

Frédéric Boccara

Multinational enterprises and the challenge of the description of a national economy

The development of Multinational enterprises (MNEs) is a major phenomenon of our economies (in France, 50% of the enterprises value added and employment). We will propose a documented description with, particularly, the new kind of indicators developed with FATS (Foreign affiliates statistics) and an enterprise groups approach. But, as far as the “transversal” dimension of MNEs is fundamental, they need a specific analytical framework. We will propose specific concepts to help structuring this framework, articulated notably on several dual notions: transfers/exchanges, control/ownership and on the notion of international sharing of productive factors and of resources (between their different productive or commercial bases, with financial centres or even fiscal paradises). We show that MNEs transfer faculty put into question, in present technological conditions (informational revolution), certain traditional approaches of activity, productivities and income, or even a certain separation between real and financial activities. It put also into question strictly national indicators of productivity or efficiency, because we have a truncated image: results observed in the accounts of a given resident unit having to be compared to the “global” set of factors and input at its disposition in the affiliates of the whole world.