

ONZIEME RENCONTRE INTERNATIONALE DU GERPISA ELEVENTH GERPISA INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM

Les acteurs de l'entreprise à la recherche de nouveaux compromis ?
Construire le schéma d'analyse du GERPISA

Company Actors on the Look Out for New Compromises
Developing GERPISA's New Analytical Schema

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NEW GLOBAL DIVISION OF COMPETENCES?

THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF ENGINEERING IN GERMAN AUTOMOBILE COMPONENTS SUPPLY COMPANIES¹

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Internationalization of manufacturing industries is usually discussed with regard to labour-intensive production. This paper analyses the internationalization of knowhow-intensive parts of the manufacturing industry with special focus on engineering. The internationalization of engineering tasks is discussed for the automobile components supply industry. The main topic is governance in multinational companies, which is important for the international division of competences in the engineering field. The study shows that the German automobile components supply companies are proceeding cautiously on the path of internationalization.

This paper argues that the idea of governance can help to develop a better understanding of internationalization, especially if we are able to identify different kinds of governance. The companies that have already introduced an international division of competences do not necessarily have loss of competences in their centres, because new capacities are created, i.e. the skills of steering the engineering process. However, there may be processes of learning, or upgrading, in "peripheral" plants, too. The study shows that in multinational companies governance seldom means direct control in the R&D departments; rather, it can be characterized by interdependencies of power, and this offers possibilities to plants in the newly industrializing countries. The study will show that internationalization is multifaceted. Internationalization of knowhow-intensive functions can be more than a zero-sum game. New competences can be created in formerly peripheral plants without diminishing the competences in the centres.

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