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The Strategies and Structures of Multinational Corporations

Abstract: I conceptualize eight firm international configurations based on the product market, geographic market and structural choices of firms. After taking these configurations to a comprehensive database to examine their relevance, I show that US firms cluster into five distinct and robust groupings that correspond with five of the eight configurations. An important contribution of this study is to show that product and geographic market characteristics need not move together – that is, differentiation in product markets need not require high responsiveness across geographic markets. Further, this paper offers two new archetypes based on product differentiation strategies that have not been considered in extant frameworks.