keiretsu network connections to navigate both domestic and global markets, maintaining stability through cross-shareholding and interlocking directorates. Additionally, the embeddedness of family businesses in informal institutions outside their home country can lead to unique forms of diaspora entrepreneurship (Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993). Therefore, given the distinct characteristics and behaviors of family businesses from the Global South, the existing findings and knowledge might not be applicable to understanding these family businesses' unique internationalization trajectories, requiring a deeper understanding of the role of formal and informal institutions, more nuanced theory development, and/or the development of novel theories.

We view this dearth of knowledge on family businesses in the Global South as an opportunity to develop new theories and add nuance to established IB theories (e.g., the Uppsala model or the OLI paradigm). For instance, in the Global South, families constitute familial networks, and societal trust in families is high, whereas trust in formal institutions can be low (Jaskiewicz et al., 2021). Large family business groups have emerged across the Global South and North in the past decades. In South Korea, family ownership and control are the defining foundation of “who controls a corporation,” given the national economy's significant dependence on family businesses (Kim, Kim & Li, 2008). Despite this, the family dimension of these international business groups has received limited attention. Moreover, there has been even less emphasis on family business groups from or in regions, such as MENA or Sub-Saharan Africa, that are currently gaining influence as the world order evolves. For instance, few scholars have studied the diversity among and across family businesses in different parts of the Global South. Tasavori et al. (2018) show that internal social capital can prompt the international performance of family businesses in Turkey. Also, Chung et al. (2021) argue that, in the context of Taiwan, family managers can be appointed to foreign subsidiaries to mitigate institutional uncertainties. In addition, Rienda et al. (2019) provide evidence that Indian family businesses show different entry modes compared to their counterparts from developed countries. Research in the context of Korean business groups suggests that ties to political regimes influence the formation of cross-border alliances (Siegel, 2007), but it is unclear whether this holds true for all markets. While these findings contribute to existing literature, more studies are needed to systematically compare and develop IB theories that integrate these findings at the intersection of IB and family businesses, particularly in the Global South.

Research has examined the hurdles of internationalization, including entry barriers (e.g., necessary economies of scale, greenfield investment, joint ventures), yet excluding successful SMEs from the Global South. However, the Internet of Things, rapid digitalization, and artificial intelligence applications enable even small companies from countries such as Egypt or Nigeria to internationalize successfully. For instance, Elves is an Egyptian SME providing a personal assistant service that, thanks to the use of AI, has

been able to expand its services beyond Egypt, reaching a global customer base. What we do not know yet is how the family dimension of funding, owning, and/or managing many of these players from the Global South influences their global ascent (or decline) relative to family business players from the Global North and non-family players from the Global South.

One area where the increasing agency by family businesses from the Global South may be particularly impactful is in addressing Grand Challenges, commonly defined as “formulations of global problems that can be plausibly addressed through coordinated and collaborative effort” (George, Howard-Grenville, Joshi & Tihanyi, 2016: 1880). Family businesses in the Global South have the potential to play a fundamental role in addressing Grand Challenges such as climate change, human rights issues, or social inequality, both in constructive as well as in destructive ways. In terms of constructive roles, we see promise in discovering how family business from the Global South leverage their ability to fill institutional voids by combining their resources and socioemotional purposes to effect change in their ecosystem (Tippman, Ambos, Giudice, Monaghan & Ringov, 2023). For instance, corporate giving can serve as a strategic tool for family business from the Global South to contribute to society at large and gain community support (Jeong & Kim, 2019). In terms of destructive ways, the strength of family ties may have unintended negative effects on society, for instance, when kinship networks or clans build powerful family business groups (Suddaby et al., 2023) that are associated with state capture (Fogel, 2006), and these become the extended arm of autocratic leaders and dictators, associated with unethical behaviors such as tax avoidance (Niu, Wang, Zhou & Gan, 2024) or corruption (Cuervo-Cazurra & Genc, 2008). Moreover, family involvement can negatively affect corporate social responsibility, suggesting that controlling family members may prioritize their own interests over those of minority shareholders (Choi, Han & Kwon, 2019; Ghoul, Guedhami, Wang & Kwok, 2016). Although there is a large literature on multinationals and their ability to navigate institutional voids and contribute to alleviating societal problems, the mechanisms by which family businesses navigate institutional voids and tackle Grand Challenges remain understudied (Buckley, Doh & Benischke, 2017).

Besides refining, enriching and/or extending existing theories in IB, we suggest that focusing on family businesses from the Global South, their internationalization and ability to address Grand Challenges, has the potential for integrating theories from outside the IB field. The study of family business is, by definition, interdisciplinary, and scholars already use a wide range of theories, drawing from fields outside or adjacent to management, such as finance and economics (Masulis, Pham & Zein, 2011), family science (Combs et al., 2020) and anthropology (Stewart, 2003; Verver & Koning, 2018) to advance theory on these businesses. Integrating such insights from outside IB to reflect on family businesses’ internationalization is still in its infancy. However, recent papers in the *Journal of International Business Studies* illustrate the vast potential of pursuing this path. For instance, Bohas and Meschi (2023) suggest that elite status attainment by Chinese business owners is a motivation for and success factor in acquisitions of French vineyards, while Carney and Dieleman (2024) draw on sociology theories to suggest that status signaling can constitute a tool to alleviate the liability of outsidership that family businesses from the Global South face when seeking entry into the Global North. We

hope to accelerate this stream of research and expect this special issue to help integrate more novel theories outside IB.

Aims and Scope of the Special Issue

The proposed SI seeks to advance our understanding of family businesses from the Global South and Global North. We are interested in contributions that can unlock knowledge on underexplored topics and geographies and advance ongoing conversations in the IB field. We are especially keen to stimulate new theoretical insights that extend IB theories or that open up new streams of IB research by leveraging theories from outside the IB field.

We welcome submissions answering questions at the macro, meso, and micro levels of analysis (as well as across levels). Moreover, we welcome research using diverse methods, including quantitative and qualitative approaches and conceptual/theoretical contributions. We encourage interdisciplinary and cross-functional perspectives.

In line with JIBS policy, we do not accept review papers for this special issue. We welcome high-quality submissions that look at family businesses from around the world, particularly those from regions that have been under-represented in the literature. Finally, the editors especially welcome manuscripts that research how family businesses address Grand Challenges. We welcome submissions with different theoretical and methodological perspectives.

Possible topics that would be suitable for this SI include (but are not limited to):

- Where do families, in particular those from the Global South, get their advantage (or disadvantage) from? What differentiates them from other multinationals, whether from the Global North or the Global South? What makes them distinct in different institutional contexts and how does this distinctiveness impact the way they internationalize? What organizational features do they display, and what networks do these families form? How are they different from industrial networks or state-owned enterprises? Are current IB theories sufficient to understand their internationalization patterns? What is the role of formal and informal institutions and how do related insights impact IB theories? How can insights from other disciplines, within and outside the broader management field, enhance our cross-functional IB knowledge?
- When do family businesses, particularly in the Global South, approach Grand Challenges at home and abroad, and, if they do, why? What explains whether family businesses, in such contexts, alleviate or contribute to inequality, human rights issues, and environmental concerns? What determines whether family businesses become heroes or villains regarding Grand Challenges? Do family businesses follow other approaches toward Grand Challenges as compared to other companies? If so, how and why? Where do these differences matter?
- There are various theoretical perspectives explaining family businesses' goals, behaviours, and outcomes. The Socioemotional Wealth (SEW) perspective has been popular in the Global North. Can this perspective provide novel explanations

for family businesses' internationalization and approaches to Grand Challenges in the Global South? For instance: How does SEW differ and operate across family businesses from different international contexts? Do family owners from the Global South pursue additional dimensions of SEW that are not included in the five key dimensions developed in the Global North? If so, why do family owners pursue these new SEW dimensions, and how does their pursuit influence their approaches to internationalization and their efforts to address Grand Challenges? Alternatively, are other perspectives, such as internalization theory or institutional theory more promising and relevant in the context of the Global South to explain family businesses' approaches to internationalization and efforts to address Grand Challenges?

- How do the Internet of Things, digitalization, and AI change family businesses' ability and willingness to internationalize and address Grand Challenges? How do these mechanisms change chosen approaches of family businesses from the Global South relative to those from the Global North? Can these mechanisms help family businesses deal with the inherent uncertainty and roughness that often paralyze organizational decision-making in challenging institutional environments?
- What drives family business decisions to "give up" on internationalization and hide the family's wealth in tax havens? What motivates families to move their businesses into or out of markets in the Global South, politically/economically unstable and war-torn countries? Additionally, where does family capital go in such situations? How does the geographical location of their capital influence these companies' decisions to expand internationally?
- How do family businesses hedge against risks (or even war) in politically/economically unstable countries in the Global South? How do they respond to co-optation, corruption, and undue regulatory pressures exerted on entrepreneurial families and family businesses in this context? Are there any differences on how family businesses in the Global South manage their relations with home and host governments and other stakeholders in comparison with family businesses in the Global North or non-family counterparts?
- Does family capitalism play a different role in the Global South when compared to the Global North and across different regions from the Global South? If yes, how? For instance, what is the role played by family offices, family foundations, family investment companies, or family academies in managing the financial, socioemotional and human capital of entrepreneurial families? How do differences in the extent and type of financial and socioemotional wealth owned by entrepreneurial families lead to differences in their behavior with respect to international business?

Deadline and Submission Instructions

Authors should submit their manuscripts between January 16, 2026, and January 30, 2026, via the Journal of International Business Studies submission system, available at

<https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/jibs>. All submissions will go through the standard double-blind review process.

The guest editors plan to run:

- Three online information sessions about the Special Issue at different times to enable scholars from around the globe to participate.
- Presentations at major global conferences on family business – IFERA, FERC, and STEP – to bring this special issue to the attention of scholars using novel approaches, constructs, and theories that could inform the international business field.
- A paper development workshop (PDW) at the 2025 AIB annual meeting. The guest editorial team has already secured some funding for this.
- A communication strategy with regular posts on the LinkedIn, X, and Facebook platforms. Moreover, we will also share posts via the AOM, AIB, SMS, FERC and IFERA listservs to create awareness and enhance the reach of the special issue.
- A symposium for the papers accepted in the special issue. The aim is to enhance the visibility and impact of the articles included in the special issue. The guest editorial team has already secured some funding for this.

Questions about the Special Issue may be directed to the guest editors or the JIBS Managing Editor (managing-editor@jibs.net).

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About the Guest Editors

The editorial team brings multi-disciplinary expertise to the topic of the proposed special issue. Besides being highly productive scholars from different geographies (Asia, Europe, Latin America, and North America), the team has substantial editorial and reviewer experience. The combination of topic expertise and editorial experience lends itself well to developing a high-quality special issue for the *Journal of International Business Studies*. The team includes scholars with long-term interests in the topic of the special issue and an outstanding record of highly influential publications in management, international business, entrepreneurship, and organization in top journals. Altogether, the co-editors of this special issue have extensive experience in editing highly cited special issues, or acting as editors, in a variety of journals, including, among others, *Strategic Management Journal*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Academy of Management Review*, *Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice*, *Journal of Management*, *Global Strategy Journal*, *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Family Business Review*.

Marleen Dieleman is professor of Family Business at IMD Business School in Singapore. Her research straddles the disciplines of International Business, Strategy and Family Business. Marleen is a qualitative researcher and she focuses on the governance, professionalization and internationalization of family business groups from emerging markets, in particular Asia. Her work has been published in *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Organization Studies*, *Journal of World Business*, *International Business Review*, *Journal of International Management and Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, amongst others. She is an Associate Editor of *Multinational Business Review*.

Peter Jaskiewicz is a University Research Chair and a Full Professor in Family Business at the Telfer School of Management at the University of Ottawa in Canada. In his research, he studies how differences among families influence family business objectives, governance, processes, and outcomes within and across institutional contexts. His research is interdisciplinary and international in nature and regularly integrates research from sociology, psychology, and family science. His work has been published in *Strategic Management Journal*, *Academy of Management Review*, *Academy of Management Annals*, *Journal of Management*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Journal of World Business*, *Journal of Business Venturing*, *Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice*, *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, and *Family Business Review*, among others. He is an Associate Editor of the *Family Business Review*, serves on the Editorial Review Board of the *Journal of Management*, and reviews regularly for *Academy of Management Review* and *Academy of Management Journal*.

Jane Lu is a Chair Professor at the Department of Management, College of Business, City University of Hong Kong. She received her MBA from China Europe International Business School and Ph.D. from the Ivey School of Business, Western University. Jane's research

centers on the intersection of organization theory and strategy with a focus on international strategy and non-market strategy. Her earlier research investigates broad issues underlying a firm's international strategy, as well as specific strategic questions, such as how to make a successful foreign entry into a country or how to manage successfully in a foreign country. Her recent research continues this line but focuses on emerging market firms and their non-market strategies. Her work has appeared in leading journals, including the *Academy of Management Journal*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *Strategic Management Journal*, *Journal of Management*, and *Journal of International Business Studies*. She served as Editor-in-Chief of the *Asia Pacific Journal of Management* (2016-2018). She is currently a Senior Editor of the *Journal of World Business* and a Consulting Editor of the *Journal of International Business Studies*.

Alfredo De Massis is Professor of Entrepreneurship and Family Business at the Free University of Bolzano and IMD Business School. He is also affiliated with Lancaster University Management School, and his editorial engagements include serving as the Editor of *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* and as the Associate Editor of *Family Business Review* while holding positions on the Editorial Boards of journals such as *AMR*, *JMS*, *SEJ*, *JPIM* and *JFBS*. He has published more than 370 articles (e.g., *AMJ*, *OrgSci*, *JoM*, *JMS*, *SMJ*, *ETP*, *JBV*, *OrgStu*), receiving more than 22,150 citations, numerous awards and frequent mentions in the media. He has guest edited more than 25 special issues in journals like *SMJ*, *JMS*, *ETP*, *JPIM*. Ranked as the leading family business academic globally in a 2024 study published in *Small Business Economics*, Alfredo serves on the boards of public and private organizations internationally, including in Italy, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, the US, Germany, and the UK.

Maria Andrea De Villa is Professor of Strategy at Universidad EAFIT and Visiting Professor at University of Michigan-Flint. She received her Ph.D. from Cranfield University (UK). She studies the internationalization of firms, particularly from emerging markets, and how firms manage socio-political risks and relations through nonmarket strategies (corporate political strategies and corporate social responsibility) and strategize to address grand challenges such as climate change. She is also interested in qualitative research methods, particularly the use of the case study from process, practice, and variance perspectives, and qualitative comparative analysis. She is member of the Qualitative Research Center at Aalto University and the Scientific Advisory Board of the Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) of the America's Conference. Her work has been published in *Global Strategy Journal*, *International Business Review*, *Journal of International Management*, among others. She serves on the Editorial Review Boards of *Global Strategy Journal*, *Strategic Organization*, *Long Range Planning*, and *Multinational Business Review*.

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