Widening the lens: Rethinking distance, diversity, and foreignness in international business research through positive organizational scholarship

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Abstract
The point of departure for the special issue is that current theory and research in international business (IB) may have overly emphasized a negative view on foreignness, distance, and differences of all kinds (national, cultural, organizational, and institutional), with an emphasis on liabilities and adverse outcomes associated with such differences. While existing research is certainly valuable, we argue that focusing on mostly negative processes and outcomes has hindered our understanding of the dynamics, processes, and conditions that enable organizations to benefit from diversity in a wide range of IB contexts. The goal of this special issue is to promote research that is in line with a Positive Organizational Scholarship perspective, which encourages scholars to look at commonly considered phenomena in new ways, as well as to explicitly consider positive phenomena in IB research. We then introduce the three articles included in the special issue and highlight how they help IB scholars better understand when and how foreignness, distance, and diversity can enhance organizational effectiveness and performance at multiple levels.
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INTRODUCTION

> Essentially, international management is management of distance.
> Zaheer, Schomaker, and Nachum (2012: 19)

People often find the unknown challenging, unsettling, and disquieting. They are unsure about appropriate behaviors and responses in strange situations, resulting in fear of distance and difference. These common psychological reactions contribute to the popular belief that differences lead to dysfunctional consequences and outcomes. Correspondingly, the notion that difference and distance create liabilities pervades research in international business (IB). National, cultural, geographic, or semantic differences are important sources of the "unknown" in the IB literature, as reflected in widely used constructs: "cultural distance" (Kogut & Singh, 1988;

Shenkar, 2001), "psychic distance" (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977, 2009), "institutional distance" (Kostova, 1996; Kostova, 1999), and "liability of foreignness" (Miller & Parkhe, 2002; Zaheer, 1995).

While parsimonious concepts such as the Kogut and Singh (1988) cultural distance index and other distance measures can be useful in gauging the differences across countries, a growing number of scholars (Berry, Guillén, & Zhou, 2010; Håkanson & Ambos, 2010; Tung & Verbeke, 2010; Zaheer et al., 2012) raise concerns about the frequent – and sometimes inappropriate – use of these concepts in IB research. Cultural distance, in particular, continues to be used extensively despite serious reservations raised by Shenkar (2001) in his critical review. In fact, Zaheer et al. (2012) found that the Kogut and Singh measure has actually *gained* usage since Shenkar's critique, probably because it provides an extremely user-friendly measure "that scholars who are not primarily interested in institutions or cultures can throw into a regression equation to deal with … an important unobserved feature of interaction between societies" (p. 20).

Among other problems, one major concern is that the predominant concepts and constructs used in the IB literature to explain the effects of distance tend to view differences, be they cultural-, psychic-, institutional- and/or knowledge-wise, as pejoratives. "Distance" connotes barriers that need to be surmounted and, thus, by its very definition, distance constructs focus on the difficulties, costs, and risks associated with conducting business across borders. Shenkar, Luo, and Yeheskel (2008: 907) pointed to the problems associated with the "illusion of discordance" – that is, the "single, narrow lens" of highlighting the negatives – as it can inhibit due attention to the full spectrum of dynamics associated with cross-border interactions. The results of a recent content analysis of 1141 articles on research on culture in IB published in the *Journal of International Business Studies* over a 24-year time period revealed a 17:1 ratio in research that made negative theoretical assumptions over those that made positive ones, supporting the conclusion that there is an overwhelming emphasis on the liabilities associated with cultural distance (Stahl & Tung, 2014).

Likewise, the "foreignness" refers to challenges firms (and individuals) face when they go abroad because they enter strange and unfamiliar territories. Based on the assumption that multinational enterprises (MNEs) are afforded an "alien-like" status in host countries (Hennart, 1982), IB scholars have generally concluded that foreignness is a liability

(Hymer, 1960/1976; Luo & Mezias, 2002; Zaheer, 1995). Specifically, MNE subunits may face high costs and legitimacy problems because of their inability to correctly interpret and adapt to local norms and customs, as well as their failure to become part of pre-existing knowledge networks and structures (Eden & Miller, 2001; Kostova & Zaheer, 1999; Mezias, 2002; Zaheer & Mosakowski, 1997). The tacit – and sometimes explicit – assumption underlying much of this literature is that the barriers, and hence difficulties and liabilities associated with business transactions across national borders rise with increasing foreignness and greater distances between/among the individuals, groups, and organizations involved. Not only do MNEs face the so-called "liability of foreignness" (Zaheer, 1995), which is that of being a stranger in a faraway land; they may also face the "liabilities of origin" (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2000; Ramachandran & Pant, 2010), which refers to disadvantages that result from their origin from a certain location (e.g., being an emerging market firm).

Although there is little doubt that distance and foreignness create challenges, both anecdotal and research evidence suggests that this is only part of the story. As Edman (2009) noted, being a stranger in a distant land may result in uncertainty and bewilderment, yet locals are not blind to foreignness but incorporate it into their assumptions and attitudes, often adjusting their behavior and reactions and forming different expectations of foreigners than of their domestic counterparts. While this may at times have negative consequences, in the form of xenophobia, stereotyping and, in extreme cases, open hostility, it can also result in greater leeway and even sympathy for outlandish behavior. These differences may provide opportunities for exploration, learning, and growth.

Companies have found that accentuating their foreignness, rather than deemphasizing it, can give them a competitive edge over local competitors in the countries where they operate. For example, based on the observation that Chinese high-potentials often prefer to work for Western companies, many developed market MNEs operating in China have made deliberate attempts to integrate their foreign identity into their employer brand strategy (e.g., by highlighting the value of "American style", merit-driven systems that open up the doors to promotion and career advancement), thereby positioning themselves as an employer of choice in the Chinese market (Stahl et al., 2012). Similarly, MNEs operating in an emerging market context have

found that when host country institutions are deficient or weak, adapting to local standards and mimicking the practices of their emerging market competitors may not be the best way to gain legitimacy. By emphasizing their foreignness (e.g., by voluntarily engaging in CSR activities), MNEs are signaling to investors, customers, and other stakeholders that they are trustworthy partners in the absence of strong governmental controls (Doh, Littell, & Quigley, 2015). In this regard, being foreign may serve as a strategic differentiator for local stakeholders and can provide a source of competitive advantage for MNE subsidiaries vis-à-vis local firms.

Greater distances – be they geographic, institutional, cultural, linguistic or psychic – can help individuals and organizations become better prepared for the challenges involved in IB transactions. This effect is also corroborated by the so-called psychic distance paradox where there are differences between countries that are psychically close (O'Grady & Lane, 1996). Consistent with this line of reasoning, several studies have found evidence that MNEs may obtain better performance in distant markets (e.g., Evans & Mavondo, 2002; Magnusson, Schuster, & Taras, 2014). These and other studies suggest that cultural differences, which tend to be more salient in business transactions across greater distances, may lead the individuals, groups and organizations involved in these transactions to pay greater attention to cultural sensitivities and be better prepared to navigate the cultural quagmires in the context of cross-border mergers and acquisitions (Björkman, Stahl, & Vaara, 2007; Reus & Lamont, 2009; Stahl & Voigt, 2008). A study by Schomaker and Zaheer (2014) found that knowledge understanding was higher across units in more linguistically distant locations. They speculated that when there are salient differences in structural elements of language, people realize the need to pay attention to them and this added awareness results in greater knowledge understanding than when meaning may be taken for granted in linguistically related settings. There is also a growing body of evidence that differences and distance can help firms engaged in cross-border business to overcome rigidities and inertia, develop unique and potentially valuable capabilities, and foster learning and innovation (e.g., Morosini, Shane, & Singh, 1998; Vermeulen & Barkema, 2001).

Findings for potential benefits of distance are in line with extant research on diversity – another concept commonly used in IB research. At the core of the "value-in-diversity" hypothesis is the idea that diversity brings net-added value to organizational processes (Cox & Blake, 1991: 46); and diversity scholars have indeed highlighted a number of potentially beneficial outcomes of diversity, such as heightened levels of creativity, greater adaptability, and higher quality of problem-solving (e.g., Adler & Gundersen, 2008; DiStefano & Maznevski, 2000; Ng & Tung, 1998). However, while the cultural diversity literature suggests that there can be positive outcomes if diversity is harnessed, to date, the IB literature has focused more on the problems associated with differences (Stevens, Plaut, & Sanchez-Burks, 2008). As a result, we are more aware of the problems, obstacles, and conflicts caused by diversity rather than the positive dynamics and outcomes that stem from such differences. There is much less literature that highlights the positive characteristics of multicultural teams. For example, Stahl, Mäkelä, Zander, and Maznevski (2010) found that most theoretical perspectives on cultural diversity emphasize the dysfunctional aspects of diversity. Attention is drawn to feelings of mistrust, dislike, and resentment that arise from value differences; and problems in communication that arise from differences in language and communication styles. Only the information-processing theory highlights the positives that can arise from diversity among team members (Van Knippenberg, De Dreu, & Homan, 2004).

In short, prevailing theories and research in IB and adjacent fields (international management, cross-cultural management, and diversity management) tend to over-emphasize the adverse outcomes associated with diversity, distance and foreignness while de-emphasizing their potentially positive role in cross-border business activities. Thus Cameron and Caza's (2004: 7) assertion that "[t]o date, … the conscious examination of positive phenomena is vastly underrepresented in organizational science" extends even more so to the field of IB (see Cameron, forthcoming, for a discussion of the reasons why a bias exists in international management and cross-cultural management research toward studying the negative much more than the positive). While the great majority of scholars in the IB field would profess a belief in letting the data speak for themselves, the history of scientific enquiry has shown that our inherited preconceptions may influence the way in which we gather, arrange, and analyze evidence, and the contexts we choose to examine to increase the likelihood of obtaining certain predicted outcomes (Popper, 1959; Klayman & Ha, 1987). As a result it is important that we recognize and attempt to correct the imbalance between

negative and positive predictions concerning diversity, distance, and foreignness.

AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW OF DISTANCE, DIVERSITY, AND FOREIGNNESS

Recognizing the imbalance between negative and positive considerations of diversity, distance and foreignness, scholars increasingly have drawn attention to the potentially positive role of differences, advocating studying how distance, foreignness, and diversity offer the potential to create value (e.g., Brannen, 2004; Edman, 2009; Insch & Miller, 2005; Kostova & Zaheer, 1999; Mezias, 2002; Tung & Verbeke, 2010; Zaheer et al., 2012). Undue emphasis on the negative in existing IB research can inhibit our understanding of the dynamics, processes, and conditions that enable organizations to benefit from diversity, including the development of strategic capabilities, improving foreign direct investment decisions, and facilitating synergy creation in mergers and acquisitions across countries. At the same time a growing body of research suggests that there may be circumstances in which distance, foreignness, and diversity are an asset to global corporations. For example, studies have found cultural differences to be associated with positive outcomes in a range of international business contexts, including culturally diverse teams (e.g., Stahl, Maznevski, Voigt, & Jonsen, 2010), global alliances and joint ventures (e.g., Meirovich, 2010), and cross-border mergers and acquisitions (e.g., Sarala & Vaara, 2010). These examples illustrate that IB research can benefit from adopting a more "positive approach" by highlighting the circumstances whereby the benefits of distance, foreignness, and diversity can outweigh the costs associated with them. Examining the positive side of differences is not only intellectually beneficial in terms of filling the gap in the literature, but is also crucial for the practice of IB. In light of the increasing globalization of the world economy and the growing intra-national heterogeneity in many countries (Tung, 2008), it is imperative that organizations recognize and leverage the positive aspects of such diversity.

Accordingly, the goal of this special issue of *JIBS* is to showcase examples of research that sheds light on the positive dynamics and outcomes associated with foreignness, diversity and distance in a wide range of IB contexts. This is in line with a Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS) perspective, which seeks "to develop rigorous, systematic, and theory-based foundations for positive phenomena …, [drawing] from the full spectrum of organizational theories to understand, explain, and predict the occurrence, causes, and consequences of positivity" (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003: 5–6). POS is not a single theory *per se* but represents a different perspective that encourages scholars to ferret out the positives as well as the negatives associated with a given phenomenon. Examples of an IB POS perspective include viewing "foreignness as an asset" (Brannen, 2004: 596), exploring the "upside of cultural distance" (Stahl & Tung, 2013), and "consider(ing) it as an opportunity for arbitrage, complementarity or creative diversity" (Zaheer et al., 2012: 26).

Research applying a POS lens can shed useful light on processes and mechanisms that foster positive outcomes in a diverse context. Furthermore, it can help explain "positive deviance" (Cameron et al., 2003; Spreitzer, 2006) and results that are counter-intuitive, such as Reus and Lamont's (2009) finding of the "double-edged sword" of cultural distance in cross-border mergers and acquisitions or Brannen's (2004) assertion that foreignness can be an asset rather than a liability for Disneyland Tokyo. Collectively, these examples demonstrate that research in IB may benefit from using a POS lens as it can be applied fruitfully to the study of a range of critical IB issues. We believe that a POS perspective in the field of IB can help redress the existing imbalance in IB research so that positive phenomena receive their fair share of rigorous and systematic investigation. In this way, it benefits the field because IB scholars can better understand when and how differences can enhance organizational effectiveness and performance at multiple levels, as illustrated by the articles featured in this special issue of *JIBS*.

OVERVIEW OF THE SPECIAL ISSUE

This Special Issue challenges the widely held assumption that cultural differences or distance engenders negative outcomes and, hence, has to be managed. This assumption accounts for the popularity of the phrase, "managing cultural differences," used in our literature. By definition, only deviant behavior and negative proclivities need to be "managed." This contrasts with desired behavior and positive outcomes that should be "valued" and "celebrated." Our call for papers generated 51 submissions – an indication that the topic of "Widening the Lens: Rethinking Distance, Diversity, and Foreignness in International Business Research through Positive Organizational Scholarship" struck a chord with IB scholars.

In total, the submissions addressed a wide range of IB issues, ranging from the very micro to the very macro, as well as cross-level phenomena, and they included both theoretical and empirical papers employing quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods approaches. Most studies did not explicitly draw on the POS perspective, but used POS as a generative lens to investigate positive phenomena. Other existing theoretical perspectives in IB were utilized to theorize why distance, foreignness, and diversity matter; under what circumstances they are likely to be beneficial rather than challenging or harmful; how their effects play out and what motivational and enabling mechanisms are or could be at work in the process; and to refine commonly used constructs in IB research and reassess whether "distance," "foreignness," and "diversity" are appropriate concepts with which to describe, analyze, and assess the impact of difference variables in IB.

Three papers out of this set were accepted for publication in this Special Issue. These three papers provide fine illustrations of the positive treatment of the concepts of distance, foreignness, and diversity related to international business and have the potential to motivate and inform an expanded research agenda around positive scholarship in the international business field in the future. The three papers chosen illustrate application of the POS perspective at the individual, team, and organizational levels of analysis respectively.

Focusing on individuals, Nurmi and Hinds' "Job complexity and learning opportunities: A silver lining in the design of global virtual work" presents a clear example of how international management research can benefit from changing the lens – from focusing primarily on problems and difficulties to discussing positive employee outcomes of cross-border work interactions. The paper makes several important contributions to the topic of the Special Issue. First, the authors creatively applied the Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1980) and the related work on job design to the context of global virtual teams consisting of knowledge workers. Through a combination of a qualitative interview-based and a quantitative survey-based methodology they provide an insightful account of the impact of job complexity associated with such virtual teams on team innovation, as well as employee satisfaction and engagement. We see this as a template for how other mainstream organizational behavior models and theories can be applied to the international management context. In our view, there is an underutilized potential of studying

important positive organizational outcomes, such as for example, employee satisfaction, commitment, or psychological ownership derived from the cross-border and international work setting.

Second, beyond replicating the main premises of the traditional Job Characteristics Model in a cross-border setting, the authors leverage the specific context of global teams, to identify an important additional mechanism through which job design affects positive outcomes of global work – the mechanism of perceived learning opportunities. While anecdotal evidence as well as research abounds that employees engaged in global work, such as expatriate managers, are able to expand their knowledge and skills (Firth, Chen, Kirkman, & Kim, 2014), this paper applies the Job Characteristics Model to explain the benefits of perceived learning opportunities and provides empirical evidence that such perceptions have a positive impact on valuable outcomes on employee satisfaction and engagement. Once again, the paper paves the way for future research on how the specific international context in IB research can highlight important dynamics that serve to expand and/or modify existing management models (Roth & Kostova, 2003).

Finally, the authors present a nuanced picture of the implications of virtual teams for individual employee outcomes, whereby the benefits of perceived complexity and learning opportunities are not automatic, but are instead contingent on design arrangements, which help off-set the negative effects of such work environments. They identify one specific arrangement – off-job recovery between work days – that can moderate the positive outcomes. Adopting such an approach to studying management phenomena in IB by examining the complex trade-offs between costs and benefits, positives and negatives, and advantages and disadvantages presents an opportunity for a more balanced and relevant research agenda.

Focusing on the team level, Lisak, Erez, Sui, and Lee's paper "The positive role of global leaders in enhancing multicultural team innovation" is an excellent addition to the literature on cultural diversity and team innovation. This paper makes three important contributions. First, it presents clear evidence of the positive impact of team diversity on innovation, a relationship that has been often inconclusive in past research. Beyond the particular relationships studied, the paper can be very useful for future positive scholarship work in that it shows how employing different theoretical perspectives might lead to varying predictions about the sign of

a particular effect – in their case, that of cultural diversity. Social identity theory, which has been the primary perspective used in team diversity research, emphasizes the faultlines and divisions within diverse teams anchored in different cultural identities of team members. While acknowledging this as an important mechanism at play in such teams, they also bring in an information processing/decision-making perspective that shifts the focus towards the breadth and richness of ideas and the possible synergies that diversity creates when it comes to innovation activities.

Second, the paper provides a rather in-depth explanation of different mechanisms by which team diversity influences team innovation, including team shared innovation goals and team communication inclusion. Beyond this particular study, understanding the underlying theoretical processes through which diversity in teams matters helps to specify the conditions that lead to positive vs negative outcomes, and thus not only informs future research but also helps explain inconclusive findings in previous work. One aspect important to note is that the authors considered team perceptions of cultural diversity. Much IB research on cultural diversity has used objective demographic data such as nationality, or archival country values scores to measure the cultural diversity of team members. Recent developments in the team diversity literature highlight the value in considering the subjective experience of diversity as a more promising predictor of team processes and outcomes (e.g., Shemla, Meyer, Greer, & Jehn, 2014; Zellmer-Bruhn, Maloney, Bhappu, & Salvador, 2008) – differences may only matter if perceived by the team members. In the case of this study, perceived cultural diversity provided a positive catalyst to shared team innovation goals, increasing their relationship with inclusive team communication. Future IB researchers should consider the merits associated with directly measuring perceptions of difference in common personal and interpersonal level IB constructs as this may unravel additional benefits not previously understood by using demographic indicators only.

Third, we think this paper will be particularly noted for its attention on the central construct of global leadership. The authors explain how team leaders' global mindset and identity affect the important underlying processes of team shared innovation goals and team communication inclusion that ultimately lead to innovative output. Furthermore, all these factors become more critical when members perceive the diversity of the team to be high. Overall, the paper is an example of how sophisticated and rigorous theorizing, along with nuanced conceptualization and measurement of diversity, can shed important light on the complex interaction between multiple factors and contingencies that explain positive outcomes in multicultural teams.

Focusing on the organizational level, Edman's "Managing the advantages and liabilities of foreignness: Towards an identity-based view" is an extremely ambitious undertaking – to develop a theoretical framework on foreignness, which can serve to explain when, under what circumstances, foreignness becomes an asset or a liability for MNC subsidiaries. In a way, it presents the broadest scope among the three papers as it incorporates all three aspects discussed in this special issue – distance, foreignness, and diversity. This paper introduces some intriguing ideas, that with further attention in future work, can have a notable contribution to both IB research and the positive scholarship approach. First, the paper addresses a topic of growing importance in the literature that recognizes the need to consider not only the negative but also the positive implications of foreignness in cross-border operations. While a number of scholars have tried to examine such positive impacts, "liability of foreignness" continues to be a much more established, better defined, and far more commonly used concept in our field. The literature so far has not even produced a single term to capture the positive side of foreignness, which is being referred to as assets, benefits, or advantages of foreignness. Presenting a theory that treats liabilities and advantages of foreignness in a "symmetrical" way (rather than viewing "liabilities" as the general case and "advantages" as the exception) is a useful step in shifting the attention to a more balanced approach.

Second, the paper presents a broad multifaceted comprehensive set of antecedents, consequences, and contingencies, which could be viewed as a first step towards developing a strong nomological network of the concept of foreignness. Furthermore, the author has tried to derive the many pieces of this framework based on the same theoretical foundation – defining foreignness through the concept of identity. The argument is that foreignness does not only depend on the nationality of the subsidiary and the host country (and the distance between the two) but is also a social construction related to the degree to which the subsidiary is viewed as foreign internally, within the MNC, and externally, in the host

country. These perceptions in turn are shaped by a number of organizational (subsidiary) characteristics such as subsidiary role and strategy, as well host country characteristics, such as cultural homogeneity and propensity for discrimination. We believe this conceptualization of foreignness offers novel insights that can serve as a foundation for future work in this area.

Third, the identity-based conceptualization of foreignness and the proposed framework allow for a very important extension of the work on foreignness – the proposition that companies can "manage" their foreignness and that foreignness can be viewed as a "strategic asset" that can be shaped and developed over time. This is very different from the traditional view of foreignness as fixed fact based on the nationality of the company and the host country where it operates. Here the author suggests that the perceived foreign identity of a company/subsidiary is continuously redefined as a result of the interactions between the host country conditions, the subsidiary characteristics, and also the impact of the various positive and negative outcomes of foreignness in subsidiary's actions. This perspective is more in line with reality and underscores the importance of smart management for overcoming/reducing the liabilities of foreignness on the one hand, and maximizing its benefits on the other hand.

CONCLUSION

The objective of the Special Issue was to systematize some emerging ideas on the positive side of the field defining condition of differences in international business. Based on our review of all 51 submitted and three accepted papers, we would draw the following summary conclusions. First, there is a notable interest in the topic. However, while all submissions had some positive elements in them, most did not provide a sufficiently novel and convincing theoretical explanation of those positive elements. In many cases, the story was pretty much reduced to positive signs of statistical effects (e.g., positive effect of institutional distance on equity stake in mergers and acquisitions). When the authors attempted to provide solid arguments for these effects, the argumentation was somewhat "forced" into the "positive scholarship" terminology and stayed on the surface. We viewed this as evidence that the Special Issue is timely and that we need to push more aggressively in developing the theoretical foundations for studying the positive side of international business.

The three papers we selected illustrate our views of the types of works that have the greatest potential to push this line of research forward. Together, they show how a POS perspective can be applied at different levels of analysis. Like all these authors, we see a tremendous opportunity to focus on positive outcomes in cross-border interactions and try to explain them through modified and extended management models that reflect the distinctiveness characteristics of the international setting. Nurmi and Hinds illustrated this approach with their paper on global virtual work and the Job Characteristics Model. As a field, we believe we can study many more desirable outcomes at all levels of analysis – individual, organizational, and even societal. This would be very true to the original Positive Organizational Scholarship idea (Cameron & Caza, 2004). Another major direction of effort should be toward developing deep theoretical explanations of positive effects of distance, foreignness, and diversity through utilization and combination of existing theories applied to the international context, as all three papers in the set do. Lisak, Erez, Sui, and Lee's theorizing on the mechanisms and conditions through which team diversity translates into positive team outcomes is a fine example of this approach.

To advance a POS perspective, we encourage researchers to begin rethinking the notions of distance, foreignness, and diversity and their effects in organizations. As already established in research, and also illustrated in the papers in our issue, these differences can have a positive impact on a range of outcomes at multiple levels of analysis. Beyond that however, all submitted papers, especially the three published pieces, made us think about the positive and negative effects of differences as representing two different (possibly orthogonal) dimensions as opposed to two ends of the same continuum. That is, conditions of difference would always present additional challenges, costs, and risks on the one hand, and potential benefits, value, advantages, on the other hand. The disadvantages and advantages are expressed in different types of outcomes. The former – in miscommunication, agency problems, costs related to discrimination, and so on; the latter – in possibilities for learning, combinatory and synergistic solutions, and innovation. They also operate through different mechanisms and thus require different approaches to managing them. "Managing" the liabilities may reduce the negative impact and thus remove barriers for achieving the positive impacts of differences

but it is not going to automatically create the positive effects. "Managing" the advantages requires focusing on different factors and mechanisms, such as for example identity formation or global leadership. In a way, one could think of the former as a "hygiene" factor in Herzberg's (1964) two-factor theory of motivation – necessary to reduce or remove it, but this does not create the extra value and benefit.

Finally, the submitted papers did not move far beyond traditional concepts considered in IB research. The POS framework has introduced or highlighted several new concepts such as thriving, flourishing, virtuousness, abundance, and resilience (Cameron et al., 2003; Spreitzer & Sonenshein, 2003), as distinctly different – and positive – phenomena than has typically been considered in IB research. Yet as noted by Cameron (forthcoming), "positive" has often been equated with softness, naiveté, unrealism, or ineffectiveness

and is often denigrated or dismissed as a legitimate engine of organizational performance. It has largely been ignored as an important driver of success in international and cross-border contexts. We encourage IB scholars to explore and take on some of these concepts to further develop positive aspects of IB. The POS framework assumes that context is central in supporting actor strengths in organizations, and emphasizes the contextual embeddedness of constructs like flourishing (Cameron et al., 2003; Roberts, 2006). Given that many theories in IB focus particularly on context (e.g., Brannen, 2004, 2009; Joshi & Roh, 2007; Khanna, 2014) and contextual differences, an expanded consideration of positive processes and states in IB research is likely to contribute to the development of POS research as well as enrich IB scholarship.

We hope the Special Issue will be viewed as a step forward in informing and motivating scholars to explore these important questions further.

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