Special Section on

What do we know and what should we know about international knowledge sourcing?

Guest Editors

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Call for papers

International knowledge sourcing has for a long period of time been a hot topic in the innovation studies literature. Scholars in this tradition initially debated on the magnitude of this phenomenon (Cantwell 1995; Patel & Pavitt 1991), while converging on the idea that international knowledge sourcing is a "North-North" phenomenon with R&D FDI departing from advanced countries and targeting other advanced countries (see e.g., Arvanitis & Hollenstein 2011; Cantwell & Piscitello 2000). As a result, the hierarchy of foreign R&D locations concerns mainly advanced country locations (Cantwell & Janne 1999; Patel & Vega 1999), which are ranked on the ground of technology- and R&D activity-specific advantages (Dunning & Narula 1995; Florida 1997; Pearce & Papanastassiou 1999). Innovation studies research has also suggested that R&D internationalization increasingly aims at sourcing knowledge abroad in order to complement and enhance knowledge production at home (Almeida 1996; Cantwell & Santangelo 2000).

However, the most recent statistics and an increasing number of studies paint a "North-South" as well as a "South-North" picture of the phenomenon challenging the stylized facts that research on international knowledge sourcing has traditionally documented. Emerging economies are nowadays major host locations of R&D offshoring. R&D FDI departs from advanced countries and target primarily emerging economies, which are now top-ranked in the hierarchy of foreign R&D locations (Contractor et al. 2010; D'Agostino et al. 2013; UNCTAD 2005). A parallel increasing pattern is the offshoring of R&D by firms originating in emerging economies and targeting advanced countries (UNCTAD 2005; Von Zedtwitz 2006). Thus, the emergence of new locations and players has transformed knowledge sourcing from a cross-border to a truly global phenomenon.

These recent developments raise questions related to the effective possibility of "traditional" actors to source knowledge at "non-traditional" locations as well as the effective capability of "non-

traditional" actors to source knowledge in "traditional" locations. Although emerging economies are experiencing an upgrading of technological capabilities and enjoy a large availability of talents (Athreye & Cantwell 2007; Lewin et al. 2009), yet, the ability of these new locations to develop state-of-the-art knowledge remains open to debate (von Zedtwitz & Gassmann 2002). Specifically, a critical issue concerns the type of knowledge and R&D activities that are more likely to be sourced and located in emerging economies, and the new international division of labor in knowledge production that has emerged as a consequence (Fifarek & Veloso 2010). The fact that recent statistics on R&D internationalization have documented document a growing involvement of emerging economies as host locations of R&D FDI has raised great interest (Moncada-Paternò-Castello et al. 2011), but the phenomenon is not fully understood at this point in time. Likewise, there is some evidence that firms located in fast-growing emerging economies perform FDI in developed economies with a technology-seeking intent (Athreye & Kapur 2009). Also this phenomenon is not fully understood from theoretical and empirical points of view.

The focus of the special section is on emerging economies as host locations of R&D offshoring departing from advanced locations as well as home locations of R&D offshoring targeting advanced countries. Theoretical and empirical arguments motivate this choice. Whether international knowledge sourcing follows a "North-South" ("Northern" firms investing in the "South") or a "South-North" ("Southern" firms investing in the "North") pattern, these perspectives represent two sides of the same coin and both challenge our current knowledge of the phenomenon.

The special section welcomes both theoretical and empirical contributions, which draw on different theoretical streams, adopt diverse empirical approaches, and apply a single or multi-level analysis. Possible topics and research questions that would be appropriate for this special section would include, but would not be limited to, the following list:

- The most recent statistics document that emerging economies are now top-ranked in the hierarchy of foreign R&D locations. But can firms from developed countries effectively source knowledge in "non-traditional" locations? What is the effect of R&D investments in these locations on the investors' performance?
- Recent research points out to a new international division of labor in knowledge production challenging the "North-North" pattern traditionally characterizing the knowledge sourcing phenomenon. What type of knowledge and R&D activities should be strategically outsourced and what type kept at home? What are the interaction mechanisms between offshored and home-base R&D activities? How do such mechanisms affect performance?

- Emerging economies have experienced an upgrading of technological capabilities and enjoy a large availability of talents, but are actors in these locations able to develop state-of-the-art technology?
- Recent statistics on R&D internationalization document a growing involvement of emerging economies as home locations of R&D FDI. What type of knowledge are emerging markets firms able to effectively source in developed countries—and for what purposes?

Submissions should be prepared in accordance with *Industrial and Corporate Change* guidelines and submitted by July 1, 2015 via email to the guest editors:
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