Foreign Direct Investment

Introduction

- Foreign direct investment (FDI) occurs when a firm invests directly in new facilities to produce and/or market in a foreign country
- Once a firm undertakes FDI it becomes a multinational enterprise

FDI can be:

- greenfield investments - the establishment of a wholly new operation in a foreign country
- acquisitions or mergers with existing firms in the foreign country

Foreign Direct Investment In The World Economy

- The flow of FDI refers to the amount of FDI undertaken over a given time period
- The stock of FDI refers to the total accumulated value of foreign-owned assets at a given time
- Outflows of FDI are the flows of FDI out of a country
- Inflows of FDI are the flows of FDI into a country

Trends In FDI

- There has been a marked increase in both the flow and stock of FDI in the world economy over the last 30 years

  FDI has grown more rapidly than world trade and world output because:
- firms still fear the threat of protectionism
- the general shift toward democratic political institutions and free market economies has encouraged FDI
- the globalization of the world economy is having a positive impact on the volume of FDI as firms undertake FDI to ensure they have a significant presence in many regions of the world

Trends In FDI

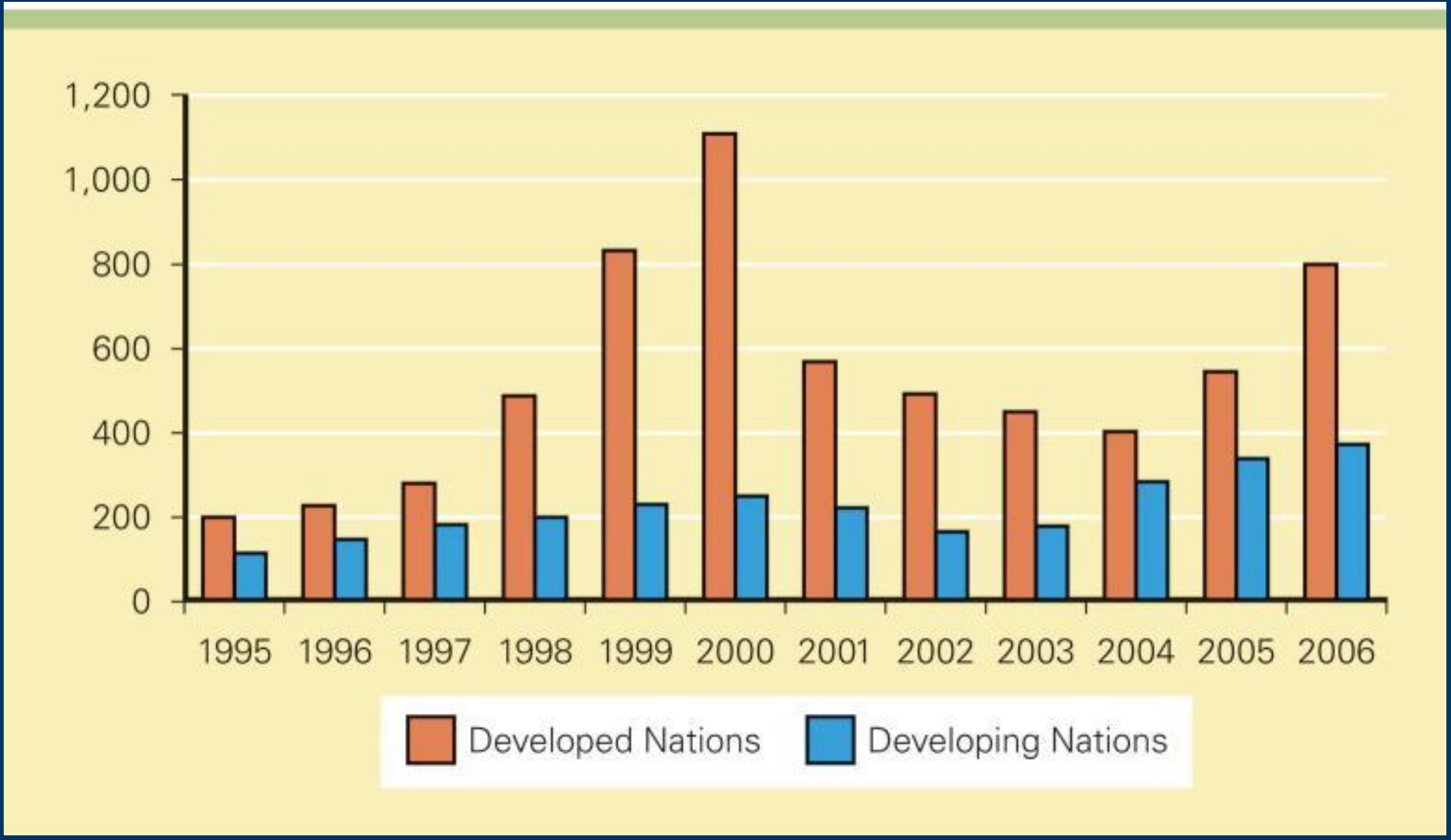
Figure 7.1: FDI Outflows 1982-2006 ($ billions)

The Direction Of FDI

- Most FDI has historically been directed at the developed nations of the world, with the United States being a favorite target
- FDI inflows have remained high during the early 2000s for the United States, and also for the European Union
- South, East, and Southeast Asia, and particularly China, are now seeing an increase of FDI inflows
- Latin America is also emerging as an important region for FDI

The Direction Of FDI

Figure 7.3: FDI Inflows by Region ($ billion), 1995-2006

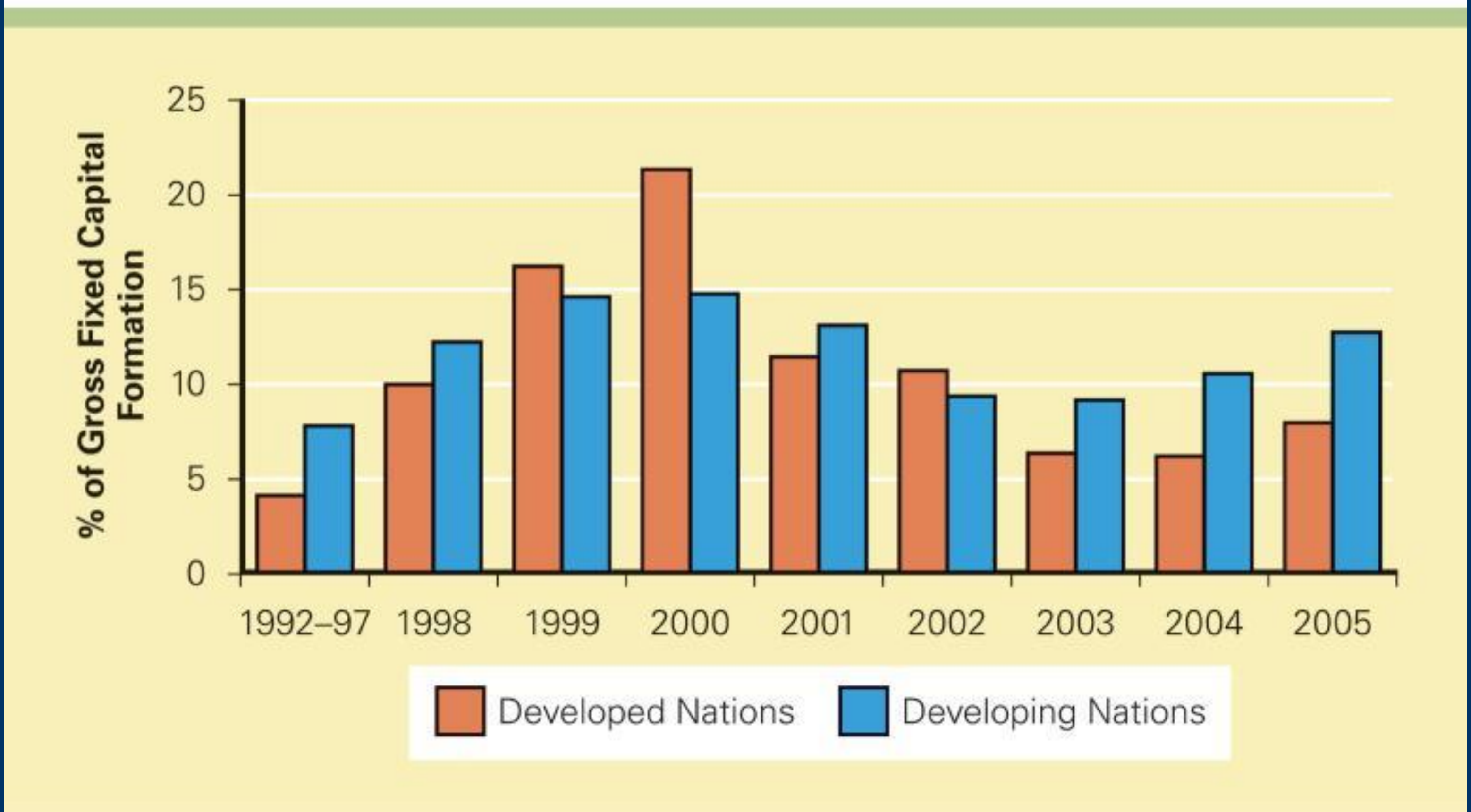


The Direction Of FDI

- Gross fixed capital formation summarizes the total amount of capital invested in factories, stores, office buildings, and the like
- All else being equal, the greater the capital investment in an economy, the more favorable its future prospects are likely to be
- So, FDI can be seen as an important source of capital investment and a determinant of the future growth rate of an economy

The Direction Of FDI

Figure 7.4: Inward FDI as a % of Gross Fixed Capital Formation 1992-2005



The Source Of FDI

- Since World War II, the U.S. has been the largest source country for FDI
- The United Kingdom, the Netherlands, France, Germany, and Japan are other important source countries

The Source Of FDI

Figure 7.5: Cumulative FDI Outflows ($ billions), 1998-2005

The Form Of FDI: Acquisitions Versus Greenfield Investments

- Most cross-border investment is in the form of mergers and acquisitions rather than greenfield investments

Firms prefer to acquire existing assets because:

- mergers and acquisitions are quicker to execute than greenfield investments
- it is easier and perhaps less risky for a firm to acquire desired assets than build them from the ground up
- firms believe that they can increase the efficiency of an acquired unit by transferring capital, technology, or management skills

The Shift To Services

- FDI is shifting away from extractive industries and manufacturing, and towards services

  The shift to services is being driven by:
- the general move in many developed countries toward services
- the fact that many services need to be produced where they are consumed
- a liberalization of policies governing FDI in services
- the rise of Internet-based global telecommunications networks

Theories Of Foreign Direct Investment

- Why do firms invest rather than use exporting or licensing to enter foreign markets?
- Why do firms from the same industry undertake FDI at the same time?
- How can the pattern of foreign direct investment flows be explained?

Why Foreign Direct Investment?

Why do firms choose FDI instead of:

- exporting - producing goods at home and then shipping them to the receiving country for sale or
- licensing - granting a foreign entity the right to produce and sell the firm's product in return for a royalty fee on every unit that the foreign entity sells

Why Foreign Direct Investment?

- An export strategy can be constrained by transportation costs and trade barriers
- Foreign direct investment may be undertaken as a response to actual or threatened trade barriers such as import tariffs or quotas

Why Foreign Direct Investment?

Internalization theory (also known as market imperfections theory) suggests that licensing has three major drawbacks:

- licensing may result in a firm's giving away valuable technological know-how to a potential foreign competitor
- licensing does not give a firm the tight control over manufacturing, marketing, and strategy in a foreign country that may be required to maximize its profitability
- a problem arises with licensing when the firm's competitive advantage is based not so much on its products as on the management, marketing, and manufacturing capabilities that produce those products

The Pattern Of Foreign Direct Investment

- Firms in the same industry often undertake foreign direct investment around the same time and tend to direct their investment activities towards certain locations
- Knickerbocker looked at the relationship between FDI and rivalry in oligopolistic industries (industries composed of a limited number of large firms) and suggested that FDI flows are a reflection of strategic rivalry between firms in the global marketplace
- The theory can be extended to embrace the concept of multipoint competition (when two or more enterprises encounter each other in different regional markets, national markets, or industries)

The Pattern Of Foreign Direct Investment

- Vernon argued that firms undertake FDI at particular stages in the life cycle of a product they have pioneered
- Firms invest in other advanced countries when local demand in those countries grows large enough to support local production, and then shift production to low-cost developing countries when product standardization and market saturation give rise to price competition and cost pressures
- Vernon fails to explain why it is profitable for firms to undertake FDI rather than continuing to export from home base, or licensing a foreign firm

The Pattern Of Foreign Direct Investment

According to the eclectic paradigm, in addition to the various factors discussed earlier, it is important to consider:

- location-specific advantages - that arise from using resource endowments or assets that are tied to a particular location and that a firm finds valuable to combine with its own unique assets

  and

- externalities - knowledge spillovers that occur when companies in the same industry locate in the same area

Political Ideology And Foreign Direct Investment

- Ideology toward FDI ranges from a radical stance that is hostile to all FDI to the non-interventionist principle of free market economies
- Between these two extremes is an approach that might be called pragmatic nationalism

The Radical View

- The radical view traces its roots to Marxist political and economic theory
- It argues that the MNE is an instrument of imperialist domination and a tool for exploiting host countries to the exclusive benefit of their capitalist-imperialist home countries

The Free Market View

- According to the free market view, international production should be distributed among countries according to the theory of comparative advantage
- The free market view has been embraced by a number of advanced and developing nations, including the United States, Britain, Chile, and Hong Kong

Pragmatic Nationalism

- Pragmatic nationalism suggests that FDI has both benefits, such as inflows of capital, technology, skills and jobs, and costs, such as repatriation of profits to the home country and a negative balance of payments effect
- According to this view, FDI should be allowed only if the benefits outweigh the costs

Shifting Ideology

Recently, there has been a strong shift toward the free market stance creating:

- a surge in FDI worldwide
- an increase in the volume of FDI in countries with newly liberalized regimes

Benefits And Costs Of FDI

- Government policy is often shaped by a consideration of the costs and benefits of FDI

Host-Country Benefits

There are four main benefits of inward FDI for a host country:

1. resource transfer effects - FDI can make a positive contribution to a host economy by supplying capital, technology, and management resources that would otherwise not be available
2. employment effects - FDI can bring jobs to a host country that would otherwise not be created there

Host-Country Benefits

3. balance of payments effects - a country's balance-of-payments account is a record of a country's payments to and receipts from other countries.

- The current account is a record of a country's export and import of goods and services
- Governments typically prefer to see a current account surplus than a deficit
- FDI can help a country to achieve a current account surplus if the FDI is a substitute for imports of goods and services, and if the MNE uses a foreign subsidiary to export goods and services to other countries

Host-Country Benefits

4. effects on competition and economic growth - FDI in the form of greenfield investment increases the level of competition in a market, driving down prices and improving the welfare of consumers

- Increased competition can lead to increased productivity growth, product and process innovation, and greater economic growth

Host-Country Costs

Inward FDI has three main costs:

1. the possible adverse effects of FDI on competition within the host nation

- subsidiaries of foreign MNEs may have greater economic power than indigenous competitors because they may be part of a larger international organization

Host-Country Costs

2. adverse effects on the balance of payments

- with the initial capital inflows that come with FDI must be the subsequent outflow of capital as the foreign subsidiary repatriates earnings to its parent country
- when a foreign subsidiary imports a substantial number of its inputs from abroad, there is a debit on the current account of the host country's balance of payments

Host-Country Costs

3. the perceived loss of national sovereignty and autonomy

- key decisions that can affect the host country’s economy will be made by a foreign parent that has no real commitment to the host country, and over which the host country’s government has no real control

Home-Country Benefits

The benefits of FDI for the home country include:

- the effect on the capital account of the home country's balance of payments from the inward flow of foreign earnings
- the employment effects that arise from outward FDI
- the gains from learning valuable skills from foreign markets that can subsequently be transferred back to the home country

Home-Country Costs

The home country's balance of payments can suffer:

- from the initial capital outflow required to finance the FDI
- if the purpose of the FDI is to serve the home market from a low cost labor location
- if the FDI is a substitute for direct exports
- Employment may also be negatively affected if the FDI is a substitute for domestic production

International Trade Theory And FDI

- International trade theory suggests that home country concerns about the negative economic effects of offshore production (FDI undertaken to serve the home market) may not be valid

Government Policy Instruments And FDI

- Home countries and host countries use various policies to regulate FDI

Home-Country Policies

Governments can encourage and restrict FDI:

- To encourage outward FDI, many nations now have government-backed insurance programs to cover major types of foreign investment risk
- To restrict outward FDI, most countries, including the United States, limit capital outflows, manipulate tax rules, or outright prohibit FDI

Host-Country Policies

Governments can encourage or restrict inward FDI

- To encourage inward FDI, governments offer incentives to foreign firms to invest in their countries
- Incentives are motivated by a desire to gain from the resource-transfer and employment effects of FDI, and to capture FDI away from other

International Institutions And The Liberalization Of FDI

- Until the 1990s, there was no consistent involvement by multinational institutions in the governing of FDI
- Today, the World Trade Organization is changing this by trying to establish a universal set of rules designed to promote the liberalization of FDI

Implications For Managers

- What are the implications of foreign direct investment for managers?
- Managers need to consider what trade theory implies, and the link between government policy and FDI

The Theory Of FDI

- The direction of FDI can be explained through the location-specific advantages argument associated with John Dunning
- However, it does not explain why FDI is preferable to exporting or licensing

Government Policy

- A host government's attitude toward FDI is an important variable in decisions about where to locate foreign production facilities and where to make a foreign direct investment