

Företagsekonomiska institutionen
Department of Business Studies

Take Me Home, Country Roads: Business Networks and Experience in Reshoring

Daniel Pedroletti



UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

Dissertation presented at Uppsala University to be publicly examined in Hörsal 2, Ekonomikum, Kyrkogårdsgatan 10, Uppsala, Monday, 12 May 2025 at 10:15 for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The examination will be conducted in English. Faculty examiner: Professor Torben Pedersen (Copenhagen Business School, Department of Strategy and Innovation).

Abstract

Pedroletti, D. 2025. Take Me Home, Country Roads: Business Networks and Experience in Reshoring. *Doctoral thesis / Företagsekonomiska institutionen, Uppsala universitet* 224. 100 pp. Uppsala: Uppsala University. ISBN 978-91-506-3098-5.

Defined as the relocation of a firm's (in-house or outsourced) foreign activities to its home country, reshoring is a valuable strategy to reconfigure the international activities and cope with the changing international business environment. This thesis focuses on how reshoring impacts the firm's business network and subsequent relocations. For this purpose, I conceive it as a process related to the firms' internationalization, which consists of dis-embedding activities from a host country, re-embedding them domestically, and generating a reshoring experience that shapes subsequent relocation decisions.

This thesis relies on 55 in-depth interviews and 148 survey responses. I collected and analyzed the data through a multiphase research design, sequentially combining qualitative and quantitative methods. It began with an exploratory phase reviewing extant reshoring research (Paper I) and conducting interviews on the topic. As the network dynamics emerged as central, two papers examined the impact of reshoring on the host- (Paper II) and home-country (Paper III) supplier network. The qualitative work also highlighted the role of reshoring experience in shaping subsequent relocation decisions. Consequently, I conducted a survey in the confirmatory phase to test the impact of firms' international production and reshoring experience on subsequent reshoring, nearshoring, and further offshoring decisions (Paper IV).

The findings display a number of challenges and opportunities presented to firms during the reshoring process, particularly when dis-embedding the activities from the host country and re-embedding them domestically. These mainly relate to the termination and evolution of business relationships with foreign suppliers and the development of new ones with those in the home country. Furthermore, the findings reveal a path dependence between reshoring experience and subsequent reshoring decisions, which are positively related, although reshoring experience does not affect nearshoring and further offshoring decisions.

This thesis contributes to the reshoring and internationalization literature in three main ways. First, it develops a network and experiential learning view of the reshoring process, untangling how these elements play out in relocations to the home country. Second, it conceives reshoring as a commitment process related to firms' internationalization. In so doing, it shows how some of the central elements explaining international expansion (e.g., relationship commitment and experience) evolve in the reshoring process and the interplay of the home country context with the evolution of commitment in a host country. Third, it advances the concept of a reshoring capability, which has important implications for subsequent reshoring decisions.

Keywords: Reshoring, Business network, Experience, Internationalization, Reshoring capability

Daniel Pedroletti, Department of Business Studies, Box 513, Uppsala University, SE-75120 Uppsala, Sweden.

© Daniel Pedroletti 2025

ISSN 1103-8454

ISBN 978-91-506-3098-5

URN urn:nbn:se:uu:diva-552487 (<http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:uu:diva-552487>)

List of papers

This thesis is based on the following papers, which are referred to in the text by their Roman numerals.

- I. Pedroletti, D., Ciabuschi, F. (2023). Reshoring: A review and research agenda. *Journal of Business Research*, 164: 114005.
- II. Pedroletti, D. (2025). Network effects of partial reshoring in the internationalization process. *International Business Review*, 34(3): 102401.
- III. Baraldi, E., Ciabuschi, F., Fratocchi, L., Pedroletti, D., Picciotti, A. (2024). The roles of key suppliers in network formation when reshoring. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, ahead-of-print.
- IV. Pedroletti, D., Ciabuschi, F., Su, C. (2025). Reshoring, nearshoring, and further offshoring: Testing the role of experience. Submitted to *Global Strategy Journal*

Reprints were made with permission from the respective publishers.

Other works

Although not included in the thesis, other papers have been developed during the dissertation work. Among them, two were peer-reviewed and presented at academic conferences:

- V. Pedroletti, D., Lindahl, O. (2023). Reshoring in the embedded multinational: business network-related challenges in relocations to the home country.
Presented at the *Academy of International Business (AIB) 2023* in Warsaw, Poland, and the *British Academy of Management (BAM) 2023* in Brighton, United Kingdom

- VI. Ciabuschi, F., Pedroletti, D. (2025). Learning to Retract: Knowledge Transfer Processes and Outcomes of Reshoring.
Presented at the *European International Business Academy (EIBA) 2024* in Helsinki, Finland, and accepted for presentation at the *Academy of Management (AOM) 2025* in Copenhagen, Denmark

Contents

1	Introduction.....	7
1.1	Background	7
1.2	Reshoring: relevance, related concepts, and what we (do not) know	8
1.3	Research purpose and questions.....	12
1.4	Research approach.....	15
1.5	Thesis structure	17
2	Conceptual background	19
2.1	From offshoring to reshoring	19
2.2	Definitions and key dimensions of reshoring.....	21
2.2.1	The governance modes of reshoring.....	21
2.2.2	The offshoring before reshoring.....	23
2.2.3	The scope of reshoring	24
3	Theoretical framework.....	27
3.1	A network and experiential learning view of the reshoring process.....	27
3.2	Internationalization and the reshoring process.....	30
3.3	The firm's business network and reshoring	32
3.4	Experiential learning and reshoring	33
4	Methodology.....	37
4.1	Research design.....	37
4.1.1	The multiphase approach.....	38
4.1.2	The mixed-methods approach.....	39
4.2	Qualitative research.....	41
4.2.1	Case selection and description.....	42
4.2.2	Data collection.....	45
4.2.3	Data analysis.....	46
4.3	Quantitative research.....	48
4.3.1	Questionnaire design	49
4.3.2	Sampling and data collection.....	50
4.3.3	Description of the sample	51

5 Summary of papers	55
Paper I: Reshoring: A review and research agenda.....	55
Paper II: Network effects of partial reshoring in the internationalization process.....	57
Paper III: The roles of key suppliers in network formation when reshoring.....	58
Paper IV: Reshoring, nearshoring, and further offshoring: Testing the role of experience	60
6 Discussion and conclusions	63
6.1 Main findings	63
6.1.1 Dis-embedding: opportunities and challenges.....	63
6.1.2 Re-embedding: opportunities and challenges	64
6.1.3 Reshoring experience and subsequent relocation decisions	65
6.2 Theoretical contributions.....	66
6.2.1 Reshoring as a network and experiential learning process	67
6.2.2 The reshoring process in firms' internationalization	69
6.2.3 Toward a reshoring capability	71
6.3 Managerial and policy implications	74
6.4 Limitations and opportunities for future research	77
References.....	79
Appendices.....	93
Acknowledgements.....	99

1 Introduction

This thesis focuses on reshoring, which is defined as the relocation of a firm's (in-house or outsourced) foreign activities to its home country. In particular, I investigate two aspects that the initial phase of the study proved to have important implications for how reshoring unfolds: its business network dynamics and the firm's reshoring experience. I thus conceive reshoring as a network and experiential learning process, reconfiguring the firm's activities in its broader internationalization. In this process, the firm's activities are dis-embedded from a host country and re-embedded domestically, generating a reshoring experience that affects subsequent relocation decisions. Theoretically, this thesis contributes to extant reshoring and internationalization literature by developing a network and experiential learning view of the reshoring process, conceptualizing reshoring as a commitment process related to the broader firms' internationalization, and theorizing the emergence of a reshoring capability that supports subsequent reshoring decisions.

1.1 Background

The study of international business has always been concerned with the international expansion of firms (Forsgren, 2017). A wealth of research has dissected why firms establish cross-border activities (Buckley & Casson, 1976; Dunning, 1980) and how they internationalize (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977; Vernon, 1966). This has generated a thorough understanding of the advantages pursued by firms when expanding abroad (Cantwell & Mudambi, 2005; Dunning, 1998), the modes in which they operate internationally (Andersen, 1997; Hill et al., 1990), and the processes through which they further expand their international activities (e.g., Johanson & Vahlne, 2009; McDougall et al., 1994).

The extensive scholarly focus on international expansion has paralleled the growing economic development and integration characterizing the decades following the Second World War (Jones, 2005). Nevertheless, a perfect market integration remained far from achieved (Ghemawat, 2003), and recent evidence indicates that global markets may be conversely starting to experience

a phase of de-globalization (Witt, 2019). The world levels of foreign direct investments have decreased since 2007 (World Bank, 2023a), and recent events, such as disruptions of global value chains, international conflicts, and rising geopolitical tensions, are creating an increasingly complex business environment (Hartwell & Devinney, 2021; Meyer et al., 2023).

This growing complexity has led extant research to broaden its focus and increasingly account for various reconfigurations of the firm's international activities. These may imply decisions to change the modes in which the firm operates in a host country, for example, shifting from a joint venture to its subsidiary and vice versa (Calof & Beamish, 1995), divesting part or all of the activities in a host country (Benito, 1997), or relocate them to a different country (Kogut & Kulatilaka, 1994). Internationalization is indeed not a one-way journey, and although a few early contributions pointed to various forms of de-internationalization, such as foreign divestment (Boddewyn, 1979) and market exit (Dixit, 1989), it is only in the last years that interest in the topic has surged and accounted for a growing number of reconfigurations of the firm's international activities (Kafouros et al., 2022).

1.2 Reshoring: relevance, related concepts, and what we (do not) know

One of the alternatives for firms evaluating possible reconfigurations of their international activities is reshoring. The occurrence and relevance of the phenomenon have been recognized by the popular press (e.g., *The Economist*, 2020), consulting firms (e.g., Deloitte, 2023), as well as policymakers at various levels (e.g., OECD, 2024; UNCTAD, 2020). Recent developments have further underscored the importance of reshoring as an option to cope with the increasingly challenging global business environment. For instance, the pandemic highlighted the vulnerability of long supply chains and the risks associated with the concentration of an important part of the firm's activities in a single location (Barbieri et al., 2020), or even worse of activities that are critical for a whole industry, as in the case of the pharmaceutical sector (Baraldi et al., 2022). Thus, it is not surprising that policymakers in the US and Europe are increasingly incentivizing reshoring efforts through subsidies and industrial policies to strengthen the resilience of critical sectors like pharmaceutical, advanced manufacturing, and renewable energy technology (Elia et al., 2021). On top of that, growing nationalism (Hartwell & Devinney, 2021) and de-globalization sentiments (Cuervo-Cazurra et al., 2020), together with the decoupling efforts of US and Western firms from China (Tung et al., 2023; Witt

et al., 2023), may increasingly induce firms to consider reshoring among the strategic moves beneficial to mitigate these challenges.

What reshoring may entail can be exemplified by Alpha's relocation to the home country, one of the cases later developed in this thesis. Alpha is an Italian firm in the toy industry that has outsourced a large part of its production activities offshore to Chinese suppliers. However, dissatisfied with the growing labor costs in China and the risks associated with the long lead times, the managers at the mother company (i.e., in Italy) decided to test the feasibility of a partial reshoring strategy. This test was carried out for a single product between 2011 and 2013, and proved successful. Nevertheless, it revealed that Alpha had to continue sourcing electronic components from Chinese suppliers, as their unique capabilities were unavailable elsewhere. At the same time, it demonstrated that Alpha could relocate to the home country the remaining activities, including research and development, design, manufacturing, and final assembly. Accordingly, between 2013 and 2022, Alpha engaged in this partial reshoring strategy for a growing number of products, dis-embedding by 2022 more than half of the activities previously outsourced to suppliers in China and re-embedding them in the Italian network of suppliers.

Research on reshoring emerged in the field of operations and supply chain management between 2009 and 2015. After the initial observations of the phenomenon (Kinkel, 2012; Kinkel & Maloca, 2009), scholars started engaging in the first conceptualizations of the phenomenon. Those aimed at defining its basic components, i.e., the direction of the relocation (Ellram, 2013), the governance mode (i.e., in-house or outsourcing) adopted for the activities in the host and home country (Gray et al., 2013), as well as the overlaps and differences from concepts such as divestment and de-internationalization or nearshoring and further offshoring (Fratocchi et al., 2014). After that, significant work has been dedicated to dissect the drivers of similar relocations (Fratocchi et al., 2016; Wiesmann et al., 2017), which have generally been attributed to changing environmental conditions in the host and home country (Martínez-Mora & Merino, 2014), shifts in the firm's strategy (Di Mauro et al., 2018), or the correction of mistaken decisions to locate the activities abroad (Kinkel, 2012).

Although these research efforts have generated a good understanding of how firm-level and environmental factors drive reshoring decisions, numerous aspects of the phenomenon and its dynamics remain unexplored. We know why firms may decide to relocate their activities to the home country: this may be, for example, to cope with geopolitical tensions (Witt et al., 2023) or attain new efficiency advantages enabled by the availability of new technologies (Barbieri et al., 2022). However, how reshoring unfolds, the challenges or

opportunities it may present, and its outcomes remain largely a black box (Boffelli & Johansson, 2020).

Before the reintegration of activities in the home country, reshoring may require firms to reduce those in a host country. This is why, similar to divestment and market exit, whose literature has significantly developed in the last decade (Arte & Larimo, 2019; Schmid & Morschett, 2020), reshoring has been conceived as a decision that may reduce a firm's international presence (Kafouros et al., 2022), and thus a form of de-internationalization (Tang et al., 2021). However, the nature of reshoring is fundamentally different from divestment and market exit and it needs to be understood as a separate reconfiguration of the firm's international activities.

Similar to divestment and market exit, reshoring may concern activities conducted by the firm in a host country (e.g., Sartor & Beamish, 2020; Schmid & Morschett, 2020), i.e., in-house (subsidiary) activities. Yet, reshoring often involves activities that are outsourced and conducted directly by suppliers abroad (Gray et al., 2013). Hence, business relationships with suppliers may be central in relocations to the home country (Ashby, 2016) and the reconfiguration of activities directly impact the firm's business network.

At the same time, reshoring entails the relocation rather than the termination of foreign activities. This has three important implications. First, the relocation requires the firm to discontinue certain activities in a host country, but also to reintegrate them in the home country (Barbieri et al., 2022). This adds a layer of complexity, as the outcome of the relocation is tied to how the activities are dis-embedded abroad as well as to how they are re-embedded in the home country. Second, similarly to divestment and market exit, reshoring is shaped by firm-level and environmental factors in the host country (Schmid & Morschett, 2020). Yet, the domestic reintegration of the activities implies that also home-country factors play a prominent role in the reshoring process (Grappi et al., 2018; Wan et al., 2019). Third, divestment and market exit are often connected to decisions to discontinue certain businesses and, for example, recalibrate the level of diversification of a firm (Berry, 2013). Conversely, reshoring may concern only a specific subset of the firm's activities and not necessarily a decision to terminate all activities and exit a market (Baraldi et al., 2018). Although reshoring may support various adjustments in the firm's strategy (Di Mauro et al., 2018), the relocated activities are, by definition, sustained, and their performance remains essential to the firm. As a result, de-internationalization literature typically revolves around questions such as why firms may reduce their activities in a host country and the impact of such decisions (Tang et al., 2021), whereas reshoring deals with whether certain

international activities should be performed in the home country and thus re-located or not.

As a form of relocation, reshoring has been studied alongside offshoring (Mukherjee et al., 2023) and described as its reverse (Wiesmann et al., 2017). While reshoring indeed involves a relocation decision in the opposite direction, relocating activities to the home country is distinct from offshoring, and some aspects set it apart as a separate strategic decision. For starters, home-country factors may be much more important in reshoring, as the activities are re-integrated into the domestic context, and this latter is central for the implementation and performance of the relocated activities (Barbieri et al., 2023; Wan et al., 2019). Next, reshoring is often motivated by problems and considered a solution to emerging challenges (Kinkel & Maloca, 2009; Witt et al., 2023). Conversely, offshoring may be often tied to strategic moves aimed at strengthening the performance of the firm's activities (e.g., Nieto & Rodríguez, 2011). In addition, reshoring may be less pervasive than offshoring and entail only very specific subsets of activities (Baraldi et al., 2018), considered strategic and possible to relocate to the home country (Witt et al., 2023). Lastly, reshoring is a decision typically made by the head office (Cia-buschi et al., 2019). Although this may as well be the case of offshoring, the domestic location of the head office (Meyer & Benito, 2016) may imply a closer oversight of the reshoring process and, potentially, a more direct experience in managing the reintegration of the activities domestically.

Rather than as a form of de-internationalization or simply the reverse of offshoring, reshoring may thus be conceived as a possible step in the firm's internationalization. This idea was initially proposed by Fratocchi et al. (2015), underscoring the limited knowledge of the dynamics it triggers and the activities it affects, but it has not been further developed. Furthermore, reshoring has been discussed in relation to the firm's internationalization, but only to frame it as a form of de-internationalization (Kafouros et al., 2022), thereby neglecting whether it represents an interruption and setback (da Fonseca & da Rocha, 2022) or just a phase in the firm's internationalization, as well as how it affects subsequent decisions to expand or adjust the firm's international activities.

Moreover, the view of reshoring as a step in the firm's internationalization may generate a more dynamic view of the phenomenon and expand our knowledge of how it unfolds. The extensive focus of reshoring research on its drivers has led to a theoretical understanding of the phenomenon based on frameworks explaining the factors leading up to such decisions, for instance, the eclectic framework (Dunning, 1988), to compare the location advantages offered by the host and home countries (e.g., Ancarani et al., 2015). This

enhanced our knowledge of why firms reshore but provided a static and simplistic picture of the phenomenon. In particular, little is still known about the implementation of reshoring, as well as about its implications for firms and their longer-term development (Boffelli & Johansson, 2020). Likewise, the role of the firm's network in reshoring has been largely neglected, although business relationships play a prominent role when the relocation involves outsourced activities (Ashby, 2016) but also when reshoring occurs entirely in-house (Barbieri et al., 2023).

1.3 Research purpose and questions

Most reshoring research has focused on explaining why firms may relocate their activities to the home country (Barbieri et al., 2018; Wiesmann et al., 2017) and disregarded how these relocations unfold and impact the firm. Capturing these aspects is nonetheless essential to make sense of the phenomenon and its intricacies. Extant research seems in fact to limit itself to assuming that the outcomes expected from reshoring are attained following the relocation. However, the investigation of cross-border relocations such as offshoring proved the relocation process to be often more complex and challenging than expected, generating a discrepancy between the drivers of the relocation and its actual impact (Grappi et al., 2013; Jensen et al., 2013; Larsen et al., 2013). To avoid incurring unexpected challenges, it is thus important to fully grasp how reshoring plays out. Furthermore, reshoring may entail a complex and challenging relocation (Barbieri et al., 2023; Benstead et al., 2017), influenced by multiple factors within and outside the firm, in the host as well as in the home country (Barbieri et al., 2018; McIvor & Bals, 2021). Yet, little is known about the key factors shaping the implementation of reshoring, its impact on the business network, and how it shapes the firm's longer-term development. In response, this thesis investigates two interrelated elements that emerged as central to reshoring during the initial exploratory phase of the study, and its purpose is:

To understand the business network dynamics and experiential learning characterizing the reshoring process.

The firm's business network and experiential learning have been crucial to the understanding of internationalization (Liesch & Welch, 2024; Vahlne, 2020). Specifically, business relationships have been acknowledged as fundamental to firms' internationalization (Coviello & Munro, 1997; Johanson & Vahlne, 1990). The firm's network may influence the firm's choices concerning its international expansion, such as where to conduct specific activities and their

operating mode (Johanson & Vahlne, 2003). However, the interdependencies within business relationships imply that the reverse also holds true, namely that internationalization decisions, such as where to establish or discontinue the firm's activities, actively shape the development and trajectory of a firm's business relationships (Johanson & Mattsson, 2015; Johanson & Vahlne, 2003).

The business network is not only one of the main factors explaining internationalization but also a central element in reshoring. Suppliers in specific countries may possess unique resources and capabilities (Alcácer et al., 2016; Jensen, 2012), which firms seek to access and leverage when internationalizing (Karlsen et al., 2003). The supplier network may thus be a fundamental source of competitive advantage (Dyer, 1996; Gulati et al., 2000) and crucial for conducting activities abroad (Hätönen, 2009). However, relationships with suppliers play a prominent role also when reshoring, as this often entails relocating activities conducted by suppliers (i.e., outsourced) in the host, home, or both countries (Gray et al., 2013). On the one hand, this means that the firm's network of suppliers may influence reshoring. The availability of capable suppliers in the home country may, for example, prove essential for the feasibility of reshoring when the necessary resources and capabilities are not domestically available within the firm (Nujen et al., 2019). On the other, Reshoring directly affects a firm's supplier network and can lead to significant changes, as reconfiguring activities within business relationships strongly influences their development and long-term viability (Baraldi et al., 2018).

Reshoring, therefore, affects the firm's relationships with suppliers in the home and host country, raising questions about how its supplier network evolves and the opportunities or challenges that similar changes may entail. For instance, the resources and capabilities necessary to reintegrate the activities may not always be easily available in the home country (Witt et al., 2023) and require the firm to develop new relationships with local suppliers that are essential to enable reshoring (Nujen et al., 2019). At the same time, suppliers in the host country may see the economic exchange with the reshoring firm reduced and disengage from the relationship (Baraldi et al., 2018). As a result, reshoring may weaken the firm's position in the host-country network and hamper its access to unique knowledge and opportunities. Similar changes may have significant consequences for the firm's competitiveness (Dyer, 1996; Gulati et al., 2000) and its internationalization (Vahlne, 2020), but also for how reshoring unfolds and impacts the firm. Given that little is known about the changes that reshoring brings to the firm's supplier network, to unpack these aspects, the following research question is postulated:

How does reshoring impact the firm's network of suppliers?

When internationalizing, firms exchange resources and money in their business relationships but also gain experience that has important implications for other decisions concerning their international activities (Vahlne & Johanson, 2017). The firm's experience has been described as one of the key drivers of internationalization decisions (Eriksson et al., 1997; Johanson & Vahlne, 1977), as through their experience firms learn how to interact with host-country customers and suppliers, coordinate activities conducted in different business relationships, or establish new business relationships and connect them to each other (Johanson & Vahlne, 2003). By enhancing firms' awareness of the opportunities and challenges associated with foreign activities (Hadjikhani et al., 2014), such experience may support decisions to expand further or reduce foreign activities and give rise to capabilities that support their reconfiguration (Vahlne & Johanson, 2017).

The role of experience in shaping internationalization decisions is well documented, particularly in relation to its influence on location decisions (Barkema & Drogendijk, 2007; Hutzschenreuter et al., 2007). Extant research has also delved into the impact of offshoring experience on subsequent offshoring decisions (e.g., Jensen, 2009; Lewin & Peeters, 2006). In particular, it evidenced that firms with previous offshoring experience may locate a growing number of activities or increasingly complex ones abroad (Jensen & Pedersen, 2012; Maskell et al., 2007), and develop offshoring capabilities that support subsequent offshoring processes (Mihalache & Mihalache, 2020).

However, how the firms' experience with reshoring affects their subsequent relocations has not received the same attention. The connection between reshoring and experience has been considered primarily in the context of negative offshoring outcomes, which have been shown to drive relocations to the home country (Kinkel & Maloca, 2009). Additionally, early reshoring research suggests that firms that have engaged in reshoring in the past may be more likely to engage in new relocations to the home country (Kinkel, 2012). Beyond this, extant research on the topic has nonetheless neglected the role of prior experience with reshoring in the firm's longer-term development (Bals et al., 2016), although firms may learn from their reshoring process (Barbieri et al., 2023) and rely on that experience as input for subsequent relocation decisions.

Following a path-dependence logic, it is reasonable to assume that previous reshoring may provide firms with greater experience in reintegrating foreign activities in the home country. During reshoring, firms may in fact learn to disengage from business relationships with foreign suppliers, manage the transfer of the activities, or establish new relationships and develop existing ones, thereby increasing the probability of new reshoring. However, from another perspective, reshoring may also reduce the firms' international activities

and become impossible after a first relocation, if all possible activities have already been relocated to the firm or suppliers in the home country. Moreover, it remains unclear whether and how a firm's reshoring experience may impact subsequent reshoring and other relocation alternatives, such as nearshoring and further offshoring (Fratocchi et al., 2014). When firms re-evaluate their location decisions, reshoring is only one of the possible options, and they may relocate to the home country (i.e., reshore) as well as to other locations (Elia et al., 2024). Therefore, given the importance of the experience firms typically derive from their location decisions and the scant understanding of how reshoring experience affects subsequent relocations, the second question guiding this thesis is the following:

What is the impact of the firm's reshoring experience on subsequent relocation decisions?

1.4 Research approach

Consistent with extant internationalization (e.g., Johanson & Vahlne, 1977; Liesch & Welch, 2024) and reshoring research (e.g., McIvor & Bals, 2021), the investigation is conducted at the firm level, and the focal unit of analysis is the reshoring process. As previously exemplified, reshoring decisions are typically made and implemented by managers in the home country (e.g., Baraldi et al., 2018; Barbieri et al., 2023). Hence, I collected empirical data mainly from these managers, and the resulting view of reshoring is based on a home-country perspective.

To gain a deep understanding of the impact of reshoring on the firm's business network and subsequent relocations, considering the thesis as a whole, I followed a multiphase and mixed-method research approach (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Given the limited scholarly work on how reshoring unfolds and impacts the firm, the initial phase of this research was exploratory and began with an analysis of extant literature on reshoring. Paper I, a literature review, identifies the key elements explored by extant research on the topic and highlights its blind spots. In particular, it untangles the multifaceted nature of the outcomes of reshoring, linking them to its drivers and implementation, and emphasizes the need to investigate its impact on the firm. This review paper provides a backdrop for the thesis by framing reshoring as a process and discussing its network dynamics and the implications it may have on subsequent relocation decisions as two important but neglected areas.

I continued the exploratory phase at the empirical level with qualitative research to reveal the impact of reshoring on the firm's supplier network. Using

in-depth case studies, in papers II and III I focus respectively on the host-country and home-country networks, examining how they evolve during the reshoring process. These studies reveal how business relationships may be affected by reshoring. Specifically, they highlight the critical role of business relationships in the reshoring process, how the activities may be dis-embedded from the host country and re-embedded in the domestic context, and the challenges and opportunities that reshoring firms may face.

The qualitative work hinted at the importance of the experience firms gained from dis-embedding and re-embedding the activities while reshoring. Some empirical cases suggested that such experience may affect the implementation of the reshoring process itself and subsequent relocation decisions. Building on these insights and extant research on the path-dependence of internationalization (Barkema & Drogendijk, 2007; Johanson & Vahlne, 1977), in the final phase of the research, I adopted a confirmatory approach to examine whether a firm's experience with international activities and moreover reshoring increases (or decreases) the likelihood of subsequent reshoring, nearshoring, and further offshoring.

Table 1 below outlines how each paper, with its specific focus, research approach, and research questions, contributed to addressing the purpose of this thesis.

Table 1 Overview of the research approach

Paper	Focus	Research approach	Research questions
I	Reshoring process: antecedents, implementation, and outcomes	Literature review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which are the main contributions to reshoring research? - What are the key themes and emerging streams in this research area? - How can future research advance knowledge on the topic?
II	Impact of reshoring on a host-country network of suppliers	Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does a firm's host-country network evolve following partial reshoring?
III	Impact of reshoring on a home-country network of suppliers	Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which roles can key suppliers play in the reshoring process of a born-offshored firm that had offshore and outsourced manufacturing activities since its establishment? - How can a key supplier influence the formation of the supply network in the reshoring firm's home country?
IV	Impact of experience on subsequent relocation decisions	Quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the relationship of international production experience and reshoring experience with reshoring, nearshoring, and further offshoring?

1.5 Thesis structure

The remainder of this thesis is structured as follows. The second chapter outlines the conceptual background of this study, discussing the connection between offshoring and reshoring and the key dimensions of the latter. In the third chapter, I introduce a network and experiential learning view of the reshoring process, which serves as the theoretical framework of this thesis. This is complemented by the conceptualization of reshoring as a commitment process related to the firm's internationalization and a discussion of reshoring in relation to the two key elements of the theoretical framework: the firm's business network and experiential learning. The fourth chapter provides a detailed account of the methodological approach I followed in this thesis and its empirical basis. Specifically, it illustrates this thesis's multiphase and mixed-method research design before detailing the methodological procedures followed in the qualitative and quantitative research. The fifth chapter summarizes the four papers of this thesis. The summaries emphasize the research gaps addressed in each paper and the research contributions generated. The sixth, last chapter presents the main findings connected to the research questions and the theoretical framework developed to address them. After that, it discusses the theoretical contributions stemming from the network and experiential learning view of the reshoring process, its relation to the broader firm's internationalization, and the conceptualization of a reshoring capability. Finally, it concludes by outlining the managerial and policy implications of this thesis, as well as some of its main limitations and corresponding opportunities for future research.

2 Conceptual background

2.1 From offshoring to reshoring

The extensive literature on the firm's international expansion has been nurtured from the late nineties by the growing focus on offshoring. The term has been used to refer to different phenomena, ranging from decisions to source from foreign suppliers (Kotabe & Murray, 1990) to the establishment of subsidiaries that could act as export platforms in foreign countries (Nachum & Zaheer, 2005), but common ground for this work was found on the idea that offshoring ultimately concerned the international relocation of activities (Doh et al., 2009). Accordingly, offshoring is here conceived as a form of internationalization (Drori et al., 2024) consisting of the relocation of activities (from the home) to a foreign country, whether internally to the firm or outsourced (Mudambi & Venzin, 2010).

Offshoring decisions have been found to involve different activities. The first basic distinction concerns the type of activities that are relocated abroad. Offshoring has been common for manufacturing and services, but the prerequisites for the decision to relocate them in a foreign country may differ substantially (Bunyaratavej et al., 2008). On the one hand, decisions to locate manufacturing activities in a foreign country are often tied to the availability of natural resources and low labor costs (Farrell, 2005). On the other, service offshoring is also driven by a cost-minimization rationale, which needs to be paired with a good education system and a skilled workforce (Bunyaratavej et al., 2007). A second distinction encompasses the value that the activities generate for the firm. In this regard, offshoring has been discussed in relation to either core or non-core activities (Contractor et al., 2010), namely activities that contribute significantly (or not) to the firm's competitive advantage. Although the value associated with certain activities has generally been seen as driving decisions to retain those activities within the firm or externalize them (Buckley & Casson, 2009), whether the activities are considered core or not to the firm may also influence their location (Manning et al., 2008). In this sense, activities that are not core (e.g., assembly operations) may be located offshore to access cost advantages, while core activities (e.g., research and development) in order to access specific pockets of knowledge and

capabilities that are available in a specific foreign country (Drori et al., 2024; Lewin et al., 2009).

Cost advantages and access to unique resources and capabilities have been major drivers of decisions to locate certain activities in foreign countries (Manning et al., 2008), but not the only ones. Risk-related considerations, opportunities to enter new markets, and the development of supplier relationships have been some of the other main drivers of offshoring highlighted in research (Schmeisser, 2013). Firms may decide to expand their international operations by locating activities in specific countries depending on their risk profile vis-à-vis the one in the home country, or locate activities in a foreign country to serve local customers and those in proximity (Hahn et al., 2011). At the same time, relationships with foreign suppliers are a common factor behind decisions to locate activities abroad and further expand them over time (Hätönen, 2009). Furthermore, as firms gain experience managing increasingly fine-sliced international activities, they may develop an offshoring capability that allows them to better navigate the challenges of offshoring (Mihalache & Mihalache, 2020).

Offshoring can be fully understood only in conjunction with the governance mode adopted to conduct the activities abroad (Mudambi & Venzin, 2010). Typically referred to as make or buy, the decision to retain the offshored activities internally or outsource them may be driven by different factors and expose the firm to different risks and benefits (Schmeisser, 2013). The choice of externalizing (or not) the activities in the host country may be driven, as the offshoring decision, by cost considerations and the need to access specialized capabilities outside the firm (Kedia & Mukherjee, 2009). However, outsourcing abroad entails specific risks and advantages. For instance, outsourcing abroad reduces the firm's control of offshore activities, exposing them to risks related to the behavior of foreign suppliers (Sen et al., 2020) and, over time, harming the firm's capabilities (Kotabe et al., 2011). Conversely, the reliance on foreign suppliers may increase the firm's strategic focus, concentrating its efforts on activities that directly affect its competitive advantage while externalizing complementary ones (Sen et al., 2020). Further, foreign suppliers may facilitate the firm's expansion in the local market, as outsourcing offshore provides a base for developing market experience and detecting local market opportunities (Hätönen, 2009). Yet, the advantages firms seek with offshoring may erode over time and present unexpected challenges (Larsen, 2016; Larsen et al., 2013; Manning, 2014).

It is thus not uncommon for firms to engage in the critical re-evaluation of their offshoring decision and consider the potential outcome that various re-configurations of their international activities may generate (Elia et al., 2024),

among which reshoring is an alternative (Barbieri et al., 2022). This may happen shortly after the initial offshoring, signaling a potential managerial mistake that needs to be corrected (Kinkel & Maloca, 2009), or long after the decision to locate the activities abroad, due to changes in the firm or its environment (Barbieri et al., 2018). As reshoring is only one of the available options for firms exploring possible reconfigurations of their offshore activities, and researchers refer to various relocations with different terms (Fratocchi et al., 2014), the next section reviews relevant definitions of reshoring and unpacks the key dimensions of the reshoring decision.

2.2 Definitions and key dimensions of reshoring

The earliest scholarly observations of relocations to the firm's home country referred to the phenomenon as "*backshoring*," a term used to describe the return of "*once offshored manufacturing capacities from foreign locations back to the domestic location*" (Kinkel & Maloca, 2009, p. 154). Subsequently, Gray et al. (2013, p. 28) provided a notable characterization of reshoring, defining it as "*bringing manufacturing back home from a current location that is, de facto, not home*" and discussing the implications of the different governance modes (in-house or outsourced) of the relocated activities. To reconcile these emerging definitions while adding nuance, Fratocchi et al. (2014, p. 56) conceptualized reshoring as "*a voluntary corporate strategy regarding the home country's partial or total relocation of (in-sourced or out-sourced) production to serve the local, regional or global demands.*" This work emphasized that reshoring involves, therefore, a relocation decision shaped by three critical dimensions: (i) the governance modes (i.e., in-house or outsourcing) of reshoring, (ii) the offshoring before reshoring, and (iii) the scope (i.e., full or partial) of reshoring. These dimensions are discussed below as they determine the various forms of reshoring.

2.2.1 The governance modes of reshoring

The governance mode of the activities in the host and home market is an essential component of reshoring decisions and generates relocation processes marked by fundamental differences. This was first highlighted by Gray et al. (2013), who identified four alternatives based on whether the activities in the host and home countries are conducted in-house or outsourced. The choice of relying on in-house or outsourced activities is typically ascribed to the value created by those activities to the firm, i.e., how core they are to its competitive advantage (Mudambi & Venzin, 2010), but also to efficiency considerations

and the availability of relevant capabilities within or outside the firm (Doh, 2005).

In-house and outsourced reshoring involve relocation decisions where activities are relocated with the same governance mode, whereas reshoring for insourcing and outsourcing also involves changes in governance (Gray et al., 2013). Although the governance mode has been central in offshoring research (e.g., Roza et al., 2011; Schmeisser, 2013) and a few conceptual pieces on reshoring acknowledged the different nature of relocations with different governance modes (e.g., Fratocchi et al., 2014; McIvor & Bals, 2021), limited attention has been paid to how these differences influence the relocation process. Consequently, our understanding of how reshoring may unfold and impact the firm under different governance modes remains incomplete.

In-house reshoring occurs with the relocation of the firm's own activities (i.e., in-house) in both the home and host country. By contrast, outsourced reshoring involves a sourcing shift whereby the firm relocates the activities from foreign to domestic suppliers. Although both types of reshoring may create value for the firm (Cheng et al., 2024), the dynamics of reconfiguring the firm's internal activities may have little in common with replacing foreign suppliers with domestic ones. For instance, in-house reshoring may aim to utilize available production capacity in the home country, sometimes requiring minimal investment (Fratocchi et al., 2016). However, it often demands substantial resources and the development of new capabilities (Nujen et al., 2019), with sunk costs from discontinued foreign activities further intensifying resource needs.

Conversely, outsourced reshoring may primarily affect the firm's supply network rather than its internal activities. Accordingly, significant efforts may be required to ensure access to relevant resources and capabilities in the firm's network (Ashby, 2016), but this proves to be far less resource-intensive. Furthermore, suppliers may play a major and direct role in relocating outsourced activities, which necessitates alignment between their interests and those of the reshoring firm (McIvor & Bals, 2021). Moreover, the relocation of outsourced activities may have a more direct impact on the suppliers conducting the activities abroad, influencing the firm's internal organization but even more so its external relationships (Baraldi et al., 2018).

Reshoring for insourcing (i.e., relocating activities previously outsourced abroad that become in-house in the home country) and for outsourcing (i.e., relocating activities previously in-house abroad that become outsourced in the home country) represent combined location and governance mode decisions (Gray et al., 2013). These shifts often reflect changing location advantages between foreign and domestic sites (Dunning, 1998) and indicate the firm's

sourcing strategy adjustments. They may be driven by resource and capability availability within the firm and its network (Nujen et al., 2019) or by strategic efforts to enhance the competitive advantage through internalizing previously outsourced activities or vice versa (Baraldi et al., 2018). Additionally, reshoring for insourcing may be much more resource-intensive, as it may require the development of internal resources and capabilities necessary to internalize the activities (Barbieri et al., 2023). On the other hand, reshoring for outsourcing may imply risks commonly ascribed to the externalization of the firm's activities (Kedia & Lahiri, 2007) but rely on resources and capabilities made available by domestic suppliers.

2.2.2 The offshoring before reshoring

The offshoring preceding reshoring strongly influences the relocation to the home country. Extant research suggested that reshoring may be closely tied to the previous offshoring decision (Foerstl et al., 2016; Johansson et al., 2019) and occur because the anticipated benefits of offshoring fail to materialize (Kinkel & Maloca, 2009), erode over time (Martínez-Mora & Merino, 2014), or no longer align with the firm's strategic objectives (Di Mauro et al., 2018). This led some scholars to define reshoring as a “*relocation of second degree*” (Barbieri et al., 2019, p. 2) and mention the prior offshoring decision in definitions of the phenomenon (e.g., Albertoni et al., 2017; Ancarani et al., 2015).

International activities are a fundamental prerequisite for reshoring, but the same is not necessarily true for the previous offshoring. The assumption that the reshored activities were previously offshored indeed overlooks that firms may establish foreign activities abroad in two distinct ways: offshoring activities initially conducted domestically or establishing them abroad from the outset (Heikkilä et al., 2018). In the first case, the firm or its suppliers had once performed the activities in the domestic market and then offshored them (Mudambi & Venzin, 2010). In the second, the activities are born-offshored, that is, developed abroad from inception and never conducted in the domestic market before reshoring (Moradlou et al., 2022). This distinction generates two separate scenarios, differentiated by whether the firm and/or its suppliers have previously conducted the same activities in the home country – an aspect largely neglected in existing research.

The previous performance of the activities by the firm or its suppliers in the home country may facilitate reshoring. For instance, conducting activities in a foreign country has been shown to increase the likelihood of a firm re-entering that market after exit by leveraging the accumulated experience and easing the subsequent re-entry (Kafourous et al., 2022). Similarly, if the firm's capabilities in the home country have not completely dissipated after offshoring

(Kotabe et al., 2011), the reintegration of the activities may build on pre-existing resources and knowledge, which allow a smoother implementation of the relocation and the quicker achievement of its desired outcomes. By the same token, the availability of domestic suppliers that conducted the reshored activities in the past may reduce the need for investments in developing new resources and capabilities, thus easing the reshoring process.

Although previously performing the activities in the home country may be advantageous, reshoring born-offshored activities is not necessarily more challenging. In particular, the implementation of these relocations may require significant time and effort (Barbieri et al., 2023), but their outcome may also benefit from the absence of established structures and routines, which may hinder the firm's ability to absorb new knowledge (Hutzschenreuter et al., 2007). Similarly, the reintegration of the activities may not always benefit from relying on domestic suppliers that have already conducted those activities. On the one hand, they may perform similar activities for other firms, making them unwilling or unable to adapt to the reshoring firm's specific requirements and forcing the firm to accommodate the suppliers' conditions instead (Hallén et al., 1991). On the other hand, suppliers that have not previously conducted those activities may actively invest in upgrading their resources and capabilities to meet the demands of the reshoring firm and take the opportunity to strengthen their competitiveness.

2.2.3 The scope of reshoring

The scope of reshoring, defined as the degree to which a firm relocates its foreign activities to the home country, is an essential but underexplored dimension of the phenomenon. Fratocchi et al. (2014) were among the first to highlight that firms may choose to fully or partially relocate their foreign activities. Subsequent research emphasized that reshoring may involve the relocation of specific subsets of activities, carefully selected to ensure that each set of activities is located in the country, enabling their best performance (Baraldi et al., 2018). The idea of reshoring being full or partial is thus well established and commonly incorporated into definitions of the phenomenon (e.g., Albertoni et al., 2017; Boffelli & Johansson, 2020). However, with few notable exceptions (Baraldi et al., 2018; Grappi et al., 2015), the explanations of reshoring and its implications have rarely accounted for these relocations' full or partial nature.

A central aspect requiring clarification is the level at which the scope of reshoring is observed. Specifically, the full or partial nature of the relocation may refer to various levels of analysis, such as a component, product, product family, foreign subsidiary or supplier, and a country or all of the firm's

international activities. For instance, the closure of a foreign subsidiary and the total relocation of its activities may be seen as partial reshoring if the firm maintains other activities in the foreign country, and this latter is the level of analysis. Conversely, relocating all activities needed to produce a product might represent full reshoring at the product level but only partial reshoring when analyzed at the subsidiary level.

However, reshoring has been commonly understood as a relocation decision (Ellram, 2013; Gray et al., 2013), suggesting that the level of analysis should be set at the country level. From this perspective, full reshoring would indicate the relocation of all the firm's (in-house or outsourced) activities in a foreign country, while partial reshoring the relocation of only a subset of those activities. This interpretation aligns well also with the drivers of reshoring decisions, as partial reshoring is often driven by the need to further fine-slice the firm's activities and optimize their performance (Baraldi et al., 2018). In contrast, full reshoring decisions are more likely to result from significant environmental changes in specific locations (Di Stefano et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the full or partial scope of reshoring decisions may also impact how the relocation is implemented and the outcome it generates. Intuitively, partial reshoring may require less resources and time than full reshoring, as it often involves only a minor reconfiguration of activities and the relocation of a specific subset (Baraldi et al., 2018). Nevertheless, partial reshoring may also create additional complexity due to the interdependencies of the relocated activities. Relocating a limited number of activities may require a significant reconfiguration of their interdependencies with the activities that remain in the host country or other locations (Jensen et al., 2013). When engaging in full reshoring, a firm may disregard the impact of the relocation on the foreign subsidiary or suppliers and concentrate more on the reintegration of the activities in the home country. Conversely, when part of the activities in the host country is sustained, the firm needs to consider how the relocation will impact the activities still located abroad, the interdependencies between them and those relocated, and, more importantly, the foreign subsidiaries or suppliers conducting them. In this regard, Baraldi et al. (2018) examined a case of reshoring for insourcing and evidenced that partial reshoring may lead to the termination of relationships with foreign suppliers, even if those suppliers are willing to maintain the relationship and sustain their activities in the host country. However, the full or partial nature of reshoring remains largely neglected in extant literature.

3 Theoretical framework

In this thesis, I introduce a network and experiential learning view of the reshoring process to tackle my research questions. This perspective emerged during the initial exploratory phase of the thesis research, underscoring the importance and neglect of these aspects in our understanding of reshoring. Therefore, this chapter develops a network and experiential learning view of the reshoring process. After that, it discusses reshoring in relation to internationalization, business networks, and experiential learning literature.

3.1 A network and experiential learning view of the reshoring process

Drawing on relevant literature (Baraldi et al., 2018; Jensen et al., 2013) and the initial exploratory research of this thesis, reshoring is here conceived as a reconfiguration of the firm’s organizational and/or network activities. Although the nature of reshoring may be influenced, for instance, by the drivers of similar relocations and external contingencies (Boffelli & Johansson, 2020), its process is here conceived as entailing dis-embedding the activities from a host country and re-embedding them domestically. These two generate, in turn, a reshoring experience that has a two-fold impact: it shapes the relocation process itself and, moreover, informs subsequent relocation decisions. Figure 1 below illustrates this view of reshoring, which is developed more in detail below and serves as the theoretical framework of this thesis.

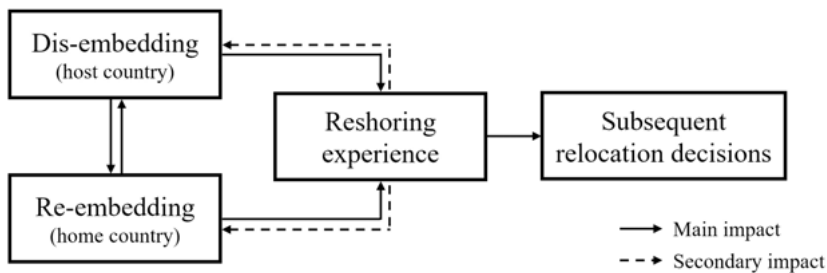


Figure 1 Theoretical framework

Dis-embedding entails the disintegration of the activities from the firm's organization (i.e., if in-house) or supply network (i.e., if outsourced) in the host country. This step requires firms to reconfigure their internal activities and the set of relationships with suppliers in the host country. Whether home or abroad, the firm's activities are typically embedded in business relationships and connected to the network in the two locations (Forsgren, 2016). Accordingly, reshoring may imply tasks such as breaking down the organizational activities, their reconfiguration, and adjustments in business relationships with suppliers, when concerning outsourced (e.g., Baraldi et al., 2018) but also in-house activities (e.g., Barbieri et al., 2023). The dis-embedding may nonetheless face resistance, as reshoring may reduce or change the nature of the activities conducted abroad, or even terminate them. Firms may face challenges such as the loss of access to knowledge embedded in the firm's organization (Reilly et al., 2023) or business relationships in the host country (Baraldi et al., 2018), as well as a reduced motivation to cooperate of the counterpart negatively affected by the relocation (Reilly et al., 2023). Dis-embedding the activities from the host country becomes thus a central task of the reshoring process, whose challenges and opportunities need to be carefully understood.

Re-embedding refers to the reintegration of the activities within the firm (i.e., if in-house) or the supply network (i.e., if outsourced) in the home country. The reintegration may begin before (Nujen et al., 2019) but also occur in parallel and/or after the implementation of the relocation (Barbieri et al., 2023), and it is tightly connected to the dis-embedding efforts. The re-embedding concept was previously employed by Baraldi et al. (2018) to suggest that the reshored activities need to be linked with relevant actors, resources, and other interconnected activities in the home-country network. Expanding on that, the re-embedding may require establishing the preconditions to conduct the activities in the domestic context, by adapting the firm's internal organization or its business relationships. Yet, these adaptations may not always be straightforward and demand firms to devote significant resources to similar tasks (Nujen et al., 2019). At the same time, re-embedding may involve tasks that redefine the firm's embeddedness in both locations and integrate the activities previously dis-embedded from the host-country network with those already conducted domestically. These activities may share old or new interdependencies that need to be aligned. Hence, their integration is essential to avoid divergencies and challenges hampering reshoring, and may require adaptations in the relocated activities (Barbieri et al., 2023) as much as in those already conducted in the home country.

Dis-embedding and re-embedding the activities generate a *reshoring experience*, implying the accumulation of knowledge about the tasks that firms

perform during their reshoring process (Barbieri et al., 2023). This experience may relate to the interaction with suppliers and their reaction to the firm's re-configuration (Johanson & Vahlne, 2003), to the disengagement from business relationships (Halinen & Tähtinen, 2002) and the establishment of new ones (Chen, 2003), or the coordination of the activities in a changing supplier network (Vahlne & Johanson, 2017).

Such experience may provide knowledge of the challenges and opportunities emerging during the relocation, which impact the reshoring process and how the activities are ultimately dis-embedded and re-embedded. For instance, firms may realize only while reshoring that they lack the necessary capabilities in the home country and need to invest in their development (Baraldi et al., 2018) or that local suppliers are unable to take on the relocated activities (Nujen et al., 2018), shifting the relocation in-house. Additionally, it is only during the reshoring process that firms may become aware of its actual costs and risks (Ciabuschi et al., 2019).

The firm's experience with the reshoring process may concurrently impact its *subsequent relocation decisions*. These may concern new decisions to relocate foreign activities to the firm's home country (i.e., reshoring), to its home region (i.e., nearshoring), or other far-away locations (i.e., further offshoring), but also decisions to offshore domestic activities. The reshoring experience may, in fact, foster (or hinder) different relocation decisions, depending on the knowledge they accumulate and the positive or negative view that it may generate of different relocation alternatives. Reshoring may enhance the firm's knowledge of its business network and resource configuration (Baraldi et al., 2018), and reduce the uncertainty perceived in the host or home country, which affects reshoring and offshoring decisions (Ciabuschi et al., 2019).

However, the firm's experience with reshoring may be positive as well as negative, making the offshoring, nearshoring, or further offshoring alternatives more or less appealing. For instance, the benefits expected from reshoring may fail to materialize and, similar to offshoring (Kinkel & Maloca, 2009), lead firms to offshore the activities just relocated to the home country again. Additionally, experiencing significant shortcomings when reshoring may discourage other relocations to the home country and, when considering new re-configurations of their international activities, lead firms to favor relocations to other foreign countries over reshoring (Elia et al., 2024). In contrast, when firms successfully mitigate the risks involved in relocations to the home country (Ciabuschi et al., 2019) and attain the expected benefits (Johansson et al., 2019), subsequent reshoring decisions may be perceived more positively and become increasingly common. Whether this reduces the likelihood of new offshoring decisions or reconfigurations of international activities through

further offshoring and nearshoring has not been explored and needs to be carefully investigated.

3.2 Internationalization and the reshoring process

The view of reshoring as a process where activities are dis-embedded and re-embedded, generating experience that is relevant for subsequent relocation decisions, aligns well with the literature on firms' internationalization (Forsgren & Johanson, 1992; Vahlne & Johanson, 2017). Internationalization refers broadly to “*the process of increasing involvement in international operations*” (Welch & Luostarinen, 1993, p. 36). Research on the topic has largely focused on the development of outward (i.e., sales-related) internationalization activities (e.g., Johanson & Vahlne, 1977; Madsen & Servais, 1997) and paid less attention to the development of inward (i.e., sourcing-related) ones (Fletcher, 2001). Nevertheless, whether in-house or outsourced, offshoring and the establishment of operations abroad are a fundamental form of internationalization (Drori et al., 2024; Hätönen, 2009). Hence, the development of inward activities may follow a similar expansion or contraction process (Fletcher, 2001).

Extant literature envisioned internationalization as a process through which firms establish a position in host-country networks and learn from the activities conducted in business relationships (Vahlne, 2020). From these, firms accumulate knowledge and build trust, which provide the basis for decisions to further increase the commitment to relationships with customers or suppliers (Blankenburg Holm et al., 2015; Johanson & Vahlne, 1990). According to this perspective, internationalizing firms become embedded in host-country networks, and the business relationships affect their experience (Forsgren, 2016; Johanson & Vahlne, 2003) and subsequent (de-)internationalization decisions (Johanson & Vahlne, 2009).

Extant research has acknowledged that internationalization may go both ways, implying the expansion as well as a reduction in international activities (Benito & Welch, 1997; Hadjikhani et al., 2014). Nevertheless, it is only more recently that scholarly research has begun exploring reconfigurations of international activities that reduce the firm's international involvement, and several areas on the topic remain unexplored (da Fonseca & da Rocha, 2022; Kafourous et al., 2022).

To address this gap, reshoring may be conceived as one of the commitment processes underlying firms' internationalization (Vahlne & Johanson, 2017), which reconfigures their activities in the host and home country. Reshoring may involve a commitment reduction in the host country (Ciabuschi et al.,

2019), diminishing the firms' resources and network embeddedness. Although it is reasonable to expect reshoring to alter relationships with suppliers, how it impacts the host-country network has not been explored and needs to be carefully understood. Furthermore, dis-embedding the activities may produce significant changes in the relationship with suppliers in the host country (Baraldi et al., 2018). However, those changes may also be paralleled and influenced by how the activities are re-embedded in the home country. Therefore, the evolution of firms' embeddedness in the host country network, which is a key dimension of its internationalization (Forsgren, 2016; Forsgren & Johanson, 1992), may be tied to the adjustments that reshoring implies in the home country.

Dis-embedding and re-embedding the activities generate a certain experience, which firms may use in the reshoring process it stems from as well as in subsequent relocation decisions. This is consistent with the idea that firms gain experience from their commitment processes (Vahlne & Johanson, 2017) and accumulate first-hand knowledge of the efforts and consequences that similar reconfigurations entail (Blomstermo, Eriksson, Lindstrand, et al., 2004). With a more or less incremental view on this (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977; Pedersen & Shaver, 2011; Santangelo & Meyer, 2017), the experience firms derive from their international expansion has been acknowledged as a central driver of subsequent internationalization decisions (Barkema & Drogendijk, 2007). This experience may concern the host country and, thereby, the host-country network (Forsgren & Johanson, 1992; Johanson & Vahlne, 2003), as well as the process in which firms reconfigure their international activities (Vahlne & Johanson, 2017). At the same time, through their experience, firms may realize that the advantages they planned to exploit abroad may be weaker than expected or that they lack essential resources, thereby facing a number of unexpected difficulties in the host country (Cuervo-Cazurra et al., 2007). In line with this, and as previously mentioned, the experience firms derive from reshoring may be positive or negative. However, as reshoring involves the reintegration of activities in the home country, the experience derived from these relocations also concerns how to reconfigure and conduct activities in the home country.

The firms' experience with reconfigurations of their international activities may lay the foundations for the development of operational and dynamic capabilities (Vahlne, 2020). Operational capabilities refer to the ability to exploit existing resources to enhance operational performance (Helfat et al., 2007). Dynamic capabilities concern instead *“the firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competences to address rapidly changing environment”* (Teece et al., 1997, p. 516) and in the context of

internationalization refer to the firms' ability to engage in commitment processes that fit their changing environment (Vahlne, 2020). These capabilities may be internal to firms as well as external, and controlled by members of their business network (Vahlne & Johanson, 2013). Additionally, they may involve different aspects, such as the ability to recognize the available local opportunities and mobilize the necessary resources to seize them (Ibid.); the ability to reconfigure the firm's activities in various locations and circumstances (Vahlne & Johanson, 2017); and the ability to develop and coordinate business relationships (Ritter, 1999). Implying a reconfiguration of firms' international activities, firms may also learn from their experience with reshoring, although it is unclear what such experience entails and whether it leads to the development of capabilities having implications for subsequent reshoring and internationalization decisions.

3.3 The firm's business network and reshoring

A vast body of literature has underscored the critical role of firms' business networks in shaping their international activities (e.g., Andersson et al., 2002; Ciabuschi et al., 2014; Jarillo, 1988) and their expansion (e.g., Coviello & Munro, 1997; Johanson & Vahlne, 1990; Liesch & Welch, 2024). Business networks are indeed not only a significant source of competitive advantage (Dyer & Singh, 1998) but also provide access to resources and capabilities that can be obtained only through relationships in host countries (Cantwell & Mudambi, 2011).

While the role of business networks in expanding international activities is well-documented, their significance in reconfigurations, particularly disengagement from host countries, has received comparatively little attention (Iurkov & Benito, 2020). In particular, business relationships have been shown to foster the development of new knowledge and influence decisions to reduce activities in a foreign country (Dominguez & Mayrhofer, 2017). However, such decisions may harm business relationships and lead some actors in the network to terminate them, which in turn may have adverse effects on the firm (Clarke & Liesch, 2017). Moreover, Iurkov and Benito (2020) highlight that reductions in international activities may also stem from a strong position of firms in their home-country network, which may provide greater access to knowledge and opportunities and, in turn, lead firms to prioritize their domestic activities over international ones.

The idea of reallocating resources to the domestic country aligns well with reshoring, where the business network often plays an even more central role compared to other types of reconfigurations. Reshoring often concerns

activities directly conducted by suppliers (Gray et al., 2013), and the first contributions highlighting their importance emphasized that they provide essential resources and capabilities (Ashby, 2016; Gylling et al., 2015). Accordingly, before reshoring, firms are tasked with assessing the availability of the necessary resources in the home country and the capabilities that local suppliers can provide to ensure a smooth implementation of the relocation (Nujen et al., 2019). This is necessary when the activities are re-embedded in the home country relying on outsourcing (Nujen et al., 2018). However, it should also be considered when they are re-embedded in-house, since domestic suppliers may also play a significant role in this process and help enhance the performance of the relocated activities (Barbieri et al., 2023).

Focusing specifically on business networks, Baraldi et al. (2018) examined how relationships with customers and suppliers enable or constrain offshoring and reshoring. Their findings suggest that firms may selectively relocate specific subsets of activities, contingent on the resources and capabilities of both the firm and its suppliers, domestically and internationally (*ibid.*). Although existing research has provided valuable insights into the importance of business networks in various reconfigurations of the firm's international activities (Dominguez & Mayrhofer, 2017; Vissak & Francioni, 2013), only a limited number of studies have addressed the role of suppliers in reshoring. Despite emphasizing their significance, little is still known about the dynamics triggered by reshoring within a firm's business network – an issue this thesis seeks to address.

3.4 Experiential learning and reshoring

One of the central explanations behind firms' internationalization is the experience they accumulate from their international activities (Blomstermo, Eriksson, Lindstrand, et al., 2004; Johanson & Vahlne, 1977). Such experience results from both their own international activities and business relationships (De Clercq et al., 2012; Eriksson, Johanson, et al., 2000), which offer indirect but nonetheless valuable knowledge (Fletcher, 2001) that may affect their subsequent relocation decisions (Casillas & Moreno-Menéndez, 2014).

The important role played by experience in cross-border relocations has been underscored by offshoring research. This research illustrates that firms learn during the relocation process and may use the accumulated experience to mitigate the challenges emerging during the implementation (Larsen et al., 2013). On top of that, consistent with internationalization literature (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977), it highlighted that offshoring is a learning-by-doing process that may improve the performance of the activities already offshored as well

as foster new offshoring decisions (Jensen, 2009; Jensen & Pedersen, 2012; Lewin & Peeters, 2006; Maskell et al., 2007).

Some scholars speculated that the experience with the implementation of reshoring may generate a feedback loop informing subsequent relocation decisions (Bals et al., 2016). Kinkel et al. (2012) showed a correlation between earlier experience with reshoring and new decisions to reshore. However, what firms learn and the impact of previous experience on different types of relocation, such as nearshoring and further offshoring, remains unclear (Foerstl et al., 2016). The only study addressing the role of experience in reshoring displays that what firms learn while reshoring is then used at different steps of its implementation to improve the reintegration of the activities in the home country (Barbieri et al., 2023). This underscores that the reshoring process is adjusted as it unfolds, for instance, in terms of what to reshore and how to reintegrate it domestically, on the basis of the evaluation of the tasks conducted at each step of the implementation (Ibid.).

For some firms, especially those that have developed their activities internationally from inception (e.g., McDougall et al., 1994), the experience of their home country context may be limited. Similarly, firms with a history of extensive offshoring may face the erosion of domestic resources and capabilities (Kotabe et al., 2011). In similar cases, the learning opportunities offered by reshoring may be essential to ensure the successful implementation of reshoring (Barbieri et al., 2023). During the reshoring process, firms may be required to develop resources and capabilities that were previously unavailable in the home country but that are essential to enable the domestic reintegration of the activities (Nujen et al., 2019). Yet, extant research has neglected what such resources and capabilities consist of and whether they impact subsequent reconfigurations of firms' international activities.

On the one hand, the experience gained through reshoring may provide firms with a better understanding of the resources and capabilities available in their home country, enabling them to reassess the feasibility and potential benefits of relocating additional activities domestically. The reshoring experience may thus induce firms to consider reshoring as a viable option for other activities or encourage alternative relocation decisions, such as nearshoring and further offshoring, when foreign locations offer superior local endowments (Elia et al., 2024). On the other hand, Benstead et al. (2017) highlighted that a firm's reshoring process may also build on its previous offshoring experience, suggesting that the firm's experience from other types of relocations may be relevant to reshoring and does not necessarily inform relocations in the same direction. However, it is unclear how the firm's reshoring experience impacts subsequent relocation decisions, as well as how the firm's supplier network

evolves following relocations to the home country. The lack of insights into these aspects warrants a deep exploration of the evolution of relationships with foreign and domestic suppliers brought by reshoring, as well as the investigation of the impact of firms' reshoring experience on subsequent relocations of their international activities.

4 Methodology

This thesis relies on a multiphase and mixed-method research design (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). The initial and primary phase was exploratory. It started with an in-depth examination of reshoring research through a comprehensive literature review. The exploratory phase then proceeded with qualitative case studies examining the dis-embedding and re-embedding of reshored activities, both of which emerged as key components of the reshoring process. Additionally, firms' reshoring experience was identified as a critical factor influencing both the relocation process and subsequent relocation decisions. Therefore, the second and last phase was confirmatory and aimed at testing the impact of experiential learning on firms' subsequent relocation decisions through a quantitative study.

This chapter illustrates the overall methodological approach of this thesis and details its research design, its qualitative and quantitative research. The research design discusses the multiphase and mixed-method nature of this thesis. The qualitative research is presented by describing the case study design, the case selection criteria, the case descriptions, as well as the data collection and analysis procedures. Finally, the quantitative research is presented with a focus on the questionnaire design, sampling and data collection, and description of the sample.

4.1 Research design

The multiphase and mixed method design enabled a dynamic investigation of the impact of reshoring on the firm and an inquiry from multiple angles (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). The multiphase approach of the research design is tied to the emergent and sequential nature of the research process, whereby the only planned phase was the initial exploration. This approach allowed the generation of relevant and interesting research questions that guided the first exploratory phase, whose findings informed the subsequent confirmatory phase.

The mixed-method approach concerns instead the reliance of the thesis as a whole on both qualitative and quantitative methods (Tashakkori & Teddlie,

1998). These two were sequentially employed in the individual papers to gather rich information on the phenomenon and quantitatively confirm some of the insights generated in the qualitative work (Hurmerinta-Peltomäki & Nummela, 2006). The multiphase and mixed-method approaches are discussed more in detail below.

4.1.1 The multiphase approach

In the exploratory phase, I aimed to understand the current state of scholarly work on reshoring and enter the field with a focus on some of the key neglected aspects while keeping an open mind on the specific elements that the investigation would address. The initial exploration focused on reshoring and was conducted through a systematic review of extant literature on the topic (Snyder, 2019). From this, it became apparent that reshoring research had mainly focused on its drivers and paid limited attention to its implementation and outcome. At the same time, by examining research on phenomena related to reshoring that may share common traits, such as divestment, market exit, de-internationalization, and offshoring, literature on the latter revealed that the outcomes of similar relocations may diverge from their drivers (Larsen et al., 2013; Manning, 2014). Given that offshoring and reshoring entail different relocations but also share a number of similarities (Ellram et al., 2013), the focus of this thesis turned to how the reshoring process unfolds and its impact on the firm.

I continued the exploration through qualitative case studies to gather rich information from the field (Siggelkow, 2007) and deepen my knowledge of the reshoring process. This phase began with a broad focus on the impact of reshoring on the firm, for instance, in terms of operational performance (e.g., efficiency levels, flexibility, quality), firm-level performance (e.g., profitability, sales), and firm-level outcomes (e.g., control on the activities, available knowledge, relationships with customers, suppliers, and local institutions). Nevertheless, the focus progressively restricted to specific aspects whenever surprising or counterintuitive findings emerged, triggering an abductive process similar to the one described by Sætre and Van de Ven (2021) and illustrated more in detail later. Based on this, the thesis narrowed its scope to how the activities are dis-embedded from the host country and re-embedded domestically, with these two elements respectively addressed in papers II and III.

After the exploratory work, I entered a confirmatory phase. This phase built on one of the common findings emerging from the qualitative data collection, which is the role of experience in shaping both the relocation process and the growing likelihood of firms engaging in subsequent reshoring after a first

relocation. The idea that firms may learn from reshoring was not totally new (Barbieri et al., 2023). Yet, it was unclear whether the knowledge developed from the experience with reshoring may affect subsequent reconfigurations of the firm and how. Three of the four cases I built during this thesis work displayed the presence of such an effect, which aligns with extant research on the role of experiential knowledge in influencing future internationalization decisions (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977) and the path-dependence typical of these decisions (Eriksson, Majkgård, et al., 2000; Hutzschenreuter et al., 2007). Accordingly, in paper IV, I tested hypotheses on whether the experience with international production activities and more importantly reshoring may lead firms to favor subsequent reshoring, nearshoring, or further offshoring decisions. By testing this on a sample of 148 firms, the paper confirmed that, when reconsidering the configuration of their international activities, firms may be more likely to perform additional reshoring vis-à-vis nearshoring or further offshoring if they have previously engaged in reshoring. Paper IV concluded thus the multiphase research process, which explored the impact of reshoring on the firm's supplier network and confirmed the influence of reshoring experience on subsequent reshoring decisions, as illustrated by Figure 2 in the next section.

4.1.2 The mixed-methods approach

The thesis as a whole (i.e., the summary and the four papers) follows the mixed-methods approach proposed by Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998). Scholars display limited agreement on what research can be labeled as mixed methods, with major disagreements on the boundaries and extent to which the two methods are combined (e.g., Anguera et al., 2018; Johnson et al., 2007). I embrace a pragmatic approach that goes beyond the disputes on the incompatibility of their ontological and epistemological stances, or the superiority of qualitative or quantitative methods (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). While acknowledging the different nature of qualitative and quantitative research, I sequentially combined the two methods in this thesis to address the different research questions emerging along the investigation and touch upon some aspects (i.e., the role of the firm's experience in reshoring) with both methods, achieving what is typically referred to as convergent (Turner et al., 2017) or between-methods triangulation (Denzin, 1978).

By relying on qualitative and quantitative research, I combine some of the strengths of the two approaches while offsetting some of their weaknesses, achieving an understanding of the reshoring process that is both deep and broad. According to Gibson (2017), mixed-method approaches may enhance research through elaboration, generalization, triangulation, and interpretation.

In particular, the qualitative case studies allowed a thorough elaboration of the complex network dynamics occurring when dis-embedding and re-embedding the firm's activities, which displayed challenges and opportunities on multiple levels (i.e., firm-level and relational). By contrast, the survey-based research allowed a broader generalization, capturing patterns that emerged from the qualitative research but that could not be generalized to a broader number of observations.

Furthermore, I combined qualitative case studies and survey-based research to enhance the validity of the findings (Turner et al., 2017). Qualitative case studies offer deep insights and contextualized explanations of the observed phenomena (Welch et al., 2013), ensuring that the inferences derived are accurate and reflect the observed phenomenon (Turner et al., 2015). Hence, they strengthen the internal validity of the findings. At the same time, survey-based research may contribute to the external validity of such explanations (Ibid.), testing them with a constant measurement and thereby generalizing the findings across a wider population (Shadish, 2002).

I employed a sequential qualitative-quantitative design (Hurmerinta-Peltomäki & Nummela, 2006), beginning with a qualitative data collection that informed both the qualitative data analysis and the subsequent quantitative data collection. The qualitative data collection started early on and about one year into the thesis process, immediately after the analysis of extant reshoring research. The qualitative data collection offered rich insights and allowed the in-depth exploration of how reshoring unfolds, its dis-embedding and re-embedding dynamics, and the associated challenges and opportunities (Bell et al., 2022). On one side, this provided comprehensive knowledge of the phenomenon as well as of how it unfolds over time and in relation to its context (Welch et al., 2013). On the other, it was during the qualitative work that the research questions of this thesis were abductively identified from unanticipated but interesting aspects that should have warranted a more profound investigation (Sætre & Van de Ven, 2021).

Furthermore, I relied on the qualitative work to inform the development of the research survey, which included suitable questions to quantitatively test some of the key insights that emerged from the qualitative work. This is typical of qualitative-quantitative sequential designs, as it provides the empirical foundations to develop a questionnaire that is robust and relevant to the research participants (Hurmerinta-Peltomäki & Nummela, 2006). The qualitative work highlighted some interesting aspects that seemed to be common to multiple cases (i.e., the important role of experience) and held the potential to advance extant reshoring literature. Accordingly, I focused on quantitatively analyzing these aspects across a broader sample of firms to obtain a more

complete picture of the phenomenon (Erzberger & Kelle, 2003) and enhance the validity of the research findings (Swanson & Holton, 2005).

The multiphase and mixed-method research design of this thesis is presented in Figure 2 below.

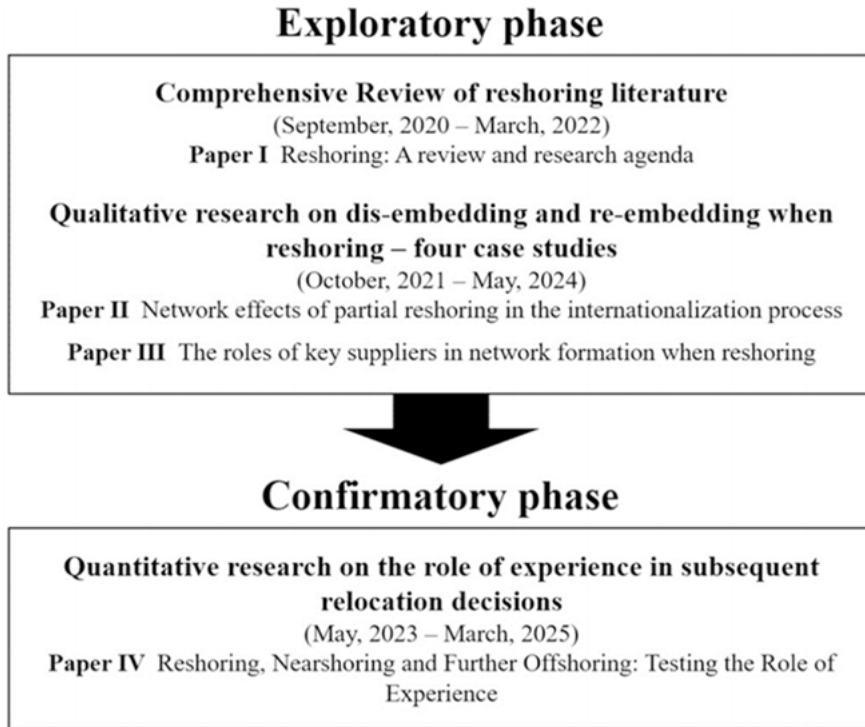


Figure 2 Multiphase and mixed-method research design

4.2 Qualitative research

The qualitative research studied the network dynamics of reshoring relying on exploratory and single case studies. These allowed a thorough investigation of a complex phenomenon, whose literature is still limited, and thereby enabled its extension (Welch et al., 2013). Although various qualitative methods may prove helpful in the inquiry of reshoring, which is complex and unfolds over time but is also a relatively novel research topic (Boffelli & Johansson, 2020), exploratory and single case studies are particularly well suited to deepen its understanding and provide rich and contextual information on how it unfolds (Siggelkow, 2007; Welch et al., 2013). Furthermore, this approach has been

applied in studies on related phenomena (Reilly et al., 2023; Vissak & Francioni, 2013) as well as reshoring (Ashby, 2016; Baraldi et al., 2018), proving suitable in advancing knowledge on the topic.

4.2.1 Case selection and description

A central element of case-study research is what should be studied (Stake, 2005), namely the unit of analysis of a study and the level at which the data are analyzed (Patton, 2002). This thesis deals with firms and, specifically, their reshoring process as the unit of analysis. The case selection was thus purposeful (Fletcher & Plakoyiannaki, 2011) and followed the criterion that firms must have conducted reshoring to be considered for the investigation. In particular, firms were deemed suitable for the study if they had either already conducted and finalized a reshoring process or initiated one that they were currently implementing. For firms whose reshoring process had already been implemented, real-time data were collected on their outcomes, as well as retrospective data on the decision and implementation of the relocation. Conversely, real-time data were collected on both the implementation and early effects of reshoring for firms that were implementing reshoring when first approached.

Due to the exploratory nature of this phase of the research, firms from different countries were initially deemed suitable cases. Nevertheless, the case selection soon focused only on firms from Italy and Sweden for four main reasons. One is that the first two cases were based in Sweden and Italy, and the search for further cases was limited to these two countries in order to avoid excessive contextual heterogeneity. Another concerns the numerous cases of reshoring announced in the press in the two countries, which are among the ones in Europe to display the greatest occurrence of similar relocations (European Reshoring Monitor, 2018). Thirdly, both countries have a large manufacturing sector but with different structures, which could show different dynamics when reshoring. The Swedish economy is dominated by large firms, while the Italian one by small and medium-sized firms (Eurostat, 2024), organized in specialized clusters (Storper, 1992). Finally, it could be easier to approach firms in the same country of the institution (i.e., Uppsala University) where I was employed (i.e., Sweden) or where some of the co-authors already had well-established contacts with relevant firms (i.e., Italy).

This led to the selection of four cases: two based in Sweden and two in Italy. The four firms conducted a reshoring process, which became the case on which this thesis has focused. However, they display differences and

commonalities regarding firm-level and reshoring characteristics. These are illustrated in Table 2 and described below in more detail in relation to each case.

Table 2 Selected case firms

	Alpha	Beta	Gamma	Woods TES
Home country	Italy	Italy	Sweden	Sweden
Size (number of employees)	~600	~2550	~1900	~30
Industry	Toys	Kitchen appliances	Furniture	Air treatment products
Host country	China	Poland	Netherlands	Canada
Governance mode in the host country	Outsourcing	In-house	In-house	Outsourcing
Governance mode in the home country	Outsourcing*	In-house	In-house	Outsourcing
Scope of reshoring	Partial	Partial	Full	Full
Duration of the reshoring process	2011-2022 ~120 months	2020-2022 ~24 months	2016-2019 ~36 months	2018-2019 ~18 months
Main reshoring drivers	Shrinking cost differentials; growing risks caused by lead times	Efficiency considerations (concentration of high-end production domestically)	Efficiency considerations (economies of scale)	Change in regulations (i.e., change of sustainability standards)

*Main governance mode, but subsets of activities were relocated in-house

Alpha is a leading player in the toy industry. Based in Italy, the firm has about 600 employees and internal manufacturing concentrated in various plants in Italy but also substantial operations outsourced in Italy and China. Alpha engaged in the reshoring of a significant part of its activities outsourced to Chinese suppliers (about 40%), over 10 years. In particular, it shifted from sourcing finished products from Chinese suppliers to sourcing only the essential electronic components from them while relocating the other activities (i.e.,

mainly plastic manufacturing and assembly) for a wide range of products to Italian suppliers. The reshoring decision was motivated by the shrinking cost differentials between Italy and China as well as the very long lead times, which exposed the firm to risks such as inaccurate demand forecasts and potential inventory costs. Accordingly, between 2011 and 2013, Alpha performed a pilot project for a single product to evaluate the potential of reshoring to cope with these issues. As the results were positive, it decided to partially relocate home the activities of a growing number of products, relocating in-house the research and development as well as design activities while outsourcing most of the manufacturing and assembly activities to Italian suppliers.

Beta is an Italian firm and global leader in the manufacturing of kitchen appliances, which are sold both directly to consumers and other large players in the sector. With about 2550 employees, the firm largely relies on internal production conducted in Italy, Poland, Mexico, and China. In 2020, the firm embarked on reshoring, which was part of a broader internal reorganization plan aimed at increasing the firm's manufacturing efficiency. For this purpose, Beta reshored from Poland to Italy the high-end production activities previously abroad while simultaneously offshoring to Poland the lower-end production previously conducted in Italy. The reshoring process was, therefore, only partial and finalized in 2022, after about two years.

Gamma is a Swedish firm active in the furniture industry. The firm has about 1900 employees and internal production across several plants in Europe and the United States. In the last decade, the firm has expanded through multiple acquisitions. As part of its growth strategy, in 2015, it acquired a Dutch firm. In order to enhance the efficiency of its production activities, in 2016, Gamma decided to fully relocate the manufacturing activities from the Netherlands to its Swedish plant, where it had available production capacity. The reshoring process stretched over about three years and underwent two main phases. In the first one, Gamma relocated only part of the activities due to contractual (i.e., patent) arrangements with a supplier that required keeping certain activities in the Netherlands. In the second phase, after about two years, the activities left in the Netherlands were relocated to Sweden, and the production in the host location was fully terminated.

Finally, Woods TES is a small Swedish firm active in the air treatment industry. Although it only has 30 employees, the firm is the leader in the Swedish consumer market and attains relatively high international sales relying on almost fully outsourced manufacturing activities. These activities were previously located mainly in Canada and China. However, in 2018, Woods TES reshored all of its production outsourced in Canada due to a change in the

European sustainability regulations, which banned the use of fluorinated greenhouse gases in household appliances. Since the Canadian supplier was not willing to adapt its activities and comply with such regulations, Woods TES reshored all of the activities outsourced in Canada to a Swedish supplier, rolling out local production by late 2019.

4.2.2 Data collection

I began the qualitative data collection in October 2021, when the first firm (i.e., Gamma) agreed to participate in the research. I finalized it in May 2024, with a final round of interviews with one of Alpha's Italian suppliers involved in its reshoring process. In this period, four cases of reshoring were built from semi-structured interviews as the primary data source, complemented by archival data and media coverage.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with managers involved in the reshoring process of the four firms and with direct experience of the phenomenon. Once I had established contact with the firms, relevant respondents were sampled by referrals (Miles & Huberman, 1994) in order to identify people with knowledge of the implementation and effects of reshoring in each firm. As mentioned in the introduction, reshoring is typically a decision made by managers at the head office, who are later involved also in managing the relocation process (e.g., Baraldi et al., 2018; Barbieri et al., 2023). Although reshoring may have an impact on managers in other locations (Ciabuschi et al., 2019), it is therefore captured here from a home-country perspective, and the findings are later postulated accordingly. Nevertheless, given that reshoring may concern activities directly conducted by suppliers (Baraldi et al., 2024), interviews were also conducted with some of them in the cases of outsourced reshoring.

I performed the interviews face-to-face, either online or in person, to enable direct interaction and the observation of the verbal and non-verbal behaviors of respondents (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Furthermore, this type of interview allows for posing follow-up questions and digging deeper into the research questions, which is essential in exploratory research based on case studies (Yin, 2014). The questions were open and covered the whole reshoring process, inspired by the reshoring framework developed in the literature review (i.e., paper I), but with a special focus on its outcomes. In particular, various aspects concerning the reshoring decision and implementation were covered to make sense of the relocation holistically. Yet, most questions covered the dynamics of dis-embedding and re-embedding the activities, their planned and actual impact, and the network dynamics manifesting in the shorter and longer term.

I prepared and conducted the vast majority of interviews, but I also benefited from the collaboration of two co-authors in this endeavor. This was the case for a few interviews with Alpha and its Italian supplier, which were performed in person by one of the co-authors of a paper outside this thesis, and of a few interviews with Woods TES, which were conducted by one of the co-authors of paper III in 2018. In the course of the thesis work, a total of 53 interviews were conducted, which, together with the 2 interviews conducted in 2018 by a co-author, form a total of 55 interviews.

Specifically, I conducted 29 interviews with the managers of Alpha. These were complemented by 2 interviews performed with managers of the Chinese supplier most affected by reshoring and 6 with the main Italian supplier taking on the relocated activities domestically. Additionally, I conducted 9 interviews with the managers of Beta and 4 with those of Gamma. Finally, I performed 2 interviews with the CEO of Woods TES and 1 with the CEO of its main Swedish supplier, which complemented the 2 previously conducted by a co-author with the CEO of Woods TES and a manager of its domestic supplier. An overview of the interviews and interviewees is provided in Appendix 1.

I also collected archival data and media coverage to complement the interview data of the four cases. The information collected concerned topics such as the firms' history and background, their past and current strategy, their international development, and the investigated reshoring process. Such information was mainly collected from internal presentations, internal documents, brochures, and catalogs for Alpha and Woods TES. Conversely, substantial information was publicly available and collected for Beta and Gamma from their annual reports and the numerous archival documents on their websites. At the same time, I scanned the web to identify relevant information and media coverage from other sources, which were collected to build a comprehensive understanding of the four firms and the background of their reshoring process.

4.2.3 Data analysis

I analyzed the data for the four cases by relying on a mix of inductive and deductive reasoning. In particular, I began the analysis of each case soon after the initial interviews were performed, with the construction of a case history from the information provided by the managers and publicly available archival data. This first step was essential to define the nature of the reshoring process at hand (e.g., governance mode, duration, key events) and define the next steps in the data collection by placing focus on empirical and/or theoretically puzzling aspects. After that, more data were collected on the reshoring process at

large, but the focus was progressively restricted to the puzzles in order to empirically ground them and start reasoning on their possible explanations (Golden-Biddle, 2020).

It was at this stage that access to Gamma was discontinued by its managers, and the data collection and analysis were thereby interrupted for this case. Following this, I paused the data collection and analysis of Beta's reshoring process, in order to focus on the reshoring process of Alpha and Woods TES. This decision was motivated by the rich information provided by the managers on these two cases, as well as the decision to focus on cases sharing the same governance mode for the relocated activities, outsourced in the case of Alpha and Woods TES. These two cases revealed particularly interesting dynamics in the dis-embedding and re-embedding of the reshored activities, and the investigation proceeded only for these two cases. Specifically, additional data were collected and combined with extant literature to start synthesizing the results and test the selected explanations against more evidence (Mantere & Ketokivi, 2013). The synthesis of the data revealed key themes that were then presented and discussed in the papers. Overall, the data analysis process resembled the abductive approach conceived by Sætre and Van de Ven (2021).

To minimize recall bias and impression management (Vissak, 2010), I triangulated insights from the interviews with archival data and available media coverage. Internal documents provided by the managers were, for instance, used to cross-check the dates and information on the key events of the reshoring process, the strategy behind the relocation, and the actors involved, as well as to understand what activities and products were relocated at each point in time. Publicly available documents such as annual reports, company websites, and relevant press releases were instead mainly employed to have precise contextual information on dimensions such as their strategy, ownership, organizational structure, key markets, history, and internationalization.

Although only two cases were ultimately included in the two qualitative papers (i.e., Alpha and Woods TES), Beta and Gamma offered important insights into the reshoring process, warranting their inclusion in this thesis. On the one hand, in line with Barbieri et al. (2023), these cases underscore that business relationships also play a prominent role in reshoring when concerning in-house activities. For example, as noted earlier, Gamma's reshoring process occurred in two distinct phases due to its inability to terminate a contractual relationship with a Dutch supplier holding an essential production patent, delaying full reshoring. Although to a lesser extent, Beta also experienced significant business relationship reconfigurations both domestically and internationally during its reshoring process. Furthermore, these cases demonstrated how the reshoring experience could influence adjustments in the

implementation of the reshoring process. At the same time, similar to Alpha and Woods TES, Gamma's managers explicitly mentioned that they leveraged this experience in subsequent relocations of their international activities. Therefore, the findings from Beta and Gamma reinforced the network and experiential learning perspective on reshoring, validating its applicability across multiple cases (Yin, 2014) and informing the subsequent quantitative study (Hurmerinta-Peltomäki & Nummela, 2006).

4.3 Quantitative research

The quantitative research relied on primary data that I collected through an online survey. I decided to collect survey data based on two major considerations. One concerns the lack of available secondary data on the variables of interest (i.e., past reshoring experience and relocation decisions), which could be grasped only by managers with knowledge of the topic.

The other relates instead to essential validity considerations. Quantitative studies on reshoring often utilize secondary data, which avoids biases typical of survey methods (Podsakoff et al., 2003) but may fail to accurately capture the phenomenon. For instance, the operationalization of reshoring as a 10% annual employment decrease in a foreign country and a 10% increase in the home country (e.g., Delis et al., 2019; Sena et al., 2022) may capture reshoring. However, it may also capture a number of other possible readjustments in the firm's operations that do not entail any relocation, for example, production shifts (Lee & Song, 2012) or foreign divestment (Schmid & Morschett, 2020) and market exit (Ozkan, 2020) paralleled by growing domestic employment without the occurrence of any relocation. Moreover, this operationalization overlooks the relocation of activities that were outsourced abroad and of those that are outsourced domestically, neglecting an essential part of the phenomenon (Bals et al., 2016; Gray et al., 2013). Hence, this operationalization of reshoring displays very limited internal validity unless cross-referenced with reshoring announcements and data on outsourced activities.

At the same time, existing databases that are built from press releases on reshoring are not always accurate in capturing the phenomenon. For instance, the Reshoring Initiative database (Moser, 2019) labels decisions not to off-shore as reshoring and, again, lacks internal validity. Conversely, data from the European Restructuring Monitor (2019) accurately capture reshoring and relocation events but provides limited information on the drivers of the relocation, i.e., only those explicitly mentioned in announcements to the press. Accordingly, data on the drivers of reshoring may be characterized by numerous omitted variables, such as some of the actual drivers of reshoring that were

not publicly announced due to strategic, confidentiality, or social desirability considerations. Hence, such data often necessitate significant assumptions about explanatory variables (Barbieri et al., 2019) and is incomplete. Additionally, the European Restructuring Monitor (2019) encompasses firms from different European countries and, therefore, highly heterogeneous home-country contexts, which may have a fundamental impact on reshoring (Barbieri et al., 2018; Wan et al., 2019). To avoid similar shortcomings and cover new variables, I designed and administered an ad-hoc survey.

4.3.1 Questionnaire design

The impact of experience on subsequent relocations of international activities emerged from the qualitative research as an important element in the reshoring process, and a structured questionnaire was designed to capture this aspect. Specifically, the purpose of the survey was to capture the impact of firms' experience with international activities and reshoring on subsequent reshoring, nearshoring, and further offshoring decisions (Fratocchi et al., 2014).

The questionnaire design started in June 2022 but was also informed by the literature review previously conducted, highlighting scant quantitative research on reshoring and the variables/constructs employed by other researchers (e.g., Kinkel, 2012; Johanson et al., 2019). Soon after, a review of relevant constructs was conducted, with reference to variables intended to be used as controls (e.g., firm's strategy, industry, size) and employed in offshoring research (Schmeisser, 2013), which captures a similar relocation. In parallel, several brainstorming sessions were dedicated to flesh out alternative models that could be tested on the topic, in order to focus the questionnaire only on aspects deemed interesting and relevant. These were paralleled and informed by the qualitative work, which provided insights into interesting variables (e.g., reshoring experience) and the possibility to start discussing them directly with managers. From this, the initial version of the questionnaire was developed.

The initial questionnaire was revised multiple times to reduce its bias and ambiguity (Churchill, 1979) between September 2022 and May 2023. In this period, two types of work were conducted. One concerned revisions of the questionnaire aimed at focusing it on the specific aspects of interest and ensuring it followed rigorous research practices. For this purpose, multiple revisions were discussed in meetings with two other experienced researchers in the field. The other type of work consisted of testing the questionnaire with experienced scholars, i.e., the two previously mentioned and two other senior scholars, and with managers of 7 Swedish firms. Based on their suggestions,

the structure of the survey (e.g., making explicit in the invitation letter that if a manager did not know an answer, they could leave it blank), as well as the content (e.g., the wording was adjusted to the terminology suggested by the managers), were revised in the final version (see Appendix 2).

4.3.2 Sampling and data collection

I began collecting survey data in May 2023 and concluded in September 2024. The targeted sample was defined through an initial list of Swedish firms that I retrieved from the Dun & Bradstreet database of manufacturing firms in Sweden, by taking the first 1500 firms in terms of size (sales revenue) and whose email contacts were available online.

Sweden represents a suitable empirical setting to study reshoring. On the one hand, Sweden is a developed country with a relatively small domestic market and is thus inherently oriented toward international markets. A significant portion of its GDP originates from international trade, and it ranks fourth in Europe in terms of foreign direct investment volumes (World Bank, 2023b). Accordingly, Swedish firms not only heavily rely on exports but also actively engage in significant foreign direct investments, making the country ideal for examining reconfigurations in the firms' international activities. This context becomes even more relevant when considering that Sweden's foreign direct investments have sharply declined between 2022 and 2023, dropping by over a third and much faster than the European average (Business Sweden, 2024). This trend may suggest deeper macroeconomic shifts and a renewed focus on domestic operations. In addition, Sweden has been a prominent location for both offshoring and reshoring (European Restructuring Monitor, 2019), further emphasizing the suitability of this empirical setting to study reshoring and other cross-border relocations.

The data collection unfolded by establishing contact via email with potential respondents. For this purpose, I built a database with emails of potential respondents. To ensure the respondents had direct knowledge of the topic, I targeted managers familiar with international relocations of sourcing or production activities. The selection criteria differed by firm size. For larger firms, I contacted operations and supply chain managers, such as production or purchasing directors. For smaller firms, I considered the CEO among the potential respondents, given their likely involvement not only in strategic decisions such as reshoring but also in the operational aspects of the relocation process.

I sent out emails to potential respondents introducing my research and the topic of the survey before providing a link to the questionnaire (developed on the SurveyMonkey platform) and reassuring managers about anonymity and

data usage procedures. Three emails were sent out over a month to the potential respondents, with a first email followed by a gentle reminder after two weeks and a final reminder after two more weeks. From this, an initial sample of 168 firms was obtained. However, for the responses to be valid, the firms had to meet the three criteria of (i) having a turnover of at least €1 million, (ii) being established for at least three years, and (iii) having either sourcing or production activities abroad. As 20 firms did not meet at least one of these, the final sample consists of 148 firms.

4.3.3 Description of the sample

The final sample comprises 148 firms headquartered in Sweden and with production activities in at least one foreign country, whether in-house or outsourced. Table 3 describes some of their main features in terms of year of establishment, size (i.e., number of employees and sales volume), and intensity of research and development in their industry.

Table 3 Sampled Firms General Characteristics

Description	Percentage	Description	Percentage
Year of establishment		Size (No. of employees)	
1609–1900	6	4–10	8
1901–1950	22	11–50	26
1951–1975	16	51–250	33
1976–2000	34	251–1000	13
2001–2018	22	> 1001	20
Industry research and development intensity		Size (Sales revenue)	
Low	6	€ 1-10 Million	12
Medium-low	16	€ 11-50 Million	38
Medium	20	€ 51-100 Million	20
Medium-high	40	€ 101-250 Million	10
High	18	€ >250 Million	20

The sample includes Swedish firms whose establishment occurred long ago as well as recently. The two youngest firms were founded in 2018, while the three oldest were established back in the seventeenth century. The sample is nonetheless rather well distributed in terms of year of establishment. The distribution is conversely slightly skewed when looking at the research and development intensity of the industries of the sampled firms. Grouping them

according to this criterion (Galindo-Rueda & Verger, 2016), it is interesting to note that almost one-fifth of the sample belongs to high-tech industries (e.g., pharmaceuticals, air and spacecraft, and electronics) and almost 60% to high or medium-high tech ones (e.g., medical devices, chemicals, electrical equipment, machinery, and equipment). Finally, in terms of size, following the definition provided by the European Commission (European Commission, 2003), a good part of the sample consists of small and medium-sized firms. This is especially true when looking at firm size in terms of number of employees, as two-thirds of the firms have 250 or fewer employees. At the same time, only half of the sample captures small and medium-sized firms in terms of revenues (i.e., between 1 and 50 million euros).

The dataset also contains information on the degree of internationalization of the firms, outlined in Table 4 and Table 5 below. Table 4 displays the percentage of employees abroad vis-à-vis those in the home country. The sample includes firms either highly focused on their home country, with 44% of the firms having only 10% or less of their workforce abroad, or highly internationalized, as 20% of the firms have more than 70% of their employees in foreign countries.

Table 4 Employees abroad vis-à-vis those in the home country

Description	Percentage
Employees overseas of total employees	
0–10%	44
10.1–30%	16
30.1–50%	10
50.1–70%	10
70.1–100%	20

Table 5 presents the level of internationalization of the production or sourcing activities in the sample, which reflects a similar pattern of the employees located at home and abroad.

Table 5 level of internationalization of the production or sourcing

Description	Percentage	Description	Percentage
Foreign production of total production		Number of foreign countries for production and/or sourcing	
5–10%	22	1	14
10.1–30%	24	2–4	29
30.1–50%	26	5–9	22
50.1–70%	12	10–19	16
70.1–100%	6	20–100	19

The percentage of foreign production of total production (in-house and outsourced) is very low for 22% of the firms and generally rather low (i.e., equal or below 50%) for 72% of the total sample. Yet, whether in-house or outsourced, more than half of the 148 firms have production activities in 5 or more foreign countries, displaying supply chains rather fine-sliced internationally.

Finally, an essential aspect of the survey concerns the reshoring experience of the sampled firms. The questionnaire asked whether the firm has engaged (or not) in reshoring in the last 10 years. The results, which are presented in Table 6 below, are rather interesting in two respects. One is that they confirm the prominence of reshoring of activities that were outsourced abroad (European Reshoring Monitor, 2018), which is twice as common as reshoring of the firm's own activities. Hence, the sample demonstrates that outsourced reshoring and reshoring for insourcing (i.e., re-integrating in-house, domestically, activities that were previously outsourced abroad) may be much more frequent than reshoring of the firm's own activities abroad.

Table 6 Reshoring Experience of Sampled Firms

Description	Percentage	Description	Percentage
Reshoring experience with foreign in-house activities		Reshoring experience with foreign outsourced activities	
Yes	19	Yes	47
No	81	No	53

Another aspect concerns the overall occurrence of reshoring, which involves about half of the sampled firms and proves not as minimal as discussed by research on the topic. In particular, Witt et al. (2023) acknowledge that, due to recent geopolitical tensions, reshoring may be increasingly considered by

firms in industries of national strategic importance and whose relocation is feasible. Yet, the phenomenon is often discussed with claims ranging from “*firms would need to perceive large and persistent losses of competitiveness before they consider reshoring*” (Yücesan, 2025, p. 10) to “*the idea of reshoring seems simplistic as compared to the sophisticated location decisions described in the literature and the constraints faced by firms to remain competitive*” (Miroudot, 2020, p. 436). Therefore, it may be true that reshoring is neither the only nor the most likely response to disruptions from de-globalization and de-coupling trends, and that firms may engage in offshoring and other internationalization strategies alongside relocations to the home country. However, the sample highlights that reshoring is far from uncommon and deserves scholarly attention that goes beyond conceptual pieces discussing its (un)likelihood, as the ones above and other recent work (e.g., D’Ambrosio & Lavoratori, 2025).

5 Summary of papers

This chapter summarizes the four papers included in the thesis, covering the theoretical framework it builds on. Specifically, paper I reviews extant research on the topic and conceives reshoring as a process of interconnected phases and culminating in outcomes on multiple levels. The paper underscores the need to capture its network and learning dynamics, which become the focus of the three empirical papers. Paper II analyzes how the activities are dis-embedded from the host country and the implications of such endeavor, while paper III focuses on their re-embedding. As both papers hinted at experiential learning dynamics, paper IV tests how the firm's experience with international activities and reshoring affects its subsequent relocation decisions.

At the end of the chapter, Table 7 provides an overview of the four papers, highlighting their research purposes, research approaches, main findings, and relevance to the research questions of this thesis.

Paper I: Reshoring: A review and research agenda

This paper reviews extant research on reshoring. Scholarly interest in the topic emerged about fifteen years ago and has surged. However, the last comprehensive review was conducted in early 2017 (i.e., Barbieri et al., 2018), just a few years from the emergence of the first contributions. Reshoring is often motivated by changing environmental conditions in the firms' host and home country (Wiesmann et al., 2017). Hence, it is crucial to understand how the phenomenon evolves in response to recent environmental changes like the pandemic (Barbieri et al., 2020) or growing sustainability concerns (Fratocchi & Di Stefano, 2019), which further underscore the need for a timely review.

In addition, reshoring research emerged in the field of operations and supply chain management and has only recently caught scholarly attention in other fields, such as international business and industrial marketing (e.g., Albertoni et al., 2017; Baraldi et al., 2018). This research provided a good knowledge of these relocations but focused mainly on supply chain factors. Moreover, reshoring research had mainly focused on explaining why firms relocate their activities (Wiesmann et al., 2017), neglecting how other elements may affect

reshoring. In response, the study organizes extant research on the topic and discusses a research agenda to advance it.

From the bibliometric and content analysis of 135 articles, the paper proposes a reshoring framework that characterizes the phenomenon as marked by the five elements of (i) antecedents, (ii) contingencies, (iii) decision, (iv) implementation, and (v) outcome. These are interconnected in a process spanning from antecedents to outcome and present a more dynamic view of reshoring.

The paper makes several contributions. First, building on the proposed reshoring process framework, it organizes and discusses extant research about the reshoring antecedents, decision, implementation, and outcomes. From this, the paper identifies and discusses notable gaps characterizing extant literature and develops a detailed research agenda to advance it. The research agenda highlights, for instance, the need to investigate the central elements supporting or hindering the reshoring process, the impact of reshoring on subsequent relocation decisions, and how relocations to the home country may shape the firm's capabilities or its network of suppliers.

Furthermore, the paper fosters the conceptualization of reshoring as a process, which has important implications for its understanding. On the one hand, this view of reshoring sets the stage for the development of greater knowledge of how different elements of the relocation influence each other and culminate in its outcome. As it was shown in relation to offshoring, these relocations may entail complex processes (Jensen et al., 2013). Hence, it is essential to grasp how reshoring unfolds, and this review provides the tools to identify some of its central elements. On the other hand, the proposed view of reshoring shifts the focus of extant research from solely on its drivers to its implementation and outcomes. These latter have received very limited attention and have only been assumed to correspond to the actual outcomes of reshoring. However, they may not always manifest as planned and must be carefully understood (Boffelli & Johansson, 2020).

Finally, the paper displays the weak theorization of reshoring research and the common use of the eclectic framework (Dunning, 1998) to explain the drivers of reshoring. Based on this, the review suggests integrating other theoretical perspectives that provide a more dynamic view of the phenomenon and uncover important neglected aspects. The paper suggests relying, for example, on behavioral theories to capture the dynamics underlying the decision-making and implementation of reshoring, organizational learning theories to reveal how and what firms learn during the reshoring process, or business network perspectives to extend the analysis of the reshoring process beyond the focal firm.

Paper II: Network effects of partial reshoring in the internationalization process

This paper investigates how a firm's host-country network evolves following partial reshoring. Extensive literature has highlighted the importance of accessing resources and capabilities through suppliers in host countries (Cantwell & Mudambi, 2011; Jensen, 2012). Yet, changing strategic and environmental factors may push firms to reconsider their previous decision to outsource activities abroad and engage in reshoring (Ashby, 2016). If in cases of full reshoring (i.e., the relocation of all activities in a host country) firms may disregard the consequences of such endeavor on foreign suppliers, when reshoring is only partial firms may be required to ensure sustained access to resources and capabilities in the host country. The decision to reduce the activities outsourced to foreign suppliers may nonetheless generate adverse reactions, harming the quality and survival of business relationships (Baraldi et al., 2018) and, in turn, the firm's access to essential resources and capabilities. Given that this does not prevent firms from reshoring their outsourced activities (European Reshoring Monitor, 2018; Moser, 2019), and not much is known of the business network dynamics triggered by these relocations, the paper investigates the evolution of the firm's host-country network following partial reshoring.

The paper relies on a single case study to allow a deep exploration of the phenomenon (Siggelkow, 2007). For that purpose, 29 interviews were conducted with Alpha's managers, complemented by 6 other interviews with suppliers and archival data. These were analyzed with an abductive approach (Sætre & Van de Ven, 2021) and informed by the network view of internationalization (Johanson & Vahlne, 2009), which manifested as the most suitable theoretical approach to explain the network dynamics brought by reshoring.

The network dynamics generated by the firm's partial reshoring are portrayed in a theoretical model contributing to research on both reshoring and internationalization. The reshoring literature is expanded by revealing the evolution of a firm's host-country network following reshoring, overlooked by research on reshoring more broadly decisions to reduce involvement in a host country (Kafourous et al., 2022). In this regard, partial reshoring is shown to induce foreign suppliers to discontinue their relationship with the firm and provide the latter with the opportunity to strategically reallocate its outsourced activities in fewer relationships and, in so doing, ensure their continuity. These relationships are deepened through greater collaboration and relational exchange (Dwyer et al., 1987; Uzzi & Lancaster, 2003), facilitating knowledge exchange and creating new business opportunities (Andersson et al., 2005).

Nevertheless, the reduced number of foreign relationships limits the diversity of knowledge and opportunities available to the firm in the host-country network (Forsgren, 2016). Furthermore, reshoring research is advanced by discussing partial reshoring as a specific relocation strategy that may balance resilience considerations (e.g., exposure to geopolitical risks) with efficiency and competence availability concerns. Specifically, the paper shows that partial reshoring may allow firms to address the limited feasibility of full reshoring while mitigating its cost implications and ensuring sustained access to critical capabilities.

To research on the internationalization process, the paper makes two notable contributions. One is a refined view of the concept of relationship commitment, which had been vaguely employed to indicate different forms of withdrawal from a host country (Johanson & Vahlne, 2009; Vahlne & Johanson, 2017). By contrast, the paper introduces the concepts of tangible and intangible relationship commitment, and clearly characterizes them to better capture the network dynamics of (de-)internationalization. Another consists of a new take on the nonlinearity of the internationalization process. This nonlinearity is shown to reside not so much in decisions to reduce the firm's international involvement (Vissak & Francioni, 2013) but rather in the contrasting dynamics that decisions such as reshoring may trigger.

Paper III: The roles of key suppliers in network formation when reshoring

This paper explores how key suppliers may help a reshoring firm establish and organize a domestic supply network, which takes on the activities previously outsourced abroad. Although previous studies highlighted the importance of suppliers in reshoring (Ashby, 2016; Choudhary et al., 2022) and that they provide resources and capabilities that are fundamental for the relocation (Nujen et al., 2018), how they contribute to the reshoring process remains a black box. This is a significant neglect, as in the case of outsourced reshoring, suppliers directly conduct the firm's activities in the home country (Ashby, 2016). Furthermore, their role may be especially important when the relocated activities were born-offshored (Moradlou et al., 2022), i.e., developed abroad from inception, because neither the firm nor its domestic suppliers may have relevant pre-existing knowledge. Accordingly, suppliers taking on those activities in the home country may be pivotal in enabling reshoring, and this needs to be carefully understood.

The paper adopts a single-case study approach to generate deep and valuable insights into the object of investigation (Siggelkow, 2007). In particular, it

builds on the reshoring process of a firm that relocated born-offshored activities from foreign to domestic suppliers (i.e., outsourced reshoring). This is analyzed with an abductive approach (Dubois & Gadde, 2002) and relying on the business network perspective (Håkansson & Snehota, 1995).

The paper makes three main contributions to reshoring research. First, this paper provides an explicit and in-depth exploration of the reshoring of born-offshored activities. Although the phenomenon was previously mentioned by other researchers (e.g., Barbieri et al., 2023; Moradlou et al., 2022), this study offers a detailed account of the reshoring process of born-offshored activities, for which the reshoring firm needs to develop an ad-hoc network in the home country delivering relevant resources and capabilities. The paper shows that the lack of an existing domestic network taking on the activities may be a threat as much as a blessing. Specifically, it shows that the formation of a new network is a particularly complex and resourceful task but that it also comes with advantages, for example, the lack of previous relational frictions caused by offshoring and access to a wholly new set of resources and capabilities.

Second, the paper outlines several roles that a key supplier covers in forming and organizing a new domestic network, which may have positive and negative effects. These roles range from operational functions to more strategic ones, including supply network coordinator, research and development collaborator, strategy and development enabler, and major contributor to value creation. The key supplier thus becomes the main coordinator of the new network (Olsen et al., 2014) and influences the strategic development of the reshoring firm. At the same time, a strong reliance on a single actor may create a risky dependence for the reshoring firm, which may restrict its future strategic development (Gadde & Snehota, 2019) and should be carefully considered before embarking on reshoring.

Third, the paper shows that the decision to reduce the geographic scope of a firm that has long been focused on developing activities internationally may require the support of capable domestic suppliers. If this is not surprising (e.g., Nujen et al., 2019), the paper adds that the key supplier and the newly developed network influence not only the outcome of the reshoring process but also subsequent relocation decisions. The newly formed supply network is indeed shown to act as a magnet and attract the domestic reintegration of additional activities previously outsourced to suppliers in different foreign countries.

Paper IV: Reshoring, nearshoring, and further offshoring: Testing the role of experience

This paper tests the role of previous experience with international activities and reshoring in shaping subsequent relocation decisions. Extensive research dissected how firms internationalize (Liesch et al., 2011; Vahlne, 2020), but only more recently scholarly interest has turned to how firms reconfigure their international activities (Kafouros et al., 2022; Rodriguez et al., 2022). When re-evaluating the location of previous offshoring decisions, and thus not considering the termination of the international activities (e.g., divestment), firms may be presented with three alternatives (Fratocchi et al., 2014): reshoring, i.e., the relocation to the firm's home country; nearshoring, namely the relocation to the firm's home region; and further offshoring, which entails the relocation to another far-away country.

Extant literature on internationalization and offshoring has shown experience to be a key determinant of decisions to expand abroad (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977; Lewin & Peeters, 2006). International experience has been shown to drive the expansion of the firm's activities in the same as well as other foreign countries (Clarke et al., 2013; Eriksson, Majkgård, et al., 2000), generating a path-dependent view of internationalization whereby initial offshoring decisions may represent only the first step of a broader offshoring strategy (Maskell et al., 2007).

However, the firm's experience with offshoring may also trigger relocations in the opposite direction and induce reshoring. For instance, Kinkel and Maloca (2009) display that unexpected problems following offshoring may trigger reshoring. Concurrently, Benstead et al. (2017) highlight that the firm's offshoring experience may be relevant to reshoring and facilitating its implementation. Therefore, it is unclear whether the experience firms derive from their international activities may foster or hamper subsequent decisions to reshore, nearshore, and further offshore. These relocation decisions may nonetheless be informed also by the experience firms derive from their reshoring experience, although this aspect has been largely unexplored (Bals et al., 2016). Barbieri et al. (2023) demonstrate that firms may learn from the reintegration of activities in the home country. Still, little is known about how such experience may encourage or hinder subsequent relocations.

Drawing on the path-dependent and experiential learning perspectives of internationalization literature (Hutzschenreuter & Voll, 2008; Johanson & Vahlne, 1977), this study hypothesizes that a firm's experience in international production enhances the likelihood of further offshoring while diminishing that of reshoring. Conversely, it posits that prior reshoring experience increases the probability of subsequent reshoring and decreases the likelihood

of further offshoring decisions. Recognizing the potential overlaps between nearshoring and reshoring, as well as between nearshoring and further offshoring, the study formulates competing hypotheses regarding the impact of international production experience and reshoring experience on nearshoring.

Utilizing survey data gathered from 148 Swedish firms, the findings reveal that international production experience positively influences subsequent decisions to further offshore and nearshore while it discourages reshoring. Meanwhile, the reshoring experience enhances the likelihood of subsequent reshoring, with no significant effect on nearshoring or further offshoring.

The paper contributes to international strategy literature by illustrating how experiential learning influences the relocation of previously offshored activities. Prior research has emphasized the need to explore relocations as a strategic response to global uncertainties (Benito et al., 2022; Rodriguez et al., 2022; Witt et al., 2023). Expanding on this, the paper displays that reshoring is not the only available relocation option but that firms with prior reshoring experience may favor it over further offshoring and nearshoring. Additionally, the paper proves that international production experience fosters relocations to other far-away locations as well as to the firm's home region, indicating the possible co-existence and substituting role of these two relocation options. Moreover, the paper reveals a contrasting effect of the two types of experience on subsequent reshoring decisions, implying a tension between the two that may play out in single decisions as well as in series.

Table 7 Overview of the four papers

Paper	Title	Research purpose	Research approach	Main findings	Relevance to research questions of the thesis
I	Reshoring: A review and research agenda	Review and organize extant reshoring literature, to highlight its focal areas and the blind spots that may advance our understanding of the phenomenon	Literature review relying on bibliometric and content analysis of extant interdisciplinary research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conceptualization of reshoring as a process characterized by antecedents, contingencies, decision, implementation, and outcome - Focus of extant research on reshoring antecedents neglecting other aspects, such as how it unfolds and the outcomes it generates - Limited theorization of reshoring in extant research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highlighting the important but largely overlooked role of the firm's network in reshoring - Underscoring the potential impact of reshoring on the firm's longer-term development, capabilities, and subsequent reconfigurations
II	Network effects of partial reshoring in the internationalization process	Explore the evolution of the firm's host-country network of suppliers triggered by reshoring, to uncover how it is managed and the implications for the reshoring firm	Qualitative research built on an exploratory and in-depth single case study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business relationships are not necessarily terminated or weakened when reshoring - Suppliers negatively affected by reshoring may engage in adverse competitive reactions - Firms may be required to strategically rebalance their position in the host-country network, by focusing on fewer but deeper relationships - Partial reshoring may be a relocation strategy balancing efficiency and resilience imperatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Impact of reshoring on relationships with host-country suppliers (e.g., termination of relationships; adverse reactions; growing collaboration with selected suppliers; greater adaptation) - Suggesting that the reshoring may build on experience (tested on a single product and, after initial experience, extended to a growing number of products)
III	The roles of key suppliers in network formation when reshoring	Investigate the role of key suppliers in the reintegration of the relocated activities and the organization of the (new) domestic supplier network	Qualitative research built on an exploratory and in-depth single case study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reshoring may be particularly resource intensive for "born-offshore" activities - A domestic supplier may be the key enabler of reshoring and become the main actor of the domestic supply network, covering operational and strategic roles - The essential role of such supplier entails opportunities (e.g., access to resources and capabilities) but also challenges (e.g., high dependence on supplier) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Impact of reshoring on relationships with home-country suppliers (e.g., establishment of first key relationship; formation of new network through key supplier) - Indicating that the firm's reshoring experience may support new reshoring decisions
IV	Reshoring, nearshoring and further offshoring: Testing the role of experience	Analyze how firms' international and reshoring experience affects subsequent reshoring, nearshoring and further offshoring decisions	Quantitative analysis with structural equation modelling, based on survey data from 148 firms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Firms with extensive international experience may tend to further expand their activities abroad, either in distant markets or within their home region - International experience reduces the likelihood of reshoring - The reshoring experience may foster additional reshoring, but it has no impact on offshoring nor nearshoring decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Testing the impact of different types of experience (i.e., experience with international activities and previous reshoring experience) on subsequent relocations of firms' international activities

6 Discussion and conclusions

This thesis has focused on the role that two key elements of firms' internationalization play in reshoring: the firm's business network and its experience. These are investigated in the four papers (see Table 1). While a more thorough presentation of the findings may be found in the individual papers, this chapter opens by discussing the main findings of the thesis as a whole.

The theoretical contributions of this thesis are threefold and discussed in the second part of this chapter in more detail. After that, this chapter concludes the thesis with a discussion of its practical relevance for managers and policymakers, its main limitations, and corresponding opportunities for future research.

6.1 Main findings

6.1.1 Dis-embedding: opportunities and challenges

Dis-embedding activities from the host country presents both opportunities and challenges for firms. By examining cases of partial and full reshoring of outsourced activities, this thesis illustrates how firms may disintegrate their activities from the host-country network and the strategic implications of these relocations. A key opportunity stems from the re-evaluation and restructuring of the foreign supply network, which may allow firms to reassess their sourcing strategies, rationalize their supplier relationships, and refine their local resources and capabilities. This aligns with the idea that decisions to reconfigure relationship commitment may affect the firm's knowledge of host-country suppliers and its position in the host-country network (Johanson & Vahlne, 2009). Although reshoring may entail a partial reduction of the firm's commitment to the host country network, dis-embedding the activities may provide firms with knowledge of how to refine their resource allocation strategy and readjust their sourcing approach in response to evolving market conditions.

In line with Baraldi et al. (2018), the findings display that dis-embedding the activities may generate the disengagement of host-country suppliers unwilling to sustain a lower economic exchange. Nevertheless, especially

when reshoring is only partial, the reconfiguration of the host-country network may also lead to an evolution of existing relationships. This latter may produce relationships characterized by greater relational embeddedness, which entails benefits such as greater information exchange and mutual adaptation (Mohr & Spekman, 1994; Moran, 2005). Hence, the findings underscore that reshoring may reduce the number of host-country suppliers (Baraldi et al., 2018) but also expand the firm's access to the knowledge base of the suppliers whose relationships are sustained (Andersson et al., 2002; Uzzi & Lancaster, 2003). In so doing, reshoring may restrain access to highly diverse information, but the exchange of knowledge may still occur by virtue of the greater social capital and collaboration between parties (Moran, 2005).

When engaging in full reshoring, dis-embedding may imply the termination of all (or most) of the firm's relationships in the host country and of its access to the resources and capabilities previously made available by foreign suppliers. Reshoring may thus harm the firm's access to specialized capabilities that are not readily available in other locations (Witt et al., 2023). At the same time, terminating business relationships entails losing the relational investments made to build and sustain them (Halinen & Tähtinen, 2002). This may become particularly problematic when host-country suppliers have acquired extensive knowledge of the firm's activities. Their disengagement may lead to a knowledge leakage once they start collaborating with competitors or become one themselves (Inkpen et al., 2019), capitalizing on such knowledge to enhance their resources and capabilities.

6.1.2 Re-embedding: opportunities and challenges

Re-embedding the activities domestically may ensure greater control over the relocated activities and mitigate the risks associated with long lead times, exchange rate volatility, and exposure to geopolitical tensions. Furthermore, re-embedding the activities may expand the firm's resources and knowledge base in the home country. Reshoring may require firms to develop specialized capabilities that support the domestic reintegration of the reshored activities, but also enhance the activities already conducted in the home country. Furthermore, as suggested by Nujen et al. (2019), developing new or existing supplier relationships may foster access to an improved set of external resources and capabilities, for instance, by collaborating on their upgrade or tapping into previously underutilized ones.

Re-embedding may nonetheless present some challenges. For starters, developing internal resources and capabilities may prove to be time-consuming and resource-intensive, and the costs of the relocation outweigh its benefits.

This may be particularly true when the activities were born-offshored, i.e., never conducted by the firm in the home country (Moradlou et al., 2022). In such cases, the lack of necessary resources and capabilities may push firms to rely on suppliers to fill these gaps. Yet, this may create dependencies on domestic suppliers, mirroring the reliance on foreign suppliers that the firm sought to escape. As a result, reshoring may introduce new vulnerabilities tied to domestic suppliers controlling the firm's access to essential capabilities and with the potential to limit its strategic development.

Furthermore, when the domestic context does not allow full reshoring and firms maintain part of the activities in the host country, re-embedding tasks firms with coordinating the relocated activities with those still conducted abroad. This resonates with the idea that reconfigurations of the firm's activities may imply new coordination efforts (Vahlne et al., 2011) and that such coordination needs may hamper the relocation. Nevertheless, the experience firms accumulate from their new coordination tasks may generate new routines and capabilities that may be employed to reconfigure the firm's activities and relationships further (Vahlne & Johanson, 2017).

6.1.3 Reshoring experience and subsequent relocation decisions

The findings highlight that firms learn from their experience with dis-embedding and re-embedding the relocated activities. This experiential learning operates on two main levels: it shapes the reshoring process itself and the firm's propensity to engage in subsequent relocations.

First, the experience derived from reshoring affects the implementation of the relocation itself. During the relocation, firms may, in fact, not only improve their ability to perform the relocated activities (Barbieri et al., 2023) but also become aware of the resources and capabilities required, their availability in the foreign and domestic locations, and whether they can be developed, either within or outside the firm. In this regard, paper II clearly displays that through its reshoring experience, a firm may learn what it can relocate and how. This was evident, for example, in Alpha's decision to initially engage in the reshoring of a single product (i.e., the "*pilot project*") to understand what activities could be relocated outsourced or in-house, what could not be relocated, and how to reconfigure the firm's business network in the two locations accordingly. Based on this experience, providing knowledge about how to manage the reintegration of the activities and the increasingly complex supplier network, the firm was able to reshore the activities of a growing number of products, which could not have been relocated in the first phases of the reshoring process.

Second, the firm's reshoring experience may influence its propensity to engage in similar relocations in the future. Paper III shows that the resources and capabilities developed in the home country when re-embedding the activities may lay the foundations for subsequent reshoring and enable the firm to engage in reshoring processes from other host countries. This underscores the findings of Paper IV, which demonstrates the greater propensity of firms with reshoring experience to engage in new reshoring. In particular, it highlights that firms that have previously reshored are more likely to engage in subsequent reshoring. Nevertheless, the boundaries of this experience may be relatively narrow. While the reshoring experience supports subsequent relocations to the home country, it does not extend to those to distant locations (i.e., further offshoring) or those within the firm's home region (i.e., nearshoring). Hence, while the learning derived from reshoring may be valuable and strengthen the firm's ability to repatriate its foreign activities, it may also be context-specific and not applicable to broader international relocation strategies.

In sum, this thesis investigates reshoring as a network and experiential learning process. This reveals how firms reconfigure their supplier relationships, the opportunities and challenges of similar reconfigurations, and the impact of the firm's reshoring experience on its relocation decisions.

6.2 Theoretical contributions

Compared to previous research, this thesis provides a more dynamic and processual view of reshoring, emphasizing how it unfolds and may be understood in relation to firms' internationalization (Vahlne & Johanson, 2017). Specifically, this thesis contributes to extant reshoring and internationalization literature in three main ways. First, it develops a network and experiential learning view of the reshoring process. Stemming from the theoretical framework developed in the thesis (i.e., Figure 1), this view advances reshoring literature by underscoring the importance of these elements in reshoring and how they play out in relocations to the home country. Second, the thesis conceptualizes reshoring as a commitment process of firms' internationalization, fostering a greater understanding of both reshoring and internationalization. Third, the thesis theorizes the emergence of a reshoring capability, which has important implications for subsequent reshoring decisions.

6.2.1 Reshoring as a network and experiential learning process

Viewing reshoring from a network and experiential learning perspective highlights how the relocation unfolds and the challenges and opportunities it may entail. In particular, the view of reshoring as a network process displays the reconfiguration it triggers in the firm's business relationships. Dis-embedding the activities from the host country may disrupt existing business relationships when suppliers are dissatisfied with a reduced economic exchange (Baraldi et al., 2018). This may generate risks such as loss of access to essential resources and capabilities and knowledge leakage (Inkpen et al., 2019), potentially harming the firm's competitive advantage (Dyer & Singh, 1998). Accordingly, the dis-embedding efforts become critical to the performance of reshoring. While relationships with host-country suppliers may be directly impacted when relocating outsourced activities and less so when reshoring in-house ones, strategically managing the termination of relationships (Halinen & Tähtinen, 2002) and the reallocation of freed-up resources (Zaefarian et al., 2017) in the host-country network may be vital to sustaining access to specialized resources and capabilities.

The dis-embedding phase is tightly connected to how the activities are re-embedded in the home country. Decisions to reconfigure the relationships in one location may be linked to the possibilities offered by the other and vice versa. Although business networks may be considered borderless (Johanson & Vahlne, 2009), this thesis underscores the importance of the context where the activities are conducted for the evolution of business relationships. For instance, the feasibility of reshoring may be essentially tied to the availability of specialized capabilities in the home country (Pedroletti, 2025). Because of that, firms may decide to dis-embed only part of their foreign activities while maintaining those that cannot be re-embedded domestically abroad. Hence, the local network drives the decision of what activities to relocate and has a corresponding impact on the choices of what relationships to terminate, downsize, establish, or further develop.

A partial reshoring strategy may create new interdependencies between the supplier network in the host and in the home country. Fine-slicing activities across different locations may create new interdependencies (Srikanth & Puranam, 2011). Although firms may benefit from relationships that are more interdependent or rely on a growing number of relationships (Moran, 2005), they should also consider the complexity that similar relocations may generate and their costs. As these interdependencies have been shown to create unexpected coordination costs when offshoring (Larsen et al., 2013), and reshoring may further fine-slice the firms' activities rather than simplifying their configuration (Pedroletti, 2025), firms need to carefully evaluate the complexity

induced by reshoring and the efforts required to manage the growing number of interdependencies it generates.

Furthermore, re-embedding the activities domestically may bring home some of the problems faced abroad. As displayed in the extant literature (Ciabuschi et al., 2019; Johansson et al., 2019), this thesis highlights that reshoring may ensure various benefits in terms of risk exposure and operational performance. Yet, it adds that some of the problems faced abroad may be transferred to the home country. Some of the problems driving reshoring are typically ascribed to the costs and risks of managing business relationships with foreign suppliers (Fratocchi et al., 2016). While reshoring may help address some of these problems, especially those related to managing relationships in a highly different and distant environment, it does not necessarily address issues such as the firm's overdependence on suppliers and the risk exposure it entails, which may be transferred to the home country and not necessarily overcome with reshoring.

The proposed view of the reshoring process also displays that the firm's reshoring experience informs the dis-embedding, re-embedding, and subsequent relocation decisions. Barbieri et al. (2023) suggested that firms may learn from their experience of reshoring and fine-tune their implementation based on that. Nevertheless, this thesis goes beyond that and demonstrates the role of reshoring experience in driving subsequent reshoring decisions. These latter may entail, on one side, decisions to reshore the activities of a growing number of products from the same host country, based on the initial experience with only one or few products (Pedroletti, 2025); on the other, they may consist of subsequent decisions to reshore activities from other host countries and/or concerning completely different products (Baraldi et al., 2024). Hence, the thesis suggests that the reshoring process may terminate when all activities are relocated and its outcomes evaluated (Pedroletti & Ciabuschi, 2023), but that its effects may extend to subsequent decisions to reshore.

The experiential learning view of reshoring aligns with the path-dependent view of internationalization (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977) and with the idea that firms may learn from reconfiguring their international activities (Blomstermo, Eriksson, Lindstrand, et al., 2004; Eriksson et al., 1997). From this perspective, this thesis corroborates the idea that past reshoring may increase the likelihood of new relocations to the home country (Kinkel, 2012). However, it also shows that the effects of path dependence in reshoring may be much more confined than when expanding the firm's international activities, as the reshoring experience does not support other types of relocations nor discourage the firm's further international expansion. The thesis, therefore, suggests a clear demarcation between reshoring and relocations to other

foreign markets, whether far away (i.e., further offshoring) or in the home region (i.e., nearshoring), and highlights that the reshoring experience may prove idiosyncratic and not relevant to, nor discouraging, other relocation decisions.

The confined effects of the reshoring experience may be bound to the distinctiveness of the reshoring process and the context-specificity of the experience it generates. Reshoring typically involves the reconfiguration of activities between a host and the home country (Ellram, 2013). Similar to internationalization (Niittymies, 2020), the experience it entails may be closely connected to the tasks and activities performed in the two locations. Accordingly, a firm's reshoring experience may prove relevant to subsequent reshoring from the same host country but also from other locations. The experience acquired in re-embedding activities domestically may, in fact, provide insights applicable to relocations from the same host country as well as from other foreign locations, since it mainly supports the effective reintegration of activities in the home country.

By the same token, the limited impact of reshoring experience on subsequent nearshoring and further offshoring may stem from the context-specificity of such experience. While reshoring provides valuable insights into the disengagement from a host country, the experience derived from dis-embedding the activities may be pertinent only to other relocations from the same host country. Moreover, the experience of domestically reintegrating the activities may hold little value for relocations that do not directly involve the home country, and thus exert limited influence on other relocations (i.e., nearshoring and further offshoring). Hence, the reshoring process may not represent a major setback or the end of internationalization (da Fonseca & da Rocha, 2022), nor a significant change in the firm's internationalization strategy, but rather an adjustment of international activities that may as well be followed by their further expansion.

6.2.2 The reshoring process in firms' internationalization

Reshoring is conceived in this thesis as a specific commitment process reconfiguring the firm's activities in the host and home country, which has implications for the evolution of the firm's internationalization (Vahlne & Johanson, 2017). The view of reshoring as a commitment process that entails dis-embedding and re-embedding the firm's activities and generates an experience affecting subsequent reshoring decisions expands existing internationalization research in three main ways.

Firstly, the view of reshoring as a commitment process brings to the fore the role of the home country in internationalization. The role of the firm's home

country in internationalization has been discussed in relation to factors such as the commitment made domestically and supporting foreign operations (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977), the domestic advantages that may be exploited abroad (Cuervo-Cazurra et al., 2018), or the behavior of firms internationalizing from specific home countries (Luo & Tung, 2007). However, beyond a few notable exceptions (e.g., Blomstermo, Eriksson, & Sharma, 2004), how reconfigurations of the activities in the host country are linked with domestic ones has been overlooked.

This thesis conversely highlights that changes in business relationships with host-country suppliers may be closely related to those in the domestic supplier network. In the reshoring process, the home country plays a prominent role in driving the decision of what activities to dis-embed from the host country, which require the availability of capabilities in the home country (Nujen et al., 2019), but also in shaping the evolution of the firm's embeddedness in relationships with suppliers home and abroad. For instance, when the relocation is only partial and further fine-slices the firm's activities between the two locations, reshoring may require closer collaboration with foreign and domestic suppliers (Pedroletti, 2025) and, in turn, produce greater relational embeddedness in both locations.

The significant role of the home country in shaping firms' international activities is also evident in relation to reshoring experience. Compared to the internationalization literature, whereby commitment decisions are based on knowledge accumulated from experience in host countries (Eriksson et al., 1997; Johanson & Vahlne, 1977; Vahlne & Nordstrom, 1993), reshoring experience involves knowledge not only of how to reconfigure activities in a host country but also of how relocated activities may be reintegrated domestically and how this process unfolds. Hence, the reshoring experience stems from operating in both the host and the home country.

The reshoring experience applied in subsequent relocations may ultimately reside in the home country. Managers at the head office play a prominent role in both the decision and implementation of reshoring (e.g., Baraldi et al., 2018; Barbieri et al., 2023), and they are typically located in the home country (Meyer & Benito, 2016). When deciding on further reconfigurations of the firm's international activities, they may not be the only ones with reshoring experience, but their previous involvement in relocations may inform subsequent relocation decisions.

Secondly, the thesis reaffirms the key role of relationship commitment decisions when adjusting the firm's position in the host-country network (Johanson & Vahlne, 2003; Liesch & Welch, 2024). Yet, it emphasizes that different components of the firm's relationship commitment may undergo contrasting

adjustments when dis-embedding part of the activities from the host country: more tangible aspects of commitment may diminish (e.g., the economic exchange) while intangible ones expand (e.g., the level of collaboration). Hence, it may be necessary to differentiate between different components of commitment to fully grasp how reconfigurations of activities in a host country unfold and affect the evolution of the firm's position in the host-country network.

Thirdly, the thesis suggests that the firm's knowledge may be expanded not only by increasing commitment to its host-country network (Johanson & Vahlne, 2009; Liesch & Welch, 2024) but also by engaging in the reconfigurations of its business relationships. This extends the idea that firms learn only from their experience in conducting activities in a host country or increasing their commitment to local customers or suppliers (Johanson & Vahlne, 2003), and it shows that, although reshoring may entail a commitment reduction (Cia-buschi et al., 2019), firms may learn from the reconfiguration it involves. The experience with the reallocation of commitment between the home and host-country network may, in fact, increase the firm's awareness of the risks and opportunities inherent to decisions to terminate, downsize, establish, or further develop commitment to certain relationships and thereby generate new knowledge.

6.2.3 Toward a reshoring capability

The view of reshoring as a network and experiential learning process in the firm's internationalization sets the stage for theorizing the emergence of a *reshoring capability*. The firms' internationalization has been widely recognized as a driver of capability development (Prange & Verdier, 2011; Santangelo & Meyer, 2017; Vahlne & Johanson, 2013), enabling firms to accumulate both operational and dynamic capabilities (Johanson & Vahlne, 2017). However, the extent to which firms develop specific capabilities from particular internationalization decisions, such as reshoring, remains underexplored. This is a critical gap, as reshoring involves reconfiguring business relationships, activities, and knowledge, which may lead to a distinct capability.

The thesis advances the idea of a reshoring capability, which is defined here as the firm's ability to reconfigure its international and domestic activities through reshoring and achieve a better fit between them and the evolving external environment. The reshoring capability constitutes thus a specific dynamic capability (Teece et al., 1997), which has the potential to change the configuration of the firm's resource base and the environment where its activities are performed (Helfat et al., 2007). The relocation may affect how the activities are conducted and the operational performance attained in the home country (Johansson et al., 2019), exposing an operational side of the reshoring

capability; however, its core function lies in the firm's ability to reconfigure its international activities and realign them with the changing environment. The environment here refers to the broader international business context, characterized by factors such as shrinking cost differentials (Martínez-Mora & Merino, 2014), geopolitical tensions (Witt et al., 2023), and supply chain disruptions (Barbieri et al., 2020), as well as to the specific shift from host- to home-country context.

In line with the idea that a firm's history and experience are a primary source of learning (Teecce, 2007; Vahlne & Johanson, 2017), the reshoring capability stems from the experience that firms accumulate through their reshoring process. Such experience provides knowledge about the relocation tasks, opportunities, and challenges of dis-embedding and re-embedding the activities, which in turn refine the firm's ability to manage reshoring effectively.

The reshoring capability entails three key aspects. One involves the ability to dis-embed activities from the host country, which may require terminating or changing the nature of relationships with foreign suppliers (Pedroletti, 2025). Another concerns the ability to re-embed the activities in the home country, which necessitates effective collaboration and alignment with domestic suppliers (Baraldi et al., 2024). The last pertains to the ability to manage the reshoring process as a whole, addressing challenges that typically emerge in similar relocations. These challenges may relate, for example, to suppliers suddenly discontinuing business relationships and inducing the reshoring firm to search for new ones (Baraldi et al., 2018), the presence of knowledge gaps that require significant transfer efforts (Reilly et al., 2023), and unexpected risks caused by the miscalculation of the costs and resources actually required to reshore (Ciabuschi et al., 2019).

The reshoring capability may operate on two levels: fostering decisions to reshore a growing number of activities from the same host country and decisions to reshore from other foreign locations. Consistent with offshoring (Mihalache & Mihalache, 2020), the reshoring capability informs how subsequent reshoring unfolds. The latter may build on the firm's enhanced ability to dis-embed, re-embed, and manage the overall relocation of activities when environmental shifts necessitate further reshoring. In such cases, firms may partly replicate their previous reshoring strategy and extend it to a growing number of activities conducted in the same host country (Pedroletti, 2025). Conversely, when reshoring concerns activities relocated from different host countries, the firm's ability to re-integrate activities in the home country may become the core of the capability. The dis-embedding may in fact differ across host countries. Still, subsequent reshoring decisions may be facilitated by the

refined ability to re-embed and conduct the activities in the home country (Baraldi et al., 2024).

Finally, subsequent reshoring decisions may also impact the firm's reshoring capability itself and contribute to its evolution. Such decisions may lead the firm to use and reinforce its capability. This may happen, for example, when relocating home activities with a similar approach (e.g., governance mode) and from the same host country. At the same time, subsequent reshoring may also broaden the firm's capability. This may occur when the firm relocates activities of a different nature (e.g., manufacturing vis-à-vis research and development), when they are moved from another host country, or when a different governance mode is adopted. In these cases, the subsequent reshoring may complement the knowledge derived from previous relocations to the home country and broaden the firm's reshoring capability. Figure 3 below illustrates the relationship between a firm's reshoring capability, the reshoring process from which it emerges, and subsequent reshoring decisions.

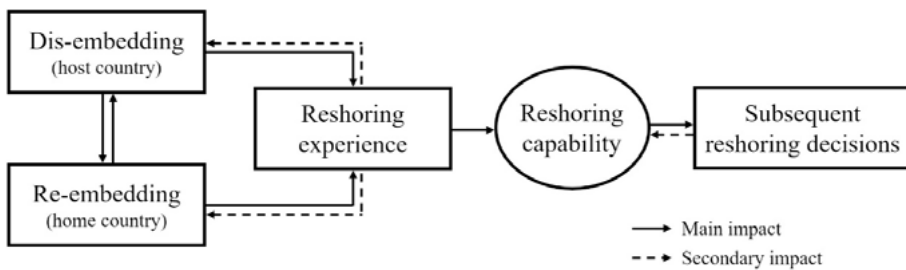


Figure 3 The reshoring capability

The reshoring capability may primarily reside within the firm, but it also relies on its business network. Similar to the capabilities developed during internationalization (Vahlne & Johanson, 2013), the reshoring capability encompasses the firm's ability to reconfigure its activities and relationships. However, this capability is closely linked to the ability of suppliers to adjust their resources and adapt to the changes imposed by reshoring. Suppliers play a crucial role when activities are reintegrated through domestic outsourcing (Nujen et al., 2018). But even in cases of in-house reshoring, the new organizational processes may necessitate significant interaction and changes within the firm's business network (Barbieri et al., 2018), which are dependent on the suppliers' ability to contribute and adapt to those.

While the emergence of a reshoring capability may be derived from the findings of the thesis, its boundaries need to be clearly defined. First, the reshoring capability includes the ability to reconfigure the firm's activities and business

relationships. Hence, it may share similarities with capabilities developed in other types of relocations (Mihalache & Mihalache, 2020). Nevertheless, given that the reshoring experience appears to influence only subsequent reshoring decisions, the reshoring capability may be equally specific and apply only to subsequent reshoring.

Furthermore, consistent with the literature on internationalization (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977; Liesch & Welch, 2024) and reshoring (Barbieri et al., 2018), this thesis adopts a firm level of analysis and assumes that elements such as relationships and experiential learning at the firm (or supplier) level reflect those occurring at the managerial level. However, the reshoring capability may be tied to the individuals responsible for managing the reshoring process. Therefore, the impact of such capability on subsequent reshoring processes may be contingent on their involvement in, or absence from, subsequent relocations to the home country.

In addition, reconfiguring the network of relationships in a host country may require different tasks and approaches than managing relationships in a significantly different context (Forsgren, 2016). The reshoring capability may thus support the subsequent domestic reintegration of activities, but it may prove only partly useful when dis-embedding activities from highly different host countries.

Finally, the development of dynamic capabilities is generally tied to the competitive advantage of firms (Helfat et al., 2007; Teece et al., 1997). In this regard, the reshoring capability may contribute to a firm's competitive advantage by offering a new strategic option that fosters the firm's strategic flexibility, which becomes essential to cope with turbulent environments (Tvedt & Lunnan, 2025). Yet, this does not necessarily mean that such capability improves the performance of the relocated activities. If knowledge of how to re-integrate international activities in the home country may support subsequent reshoring, the performance levels attained by the activities after the relocation may be tied to factors that are not connected to the firm's ability to reshore nor the relocation process. Accordingly, the development of a reshoring capability may not automatically translate into a better performance for the relocated activities.

6.3 Managerial and policy implications

Reshoring has gained the attention of practitioners in the popular press (The Economist, 2020), consulting firms (Deloitte, 2023), and international organizations at various levels (OECD, 2024; UNCTAD, 2020). The thesis findings

may thus provide relevant insights to managers and policymakers dealing with reshoring.

The managerial implications concern insights on reshoring decisions as well as on dis-embedding and re-embedding the relocated activities. For starters, the thesis emphasizes the importance of carefully managing business relationships when reshoring. In particular, it underscores that managers must carefully assess the value of each business relationship and evaluate ex-ante the potential impact of reshoring on their development. This may be essential when dis-embedding activities from the host country, given that suppliers affected by the relocation may disengage from the relationship and hamper the firm's access to specialized resources and capabilities. Concurrently, suppliers negatively affected by reshoring may respond by entering into competition with the reshoring firm or starting collaborations with its direct competitors, which may lead to knowledge leakage and threaten the firm's competitiveness. To anticipate similar issues, the thesis shows that managers may engage in the strategic reallocation of resources and activities in the host country network, securing access to specialized capabilities in selected relationships while mitigating the emergence of new competitive threats.

In a similar vein, the thesis highlights that re-embedding the activities in the home country may require managers to build key relationships with domestic suppliers. Similar relationships may be essential enabling factors of reshoring, especially for the relocation of activities developed abroad from inception, and may support a broader reconfiguration of the firm's international activities through further reshoring. These relationships may indeed play a key role not only in providing the capabilities necessary to reintegrate the activities domestically, but also in co-developing solutions that allow for efficiency and innovation in the reshored activities. Nevertheless, the thesis reveals that engaging in similar partnerships may also carry the risk of becoming overdependent on a single supplier. Since this latter may become increasingly central in the firm's network, it may limit the strategic development of the reshoring firm and managers need to give due consideration to how the relationship may evolve over time, as well as to the benefits and costs of such dependence.

In addition, the thesis illustrates that managers may overcome the limited feasibility of reshoring by adopting a selective and incremental approach in their relocation decisions. In particular, reshoring may offer benefits such as risk reduction and greater control on the supply chain, but it may often seem unfeasible, due to the lack of necessary resources and capabilities in the home country or efficiency concerns. However, managers may mitigate these challenges by reshoring only a selected subset of activities, achieving a better balance in terms of efficiency and risk exposure while sustaining access to critical

resources and capabilities in the host country. In so doing, managers may evaluate the impact of a single reshoring decision, with a limited impact on their foreign and domestic networks, and only later decide whether to reshore (or not) a growing number of activities.

Finally, the idea of a reshoring capability emerging from the reshoring experience has two main implications for managers. On the one hand, managers with previous reshoring experience may have a different perception (e.g., more positive or negative, more detailed) of subsequent reshoring decisions. Hence, they should be aware of this changed perception and account for when making subsequent relocation decisions. On the other, involving in reshoring managers with previous experience may ensure a greater ability to manage similar reconfigurations and avoid typical shortcomings, such as the emergence of unexpected risks and costs (e.g., adverse supplier reactions, unexpected coordination costs, risky interdependencies).

To policymakers, the thesis highlights that efficiency concerns are central to reshoring decisions, but another major element preventing reshoring may be the lack of capable domestic suppliers. In many cases, domestic supply chains have eroded over time, making it difficult to identify local suppliers with the necessary resources and capabilities to take over activities previously conducted abroad. Although firms may sometimes overcome this barrier by re-embedding the activities in-house, doing so often requires significant investments in building or re-developing internal capabilities that may not be attainable or efficient for all firms.

Reshoring may thus be fostered by policy measures targeting the development of specialized capabilities in the home country and addressing existing competence gaps. To make reshoring a viable and long-term strategy, policymakers may thus consider prioritizing the deployment of support programs enhancing technological adoption and the development of capabilities in strategic sectors over typical instruments such as subsidies and tax discounts. While direct financial incentives may encourage short-term relocations, only broader capability-building efforts, such as those aimed at fostering advanced manufacturing technologies, workforce development, or cluster-based supplier networks, may create the conditions necessary for successful reshoring. Direct financial incentives may in fact mitigate efficiency concerns and foster temporary reshoring, but they may also be taken advantage of and, once expired, lead to subsequent offshoring decisions. Broader policies that do not target specifically reshoring but the development of strategic capabilities domestically may thus prove, over time, more effective in stimulating reshoring.

6.4 Limitations and opportunities for future research

The thesis takes a step forward in our understanding of reshoring and untangles its impact on the firm's network and experiential learning. Obviously, it suffers from a number of limitations and the main ones are discussed here. Although reshoring is tied to elements that are internal as well as external to the firm (e.g., supplier network), it is typically considered a firm-level phenomenon (Barbieri et al., 2018; McIvor & Bals, 2021), and managers at the head office those making reshoring decisions (Ciabuschi et al., 2019). Consistent with this and the prevalent firm level of analysis of internationalization literature (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977; Liesch & Welch, 2024), this thesis adopted a firm level of analysis in its investigation. Nevertheless, this choice builds on the assumption that factors such as relationships, experience, and capabilities at the firm level are the reflection of those at the managerial one. Therefore, this perspective may only partially capture how those elements unfold when reshoring. Therefore, future research may investigate the network dynamics of reshoring from the perspective of suppliers involved in the relocation process (i.e., with a relationship or network level of analysis) or unpack the role of managers in the home and the host country.

Furthermore, the view of the firm as a multinational, composed of dispersed and goal-disparate units that include headquarters and subsidiaries (Ghoshal & Bartlett, 1990), may expand reshoring research. Going beyond the view of the reshoring firm as a single unit, future research may reveal dynamics that are internal to the firm and core to the relocation process, such as knowledge transfer between the foreign subsidiary and the domestic unit taking on the activities, or other tensions between the two (e.g., Reilly et al., 2023). Similarly, this thesis has focused on the firm's business network and, thus, actors that are external to the firm. Conversely, future research may investigate the impact of reshoring on the development of the firm's internal network of subsidiaries.

The thesis as a whole is mixed-methods, but the single papers are not, and the insights they generate are tied to their research approach, which comes with strengths and weaknesses. For instance, the choice of investigating the impact of reshoring on the firm's supplier network with a qualitative approach was aimed at developing rich and contextual insights (Welch et al., 2013) into the network dynamics triggered by reshoring. The resulting findings are nonetheless linked with the specificities of the analyzed cases, such as the full or partial nature of reshoring, the outsourced governance mode in the host country, and the idiosyncratic industry or country-level dynamics. Accordingly, future studies may develop more generalizable findings on the network dynamics triggered by reshoring, relying on a larger, more homogeneous sample

(e.g., governance mode, home and host country, industry) and quantitative methods.

On the contrary, the role of reshoring experience in driving subsequent relocation decisions was addressed with cross-sectional survey data. This type of data may not only carry a number of biases (e.g., Podsakoff et al., 2003), but also lack depth in what the experience actually entails. While the questionnaire covered previous experience with both in-house and outsourced reshoring, it did not include questions on how the experience was accumulated, whether it was positive or negative, what it consisted of (e.g., main tasks, challenges), who was involved in previous relocations and may have thus learned from them or not. Consequently, future studies adopting a qualitative approach may generate more profound insights into the role of experience in the reshoring process and its link with subsequent relocations.

References

- Albertoni, F., Elia, S., Massini, S., & Piscitello, L. (2017). The reshoring of business services: Reaction to failure or persistent strategy? *Journal of World Business*, 52(3), 417–430.
- Alcácer, J., Cantwell, J., & Piscitello, L. (2016). Internationalization in the information age: A new era for places, firms, and international business networks? *Journal of International Business Studies*, 47(5), 499–512.
- Ancarani, A., Di Mauro, C., Fratocchi, L., Orzes, G., & Sartor, M. (2015). Prior to reshoring: A duration analysis of foreign manufacturing ventures. *International Journal of Production Economics*, 169, 141–155.
- Andersen, O. (1997). Internationalization and Market Entry Mode: A Review of Theories and Conceptual Frameworks. *MIR: Management International Review*, 37, 27–42.
- Andersson, U., Forsgren, M., & Holm, U. (2002). The strategic impact of external networks: Subsidiary performance and competence development in the multinational corporation. *Strategic Management Journal*, 23(11), 979–996.
- Andersson, U., Holm, D. B., & Johanson, M. (2005). Opportunities, Relational Embeddedness and Network Structure. In P. Ghauri, A. Hadjikhani, & J. Johanson (Eds.), *Managing Opportunity Development in Business Networks* (pp. 27–48). Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Anguera, M. T., Blanco-Villaseñor, A., Losada, J. L., Sánchez-Algarra, P., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2018). Revisiting the difference between mixed methods and multimethods: Is it all in the name? *Quality & Quantity*, 52(6), 2757–2770.
- Arte, P., & Larimo, J. (2019). Taking stock of foreign divestment: Insights and recommendations from three decades of contemporary literature. *International Business Review*, 28(6), 101599.
- Ashby, A. (2016). From global to local: Reshoring for sustainability. *Operations Management Research*, 9(3–4), 75–88.
- Bals, L., Kirchoff, J. F., & Foerstl, K. (2016). Exploring the reshoring and insourcing decision making process: Toward an agenda for future research. *Operations Management Research*, 9(3–4), 102–116.
- Baraldi, E., Ciabuschi, F., & Fratocchi, L. (2022). The pros and cons of reshoring to address the problems of shortages in global pharmaceutical value chains: The case of antibiotics. *Journal of Global Operations and Strategic Sourcing*.
- Baraldi, E., Ciabuschi, F., Fratocchi, L., Pedroletti, D., & Picciotti, A. (2024). The roles of key suppliers in network formation when reshoring. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, ahead-of-print(ahead-of-print).
- Baraldi, E., Ciabuschi, F., Lindahl, O., & Fratocchi, L. (2018). A network perspective on the reshoring process: The relevance of the home- and the host-country contexts. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 70, 156–166.
- Barbieri, P., Boffelli, A., Elia, S., Fratocchi, L., & Kalchschmidt, M. (2022). How does Industry 4.0 affect international exposure? The interplay between firm

- innovation and home-country policies in post-offshoring relocation decisions. *International Business Review*, 31(4), 1019-1022.
- Barbieri, P., Boffelli, A., Elia, S., Fratocchi, L., Kalchschmidt, M., & Samson, D. (2020). What can we learn about reshoring after Covid-19? *Operations Management Research*, 13(3-4), 131-136.
- Barbieri, P., Ciabuschi, F., Fratocchi, L., & Vignoli, M. (2018). What do we know about manufacturing reshoring? *Journal of Global Operations and Strategic Sourcing*, 11(1), 79-122.
- Barbieri, P., Dosi, C., & Vignoli, M. (2023). Implementing reshoring: Insights and principles from a longitudinal case study in the e-bike industry. *Operations Management Research*, 16(2), 555-573.
- Barbieri, P., Elia, S., Fratocchi, L., & Golini, R. (2019). Relocation of second degree: Moving towards a new place or returning home? *Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management*, 25(3), 1005-1025.
- Barkema, H. G., & Drogendijk, R. (2007). Internationalising in small, incremental or larger steps? *Journal of International Business Studies*, 38(7), 1132-1148.
- Bell, E., Bryman, A., & Harley, B. (2022). *Business Research Methods*. Oxford University Press.
- Benito, G. R. G. (1997). Divestment of foreign production operations. *Applied Economics*, 29(10), 1365-1378.
- Benito, G. R. G., Cuervo-Cazurra, A., Mudambi, R., Pedersen, T., & Tallman, S. (2022). The future of global strategy. *Global Strategy Journal*, 12(3), 421-450.
- Benito, G. R. G., & Welch, L. S. (1997). De-Internationalization. *MIR: Management International Review*, 37, 7-25.
- Benstead, A. V., Stevenson, M., & Hendry, L. C. (2017). Why and how do firms reshore? A contingency-based conceptual framework. *Operations Management Research*, 10(3-4), 85-103.
- Berry, H. (2013). When Do Firms Divest Foreign Operations? *Organization Science*, 24(1), 246-261.
- Blankenburg Holm, D., Johanson, M., & Kao, P. T. (2015). From outsider to insider: Opportunity development in foreign market networks. *Journal of International Entrepreneurship*, 13(3), 337-359.
- Blomstermo, A., Eriksson, K., Lindstrand, A., & Sharma, D. D. (2004). The perceived usefulness of network experiential knowledge in the internationalizing firm. *Journal of International Management*, 10(3), 355-373.
- Blomstermo, A., Eriksson, K., & Sharma, D. D. (2004). Domestic Activity and Knowledge Development in the Internationalization Process of Firms. *Journal of International Entrepreneurship*, 2(3), 239-258.
- Boddewyn, J. J. (1979). Foreign Divestment: Magnitude and Factors. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 10(1), 21-26.
- Boffelli, A., & Johansson, M. (2020). What do we want to know about reshoring? Towards a comprehensive framework based on a meta-synthesis. *Operations Management Research*, 13(1-2), 53-69.
- Buckley, P. J., & Casson, M. (1976). *The Future of the Multinational Enterprise*. Springer.
- Buckley, P. J., & Casson, M. C. (2009). The internalisation theory of the multinational enterprise: A review of the progress of a research agenda after 30 years. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 40(9), 1563-1580.
- Bunyaratavej, K., Hahn, E. D., & Doh, J. P. (2007). International offshoring of services: A parity study. *Journal of International Management*, 13(1), 7-21.

- Bunyaratavej, K., Hahn, E. D., & Doh, J. P. (2008). Multinational investment and host country development: Location efficiencies for services offshoring. *Journal of World Business, 43*(2), 227–242.
- Business Sweden. (2024). Stalemate in Turbulent Times: Cross-Border Direct Investment in the Global and Swedish Economy. <https://www.business-sweden.com/insights/global-analysis/fdi-overview/>
- Calof, J. L., & Beamish, P. W. (1995). Adapting to foreign markets: Explaining internationalization. *International Business Review, 4*(2), 115–131.
- Cantwell, J. A., & Mudambi, R. (2011). Physical attraction and the geography of knowledge sourcing in multinational enterprises. *Global Strategy Journal, 1*(3–4), 206–232.
- Cantwell, J., & Mudambi, R. (2005). MNE competence-creating subsidiary mandates. *Strategic Management Journal, 26*(12), 1109–1128.
- Casillas, J. C., & Moreno-Menéndez, A. M. (2014). Speed of the internationalization process: The role of diversity and depth in experiential learning. *Journal of International Business Studies, 45*(1), 85–101.
- Chen, T.-J. (2003). Network Resources for Internationalization: The Case of Taiwan's Electronics Firms. *Journal of Management Studies, 40*(5), 1107–1130.
- Cheng, M. P. S., Tang, C., Lo, C. K. Y., Yeung, A. C. L., & Lam, H. K. S. (2024). Return to the United States: Impact of Reshoring Announcements and Reshoring Risks on Market Valuation. *Management Science*.
- Choudhary, N. A., Ramkumar, M., Schoenherr, T., Rana, N. P., & Dwivedi, Y. K. (2022). Does Reshoring Affect the Resilience and Sustainability of Supply Chain Networks? The Cases of Apple and Jaguar Land Rover. *British Journal of Management*.
- Churchill, G. A. (1979). A Paradigm for Developing Better Measures of Marketing Constructs. *Journal of Marketing Research, 16*(1), 64–73.
- Ciabuschi, F., Holm, U., & Martín Martín, O. (2014). Dual embeddedness, influence and performance of innovating subsidiaries in the multinational corporation. *International Business Review, 23*(5), 897–909.
- Ciabuschi, F., Lindahl, O., Barbieri, P., & Fratocchi, L. (2019). Manufacturing reshoring: A strategy to manage risk and commitment in the logic of the internationalization process model. *European Business Review, 31*(1), 139–159.
- Clarke, J. E., & Liesch, P. W. (2017). Wait-and-see strategy: Risk management in the internationalization process model. *Journal of International Business Studies, 48*(8), 923–940.
- Clarke, J. E., Tamaschke, R., & Liesch, P. W. (2013). International Experience in International Business Research: A Conceptualization and Exploration of Key Themes. *International Journal of Management Reviews, 15*(3), 265–279.
- Contractor, F. J., Kumar, V., Kundu, S. K., & Pedersen, T. (2010). Reconceptualizing the Firm in a World of Outsourcing and Offshoring: The Organizational and Geographical Relocation of High-Value Company Functions: Relocation of High-Value Functions. *Journal of Management Studies, 47*(8), 1417–1433.
- Cooper, D. R., & Schindler, P. (2014). *Business research methods*. McGraw-Hill.
- Coviello, N., & Munro, H. (1997). Network relationships and the internationalisation process of small software firms. *International Business Review, 6*(4), 361–386.
- Cuervo-Cazurra, A., Doz, Y., & Gaur, A. (2020). Skepticism of globalization and global strategy: Increasing regulations and countervailing strategies. *Global Strategy Journal, 10*(1), 3–31.
- Cuervo-Cazurra, A., Luo, Y., Ramamurti, R., & Ang, S. H. (2018). The Impact of the home country on internationalization. *Journal of World Business, 53*(5), 593–604.

- Cuervo-Cazurra, A., Maloney, M. M., & Manrakhan, S. (2007). Causes of the difficulties in internationalization. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 38(5), 709–725.
- da Fonseca, L. N. M., & da Rocha, A. (2022). Setbacks, interruptions and turnarounds in the internationalization process: A bibliometric and literature review of de-internationalization. *Management Review Quarterly*.
- D’Ambrosio, A., & Lavoratori, K. (2025). Reshoring to survive? The other side of de-globalization. *Journal of Industrial and Business Economics*.
- De Clercq, D., Sapienza, H. J., Yavuz, R. I., & Zhou, L. (2012). Learning and knowledge in early internationalization research: Past accomplishments and future directions. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 27(1), 143–165.
- Delis, A., Drifffield, N., & Temouri, Y. (2019). The global recession and the shift to re-shoring: Myth or reality? *Journal of Business Research*, 103, 632–643.
- Deloitte. (2023). Is it Time for Supply Chain Reshoring? *Deloitte United States*. <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/mergers-and-acquisitions/articles/supply-chain-reshoring.html>
- Denzin, N. (1978). Triangulation: A Case for Methodological Evaluation and Combination. *Sociological Methods*.
- Di Mauro, C., Fratocchi, L., Orzes, G., & Sartor, M. (2018). Offshoring and backshoring: A multiple case study analysis. *Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management*, 24(2), 108–134.
- Di Stefano, E., Giovannetti, G., Mancini, M., Marvasi, E., & Vannelli, G. (2022). Reshoring and plant closures in Covid-19 times: Evidence from Italian MNEs. *International Economics*, 172, 255–277.
- Dixit, A. (1989). Entry and Exit Decisions under Uncertainty. *Journal of Political Economy*, 97(3), 620.
- Doh, J. P. (2005). Offshore Outsourcing: Implications for International Business and Strategic Management Theory and Practice. *Journal of Management Studies*, 42(3), 695–704.
- Doh, J. P., Bunyaratavej, K., & Hahn, E. D. (2009). Separable but not equal: The location determinants of discrete services offshoring activities. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 40(6), 926–943.
- Dominguez, N., & Mayrhofer, U. (2017). Internationalization stages of traditional SMEs: Increasing, decreasing and re-increasing commitment to foreign markets. *International Business Review*, 26(6), 1051–1063.
- Drori, N., Andrews, D. S., Fainshmidt, S., & Gaur, A. (2024). Industry Offshoring and Firm Internationalization: Complementarities in External Learning. *Journal of Management*.
- Dubois, A., & Gadde, L.-E. (2002). Systematic combining: An abductive approach to case research. *Journal of Business Research*, 55(7), 553–560.
- Dunning, J. H. (1980). Toward an Eclectic Theory of International Production: Some Empirical Tests. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 11(1), 9–31.
- Dunning, J. H. (1988). The Eclectic Paradigm of International Production: A Restatement and Some Possible Extensions. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 19(1), 1–31.
- Dunning, J. H. (1998). Location and the Multinational Enterprise: A Neglected Factor? *Journal of International Business Studies*, 29(1), 45–66.
- Dwyer, F. R., Schurr, P. H., & Oh, S. (1987). Developing Buyer-Seller Relationships. *Journal of Marketing*, 51(2), 11–27.
- Dyer, J. H. (1996). Specialized Supplier Networks as a Source of Competitive Advantage: Evidence from the Auto Industry. *Strategic Management Journal*, 17(4), 271–291.

- Dyer, J. H., & Singh, H. (1998). The Relational View: Cooperative Strategy and Sources of Interorganizational Competitive Advantage. *The Academy of Management Review*, 23(4), 660–679.
- Elia, S., Fratocchi, L., Barbieri, P., Boffelli, A., & Kalchschmidt, M. (2021). Post-pandemic reconfiguration from global to domestic and regional value chains: The role of industrial policies. *Transnational Corporations*, 28(2), 67–96.
- Elia, S., Goerzen, A., Piscitello, L., & Valentino, A. (2024). Re-Evaluating the Offshoring Decision: A Behavioural Approach to the Role of Performance Discrepancy. *Journal of Management Studies*, 61(1), 178–229.
- Ellram, L. M. (2013). Offshoring, Reshoring and the Manufacturing Location Decision. *Journal of Supply Chain Management*, 49(2), 3–5.
- Ellram, L. M., Tate, W. L., & Petersen, K. J. (2013). Offshoring and Reshoring: An Update on the Manufacturing Location Decision. *Journal of Supply Chain Management*, 49(2), 14–22.
- Eriksson, K., Johanson, J., Majkgård, A., & Sharma, D. D. (1997). Experiential Knowledge and Costs in the Internationalization Process. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 28(2), 337–360.
- Eriksson, K., Johanson, J., Majkgård, A., & Sharma, D. D. (2000). Effect of Variation on Knowledge Accumulation in the Internationalization Process. *International Studies of Management & Organization*, 30(1), 26–44.
- Eriksson, K., Majkgård, A., & Sharma, D. D. (2000). Path Dependence and Knowledge Development in the Internationalization Process. *MIR: Management International Review*, 40(4), 307–328.
- Erzberger, C., & Kelle, U. (2003). Making inferences in mixed methods: The rules of integration. In *Handbook of mixed methods in social & behavioral research. United States*. SAGE.
- European Commission. (2003). *SME definition*. https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/smes/sme-fundamentals/sme-definition_en
- European Reshoring Monitor*. (2018). <https://reshoring.eurofound.europa.eu/>
- European Restructuring Monitor*. (2019). <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/en/european-industrial-relations-dictionary/european-restructuring-monitor>
- Eurostat. (2024). *Enterprise statistics by size class and NACE Rev. 2 activity*. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/sbs_sc_ovw/default/table?lang=en
- Farrell, D. (2005). Offshoring: Value Creation through Economic Change. *Journal of Management Studies*, 42(3), 675–683.
- Fletcher, M., & Plakoyiannaki, E. (2011). *Chapter 10: Case Selection in International Business: Key Issues and Common Misconceptions*.
- Fletcher, R. (2001). A holistic approach to internationalisation. *International Business Review*, 10(1), 25–49.
- Foerstl, K., Kirchoff, J. F., & Bals, L. (2016). Reshoring and insourcing: Drivers and future research directions. *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management*, 46(5), 492–515.
- Forsgren, M. (2016). A note on the revisited Uppsala internationalization process model – the implications of business networks and entrepreneurship. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 47(9), 1135–1144.
- Forsgren, M. (2017). *Theories of the Multinational Firm: A Multidimensional Creature in the Global Economy*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Forsgren, M., & Johanson, J. (1992). *Managing Networks in International Business*. Routledge.
- Fratocchi, L., Ancarani, A., Barbieri, P., Di, M. C., Nassimbeni, G., Sartor, M., Vignoli, M., & Zanoni, A. (2015). Manufacturing Back-Reshoring as a

- Nonlinear Internationalization Process. In *The Future Of Global Organizing* (Vol. 10, pp. 365–403). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Fratocchi, L., Ancarani, A., Barbieri, P., Di Mauro, C., Nassimbeni, G., Sartor, M., Vignoli, M., & Zanoni, A. (2016). Motivations of manufacturing reshoring: An interpretative framework. *International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management*, 46(2), 98–127.
- Fratocchi, L., Di Mauro, C., Barbieri, P., Nassimbeni, G., & Zanoni, A. (2014). When manufacturing moves back: Concepts and questions. *Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management*, 20(1), 54–59.
- Fratocchi, L., & Di Stefano, C. (2019). Does sustainability matter for reshoring strategies? A literature review. *Journal of Global Operations and Strategic Sourcing*, 12(3), 449–476.
- Gadde, L.-E., & Snehota, I. (2019). What does it take to make the most of supplier relationships? *Industrial Marketing Management*, 83, 185–193.
- Galindo-Rueda, F., & Verger, F. (2016). *OECD Taxonomy of Economic Activities Based on R&D Intensity*. OECD Taxonomy of Economic Activities Based on R&D Intensity.
- Ghemawat, P. (2003). Semiglobalization and international business strategy. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 34(2), 138–152.
- Ghoshal, S., & Bartlett, C. A. (1990). The Multinational Corporation as an Interorganizational Network. *Academy of Management Review*, 15(4), 603–626.
- Gibson, C. B. (2017). Elaboration, Generalization, Triangulation, and Interpretation: On Enhancing the Value of Mixed Method Research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 20(2), 193–223.
- Golden-Biddle, K. (2020). Discovery as an Abductive Mechanism for Reorienting Habits within Organizational Change. *Academy of Management Journal*, 63(6), 1951–1975.
- Grappi, S., Romani, S., & Bagozzi, R. P. (2013). The effects of company offshoring strategies on consumer responses. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 41(6), 683–704.
- Grappi, S., Romani, S., & Bagozzi, R. P. (2015). Consumer stakeholder responses to reshoring strategies. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 43(4), 453–471.
- Grappi, S., Romani, S., & Bagozzi, R. P. (2018). Reshoring from a demand-side perspective: Consumer reshoring sentiment and its market effects. *Journal of World Business*, 53(2), 194–208.
- Gray, J. V., Skowronski, K., Esenduran, G., & Johnny Rungtusanatham, M. (2013). The Reshoring Phenomenon: What Supply Chain Academics Ought to know and Should Do. *Journal of Supply Chain Management*, 49(2), 27–33.
- Gulati, R., Nohria, N., & Zaheer, A. (2000). Strategic networks. *Strategic Management Journal*, 21(3), 203–215.
- Gylling, M., Heikkilä, J., Jussila, K., & Saarinen, M. (2015). Making decisions on offshore outsourcing and backshoring: A case study in the bicycle industry. *International Journal of Production Economics*, 162, 92–100.
- Hadjikhani, A., Hadjikhani, A. I., & Thilenius, P. (2014). The internationalization process model: A proposed view of firms' regular incremental and irregular non-incremental behaviour. *International Business Review*, 23(1), 155–168.
- Hahn, E. D., Bunyaratavej, K., & Doh, J. P. (2011). Impacts of Risk and Service Type on Nearshore and Offshore Investment Location Decisions. *Management International Review*, 51(3), 357–380.
- Håkansson, H., & Snehota, I. (1995). *Developing Relationships in Business Networks*. London: Routledge.

- Halinen, A., & Tähtinen, J. (2002). A process theory of relationship ending. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 13(2), 163–180.
- Hallén, L., Johanson, J., & Seyed-Mohamed, N. (1991). Interfirm Adaptation in Business Relationships. *Journal of Marketing*, 55(2), 29–37.
- Hartwell, C. A., & Devinney, T. (2021). Populism, political risk, and pandemics: The challenges of political leadership for business in a post-COVID world. *Journal of World Business*, 56(4), 101225.
- Hätönen, J. (2009). Making the locational choice: A case approach to the development of a theory of offshore outsourcing and internationalization. *Journal of International Management*, 15(1), 61–76.
- Heikkilä, J., Martinsuo, M., & Nenonen, S. (2018). Backshoring of production in the context of a small and open Nordic economy. *Journal of Manufacturing Technology Management*, 29(4), 658–675.
- Helfat, C. E., Finkelstein, S., Mitchell, W., Peteraf, M., Singh, H., Teece, D., & Winter, S. G. (2007). *Dynamic Capabilities: Understanding Strategic Change in Organizations*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Hill, C. W. L., Hwang, P., & Kim, W. C. (1990). An eclectic theory of the choice of international entry mode. *Strategic Management Journal*, 11(2), 117–128.
- Hurmerinta-Peltomäki, L., & Nummela, N. (2006). Mixed methods in international business research: A value-added perspective. *Management International Review*, 46(4), 439–459.
- Hutzschenreuter, T., Pedersen, T., & Volberda, H. W. (2007). The role of path dependency and managerial intentionality: A perspective on international business research. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 38(7), 1055–1068.
- Hutzschenreuter, T., & Voll, J. C. (2008). Performance effects of “added cultural distance” in the path of international expansion: The case of German multinational enterprises. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 39(1), 53–70.
- Inkpen, A., Minbaeva, D., & Tsang, E. W. K. (2019). Unintentional, unavoidable, and beneficial knowledge leakage from the multinational enterprise. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 50(2), 250–260.
- Iurkov, V., & Benito, G. R. G. (2020). Change in domestic network centrality, uncertainty, and the foreign divestment decisions of firms. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 51(5), 788–812.
- Jarillo, J. C. (1988). On strategic networks. *Strategic Management Journal*, 9(1), 31–41.
- Jensen, P. D. Ø. (2009). A learning perspective on the offshoring of advanced services. *Journal of International Management*, 15(2), 181–193.
- Jensen, P. D. Ø. (2012). A passage to India: A dual case study of activities, processes and resources in offshore outsourcing of advanced services. *Journal of World Business*, 47(2), 311–326.
- Jensen, P. D. Ø., Larsen, M. M., & Pedersen, T. (2013). The organizational design of offshoring: Taking stock and moving forward. *Journal of International Management*, 19(4), 315–323.
- Jensen, P. D. Ø., & Pedersen, T. (2012). Offshoring and international competitiveness: Antecedents of offshoring advanced tasks. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 40(2), 313–328.
- Johanson, J., & Mattsson, L.-G. (2015). Internationalisation in Industrial Systems—A Network Approach. In M. Forsgren, U. Holm, & J. Johanson (Eds.), *Knowledge, Networks and Power: The Uppsala School of International Business* (pp. 111–132). Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Johanson, J., & Vahlne, J. (1990). The Mechanism of Internationalisation. *International Marketing Review*, 7(4).

- Johanson, J., & Vahlne, J.-E. (1977). The Internationalization Process of the Firm— A Model of Knowledge Development and Increasing Foreign Market Commitments. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 8(1), 23–32.
- Johanson, J., & Vahlne, J.-E. (2003). Business Relationship Learning and Commitment in the Internationalization Process. *Journal of International Entrepreneurship*, 1(1), 83–101.
- Johanson, J., & Vahlne, J.-E. (2009). The Uppsala internationalization process model revisited: From liability of Foreignness to Liability of Outsidership. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 40(9), 1411–1431.
- Johansson, M., Olhager, J., Heikkilä, J., & Stentoft, J. (2019). Offshoring versus backshoring: Empirically derived bundles of relocation drivers, and their relationship with benefits. *Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management*, 25(3), 100509.
- Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed Methods Research: A Research Paradigm Whose Time Has Come. *Educational Researcher*, 33(7), 14–26.
- Johnson, R. B., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Turner, L. A. (2007). Toward a Definition of Mixed Methods Research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(2), 112–133.
- Jones, G. (2005). *Multinationals and global capitalism: From the nineteenth to the twenty-first century*. Oxford University Press.
- Kafourous, M., Cavusgil, S. T., Devinney, T. M., Ganotakis, P., & Fainshmidt, S. (2022). Cycles of de-internationalization and re-internationalization: Towards an integrative framework. *Journal of World Business*, 57(1), 101257.
- Karlsen, T., Silseth, P. R., Benito, G. R. G., & Welch, L. S. (2003). Knowledge, internationalization of the firm, and inward–outward connections. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 32(5), 385–396.
- Kedia, B. L., & Lahiri, S. (2007). International outsourcing of services: A partnership model. *Journal of International Management*, 13(1), 22–37.
- Kedia, B. L., & Mukherjee, D. (2009). Understanding offshoring: A research framework based on disintegration, location and externalization advantages. *Journal of World Business*, 44(3), 250–261.
- Kinkel, S. (2012). Trends in production relocation and backshoring activities: Changing patterns in the course of the global economic crisis. *International Journal of Operations and Production Management*, 32(6), 696–720.
- Kinkel, S., & Maloca, S. (2009). Drivers and antecedents of manufacturing offshoring and backshoring—A German perspective. *Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management*, 15(3), 154–165.
- Kogut, B., & Kulatilaka, N. (1994). Operating Flexibility, Global Manufacturing, and the Option Value of a Multinational Network. *Management Science*, 40(1), 123–139.
- Kotabe, M., Mol, M. J., & Ketkar, S. (2011). An Evolutionary Stage Model of Outsourcing and Competence Destruction: A Triad Comparison of the Consumer Electronics Industry. In *The Future of Global Business*. Routledge.
- Kotabe, M., & Murray, J. Y. (1990). Linking Product and Process Innovations and Modes of International Sourcing in Global Competition: A Case of Foreign Multinational Firms. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 21(3), 383–408.
- Larsen, M. M. (2016). Failing to estimate the costs of offshoring: A study on process performance. *International Business Review*, 25(1, Part B), 307–318.
- Larsen, M. M., Manning, S., & Pedersen, T. (2013). Uncovering the hidden costs of offshoring: The interplay of complexity, organizational design, and experience. *Strategic Management Journal*, 34(5), 533–552.

- Lee, S.-H., & Song, S. (2012). Host country uncertainty, intra-MNC production shifts, and subsidiary performance. *Strategic Management Journal*, 33(11), 1331–1340.
- Lee, T. W. (1999). *Using Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*. SAGE.
- Lewin, A. Y., Massini, S., & Peeters, C. (2009). Why are companies offshoring innovation? The emerging global race for talent. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 40(6), 901–925.
- Lewin, A. Y., & Peeters, C. (2006). Offshoring Work: Business Hype or the Onset of Fundamental Transformation? *Long Range Planning*, 39(3), 221–239.
- Liesch, P. W., & Welch, C. (2024). Asynchronicities of growth: A process extension to the Uppsala model of internationalisation. *Journal of International Business Studies*.
- Liesch, P. W., Welch, L. S., & Buckley, P. J. (2011). Risk and Uncertainty in Internationalisation and International Entrepreneurship Studies: Review and Conceptual Development. *Management International Review*, 51(6), 851–873.
- Luo, Y., & Tung, R. L. (2007). International expansion of emerging market enterprises: A springboard perspective. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 38(4), 481–498.
- Madsen, T. K., & Servais, P. (1997). The internationalization of Born Globals: An evolutionary process? *International Business Review*, 6(6), 561–583.
- Manning, S. (2014). Mitigate, tolerate or relocate? Offshoring challenges, strategic imperatives and resource constraints. *Journal of World Business*, 49(4), 522–535.
- Manning, S., Massini, S., & Lewin, A. Y. (2008). A Dynamic Perspective on Next-Generation Offshoring: The Global Sourcing of Science and Engineering Talent. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 22(3), 35–54.
- Mantere, S., & Ketokivi, M. (2013). Reasoning in Organization Science. *The Academy of Management Review*, 38(1), 70–89.
- Martínez-Mora, C., & Merino, F. (2014). Offshoring in the Spanish footwear industry: A return journey? *Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management*, 20(4), 225–237.
- Maskell, P., Pedersen, T., Petersen, B., & Dick-Nielsen, J. (2007). Learning Paths to Offshore Outsourcing: From Cost Reduction to Knowledge Seeking. *Industry and Innovation*, 14(3), 239–257.
- McIvor, R., & Bals, L. (2021). A multi-theory framework for understanding the reshoring decision. *International Business Review*, 30(6), 101827.
- Meyer, K. E., & Benito, G. R. G. (2016). Where do MNEs locate their headquarters? At home! *Global Strategy Journal*, 6(2), 149–159.
- Meyer, K. E., Fang, T., Panibratov, A. Y., Peng, M. W., & Gaur, A. (2023). International business under sanctions. *Journal of World Business*, 58(2), 101426.
- Mihalache, M., & Mihalache, O. R. (2020). What is Offshoring Management Capability and How Do Organizations Develop It? A Study of Dutch IT Service Providers. *Management International Review*, 60(1), 37–67.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*. SAGE.
- Miroudot, S. (2020). Reshaping the policy debate on the implications of COVID-19 for global supply chains. *Journal of International Business Policy*, 3(4), 430–442.
- Mohr, J., & Spekman, R. (1994). Characteristics of partnership success: Partnership attributes, communication behavior, and conflict resolution techniques. *Strategic Management Journal*, 15(2), 135–152.

- Moradlou, H., Fratocchi, L., Skipworth, H., & Ghadge, A. (2022). Post-Brexit backshoring strategies: What UK manufacturing companies could learn from the past? *Production Planning and Control*, 33(14), 1319–1336.
- Moran, P. (2005). Structural vs. relational embeddedness: Social capital and managerial performance. *Strategic Management Journal*, 26(12), 1129–1151.
- Moser, H. (2019, July 8). Reshoring was at record levels in 2018. Is it enough? *Industry Week*.
- Mudambi, R., & Venzin, M. (2010). The Strategic Nexus of Offshoring and Outsourcing Decisions: Offshoring and Outsourcing Decisions. *Journal of Management Studies*, 47(8), 1510–1533.
- Mukherjee, D., Kumar, S., Pandey, N., & Lahiri, S. (2023). Is offshoring dead? A multidisciplinary review and future directions. *Journal of International Management*, 29(3), 101017.
- Nachum, L., & Zaheer, S. (2005). The persistence of distance? The impact of technology on MNE motivations for foreign investment. *Strategic Management Journal*, 26(8), 747–767.
- Nieto, M. J., & Rodríguez, A. (2011). Offshoring of R&D: Looking abroad to improve innovation performance. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 42(3), 345–361.
- Niittymies, A. (2020). Heuristic decision-making in firm internationalization: The influence of context-specific experience. *International Business Review*, 29(6), 101752.
- Nujen, B. B., Halse, L. L., Damm, R., & Gammelsæter, H. (2018). Managing reversed (global) outsourcing – the role of knowledge, technology and time. *Journal of Manufacturing Technology Management*, 29(4), 676–698.
- Nujen, B. B., Mwesiumo, D. E., Solli-Sæther, H., Slyngstad, A. B., & Halse, L. L. (2019). Backshoring readiness. *Journal of Global Operations and Strategic Sourcing*, 12(1), 172–195.
- OECD. (2024). *Offshoring, Reshoring, and the Evolving Geography of Jobs*. https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/offshoring-reshoring-and-the-evolving-geography-of-jobs_adc9a9d5-en.html
- Olsen, P. I., Prenkert, F., Hoholm, T., & Harrison, D. (2014). The dynamics of networked power in a concentrated business network. *Journal of Business Research*, 67(12), 2579–2589.
- Ozkan, K. S. L. (2020). International market exit by firms: Misalignment of strategy with the foreign market risk environment. *International Business Review*, 29(6), 101741.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). Two Decades of Developments in Qualitative Inquiry: A Personal, Experiential Perspective. *Qualitative Social Work*, 1(3), 261–283.
- Pedersen, T., & Shaver, J. M. (2011). Internationalization revisited: The big step hypothesis. *Global Strategy Journal*, 1(3–4), 263–274.
- Pedroletti, D. (2025). Network effects of partial reshoring in the internationalization process. *International Business Review*, 34(3), 102401.
- Pedroletti, D., & Ciabuschi, F. (2023). Reshoring: A review and research agenda. *Journal of Business Research*, 164, 114005.
- McDougall, P., Shane, S., & Oviatt, B. M. (1994). Explaining the formation of international new ventures: The limits of theories from international business research. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 9(6), 469–487.
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J.-Y., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(5), 879–903.

- Prange, C., & Verdier, S. (2011). Dynamic capabilities, internationalization processes and performance. *Journal of World Business*, 46(1), 126–133.
- Reilly, M., Tippmann, E., & Sharkey Scott, P. (2023). Subsidiary closures and relocations in the multinational enterprise: Reinstating cooperation in subsidiaries to enable knowledge transfer. *Journal of International Business Studies*.
- Ritter, T. (1999). The Networking Company: Antecedents for Coping with Relationships and Networks Effectively. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 28(5), 467–479.
- Rodriguez, C., Ciravegna, L., & Petersen, B. (2022). Geographical reconfiguration in global value chains: Search within limited space? *Global Strategy Journal*.
- Roza, M., Van den Bosch, F. A. J., & Volberda, H. W. (2011). Offshoring strategy: Motives, functions, locations, and governance modes of small, medium-sized and large firms. *International Business Review*, 20(3), 314–323.
- Sætre, A. S., & Van de Ven, A. (2021). Generating Theory by Abduction. *Academy of Management Review*, 46(4), 684–701.
- Santangelo, G. D., & Meyer, K. E. (2017). Internationalization as an evolutionary process. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 48(9), 1114–1130.
- Sartor, M. A., & Beamish, P. W. (2020). Integration-oriented strategies, host market corruption and the likelihood of foreign subsidiary exit from emerging markets. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 51(3), 414–431.
- Schmeisser, B. (2013). A Systematic Review of Literature on Offshoring of Value Chain Activities. *Journal of International Management*, 19(4), 390–406.
- Schmid, D., & Morschett, D. (2020). Decades of research on foreign subsidiary divestment: What do we really know about its antecedents? *International Business Review*, 29(4), 101653.
- Sen, S., Kotlarsky, J., & Budhwar, P. (2020). Extending Organizational Boundaries Through Outsourcing: Toward a Dynamic Risk-Management Capability Framework. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 34(1), 97–113.
- Sena, V., Kanungo, R. P., Ozdemir, S., Yannopoulou, N., & Patel, P. (2022). Are Reshoring Decisions Influenced by External Stakeholders and Country-Level Environmental Regulation? *British Journal of Management*.
- Shadish, W. R. (2002). Revisiting field experimentation: Field notes for the future. *Psychological Methods*, 7(1), 3–18.
- Siggelkow, N. (2007). Persuasion With Case Studies. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(1), 20–24.
- Snyder, H. (2019). Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guidelines. *Journal of Business Research*, 104, 333–339.
- Srikanth, K., & Puranam, P. (2011). Integrating distributed work: Comparing task design, communication, and tacit coordination mechanisms. *Strategic Management Journal*, 32(8), 849–875.
- Stake, R. E. (2005). Qualitative Case Studies. In *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*, 3rd ed (pp. 443–466). Sage Publications Ltd.
- Storper, M. (1992). The Limits to Globalization: Technology Districts and International Trade. *Economic Geography*, 68(1), 60–93.
- Swanson, R. A., & Holton, E. (Eds.). (2005). *Research in organizations: Foundations and methods of inquiry* (1st ed). Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Tang, R. W., Zhu, Y., Cai, H., & Han, J. (2021). De-internationalization: A Thematic Review and the Directions Forward. *Management International Review*, 61(3), 267–312.
- Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (1998). *Mixed Methodology: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. SAGE.

- Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (2003). Issues and dilemmas in teaching research methods courses in social and behavioural sciences: US perspective. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 6(1), 61–77.
- Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (2010). *SAGE Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social & Behavioral Research*. SAGE.
- Teece, D. J. (2007). Explicating dynamic capabilities: The nature and microfoundations of (sustainable) enterprise performance. *Strategic Management Journal*, 28(13), 1319–1350.
- Teece, D. J., Pisano, G., & Shuen, A. (1997). Dynamic capabilities and strategic management. *Strategic Management Journal*, 18(7), 509–533.
- The Economist. (2020). Is a wave of supply-chain reshoring around the corner? <https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2020/12/16/is-a-wave-of-supply-chain-reshoring-around-the-corner>
- Tung, R. L., Zander, I., & Fang, T. (2023). The Tech Cold War, the multipolarization of the world economy, and IB research. *International Business Review*, 32(6), 102195.
- Turner, S. F., Cardinal, L. B., & Burton, R. M. (2017). Research Design for Mixed Methods: A Triangulation-based Framework and Roadmap. *Organizational Research Methods*, 20(2), 243–267.
- Tvedt, J., & Lunnan, R. (2025). Proactive investments in switching-flexibility and the value of agility in international business. *Journal of International Business Studies*.
- UNCTAD. (2020). *COVID-19 will likely transform global production, says UN report*. <https://unctad.org/news/covid-19-will-likely-transform-global-production-says-un-report>
- Uzzi, B., & Lancaster, R. (2003). Relational Embeddedness and Learning: The Case of Bank Loan Managers and Their Clients. *Management Science*, 49(4), 383–399.
- Vahlne, J.-E. (2020). Development of the Uppsala model of internationalization process: From internationalization to evolution. *Global Strategy Journal*, 10(2), 239–250.
- Vahlne, J.-E., Ivarsson, I., & Johanson, J. (2011). The tortuous road to globalization for Volvo's heavy truck business: Extending the scope of the Uppsala model. *International Business Review*, 20(1), 1–14.
- Vahlne, J.-E., & Johanson, J. (2013). The Uppsala model on evolution of the multinational business enterprise – from internalization to coordination of networks. *International Marketing Review*, 30(3), 189–210.
- Vahlne, J.-E., & Johanson, J. (2017). From internationalization to evolution: The Uppsala model at 40 years. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 48(9), 1087–1102.
- Vahlne, J.-E., & Nordstrom, K. A. (1993). The Internationalization Process: Impact of Competition and Experience. *International Trade Journal*, 7(5), 529–548.
- Vernon, R. (1966). International Investment and International Trade in the Product Cycle. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 80(2), 190–207.
- Vissak, T. (2010). Recommendations for Using the Case Study Method in International Business Research. *Qualitative Report*, 15(2), 370–388.
- Vissak, T., & Francioni, B. (2013). Serial nonlinear internationalization in practice: A case study. *International Business Review*, 22(6), 951–962.
- Wan, L., Orzes, G., Sartor, M., & Nassimbeni, G. (2019). Reshoring: Does home country matter? *Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management*, 25(4).

- Welch, C., Plakoyiannaki, E., Piekkari, R., & Paavilainen-Mäntymäki, E. (2013). Legitimizing Diverse Uses for Qualitative Research: A Rhetorical Analysis of Two Management Journals. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 15(2), 245–264.
- Welch, L. S., & Luostarinen, R. K. (1993). Inward-Outward Connections in Internationalization. *Journal of International Marketing*, 1(1), 44–56.
- Wiesmann, B., Snoei, J. R., Hilletoft, P., & Eriksson, D. (2017). Drivers and barriers to reshoring: A literature review on offshoring in reverse. *European Business Review*, 29(1), 15–42.
- Witt, M. A. (2019). De-globalization: Theories, predictions, and opportunities for international business research. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 50(7), 1053–1077.
- Witt, M. A., Lewin, A. Y., Li, P. P., & Gaur, A. (2023). Decoupling in international business: Evidence, drivers, impact, and implications for IB research. *Journal of World Business*, 58(1), 101399.
- World Bank. (2023a). Foreign Direct Investment. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BN.KLT.DINV.CD>
- World Bank. (2023b). Foreign Direct Investment, Net Inflows (% of GDP) - Sweden. <https://data.worldbank.org>
- Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. SAGE.
- Yücesan, E. (2025). Does deglobalization imply the end of global supply chains? *International Business Review*, 102398.
- Zaefarian, G., Forkmann, S., Mitreğa, M., & Henneberg, S. C. (2017). A Capability Perspective on Relationship Ending and Its Impact on Product Innovation Success and Firm Performance. *Long Range Planning*, 50(2), 184–199.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Interviews and Interviewees Summary

Firm	Interviewee	Venue	Number of interviews / Total hours
Alpha	Strategy Executive	HQ and online	7 / 6,25 Hours
Alpha	Operations Executive	HQ and online	8 / 6,75 Hours
Alpha	Marketing & Sales Executive	Online	1 / 1,25 Hours
Alpha	Marketing & Sales Director	Online	1 / 1 Hours
Alpha	R&D & Innovation Director	HQ and online	3 / 2,5 Hours
Alpha	R&D & Innovation Manager	HQ	1 / 1 Hours
Alpha	R&D & Innovation Manager	Online	2 / 2 Hours
Alpha	R&D & Innovation Manager	HQ	1 / 1 Hours
Alpha	Operations Manager	HQ	1 / 1 Hours
Alpha	Operations Manager	Online	2 / 1,75 Hours
Alpha	Subsidiary Manager	Online	2 / 2,25 Hours
Alpha (Italian supplier)	Founder and Co-owner 1	HQ of supplier	3 / 4,5 Hours
Alpha (Italian supplier)	Founder and Co-owner 2	HQ of supplier	3 / 4,5 Hours
Alpha (Chinese supplier)	Chief Executive Officer	Online	1 / 1 Hours
Alpha (Chinese supplier)	Key Account Manager (of Alpha)	Online	1 / 1 Hours
Beta	Human Resources Executive	Online	1 / 0,75 Hours
Beta	Operations Director	HQ and online	3 / 3,75 Hours
Beta	Reshoring Project Manager (External)	HQ and online	3 / 3,50 Hours
Beta	Learning & Development Manager	HQ and online	2 / 2,50 Hours
Gamma	Managing Director	Online	2 / 1,25 Hours
Gamma	Manufacturing Executive	Online	2 / 1,75 Hours
Woods TES	Chief Executive Officer	HQ and online	3 / 8 Hours
Woods TES (Supplier)	Chief Executive Officer	HQ	1 / 0,75 Hours
Woods TES (Supplier)	Production Manager	HQ	1 / 0,5 Hours

Appendix 2 Questionnaire



Department of Business Studies – Uppsala University

The survey concerns information on Swedish firms' foreign suppliers, manufacturing in foreign countries, and international relocations.

The questionnaire will take about 15 minutes to fill in.

If you intend to interrupt and continue the survey later, keep it open in the browser, so you don't have to start it over.

There are two types of questions: multiple-choice questions and questions with open ended answers. Please feel free to give approximate responses to the open-ended questions if you are uncertain of the exact answer. If you don't know the answer to a specific question, you may skip it and move forward.

All information provided in the survey will be treated with strict confidentiality and the results will only be reported in aggregate form, so that your firm and any personal information cannot be identified.

Thank you very much for your help and participation!

1. **Company name:** (optional)

2. **Industry:**

3. **Year of establishment of the company:**

4. **Country (of mother company):**

5. **Please indicate the current (approximate) total number of employees in your company:** (*total = employees home and abroad*)

6. **Please indicate the current (approximate) total sales volume of your company:** (*total = home and abroad, in Euros ML*)

7. Have you ever had production or sourcing activities in foreign countries?

- Yes
- No

8. How many employees do you currently have in foreign countries? (Approximate number)

9. If you have one or more foreign production plants, when was the first one established? (Please, specify year. If you have none, write "0")

10. To what extent has your firm strategy historically been mostly focused on?

	Not at all		Somehow		Very much
	1	2	3	4	5
Differentiation of products	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Product quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
New product development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Operational efficiency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Price competition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vertical integration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focus on niche markets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Customization of products	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Rate the current export level of your firm: (percentage of export to total sales)

- 0% of total sales
- 1-10% of total sales
- 11-20% of total sales
- 21-30% of total sales
- 31-40% of total sales
- 41-50% of total sales
- 51-60% of total sales
- 61-70% of total sales
- 71-80% of total sales
- 81-90% of total sales
- 91-100% of total sales

12. Compared to your main competitors, please evaluate your firm performance in the last 5 years:

	Much worse		Same	Much better	
	-2	-1	0	1	2
Sales	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Market share	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Profitability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. Did you transfer back to the home country any of your own production from foreign subsidiaries, during the last 10 years?

- Yes
- No

14. Did you substitute any sourcing of products/components from foreign suppliers with home country suppliers or in-house production, during the last 10 years?

- Yes
- No

15. Did you transfer any of your own production from a foreign country to a new foreign country, during the last 10 years?

- Yes
- No

16. Did you substitute any sourcing of products/components from foreign suppliers to suppliers or own production in a different foreign country, during the last 10 years?

- Yes
- No

17. Considering your firm current total production volume worldwide, what is the percentage of:

(Please, consider 100% as total sum of the four alternatives and distribute it among the four options)

Percentage to total production

The production in your **home country** in-house

The production in your **home country** outsourced to suppliers

The **offshore** production that you have in-house

The **offshore** production that you have outsourced to suppliers

18. **What is the number of foreign countries where you have either in-house production (i.e., own subsidiaries) or sourcing of products and/or components (i.e., foreign suppliers)?** *(Please, specify the number)*

19. **Are you considering the option of relocating (part or all of) your foreign sourcing, in the next three years?** *(Multiple options can be selected)*

- Yes, to our home country (i.e., reshoring)
- Yes, to another country in Europe *(please, specify where in the box below)*
- Yes, to another country OUTSIDE of Europe *(please, specify where in the box below)*
- No, we do not consider it

Please, specify *country* or *countries* where you intend to relocate:

20. **Are you considering the option of relocating (part or all of) your foreign production activities, in the next three years?** *(Multiple options can be selected)*

- Yes, to our home country (i.e., reshoring)
- Yes, to another country in Europe *(please, specify where in the box below)*
- Yes, to another country OUTSIDE of Europe *(please, specify where in the box below)*
- No, we do not consider it

Please, specify *country* or *countries* where you intend to relocate:

21. **Are you considering the option of offshoring (part or all of) your domestic production activities, in the next three years?** *(Multiple options can be selected)*

- Yes, **sourcing** to suppliers in Europe *(please, specify where in the box below)*
- Yes, **sourcing** to suppliers OUTSIDE Europe *(please, specify where in the box below)*
- Yes, **own production** in Europe *(please, specify where in the box below)*
- Yes, **own production** OUTSIDE of Europe *(please, specify where in the box below)*
- No, we do not consider it

Please, specify *country* or *countries* where you intend to relocate:

Acknowledgements

Working on the thesis has been a great experience and I have enjoyed every moment of these four-and-a-half years, from September 2020 until March 2025. Several people contributed to this, and I would like to express my gratitude to them.

This journey would not have been the same without my supervisors. Professor Francesco Ciabuschi, I cannot thank you in just a few words. It has been a blessing to work and have fun together. I could learn something from every conversation we have had, and I could not have asked for a better mentor. I hope this is just the beginning. I am also extremely grateful to my supervisor, Olof Lindahl, who has always supported me during these years.

One of the most important people during this time has been my colleague, Carla Sacchi. Also in your case, I cannot express how grateful I am for meeting you. I will never forget working and having fun together. You are a wonderful friend.

I am also thankful to a number of people who helped me with comments on my work. Thank you, Professor Henrik Dellestrand, for helping with the kappa and providing detailed comments on the papers I have presented during these years. Thank you also to Professors Ulf Holm and Fredrik Tell for their insightful feedback and help during my time at the department.

I am also very grateful to Stefano Elia for acting as opponent at my final seminar and providing a thorough review of my work, which I could build on to finalize the thesis.

During this time, I have worked with outstanding researchers. Professor Luciano Fratocchi, I admire you and I am grateful to have met you. Thank you also to Professors Enrico Baraldi and Andrea Perna for working together and giving me the chance to learn from you. Cong Su, thank you so much for the help with the quantitative analysis.

My fellow – current and former – PhD students made life at the department much more enjoyable. Francesco Picicella, thank you for the evenings pumping iron and eating burgers together. Alexander Gorgijevski, thank you for all the things you taught me. Tim Kastrup, thank you for our honest talks. Anika Wiese, thank you for the conversations and for being patient with me. Aynaz Monazzam, it has been a pleasure to be part of the same cohort and succeed

together. Jakob Westergren, thank you for your kindness and always helping out. Yunchen Sun, thank you for all the laughs together. Magnus Norberg, thank you for the thought-provoking discussions. I hope I do not forget anyone, but thank you all, Peter Kumlin, Paul Rosenbaum, Victor Larsson, Johan Fröberg, Maja Jonson, Alice Schmuck, Michał Budryk, and Olof Wadell, for making this journey much more fun.

I would also like to thank all my colleagues in the International Business research group at the department for the feedback and the stimulating discussions.

My gratitude goes also to all the faculty and employees who made working at the department easy and enjoyable.

Additionally, I am grateful to the faculty and PhD students who participated with me in the NORD-IB research school, for the fun time together and for broadening my knowledge of the field.

Last but not least, I want to thank my beloved ones for their constant support and patience throughout the years.