
Abstract (English version)

Multinational enterprises (MNEs) act as the key drivers of world trade and investment activities due to their ability to facilitate (economic) interdependencies across national and regional markets. The international business and management research community has thereby shown a substantial effort to develop theoretical frameworks that explain the reasoning for and assess the status and progress of MNE internationality/regional. In doing so, previous research, as original as by Rugman and Verbeke (2004a) and as recent as by Rosa *et al.* (2020), renders the concept of firm-level globalization, in terms of a balanced geographic distribution of sales across the triad, as meaningless and a special but not the general case.

For the generation of a holistic view, the present work examines the existing literature from this specific research field and considers longitudinal data from European MNEs for an empirical assessment. The body of literature defining and conceptualizing the different kinds of (international) firms is thus reviewed and analyzed while accessing more than 100 excerpts from peer-reviewed and monographic works. In addition, it is assessed how MNE regionality and globality are operationalized and measured. Likewise, a detailed review and analysis of the research that considers MNE classification systems and contributes to the regional and global debate is provided. Based on 253 data samples, it is thereby shown that 85.0% or 28,575 of the 33,632 firms are classified as home region-oriented MNEs. In consequence, prior research indicates that these MNEs are – despite their interdependencies – dominantly (home-) regional.

In extension, the present work contributes to the existing debate on regional and global MNEs based on the analysis of longitudinal data from European MNEs. Using sales and employee data, MNEs listed in CAC40 and DAX30 are substantially increasing in interregional orientation throughout the 2005-2015 period. In consequence and with home-region orientation fading, the stake of home region-oriented MNEs decreases by 32.8% from 81.3% in 2005 to 48.4% in 2015. The additional data review suggests that growth into interregional orientation is incremental while selected cases exemplify that the development is not only gradual but also complemented by big steps, such as connected with foreign M&A activities. While these insights are in contrast with the original narrative, the present work provides a comprehensive and updated perspective on regional and global MNEs.

Keywords: Globalization, regionalization, home-region orientation, Europe, multinational enterprises, global, regional, France, Germany.