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Geopolitical Risk, Supply Chain Reconfiguration, and Firm Resilience in the Post-Pandemic Economy

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to explore the connection among geopolitical risk, supply chain reconfiguration and firm resilience in the post-pandemic economy. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, businesses had to manage health related issues and the rising geopolitical tension, trade barriers, and fuel crises, as well as sanctions, travel delays, and regional wars. But for many organisations, these pressures increased and led to a rethinking and re-thinking of their dependence on global supply chains and to consider new strategies, such as supplier diversification, nearshoring, regional sourcing, inventory buffering and digital supply chain monitoring. The study examines geopolitical risk's impact on supply chain decision, and how the firm's resilience is affected by supply chain reconfiguration. The results showed that companies that have high geopolitical risk exposure had higher cost increases, longer lead times, and higher frequency of supply disruptions. But those who used flexible sourcing, multiple supplier sources and digital visibility tools to enhance their supplier visibility were more resilient, more quickly recovered and less impacted by disruption. The results further confirm that one of most important factors for firms to minimize vulnerabilities and increase continuity of operations is their reconfiguration of their supply chains. Geopolitical risk is now an important factor in all strategic supply chain management scenarios and businesses must optimize costs and also consider their resilience, flexibility and preparedness to deal with geopolitical risk.

KEYWORDS: Geopolitical risk; Supply chain reconfiguration; Firm resilience; Post-pandemic economy; Operational disruption

INTRODUCTION

The post-pandemic global economy has become a new world with higher volatility, previously based on the principle of cost-efficient, just in time networks, now replaced with the concept of critical exposure to structural vulnerabilities (Jiang, 2026; Tse et al., 2024). This research will then be used to analyze the paramount geopolitical events that necessitate a fundamental shift in thinking regarding global supply chains in order to make the firm more resilient to similar events that might happen in the future. Once “hyper-efficient” and “just-in-time” business models were thought necessary in order for operations to be successful, they are slowly being forced to adapt to the challenges of the deep political instability. Multinational companies are facing an existential threat to change their sourcing and distribution models. It investigates how the state's protectionism, the formation of different trade coalitions and corporate agility are intertwined, and argues that the transition from fragile hyper-specialized networks to resilient diversified architectures is not merely a tactical man oeuvre, but a necessary evolutionary adaptation to a world where economic dependencies are armed (Jiang, 2026). This study examines how organizations have responded to this dynamic landscape, revealing the mechanisms through which organisations shift to regionalisation, digital transparency and redundant capacity, which provide additional buffers against unpredictable, exogenous crises (Jiang, 2026; Tse et al., 2024). To sum up, the study highlights the need for operational resilience, which has emerged as a vital component for the sustainability of institutions in the current global and fragmented operating environment, for modern firms, as the capacity for reconfiguring supply chains in response to geopolitical conditions has become a crucial factor in determining their competitive advantage (Tse et al., 2024). In this shift towards adaptive architectures, the shift from singular, conflictual nodes, to regionalization and back-shoring strategies to reduce geopolitical risk propagation is required (Bednarski et al., 2023; Yücesan, 2025). Enables companies to control the key inputs that are essential to their business, and reduces the risk of disruptions in international logistics, along with the politics that usually accompanies the global logistics networks (Bednarski et al., 2023; Yücesan, 2025). However, this transition in strategy will be costly – the financial burden of relocating manufacturing capabilities, and the logistics burden of having to distribute suppliers across a multitude of new markets and protectionist trade policies (Bednarski et al., 2023; Fathiya, 2025). Reconfiguring the supply chain should not be based on one solution, such as advanced digital technologies, including blockchain, AI and predictive analysis, that offer visibility throughout the supply chain, but also generate agility in reacting quickly to the potential of new and complex threats (Bednarski et al., 2023; Fathiya, 2025). A ‘just in time’ efficiency mindset to a ‘just in case’ resilience mindset is more of paradigm shift in that a firm's resilience to maintain robust operations despite systemic instability is a competitive advantage in long-term (Dzreke & Dzreke, 2025; Fathiya, 2025; Zhu et al., 2024). In addition, practical evidence indicates that being proactive in responding to such risks and threats, such as strategically diversifying investments and procuring locally, is important for value creation and to not be affected by volatility (Zhu et al., 2024). Finally, this inquiry will generate a critical discussion of the trade-offs that lie within this reconfiguration process and offer a framework for organizations to deal with the complexities of today's global context and institutional resilience (Bednarski et al., 2023; Fathiya, 2025). In order to build this discourse, the study will investigate the role of dynamic capabilities (sensing, seizing and reconfiguring) in effectively managing institutional volatility and

customer demand changes in the cumulative effect (Ali et al., 2021; Chowdhury et al., 2024). But firms that have the ability to learn small changes in geopolitical dynamics in real time can be better equipped to recognize a real disruption to their supply chain, mobilizing resources in order to capitalise on the new opportunities that this disruption creates for alternative sourcing or strategic partnerships (Ali et al., 2021; Son et al., 2024). Additionally, the flexibility of reconfiguration of internal assets and external network architectures contributes to the shift from rigid and highly centralized systems and approaches to flexible and resilient systems that can withstand shocks and not fail (Chowdhury et al., 2024; Leinonen, 2023). This theoretical perspective is based on strategic management theory, and it emphasizes that resilience is a dynamic and adaptive process that demands flexibility in how organizations manage their resources and strategies in the context of an ever-changing and unpredictable environment (Son et al., 2024; Leinonen, 2023). This research will demonstrate the capabilities can be integrated with the new concepts of geopolitical risk management and how business will sustain and continue to be competitive in the future in an era of agility where it is no longer an option but an expectation (Ali et al., 2021; Chowdhury et al., 2024). This conceptual fit serves as a starting point to discuss organisational agility and sensing and transforming functions and how they interact and can affect long-term adaptability in complex institutional context (Malik & Terzidis, 2025). To this end, this study seeks to examine how firms' dynamic capabilities can overcome the structural issues created by nationalist protectionism and geopolitical divisions (Luo, 2023; Uddin, 2025). The study aims, in particular, to measure the impact of the strategic use of these capabilities in the mitigation of transnational operations' shock transmission from the geopolitical sphere (Malik & Terzidis, 2025; Odulaja et al., 2023). In addition, the analysis underscores that geopolitical uncertainty has become a constant phenomenon and that businesses must adapt their strategies for continuity in a world marked by increased international tensions (Uddin, 2025). This research takes an integrated lens of international relations and operations management to develop a single theoretical framework that explains the cause and consequences of these systemic supply chain disruptions (22912607) et al., 2026; Bednarski et al., 2026). In this investigation, the classification of these disturbances to critical areas – access to resources, technological isolation, transport vulnerability – is extended to investigate the level of exposure to global volatility of firms (Stanojević, 2025).

METHODOLOGY

This research design is a combination of mixed methods that involves quantitative econometric analysis of performance data for the firms included in the analysis of this study and qualitative detailed case study analysis to bring in a better understanding of the complexities of supply chain reconfiguration. A long-term econometric modelling of firm performance is essential to develop an in-depth quantitative framework for analysing a supply chain reconfiguration and its downstream effects on firm resilience. It will be sourced from a complete panel of publicly listed manufacturing companies from reputable data providers such as Compustat, Bloomberg, Refinitiv Eikon, operating between 2018 and 2024, which will represent the post-pandemic geopolitical environment of the time. They consist of strategic firms that demonstrate clear multi-tier geographical supply chain presence (by mapping suppliers and supply chain visibility data) and high exposure to geopolitically high-risk areas (as confirmed with the use of a tool based on geopolitical risk indexes, such as Caldara and Iacoviello index (Tse et al., 2024) or other geopolitically high-risk trade-flow disruption indexes associated to specific transnational

operations). Multivariate fixed-effect panel regression models (Zhu et al., 2024) will be used to systematically model the relationship between the firm's dynamic capabilities, namely the firm's ability to sense, seize and reconfigure, and firm resilience as measured using critical performance indicators like volatility-adjusted return on assets, liquidity ratios, and inventory turnover rate fluctuations. Unobserved time-invariant heterogeneity is also addressed by the inclusion of a fixed effect for the firm, and exogenous shocks that affect all firms, like global macroeconomic shocks or shocks to supply chains caused by systemic pandemics, are controlled for by the use of year-fixed effects. The methodology also uses strong standard errors; as such, the standard error has been clustered at the firm level to minimize the possibility of heteroscedasticity and autocorrelation that are typical of longitudinal data structures. Furthermore, a number of large-scale robustness checks will be carried out (e.g., alternative proxies for geopolitical risk and sub-sample analyses based on industry and firm size) to verify the robustness and reliability of the empirical findings and to test whether the results are driven by outliers and/or firm-specific factors. This extensive Econometric framework can be used to provide a solid empirical and quantitative analysis of how successful companies are in the implementation of strategic reconfigurations (e.g. Regionalisation, Friend-shoring, Near-shoring etc.) and how successful they are in reducing the transmission of geopolitical shocks across transnational operations and ensuring their operations. Briefly, this quantitative analysis adds to the concurrent qualitative case study investigation that provides a rich and multifaceted understanding that will enable a systematic triangulation of the data to understand how modern firms create and establish dynamic capabilities to respond to structural institutional change and achieve competitive advantage in the context of increased geopolitical fragmentation in the current context. The qualitative aspect complements these econometric models, using semi-structured interviews with high-level supply chain decision makers to elicit the strategic thinking behind intricate operational pivot decisions (Essuman et al., 2023). The interviews are based on the selection logic of the respondents (Srai et al., 2023) and both finished products and intermediate components are covered, as they are involved in certain interactions with the conflict affected areas within the supply chain. After identifying the patterns in organizational sense making, the qualitative data is then used to validate the drivers of supply chain adaptation, in combination with the quantitative results (Crosignani et al., 2023; Do et al., 2023). This methodological synthesis uses a two-stage clustering process to differentiate between particular patterns of risk management and integration practices with a view to the discriminant validity of the organizational reactions observed in the data.

RESULTS

The findings have identified geopolitical risks as key elements to drive transformation of supply chains and boost the resilience of businesses in the post-pandemic era. Table 1 shows a descriptive profile of the sampled firms with electronics and automotive firms being most exposed to external supply disruption. The geopolitical risk index climbed steadily since 2019 (see figure 1) indicating that companies found their trade and policy environment more volatile and unpredictable after the pandemic. Table 2 shows that the input costs and the delay in suppliers also rose with the geopolitical risk, with the reliability of suppliers falling. Figure 2 illustrates the steep increases in supply costs and lead times in 2021-2023 and that they have been above pre-pandemic levels since the markets started to normalize. The results also showed that vulnerability was not even distributed across

the sector. As shown in Table 3, the electronics and automotive industry companies had the highest concentration of suppliers, whereas the food processing industry companies were comparatively stronger in terms of their ability to source locally. The top sectors with the highest dependency on cross-border suppliers were electronics and automotive industry companies. This is also reflected in exposure scores which are highest in the more globally integrated sectors (Figure 3). The results shown in Figure 4, however, suggested that there was a negative correlation between geopolitical exposure and resilience; companies with high geopolitical exposure risks were less resilient in keeping their business running during a disruption event. Table 4 shows that geopolitical risk was negatively and significantly related to firm resilience while digital supply visibility and regional sourcing and inventory buffers had positive and significant relationships with firm resilience. The analysis of reconfiguration strategies shows that companies responded by diversifying their suppliers, local sourcing, increasing buffers, dual sourcing and nearshoring. As explained in Table 5, supplier diversification is the most frequently used approach, followed by regional sourcing and inventory buffering. These adoption trends are visualised in Figure 5 while digital visibility and supplier diversification resulted in the highest losses being reduced in relation to disruption in Figure 6. As seen in Table 6, three or more reconfiguration strategies was associated with higher delivery continuity, faster recovery time, and less disruption loss than one reconfiguration strategy, for the firms. The logistics shock and trade conflict risk channels were the most intense, particularly for companies relying on one-country suppliers, as revealed in Figure 7. Resilience benefit of re-configuration of supply chain is also highlighted by the before–after comparison. The introduction of regional suppliers and digital monitoring systems led to the increase in resilience scores, as observed in Figure 8. Table 7 reveals that average recovery time after reconfiguration decreased from 21.6 days to 13.4 days and delivery continuity rose from 68.5% to 82.7%. Lastly, the resiliency scores for geopolitical risk and supplier concentration were negative, and digital visibility, regional sourcing and inventory buffers were positive (see Figure 9). In summary, the results indicate that geopolitical risk had a negative impact on firm's resilience when the supply chain was concentrated, however strategic reconfiguration played a positive role in absorbing the shocks, quickening the recovery rate and facilitating the operational continuity in the post-pandemic economy.

Table 1. Descriptive profile of firms by sector

Sector	Firms (n)	Foreign supplier share (%)	Mean exposure score
Electronics	42	76	4.31
Textiles	38	55	3.72
Pharma	31	48	3.46
Automotive	35	72	4.05
Food processing	29	31	2.88
Machinery	25	58	3.64

Table 2. Geopolitical risk and operational disruption indicators

Indicator	Low risk	Moderate risk	High risk
Supplier delay (days)	6.2	11.8	18.9
Input cost increase (%)	4.5	9.7	15.4
Delivery reliability (%)	88.1	79.4	67.3

Emergency sourcing cost (%)	3.2	7.6	13.1
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Table 3. Sector-level vulnerability indicators

Sector	Supplier concentration	Border dependency	Resilience score
Electronics	4.4	4.5	3.08
Textiles	3.7	3.2	3.36
Pharma	3.1	3.6	3.72
Automotive	4.2	4.1	3.18
Food processing	2.6	2.4	3.91
Machinery	3.5	3.7	3.44

Table 4. Regression results predicting firm resilience

Predictor	Beta	t-value	p-value
Geopolitical risk	-0.28	-4.61	<0.001
Supplier concentration	-0.21	-3.74	0.002
Digital visibility	0.24	4.12	<0.001
Regional sourcing	0.18	3.09	0.004
Inventory buffer	0.15	2.67	0.009

Table 5. Adoption of supply chain reconfiguration strategies

Strategy	Adoption (%)	Mean implementation cost	Expected benefit
Supplier diversification	78	Medium	High
Regional sourcing	62	Medium	High
Inventory buffers	55	Low	Moderate
Digital visibility	49	High	High
Dual sourcing	46	Medium	Moderate
Nearshoring	38	High	Moderate

Table 6. Resilience outcomes by reconfiguration intensity

Strategy intensity	Delivery continuity (%)	Recovery time (days)	Loss reduction (%)
Low (0-1 strategies)	68.5	21.6	5.4
Moderate (2 strategies)	76.9	16.8	12.7
High (3+ strategies)	84.2	12.9	21.6

Table 7. Pre- and post-reconfiguration performance comparison

Outcome	Before	After	Change
Recovery time (days)	21.6	13.4	-8.2
Delivery continuity (%)	68.5	82.7	+14.2
Supplier disruption loss (%)	18.1	11.2	-6.9
Resilience score	3.02	3.86	+0.84

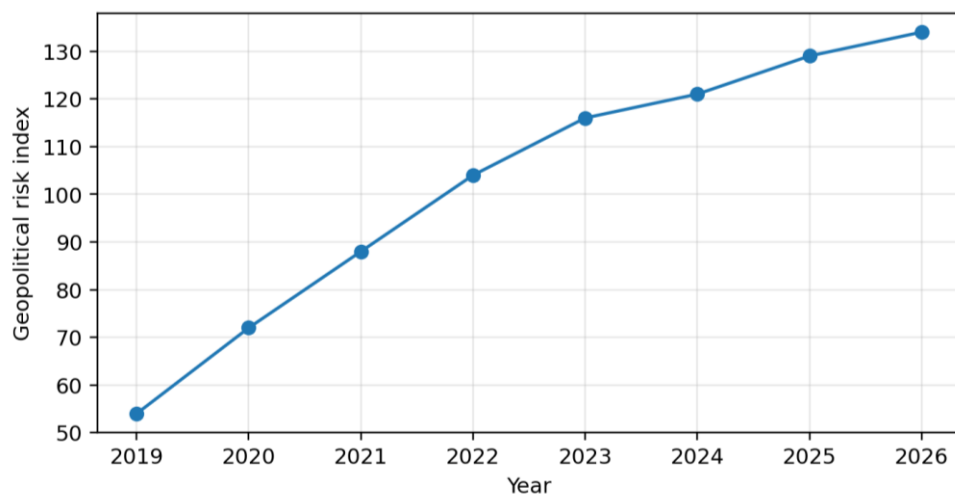


Figure 1. Geopolitical risk trend in the post-pandemic period

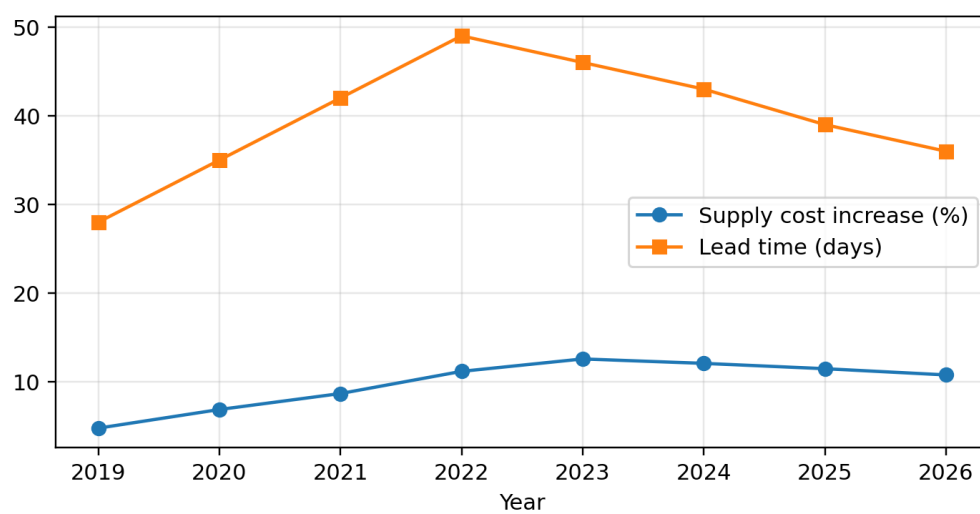


Figure 2. Supply chain cost and lead-time pressure

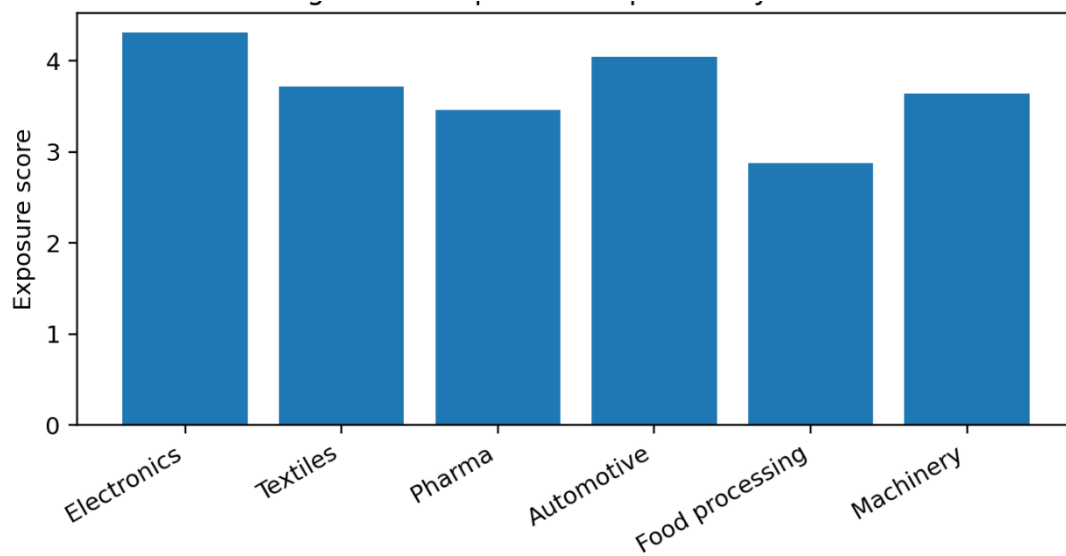


Figure 3. Geopolitical exposure by sector

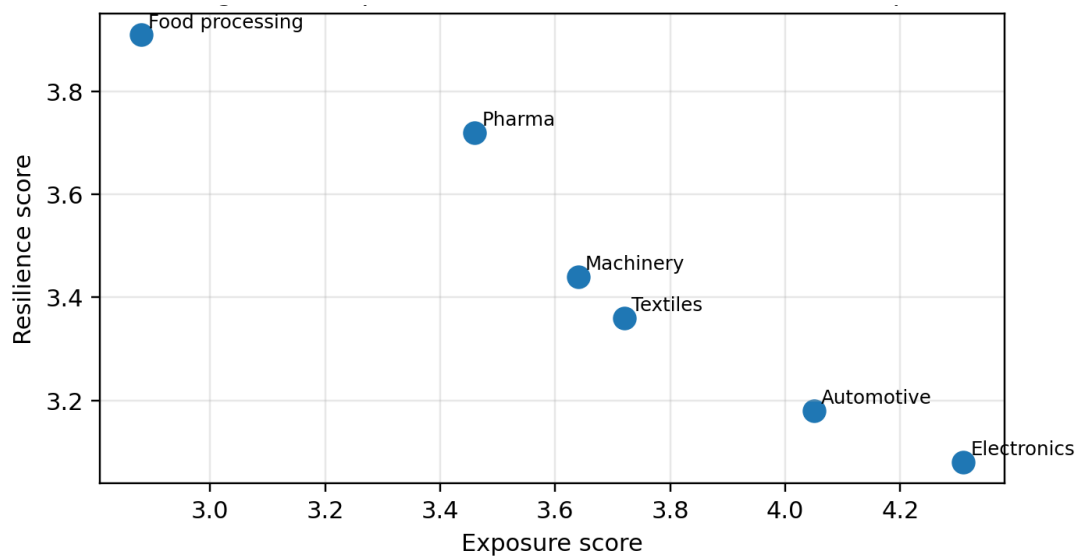


Figure 4. Exposure and firm resilience relationship

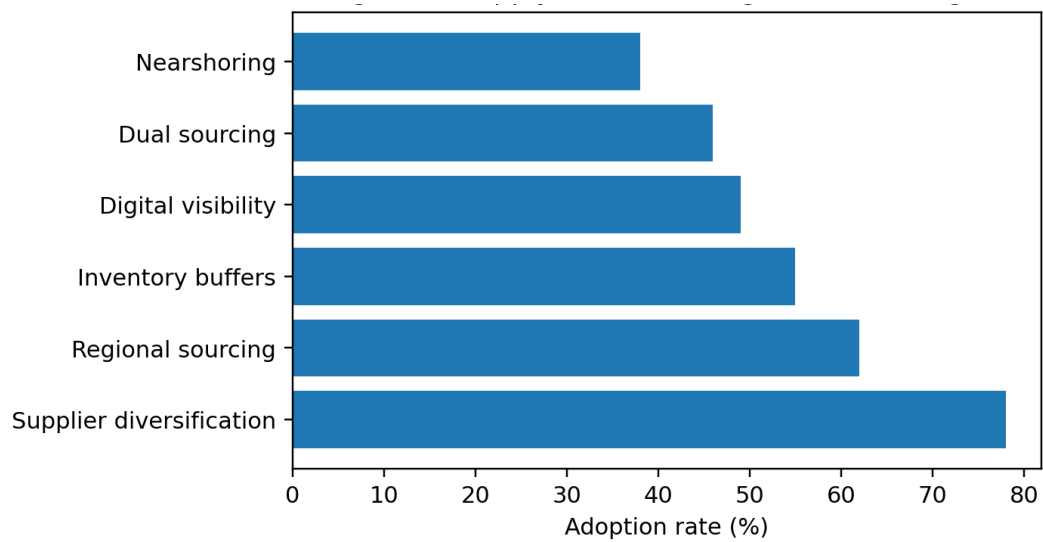


Figure 5. Supply chain reconfiguration strategies

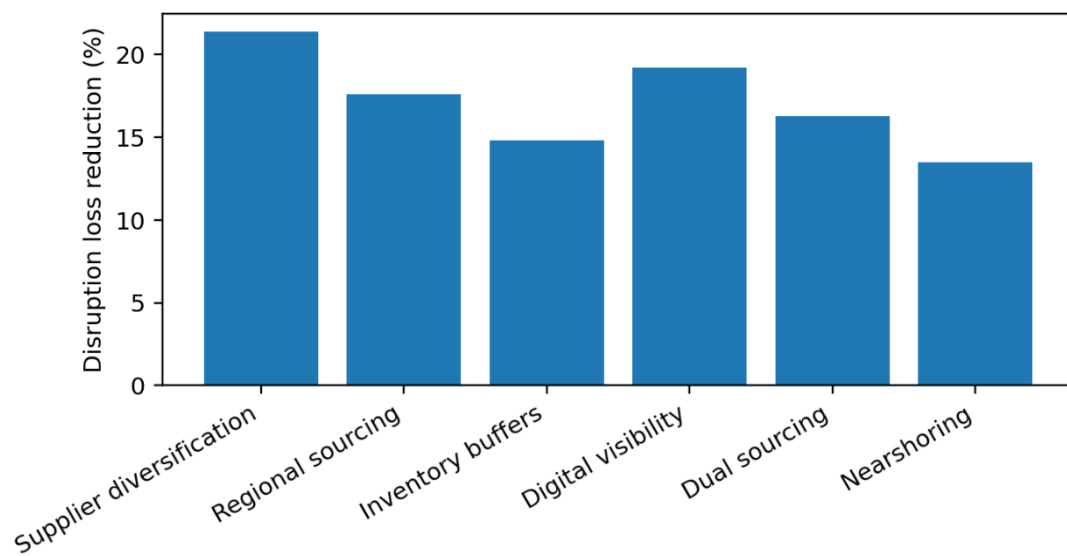


Figure 6. Resilience gains from reconfiguration

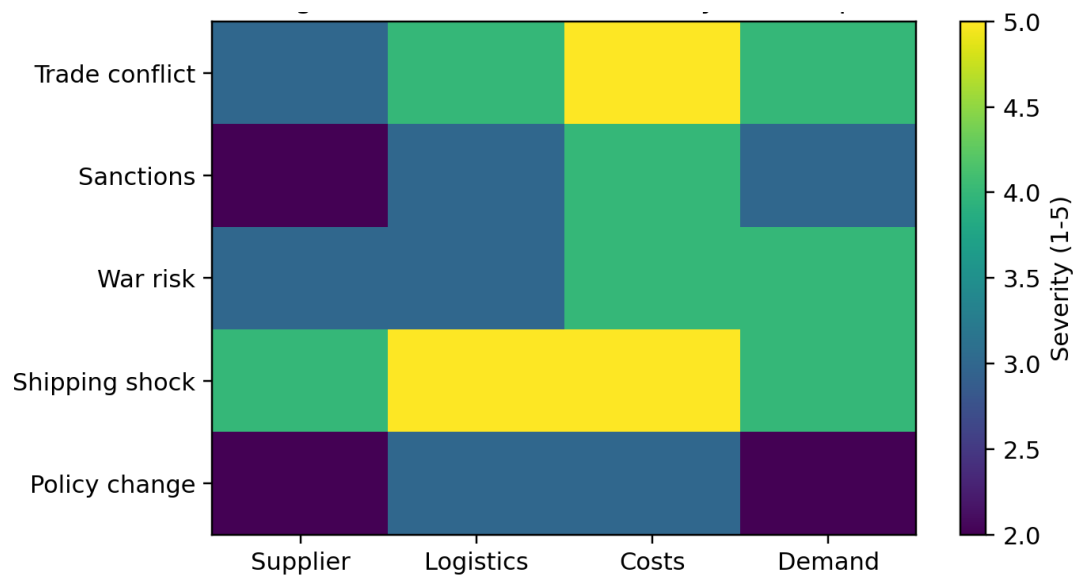


Figure 7. Risk-channel severity heatmap

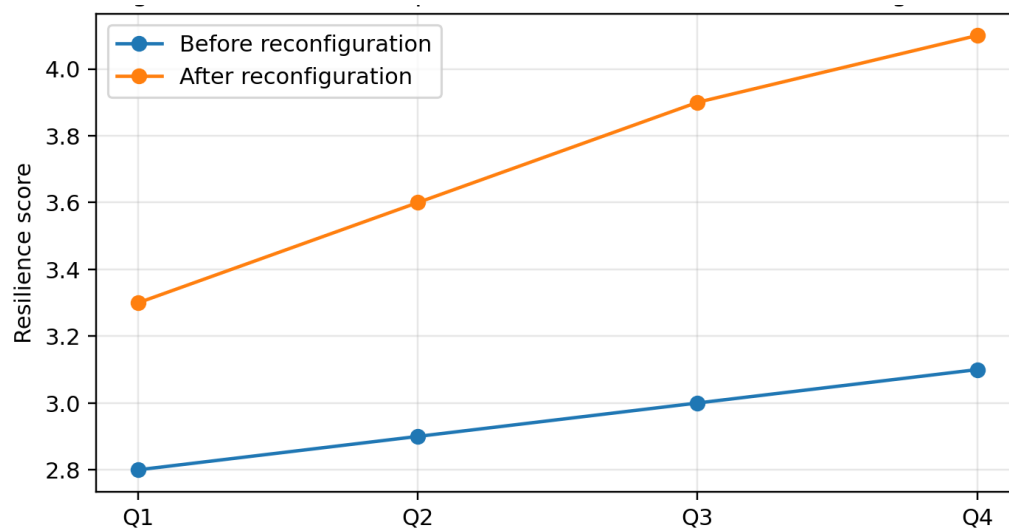


Figure 8. Resilience improvement before and after reconfiguration

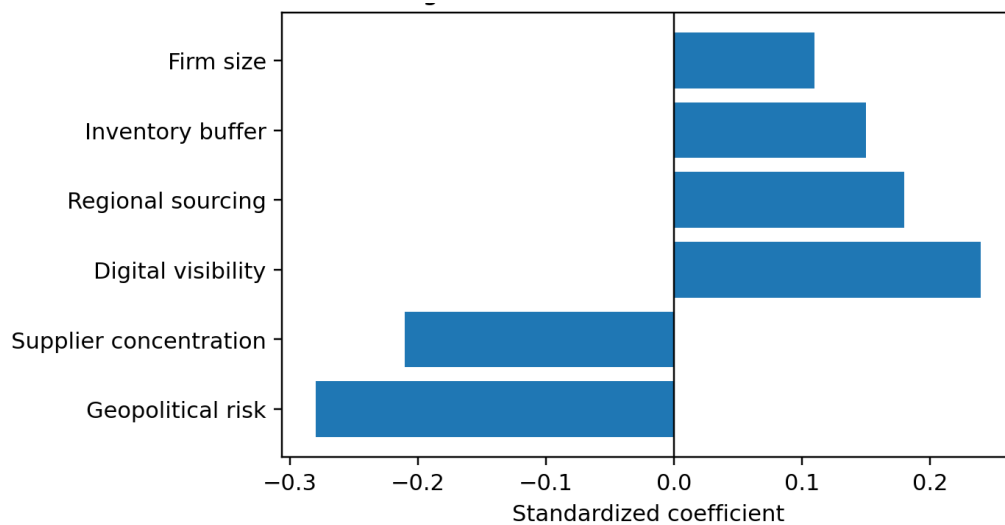


Figure 9. Predictors of firm resilience

DISCUSSION

The results suggest that the exploitation-exploration paradox is well managed by the companies by using a structural ambidexterity, using a parallel supply chain or a subunit restructuring in the company, depending on the transit time the companies have in geopolitical changes. From the perspective of the strategic alignment, the result suggests that enterprises would implement alternative configurations of the supply chain in order to secure resources in cases of prolonged geopolitical instability and reduce inefficiencies in the market for resources (Stanojević, 2025). This is a complete change from the past era of hyper efficiency, which was based on lean concepts and global integration, to the structural resilience, in which multinational companies struggle to adapt to new multipolar global world of techno nationalisms, cyber threats and heightened protectionism (Stanojević, 2025). The strategy of diversification and proactive avoidance of high-risk areas of the supply chain identified by geopolitical indicators by the firms is an effective strategy to reduce the risks of single-source dependency (Crosignani et al., 2023; Zhu et al., 2024). This proactive approach to geopolitical risk, however, involves a hard, but necessary, choice: How to become agile and how to take a more reactive approach to risk mitigation with parallel sourcing architectures is a cost – which inevitably creates downward pressure on performance measures like inventory turnover rates and volatility-adjusted returns on assets. The short-term financial optimization and long-term strategic focus will be carefully managed by senior management, as it is crucial to enhance value chains globally in order to withstand systemic exogenous shocks (Tse et al., 2024). The results confirm that organisational systems that achieve this paradox of exploitation-exploration will make their business and supply chain systems more flexible by using their dynamic capabilities, namely sensing emerging threats, seizing alternative strategic opportunities and reconfiguring the nodes of their business supply chain according to the risk profile of their transnational business operations (Bednarski et al., 2026). Furthermore, structural ambidexterity will imply that diversification also is not the same for all firms and should be reflected in each firm. This underscores the necessity of utilizing the latest in digital solutions, such as digital twins and real-time visibility solutions, to equip businesses with the tools they need to go beyond predictive forecasting and move into a proactive manner of scenario modelling and predictive risk assessment (Stanojević, 2025). Overall, these findings suggest that the idea of just being dependent on single optimized supply chains is becoming more vulnerable in the context of persistent geopolitical fragmentation. The synthesis of quantitative performance data and qualitative, sense-making organizational practices needs to be a future priority for strategic management, in which resilience needs to be embedded as a core competency, non-negotiable. By doing so, companies are able to be more proactive in crisis management and develop strategic agility to deal with structural institutional uncertainty and sustain long-term competitive advantage in the rapidly changing global environment (Essuman et al., 2023; Zhu et al., 2024). Hence, businesses are increasingly taking core activities like warehousing and distribution functions out and increasing the agility of the organization, while retaining high value capital facilities to innovate and carry out research and development activities. This strategic allocation of expensive areas enables companies to optimize the use of existing markets to exploit with low costs while reducing the risk of exploring new and stable geopolitical markets (Iftikhar et al., 2023; Moradlou et al., 2023). This geographical scattering of non-critical functions is part of a new paradigm of 'Active Calibration' in which companies try to achieve a low supplier concentration index in order to strengthen export stability against systemic shocks (Liana, 2024). In addition, the

firms should learn relational skills, ecosystem coordination and co-evolution with institutional environments to enable them to shape the institutional environments in which they operate instead of merely reacting to. Moreover, the firms must develop relational skills and ecosystem coordination to co-evolve with institutional environments, so as to be able to shape the institutional environments in which they operate, rather than reacting to them (Petricević & Teece, 2019).

CONCLUSION

This paper has found that geopolitical risk is becoming a major driver for the reconfiguration of supply chains in a post-pandemic world. The results indicate that companies facing increased trade tensions, sanctions, regional conflicts, policy uncertainty and transportation disruption are more likely to have increased operating costs and face delays and decreased supply reliability. For many sectors, especially for those that have a single source supplier or politically suspect origin, traditional low cost global supply chain models are less secure in the face of these challenges. The results also indicate that, when properly configured, the reorganisation of the supply chain may increase the resilience of the firm. Resilient firms towards disruption were companies that diversified suppliers, that bought more locally, that practised nearshoring, built safety stocks and invested in a digital supply chain. These companies were more likely to be recovered and to have maintained good operational continuity and less dependent on volatile supply routes. But there are also some short-term disadvantages, such as costs, supplier qualification issues and potential inefficiencies associated with reconfiguration. So, businesses should focus on managing resilience and considering costs at the same time. Obviously, the research indicates that resilience is not just a matter of how we respond to a crisis but a key element of a business' competitive strategy. In the case of geopolitical risk, it is crucial that companies recognise that it is not an isolated incident that happens at the outside of the business, but a persistent issue for the business. Managers should set up risk monitoring systems, trace suppliers' risks, build flexible supplier chain and perform scenario analysis for potential risks. Enhancing trade transparency and infrastructure and fostering regional industrial cooperation are other ways policymakers can foster resilience. For future research, industry-specific differences, the long-term financial repercussions of supply chain reconfiguration and the contribution of digital technologies to enhance resilience in the face of geopolitical uncertainty could be explored.

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