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PRESENTATION OF TOPICS

IIB THESES ASSIGNMENT, MAR 14TH, 2025



Institute for
International
Business



Information about the procedure: https://www.wu.ac.at/fileadmin/wu/d/i/iib/doc/IIB_Studies/Ba_Ma/Theses_Assignment_mar_2025.pdf

11.03.2025

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TOPICS TEAM MOHR

Supervisor: Yoveska; Examiner: Mohr

Getting rejected for external funding: Impact on the Motivation and Reactions of Startup Founders (Female vs. Male Perspective) (**Bachelor**)

Startups' Internationalization and Social Media (**Bachelor**)

Influencer marketing: the rise of AI virtual influencers (**Bachelor**)

Family Firms vs. Non-Family Firms: Career Opportunities for Women (**Bachelor**)



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TOPICS TEAM NELL

Supervisor: Markus; Examiner: Nell

A systematic literature review of studies at the intersection of employees and decentralized organizations.

(Bachelor)

The literature review can encompass studies on decision-making, AI, management practices etc.

Thesis work within the area of decentralized organizing or examining the effects that organizational decentralization practices and self-management or autonomy initiatives have on employees. **(Bachelor/Master)**

Various topics and research methods are welcome. It is advisable to discuss your topic with me before writing the proposal. (Main interests, empowerment, feedback, motivation, ethics etc.)

Making self-management stick? Exploratory study of mechanisms that enable decentralized or self-managed organizing and related employee attitudes. **(Bachelor/Master)**

Several students can register for this thesis and will take part in a group data analysis (data already collected).

Each student will then focus on a specific research question to independently analyze the data and write the thesis. Both qualitative (e.g., interviews) and quantitative (e.g., surveys) are possible. Students interested in this topic need to get in contact with me before writing a proposal.

Studying the experiences of employees in decentralized organizations. **(Master)**

All types of research formats possible (e.g., quantitative survey, qualitative interviews, conceptual theory development)

Contact information: If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact JJ Markus at julian.jonathan.markus@wu.ac.at



Supervisor: Sehner; Examiner: Nell

The Role of integrators, boundary-spanners, and brokers in large organizations: A Literature Review (**Bachelor**)

Description: This literature review examines the roles of boundary-spanners, brokers, and integrators in large organizations that face collaboration challenges (Lawrence & Poliquin, 2023). Boundary spanners coordinate cross-boundary interactions and gather external information to enhance organizational problem-solving and innovation (Marrone, 2010; Tippmann et al., 2017; Lifshitz-Assaf et al., 2022). Brokers act as intermediaries, facilitating knowledge flow across work units within organizations (Pawlowski & Robey, 2004). Integrators promote coordination across specialized units, enabling effective adaptation and organizational learning (Stan & Puranam, 2017). Understanding these roles is essential for improving collaboration in problem-solving and innovation tasks in complex organizational structures.

Methodological approach: Systematic literature review.

By working on this thesis, you develop literature review skills. You are also building skills on how to categorize, digest, and clearly communicate complex information – skills that are very important later on in your career.

Contact information: If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact Martin Sehner at martin.sehner@wu.ac.at



Supervisor: Schmitt; Examiner: Nell

(Re)Location choices of headquarters in multinational corporations: A systematic literature review (**Bachelor**)

Description: Headquarters (HQs) of multinational corporations (MNCs) are central to both firm strategy and countries' economies, as they perform high value-adding activities, employ skilled professionals, and yield corporate as well as tax income. At the same time, recent trends in globalization and deglobalization – exemplified by geopolitical shifts, Brexit, and regional independence movements – have resulted in an increase in cross-border HQ relocations, challenging traditional notions of immobile corporate centers. This dynamic environment raises two key questions: What are the main determinants driving the (re)location choices of HQs, and what are the implications of these moves for firm performance and stakeholder relations? By systematically reviewing existing literature on HQ mobility, this bachelor thesis aims to uncover how strategic, economic, and regulatory factors converge to influence relocation decisions, ultimately offering fresh insights into a phenomenon that is reshaping the global business landscape.

Methodological approach: The thesis should be approached with a systematic literature review.

Contact information: If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact Jan Schmitt at jan.schmitt@wu.ac.at.



Supervisor: Schmitt; Examiner: Nell

The conflict between centralization and decentralization in internally organizing multinational corporations: A systematic literature review (**Bachelor**)

Description: Multinational corporations (MNCs) are complex systems that must balance centralized control with decentralized autonomy. As such, the international organization of firms can be viewed as a network where the degree of centralization vs. decentralization affects firm processes and outcomes (e.g., coordination, decision-making, and performance). For scholars of international business and global strategy, understanding how centralization vs. decentralization impacts firms has been a crucial research topic over decades. However, the literature is rather fragmented and especially recent developments in the global business landscape (e.g., globalization, digitalization, etc.) may force us to refine our knowledge in that research area. In practice, we also observe that some firms favor a highly centralized model to maintain uniformity and strategic coherence, while others opt for decentralized structures to enhance local agility and market adaptation. Given this complexity around centralization vs. decentralization, this systematic literature review will address two key questions: First, what does existing research reveal about firms' organizational structures and their choices for a (de)centralized approach? Second, how is the digital transformation reshaping this balance by altering traditional control and communication processes?

Methodological approach: The thesis should be approached with a systematic literature review.

Contact information: If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact Jan Schmitt at jan.schmitt@wu.ac.at.



Supervisor: Schmitt; Examiner: Nell

The impact of digitalization on organizational structures of multinational corporations (MNCs) and headquarters (HQs): A survey-based approach (**Master**)

Description: Multinational corporations (MNCs) and their headquarters (HQs) have long been central to international business research, but the ongoing digitalization is now challenging established models. Digital technologies like big data analytics, artificial intelligence, and the internet of things are reshaping business processes, firm cultures, and the traditional roles of HQs in adding value and coordinating subsidiaries. This thesis project will tackle the emerging research gap by surveying HQ and subsidiary managers to explore how digitalization is redefining the functions and interactions within MNCs. Students will have the opportunity to formulate distinct research questions and collaboratively design a survey study that yields both theoretical and practical insights into the evolving landscape of global business.

Methodological approach: The thesis should be approached with a survey design. Students need to develop the survey and collect responses from HQ and subsidiary managers. Students are allowed to collaborate with each other to collect this data. While students might share their data with the other fellow students for the analyses, each student will focus on an independent and separate topic.

Contact information: If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact Jan Schmitt at jan.schmitt@wu.ac.at.



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TOPICS TEAM PUCK

Supervisor: Lackinger; Examiner: Puck

Open Topic: Global Chinese Development Finance and the Belt and Road Initiative (**Bachelor**)

*Note: Students propose their topic of interest using the Global Chinese Development Finance Dataset 3.0 or another dataset related to Chinese overseas finance in relation to International Business. The topic requires students to develop data analytic skills in R to conduct the analysis.



Supervisor: Puck; Examiner: Puck

Internationalization of Austrian SMEs (**Bachelor**)

To what extent does the BRI act as a competitor or complement to existing European trade initiatives such as Global Gateway? (**Bachelor**)

***Disclaimer:** this topic has been suggested and developed by students in cooperation with the supervisor – applications for these topics by third persons are generally possible, yet not recommendable.



Supervisor: Puck; Examiner: Puck

International Firms and De-Globalization Pressures: Case-Based Evidence (**Bachelor/Master**)
multiple topics possible

International Entrepreneurship: How Austrian Start-Ups Internationalize (**Bachelor/Master**)
multiple topics possible

Recent Developments in Austrian Firms' Internationalization (**Bachelor/Master**)
multiple topics possible

A Global Market Analyses of Women's Soccer: Trends and Developments (**Master**)

The Organizational Structure of WU Vienna: An Assessment based on Publication Outlets (**Master**)

Strategy Consulting for SME: Assessing Players and Competitive Strategies in DACH (**Master**)



Supervisor: Tinhof; Examiner: Lindner

Simulating internationalization processes (Bachelor/Master)

*Note: Students conduct a review of simulation approaches, create a simulation of their own, or expand an existing simulation form the supervisors. The topic requires intermediate R, Stata or Python skills.

Supervisor: Tinhof; Examiner: Müllner

Adaptation to cultural environments – Case study (**Bachelor**)

*Note: Students conduct an in-depth qualitative case study of a business and their adaptation to cultural environments using a multitude of unstructured data (interviews, media, business data sources, big data sources (Google Trends, GDELT...)).

Business ecosystem internationalization – Systematic literature review (**Master**)

*Note: Students conduct a systematic, bibliometric review of the literature on business ecosystem internationalization.



Supervisor: Wolfesberger; Examiner: Wolfesberger

Populism and International Business – A systematic literature review (**Bachelor**)

Core focus inter alia: Recent findings, research contexts used, measurements, future research areas.

Public-Private Partnerships/Infrastructure Investments in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative – A case study-based approach (**Bachelor**)

Core focus would be to research big infrastructure projects in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative and analyze, inter alia, each actor's involvement

Greenfield vs. Brownfield investments: Determinants and future research directions – A systematic literature review (**Bachelor**)

Core focus inter alia: Recent findings, research contexts used, measurements, future research areas. A particular emphasis should also be on the institutional/political environment of the host country.



Supervisor: Wolfesberger; Examiner: Puck

Stakeholder networks of firms and NGOs and their effect on FDI / alliances / location choice (**Master**)

Quantitative study (using available datasets); Knowledge of R beneficial

Civil societies and firm internationalization strategies / Crossborder acquisitions (**Master**)

Different topical foci possible

- Read Bruijn et al., (2024) to get an idea of possible foci
Bruijn, K., Georgallis, P., Albino-Pimentel, J., Kourula, A., & Teegen, H. 2024. MNE–civil society interactions: a systematic review and research agenda. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 55(2): 136–156.
 - Quantitative study (using available datasets); Knowledge of R beneficial
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USE THE APPLICATION FORM AND SIGN UP FOR A (ONE!) THESIS

THAT MEANS:

Use the link on the **IIB homepage** to download the **application form**, fill the form and sign it, and **send it via Email** to the respective supervisor **by Mar 14th**.