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Internationalization, Innovative Capacity Counter Electronic Evidence and Its Impact on Developing Industries in Developing Nations: The Case of Cameroon

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Abstract
Production networks and the regional division of labour have been established in Cameroon resulting in massive vertical intra-industry trade in parts and components within the regions. This phenomenon is known as cross-border production sharing or the fragmentation of production processes into many stages across different developing nation. New development strategies claimed that participation in international production and distribution networks is the key to accelerating economic development in the era of globalization. The objectives of this study were to assess the mechanics of internationalization networks and its impact on developing countries in developing industries and to examine the link with technology transfer and developing industries. The study adopted the descriptive assessment of the previous works on the impact of innovative capacity counter electronic evidence in Cameroon. Findings from the study revealed that innovative capacity counter electronics evidence has a significant impact on developing industries in developing nations the case of Cameroon. The study recommended that developing industries in developing nations should internalize their skills and combat brain drain.
Keywords: *Internationalization, Innovative capacity and electronic evidence*.

Introduction

Outward foreign direct investment (OFDI) enables both small and large Multinational Enterprises (MNEs) to potentially enhance their competitiveness through securing access to new markets, technologies, brand names, resources and strategic assets abroad. In their constant search for better exploiting, consolidating and expanding their capabilities (or resource base), firms pursue a variety of strategies, which include product and technological diversification across fields and geographical sites (Cantwell and Piscitello 1999). These potential enhancers of competitiveness would not be available to firms that elected to stay focused on their own domestic economy. Moreover, firms that stay focused on the domestic market increasingly miss out on opportunities that are available only to firms that are prepared to internationalize – opportunities such as becoming integrated in global value chains or attracting global customers (Lee 2001). Recent years have seen the emergence of a growing number of multinational enterprises (MNEs) in a variety of industries from developing economies as diverse as Brazil, China, Korea, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Russia, Singapore, Taiwan, and Turkey.

These firms are part of a "second wave" of developing-country MNEs, after the "first wave" documented by such scholars as (Kumar & McLeod 1981, Wells, 1983). Second-wave MNEs appear to be driven directly by firm-to firm contracting in a global setting – frequently involving SMEs initially being drawn into the global business domain through contractual linkages with larger MNEs. Their contemporary internationalization may be said to be one of the notable outcomes of globalization: just how the multiple connections of the globalized economy may be utilized by emerging MNEs to provide themselves with a distinctive advantage vis-àvis incumbents, remains a topic to be explored in depth. Nonetheless, no matter how good the conceptual and

theoretical framework developed in the international business literature to seek to account for OFDI and MNEs, the question remains of its ability to cope with, or shed light on, the phenomenon of such MNEs from non-traditional source countries (Bartlett and Ghoshal 2000). More so, when MNEs decide to invest overseas the new breed of MNEs rarely has at hand resources such as proprietary technology, financial capital, brands, and experienced management. In the case of the so-called Uppsala school, the path of expansion is slow and incremental, with frequent loops of experimental learning. For emerging MNEs the luxury of waiting does not seem to exist anymore as protection at home is eroded by market liberalization, time-to-market is reduced, and production runs must increase continuously to control costs. We document the rise of Haier, Mabe and Arçelik (from China, Mexico, and Turkey, respectively), as successful examples of latecomer firms that managed to upgrade their operations, evolving from the production of simple goods, generally as Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) subcontractors, into new product lines developed through their own design, branding and marketing capabilities. One hypothesis to be explored is that these firms did not delay their internationalization until they were large, as did most of their predecessor MNEs from North America, Europe or Japan. Instead, many of the enterprises from developing countries *grow large as they* internationalize; conversely, they internationalize in order to grow large.

This is a striking pattern which, if confirmed, indicates that enterprises from developing countries, both those that are still small and those that are growing large, have pursued distinctive approaches to internationalization. It is a further interesting hypothesis to investigate to what extent such firms have made use of the interconnected character of the globalizing economy in order to accelerate their internationalization. In particular, and to the extent that most current internationalizing firms from developing countries were born as suppliers of established incumbents, they may have used their arrival as "latecomers" on the global stage to capture advantages associated with being late, such as the new possibilities for linkage and leverage of knowledge and market access available through globalization.

Statement of the problem

Since the early 1990s, international production networks have developed within the Association of the Sub-Sahara. Extensive production networking and the regional division of labour have resulted in massive vertical intra-industry trade in parts and components within the region, effectively becoming the de facto economic integration in Sub-Sahara Africa. The share of intra-regional trade (exports and imports) within several economic areas. The share of intra-Sub-Sahara trade, that rose remarkably from 34.9% in 1980 to 52.4% in 2003. Surprisingly, this figure is higher than that of other areas, which stands at 44.6%, though a bit lower than 58.7% of the European Union (EU). Developing industries has no doubt achieved a high level of de facto economic integration in terms of international trade transactions within the region. The integration process has not been seriously interrupted, not even by the financial crisis or the recently world pandemic covid 19. However, economic integration in the sub-Sahara does not seem to have developed in an even manner. This suggests that economic activity requires a large space in which to expand, such as the whole of Developing nations, as spatial economists argue. Such a trend suggests that countries at relatively low-income levels have played a significant role in the expansion of the intra-regional trade in Sub-Sahara. The trade pattern inside developing industries has changed, from a traditional pattern in which capital goods and final products, such as consumer and intermediate goods, have been traded with each other to a pattern where parts and components are traded instead. To put it differently, intermediate goods in the same industry have been actively traded among the developing countries, expanding intra-industry and intra-regional trade. For instance, import shares of parts and components within sub-sahara increased from 7.2% in 1980 to 32.2% in 2003, while those of

processed goods decreased from 37.3% to 28.0% in those same years. Parts and components as shares of trade have become the largest among commodity groups.

This phenomenon is known as cross-border production sharing or the fragmentation of production. Production processes are finely sliced into many stages and located in different countries in sub-sahara. In theory, with such vertical specialization a slight decline in trade costs would induce an increase in the trade of intermediate goods since goods may move across national borders multiple times. For example, an intermediate good is exported from country A to country B and is imported back to country A again after processing in country B. In this case, the good crosses a national border twice in country A and twice in country B. This is what actually happens in developing countries; when trade cost goes down, the competitiveness of the whole of sub-Sahara increases greatly.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study was to examine internalization, innovative capacity counter electronic evidence and its impact on developing industries in nations and the specific objectives were, to:

i. Examine the mechanics of internationalization networks and its impact on developing nations in developing industries.
ii. Analyze the link with technology transfer and developing industries.

Research Questions

To achieve the objectives of this study, the following questions were raised in the study:

i. Does internalization and innovativeness affect developing industries in developing nations?
ii. Does innovative capacity counter electronic evidence affect developing industries in developing nations?

Literature Review

Accelerated internationalization is a novel feature of the global business economy, in both advanced and emerging economies (Manjunatha, 2020). Latecomers in particular internationalize very rapidly, by making use of prior international connections, leveraging their own expansion through making use of these – as in the case of expanding abroad as contractor to an existing multinational, or being carried by a global customer into new markets (Andersen, Blenker & Christensen 1997). It was as if these firms had executed a "gestalt switch" from domestic to global player – even if their actual pattern of internationalization was incremental. Thus, they benefited from surprise in creating their global presence. A firm without this gestalt switch sees the international economy in terms of adding one foreign country to its domestic market, then another, and another in incremental expansion. In such a process, a "global perspective" emerges only slowly, if at all. Trade-offs between country operations, and the rotation of product strategies through the most relevant countries, are barely discernible as potential strategies. A firm that makes the "gestalt switch" by contrast makes its first foreign foray as an initial step not into one foreign market, but into the world. It starts out with a view that it will pursue customers wherever they are to be found, and preferably global customers, since they give maximum internationalizing leverage. Each move is seen as adding another piece in an expanding pattern that was global in scope from the beginning. Rather than emulate incumbent MNEs by entering markets through large investments in wholly owned subsidiaries, a crucial characteristic of this strategy is to forge partnerships so as to reduce risk, acquire knowledge, and gradually increase commitment to overseas markets.

Organizational and strategic innovation

Latecomers and newcomers adopted a variety of global organizational forms, such as web like integrated global operations. In most cases they dispense with conventional "international division"-style organization, which demonstrates that they begin their internationalization already equipped with a global outlook. The effect is that such firms do not tend to suffer from well-known "subsidiary-headquarter" problems of morale and initiative (Andersson & Forsgren 1996). The counterpart to this local responsiveness is the issue of maintaining global coherence and integration. Mathews (2006) documents one of many possible trajectories in building new organizational structures. As newcomers and latecomers, these firms had to find innovative ways to make space for themselves in markets that were already crowded with very capable firms. Viewed in their own terms, the firms found new ways to complement the strategies of the incumbents, such as through offering contract services, through licensing new technologies, to forming joint ventures and strategic alliances. It is plausible that it was through the implementation of these complementary strategies that newcomers and latecomers were able to win a place in the emergent global economy, not on the basis of their existing strengths, but on the basis of their capacity to leverage resources from the strengths of others, through making international connections. These internationalization strategies, designed to enhance firms' resource base rather than to exploit existing assets, represent a fundamental departure in thinking by firms about what "globalizing" means and how it can be accomplished. It takes the firms beyond earlier stages of multinational expansion; characterized by what Perlmutter (1969) and Alen (2017) described as ethnocentric and polycentric management attitudes, straight to a geocentric strategic perspective. This turns out to be an advantage of being a latecomer or newcomer.

The global white goods sector

The white goods sector (SIC 363) shows common characteristics with other producers driven global value chains, although relatively few scholars have analyzed it (e.g., Nichols and Cam 2005, Paba 1986, Alen 2017). Products are relatively similar and simple to produce, although assembling different parts and subsystems requires this strategy parallels a similar approach to leveraging technological capabilities by latecomers from incumbents, as described in Mathews and Cho (2000the combination of knowledge domains ranging from mechanics to electronics and plastic moulding (Aza & Ciabuchi, 2017); the industry is mature and is seen as a likely candidate for delocalization to developing countries, where not only input costs are lower, but demand growth rates are higher as ownership of major home appliances is strongly correlated to economic development. This gives a decided latecomer advantage to MNEs developing countries. On the other hand, since household appliances are experience goods and reputation matters, brand loyalty is a very important competitive factor in this market (Paba 1986). It acts as an information-based barrier to entry, reduces the amplitude of short-run demand shifts and allows firms to experiment (brand reputation cannot be brushed away by a single product innovation failure). Outsourcing, once limited to neighbouring firms in the industrial cluster, has expanded geographically. Maytag dishwashers use Chinese motors and Mexican wiring and are assembled in the US. OEMs in developing countries are also producing on behalf of Western OBMs (e.g. Daewoo produces refrigerators with freezers on top sold under the Maytag brand). The processing is now moving further as the worlds while goods – and not simply their components – are indeed increasingly being made in emerging markets. Electrolux, which at February 2005 had 27 of its 44 white goods factories in high-cost countries, said that 13 or 14 of them could be switched to low-cost countries over the next four years. Premium brand Miele opened a Czech factory for horizontal-axis top loader washers for the French market. Whirlpool closed its Quebec plant, retrenched 1,000 Italian staff, and is moving much of its production from Arkansas to Mexico. Technology is adding new capacity in Poland and Russia. Building new plants in countries such as Russia. For some products, however, consumers are still

willing to pay higher prices for goods produced in a specific country. The choice of off-shoring location is driven not only by demand and costs considerations, but also, and even more importantly, by the presence of suppliers of specialized components. A lesson emerging from leading white goods manufacturers is indeed that success depends on firms' internal resources as much as it does on the collective efficiency of the cluster in which they operate and are embedded (Sori 2005). A major recent change in the industry has been the simplification and standardization of production platforms that allow using standard engineering frameworks to which parts can be added or subtracted (Nichols and Cam 2005). The development of common platforms also allows speeding up product renewal and time to market, which is necessary to avoid price erosion. The introduction of computer aided manufacturing (CAM) and flexible techniques, including just-in-time, have allowed to reduce production costs. These again are technological and organizational innovations of which latecomers, without the prior routines that drag down incumbents, can take advantage. The search for greater efficiency, rather than pure price competition, had a dramatic impact on the plant organization of labor. Flexibility means that a production line can process different models without any. According to Merloni's managing director, Central Europe, "This shift in production capacity meets the need for a more even balance between output levels in Eastern and Western Europe. About 86 percent of the company's total production is provided by its plants in Western Europe, a region that only delivers 67 percent of the company's sales" ("Merloni Expanding in Central and Eastern Europe", *Appliance*, February 2004).

Fragmentation reflects the high incidence of transport costs, persistent differences in consumers' preferences and brand loyalty. The world's top ten manufacturers, ranked by sales, include three US companies, four Japanese ones, and one each from Sweden, Germany, and China. Only a few offers the whole product range and are present in all key markets. In fact, only Whirlpool, General Electric (GE), and AB Electrolux have a global orientation. Others have a strong regional position or are leaders in specific product niches (often of high quality). While they may not be present on all geographical markets, most manufacturers offer complete or nearly complete lines of major household appliances. ADBI Working Paper 231 Lim and Kimura 11 Related to this issue is information communication technology (ICT) capability. Although there have been no comprehensive studies done on the extent of adoption of ICT in the SME sector in developing industries, preliminary data suggest that a huge number of SMEs in developing countries have yet to establish an online presence and networking facilities (Asasen, Asasen, and Chuangcham 2003). This can be partly attributed to a lack of awareness and know-how and limited access to ICT infrastructure, hardware, and software.

Networking

There has been minimal clustering and network forming among SMEs, activities that, as many scholars agree, can help small firms overcome some of the barriers they commonly face, such as difficult access to information, markets, and inputs (Giuliani, Pietrobelli, and Raboletti 2005). This may be due to an inward-looking mentality that is typical among the family enterprises that account for a large proportion of the sector. To illustrate, more than 90% of SMEs in Cambodia are single proprietorship businesses, owned by an individual or family (Baily 2007). In Malaysia, micro-establishments represent 79.4% of SMEs (Normah 2006). Linkages also require fundamental shifts in business strategies that SMEs may not be able to achieve because of a lack of resources and knowledge.

Access to Finance

SMEs in most Southeast Asian economies have been having difficulty gaining access to finance for a long time. This can be attributed to imperfections in the financial markets and a lack of critical primary and secondary markets such as those for SME equity and bond financing. The formal banking sector remains the dominant source of credit for local businesses in the region. Worsening the problem, the current economic crisis has increased risk aversion and decreased liquidity. In response, governments have made substantial efforts to allocate formal-sector resources to support SMEs through measures such as subsidies and safeguarding banks. However, success has been spotty. Thus, SMEs are still struggling to secure long-term bank loans, working capital and bridge financing.

New Development Strategies and Technology Transfers and Spillovers

The formation of international production and distribution networks in sub-sahara induces a fundamental revision of development strategies for LDCs. New development strategies claim that participation in international production and distribution networks is the key to accelerating economic development in an era of globalization.

The development of international production and distribution networks in sub-sahara also presents a new perspective on technology transfers and spillovers. Hosting FDI generates both positive and negative effects on local firms and entrepreneurs. Negative effects stem ADBI Working from enhanced competition in local markets for products and labor, and technological dominance by MNEs may adversely affect the performance of local firms. On the other hand, positive effects include easier access to technology and managerial know-how for local firms and entrepreneurs. Technology transfers or spillovers may occur in the form of imitation or reverse technology, spin-off of engineers, and most notably vertical links to upstream and downstream MNEs.

A traditional development strategy known as import-substituting FDI seeks to establish vertical links between local firms and MNEs, and leverages those links to explore the possibility of technologically upgrading local firms and entrepreneurs. Such attempts often fail because the size of the local market is small and compensating incentives for MNEs such as import restrictions degrade the competitive environment. Under discretionary incentive schemes, MNEs typically have a weak incentive to make technology transfers to local firms and entrepreneurs. Another development strategy that utilizes export-oriented FDI and does not provide a notable increase in technology transfers and spillovers in so far as the activities of MNEs are geographically segregated in narrow export processing zones (EPZs). MNEs in EPZs are exposed to international competition and pursue maximum efficiency. In this situation, the value-added slices that MNEs bring in are often very thin and limited to purely labor-intensive activities, and the enclave nature of EPZs becomes a serious obstacle to technology transfers and spillovers.

The concept of four layers of transactions has a profound implication in the context of sub-sahara. Developing countries at the early phase of economic development try to participate in international production networks by hosting production blocks pushed out of congested industrial agglomeration in the neighborhood. During this phase, transactions by invited production blocks occur mostly in the second layer. However, developing countries that have reached a higher phase of economic development should try to formulate efficient industrial agglomeration. In this phase, transactions in the first layer become important. Alternatively, in the context of developing economies outside the industries, long distance transactions such as those in the third layer become important. The types of

expected transactions require different policies, and have different demands for hard and soft infrastructure (Bhat & Monaya, 2020).

International production and distribution networks, particularly at the stage of development observed in the developing countries today, present a possibility for technology transfers and spillovers.

The Internationalization of SMEs in Regional and Global Value Chains

Current State of SMEs in Sub-Sahara

Before exploring what policies can facilitate the internationalization of SMEs in developing countries, it is useful to first examine the sector's characteristics to get a sense of the present and potential capabilities, as well as the constraints that are present. This, however, is a tricky task given the following factors: 1) a lack of timely and comprehensive information about SMEs due to a structural weakness in statistical service in many developing countries, 2) the wide differences in economic structures and levels of development in the region, and 3) differences in countries' definitions of SMEs.

Roles and Characteristics

With its massive size, the SME sector forms the backbone of Sub-sahara economy. It accounts for a majority (more than 90%) of the number of all private-sector firms (Asasen, Asasen, and Chuangcham, 2003) and employs a considerable proportion of the domestic workforce in each country (40–90%). Thus, it is not surprising that developing countries SMEs play a significant economic role, albeit to varying extents. They make a substantial contribution to employment (about 40–90%) and exports (more than 25%), and play different dynamic roles that drive economic growth and industrial development (Chung et al, 2019). For example, SMEs in Singapore provide a flexible skilled production base that attracts MNEs; while in SMEs and rural enterprises were instrumental in the transition process from a planned to market economy.

Developing countries SMEs pervade virtually all socio-economic activities and services across urban and rural-urban areas. But there is much variation in their sectoral composition. While SMEs have an overwhelming presence in the Malaysian service sector, they are strongly represented in agriculture in Indonesia, food, beverage, and tobacco in Cambodia, and wholesale and retail trade in the Philippines. Given the trends of rising globalization and economic integration in the Sub-Sahara region, there is significant potential for the SME sector to increase its contribution to the region's development through greater participation in global value chains (GVCs). There are, however, some characteristics that are generally shared among SMEs in Sub-Sahara that limit their ability to do so.

Entrepreneurism

There is a shortage of a sustainable entrepreneurial drive in the sector. This can be attributed to a weak culture of innovation, and in the high growth sub-Sahara economies an over-reliance on technologies brought in by MNCs. Entrepreneurship capabilities are crucial for SMEs to maximize their inherent comparative advantages gained from operating on a small scale, such as the flexibility to adapt to changing market demands.

Level of Expertise

The SME sector's development is also constrained by a lack of skill and expertise in organization and management, which are important for enterprises' efficiency, flexibility, and competitiveness (Asasen, and Chuangcham 2003). The need for competent, contemporary management is

compounded by the fact that drastic economic and technological developments have created new, modern ways of production and service delivery.

The Network Approach

Proponents of the network approach view internationalization as a natural development resulting from the process of establishing, improving, maintaining, and dissolving relationships with individuals and firms (Johansson and Mattson 1988). A firm's network of both local and overseas relationships is seen as a crucial form of capital as it can create trust, raise access to information, and increase the firm's ability to mobilize resources. As firms internationalize, the number and strength of relationships in their network increases, bringing more benefits and helping them integrate further into GVCs.

Conclusion and Way Forward

The importance of SMEs in the age of globalization, production networking, and regional economic integration is well documented and firmly established in the literature. The central question is why some countries have successfully transformed and established viable, competitive, and sustainable SMEs development while the majority of other developing countries have failed. The answer is complex and requiring of country-specific, sectoral level analysis as well as the examination of economic, political, social, and cultural elements in a dynamic context. However, some elements can be used as basic policy guidelines for developing SMEs.

Successful cases of SMEs in developing countries, Thailand, Malaysia, India, and many other countries have adopted long-term comprehensive, coordinated and consistent policies. Often, empirical evidence shows that correct policy measures for SMEs in developing countries are not coordinated among relevant ministries, agencies, and organizations, which in the long run results in inconsistent policies. Therefore, governments and responsible agencies must develop "best practices" on the ideal business environment, training and upgrading, financing, marketing and management, sub-contracting, and networking and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that SME policies are efficiently and effectively carried out. Successful case studies invariably indicate that effective collaboration between government, trade associations, education, and training institutions is important in reducing cost for human resource development and capacity building.

Likewise, the dissemination of information through the effective use of available ICT should be maximally used. In this context, the establishment of national and regional corporate credit information and database and credit guarantee system in the region should be given high priority. The establishment of such database and credit information would contribute significantly to the problem of trade financing and other financing aspects of SMEs.

Globalization and regional integration require the healthy and sustainable existence of SMEs and their development in the region. The proliferation of bilateral and sub-regional FTAs has created duplication and overlapping of rules and other trade and investment rules and regulations that would increase the transaction cost of doing business in the region, affecting SMEs adversely. It is necessary to create a conducive business environment through the provision of standardization of products and services, rules and regulations.

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