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Evolution of the Concept

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De-internationalization: Evolution of the Concept

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Abstract: In this paper I discuss the evolution of the concept of de-internationalization. I look at the evolution of de-internationalization via empirical and theoretical lenses. I draw on recent empirical evidence to exemplify the evolution of what, how, why, who, where, when of de-internationalization. For example, in recent years, MNEs have been involved in back-shoring – reversing previous off-shoring by bringing manufacturing back home. Practitioners and policy makers acknowledge the relevance of back-shoring for MNEs and international trade policies as UNCTAD 2013 report on ‘Global Value Chains: Investment and Trade for Development’ states. Growing empirical data adds to the relevance of this phenomenon. In Germany alone approximately 400 to 700 per year perform back-shoring activities. Present-day ‘carrot-and-stick’ Trump’s policy towards de-internationalization of US companies provides a new perspective on the phenomenon. I then discuss the evolution of theoretical developments of the concept employing a number theory building strategies. Here I discuss the role of context and forms of organizing on de-internationalization decisions and conceptualize de-internationalization within and across levels. Indeed, despite compelling empirical evidence of de-internationalization, academic research lags behind. I conclude the paper by mapping theoretical landscape of de-internationalization phenomenon suggesting future research directions.