



DOCTOR OF BUSINESS (DBA)

Being distinctive

university market development strategies away from home

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Award date:
2017

Awarding institution:
University of Bath

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**Being Distinctive:
University Market Development Strategies Away From Home**

Volume 1 of 1

Mark Timothy Gore

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctorate of Business Administration:
Higher Education Management

University of Bath
School of Management

May 2016

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Abstract

British universities have become more strategic about their international market development work over the past two decades and have given considerable attention to the planning and implementation of effective international strategies to achieve this. This study considers the international strategies of a group of four of these universities.

The study analyses the accounts of expert practitioners in a variety of roles within the international teams of these universities to uncover the rationales, objectives and methodologies within these strategies. The study uses the theoretical lens of Resource-Based Theory (RBT) and the dynamic capabilities approach to analyse these expert accounts and to make sense of the *why* and *how* of the strategic international work being undertaken by these teams within their universities.

The *why* question is addressed in this study through RBT and the findings indicate that the four universities in this study all seek the same set of key resources. The *how* question is subsequently addressed through the dynamic capabilities approach and thus the study examines how the international teams prioritise several capabilities which allow them to effectively pursue these resources. The dispersed nature of a university means that a great proportion of the time and energy is taken up setting up efficient and effective processes and other internally focussed activities. The study suggests that there is an imbalance between the resources sought and the capabilities developed with considerable bias to the setting up of reliable internal processes which distracts from the externally focussed mission.

The complexity of the capabilities developed and the considerable timescales and resource investment involved in major international projects such as campuses help explain the ultimate distinctiveness of each university's approach.

The study is undertaken from a theoretically-informed practitioner perspective and is intended to be of use to practitioners in their own strategic deliberations.

List of abbreviations

MOOC	Massive Open Online Course
RBV	Resource based view
RBT	Resource based theory
TCT	Transaction cost theory
TNE	Transnational Education (usually higher education)

Chapter 1: Introduction

British universities have become more strategic about their international market development work over the past two decades and have given considerable attention to the planning and implementation of effective international strategies to achieve this. This study considers the international strategies of a group of four of these universities. The study analyses the accounts of expert practitioners in a variety of roles within the international teams of these universities to uncover the rationales, objectives and methodologies within these strategies. The study uses the theoretical lens of Resource-Based Theory and the dynamic capabilities approach to analyse these expert accounts and to make sense of the *why* and *how* of the strategic international work being undertaken by these teams within their universities.

In-depth semi-structured interviews with these expert practitioners is used as the main enquiry method and analysed alongside any relevant public materials for each of the four universities in the study. The accounts are used to understand through the eyes of the practitioners what are considered the vital resources the universities need to continue and develop their mission and what the priorities for accessing these resources are in terms of the development and deployment of dynamic capabilities. The data points to a high degree of internal focus in the work of the international teams as they struggle with an organisational form that is not easily coordinated strategically. It also indicates there is an imbalance between the importance of resources and the attention given to developing appropriate dynamic capabilities to secure these resources into the future. Large strategic projects, such as foreign campuses are difficult to implement mainly for reasons of limited capacity particularly in terms of senior leadership and therefore tend to be very limited in number and strongly influence strategic priorities for long periods as path dependency absorbs the limited dynamic capabilities available. Often, such projects are initiated through some form of partnership securing the initial investment which tends to be linked to existing and largely fortuitous relationships thus securing their distinctiveness from the beginning. However, once a university has embarked on such a project, it initiates a further cycle of dynamic capability development over a long period that could yield dividends in the future.

Context – Universities in England

The context for this study is England in the second decade of the second millennium. England has hosted two medieval universities, the universities of Oxford and Cambridge of significant international reputation.. English universities have played an important role in the transition from late medieval to modern conceptions of universities and a very important role as the first massified universities in Europe and arguably the world.

In pre-medieval and mid-medieval times England was irrelevant to higher learning as the great Arabic universities such as Al Azhar, were gradually succeeded by the western European universities in what is now Italy, Germany and France. Durham, Oxford and Cambridge followed the

established European models. However, in the latter part of the industrial revolution in England, and in response to the needs of its far-flung empire, the university as a concept became industrialised and scalable, following the precepts of the revolution itself, mainly through the activities of the University of London. The University started life fairly conventionally as the merger of traditional colleges UCL and King's College but soon took on a very different character as a federal and thoroughly modern university that accepted students irrespective of gender or creed and in 1858 allowed students outside of the traditional college structures to sit for exams. This evolution introduced two types of innovation to higher education – the ability to learn and earn a degree at a distance and a mechanism for the creation of new universities through a transitory period as a college of the University of London. The major metropolitan universities in UK, such as Liverpool, Manchester, Exeter, Nottingham came into being in this way and in parallel such universities were being created through a similar method around the empire. Other mechanisms of post compulsory education also came into being. A number of technical colleges or polytechnics came into existence throughout the 20th century and in 1992 all polytechnics were given the opportunity to become universities themselves becoming what is commonly referred to as the Post-92 institutions. Hence in UK higher education there are various waves of immigration making up the current population: the ancient universities of Oxford, Cambridge and Durham, a swathe of mostly metropolitan 'red-brick' universities of high status having largely grown out of the University of London mechanism, a cohort of 'Post-92' ex-polytechnics and a smattering of other institutional forms such as the very few private degree awarding institutions such as the University of Buckingham or the more recently created University of Law. Roger King (1995) points out that the original rationale for making the polytechnics into universities was to encourage greater diversity in the sector with different institutions specialising in different areas of focus with some of these aiming to be primarily teaching institutions but he claims the changes have in fact created the opposite effect with convergence of missions in all universities aiming to be both teaching and research and competing with each other for a similar offering (Roger King, 1995).

Higher education in England and Wales is governed separately from that of Scotland and Northern Ireland which each have their own devolved authority from the central UK government. In England and Wales, degree awarding powers are granted in a variety of ways but are considered a monopoly of the government or realm. Universities are not public institutions in the same way as they are in many European institutions as they are kept at arm's length from the government with government funding being mitigated by independent bodies or mechanisms such as the Higher Education Funding Council of England (HEFCE) or the Research Excellence Framework. Aside from the few private higher education institutions, all universities are considered independent from government but are at least partly funded from government sources. Over recent years the balance between pure government funding and externally accessed funding through student fees, commercial activity and non-governmental research funding has evolved away from direct government funding to the extent where a few notable institutions have publicly considered becoming completely private. The main sources of

research funding in the UK are through competitive bidding to the national Research Councils as well as through European funding.

Student funding has changed over the past decade from a largely state-supported activity to a largely self-funded activity mitigated by the availability of cheap student loans available to all undergraduate and some postgraduate student irrespective of means. This loan is also extended to European students who wish to study at undergraduate level in England and Wales.

In contrast to many European countries, British universities are able to charge differential, predominantly higher, fees to foreign students. In addition, these fees, once secured, are less task specific than equivalent domestic fees which are to be used according to stricter guidelines and higher accountability. Of course, other rationales add to the attractiveness of overseas students including the nature of universities as globally aware and engaged, but this financial imperative helped nurture a strong interest in the recruitment of such students. This strengthened international student recruitment facility helped nurture competent international teams. The need to ensure an appropriate student experience for international students on campus led to an expansion of roles into the mainstream of the university and over time these teams developed a wider set of responsibilities. In the Russell Group of research intensive British universities, where reputation alone tended to produce a steady stream of such students, the international teams developed their interest in securing research and other types of partnerships over and above the needs of international student recruitment. In recent years, specialised Pro- and Deputy- Vice Chancellors have been added to senior teams to lead this work. The interviews in this study reflect the evolution of roles in this way.

The result is a higher education sector that is quite diverse and relatively independent of government in comparison with many European comparators. Many British Universities are members of the so called 'mission groups, such as the 'Russell Group' which is a grouping of prestigious research intensive universities. All four universities in this study belong to the Russell Group and all 4 also share an ancestry through the University of London as described above.

The development of the research project

Universities became a part of my career during my work with the British Council in the early nineties. I was responsible for overseeing the setting up of a pioneering distance learning centre for British universities in Hong Kong. Thenceforward, in Singapore, Dubai, Jordan and India I represented British higher education and worked very closely with the sector. My work with the British Council was all about bilateral relations between the UK and the countries I worked in and I realised that universities were a very effective way of building such relations. Indeed, in Dubai I was responsible for establishing the concept and initial funding for the British University in Dubai precisely for this reason that it was the single most effective way to fit UK strengths into Emirati aspirations. During this time, I became fascinated with the university as an organisational form and its role within societies and nation states. My

academic life was developing into the study of strategy in an international context through my MBA (through the type of distance learning arrangements I had helped to set up). This reinforced an interest in strategy I had gained in childhood through my passion for military history. Increasingly, I was being asked to give strategic advice to universities in the development of their international strategy and this fuelled an interest in how strategic theory usually applied in the corporate world could apply to the unusual organisational form of a university.

This project developed as I joined the DBA in 2007 and moved from the British Council to work in the University of Greenwich with the aim of setting up an India Centre for them. Working to create a strategic international plan inside a university was a considerable culture shock after the well-oiled hierarchy of the British Council. Nevertheless, the Centre for Indian Business was created and the concept won Greenwich the International strategy award from Times Higher Education. My work within the DBA and as an active member of the part of the higher education community focussed on bringing theoretical rigour to my work applying strategy. I experimented with different parts of the strategic literature applied to universities and delivered a large number of talks, workshops and fora on the subject over several years. During this time, I experienced a number of shocks that acted as a catalyst to develop the theoretical base of my thinking. I had brought with my understanding of strategy a fairly realist and objectivist theoretical approach that made major assumptions about the rationality of the actors involved and the nature of the knowledge they have access to in order to plan and act. The dysfunctional strategic environment I worked in at my first university appointment surprised me. I was also surprised by the nature of the data I started collecting from the main interlocutors who were themselves responsible for creating and often for leading international strategy within universities. It was becoming clear to me that making sense of the real world of strategic creation and implementation in universities needed insights into a far more human and political world than I had initially thought. The paucity of data also surprised me – many universities simply do not know what resources they apply to internationalisation as the inputs are codified and distributed in unexpected and trans lucid ways. However, it was also clear that universities were managing to be strategic about their internationalisation and indeed often published accounts of this strategic intent. It was also clear that universities had considerable freedom to conceive of and implement distinctive approaches to strategy. As I developed my sample of universities I realised that the four universities that had accepted my request to work with them were superficially very similar but had developed four very different realisations of their international approach. I reasoned that this sample then allows me to study what underlying factors could lead to such diversity which would in itself throw a good deal of light on the nature of their strategic activity and the influences on it.

The research project therefore developed out of my professional role over nearly two decades and my own reflexive appreciation of how I could improve my ability to understand and therefore contribute to the development of strategic international work. This doctoral project has helped me bring a

theoretical perspective to my professional life and the role I play in the sector. I intend to develop the concepts further through further papers and seminars and also to apply the thinking to the current need to reassess European strategy for British universities.

The research project developed out of the fact that I could find very little evidence in the literature for similar approaches and this indicated to me that not only was there a dearth of relevant literature but there was also an interesting research challenge that would be useful to move forward – that of applying the strategic literature developed mainly in the corporate world to the world of the university and its particular situation and organisational form.

This thesis is organised into nine numbered sections with sections 4-9 being the substantive chapters. The first two chapters are a review of the literature with the first one being a survey and critical engagement with the relevant literature in international higher education and the second in strategic theory. The third chapter then focuses on the development of an analytical framework for the study and how this is situated within the relevant parts of both sets of literatures. The fourth chapter describes the methodological approach and research design and recounts how issues were dealt with along the way. The fifth chapter analyses the data using the framework set up in chapter 2 and reports on the findings and their significance. The final chapter is an analysis and conclusion which reflects on the theoretical viewpoint and overall outcomes of the project, how it has contributed to current knowledge and possible future directions for research.

This work is undertaken by a practitioner and is concerned with theory-informed practice. As such, I introduce to the work Professor Brown as a fictional incoming Pro-Vice-Chancellor to a research-intensive university in the UK. Professor Brown finds herself taking over leadership of the development and implementation of a strategic plan for the university that addresses internationalization. Alongside, my own self-reflective position as an engaged observer, this device helps me also focus on the third person practitioner viewpoint and how a theoretical analysis can inform this position. Seen through the eyes of Professor Brown the literature review helps her scan the landscape of international higher education observing the challenges and opportunities that face her university. The review of the strategic theory helps her develop an approach through Resource-Based Theory to make sense of the strategic approach she is inheriting and steer it forward thenceforward. The empirical study thus becomes a consultation with Professor Brown's peers to understand how peer universities are developing their strategic approaches.

Chapter 2: The Global Landscape for Higher Education

Universities operate in a fluid global environment. Their international strategies are subject to both internal and external pressures. The success of their international strategy is dependent on their understanding and successful navigation of their operating environment as well as their understanding and leverage of their own capabilities and constraints.

This review considers the relevant literature in several domains: the changing global environment that universities operate within; the literature around strategic and transnational planning for universities and the literature around strategy in the corporate world with a particular focus on resource based view and transaction cost theory.

This study is based on four UK universities – given the fictional names of Western, Central, Northern and Eastern Universities. It is both an exercise in understanding and a practice-oriented one. I imagine a person taking a leading role in developing the international strategy of one of these universities – an incoming pro-vice chancellor for international strategy – Professor Brown. How would she make sense of where they are and where to go in the continuation of the university's international work? She would want to understand the surrounding environment with its challenges and opportunities; she would then need to consider the strengths and weaknesses of her own university and how these can be matched to the environment. She would want to have some concept of how strategic thought is developing and what is relevant to universities, using this base of knowledge to guide her planning and that of her team and colleagues. Finally, she might want to consider what makes their university unique and what will stand out when it is seen from outside. This literature view follows this plan of analysis.

A brief history of universities

We can trace the origins of universities back to over more than 2,000 years. The ancient centres of learning in India, China and elsewhere attest a long tradition of scholarship that pre-dated the western models of higher education that predominate for the moment today. Higher knowledge was transmitted through the centuries by a variety of means that originated in the Eastern world, traversed the classical civilizations of Greece and Rome, migrated out again eastwards as the Barbarians ransacked Europe through the great Arabic universities of El Azhar and others, through the libraries in isolated monasteries, temples and mosques and back into late Medieval Europe. No doubt, this locus of activity will continue to shift around our inquisitive world as the resurgent China, India and other countries expand their own higher education systems and, in turn, export their renewed models of learning. The currently predominant models of higher

education thus have a diverse and ancient lineage.

It can be argued that universities have always been international in outlook. However, the context and meaning of international implies nations and the roots of universities far out-date the birth of modern nation-states as we know them. It is therefore more meaningful for the purposes of this study to consider modern history and the relationship of universities to their home nation-states. Indeed Peter Scott argues that universities were far more tied to their own nation states (or their predecessors) than they were international and it was only in the 19th century that this started to change with engagement in subjects such as science and technology which transcended borders (Scott 2000) There were many influences that shaped the international nature of universities. Olds and Robertson (2014) in a recent MOOC on the globalization of universities start their story in inter-war France:

"In the aftermath of the First World War the International University Campus in Paris was born of the dreams and desires of exceptional men. In the pacifist mood of the inter-war years André HONNORAT, Minister of Education conceived the idea of creating a "campus" intended to house foreign students and thus to contribute to the construction of peace in the world in a place dedicated to international exchanges, where the youth of the world would learn to live together"(Olds and Robertson, 2014).

In this way, they point to an intentional intercultural role for universities in forging a peaceful post war society. They then go on to trace a number of contextual factors that have changed since *Cite Universite* (CiteU) and are highly relevant to our present-day situation:

- major demographic change;
 - development and restructuring of economies;
 - emergence of a global urban era;
 - end of colonial period and beginning and end of Cold War;
 - emergence of intergovernmental organizations such as UNESCO;
 - major technological transformations;
 - enhanced influence of market-oriented ideologies;
 - Emergence of English as Lingua Franca;
 - emergence of new private sector players, public private partnerships and public sector spin-offs; and
 - massification .
- (Olds and Robertson, 2014)

The *CiteU* still exists in the attractive Parc Montsouris in Paris, albeit in a form that has considerably evolved over the years in line with some of the changes that have been noted. These significant changes over the last few decades are reflected elsewhere in reports by those who scan the higher education landscape.

"A combination of demographic and economic drivers, bilateral trade patterns, and shifts in inbound and outbound student flows linked to growing global competition and rapid expansion of tertiary education capacity, will re-shape the global higher education landscape by 2020. Demographically, just four countries – India, China, US and Indonesia – will account for over half of the world's 18–22 population by 2020. A further quarter will come from Pakistan, Nigeria, Brazil, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Philippines, Mexico, Egypt and Vietnam" (British Council, 2012, p4-5).

Change is perhaps a constant of all ages but it seems to be particularly dramatic in the 21st century where significant demographic and economic shifts are coupled with unprecedented evolution of information technologies.

"The fast-paced growth in global tertiary enrolments and mobile students has followed closely world trade growth and far outpaced world GDP growth over the past 20 years. Increasingly, this expansion is being seen by governments as means to deliver on national priorities and contribute to economic growth" (British Council, 2012, p4).

These contextual and environmental changes are of great importance to universities and are shaping the way they develop as institutions but also deeply affect the way universities interact with the world and how they strategize this engagement. An example of how these changes are playing out is supplied by the recently released MIT report looking at future options for the University which they describe as 'bold' (*Institute-wide Task Force on the Future of MIT Education*, n.d.).

Many commentators see internationalization moving into a new, more comprehensive all-embracing age. Indeed the NAFSA initiative, *Comprehensive Internationalization* (Hudzik, 2011), exhorts NAFSA members to embrace internationalization as a core concept that permeates all aspects of university life.

Globalization

Internationalization and globalization are inter-related conceptual frameworks that need careful attention as they frame the discussion. It would be straightforward to define internationalization as a process of reaching out from a nation-state home across borders, whereas globalization is a process that transcends borders and has no clearly defined home base or any clearly defined agent. Most universities aspire to an 'international' strategy but many claim to be a 'global' university.

The development of these conceptual frameworks reflects the times we are passing through. In the late nineties, many thought the nation state an outdated concept and companies such as British Airways wished to move away from a

multi-national to a global business model uprooting headquarters and national identities to take advantage of the opportunities of a globalized world in the spirit of Friedman's 'Flat World' (Friedman, 2005). British Airways attempted to move away from a British base by redesigning elements of the visual identity such as the use of the Union Jack flag. The literature on internationalization of corporate organizations seemed to see this progression from local, to exporter to international, moving on to multi-national and then a global organization as an almost inevitable development. We are currently witnessing a reversal in some aspects of this globalization agenda in the resurgence of 'buy local' campaigns for both ecological and national economic reasons; the increasing concerns about immigration and migration; and massively increased cross-border tracking and security in an age of widespread threat. We are moving out of an era where globalization was taken for granted. This will affect models of internationalization where the process followed by corporations is seen as almost inevitable.

The deep financial crisis of the last decade has had a far-reaching effect on most countries in the world but perhaps predominantly on the developed world. It has rebalanced the debt/credit relationship between China and the US leading to dramatic changes in the trade flows and has inevitably led to heightened protectionism across state boundaries which has led commentators such as Joseph Stiglitz to declare that globalization is in retreat (Stiglitz, 2010). In Europe, in response to the recent terrorist attacks in Paris, Brussels and elsewhere, security has been heightened to unprecedented levels; the flows of migrants out of battle zones in Syria and Iraq has also impacted the much-vaunted free movement of peoples through the Schengen agreement; and the forthcoming EU referendum in the UK is threatening a withdrawal from the EU which is actively opposed by the UK university community¹. For the university world, this is a dramatic change; the current waves of internationalization were all born in an era of expanding globalization and against a backdrop of expectations that barriers to all forms of trade and exchange across state boundaries would continue to retreat and that Thomas Friedman's Flat World was an inevitable development.

Ian Bremmer (2014) characterizes this new phase of globalization as 'guarded globalization' - slow, selective and subject to both nationalism and regionalism. He makes the point that the strategic priorities of host governments are changing radically and differ from country to country. While industries such as the defense industry have always been considered sensitive, others such as retail have moved up the agenda of host countries, for example India, as protectionism becomes increasingly critical. One response of companies has been to increase their own perceived importance at home, as German telecommunication providers have done, petitioning for an internally secure email system for example (Email made in Germany), in the wake of revelations that the US has been spying on European communications. Bremmer (Ibid) outlines several

¹ *Which is what happened a month after this thesis was submitted*

strategies to deal with this new cautious approach to globalization such as delivering benefit to state governments, diversified approaches to country markets; or using state-to-state processes to good effect. This approach is echoed by Pankaj Ghemawat (2010) who advocates for the corporate world an approach that is sensitive to local context.

Universities need to frame their strategies in the context of this new phase of guarded globalization. A recent report on trends affecting European higher education states that "*The impressive strides made in international higher education cooperation could be harmed by widespread global conflicts, including those based on religious fundamentalism and resurgent nationalism.*" (Surssock, 2015).

Universities are caught up in this increasingly complex and fragmented globalisation in many ways. Travelling staff are put in danger accidentally as was the case in the Mumbai attacks; foreign education is deliberately targeted by extremists as in Boko Haram Nigeria; visa regimes for incoming staff and students have become more exclusive as is the case recently in the UK; universities can be discredited for their connection with repressive regimes as was the case for LSE and the Gaddafi family; and universities can be cut off from each other by conflicting world views as is happening to universities caught up in the Islamic State. The current referendum in the UK is a case in point. We do not yet know what will happen to the European sections of staff and students that make up large proportions of the communities in UK universities as student loans for EU students are put in question, domestic fees for those students are also questioned and no-one knows what the status of EU staff in Britain will be in the event of a 'Leave' vote being successful, nor what that will mean for research funding². Meanwhile, environmental concerns are a disincentive to increased mobility of staff and students and increasingly pervasive risk assessment and monitoring at universities is dampening innovative and ambitious overseas activity. This is the new normal for universities in the UK and elsewhere and international work needs to understand and respond to this environment of guarded globalisation.

Tertiary enrolments and international flows

The growth of interest in higher education is a global phenomenon. Estimates of global enrolments vary but they are likely to be currently around 200 million. Numbers grew substantially throughout the first decade of the 21st century and continue to grow albeit at a slightly slower rate.

Tertiary enrolments globally are rising at the rate of around 1.4 per cent per annum adding approximately 2 million new students each year. This

² *These issues are currently still outstanding almost a year since the Leave vote*

represents a slowing of growth from the previous two decades where growth was around 5 per cent pa". (British Council, 2012, p5)

Nevertheless, growth in overall numbers is considerable in countries, such as India, with young populations and India will continue to fuel growth in higher education enrolments for at least the decade to come. This growth is closely linked with economic development and is therefore a factor of great importance in developing economies.

"The importance of economic growth as a driver of future tertiary education demand is clearly illustrated by the strong relationship between GDP per capita at purchasing power parity (PPP) and gross tertiary enrolment ratios. Not only is the correlation positive and statistically significant, but more importantly, at low PPP GDP per capita levels, gross tertiary enrolment ratios tend to increase quicker for relatively small increases in GDP per capitaIn absolute terms, China (585,000), India (296,000) and South Korea (134,000) are still forecast to be the largest countries of origin for international students in 2020....., India is forecast to be one of the main sources of future growth in outbound tertiary students (+71,000 between 2011 and 2020), followed by Nigeria, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey" (British Council, 2012, p5).

However, the concept of a thoroughly globalized higher education sector, where mobility will become the norm, starts to break down on closer analysis. Two of the aspects of internationalization that get the most media attention are probably global student flows and offshore campuses. International mobility has only represented two per cent of the higher education enrolment worldwide over the past two decades (British Council, 2012) and the enrolment at international campuses is a tiny proportion of transnational activity generally, which itself is a small part of higher education generally. The UK is probably the world leader in transnational teaching and this represents activity reaching only around 500,000 students (British Council, 2012). In addition, it is recognized that these enrolment figures mask large numbers of part-time students. There were only 77,448 students at 106 of the 200 branch campuses surveyed in 2012 by the Observatory of Borderless Higher Education. In other words an average of only 730 per campus (Lawton and Katsomitros, 2012). This is a miniscule contribution to global tertiary enrolment. With an estimated two per cent of students in transnational education and at international campus as well as the two per cent of globally mobile students, we have only around four per cent of the total tertiary enrolment taking part in international activity involving foreign courses or mobility.

The total number of internationally mobile students is increasing but in line with total enrolment rather than as an increasing percentage of the total. This leads to a highly competitive market for these students as the traditional host countries vie with each other and increasingly with new entrants from developing countries.

“The number of students pursuing studies abroad continues to surge as higher education institutions around the world vie for the best and brightest minds. But there is growing competition for students from emerging regional destinations that may offer more affordable and culturally-relevant programmes of study. The rise in internationally mobile students reflects growing university enrolment around the world. In 2013, over 4.1 million students went abroad to study, up from 2 million in 2000, representing 1.8 per cent of all tertiary enrolments or 2 in 100 students globally.”* (Global Flow of Tertiary-Level Students n.d.)

In addition, there are clear trends emerging in the main patterns of international student mobility; transnational activity and overseas campuses. All of these are greatly influenced by significant activity in Asia. Trends for branch campuses include a shift from the Middle East to East Asia as well as a gradual increase in south to south linkages (Lawton and Katsomitros, 2012). Many factors are contributing to a decline in the predominance of the market leaders in hosting international students. The growth of domestic capacity in developing countries as well as the hosting of educational hubs in many Asian countries are two such factors.

“While traditional destination countries, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, remain strong magnets for students seeking a high-quality education, new destination countries and regional hubs are competing for a share of the revenue and intellectual capital of internationally mobile students. In 2013, six destination countries hosted nearly one-half of total mobile students: the United States (hosting 19 per cent of global internationally mobile students), United Kingdom (10 per cent), Australia (6 per cent), France (6 per cent), and Germany (5 per cent) and Russian Federation (3 per cent). But the top five also saw their share of international enrolment decline from 56 per cent in 2000 to 50 per cent in 2013. Australia and Japan, traditional destinations in East Asia and the Pacific, are rivalled by newcomers China, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and New Zealand, which hosted 7 per cent of the global share of mobile students in 2013.” (Global Flow of Tertiary-Level Students n.d.)

At the same time, tighter immigration is a new reality in countries in this era of guarded globalization leading to increasing security and migration concerns. This particularly effects the US and UK.

In Asia higher education is seen as a tool for competitiveness and economic growth. Asia is trying to move to the forefront of science and innovation by attracting talent that formally would have been oriented towards the West. Over the past few decades a large number of educational ‘hubs’ have developed

across Asia aiming to attract staff and students to that location. Dubai's Knowledge Village grew up in the late 1990s in a hot desert suburb of Dubai and was soon followed by Dubai International Academic City becoming one of the pioneering educational hubs. The international institutions that came to Dubai found an international and expatriate audience that far outnumbered the local Emirati population and has largely served that audience. The Emiratis attend the publicly funded universities and higher colleges that are accredited by the Emirati accreditation authorities, while the Academic City grew its own accreditation body - the Knowledge and Human Development Authority. Meanwhile, in Malaysia, foreign institutions were welcomed and found themselves serving mainly a national audience but one that was not served by the national universities which are restricted to ethnic Malays. In Singapore, the government courted top ranking universities to set up programmes in the city state.

The C-Bert site that catalogues and monitors global educational hub development defines hubs in this way:

"Education Hub: A designated region intended to attract foreign investment, retain local students, build a regional reputation by providing access to high-quality education and training for both international and domestic students, and create a knowledge-based economy. An education hub can include different combinations of domestic/international institutions, branch campuses, and foreign partnerships, within the designated region." (Educational Hubs, n.d.)

There are currently 15 listed educational hubs on the site compiled by C-BERT (Educational Hubs n.d.). These include Abu Dhabi; five locations in Dubai; Kuala Lumpur Education City and Iskander in Malaysia; Singapore's Global School house; Incheon Free Economic Zone in South Korea; and Education City in Qatar.

"Recognition of the current and growing future role of some Asian (and also Gulf state) countries as education hubs with increasing inbound tertiary student flows, thereby competing more directly with traditional destination countries, is critical for understanding how the global higher education landscape will look in 2020." (British Council, 2012, p4)

These developments are crucially important for UK institutions interested in mobile international students and transnational education. Many UK institutions have sought to play an active transnational role in Dubai, Qatar, Malaysia, China and Singapore. It is also clear that the rising attractiveness of such hubs, as well as increasing quality and quantity of home provision in many countries, is starting to affect the market for international students in UK.

Many commentators have noted this change in competitive dynamics, for example in the book review of Goddard's new book on the subject.

"The English-speaking countries have been long accustomed to dominating the market in selling international education to students but that situation is undergoing rapid change, Goddard notes. Traditional source countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and the Middle East are developing their own capacities to offer education to outsiders. Singapore hopes to attract 150,000 foreign students by 2015, Malaysia 100,000 by 2020 and Jordan 100,000 by the same year. China, despite facing huge demand for higher education from its own young people, is planning to expand its enrolments of foreigners from 200,000 at present to 300,000 by 2020." (Worldwide student numbers forecast to double by 2025 - University World News, 2012)

These educational hubs have had mixed fortunes. By and large, the ability of these educational hubs to attract large numbers of international students has been relatively limited so far. Reliable statistics are not always easy to get hold of. China's progress towards its foreign student target is slow. The evidence so far is mixed. The majority of those that do come to China do so for short cultural or linguistically focused visits. Meanwhile, the hubs are often seen as second choice for locals who often aspire to the top ranking local universities, such as the formidable National University of Singapore, or the many world ranking Chinese universities.

"By 2020 using the consistent UIS data, international students will continue to gravitate towards the US, UK, Australia, Canada, Germany, France and Japan. However, given increased investments in higher education and excess capacity in countries with less favourable demographics, it is possible in the long run that countries like China, Singapore, Malaysia and some Gulf States will become the fastest growing study destinations. It is difficult to estimate the extent to which these countries will displace international students to traditional destinations such as the US, UK, Australia and Canada." (British Council, 2012, p5)

The UK is currently the second most popular receiving country, after the USA, with 346,115 incoming international students in 2013-14 (Rogers and Kemp, 2015) and 108,340 EU students. Although the statistics are far from complete it is likely to be the most important exporter of transnational teaching. Transnational activity is set to outpace incoming international students and this trend is likely to increase. The absolute number of mobile international students is likely to continue rising but this represents a proportional decrease of the entire cohort and the share that the UK attracts is under increasing pressure as Asia and other parts of the world promote the attractiveness and openness of their higher education provision. The UK is also in a very specific situation with regards to EU students. Should the June referendum require the UK to leave the EU these students will undoubtedly decrease markedly, assuming that the UK student loans are withdrawn and fees are moved from domestic to international levels.

The UK is therefore facing considerable pressure on its recruitment of international students. The recent immigration clampdown has added difficulty to this market and has been a source of considerable tension between the sector and the government. International students are of crucial importance to UK universities. The four universities involved in this study have around a quarter of their students and a higher proportion of fee income from international students.

	UK	EU	Non-EU	Total	% non-EU	% International
Western	13607	1014	3788	18409	21	26
Central	22321	997	4472	27789	16	20
Northern	13719	560	5360	19638	27	30
Eastern	22838	1505	5815	30158	19	24

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), 2013-14

Of the four universities in this study, Northern has 27 per cent of its FTE students from non-EU international countries representing, with the international fee differential, well over a third of its fee income. In the environment sketched above of increasing competition and barriers, this represents a considerable strategic challenge to ensure continued access to good international students. It is also of no surprise that UK universities are increasing their investment in transnational education.

Our incoming PVC International would need to have a good grasp of these trends and the opportunities and challenges they present. The UK faces considerable risk in sustaining the flows of both international and EU students in the future and securing access to these student flows will be a crucial challenge for the immediate future.

Transnational education

Transnational Education (TNE) has been an area of substantial and continued growth in the UK higher education sector and elsewhere. TNE usually refers to a specific subset of international activity that is carried out across borders and usually encompasses the delivery of taught programmes across borders; campus activity and distance learning. TNE does not usually refer to international research activity although this is often a part of campus activity overseas and it does not refer to incoming international students, study abroad programmes or internationalization at home.

Transnational education (TNE) – described as programme and provider mobility for the purposes of this report – is a dynamic, vibrant sector of higher education internationalisation. Not only has there been an exponential increase in the number of new TNE programmes being offered, there are new forms of TNE partnerships and delivery modes

emerging onto the TNE landscape. The last decade has seen a steady increase in the number of branch campuses and the development of internationally co-founded institutions, such as bi-national universities. Franchised universities are new to the TNE landscape and involve a foreign or local entity establishing a private independent university in a host country which offers franchised academic programmes from different foreign providers. The number of twinning and franchise programmes is now being surpassed by the staggering increase in double and multiple degree programmes, and distance education is being revolutionised by the development of new technologies and massive open online courses (MOOCs). (McNamara and Knight, 2015)

Transnational higher education was born in the modern era through the activities of universities such as the University of London. In 1858, the constitution of the University of London was altered to allow students that were not attending courses at the London colleges to be able to sit for University of London examinations. Soon, students were sitting University of London degree examinations in outposts of the empire – firstly in Mauritius and thereafter all over the world. This became known as the University of London External System and engendered a vast industry of support at a distance with packages of materials being shipped throughout the world and examination scripts being returned to London to be marked. The system also had a secondary effect. Colleges in such locations as South Africa, the Caribbean, Singapore and Malaysia used the external system to be able to award degrees that were quality assured through a recognized system and were thus widely internationally accepted. Over time these colleges developed their own curricula and quality assurance mechanisms and established themselves into major universities such as the University of the West Indies or UNISA. The University of London External System was rebranded as the University of London International Programmes in 2011 and continues to be the leading UK provider of transnational education with over 50,000 students worldwide.

Over time, other universities started offering taught programmes by a variety of methodologies across borders. TNE is proving a vibrant and evolving part of the internationalization agenda that now represents more than half a million UK registered students on TNE programmes abroad. In 2015, the number of students on registered TNE programmes in the UK outnumbered for the first time international students coming into the UK. TNE continues to resist simple classification and several typologies have been put forward that classify different forms of TNE from validation, through franchise and distance learning, to full campus activity. Significant TNE activity is reported in a number of countries. Australia and UK collect statistics and so it is easier to compare their activity but there are other important actors in this respect with the US, Russia and France each having important amounts of TNE activity.

In terms of campuses overseas, there are well over 200 international branch

campuses (IBCs) worldwide. Currently, the most authoritative report on IBCs is the report by the OBHE (Observatory on Borderless Higher Education). This is not without controversy as the definitions of IBCs include or exclude a variety of different substantial partnerships – for example Liverpool’s China campus was excluded from the first report but was then included in the second. OBHE is currently working with C-BERT, which is another widely respected monitor of TNE, and the resulting census of campus activity is expected to be more reliable and inclusive. Meanwhile, the main global trends are summarized as:

Provision from the developing world continues to expand slowly: of the 200 IBCs, 40 (20 per cent) originate from countries that are not traditional HE exporters. Of these 40, 34 can be categorized as south-to-south (17 per cent of the total). Two years ago, 26 operations of this type were identified. US universities continue to provide the greatest number of IBCs, though the number (78) is the same as that recorded at the time of the Observatory’s previous report. Even so, more than 1/3 of the new IBCs now in planning are from the US, for destinations from China to Korea to Rwanda. The United Arab Emirates continue to host the greatest number (37), though this is three fewer than in 2009. The number hosted by mainland China has increased by 70 per cent (from 10 to 17) and the number in Singapore has increased by 50 per cent (from 12 to 18). Seven more are in the works for China, five from the US and two from the UK. Three more are currently planned in Singapore, again from the UK and US. France is now a source country for 27 IBCs, 12 of which are from the ESMOD International Fashion group. The UK has almost doubled its provision, from 13 to 25 (and 8 more at least on the way). (Lawton and Katsomitros, 2012)

Although the UK is a major actor in TNE, it is less significant in campus activity and comes in third after the US and France in terms of the total number of campuses.

The UK had 13 IBCs in 2009; the number has now almost doubled to 25... among the new UK operations are four from UCL: in Adelaide, Qatar, Kazakhstan and Singapore. Each of the four is dedicated to a different, single disciplinary focus. It also includes three new campuses in India, two of which are in the Delhi suburbs: Lancaster University’s partnership with GD Goenka World Institute in Gurgaon; Strathclyde Business School’s campus in Noida, in partnership with transport infrastructure firm SKIL Infrastructure Ltd; and Leeds Metropolitan’s purpose-built campus in Bhopal in partnership with an education charity, Jagran Social Welfare Society. (Lawton and Katsomitros, 2012)

Recent increases in the number of UK campuses reported in the 2012 OBHE report have been put into question again as University College London (UCL) rethinks its campus policy and withdraws from some of its activity in this respect.

As the analysis in the UK of TNE activity becomes more sophisticated, the ways that it impacts on all international work becomes clearer. It has recently become apparent that TNE has an important and subtle relationship to the recruitment of international students onto UK campuses.

Over a third of all first degree international entrants in England in 2012-13 (34 per cent or 16,500 entrants) transferred directly from transnational programmes. The growth in such progressions from 2009-10 to 2012-13 was higher than the growth in numbers of other international entrants to first degrees: 21 per cent growth in transnational entrants (2,950 entrants), compared with 17 per cent growth in other entrants (4,700 entrants). This contributed to a slight increase in transnational entrants as a proportion of all international entrants, which grew from 33 per cent in 2009-10 to 34 per cent in 2012-13. (Illieva, 2014)

Transnational education comes in many varieties. Pure distance education crosses borders easily and has been the core of the University of London approach for around a 150 years, albeit supported by local tuition centres in many cases. However, distance education does not always mean cross-border, the Open University in the UK does indeed have many thousand students overseas but the vast majority of their students are still in the UK. Distance learning has many advantages for universities – it allows economies of scale although different models come with more or less online tutor support which can reduce the economies of scale. It allows the university to control the curriculum and assessment – two crucial parts of the offering which, if contracted out, can pose a risk to quality and thus lead to reputational risk. However, distance learning is normally a ‘global’ product in that it cannot easily be adapted to a local context whether this be in terms of relevant curriculum content, learning styles or relation to employment and broader social environments.

Another common form of TNE is validation. This is normally where a university attributes equal value to a curriculum and assessment package in another location and thus allows that institution to award the validating university’s degrees. This practice was formally more common than it now has become. The scandal that marked the collapse of the University of Wales centred on the use of validation, for example validating programmes in languages other than English and where the University itself had limited resources in that language. Validation however is a ‘localized’ approach allowing institutions awarding their degrees to do so to students studying appropriate curricula in familiar contexts. It is regarded as a strong capacity mechanism when done well but does require very strong quality assurance systems.

A franchise sits between these extremes. The university allows another institution to teach its own curriculum and assess according to the awarding university’s norms (either controlling or delegating the actual assessment process). This allows some localization and contextualization but affords the awarding university stronger control over systems and awards and is thus

considered a safer alternative than validation.

Finally, an articulation arrangement allows students to do part of a degree locally, often under a local institution's curriculum and assessment regime. On successful completion of this stage students move to the awarding institution for the final part of the degree. In practice, the periods at sending and receiving institutions vary considerably with 2+1, 2+2, 3+1 and even 4+0 being common variants where the first figure is the number of years at the first institution and the second figure the number of years at the awarding institution. The risk here depends on the rigour of the agreement, the sending institution's systems and the periods considered (McNamara and Knight, 2015).

TNE tends to be stratified according to the types of participating institutions. Research intensive universities such as the UK Russell Group universities claim not to use validation or franchise and normally allow articulations only with reputable partners and with a minimum of two years in the awarding institution. The pattern is considerably different for more teaching oriented universities, such as the UK post-92 institutions, some of which engage extensively in franchise, validations and articulations. Distance learning is a rarer part of the scene in all types of institutions and is less dependent on the mission group that universities belong to.

However, all universities in the UK are starting to rely on the importance of TNE as a channel of students and increasingly add a TNE element to their international mix. In a 2013 study by the Leadership Foundation (Lawton et al., 2013) the prognosis was that transnational education will continue to grow while the overall numbers involved in actual cross-border mobility will slightly reduce. This in itself will gradually move the locus of international education away from the global north to the centres of population growth and economic growth in Asia. This trend will be reinforced by tighter immigration in developed countries such as the UK and US - the main receiving countries up to now. The main branch campuses activity thus far centred on the Middle East through strong regulatory and financial incentives will also start to follow the demographic growth into Asia.

As Professor Brown considers the development of international activities at her university, she will need to consider the role of TNE in this mix. As a research intensive university, she may feel that delegated programmes along the lines of franchises and validations bring too much reputational risk while distance learning is difficult to set up and demands a particular set of skills and experience. However, TNE partnerships can lead to larger multidimensional partnerships involving research and can also act as a way of guaranteeing flows of students through articulation agreements. In the context of the various threats to the sustainability of international student flows, it is likely that TNE needs to be somewhere in the mix.

Knowledge, regulation and control

Currently, only the UK and Australia closely monitor transnational activity and report at a national level on this information. The UK has step by step made reporting on overseas teaching by universities obligatory through the annual returns to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and distance learning was added to the reporting requirement in 2013/14. However, it is clear that this is changing and the recent report by France Strategie calls for national reporting on international activity. This increase in the requirements for reporting is likely to follow an increase in control mechanisms as national reputations and identities are affected by activities under their flags. Many commentators point to a maturing of the sector with universities becoming more strategic and hence more controlling of their academic activity. Steps in this direction were hastened in the UK since the demise of the University of Wales validation activities which drew significant adverse public and audit comment and led to the collapse of the federation. We see evidence of this in UCL's recent decision to rein back its campus activity in Adelaide, Qatar and Kazakhstan.

In this new era of guarded globalization, universities need to be aware of the increased scrutiny which adds a further layer of complexity and cost onto international activity. This further necessitates strategic action.

Technology

Technological changes have been profound. The internet was born in 1962 with the establishment of Arpanet. Email and other protocols started to propagate in the eighties but it was not until 1992 that the first widely used search engine (Viola) appeared and in 1995 the final restrictions were removed to make the internet fully commercial. These developments have profound implications for the way knowledge is generated and accessed, making it increasingly possible for students to access knowledge outside of the old formal structures of classrooms and libraries. The development of Web2 technologies and the rise of peer created repositories of knowledge, such as Wikipedia, took this trend even further. It would be difficult to disentangle cause and effect on generations growing up with these technologies that are increasingly critical of formal authority structures and more reliant on peer interaction and opinion.

The influence of new technologies on teaching and learning has already been profound but is likely to greatly increase in the coming years. Perhaps one of the more obvious developments has been the resurgence of interest from elite universities around the world in teaching as MOOCs and their variants became established. The most striking outcome of this has been the proliferation of free courses available across borders from platforms such as Coursera and EdX on the one hand and innovators such as the Khan Academy on the other. This has led to other signs of innovation and change. One of the first visible changes in the establishment was GeorgiaTech's decision to offer a MOOC-inspired version

of its MSc in computer sciences through an online version at a fraction of the fee by teaming up with Udacity and the telecom giant AT&T to do so (Rivard, 2013). Similarly, MIT has taken a hard look at its traditional Ivy League approach to selectivity and on-campus activity and is considering building a far more flexible approach to all aspects of its curriculum and academic infrastructure which has been strongly influenced by MOOCs (Institute-wide Task Force on the Future of MIT Education, n.d.).

Innovation, disruption and change

The year 2012 was the year of the MOOC. Many commentators saw MOOCs as the beginning of the type of disruption that swept through the music industry with the arrival of Napster and others. In 2011, Christensen and Eyring (2011) were already drawing attention to a sector that was ripe for disruption. According to Christensen and Eyring, the higher education sector in the US had made itself vulnerable to disruption through the homogenization effects of competition amongst US institutions where Ivy League imitation served to drive up costs and expectations right across the sector. They claim that the Carnegie system of classification - the Carnegie Ladder - which was intended as a way of nuancing funding according to a typography of institutions had the unintended consequence of leading to a race-to-the-top, thus driving up average costs in the sector and increasing the proportion of those unable or unwilling to pay the direct or indirect costs associated with this progression. This opened the way for cheaper alternatives to broaden their appeal. It is, therefore, easy to see how MOOCs which became the main HE story the following year fit into this rationale.

It is helpful to see the arrival of MOOCs in the light of Christensen and Eyring's analysis about disruption (2011). In their analysis it is suggested that the MOOCs themselves are only a symptom of a deep chasm between supply and demand and technology and social change help to facilitate change. If their thesis is correct we can then expect a steady tide of innovations in higher education using the new possibilities of learning and communications technology as well as the increasing connectedness of students through social networks and innovations in funding models. In the recent report that MIT has published into options for its future ("Institute-wide Task Force on the Future of MIT Education," n.d.) we are seeing evidence of a well-established traditional university starting to respond to these changes and can, therefore, expect this to move up the agenda of the university in the coming years.

Clayton Christensen's (2000) work examines how incumbent organizations within sectors find it difficult to react effectively to rapid sector innovation. At a time of rapidly changing conditions facing universities globally and at home, as well as large-scale technological evolution in higher education, this analysis is highly relevant for universities attempting to develop their international strategies. There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, it helps with analysis of how competitive forces are evolving as changes in technology force the evolution of customer demands. Secondly, through resource dependence theory, it helps explain how

forces within organizations make it difficult to adapt to changes in the 'market'. Christensen makes a distinction between the different value networks surrounding products in specific markets. His analysis explains why organizations are trapped into an evolutionary path that prioritizes what he calls sustaining innovation as opposed to disruptive innovation that can remove incumbents in due course. Value networks are the set of relationships that exist between a given product and its main market. On the basis of resource dependency, organizations will consciously or unconsciously prioritize development of products that meet the set of expectations that its main markets hold. Christensen's analysis shows that other similar products may inhabit different value networks with different expectations and demands. An example in the higher education world would be on-campus versus distance education. Each product has a set of characteristics that is different and their value would be measured differently for each category by its respective markets. The trend over time is normally to enhance the attributes that each value network most prizes as a way of defending a competitive position. Disruptive innovation normally starts in a lower priced/lower spec value network addressing audiences that the higher value network does not attract. However, innovation in technology allows the disruptive innovation to start colonizing the higher value network and eroding the market share from its incumbent. Meanwhile, the incumbent is trapped within its own value network as the lower value network only seems to offer smaller markets and lower rates of return until the point where the attack from this market begins (Christensen, 2000; Christensen and Eyring, 2011).

Christensen maintains that there is one effective strategy to counter this tendency. That is setting up independent subsidiaries with a suitable size and mind-set to exploit potential new value networks. There may be two ways in which this argument applies to university international strategy. The first is in distance versus campus provision and the second may be off-shore campus versus home campus approaches.

The development of MOOCs has been a significant evolution in the higher education sector. Private platforms, such as Coursera, bring together a large number of elite institutions that offer a variety of programmes free of charge to their students who in the case of Coursera now number more than 10 million. The nature of the technology used in hosting these courses allows unprecedented access to data as every key stroke of those taking part is registered. The audiences are preponderantly mature and well educated with many MOOC users having already more than one degree qualification to their name. Many saw the initial pedagogic approach in MOOCs as primitive and inflexible; however, there has been considerable experimentation in pedagogic approaches at scale which are interesting and developmental – the use of hierarchically rated question types on open panel discussions can for example help mitigate the large number of questions by allowing the most common question types to 'float to the top' and experiments in peer assessment have also been interesting. It is clear that the pedagogy will continue to evolve.

Also of interest is the business model that develops. The basic model is a 'freemium' model where participation in the course is free but there are various peripherals that are charged. Of most interest is the development of transportable credits and other forms of award that can be recognized academically or by employers. These are normally available at a fee. As these models are further explored new approaches are emerging. MIT recently announced a MOOC inspired online computer science programme at a sixth of the cost of the same programme taught fully on campus (MIT, 2014; *MOOCs@Edinburgh2013-Report#1*, 2013)..

The development of MOOCs and its associated wave of innovation have already been tremendously influential within the higher education world. Apart from the question of whether this innovation could potentially disrupt the higher education sector, there have been several important developments in how they are currently used. Firstly, MOOCs have helped valorize teaching at a time when an institution's reputation seemed to be mainly concerned with its research profile and has seen the rise of 'star academics' through their exposure on MOOCs. Secondly, there has been unprecedented experimentation with new ways of delivering programmes and ways of reducing or eliminating costs for the students. And finally, institutions have used MOOCs to build their reputation. To not offer a MOOC on a subject that a university is supposedly reputed for means that it is missing crucial exposure in that area and conversely to offer the 'must do' MOOC on evolutionary biology for example helps secure a university's reputation in this domain.

Clearly, many traditional research intensive universities do not offer online programmes and much less MOOCs. To be absent from this space is itself a risk as it means that the universities are not building the knowledge and expertise in an area which could be crucial for their survival in the future. Professor Brown needs to consider whether her university has the capabilities to play in this space and if not whether they should be developed. Further questions would then follow about how to integrate any such work into the international effort and what role it plays in the international strategy.

Research

In the US and western Europe, truly domestic research, that which only lists authors from the home country, has not increased over the last two decades but international collaborations have increased greatly (as shown by Adams, 2013 in his writing on the fourth age of research). This is less true of economies such as India, China and Brazil where domestic research is about 75 per cent of production. Papers produced in the US and UK enjoy a citation premium when there is international co-authorship and this premium rose by 20per cent for both countries between 2001 and 2011. The 'fourth age' of research is characterized by a growing divide between domestic and international research. Adams makes a link between research success, largely brought about through increasing

international collaboration and funding, and therefore throws light on a growing intellectual and financial gap between those institutions that are largely international and those that are largely national. Adams recommends that governments address three key areas: access to talent by attracting and retaining the best scientists; incentives for universities to participate in global networks; and encouragement of researcher mobility to countries outside Europe and the US. Adams fourth age is one where research becomes a truly international endeavor between elite research groups.

Researchers with international experience create the most highly cited research articles.³ The countries generating the highest average citation impact per document include Switzerland, the Netherlands, the Nordic countries, the UK and US. At the institutional level, demand for international collaboration strongly follows quality, and Harvard produces the highest number of collaborative research articles, followed by Toronto and Oxford. The UK has at least eight universities with an average research citation impact more than 80 per cent above the global average and will continue to be a desirable global collaboration partner. There is a strong correlation between international research collaboration rates and citations per document. While not proof of causality, the association is positive (i.e. the direction expected) and significant (for 2010, 80 per cent of the variation in citations per document across countries is 'explained' by international research collaboration rates). (British Council, 2012, p6)

There is scope for more effective application of research excellence into commercial activities, and this could strengthen future economic growth potential. Universities remain an under-used resource for generating inward investment and research income from global companies, though it varies from country to country. Particularly beneficial are expected to be: collaborations with countries leading on internationally-filed patent applications (e.g. US, China, Japan and South Korea); those with the highest rates of commercial joint-working (e.g. India, Australia and Brazil); and those involving smaller, research-intensive countries which excel in niche technological growth markets (such as Switzerland, the Nordic countries and Israel), and have research citation impact significantly above the world average. (British Council, 2012, p6)

Success in research therefore is closely linked to international co-authorship. In addition, research success is highly correlated with a university's overall reputation and is thus an important part of the strategic intent of most universities.

Competition and the concept of World class universities

Many authors have called attention to the changed circumstances of higher education in the parts of the world influenced by 'neo-classical' or 'neo-liberal' thinking as universities are co-opted to the cause of fueling their nation states

'knowledge economy' and thus become a part of a global war for talent that itself animates what Naidoo calls the fetish of competition (Naidoo, 2016). In the UK, King (1995), indicates the gap between successive government policies that in theory are aimed at diversification of the sector but in reality contribute to a situation where all universities are competing for the same space of success in teaching and research – a situation that Christenson and Eyring would also recognize (Christensen and Eyring, 2011; Roger King, 1995). This context contributes to the rise of interest in 'world class universities' or those universities who are the most successful in this global war for talent. World class universities are widely talked about and studied through such institutions as the Centre for World Class Universities at Shanghai Jiao Tong University (Hou et al., 2012). Hou et al define a world class university as:

In order to make its features more explicit, the Tertiary Education Coordinator at the World Bank, Jamil Salmi (2009) defined a world-class university as having three major indispensable elements, which are summarized below:(1) a high concentration of talents with excellent faculty and extremely able students;(2) abundant resources to offer a rich learning environment and to conduct advanced research; (3) favourable governance features that encourage strategic vision, innovation and flexibility and enable institutions to make decisions and manage resources without being encumbered by bureaucracy. (Hou et al., 2012, p 842)

There are clear methodological flaws in university rankings and using them simplistically or in a reductionist way is unwise. However, many senior university administrators are using them wisely, as in the case of the University of Minnesota whose mission is to become one of the top three research universities in the world (Hou et al., 2012; Deem et al., 2008). Many commentators have noted the increasing interest shown by universities in being leading universities on the global stage and the competitive pressures to top the world league tables as well as to attract the brightest and best staff and students in what Wildavsky calls "the Great Brain Race" (Wildavsky, 2010).

Clearly the reputation a university has is highly dependent on its position in the rankings and this influences student choice as well as partner choice. While many universities claim they do not guide their work according to the rankings, they undoubtedly have enormous influence on strategy. Our incoming PVC International, Professor Brown, will need to have this firmly in mind when making decisions about the type of activity the university engages in internationally. If Wildavsky (2010) is right in his conceptualization of a global battle for the brightest and best staff and students, then a university's priorities will be clear – to secure the best students and staff whichever way that is possible. However, reputation also has many less tangible aspects, and for example being a major MOOC provider could be a way of ensuring that peer reviews are positive in the fields where the MOOCs are active. As peer reviews are part of the ranking process anything that places a positive image of the university in the front of

minds is relevant.

The influence of rankings on strategy

There is a fair amount of literature around the effect of the various league tables and rankings on the strategic behavior of universities. While the majority of the literature takes a critical stance on the usefulness or reliability of such measures a few try to make the connection between rankings and strategy. For example Hazelkorn (Hazelkorn, 2007; Marginson, 2012) in an international survey asks what actions resulted from rankings and found that over half of surveyed institutions had a formal mechanism for reviewing rankings and the majority of these reported action that resulted from these internal analyses many of them geared to better capturing data and others involving changes to structure. Some changes to teaching and learning were also reported. It is clear from many studies that the importance of international reputation has been heightened by the rankings. There are various reasons for this such as the siphoning by some funders of research funding selectively to high ranking institutions. (Tapper and Filippakou 2009)

The rankings industry has also fueled a prioritized interest in research strength. Many papers addressing university strategy are concerned with research fire-power and how to position universities to best effect in this context. Although research is often international, geography is seen to matter and regions play a role in the competitive positioning of research strength. Marginson (2015) discusses the growth of the post-Confucian systems into a distinctive research region and discusses the potential participation of Australian universities in this region utilizing the geographical proximity and building on cultural connectivity (Marginson, 2015).

These studies approach university strategy from an institutional point of view and consider how the institution seeks to position itself against other institutions through manipulation of the inputs (such as recruitment of 'world class' research teams) that are assumed to be the levers that affect the outputs measured through the rankings and other measures of 'world class' institutions. They generally are little concerned with how the strategy may be put in place or implemented and do not generally concern themselves with the issue of the university as a unit of analysis and any potential conflicts in this regard.

Conclusion on the landscape

Stepping into the PVC international role in a research-intensive UK university means taking on a significant challenge. Professor Brown's university has continued through ups and downs of history for over a century but the future is less than clear. Globalization has faltered and with it there are many threats to the free movement of people and services. Competition is increasing both from traditional foes such as the US and Australia but also from emergent higher education powerhouses such as China. The number of mobile international

students continues to increase but only because the absolute number of tertiary students worldwide is increasing – mobility remains a luxury for a tiny percentage of students globally and the competition to attract them has widened and deepened with, for many, the attraction of remaining in their region (which for the majority of new tertiary students is Asia) rather than travelling to far destinations such as the UK. In addition, economic and visa issues compound the problem.

One of the obvious ways to reach out to these audiences seems to be through transnational education but there is considerable choice of methodology and each carries differing types of risk and uncertainty. Research continues to internationalize but sources of research funding remain stubbornly local and one key source for UK universities, Europe, is threatened. Meanwhile the competition for the best researchers intensifies and new research hubs in Asia again threaten the UK's prominence.

The last few years have brought another threat to universities, that of technological change and potential sector disruption. The year of the MOOC has been and gone yet new potentially disruptive technological and programme models continue to evolve and each could bring the much anticipated sector disruption. These changes not only affect programme delivery but also reputation which is now built through MOOCs as well as through more traditional means.

Professor Brown understands from this survey of the landscape that the operating environment for universities such as hers over the coming years is going to become more competitive, subject to more regulation and will also face challenges from evolving models of delivery and changing stakeholder needs and expectations. She realizes that her university needs to understand both the environment and the way her competitor institutions are responding to these challenges. She will also need to ensure that her university has a clear sense of its own priorities and the capacity to act on these priorities in the near and more distant future.

The university's reputation and hence its positioning for future success is greatly impacted by its international profile. The challenges and risks are becoming more complex. The international PVC has a crucial role within the university and no-one can say it is an unexciting one.

Chapter 3: The Development of Strategic Thought

In order to navigate the opportunity and risk that the international context offers, the university will need a strategic approach. What can strategic theory offer to a university that can help it in this endeavor? This section gives a brief history and overview of strategic thought and then hones in on two inter-related parts of strategic theory that are well suited to the complexity of the university organizational form.

The modern conception of corporate strategy in the western world grew out of scientific rationalism in the 18th and 19th centuries although its military roots go back to early civilizations. It was given fresh impetus from the influences of logistics planning, particularly during the first and second world wars where vast quantities of people and materials needed to be organized and mobilized across vast military arenas and on a global scale. The influx of those charged with this task into both public and commercial organizations at the end of hostilities after the First World War brought further development into the nascent discipline of strategy and this process continued with the further lessons of the coordination of the global conflict in an increasingly modern setting through the Second World War (Kiechel, 2012, 2010).

There have been several efforts to categorize strategic approaches. Chaffee (1985) categorized strategic thought into three categories: linear, adaptive and interpretive, where linear corresponds to the planning school, adaptive is a learning and responding approach, whereas interpretive is about sense-making and communication to ensure comprehension and buy-in to strategic processes (Chaffee, 1985). Mintzberg, Ahlstrand and Lampel (1998) catalogue 10 schools of strategy formation: three prescriptive and seven descriptive. The schools are: design; planning; positioning; entrepreneurial; cognitive; learning; power; cultural; environmental; and configuration. At first, seeing the surrounding environment for business as difficult to control, thinking about strategy was passive and reactive and concentrated mainly on planning and administration. Mintzberg *et al* called this the design and planning schools of strategy.

Part of the subsequent change in thinking came through the development of the consulting industry with a primary role played by the Boston Consulting Group (BCG). The so-called positioning school developed partly through the way that BCG developed understanding of the learning curve and its implications for competition. The link between market share, costs and competitive positioning was firmly established by the BCG's influential star/dog/cash cow/question-mark matrix which at the same time spawned the modern consulting industry and the market for management products. This muscular approach to strategy rapidly developed with Michael Porter as one of its most visible protagonists. This approach views organizations through the lens of a maelstrom of competing forces in which they need to battle to build a defensible position. The approach had the advantage of

bringing situation analysis to planning through an analysis of the influence of competitors, the relative strengths of different parts of the value chain and the effects of new entrants to the sector and new ways of serving the needs of its customers. The external environment was seen as crucially important and situated an organization's strategic endeavor in the context of the fluctuating fortunes and ambitions of others competing in the same space. The essence of strategy is to build a defensible position by offering products or services that meet a customer demand from a position that cannot easily be imitated by rivals. Porter's model (2010) sees organizations in direct competition with their peers but also facing different sorts of pressures from suppliers, consumers, new entrants and substitute products.

School	Strategy formation as	
Design	A process of conception	Prescriptive
Planning	A formal process	
Positioning	An analytical process	
Entrepreneurial	A visionary process	Descriptive
Cognitive	A mental process	
Learning	An emergent process	
Power	A process of negotiation	
Cultural	A collective process	
Environmental	A reactive process	Combinatory
Configuration	A process of transformation	

After (Mintzberg, Ahlstrand et al, 1998)

As the discipline developed the appreciation of the complexity involved in strategic thought led away from the prescriptive strategies towards descriptive strategies that were more about sense-making than prescription. Keichel's (2012) 'intellectualization' of business was in full swing with the descriptive schools such as the cognitive and learning schools. Gradually, strategy-making and understanding matured as simplistic approaches were abandoned and more sophisticated tools were brought to bear.

The descriptive school encompass the entrepreneurial school which sought to attribute success to the behaviours of 'hero leaders' as well as the related cognitive and learning schools which seek to understand behaviours within an imperfect world

of limited information and constraints of full understanding. The cultural school looked for success through the ability of leaders to promulgate facilitative organizational cultures, while the power school tried to understand strategy as the balancing and exploiting of differences of power and influence within and without the organization. Finally, the configuration school attempts a reconciliation of the various schools recognizing the validity of approaches and analyses from different perspectives in varying circumstances.

The development of strategic thought in modern corporations has been influenced in two distinct ways. Firstly, following the massification of the strategic industry through the work of the consulting industry and the advent of an era of popular business writing. Early publications such as 'The Principles of Scientific Management' by Frederick Winslow Taylor (1919) is still rated as one of the most influential business books of all time but it was after the second world war that this trend expanded more rapidly with stalwarts such as Peter Drucker first publishing in 1939 and still active today. Amongst the works devoted to corporate strategic thought ranked by sales or influence, the Peters and Waterman classic 'In Search of Excellence' (1982) is nearly always at the top, closely followed by Jim Collins 'From Good to Great' (2001) and Clayton Christensen's 'The Innovator's Dilemma' (2000). These practitioners and popular oriented books have indeed been influential in the practice of strategy and generally use case study or empirical data to drive conclusions and recommendations ("The 100 Best Business Books of All Time: More on The 100 Best Archives," n.d.)

Secondly, the development of theory-based strategic thought has paralleled the development of popular and practice-oriented writing. The transition from prescriptive to descriptive tracks the parallel development in economics theory from neoclassical thought, where actors are assumed to be working in perfect market conditions and acting rationally on high quality information, to transactional costs theory, where the market conditions are assumed to be imperfect. Here, information is non-complete and although actors are assumed to be intentionally rational, Pareto effects in reducing the cost on transactions of overcoming these market failures mean that there is often no 'one best way'.

In practice, the two strands of development, practice and theoretical, are intertwined and inter-related. The fortunes of the theoretical foundations and philosophical groundings of theory make their way into the extant popular and practice based literature. And some authors, such as C K Prahalad, span both domains being highly influential in the Transaction Cost Theory and Resource-Based Theory literature as well as a top selling business author.

Transaction Cost Theory

Transaction Cost Theory (TCT) is concerned about costs that accrue to transactions – sometimes referred to as friction in the system impeding the smooth flow of activity. Costs occur for a variety of reasons – obtaining information; building agreement; safeguarding agreements as well as evaluation, monitoring and enforcement. TCT developed in contrast to neoclassical economic where rational decisions were assumed to be possible in the bright light of full information and therefore perfect competition. In other words, customers would be able to look at a variety of products or services that could meet their needs, be aware of any performance differentials and how they might impact on the value they would gain from purchase of these products and services and therefore weigh up any pricing differential in the light of value delivered and make a rational buying decision.

This scenario breaks down in real life for multiple reasons. Firstly, in real life, we rarely have enough information to make a rational decision, information is presented in different forms and does not easily compare between rival offers and in any case, we do not have the necessary resources to calculate what this would mean to our own value assessment of each offering. In other words, we operate in bounded reality where rational decisions are limited by constraints of information processing or ability to predict complex outcomes as well as imperfect information itself. Added to this is the need to protect transactions from lack of good faith - the 'rational human' argument of self-interest that typifies neoclassical economics and develops a Machiavellian twist around opportunism and deceit. This is well exemplified in the game theory construct of the prisoner's dilemma which continues to evolve strategies to counter opportunism. Actors are seen to be rational within the limits of a bounded reality.

TCT considers the firm as a hierarchy that adds value by economizing on transaction costs. Efficiency in TCT is conceptualized as pareto efficiency where governance modes are compared according to their ability to facilitate transactions until the point where it is impossible to make one party better off without making the other party worse off. (Martins, 2010, p7)

The concept of pareto efficiency is critically important as it indicates the difficulty of 'balancing the machine' and mitigates against 'one best way' thinking that typified the proscriptive schools of strategy.

Other assumptions include asset specificity – assets are not necessarily freely traded and to re-use them may incur considerable cost. Asset specificity is one of the main drivers of transaction costs and therefore of central importance to the theory.

TCT is concerned with markets and transactions at the conceptual level. It concerns

itself with organizations mainly as vehicles that are more or less efficient when compared with other mechanisms. From a TCT point of view, the organization defines its own boundaries with respect to which transactions it can add value to and which it cannot. This approach fits with the core competence model where core competencies are developed and nurtured and others are contracted out – the classic ‘make or buy’ discussion. Clearly, adding value to transactions, or reducing friction, is a process which develops according to learning curve principles and is itself a process with many complications and so making the make/buy decision is not necessarily straightforward itself.

TCT is often summarized as being a question of scope. The basic search for lower transaction costs is seen as influential on the boundaries of the firm – influencing such questions as ‘make or buy’, whereas in RBT there is less concern about the boundaries of the firm and more interest in how internal resources can be marshalled to ensure its goals are met. The core unit of analysis in RBV is therefore the single institution whereas the TCT is concerned with effective ways of lowering transaction costs whether these be within a single organization or through out-sourcing and the market itself. (Martins, 2010). These two theoretical approaches can be seen as complementary and inform a vast library of work that is concerned with the inner working of organizations and the building of the essence of strategy which is competitive advantage.

The Resource Based View

The Resource-Based View (RBV) sees strategic intent as a struggle for key resources. RBV and the various schools of thought it spawned have been tremendously influential throughout strategic thought. It differs from Porter’s work in that the focus is internal rather than external and thus brings into focus different aspects of strategic analysis inevitably letting other aspects, for example those around market demand, fade into the background.

A great deal of analysis, criticism and development has targeted the resource based view as it matured. Critics found fault with its focus on internal mechanisms and its relative neglect of the market and product related issues in strategic thought and it was sometimes thought to be deeply flawed through a logical self-referential base. Nevertheless, the view has developed itself, with increasing tendency to refer to Resource-Based Theory (RBT) and a multitude of related perspectives of which for our purposes, Dynamic Capabilities is the most important.

Twenty years after the 1991 issue, there are strong indications that RBT has reached maturity as a theory. First, scholars are increasingly using the term resource-based theory instead of resource-based view. This reflects the fact that resource-based research has reached a level of precision and sophistication such that it more closely resembles a theory than a view. Second, RBT has given rise to prominent spin-off perspectives, most notably

the knowledge-based view (Grant, 1996), the natural-resource-based view (NRBV) of the firm (Hart, 1995), and Dynamic Capabilities (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997). Third, RBT's insights have been integrated with those of other perspectives, such as institutional theory (Oliver, 1997) and organizational economics (Combs & Ketchen, 1999). Finally, resource-based inquiry has evolved to the point where retrospective assessments have been warranted, including a meta-analysis of the empirical evidence related to the RBT's core tenets (Crook, Ketchen, Combs, & Todd, 2008), critical examination of the methodology surrounding RBT (Armstrong & Shimizu, 2007), and a review of critiques of the RBT (Kraaijenbrink, Spender, & Groen, 2010). (Barney et al., 2011 p1303)

So RBT has endured and continues to contribute to strategic theory. RBT differs from TCT in its basic approach. RBT invites organizations to analyze what resources are important to them and to then develop the capabilities necessary to ensure continued and preferential access to these resources. The focus of TCT is therefore different as TCT looks neutrally across the resources terrain and instead focuses its attention on how to put in place efficient processes that reduce the costs of these transactions whatever they may be. RBT would also be concerned about friction in the system as it endeavors to secure its vital resources. However, it would frame the iterative process of reducing this friction as a capability. For example, knowledge is a crucial resource for international higher education activity. The lack of knowledge of a particular country's higher education regulation could be framed as friction in the TCT view whereby setting up a jointly supervised doctoral programme would necessarily take time to accomplish whereas in RBT staff with knowledge of regulatory systems would be regarded as part of a specific capability that a university possesses.

The resource based perspective also invites consideration of managerial strategies for developing new capabilities. Indeed if control over scarce resources is the source of economic profits then it follows that such issues as skill acquisition, the management of knowledge and know-how and learning become fundamental strategic issues. (Teece et al., 1997, p514)

In RBT, strategy becomes a clear pursuit to overcome resource constraints. A pursuit which is in itself never-ending.

It is a view of strategy as more than the allocation of scarce resources across competing projects; strategy is the quest to overcome resource constraints through a creative and unending pursuit of better resource leverage. (Hamel and Prahalad, 1994, p25)

The VRIN framework and similar approaches are often cited (Pan et al. 2007; Bowman and Ambrosini, 2007) to help define resources. This framework stresses that resources should be Valuable, Rare, In-imitable, Non-substitutable. For universities we would need to define what resources fit these criteria. We can

assume that the main components are around staff and students – the best researchers and teachers in their fields and the ablest students help define the reputation and potential of the institution.

The resource based view has been extensively employed in strategic literature. A typical application is reported in Paiva, Roth and Fensterseifer (2007) where manufacturing strategy is analyzed according to the ability to construct and deploy both internally focused and externally focused knowledge to enhance manufacturing strategy. Internally focused knowledge is about the ability of parts of the organization to interact with and learn from other parts of the organization whereas externally focused is about bringing in knowledge from the wider sector for example from competitors and the external environment. The development of cross functionality was positively associated with the ability to build and channel internally focused knowledge and this was more or less strongly associated with the ability to understand and integrate externally focused knowledge. In this way cross-functionality is the basis for creation of competencies that enable organizations to compete effectively (Paiva et al., 2008).

Dynamic Capabilities approach

Intricately connected with the RBV is the concept of core competencies developed since the 1990s and most notably championed by Hamel and Prahalad (Hamel, 2002; Hamel and Prahalad, 1994). Core competencies are related to both RBT and TCT. In RBT, core competencies are the central mechanisms whereby the most important and value rich resources are secured and leveraged. Organizations are told to value these competencies and invest in developing them. Meanwhile, TCT is encouraging organizations to consider where they are likely to be able to effectively reduce transaction costs and in contrast where it would be more efficient to ask the market to do this on their behalf. TCT would encourage an organization to divest itself of any activities wherever it is unable to reduce transaction costs. Teece stresses that such assets as tacit know-how and reputation are not readily tradeable and therefore they need to be developed in-house (Teece et al., 1997).

Work on Dynamic Capabilities started in the late 1990s with writers such as Teece et al (1997) defining Dynamic Capabilities as follows:

Winners in the global marketplace have been firms that can demonstrate timely responsiveness and rapid flexible product innovation, coupled with the management capability to effectively coordinate and redeploy internal and external competencies (...) the term dynamic refers to the capacity to renew competences so as to achieve congruence with the changing business environment (...) The term capabilities emphasizes the key role of strategic management in appropriately adapting, integrating and reconfiguring internal and external skills. (Teece et al., 1997, p 515)

The resource based view developed the Dynamic Capabilities approach which conceptualized these capabilities as being bundles of resources that could be acquired and deployed to help build defensible strategies against the forces of competition and change that organizations face. The focus of Dynamic Capabilities is on survival in a turbulent environment through the deployment of unique capabilities. Of course, longer term strategy recognizes the prospect of building these capabilities over time and part of the strategic intent is usually directed at this. Mascarenhas *et al* (1998) identified three types of competencies in their study of multinationals: superior technological know-how (a deep understanding of a subject area); reliable processes and close relationships with external partners (Mascarenhas *et al.*, 1998). In this framework, Teece *et al* define six inter-related concepts: 1) *factors of production*, which are undifferentiated inputs with any firm specific characteristics; 2) *resources* which are firm specific assets difficult to imitate or transfer and may contain tacit knowledge; 3) *organizational routines or competences* or assemblages of firm specific assets; 4) *core competences* which are those that define the fundamental business; 5) *Dynamic Capabilities*; and 6) *products*.

RBV and its derivative Dynamic Capabilities provides an appropriate framework to analyze university strategy and its resource-seeking intent with the added insight that TCT gives to the very real frictions that exist within universities to ensure that the necessary Dynamic Capabilities are developed and that processes work smoothly.

Models of internationalization

Finally, before moving into the domain of strategy it is worth giving some consideration to models of internationalization as these are of relevance to the ways in which universities may seek to internationalize themselves.

There are a number of models of internationalization and market entry of which the Uppsala model or internationalization model is probably the best known. This model supposes that the progress of internationalization follows the development of experiential knowledge and tends to follow certain well-developed processes or establishment chains, such as distribution through independent intermediary followed by export through a sales subsidiary, and finally manufacture in the market (Johanson and Vahlne, 1990). The Uppsala model is generally recognized as most appropriate for an analysis of early stage internationalization as it is seen as a process model. The concept of psychic distance, defined as such factors as cultural, linguistic and political system, is an important component of the model. The model assumes that the process of internationalization seeks out psychically close markets at its early stages and then onwards takes on an evolution of building experiential knowledge, problem solving, geographical expansion which means an almost inevitable course thereon of increasing investment of resources into foreign endeavors. The model fits universities well as it envisages corporate entities as

loosely coupled organizations with a diversity of actors and hence a diversity of motivations and attitudes (Johanson and Vahlne, 1990; Whitelock, 2002).

Meanwhile, the eclectic model of internationalization based on Dunning's work considers advantages offered by dint of ownership as opposed to those accruing from location (Dunning, 2001). This leads to a rather different conclusion from the Uppsala model, that organizations will tend to establish production in locations where advantages can be found which may not necessarily be psychically close locations. However, the eclectic paradigm assumes good quality market information which is likely to come at more advanced stages of internationalization and so the two approaches can be viewed as complementary. The eclectic approach also assumes rational informed actions based on a balanced understanding of relative transactional costs.

An important dimension to both these analyses is the underlying understanding of transaction costs and the effect this has on decision making. Early in internationalization processes organizations typically rely on middle men as they are not able or willing to internalize the functions. Transaction costs are affected by a number of factors, including uncertainty and complexity of products. When transaction costs increase, it may make sense to internalize and as knowledge increases uncertainty decreases and therefore it may become sensible to internalize (or the opposite if the new knowledge demonstrates the lower transaction cost of externalization). This does not necessarily trigger the decision to make this change which depends on willingness as well as ability. Again, knowledge increases as internationalization progresses. The internationalization approach recognizes that transaction costs may change in the process whereas the eclectic approach is static in this respect (Johanson and Vahlne, 1990).

A further perspective on the internationalization process has been provided through an industrial network approach. In this work, organizations are conceived as places within a complex web of relationships with customers, clients, suppliers, partners, regulators and distributors, which is built and strengthened over time. These networks interact in a variety of ways and the extent and effectiveness of these relationships are clearly difficult to assess from the outside, such as by a newcomer to a particular market who will need to slowly understand the networked environment and build their own place within it. This analysis again emphasizes experiential knowledge in the same way as the internationalization approach does. The networks themselves will be more or less international and an organization's engagement in a particular network may help them bridge the gap into the new market network.

Organizations are seen as having an 'advantage' package which is their aggregate strengths and weaknesses seen in the light of certain circumstances and network relationships. An advantage cycle is when these attributes evolve over time and are utilized (or not) to propel acquisition of a new set of advantages. For example, a technological advantage may lead to the establishment of a distribution network which over time itself becomes an advantage and helps with the acquisition of new

resources. These advantages are acquired at a cost and should be recorded on the balance sheet but are often not. The intangibility of knowledge advantages mitigate against their full understanding and recording (Johanson and Vahlne, 1990).

As a further development of the corporate strategic internationalization literature, Pankaj Ghemawat (2007) has been very prominent in recent years. Many commentators at the end of the last century, characterized by the commercial success of Thomas Friedman's 'The World is Flat' (Friedman, 2005) assumed that globalization was flattening the differences in the world and that local culture and distinctiveness was giving way to globalized cultures and values. Ghemawat (2007) argues that globalism is not complete and that the world is far from being flat. This concept argues for great sensitivity to culture and social fabrics. He argues for an approach to global strategy that, while accepting that there are inevitable convergences and cultural similarities emerging across national frontiers, there are also great differences and these need to be understood and taken into account. Even the internet exhibits characteristics and patterns of usage that vary considerably over national and cultural boundaries (Ghemawat, 2007; Gore, 2012).

Companies whose strategies currently emphasize smoothing differences and achieving economies of scale across national boundaries may need to shift toward adapting to local conditions. Companies whose strategies emphasize arbitrage—taking advantage of differences—may need to make the same shift; now is not the time to be perceived as an exploitative foreigner.
(Ghemawat 2010)

In this discussion of internationalization processes, the concepts of transaction costs and strategic networks have been raised. These will be picked up again as we move through the strategy section and establish the framework for the analysis section of this study.

Conclusion

Strategy is a relatively modern discipline which has rapidly developed both as a pure applied discipline. A comprehensive scanning of the higher education global environment reveals for UK research intensive universities a challenging and rapidly evolving landscape. In order to navigate the challenges and opportunities this landscape offers, the incoming PVC of a research-intensive university needs to carefully decide priorities and marshal its resources to meet the challenges effectively. This implies a strategic approach to internationalization. This chapter reviews the history of strategic development and the following chapter will examine how elements of strategic thought can be appropriately built into an analytical framework for universities to employ.

Chapter 4: Developing an Analytical Framework

This chapter takes us from a critical review of the literature towards an analytical framework. It commences with a consideration of what the rationale for an international strategy may be and then considers what examples are available in the current literature and what lessons this framework may draw from these. It then considers which parts of strategic theory might best be applied in the university context, considers an example in the literature and develops the analytical framework for this study.

Why construct an international strategy?

The changing global background for universities described in the preceding sections leaves little choice for universities but to engage actively in internationalization. Philip Altbach (2004) conceives of internationalization as a coping mechanism for the forces of globalization. Globalization in some ways reinforces global inequalities and leads to centres and peripheries both between countries and regions and at a smaller scale within countries and knowledge systems. A new neocolonialism of the market place replaces the struggle for 'hearts and minds' of the Cold War Era. He also stresses the role of English as the new vehicle of knowledge. The global academic market place is seen as a predominantly South to North phenomenon. Power relations between an exporting institution and a receiving institution are usually unequal. According to Altbach, a central goal is almost always to make a profit. The inclusion of education in GATS indicates a changing view of knowledge as a commodity like any other.

The challenge is to recognize the complexities and nuances of the modern context and then seek to create a global academic environment that recognises the need to ensure that academic relationships are as equal as possible. Recognizing inequality is the first step. The second is to create a world that ameliorates these inequalities. These tasks, in the context of marketisation and the pressures of mass higher education, are not easy ones. Yet, it is important to ensure that globalization does not turn into the neocolonialism of the 21st century (Altbach 2014)

There seem to be two main competing conceptual frameworks for the operation of an international strategy; one based on ideological grounds as sketched out by Altbach and the other based on a competing market driven ideology often supported by national economic strategies.

Increasingly in the emerging strategic literature we see a new sensitivity to social and cultural issues. We see a story emerging from India and elsewhere about enfranchising the poorest sections of society and developing ways of doing business that deliver value 'at the bottom of the pyramid' and even that most muscular of strategists Michael Porter has recently written about 'creating shared value' by which he means developing business models that are profitable but also deliver social good. The neoliberal ethos is developing a social consciousness in this new landscape, and the boundaries between the old corporate world and social organizations such as universities are blurring. (Porter and Kramer 2010)

There are many reasons institutions seek to construct an international strategy. As a national priority, an economic strategy is often fore-fronted for the export of university services as noted in the first sentence of the foreword to the UK Government's International Education paper written by the then Minister for Universities and Science, David Willetts: "There are few sectors in the UK economy with the capacity to grow and generate export earnings as impressive as education" (HM Government, 2013). The University of Exeter published an analysis of the economic impact of its international students on the local economy and it estimated that they contributed £88M to the city's economy (University of Exeter, 2012).

However, perhaps unsurprisingly, economic motives are rare in published international strategies and instead many other motivations are invoked: "Internationalizing our core and support functions enables us to produce graduates who are empowered to excel in a global environment and allows us to deliver genuinely world-changing research" (The University of Nottingham, Undated). Clearly economic forces are important to fund a university's need for resources but this is not the ultimate measure of success for a university where reputation and standing usually outweigh the balance sheet. Some universities express their overall strategic aim as being to climb the reputational rankings: "To establish the University of Exeter as a university of global standing" (University of Exeter, 2010).

While pragmatic positioning and economic imperatives are clear drivers in international activity for many universities, many authors note the role of the university as being a major player in addressing issues that face the world at large or defining the social and cultural mission of universities as helping to grow intercultural understanding (Bourn, 2011; Duderstadt, 2012).

Internationalization of teaching and research are critical objectives for most tertiary institutions for many reasons. These include raising quality standards and global relevance, attracting the best students and staff, generating revenue, pushing the frontiers of knowledge through research and promoting internal diversity (British Council, 2012, p4).

Gabriel Hawawini (2011) hints at this with an expansive definition of internationalization:

The internationalization of higher education institutions is the process of integrating the institution and its stakeholders—including its students, faculty, and staff—into a globalizing world. (Hawawini, 2011, p.5 and p12)

This definition goes beyond the particular dimensions of teaching, research and service. It calls for a change in existing *structures* and *mindsets* in order to allow the institution to contribute to the shaping of the emerging global knowledge and learning network. In the corporate world the main motivating force in strategy is economic. In the university world the extent to which this is a foreground motivating force is variable and open to interrogation.

Approaches to strategy in the higher education literature

There is a fairly thin body of literature and research on university strategy generally. This is sometimes explained by the difficulty of conceptualizing strategy in institutions that are loosely governed with high degrees of autonomy held by individuals within the organization and ambiguous methods of applying strategy. Fumasoli and Lepori point out that the majority of examples are US-based and that empirical studies on the nature of strategies within higher education institutions are rare (Fumasoli and Lepori, 2010).

In considering the literature of strategy applied in higher education contexts, Naidoo and Wu also point out that where there is analysis of strategy in the literature it tends to focus on strategy formulation rather than implementation (Naidoo and Wu, 2011). The strategy formulation, they state, focuses on four key thematic areas: targeting, segmentation, brand and positioning. The authors used the university as the unit of analysis and stress in the unified nature of the institution became clear with the level of understanding of strategic fit of their own efforts within a broader institution-wide context and the apparent disconnect between the value of academic involvement in the implementation of marketing strategies and the institution's incentive mechanisms for academics to be involved in this way. Indeed, many such conflictual relationships were clear in the study between the espoused strategic approach and individuals within the study feeling that the strategy did not fit their own value sets.

A planning, prescriptive approach to strategy was common in the 1970s and 1980s (Bryson, 1988; Mazze, 1971; Holdaway and Meekison, 1990). Perhaps unsurprisingly, these processes were judged to be *ad hoc* and produced greatly divergent results even when applied to different functional areas within a single university as was the case at the University of Alberta in the 1980s (Holdaway and Meekison, 1990). In common with the corporate world, the real context of strategic action proved to be too complex to allow formulaic prescriptive strategies to consistently produce good results.

Fumasoli and Lepori (2010) reinforce this view of strategy. In their study of Swiss higher education institutions, they see strategies as initiated by academic administrators and then subjected to considerable adaptation by academics as they accept it to differing degrees and impose their shapes onto the structures. Strategy is thus seen as trying to influence academics to accept initiatives and designing ways of controlling decentralized organizational structures (Fumasoli and Lepori, 2010). The authors describe three pertinent approaches to strategies with the first

two linking objectives to means, with a positional element being added through Michael Porter's work and being essentially relevant to rational hierarchical organizations whereas the third approach is best exemplified in Mintzberg's work looking at complex interactions between strategy, organizational dimensions and environment. The dynamic and emergent elements of strategy creation come sharply into focus in this analysis (Fumasoli and Lepori, 2010).

For the purposes of this paper, we define a strategy as a pattern of decisions and actions aiming at realizing objectives that are relevant for the organization and which compose a coherent sequence developing in time and across relevant areas of activity. To be identified as a strategy, such patterns must be recognized and shared by organizational members as a collective pursuit of organizational goals. Actors' rationalization of a pattern as an organizational strategy can occur before decisions and actions take place (as in strategy formulation, for example in the strategic plan), meanwhile or afterwards, as actors rationalize organizational events in a strategic perspective. (Fumasoli and Lepori, 2010).

Perhaps the most obvious question to pose of university strategy is whether in fact it is strategic or not. Many would argue that universities are not capable of strategic action in the well-accepted corporate sense of the word through their very nature. Indeed, Mintzberg and Rose (2007) find evidence of this view and analysing McGill University's strategic development, claimed that "*Amidst continual change in detail, there was remarkable stability in the aggregate, and nothing resembling quantum or revolutionary change ever occurred*" (Mintzberg and Rose, 2007, p 283). They argue then for a strategic conception of a university as essentially un-strategic at the macro level. This conception of a university's strategic approach would argue for a lack of major innovations and developments in international strategy and a similar approach amongst other 'loosely coupled' universities.

This is close to a Weberian view of an increasingly bureaucratized society (Freedman, 2013). "*The result was a postmodern version of Tolstoy, with barely perceptible everyday gestures moving big organizations in ways that nobody intended but could still come out right in the end.*" (Freedman, 2013, p 557). Many observers of strategy in a university context conceptualize universities as a professional bureaucracy with elements of a typical bureaucracy including hierarchy and formal rules and regulations combined with elements of a more collegial and professional structure with authority lying in expertise and considerable decentralized power (Hardy, 1991). A Swiss study builds three case studies which attempt to make sense of the strategy making process in complex and loosely coupled organizational forms which not only have to contend with their internal complexities but also with the changing interventions of the Swiss Cantonal governments. In each case an academic administration attempts to set strategy and achieves results through varied success of bottom-up processes and their links to the strategy setting (Fumasoli and Lepori, 2010)

There have been a few attempts to classify university strategies into types or models. Ayoubi and Massoud (2007) did a quantitative factor analysis of internationalization efforts amongst UK universities in 2001. All four of the universities in this study were classified as: "

International winners: This group represents universities that have a high loading of internationalisation in their missions, and are very active in doing international student business. In terms of internationalisation, universities in this group tend to say and to do. These universities match between their strategic intent of internationalisation and their perceived results of doing so – 37 per cent of UK universities fall into this category. (Ayoubi and Massoud, 2007, p 345)

Olds and Robertson arrived at four models : import, export, partnership and network. (Olds and Robertson, 2014, p12). Similarly, Jane Knight (2015) arrived at three classifications: the Classic model - a university with multiple international partners and activities; satellite models with overseas offices, research centres and branch campuses; and co-founded models which are internationally co-founded or co-developed. In this analysis, Central and Western fall into the classic model, Eastern into the satellite model and Northern the co-founded model. Knight also speculates about the coming of edu-glomerates which would offer in-situ a variety of university offerings - perhaps along the lines of the British University in Dubai. This is a rather simplistic analysis as most universities will exhibit aspects of each of her categories, for example Northern has a co-founded branch campus but also a great variety of overseas partnerships. Gore, in a similarly broad-brush approach, suggests three categories of overseas engagement for universities: global network, focused network and global product (Gore, 2012).

Institution	% Non EU	% OS income to total	% market share OS 1st Y sts	Int st factor	Mission	Cluster	Group
Western	8.8	6.25	0.8	0.10184	1	3	W
Central	10.2	6.56	1.9	0.82384	1	3	W
Northern	8.5	4.8	1.3	0.20676	1	3	W
Eastern	11.5	8.98	2.3	1.373	1	3	W

After Ayoubi and Massoud (Ayoubi and Massoud, 2007) - 2001 comparison

	Ayoubi and Massoud	Knight	Gore
Western	Winner	Classic	na
Central	Winner	Classic	na
Northern	Winner	Co-founded	Focussed network / Global product
Eastern	Winner	Satellite	Focussed network

(Ayoubi and Massoud, 2007; Gore, 2012; Knight, 2015)

The case study approach to internationalization is expanded to a comparative study of two institutions in Indonesia and Australia by Marginson and Sawir (2006). They used structured interviews with internationally-focused staff to examine the differences and similarities between the strategies used by both. No theoretical analysis is proposed but in discussing the capacity of the university to engage in international activities and the developmental strategies, the study considers many of the same issues as a dynamic capabilities approach would do stressing issues of capacity and the need to grow it whereby they mean the ability to receive contain and produce activities related to internationalization. They also stress that the strategic nature of much of the activity is questionable as the policies seem to be concerned with for example more is better for mobility rather than a balancing of priorities and actions (Marginson and Sawir, 2006).

Modes and models

Our take on things is that in this current 'global' era in which universities find themselves, we are witnessing the emergence of: (i) new logics; (ii) new models to organize and communicate internationalization processes, and (iii) new mechanisms and practices, all of which are reshaping the nature of universities, their associated global footprints, the sectors in which they operate, and the relationship between the sector and economic growth more generally. (Olds and Robertson, 2014, p 8)

Shirley (1983), building on the influential work of Vancil and Lorange (1975), identifies four layers of strategy for universities: programme level functional strategies, programme strategies, campus-wide functional strategies and institutional strategies. He suggests the use of the term Strategic Academic Unit to replace the widely used Strategic Business Unit (SBU) in the corporate literature. Ultimately, these analyses have lacked a strong theoretical base to their analysis and therefore are more attempts at typology building than a deeper sense-making.

There is a strong tendency in the literature to see strategy in a university as a conflicted issue as the combination of both formal and informal processes with a preponderance of initiatives growing bottom upwards and increasing more or less successful attempts for institutions to strategize by building on these informal processes. This arrangement can also be seen as a blend of two very different management systems. One system of bureaucratic hierarchical processes with a well-organized decision-making structure with the Vice Chancellor at the top; and another of a professional structure with considerable dispersion of authority which also tends to lie with expertise rather than hierarchical position (Hardy, 1991). It is

the interplay between these different systems that is a key characteristic of universities and their approach to internationalization strategies.

The layering of strategies indicates how the different functional divisions of an organization can relate to an overall institutional strategy. Mintzberg (2007) takes this thinking further through an analysis of how the various sub strategies are corralled, or otherwise, into an organizational approach. He plots a continuum of strategic action including: planned, entrepreneurial, ideological, umbrella, process, unconnected, consensus to imposed strategies moving from highly planned to highly reactive. This continuum offers a useful tool for our interest in university strategy allowing us to differentiate university approaches to strategy across a continuum of intention. Intentionality and centrality of strategic intent and action is evidenced in many ways. For example, the Porterian positioning analysis only makes sense for a university in a conceptualization of the university as a unified institution with 'a view' of competition and how to react to it. At the other extreme of the continuum, a professional organization with dispersed authority and motivations will in practice be reacting to a host of different competitive forces which will result in many competing, partially overlapping priorities expressed through local and small scale actions at the smallest unit of analysis of either the individual professor or the department.

Strategic theory applied to universities

In the development of strategic theory there have been many economic and managerial theoretical foundations proposed. One main axis of differentiation in such theoretical grounding is that of the industry organization theory that underpins such work as Porter; the transaction cost theory (TCT) which has been enormously influential and the resource based view (RBV) which has been perhaps the dominant recent influence on strategic thought. Industry organization approaches contrast with the more mechanistic TCT and RBV which are concerned with the mechanisms that direct strategic decision making.

RBV and TCT are appropriate to the analysis of universities because they make no assumptions about the nature or coherence of the organization itself and focus on the smooth running of internal mechanisms which for universities as loosely coupled organizations is of prime importance. In arguments of industry organization and other macro approaches, organizations are assumed to be relatively internally coherent and goal seeking.

Dynamic capabilities in a university context

Butler and Soontiens (2015) have applied the dynamic capabilities approach to universities looking at how competitive advantage is secured for the Australian Curtin University through offshoring.

[They] identify capabilities as building blocks in the process of establishing an intentional strategic net to create benefits for the organization and for the members of its strategic business net. (Butler and Soontiens, 2015, p478)

The authors consider how dynamic capabilities theory has interacted with work on networks both in terms of interacting with networks as established objects and in contributions to the development of such networks. They argue that dynamic capabilities facilitate the transfer of complex knowledge within networks and then to use the net as a way to co-create new resources. This case study chronicles the involvement of Curtin University in an Asian strategic network moving from a fairly ad hoc and reactive strategy of internationalization towards a more intentionally driven strategy. The development of the qualifications authority AUQA (Australian Universities Quality Agency) towards assessment of internationalization activities was an important milestone in the process prompting Curtin to assess its offshore activity and to move away from a passive network role to being the initiator of a strategic net.

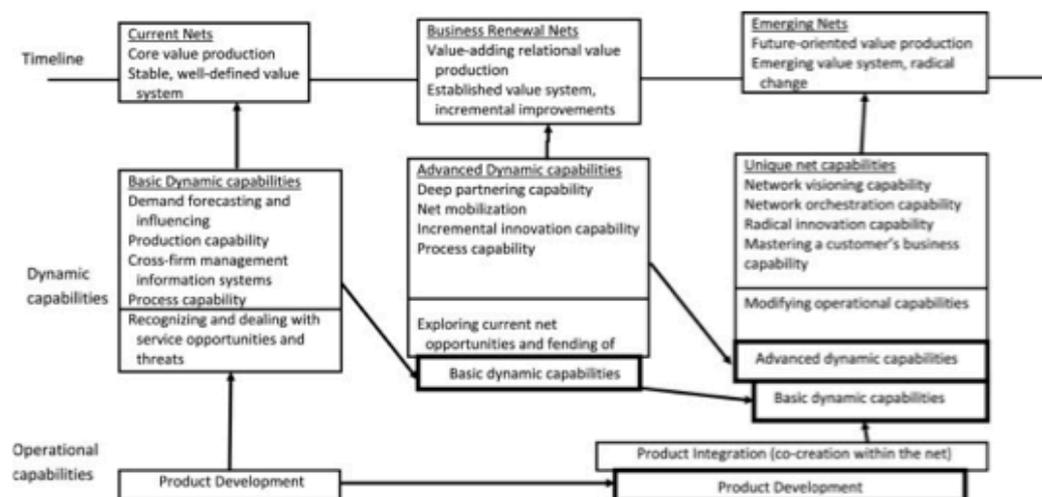


Fig. 1. Net formation – conceptual framework.

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Offshoring of higher education services in strategic nets: A dynamic capabilities perspective

Journal of World Business, Volume 50, Issue 3, 2015, 477–490

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2014.08.001>

Fundamental to understanding Curtin's offshoring operations is the ability of Curtin to tap into a student cohort that would otherwise not be accessible, therefore expanding its market reach. Enrolment trends confirm that a local presence of Curtin operations also creates a higher product and brand awareness and, subsequently, this has led to students flowing towards the Perth campus. In addition, the organizational capability and skill set of its professional and academic staff in delivering programs offshore were developed by implementing a cross-culturally sensitive teaching and learning approach and responding to various cultural and market environments. (Butler and Soontiens, 2015, p 483)

The dynamic capabilities involved are categorized at three levels: basic, advanced and unique. There is a recognition that the development of capabilities is cumulative and that new capabilities emerge in the context of developing the net.

The analytical framework

The nature of universities as loosely coupled organizations makes strategic analysis complex. Elements of rational planning and positioning combine with a large amount of micro-maneuvers of the type referred to by Mintzberg and Rose (Mintzberg and Rose, 2007). To make sense of university strategies it is necessary to consider the types of pervasive motivations that affect all members of the community as well as the institution as a whole. For this reason, the resource-based view is important as it informs analysis at the micro, meso and macro levels of analysis. This analysis can be usefully extended to dynamic capabilities which takes into account the immediacy of 'survival' in a competitive and changing environment such as currently faces the higher education sector and can be informed by TCT which helps focus on processes and the efficient coordination of universities as complex organizations.

RBT provides the foundation for my analytical framework. The theory helps answer the questions *why* and *what*. The need to secure vital resources to sustain the mission of the university is the motivation, according to RBT, behind all strategic enterprise (Hamel and Prahalad, 1994). Therefore, the first step in the analysis is to decide what resources, according to the expert practitioners are vital for the university's sustainability. According to RBT, not all resources are of equal importance in securing sustainable advantage and it is rare and important resource that is of most importance to organizations as they will need to ensure access to sufficient quantities often facing stiff competition in the process. This study therefore draws on an accepted methodology, the VRIN approach (Pan et al., 2007), for drawing up a list of such highly prioritized resources. Often, resources are use-specific and therefore are not internally tradeable for other uses – this infers the need for a range of resources and therefore a complex strategic approach to secure access to this range. This is clearly the case for universities which seek the best staff and students and a range of revenue sources to fund research, investment and operational costs. The first stage in my analytical framework is therefore to identify all possible resource types and to use contextual information from the interviews and published materials as well as my knowledge of the sector to shortlist these to the resources that are of the most importance to the universities in this study.

Having identified a set of prioritized resources, according to RBT we can assume that the conscious or unconscious behavior of those who create and implement strategy will be essentially resource-seeking. This leads to the dynamic dimension of the analytical framework which is directed at the *how* of strategy formation. The dynamic capabilities approach allows this active element to the creation and implementation of resource-seeking routines (Teece et al., 1997). The capability element is about building organizational capacity to be successful in the long term in securing the needed resources. The interviews in this study are designed to focus on both the near and longer term approaches to resource capture and to understand the techniques used and priorities expressed of the practitioners in the field towards the development and usage of such tools. In order to do this, the corpus is analyzed into a number of categories including references to resource types, and references to mechanisms of resource capture. The frequency, order and duration of explanation around the resource capture mechanisms allows the framework to judge what dynamic capabilities are being developed and where the priorities lie according to the practitioners. This analysis then allows for an assessment of how closely the resources needed and capabilities developed match and therefore whether there are indications of any possible mismatches between strategic priority and strategic attention. Furthermore, the corpus and framework also allows for an assessment of what is driving the differences in strategic approach between universities that are superficially similar. In other words, what is distinctive about each approach and how this has arisen. The framework in this respect is more indicative than conclusive and indicates possible reasons for distinctiveness that would productively be tested by further studies.

Conclusion

Professor Brown is now satisfied that she has a suitable framework within which to situate the international strategy that she hopes to create for her university and as a means of understanding and comparing the approaches of her peers in similar universities. The next step is for her to consult her peers on their goals and priorities bearing in mind the analytical framework she plans to use so that she can draw conclusions about the appropriacy and coherence of these strategies with the resources the universities need and ultimately with the mission they aim to fulfill.

Chapter 5: Methodology

Introduction

This study looks at university international strategies through the eyes of experienced practitioners and attempts to make sense of the way universities construct and implement their strategic international activity. The purpose of this thesis is to understand what universities are trying to achieve through their international strategies, what drives their choices and how they go about achieving their objectives. The study focuses on four similar research-intensive universities that despite similar circumstances have very distinctive approaches to international work. The diversity of approach suggests underlying factors that are important to strategic action but nevertheless are difficult to perceive. This study seeks to throw light on these factors as a way of understanding strategic choice and thus helping universities refine their own approaches to international strategy creation and implementation.

The research design is a primarily qualitative analysis of the accounts of experienced professionals who are themselves involved in or leading the implementation of their university's international strategies supported by an analysis of published data and the explicit strategy documents available publicly. This analysis aims to make sense of international strategy in universities through the eyes of the protagonists, using a combination of resource based theory and dynamic capabilities theory as the main tools for this analysis. The study also makes reference to transaction costs theory. Through a semi-structured interview process, respondents are given the opportunity to describe the way their university's strategy is conceived and enacted. The principles of tacit or private knowledge informed this process with the aim of accessing the maximum possible deeply held sets of knowledge and experience of the respondents by lowering affective barriers. The semi-structured format allows respondents considerable freedom to describe their strategic work in the context of common framing questions. In this way, it was expected that the analysis should be able to surface the key resources that each protagonist considers vital for the international strategy and the ways that each respondent go about acquiring these resources. This analysis involves both qualitative analysis of the speech acts in their context and a quantitative assessment of how these are prioritised and what importance is given to the various components of the discourses.

In this chapter, I will first set the research project in the context of my own career and research path indicating how this has influenced the aims and methods of my inquiry. I will then introduce a brief overview of the development of ontological and epistemological approaches within the social sciences and how I understand the knowledge project. Having set the study in an ontological and epistemological context I will then discuss the research design and how this has evolved. During this discussion I will provide an account of the process over time, the problems and challenges I have faced and how I have dealt with these throughout the project.

This project has been quite ambitious as there are very few published accounts of strategic theory being applied to universities. The challenges of building an appropriate research methodology that encompass the very particular organisational form of universities have been quite considerable and I offer this study as a contribution to the literature in the spirit of developing a better documented analysis of strategy in universities. The project has required me to face many struggles personally and therefore has been an important learning experience both in terms of its content but also in terms of being able to understand and apply an appropriate epistemological framework to the enquiry.

Background to research project

The approach is that of a theory-informed practitioner. The origins of this research project lie in my own career trajectory. After my first degree in archaeological sciences, I volunteered as a teacher in Sudan and discovered a love for education. This led me to join the British Council where I spent 20 years working in Cairo, Hong Kong, Singapore, Dubai, Amman and Delhi. Early on in my work with the Council, I was involved in pioneering work by British Universities in distance learning helping set up programmes in Hong Kong, Singapore and Dubai and over time became responsible for the representation of all types of British higher education in the countries I worked in. As Director of the British Council in Dubai, I led the work that established the concept and initial funding for the British University in Dubai. In India, I led a £26M project to establish substantial and mutually beneficial programmes between British and Indian universities. In my role I found that I was increasingly involved in giving strategic advice to universities developing their international strategies without ever having worked within a university myself. Over this period, I had become fascinated by universities as organisational forms that are hard to define but have been essential and relatively stable parts of the social fabric for well over a millennium. My interest in strategy developed in childhood where at an early age I became deeply interested in military history and engaged extensively and seriously in a range of strategic games. I was able to develop the theoretical grounding for strategy throughout my MBA with the University of Durham which had emphases on strategy and international marketing. Gradually, these two passions combined into an interest in how universities create and enact strategy given their own complex and ambiguous organisational forms and I started experimenting with how corporate strategy could be applied to the world of universities. I have always been active in the professional sectors I work in and give a large number of talks, run workshops and organise fora relevant to these sectors. I started integrating my thinking into these fora and trying out ideas on colleagues.

In this work, two things became clear to me firstly that I wanted to deepen the theoretical grounding for my thinking and secondly that I needed to work within universities to really understand how they work in practice. The DBA at Bath seemed the right programme with its informed practitioner approach and its wide variety of professional participants. Soon after starting the DBA I

joined the University of Greenwich with the mission to create an India Centre for the University. After the smoothly oiled bureaucratic processes that the British Council operates, a strategic role within a university came as a shock. In my new role I was given a mandate but no staff, no formal authority, no budget, an academic position within a school that did not welcome the development and no position within any of the decision making structures within the university. Nevertheless, there were great opportunities and gradually I built the Centre for Indian Business and at the same time lectured on international business building my competence in the strategies of internationalisation at the same time. The work on the India Centre led to a Times Higher Education prize for best international strategy which reassured me that I was on the right lines despite the dysfunctional nature of the structures I worked within.

During the DBA I have changed my job three times and changed country twice. During this time the nature of my project developed alongside my professional role. I knew I wanted to understand how strategy is created and enacted within universities. My background in mathematics and natural sciences and my interest in strategy gave me a preference for normative and realist approaches and it was here that I started trying to apply corporate strategic theory such as Porter's industrial organisation theory to universities. The DBA allowed me to deepen my knowledge of theoretical approaches and to work on building analytical models developed in the corporate strategy literature that could work within the world of universities. The final stage of the taught phase of the DBA was the research methods module. Having flown through the previous three assignments I found the fourth assignment the most challenging but also the most fascinating module. I spent a year absorbing the ontological and epistemological foundations of knowledge and struggled with adapting my world view to clearly understanding the positioning of constructivism and how its precepts work within the social sciences. I had particular difficulty with how constructivism is often used to justify what I considered to be loose epistemological foundations and how extreme forms of constructivism could conceptually lead into relativism which I found unacceptable. As for many before me Popper's falsifiability and David Deutsch's philosophical analysis of the development of methods of inquiry helped guide me through.

Finally, I introduce a fictional character, Professor Brown, as an incoming Pro-Vice-Chancellor to a UK research-intensive university. The device of Professor Brown allowed me to alternate between a subjective and reflexive mode of self-aware researcher to an inter-subjective mode of purposeful research activity seen through eyes that are not mine but rather those of a central actor in the processes I seek to understand. The character also allows me to maintain a particular human focus to the study situating it within social processes that are both complex and very human in nature and brings coherence to the complete work.

Professor Brown, after assessing the challenges and opportunities in the global landscape of higher education, studies the strategic literature in search of a theoretical tool that will both help her make sense of strategy and help

her chart a path for the future. The empirical part of the study is a set of in-depth conversations with peers in her network looking at how they lead or contribute to their own university's international strategy, framing the conversation around what is distinctive about the approach and how they understand both the why and the how of their own strategic approach. The peers are all highly experienced international professionals with most of them having decades of experience in the sector themselves. Professor Brown hopes to be able to use the theoretical framework she has selected, a combination of resource based view and dynamic capabilities, to make sense of these conversations in terms of each university's international strategy creation and implementation.

Research questions

The interviews were semi-structured around a framework of core questions as follows:

How do the international teams within universities create and guide international strategies?

- What are their priorities?
- What challenges need to be addressed and how?
- What distinguishes each university's strategy?
- Why do the strategic approaches of each university differ?

Operationalised research questions

Who is involved in the creation of international strategy?

What mechanisms and fora exist to plan, debate, craft, interrogate and evaluate international strategy?

What are the goals and values of the university and how do they guide strategy formulation?

What metrics are used to measure success?

How are resources secured?

How do universities leverage available resources to develop an overseas engagement strategy?

What constraints on action exist and how are these dealt with?

How do perceptions of negative and positive risk affect these?

What strategic models are developed?

This chapter looks at the theoretical framework and the appropriate research methodology that needs to be set up to investigate these research questions. It also has a number of inter-related issues:

How do our current theories of knowledge inform the theoretical framework for this investigation?

What is the appropriate methodology that is to be built from the theoretical framework for addressing the issues above?

How does this methodology translate into research design?

How do we ensure quality in this research project?

Research methodology - historical approaches

In this section I consider the evolution of epistemological approaches and situate this project within this evolution of thought and enquiry.

We can view the epistemological mission as benevolent: to increase the stock, strength and detail of our most reasonable beliefs by providing them with the strongest foundation of justification possible and perhaps to open up new ways of knowing. (Bartley 2009)

What is the nature of the type of knowledge we are seeking on international strategies in universities? Setting the enquiry as one within the social sciences already raises expectations about the nature of the enquiry, the methodological approaches we will use and the philosophy underlying these. However, it is important not to leave these expectations unquestioned and to ensure in this and any comparable study that we have situated it within an ontological and epistemological context. In fact, I question many assumptions about social science that attempt to set it apart from the natural sciences in epistemological underpinnings. I argue that both share a common and highly polished approach to enquiry.

Epistemology in the West grew up through two philosophical traditions: the analytical and the continental schools of thought. The analytical school developed the strict empirical principles that became positivism. Empiricism is an approach that the only beliefs that can qualify as knowledge are those justified by observation. The continental tradition, which is also closer to Eastern conceptions of philosophy, maintained a grand view of philosophy emanating from ontology and dealing with grand multidimensional themes. The analytic tradition developed a more discreet, atomistic approach where epistemology was central and the traditions of empiricism and reliabilism were closely integrated. As part of this tradition, the influential Vienna School developed logical positivism that was to dominate scientific thought for the decades to come. Logical positivism combined an empirical approach with mathematical logic and a study of the methods of the natural sciences. Its concern with quantitative methods stretches back into Western history in particular: “...*statistical laws were found in social data in the West, where libertarian, individualistic and atomistic conceptions of the person and the state were rampant. This did not happen in the East where collectivist and holistic attitudes were more prevalent...*” (Hacking 1990, p 126).

The logical positivists employed the principle of verifiability that any meaningful statement about the world can be verified by experience. All types of statistical methods including probability theory were adopted by the positivists (Kusch 2002; Rosenberg 2006; Jones 2009). Their position was essentially confirmatory and a theory was largely seen as a useful summary or short form of natural processes and predictor of experience rather than an actual description of those processes (Cook 1979). In other words, predictability became a more important principle to the positivists than

explanation. Logical positivism became strongly associated with modernism and with the science project. Logical positivism was strongly entrenched in the natural sciences at the time that the social sciences started their development. It was natural that many tried to apply the fashionable principles of logical positivism into social science research.

However, the two divergent traditions were also associated with different ontological positions both developing out of Enlightenment thinking but leading in very different directions. The Enlightenment brought to us the sense of progress through enquiry. The crucial difference was the concept of fallibilism that infused the British Enlightenment. In the continental tradition we are moving towards perfection. In the British or more broadly Western tradition we will follow Xeno's steps in always improving our stock of knowledge but never achieving perfection. This ontology, perhaps rather conversely, although it spawned a dead-end in logical positivism, enabled the crucial step in enquiry that Popper took of unlimited questioning (Deutsch 2011).

Two cultures

The social sciences grew up post-enlightenment as a part of a new concern for the welfare of the citizen within their state. Francis Bacon, according to Fuller, saw the application of natural sciences theories and methods to social phenomenon. But Comte went further seeing the development of a study of methodology or philosophy of science in the natural sciences as a second order activity enabled by the progress of science and exportable into the context of social sciences (Fuller 2007).

Within this quest for knowledge, the social sciences seemed to be dealing with a double layer of complexity in their study of conscious beings. This led to CP Snow's 'two cultures' (and later Kagan's 'three cultures') where there was seen to be different rules of the game in aims and implementation of the two types of research. Very often researchers are tempted to characterize these two cultures as 'positivist' and 'constructivist' or 'postmodern'. Kagan himself argues that the three 'cultures' differ not only in their primary interests, primary sources of evidence and vocabulary, but also in the influence of historical conditions, ethical influences, dependence on outside support, work conditions, contribution to the national economy and criteria for beauty (Kagan 2009). Part of the concept of separate research cultures comes from well-trodden paths in methodology. If a particular methodological approach treads a path that many follow we can perhaps give it some credence? We could make a Kuhnsian case for the development of methodologies in fits and spurts.

It is clear that there are cultural differences that make up part of the constellation of distortions and influences that we need to take into account in any thorough investigation. However, these cultural differences exist not only between the main two or three disciplines but also between the various sub-cultures within these disciplines as Knorr Cetina shows us (Knorr Cetina 1999). The methods of enquiry used for each sub-culture are therefore taking

epistemological positions within a broadly agreed epistemological tradition and ontology. The holistic sense of enquiry needs to be fully aware of this epistemological positioning and the way that this throws light and shadows on its subjects of investigation. Newer 'postmodern' traditions such as realism fully embrace the wider issues in their scientific approach. However, all of the cultures have grown up with the same influences and it makes no sense to claim that natural scientists against social scientists are operating different epistemologies - "the "natural" and "social" sciences are mutually alienated sides of a holistic sense of enquiry" (Fuller 2002 p xiv).

I situate this study within this understanding of broadly agreed epistemological and ontological positioning which accepts that science and social science share an ontology and a similar philosophical basis to their methods of enquiry.

Constructivism and its limits

Much of the supposed divide between the natural and social sciences centres around views on the social construction of knowledge. It is often taken for granted that social sciences will necessarily involve constructivist methodologies which assume that knowledge is at least partly socially constructed. The essential ontological position that evolved with positivism was objectivist and reductionist. Constructivism supplied an opposing ontological position where social phenomena were seen as realities constructed and constantly renewed by their actors. Positivism moved from the natural sciences into the social sciences. Constructivism grew up in some ways as resistance to this philosophical occupation and it became the dominant influence in social sciences at which point it started to counter-attack into the territory of the natural sciences aided by the ground broken by Thomas Kuhn and others (Jones 2009 p 10).

It is important to bear in mind that we are talking about relative ontological positions and it would be hard to make the case that these are completely separate ontologies. Most natural scientists today accept the concept of theory-ladenness as part of the make-up of their approach to knowledge. The constructivist is not saying anything different but highlighting the importance of the 'theory-ladenness of facts' to our interpretation of meaning. It is a question of emphasis. Only at the extremes is it possible to make a case for different ontologies – science would maintain generally that although we have imperfect and to a certain extent constructed versions of reality – there is a 'fact of the matter' to be investigated. The hardened constructivist, as in some forms of naturalism for example, would claim that there is no external reality and all knowledge is contingent on human constructs but this position at the extreme is rare and subject to frequent effective attack. Thinkers such as Boghossian (Boghossian, 2006) doubt that we would easily find an actual competing epistemology that produces consistent and impressive results.

However, constructivism has forced us to confront our fallibility across many dimensions: cognitive, social, and political. It has forced us to situate our enquiry in a human context that is not effectively isolated from that we are

studying, especially in the social sciences but also in the natural sciences. And it has forced us to back away from seeing empirical observation as the unquestionable foundation for science. Finally, constructivism has also opened up the area of epistemology explored by Polanyi (1983) and others of tacit or private knowledge.

This study rejects this 'hardened constructivism' but accepts that constructivism as an epistemological approach has greatly enhanced the social sciences through its understanding of the human element in construction of knowledge.

Postmodernism

Social sciences research is often set within a 'postmodern' context where postmodernism is interpreted as a philosophical position in opposition to positivism. 'Modernism' was the movement in the social sciences that sought to emulate the scientific method in its objectivity and search for general patterns. 'Postmodernism', therefore is all that challenges that positivistic programme. Postmodernism embraces the plurality of experience, argues against the reliance on general 'laws' of human behaviour, and situates all social, cultural, and historical knowledge in the contexts shaped by gender, race and class (Angrosino 2007 p 13). *"Postmodernism differs fundamentally from modernism in its approach to defining truth and knowledge. Postmodernism rejects the notion that truth and knowledge are to be found through rational thought or method. Whereas modernism values the external, postmodernism values the internal or 'I' and puts greater emphasis on human-centred approaches"* (Webster and Mertova 2007 p,29).

Many authors stress the 'postmodern' approach to qualitative research where the interview is seen as a 'construction site of knowledge' and where the 'certainty of knowledge is less a matter of interaction with a non-human reality than a matter of conversation between persons' (Kvale 2007). This approach is seen as the key means to open the gateway to the private, contextualised and local world of the interviewee. It is very difficult in practice to draw a line between modern and postmodern. One would not be possible without the other. It may be possible to understand postmodern as a mode of thought whereby all the lessons of modernism have been learnt and having been thoroughly ingested it is now possible to poke fun at the strictures of this mode while still working within its traditions.

So if the postmodern movement can be claimed to have existed at all we can see its influence on the spirit and method of enquiry as beneficial. It has brought humanity back into focus to the betterment of both natural and social sciences and has enabled a more self-critical reflection on the nature of inquiry and the influences on it, as well as paving the way for various emancipatory and critical approaches. In all cases, we approach the enquiry using scientific methods by forming working hypotheses that seem to best explain the facts under observation and subject these to creative destruction by testing other contesting explanations empirically – be it by observation, 'objective' interview or subjective interaction. In the first two we will take the

basic epistemological position that we can separate subject and object and minimise the influence of the latter on the former. In the third, we abandon this 'pretence' and fully integrate or even take advantage from the relation of observer with observed.

This study does not take a 'post-modern' position and has for example no direct emancipatory purpose although the lessons of post-modernism on critical perspectives inform the general epistemological approach to this enquiry.

The scientific method renewed

Logical positivism has been largely discredited particularly through the demise of confirmationist approaches. Competing theories were irrelevant to confirmationists whereas for the followers of Popper (1959), the falsificationists, this competition between rival views moves central stage and is not only the decider of which theory remains undefeated but also a necessity in itself for an approach to be seen as 'scientific' that it or rival theories can be falsified (Cook 1979). Popper's work proposes the testing of causal inferences stressing the need to find and evaluate other possible causal propositions. Popper claimed that the point of science wasn't to amass positive evidence but to design scientific experiments that have the potential to falsify any given theory and thus move our understanding forward in a creative destruction sense. There is a widespread agreement that science cannot be confirmatory but must instead concern itself with falsification, thus logical positivism has been largely superseded by Popperian approaches to knowledge in the natural sciences as it has in the social sciences (Cook 1979).

There are also misconceptions around the general approach of science. Many take it to be essentially inductive and confirmatory. In other words, general principles are induced from patterns of specific cases and in this way hypotheses are 'confirmed' or rejected along the nature of 'it has been scientifically proven that....' "Inductivism is observation- and prediction-based, whereas in reality, science is problem and explanation based. Inductivism supposes that all theories are somehow extracted or distilled from observations, or are justified by them, whereas in fact theories begin as unjustified conjectures in someone's mind which typically precede the observation that rules out rival theories" (Deutsch 1997 p 69).



The course of scientific discovery (Deutsch 1997 p 65)

There have been many attempts to fix and catalogue approaches to science but these have largely failed. Popper developed the currently dominant epistemological approach to science which insists that statements can never be proved as there is always the possibility of a better explanation in the

future but that rival potential explanations should be tested with a view to falsifying the weaker claims so that the strongest explanation is the one used (Popper 1959). Similarly, in methodology, we can never say “this is the most appropriate methodology” as an improvement can always be made.

Jones sees these philosophical traditions behind constructivism and post-positivism as ultimately complementary and ‘both camps have methods, trajectories and emphasis that can be honoured and incorporated into a synthesis’ (Jones 2009). The essence of Popper’s approach to science was to encourage generation of competing theories so that the robustness of a claimant theory could be tested. Indeed, in Bryman’s well-read textbook, he similarly claims that constructivist approaches generate theories but gives a counter-example where a piece of constructivist research is used to test what he calls ‘a kind of proxy for theory’ (Bryman 2008 p 23). In reality what is happening here is that different orientations are entering an iterative and complex problem solving process at different starting points and with varying foci, but all rigorous approaches to research involve similar processes that may be more or less overt including both theory generation and verification. The basic problem solving approach can contain various levels of iterations and reformulations as the main problem solving process involves sub-problems or as the problem-solving process pursues dead-ends. Deduction and induction both play their part in this problem solving enterprise. This study undertakes to follow this approach to generating an enquiring and problem solving approach.

Critical realism

The realist approach to science is an approach that has addressed many of the criticisms levelled at positivism. It is also a more human approach conceptualising the scientific endeavour as a craft to be honed, acknowledging the complexity of influences and prioritising explanation over predictability. Realism does believe that there is an independent reality but also acknowledges the ‘theory-ladenness’ of facts from the historical and social roots of the method of inquiry. The approach tries to isolate ‘generative mechanisms’ which are the particular arrangements and actions which produce results and may not be directly observable. Realism also moves away from empiricism in that it stresses the primary role of the theory rather than that of the observation in science (Robson 2002; Bhaskar 2008).

Critical realism has been proposed in this chapter as a way forward, acknowledging that positivism has been discredited but avoiding the divorce from science implied by a thoroughgoing relativist approach. It seeks to achieve a détente between the different paradigms of a post-positivist approach within the empirical tradition on the one hand and less thoroughgoing versions of relativism found in some constructionist approaches on the other (Robson 2002 p 42).

Robson also points out that critical realism chimes well with how physical scientists actually conduct research. Critical realism has been helpful in guiding me towards an epistemological approach that marries the lessons of

constructivism with those of the evolved scientific approach as outlined above. It has been further useful in suggesting the existence of underlying generative mechanisms that may or may not be visible but influence the behaviours observed. It seems to me that the Resource Based Theory discussed below provides just such a 'generative mechanism' in the way that resources are seen to influence behaviour and therefore I bear in mind critical realism during the design of this project.

Private and social knowledge

Piaget, through his genetic epistemology, and others made appeals to biological analogies of the way organisms interact with their environment using valid knowledge to their advantage. Autopoietic approaches to epistemology have taken this further and use the analogies of cells as self-contained living entities that follow their inbuilt programmed path of development responding only partially to data received from outside and never able to import into their systems whole pieces of 'knowledge'. This is a biological constructivist approach which is a very helpful metaphor for our understanding of knowledge sharing that reinforces Polanyi's claims that much of the knowledge is private (Polanyi 1983; Krogh Roos and Kleine 1998).

"Even within the domain of science with its modernist objectivist viewpoint, science philosophers as far back as Polanyi (1964) insist that human knowledge is personal knowledge or personal knowing and that scientific knowledge is not purely objective and exhaustibly verifiable;" (Webster and Mertova 2007, p 29) The concept of private knowledge and the difficulty of effectively accessing deeply held or tacit knowledge is a crucial contribution to my research approach. This project designed the interview situations with the minimum of affective barriers and the maximum opportunity for the interviewees to follow their own trains of thought through the loosely structured questions.

Strategy Research

Strategy is a relatively new field of study and hence not as well established as some of its social sciences cousins. This leads some following Kuhn to suggest that the body of knowledge associated with the field is not yet coherently defined and that the subsequent set of outstanding questions are not yet well defined (Ketchen, Boyd et al. 2008). Zan further explores this development (Zan 1990).

Others suggest that case studies are optimal instruments of enquiry at the early stage of enquiry into a new discipline as their exploratory and post-facto theorisation nature help bring out a large range of relevant issues which help define a coherent question set for the discipline and also have a pragmatic nature (Gibbert, Ruigrok et al. 2008). This study is a combination of case study and broader enquiry with its in-depth analysis of four universities.

Probably the dominant influence in strategy research is the Resource-Based View (RBV) also known as Resource-Based Theory (RBT). This viewpoint makes the case that success depends on the ability to marshal distinctive resources in any given competitive situation. In itself RBV is not a methodology and has no epistemological assumptions but it is generally applied through a statistically oriented methodology and taken to have a basically realist ontology (Holcomb, Holmes Jr et al. 2009; Meyer, Wright et al. 2009). Meyer et al examine the role of managers in resource productivity and conclude that the relationship is most positively correlated with weaker resource sets. Holcomb et al (2009) uses RBV to assess the role of owned and sought knowledge in foreign entry strategies – an area of great relevance to universities.

While RBV is useful in isolating the ability of superior resources to allow a university to perform better it is not the only criterion. He engages the work of competitive dynamics research to look at the performance related actions of firms but stresses that this literature does not usually make an effective link to how resources can be best employed. Some researchers have added a competitive dynamics approach to RBV to correct this imbalance. This approach analyses the actions taken by players to leverage their resources (*Kunc and Morecroft (2010); Ndofor, Sirmon et al. (2011); Morgan, Vorhies et al (2009)*). As an example, Morgan et al look at a firm's marketing orientation, a 'know what' competency, using a RBV and then analyse the ability to competitively deploy this in various markets (the 'know how') using a dynamic capabilities approach.

Various constructivist approaches have also been deployed in this arena (Raza and Andrew 2000). They make the case that the 'enacted' reality of management is a third type of reality between perceived and actual and this is an arena of vital concern to management theory. Be that as it may, they also claim that constructivism has an ontological realism but not epistemological relativism (Mir and Watson 2000).

Summary of ontological and epistemological positioning

This study positions its work within an updated and comprehensive spirit of inquiry that has developed out of Karl Popper's work on falsifiability coupled with continuing attention to a method of inquiry that develops explanation in transparent and contestable forms while consciously taking into account the viewpoint and influence of the observer on the observed. This assumes a similar ontological realism underpinning an epistemological approach which understands and works within human fallibility to produce ever better but never perfect explanations. The research design therefore needs to lead from evidence to explanation in a coherent, transparent and contestable way.

This is achieved by producing a corpus of evidence through semi-structured interviews and then viewing the entire corpus through the lens of appropriate theory developing a coherent explanation of how strategy creation and implementation works in this sample of four institutions. The explanation takes all of the corpus and everything expressed during the interviews is analysed

and finds its place within a coherent explanatory framework. The process, transcription and evaluation is transparent and context-rich so that the analysis can be understood and critiqued.

The research context

The study applies a theoretical perspective to the accounts of expert practitioners in the subject universities and through the ways the universities describe their own approach in public materials. This analysis will also throw some light on what aspects of their strategies produce a distinctive approach that is hard to imitate and thus a source of competitiveness.

The study considers four universities that share many aspects of their nature. They are all metropolitan UK universities situated outside London, they all belong to the Russell Group of research-intensive universities and are all within the public higher education system of England and Wales that shares systems of student finance, undergraduate recruitment, government grants and support and all award degrees subject to common regulatory frameworks. They all conduct research financed for the most part with government grants and European funding accessed through competitive bidding. All are subject to public scrutiny through governance systems and freedom of information legislation.

Under such a shared framework, arguments of organisational isomorphism could be made that they should approach their international work for similar reasons and in similar ways. Yet this does not seem to be the case. Each university expresses their international mission in different ways and executes it in distinct ways. This study attempts to make sense of this reality.

It is generally acknowledged that most UK universities did not engage in highly strategic international work until the last two decades. I am not concerned with the origins of strategy in international work as the generation of staff involved in the early stages of such work in the universities under study have now moved on and the traces and rationales are less evident although two of my interviewees have witnessed this transformation and others comment on it. Instead I am interested in the recent and current planning and implementation of these universities' international strategies. This study is about how strategy is being re-sensed, re-interpreted and re-created in real time.

Strategy is driven by purpose and goals and can be defined as the planning and operationalisation of ways to reach a goal or set of goals. We also need to take into account non-rational interpretations of strategy which admit an iterative and often syncopated approach to strategy as a series of rational and planned responses to unforeseen or uncontrolled events within an overall framework of bounded rationality. The strategic responses of these universities seem to differ considerably from each other and I am trying to make sense of why and how these differences come about.

Development of the theoretical base for analysis

Strategies exist in the context of their operating environment and are attempts to optimise the university's outcomes in the light of the opportunities and threats they perceive and the strengths and weaknesses they have within their institutions. At this stage we are starting to deal with different strings of management and strategic theory. Schools of thought use different perspectives to make sense of strategy and, as discussed above, the resource based view (RBV) is one of the key underpinnings of such analysis appearing in or influencing a great variety of different schools of thought. RBV conceptualises organisations as resource seeking and resource dependent. This impacts on perceived behaviour in a number of ways; organisations position themselves within reach of key resources, compete with each other for access to these resources and become dependent on certain routines and practices that have in the past delivered resources. In this way, RBV has been influential on strategic thinking as diverse as Porter's work on competitive positioning and Christensen's work on disruptive innovation (Christensen, 2000; Porter, 2008). In the highly challenging global environment facing the higher education space and with the recent waves of innovative change that threaten to disrupt the sector, this thinking is a highly appropriate lens through which to view the current development of international strategies.

At this point, universities and corporations diverge in their motivations. The basic unit of analysis for corporations is almost always a financial one, whether this is expressed as a short term goal to generate returns for shareholders or as a longer term one building their position to guarantee future revenues. Universities exist in the same world as corporations and also have need of finance, but their basic unit of analysis is usually not a financial one but something less substantial to do with the basic function of universities as producers and distributors of knowledge. This unit has sometimes been expressed as reputation which allows universities to attract the best students and staff and access the maximum research funding. Whatever the basic currency, the result is similar - a basic orientation towards the capture and retention of resources with all the positioning, competitive and dependency implications. And so this lens is one crucial perspective to understand universities' actions. Using RBV and expert accounts, this study aims to identify what expert practitioners see as the core resources for universities and how this can fuel strategic action.

A complementary and related perspective is one of competencies and in particular of dynamic capabilities. Competencies can be defined as bundles of assets that allow organizations to gather and use resources which in turn fuels the generation of new competencies. So, although RBV is still a crucial part of this perspective, the combination and mobilisation of resources creates a dynamic and evolving version of RBV. Out of a conception of the competencies framework evolved the dynamic capabilities approach on the claim that a capability goes beyond a competency in its ability to action the underlying resource bundle. At any point in time a university will have a limited set of capabilities and therefore will be constrained in its action because of

this. Capabilities come in many forms and in the case of universities are largely people related - world class academics and researchers, strong marketing teams, and effective leadership. Again, this study will aim to identify what expert practitioners conceptualise as the key capabilities of their universities. However, bearing in mind that they may not be consciously aware of these if they are not familiar with capabilities theory, the interviews aimed to access tacit knowledge of processes, concerns and general thematic goals to be able to deduce from these the dynamic capabilities that reasonably explain the projected strategic course for the universities.

We can thus hope to understand the choices universities make in terms of the resources they seek, the capabilities they have or hope to develop and the impact of the constraints and opportunities the environment offers. Finally, the understanding of how a university marshals its capabilities and acts to leverage opportunities at the strategic level is influenced by the nature of the organisation and its ability to act in unison with the implications for leadership and organisation.

In this way we can examine the international strategy of a university through a set of closely linked lenses. The resources that a university considers important and how these are defined; the capabilities that a University considers it has or would like to develop; the mechanisms to develop its international engagement and the ability of the organisation to act in concert as a strategic response to the opportunities and challenges of its environment.

Research design and methodology

The research project aims to understand the approach to strategy creation and implementation in the four universities under study. The study aims to follow the design of critical enquiry outlined on page 62 above that is a modified version of the scientific method as outlined by Deutsch 1997. The study endeavours in this way to access and then interpret that deeply held tacit knowledge of a range of experienced practitioners. The theory generation and critical evaluation of the theory evolved over a period of a few years in the way I have described elsewhere in this chapter as I tested different theoretical approaches to the data and critiqued the results I was getting through interactions with a wide range of professionals in the field.

In order to build a research design, I needed to access experts in the field; develop a structured but freely flowing conversation with them in circumstances that would allow access to their tacit knowledge through low affective barriers and produce a set of recorded interviews which could be analysed. The semi-structured design of the interview was necessary to position each respondent within a similar framework of prompting questions that allowed them to respond freely and follow their own senses of priority and importance around the general themes. At the same time as working to uncover the strategic work of the practitioners I conducted a thorough review of published materials which complemented and triangulated the views of the practitioners.

The analysis phase was iterative in the way suggested by Deutsch's model and through both interactions with peers in workshops and sector events and the application of different strategic theoretical lenses to the data. This led to an interpretation of the data that was coherent and critiqued. Crucially, it is possible to test further the conclusions developed. More details of this process are given below.

Controlling quality in the research design and process

The quality of qualitative research design is usually assessed as a whole as it is difficult to isolate the constituent steps of the research and assure quality in the way one might in a purely quantitative study where such issues as sampling and questionnaire design can be quite well fixed in advance. Strategy research is a relatively recent discipline and therefore one where exploratory, looser research design is likely to better guide the type of research questions this study deals with. This is more in line with a grounded theory approach where both the application of theory and process design evolve together throughout the study (Flick, 2007a).

Interview construction

My main concern was to make sense of the strategies employed by the four universities. Undertaking the DBA helped me to explore approaches to strategy in general and to understand the way that universities have integrated strategic thought into their international strategy. I have spent the last five years approaching the problematic of interpreting university strategy from different strategic viewpoints. I have done this through a variety of different mechanisms but always as a practitioner deeply engaged in the sector of internationalization of higher education and its interpretation.

As I was developing an analysis of strategy as a human construction my approach was to find value in uncovering deeply held tacit knowledge rather than quantifiably treatable data. I therefore needed a methodology that would allow me to explore the opinions and experience of those involved in the construction and implementation of strategy. This suggested semi-structured interviews which according to Bryman (2008), allow access to 'rich detailed answers' which in a quantitative approach would be difficult to analyse and in which the respondents are encouraged to follow their own trains of thought, to ramble or to go off point because this allows me to understand 'what the interviewee sees as relevant and important'. In this way I would be able to enter the interviewees world and understand their priorities and preoccupations (Bryman, 2008, p437).

Sample development

My research process involved many iterative steps. My aim was to bring strategic theory into the analysis of universities' development of their international work.

During my work with the British Council over a twenty-year period I had been responsible for the representation of UK education in the countries I worked in (primarily Hong Kong, Singapore, Dubai, Jordan and India) and over this time I built up considerable familiarity with the work of the universities and the international teams that led them. Of these, I had close contact with a number of universities that seemed to me to have pro-active and interesting international approaches. The four universities in this study were amongst those. In my professional capacity, I met the Vice Chancellors of all four universities and developed relationships with all the international teams. Subsequent to leaving the British Council in 2008, I took an international role with the University of Greenwich and then the University of London. During this time, I built up a peer relationship with those I had known beforehand and took the opportunity to work professionally with them at sector conferences.

As my DBA progressed and I started to hone in on the strategies of universities I sought out universities and international teams where I already had a basis of trust and familiarity with their international work. As I considered the options, the question developing in my mind was how to explain different strategic courses of action undertaken by seemingly similar universities. I therefore decided to concentrate on a set of universities that were quite similar but had demonstrably different international strategies. I contacted a number of universities and received consent from four universities that all shared UK public university status, offered a wide curriculum, were research intensive and were situated outside London. However, it is evident that all four universities have taken very different paths on their internationalization journey. My intention was to leverage my position as a respected peer in the sector in order to gain access to the experience, knowledge and expertise of a group of expert practitioners and was aware of the difficult-to-access tacit knowledge that this approach would hopefully help to reveal. The selection of the universities and the international teams within them became fairly straightforward and I took this element of the work forward in 2012. At this point I had in my mind that I would use a critical realist perspective informed by resource-based view and core competency approach.

This study uses a number of internationalization expert practitioners as witnesses to the motivations and processes at work in developing strategy. It first seeks to understand the world of university internationalization strategy through their voices and this is informed by resource based view theoretical considerations. The study conceptualises strategy as a human process and therefore one that is socially constructed. The inner workings of the strategies examined are therefore a set of human processes and behaviours with all the associated complexity of intent and execution. The expert practitioners have built up their knowledge of this work over their careers and most of them have

a few decades of experience between them. I assume that this knowledge is deeply held and largely tacit and therefore difficult to access and likely to be constrained by such human factors of memory, attention, preference, ego and bias. The intention of the study is to gain access to this experience and expertise as fully as possible. The theoretical lenses of resources and capabilities allow the information to be sorted and categorised. Interpretation is then possible bearing fully in mind the way that each individual has constructed knowledge in their own unique way.

Purposive sampling comes with a need for more openness and flexibility and thus is more likely to be a part of a loose design and is easier to manage, if the researchers are more experienced (Flick, 2007b) p4

Sampling was purposeful as there are a limited number of actors within universities who work on a daily basis with the creation and implementation of strategy. To this end, the study aimed at 'typical cases' and allowed for 'maximal variation' mainly through the different approaches of the various universities (Flick, 2007b). Purposeful sampling, according to Bickman (2016) of a small sample selected for typicality and relative homogeneity gives more confidence that the conclusions are likely to be representative of the population while at the same time the variation experienced in the interviewing also adequately addresses the heterogeneity of the population. They are particularly used in multi-case study type formats such as this study to investigate particular comparisons of approach (Bickman, 2016).

The study aimed to investigate the creation and implementation of international strategy in universities and so I needed a sample of actors central to this activity. Clearly, the directors of international activity are the most central to the study as it is they who live and breathe the strategy in their daily lives. Many universities also have a senior academic who is charged with internationalisation in her or his portfolio – usually this is a pro-vice-chancellor in British universities. Schools and departments also often have a lead-person charged with internationalisation. Within the international directorate there are often senior administrators charged with aspects of international work. And finally, there is the lead person – usually the vice-chancellor for each university – who is more or less engaged in the internationalisation process. It is clear that the nature of the study required purposeful sampling and this would need to involve both the respondents and the universities they worked for.

The first sampling question was which universities to choose. As the primary aim was to understand the creation and implementation of strategy within British Universities in general, any university would be appropriate. However, I wanted also to be able to compare like-with-like and therefore planned to have universities that were in similar circumstances. At the same time, it was evident that superficially similar universities would often display significant differences in their approaches to international work. This suggested that there were underlying mechanisms and motivations that would lead them in different directions and therefore would allow a broader and deeper view of what strategy entailed in the reality of these universities. At the same time, I

needed the buy-in of each university and the openness of each one to publication of their work.

I approached a good number of universities through their international offices. Some of these I knew as peers, some I was introduced to and some I 'cold-called'. Several did not respond or promised responses but never actually did. Others refused, for confidentiality or other reasons. As the conversations with potential universities developed there started to emerge a coherent group of universities to include. As I got approval from the four current subjects of study, it became clear that I had built a sample that achieved two things – similarity and difference. The four universities all shared similar circumstances and missions but exhibited very different approaches to their international work. I was also talking to a fifth university which, as an ex-polytechnic, was quite different in its mission and I decided that it would not be wise to include a third dimension of analysis and closed the sample on the current four.

For the interviewees, I wanted a range of the main actors within each university. The literature suggested working towards theoretical saturation where all the main issues and theoretical constructs receive an adequate airing. I aimed for five or six per institution as an initial target. Bryman (2008) suggests that this should be sufficient without generating an amount of data that would be impossible to analyse in a suitably sensitive manner. (p453-462).

This resulted in transcribed interviews with 12 experts (the full list of those interviewed is given in chapter 3 Analysis) as well as a large number of discussions, one focus group and guided tours of each university. The interviews were transcribed. The majority of the interviews were conducted in 2012. My initial interviews were semi-structured interactions which aimed to understand how international strategies are created in the target universities. The semi-structured format was designed to give a similar framework to each conversation but to allow the respondents the space to elaborate on what they saw as important and, through a trusting environment, to encourage them to be frank and fulsome in their description of the strategy creation they are a leading part of. The space for free expression within the conversations allowed each person to dwell on what they saw as important, challenging or interesting and thus to shine a light on their perceptions of the strategy creation process.

Rigour, reliability and validity

The interpretation of the corpus is as discussed above an epistemological challenge. I agree with Schwandt (2007) that the interpretation process is not necessarily subjective, in the sense that this is 'my' view but must be necessarily intersubjective where I as analyst am situated in a complex web of relationships, beliefs, standpoints, and life *circumstances involving myself and all the actors in this study* (Schwandt *et al.*, 2007). Therefore, establishing the objectivity and truthfulness of the claims and interpretations needs to take account of this context. I take as my starting point for resolving this issue the

work of Guba and Lincoln (Schwandt *et al.*, 2007) and the two ways that they have approached this

What they describe in the chapter are two approaches to thinking about the problem of justifying interpretations. One way they characterize as that of employing trustworthiness criteria, and they describe these criteria as analogs to “scientific” understandings of conventional notions of internal validity (credibility), external validity (transferability), reliability (dependability), and objectivity (neutrality). The second way, they argue, is fundamentally different, and more aligned with assumptions about interpretations as socially constructed undertakings with significant implications for the ways in which we inevitably use those interpretations to continue to go on with one another (as Wittgenstein might have said)—that is, in making sense of or understanding one another and subsequently acting with confidence on those understandings. Thus, they offered a new (and sometimes difficult) language of authenticity criteria—fairness, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, and catalytic authenticity (...) to my way of thinking, although perhaps not to theirs and others, these two ways of approaching the knotty problem of justifying interpretations as credible and truthful are not opposed; in fact, they are complementary p12-13).

Various research methods writers describe ways to counter validity threats in qualitative research. Bickman (2016) lists a number of strategies such as: intensive, long-term involvement; rich data; respondent validation; searching for discrepant evidence and negative cases; triangulation; quasi-statistics and comparison. Credibility, Lincoln and Guba in Schwandt *et al* (2007) argue can be established in a variety of ways such as prolonged engagement, persistent observation, cross-checking, peer de-briefing, negative case analysis and member checks. They also argue that transferability can be affected through dense and descriptive data where the context is made clear and explicit so that the level of transferability can therefore be judged (Bickman, 2016; Schwandt *et al.*, 2007).

I tested credibility in many ways. As a professional in this field, I have worked extensively in the sector with a variety of colleagues from universities in the UK and internationally, doing analyses of different aspects of their strategic approaches and presenting my findings in written papers and conference presentations. I used this experience to cross-check or peer de-brief my developing interpretations and the theoretical framework I was applying to arrive at these interpretations with my peers. I worked with the material in several ways: as key note addresses, as contributions to panel debates and as the core of collaborative workshops that I instigated and led to peers or newer professionals in the field. Following the Karl Popper (Cook, 1979) falsifiability principle and negative case study approach, I invited alternative

interpretation and comment from peers and audiences during these professional and academic interactions and used this feedback to help develop both my interpretation and use of the theoretical frameworks. A list of my main outputs can be found in annexe 2.

I maintained and maintain a prolonged engagement with the majority of my respondents. Some of them I have known for several years and some I met for the first time immediately before the interviews or at the interview. I have kept in touch with the majority of them ever since and meet them fairly often on the professional circuit. I also keep in touch with the University and its progress. This gives me some assurance of the credibility and trustworthiness of the material I have collected and the statements of the respondents.

Transferability was also an important principle. This thesis is designed to interpret a base of evidence in a rigorous and at least partially transferable basis and thus inform practice. The 'thickness' of the description and context thus becomes important. I provide this in various ways. I provide detailed profiles of the nature of the universities in question and situate them within the context of British higher education which I also sketch in relation to the global context. An important principle I have used in the analysis section is to endeavour wherever possible to explain 'in the words' of the respondents using fairly complete verbatim quotes that should allow readers to interpret the surrounding context and thus not only the sentence level meaning but the context in the embedded discourse as well as the relationship to institution and context.

Finally, Lincoln and Guba in Schwandt et al (2007) refer to the importance of the possibility of audit of the processes and results. This I have provided for by archiving complete transcriptions which have been shared with respondents and any corrections invited. All interviewees are traceable and can be asked to review their reports or interpretation of these.

Development of the theoretical framework

As my professional work demonstrates, I have tried to analyse university strategy in many contexts and through different analytical frames. I have written extensively around MOOCs and disruptive innovation and around industrial organisation and competitive forces, as well as more detailed work on partnership creation, transnational education and modes of delivery. During this period, I started to experiment with using an industry organisation theoretical viewpoint combining the work of Porter with the work on Core competencies espoused by such authors as CK Prahalad (Hamel and Prahalad, 1994; Porter, 2008). This was an interesting period and I put together quite a number of papers and presentations on this subject trying out the concepts on expert audiences in workshops and seminars. I found the industrial organisation approach to be helpful in understanding how universities need to be aware of the external environment and to shape their responses in this light but also found the approach faced considerable difficulty. Universities are complex organisations and do not easily fit into concepts of unified coherent goal-seeking business units. The results that

universities show are also difficult to measure in a holistic fashion and the range of objectives that are unquantifiable is quite extensive. I also realised that this theoretical analysis did not seem to fit the data I had collected from various perspectives. Firstly, I realised that the major pre-occupations of the interviewees were not around external forces but were very internally focussed. The major challenges they were facing were internal to each university rather than as a result of facing a strong competitor in one field or another.

That year, 2012, was the 'year of the MOOC' and I did quite a bit of work around applying theories of disruptive innovation to universities. One primary area of focus is around the disruptive changes the higher education sector is experiencing along the lines of Clayton Christensen and Martin Eyring's 2011 work *The Innovative University*. I have given several keynote presentations around this thematic area and have developed my argumentation and evidence considerably through the process. I draw in the most recent publications the British Council has produced on transnational education; the Leadership Foundations Horizon 2020 report and a number of other surveys of developing trends. I include first-hand experience of developing and integrating MOOCs into a university strategy and analyse how universities such as Georgia Tech and MIT are responding to the rapidly changing environment. By participating in these fora I am able to test my approach on a range of expert audiences and test my analysis, which again produced an interesting and useful dimension of understanding of how universities were faring in their international work. Apart from a few notable exceptions, such as Liverpool's work with Laureate, there was little evidence that the international teams were grappling with these sort of issues in the short and medium term challenges they faced (Lawton et al., 2013; MIT 2014).

However, the work on disruptive innovation was strongly linked to RBV and capabilities theory as was the work on core competencies, and I began to realise that as a tool for analysing the very real concerns that my peers were facing in their short and medium term strategies, RBV provided a very appropriate tool. I therefore came back to my methodological starting point but with some important lessons learnt along the way and a clearer vision of how RBV could be harnessed to organise the rather scattergun experiences that my interviews revealed and ultimately to make sense of the experience of strategic creation that was the reality in the world of my peers in international teams in the UK.

I had already started to examine more internally focussed methodologies. I started with critical realism trying to find a way of uncovering underlying mechanisms that could be said to be dictating choice of strategy. I remained optimistic that this direction of investigation could be productive but in my interactions with a large number of expert practitioners I realised that the number of parameters was vastly too complex to be able to meaningfully detect underlying mechanisms in this way unless they were of such banality as to be meaningless. However, the RBV and dynamic capabilities approach allowed me to rationalise these experiences through a theoretical frame but

also one that then allows itself to be of further use to practitioners in understanding and directing their strategic efforts.

Throughout my work with peers it has been apparent to me that I could better access their thinking through close and trusting work as professional to professional. In this way, I have spent considerable time with colleagues developing workshops, presentations and written papers. The work of Polanyi (1983) and his successors is particularly pertinent in the way that knowledge is sticky and often private. The more interesting and revealing items of experience are only shared when there is trust which is created through relationships and over time and particularly through shared professional interactions such as jointly delivered workshops and seminars. The scripted and semi-structured interviews I carried out for this study were with 12 colleagues I had developed this sort of trusting professional relationship with and I considered to be expert in their fields and therefore complemented in a formal setting a great deal of exchange over time with them.

Analyzing the text

The main categorising strategy used is that of coding the narrative from the interviews. The main driver for this coding is RBT and Dynamic Capabilities theory but I also use an inductive approach using analysis of the texts themselves to develop categories in the way that grounded theory would do. This inductive analysis allows me to refine the categories suggested by the theoretical work. I referred to the types of category suggested by Bickman of 'organisational' substantive' and 'theoretical'. The original organisational types of category, or 'topic' such as 'distinctiveness' was subject to analysis and statements under this heading were then categorised using the theoretical framework into categories such as 'reliable processes' which are more explanatory in nature. McMillan and Schumacher (2001) suggest three category types with 'substantive' filling the middle position. Substantive is a step towards categorisation but remains descriptive rather than explanatory – 'leadership' could fit this description in the present study as a broad term that is then analysed into leadership as a key resource that is sought or lacking and the conscious development of leadership as a dynamic capability (Bickman, 2016).

As I proceeded with the analysis the initial fracturing of data in categories was also supplemented by what Bickman (2016) calls a 'connecting strategy' which is making sense of statements in context and pulling threads together from different parts of the discourse (*ibid*). This brings a richer understanding to the analysis as the statements are reviewed in their context and in a more holistic understanding of the corpus. As an example, once the fragmenting approach started to produce examples of where the international staff were acting in what I began to call 'proselytising' mode working to instil values and knowledge of internationalisation throughout the university this activity became a sort of leitmotif throughout the texts and helped explain other related concepts such as when the international team refrained from leading an activity or making decisions because the desire to instil a sort of automatic

international response in colleagues became more important. This particular motif became a recurring pattern throughout the woven tissue of the corpus.

Literature

I reviewed the literature around internationalization and international strategies for universities. There is a considerable amount of literature on the micro strategies involved in, for example, setting up academic partnerships or designing transnational education programmes. There is also a good literature on the policy environment for international education. However, there is a dearth of literature on university strategies at the macro level. For this reason, I decided it would be appropriate to review the literature around corporate strategy and attempt to apply it where appropriate to universities. The literature review therefore surveys the general internationalization environment for universities looking in particular at how changing circumstances need to be taken into account by universities in their strategic planning and then examines corporate strategy in an analysis that aims at explaining why and how choices are made that result in distinctive approaches to international strategic work by universities.

Collection and interpretation process

My approach to the collection and analysis of the empirical data is as follows:

Step 1

The interviews were conducted in an ambient environment and aimed through a structured framework to allow the maximum freedom to respond to the main prompting questions while allowing the respondents to follow their own lines of thought as this allows access to their tacit knowledge and allows them to prioritise and order their own accounts within a framework that is applied to all the interviews.

This itself posed several challenges. One of the interviews started in a café which proved far too noisy and distracting and so we moved somewhere quieter. All the practitioners were busy professionals with many demands on their time and most interviews were conducted in their offices where they would feel most at home and comfortable but at the same time where there were occasional phone calls or other interruptions. One interview with a very senior respondent started in his office, continued on a walk to the station and finished on a train ride with only the office part recordable. Another interview took place as part of a campus tour and so was not recordable either. One interview recording was lost as the quality was very poor. However, I did end up with 13 complete interviews and a number of extra notes and discussions.

Step 2

The interviews were transcribed and read through several times to absorb the main thematic areas. In parallel, I read and absorbed all the public and shared materials that supported the main spoken evidence.

The first interviews surprised me considerably as they did not fit my conception of what strategic action should look like and the way priorities and concerns should be dealt with. At first, I questioned my interview technique and questionnaire design. But I subsequently started to realise that my preconceptions were more related to a positivist and normalist mindset whereas what I was experiencing was a real world 'imperfect' human and political process of an ongoing struggle to make diverse and complex structures functional and strategic. Once I let go of my preconceptions I started to relate to the material much more closely and this helped me approach the analysis in a far more neutral way.

Step 3

The interviews were analysed into the main rhetorical functions including questions of aims and objectives and the underlying resources explicitly or implicitly referred to; the main *how* questions about the capabilities that are employed and leveraged; any references to historical development and any statements about ways that these separate functions combine together.

The categorisation process worried me at first as it seemed that it would be possible to randomly create categories and that this would thus lead to varying interpretations of the work. However, as I started to understand the material better and to leave aside my presuppositions the categories flowed from the material itself. As I worked with the material and the categories the sense-making process became clearer. The next step worked iteratively with this step.

Step 4

I reviewed the theoretical approach and examined how other studies have identified resources and capabilities in the RBV and Dynamic Capabilities approaches.

During this period, I consulted with peers on different analysis techniques for strategic action and experimented with different approaches in my sector work and written papers.

This approach gave me a basis for initial categorisations and then allowed me to test these on peers. Working with the literature also helped me to see where categories developed in other contexts could be applied and where they needed to be further refined for this context. I was guided by the research literature encouraging the use of previous studies as well as my own intuition in the coding process (Gibbs, 2007).

Step 5

I reviewed all the identified resources and applied the VRIN (Valuable, Rare, In-imitable and Non-substitutable) framework to distil the key resources needed by all the universities.

This was an area where respondents made more implicit references to resources and where the narratives needed a certain amount of contextual interpretation. Here that my knowledge of the sector was also a useful contribution to the analysis.

Step 6

I reviewed all the references to capabilities (implicit or explicit) and, informed by approaches to capability identification in the literature, I looked at how to break these into meaningful and self-contained categories. This involved a considerable amount of iterative and sense making work. The result is a division of all capabilities statements into 6 main categories. These were then analysed for frequency and duration of mentions and importance given to them. This resulted in two levels of categorisation – those that were given most prominence and the second level which were given far less prominence.

This was a rewarding part of the process as once the categories had been established and tested the data started to make much better sense and to suggest interpretations. As I was dealing with free-flowing conversations, a human and qualitative analysis worked far better than other narrative analyses such as word counts as the contextual signals for meaning were crucially important.

Step 7

I then matched the resources identified to the capabilities employed or developed to secure these resources and draw conclusions about the appropriateness of the fit.

This stage started to suggest that the human and political processes involved in strategy making and doing were far less logical than I had first supposed.

Step 8

I re-analysed the written statements on websites and brochures about the universities and compared these to the statements made in the interviews and then drew conclusions about the differing and distinctive nature of each university's capabilities set.

This analysis threw light on the approach of the different universities of the study. By and large the published accounts were coherent with the interviews with for example both interviews and published material at Eastern University indicating a university that saw internationalisation very much in terms of bring the world to the home campus. However, the way that priorities were expressed in strategic documents varied considerably with very concise and all-embracing statements in one university and very atomised and specific statements in another. The degree to which internationalisation was integrated into such things as the Vice Chancellor's introduction also clearly reflected the stage of the internationalisation process at that university.

Step 9

I re-examined the transcripts for evidence of capabilities that were developed on the back of success in a previous undertaking such as those gained through operation of a campus and also looked for capabilities that are being cultivated for future competitiveness.

This stage made it clear that the main thrust of work was immediate and short term. There was little evidence that universities were consciously and pro-actively developing its abilities for a longer term future. This lack of pro-active strategic thought as may be expressed for example through discussions of comparator universities and how the performance of the home university compared was puzzling for me at first as I had assumed that the data would be full of this sort of statement that would have fitted the industry organisation theoretical framework I had first intended to apply. However, as I reframed my sense-making of strategic work within universities the data helped me to understand the struggles that are faced within the structures of universities to precisely be more 'strategic'.

Step 10

I wrote up the analysis with an emphasis on providing a coherent story and structure to the actual voices of the expert practitioners weaving together each individual's contributions to the place of the resources and capabilities under review.

Approach conclusion

This approach produced a coherent story about the work of the international teams, their goals and the way they work to achieve these goals.

Ethical approach and challenges

I adopted as my main ethical guidelines the four principles identified by Diener and Crandall (1978):

- Whether there is harm to participants
- Whether there is lack of informed consent
- Whether there is an invasion of privacy
- Whether deception is involved (Diener and Crandall, 1978)

There was clearly no possibility of physical harm coming about to any of the participants. However, their identification and the attribution of particular statements or opinions to them could potentially cause them professional or personal harm. I worked with a relatively small number of interviewees and therefore individuals are clearly identifiable in the final thesis.

I had intended to make explicit the universities that I was working with as it seemed to me that this would work better in terms of reader accessibility and applicability of the conclusions. I made this clear to participants and returned to them their transcripts in case there was anything they wanted to make confidential. During the interviews there had been a few times when I was advised that we were in confidential territory and I of course respected this for these sections in any case. However, on further consideration I realised that this approach still does not protect the respondents adequately as the thesis will be published even if a restricted status slows down this process and there would still be scope for individuals to be identified, and critiqued for their statements or disclosures. Therefore, as a further protection I have anonymised the names of the universities and removed any individuals referred to in the work. This does not of course make it impossible to identify the participants but makes it much more difficult to do so and any ensuing ambiguity would further protect them.

The same is of course true of the universities themselves which could potentially be identified. The conclusions may be considered favourable or unfavourable and the case discussed by Bryman of the fictional village of Springdale is instructive (Bryman, 2008). Anonymising the names of the universities helps in this respect.

I also ensured I had informed consent to the interviews. I shared with them a description of the objectives of the research beforehand as well as a general sense of the questions that would be asked. I have obtained written consent from the participants and have shared the transcripts with them respecting any requests for confidentiality. I don't believe there was any invasion of privacy as the interviews concerned only professional subjects and did not involve the participants' personal lives.

Neither do I believe there is any deception involved as I was explicit about my aims and my questioning approach was completely transparent. The conclusions I drew from the work emerged out of the data and were in no way covertly obtained.

I also pay attention to the protection of the recordings and tape-scripts as advised by Bryman and required by data protection law. I do not have personal details recorded beyond names and job titles so this aspect is not a concern. The recordings and transcript are stored in password protected areas of my personal data files. Only anonymised summaries are publicly available through the thesis.

I approached the semi-structured interviews as a person engaged in the field under study and in a position of similar seniority and knowledge to those interviewed. This brings with it advantages and disadvantages that I needed to manage. Knowing the field, I needed to be careful not to pre-empt answers with my own understanding. As I am likely to be constructing a schema of reality based on my own expectations this may or may not have been in tune with the way my interviewees constructed reality. I guarded against this by carefully constructing questions that were as open as possible and not leading

towards a particular answer. I was also careful to listen and only intervene in my role as a facilitator of the interviewee's construction of reality. The advantage of my situation was that I was able to gain access for the interviews as I had most of the people concerned in my professional network.

I was also able to be empathetic in a way so as to enable trust-building and therefore give better access to tacit understanding. Indeed, in some parts of the interview, especially where we are dealing with rather complex processes of strategy implementation, the knowledge I was seeking to surface may be to a greater or lesser extent tacitly held by the interviewee. I expected the dialogue to help clarify the concepts in the interviewee's mind as s/he makes explicit what they may have dealt with implicitly previously. I expected to be able to probe quite deeply and to challenge the interviewee to examine his/her concepts in the face of a complex operating environment. For example, although many explicit international strategies state research as a goal, in practice it is very difficult to facilitate a top-down research strategy and in the face of many competing priorities this is likely to be downgraded in practice. My questions and probes sought to explore the issues around such matters.

I make my research positioning explicit in the following way:

Categories / perspectives	Research orientation
Ontology	<p>My ontology is broadly objectivist believing that there is a fact of the matter and that real social forces exert an influence on the actors involved.</p> <p>My ontological orientation, however, is weakly constructivist in that these forces are counterbalanced to a certain extent by the actions of the actors who themselves are helping to shape the system</p>
Epistemology	<p>My epistemological approach reflects my ontological orientation and is broadly objectivist with an understanding of the constructivist nature of social reality. I expect participants to have a constructed version of reality that fits their understanding of their life world and it is this they are likely to share with me. However, I also expect to find that there are social forces that are largely outside the influence of these actors that shape the development of strategy.</p> <p>I will work from a weak version of Polanyi's concept of tacit knowledge (1983) assuming that much knowledge is deeply personal and difficult, but not impossible, to surface and make explicit.</p> <p>I also assume that dialogue can surface and clarify concepts in the minds of those interviewed in a way that is generative of new understanding</p>
Socio-economic	<p>My own background is white lower middle class influenced by over 30 years in a variety of overseas cultural contexts. I am to a certain extent a newcomer to the social milieu I am interrogating and without a doctorate will lack complete credibility however this will be counterbalanced by the reputation I have built up in the sector through active participation in sector activities and thinking.</p>

Emancipatory	There is no primary emancipatory orientation in this study. However, I am concerned with the definition of success and failure and the pressures that actors within international development of universities will be under to conform to the various forces present as generative mechanisms. Success should then be judged by what the actors superficially achieve but how they deal with these at times conflictual forces
Political	There is no primary political orientation to this work. Its main orientation is managerial in assessing how better to manage internationalisation. Personally, I believe that internationalisation of universities can be achieved to the mutual benefit of the countries involved but the forces involved in shaping international strategy may work against this – a secondary area for analysis in this study.

Explicit research orientation

Challenges and research problems

In defining and refining my research aims I met and worked through a considerable number of theoretical difficulties. Many of these concerned the loosely coupled and the loosely defined concept of what a university is and whether a university can be said to have unity of purpose. We can understand universities as fairly loose coalitions of lower order social units with varying objectives. For example, we will normally find an international office whose role it is to recruit international students; departments or faculties grouped by discipline that have the dual role of playing a part in advancing the body of knowledge in that discipline and teaching from this body of knowledge; a set of support teams such as HR, finance and registry; and research units. At each level of entry or unit of analysis we can detect diversity of objectives and capabilities. If we were to enter at departmental level we would find that each department is comprised of individuals with a similar rich diversity of capability, aspiration and objectives. How then are we to decide what constitutes the aims of any particular university? In discussing the nature of strategic success in universities, King (1995) stresses this point that in the private sector, the product is largely under the control of the hierarchical processes that manage the entity whereas for universities this is not the case where the nature of programmes are thought to be under individual or collegiate regulation (Roger King, 1995).

There were various challenges throughout the data collection and analysis phases. My preconceptions of strategic behaviour led me to expect a certain set of responses from the interviewees and in the first interviews I was surprised that the themes that seemed most pertinent to the interviewees were internally focussed. This took me off guard and my first reaction was that perhaps I was asking the wrong questions or guiding the interviews badly. This was quite disconcerting. However, after a considerable amount of reflection and discussions with peers I began to change my preconceptions and accept that what I was hearing reflected the priorities and concerns of the interviewees and the semi-structured format allowed them to express these

freely. This was an important realisation that helped me to understand that strategy was at heart a human and political process and less normalistic than I had imagined and this helped me put aside the more positivist preconceptions I had. Related to this was the driving force behind strategy, the unit of motivation if it was not to be an economic one.

The role of leadership was important in the concept of unity of purpose as was the concept of organizational culture. At the same time, it was difficult to define what success might look like in the context of international strategy – was it purely reputational as measured through such rankings as the Times Higher Education world rankings? If so, the international strategy was relevant but far from the whole picture in this regard. Similarly, was it the number of international students or the rate of mobility amongst home students that defined success? Was there a way of measuring the impact per unit of resource employed into international affairs? This proved very difficult as there are few public accounts of investment in international work and most universities have a mix of explicit international spend (size of international team, expenditure on agents etc.) and hidden investment (departmental travel budgets, subsidised doctorates etc.). It seemed unlikely that I would be able to get access to enough secure data to do a thorough analysis. It was also clear that my strength as a practitioner researcher is my own deeply held knowledge of how the sector works and the processes that are used to create international impact, as well as the strong professional network I have developed and the access it allows me. I therefore turned my analysis towards the internal working of the universities in the creation of international strategy.

As my understanding of the RBV approach matured these research problems became manageable as the approach was concerned with the 'glue' that helped resolve the main issues the international teams were addressing. It was indeed no surprise that my peers were spending a vast amount of their time on the setting up and management of reliable internal processes that mitigate the inherently un-strategic nature of a university.

Supervision

During these initial phases of research and concept exploration, I was initially unsure how I could develop a framework of strategic theory that would allow me a methodology for interrogating the institutional narratives. This uncertainty was reflected in Bath University's advice on appropriate tutors for my work. It was suggested that I work with academics from the Strategy department who specialised in strategy as practice approaches. My initial understanding of this approach led me to think that it may be applicable to my research and I explored this with the supervisor and through the literature. But it became apparent that the methodology was more appropriate for micro level strategy making through intensive observation, along the lines of an ethnographic approach, which neither suited the macro level strategic insight I was seeking nor my own competency and opportunity as a researcher. I therefore re-assessed my methodological approach and decided to use more broad based strategic theories as my lens for analysis and use a social

constructivist approach through semi-structured interviews to uncover the narratives I needed. I worked alone for a considerable time as the interactions with my supervisor at the time were not particularly pertinent. As my thinking matured, however, I was able to articulate better the type of supervision I needed and arranged for the school to transfer my supervision to a more appropriate supervisor in 2015. My interactions with this supervisor helped me to refine my theoretical approach and redirect my analysis which I then completed.

Contribution to knowledge

This thesis joins a relatively thin corpus of work examining the international strategy of universities and an equally thin body of work applying strategic theory to universities. I suspect that there are several reasons why this might be so. Firstly, universities do not easily lend themselves to the application of strategic theory because of their loosely coupled nature and the combination of professional and bureaucratic characteristics. Even Mintzberg found it difficult to classify the strategic approach of universities (Mintzberg and Rose, 2007). Secondly, the concept of an international strategy for universities is a relatively recent phenomenon. Whatever the reasons, my work adds in these two distinct fields to a scant body of literature and may encourage others to pursue the application of RBV and dynamic capabilities to university work. It examines a set of universities that is not often considered in the extant literature with more analysis available for universities in Australia and the US and for sections of universities in particular with business schools.

This study opens up questions of whether the methods used by universities match the goals they are trying to achieve suggesting that there are gaps and imbalances in the application of strategy to goals. The study also suggests that the complexity of the work can lead to short-sightedness of goals and stifles longer term and more ambitious development.

Conclusion

Returning to Professor Brown, she can, at the end of her analyses of the empirical data she has collected from her expert practitioners, be fairly confident that she has an insight into the objectives and tools that each of her peer universities are using to build their own particular brand of internationalization. She can therefore draw her own conclusions about what elements of these objectives and tools are useful and represent good practice, what elements might be unbalanced or missing and how the whole toolkit contributes to building a sustainable international strategy.

Chapter 6: Findings

Introduction

This study looks at university international strategies and attempts to make sense of why and how universities engage in purposeful international activity. The purpose of this thesis is to understand what universities are trying to achieve through their international strategies, what drives their choices and how they go about achieving their objectives. The study focuses on four similar research-intensive universities in the UK which, despite similar circumstances, have very distinctive approaches to international work. The diversity of approach suggests underlying factors that are important to strategic action but nevertheless are difficult to perceive. This study seeks to throw light on these factors as a way of understanding strategic choice and thus helping universities to refine their own approaches to international strategy creation and implementation.

The study has two dimensions. One is a sense-making exercise in order to understand why and how universities achieve their internationalization goals. This is done by applying a theoretical lens to the accounts of expert practitioners. The second is practice-oriented and seeks to inform practitioners on how international strategies can be conceptualized and constructed towards a particular set of goals. In the literature review, I imagined an incoming PVC International for a research-intensive university, Professor Brown. She wanted, through a review of the relevant literature, to understand the current global operating environment for universities and to develop her thinking on how strategic theory could inform strategy development for her university. Armed with this overview of the landscape and a set of conceptual tools that help to organize and make sense of strategic action, she now undertakes an expert consultation. The idea in her head is to get a feel for the priorities and challenges that her peers in other research intensive universities feel are important; to listen to how they turn this set of opportunities and challenges into an operationalized strategic plan and to attempt to make sense of this through the lens of her main conceptual tool - resource based theory. This will subsequently inform her own thinking as she takes on the challenge of steering the international strategy of her own institution.

This chapter uses Resource-Based Theory and dynamic capability analysis to make sense of the way a number of experts in the field of internationalization understand and relate to their institution's strategy.

The first stage looks at motivations in order to throw light on the basic unit of analysis, that is the core 'resource' from which all other resources and bundles of resources are derived from. It is assumed that this core resource can be deduced from the expressed purposes for each university's international strategy – the question of why? Having painted a picture of the most basic resource that universities are seeking the chapter then moves on

to see how different capabilities are imagined; leveraged and sought by universities through their international work.

The expert practitioners

This study is based on an analysis of semi-structured interviews undertaken with twelve expert practitioners in internationalization of higher education within the four UK universities.

The universities have been anonymised to:

1. Western University
2. Northern University
3. Central University
4. Eastern University

They are:

W1 The Director of Western City International at the Western University
W2 The Director of International at the Western University
N1 The Director of International at the Northern University
N2 The Pro-Vice Chancellor International at the Northern University
N3 The ex-Vice Chancellor at the Northern University
C1 The Director International at the Central University
C2 The Director International Office at the Central University
C3 The Director International Partnerships at the Central University
E1 The Director International at the Eastern University
E2 The ex-Director of International at the Eastern University
E3 The Pro-Vice-Chancellor International at the Eastern University
E4 The Director Student Recruitment at the Eastern University

All of these colleagues were highly experienced with many years of experience in this and other roles.

These interviews were recorded and transcribed.

In addition, there were informal conversations with many staff at the four Universities, the I (company) and other universities. A focus group at Central with the faculty leads for internationalization was not transcribed but notes were taken, and a visit to the campus by the Manager of Student Recruitment at Western was also not recorded or transcribed. Finally, the recording of an interview with the Deputy Director responsible for the Northern Country C campus was too poor quality to transcribe so I worked from notes.

The prefixes E, L, LE and N refer to the respective universities Western, Northern, Central and Eastern.

Institutional Profiles and public approach to internationalization

This study concerns four universities in a very similar context in England, UK. They are all metropolitan universities in cities outside of London. All four are research intensive and belong to the Russell Group – a mission group uniting a large group of research intensive universities with good UK and international reputations. They all have their origins in the University of London system and awarded University of London degrees in the early part of their history. All four are ‘public’ universities in the UK sense of the term in that they receive government funding that covers some of their teaching and research costs. However there are also clear differences and each has developed a distinctive approach to their international work. Two of the universities are medium sized with around 13000 students and the other two are larger with over 20000 students.

	UK	EU	Non-EU	Total	% non-EU	% International
Western	13607	1014	3788	18409	21%	26%
Central	22321	997	4472	27789	16%	20%
Northern	13719	560	5360	19638	27%	30%
Eastern	22838	1505	5815	30158	19%	24%

Student Numbers - Source: HESA

THE World Rankings	Change in position 2011-2016
Eastern	Gained 31 places In top 150
Central	Gained 35 In top 150
Western	Gained 91 In top 100
Northern	Gained 8 In top 200

International Outlook	Change 2011-2016
Eastern	Gained 6.2 points – above 80
Central	Gained 27.4 points – above 70
Western	Gained 24.5 points – above 80
Northern	Gained 25.6 points – above 80

Source THE

Strategic plan emphases

"Internationalisation is at the heart of everything we do as a University. Described by The Times as the closest the UK has to a truly global university, The Eastern University has award-winning campuses in the UK, Country C and Country M and hosts a genuinely global academic community in all three countries." Internationalisation p.1

Order of mention	Eastern 2010-2015 Strategic Plan	Central 2015-20 Strategic Plan	Northern Strategic Plan 2009-14	Western Strategic Plan 2015
1	An academic endeavour for improving peoples lives globally	Strengthen profile and reputation	Number of students studying overseas	Research-led partnerships
2	International opportunities for students - exchange, study abroad and work placements	International opportunities for students - exchange, study abroad and work placements	Staff and students on overseas placements	Global student and alumni community-international curriculum and student body
3	Globally relevant teaching research and knowledge exchange	Outstanding educational experience for students	increase in number and diversity of staff and students	Student mobility
4		overseas alumni engagement for recruitment and employability	increased number of online programmes	lifelong relationships - offices in Country C to support relationship building for research and collaboration
5		Flexible award delivery	Northern graduates globally employable	
6			Global feel to campus	
7			Increased physical presence overseas	
8			more strategic research partnerships	
9			increased philanthropy from overseas	

Profiles

The four universities have all prioritized internationalization in their strategic outlook. They all have considerable numbers of international students – between 20-30 % of their total and all score highly on the THE measure of international outlook. All have improved their world rankings over the previous 6 years. However, within this relative homogeneity there is considerable variation that can be seen through the various monitoring mechanisms. Northern has the highest level of international students overall and the highest non-EU level with small numbers of EU students. All have done well within the world rankings but the two universities without campuses have made greater strides than Northern and Eastern in this respect with Western showing dramatic improvement the last year.

Each of the four universities publicly expresses its strategic goals in various quite distinct ways. Eastern manages to condense its aspirations into three

concise goals: improving people's lives, international experience for students and globally relevant teaching and research. Central strongly emphasizes the student experience aspect of its strategy: international opportunities for students, international experience, alumni connections and flexible award delivery, capping this with its aim to build profile and reputation. Northern expresses a more diverse set of objectives with student experience high on the list, as for Central, but makes explicit a goal to diversify staff as well as students and, unlike the other three, to develop its online provision. Other goals include global employability for students and greater physical presence overseas. Western highlights research led partnerships and then a global student and alumni community, as well as internationalization at home objectives and student mobility. Each of these publicly expressed strategies is different and gives each university a distinctive international profile.

The development of Western's position within the UK, its attractive home campus; the work it has done on establishing and publicizing the value internationalization brings to Western City all typify Western as an internationally focused university that sees internationalization at home as its driving force "*the essence of our strategy is bringing the best and brightest staff and students to our W and C campus*" (International Strategy) Western has a clearly expressed inward focus to its internationalization work with several strong references to bringing the world to Western. Western has been prolific in the publication of its international work with separately published international reports including a report assessing the impact of its international work on the local economy. Internationalization is the third objective in the strategic plan behind education and research and knowledge transfer.

Northern is clearly trying to position itself as an exporter of education with a clearly articulated development expressed by N2 with several key drivers for international strategy that are based on philosophical principles. One important principle he articulates is around the need to struggle against monoculturalism and monolingualism. "*We are also working on the assumption that for British students and indeed for students from other countries with a similar sort of background to Britain monolingualism is a disability, monoculturalism is dangerous.*" N2. This leads to a distinct set of objectives around the conscious mixing of ethnic and linguistic groups, the setting up of language programmes and study abroad objectives.

Northern stresses its global intent throughout its strategic plan and other public literature. The opening statement of purpose claims: "*The Northern University is a globally-focused institution whose activities are rooted in world-leading research excellence*" and goes on to reinforce this in the opening statement of the vision "*As a distinguished 21st Century university we will have global reach and influence*".

Central's international work is second place to its role as a civic university. It is far less public in its representation of its international work than Western. *International* is relegated to 5th place in the strategic plan and likewise in the Vice Chancellor's introduction to the plan.

Eastern has spent nearly a decade establishing its two campuses in Country M and Country C . This is a model that is hard to imitate and allows Eastern to claim to be "*a global university*" and to back this up with the names "United Kingdom, Country C , Country M " on all its publicity materials. Eastern goes to great lengths to project itself as a global university. It is the only university that lays claim to its three-country bases in the logo of the university itself which features United Kingdom, Country C and Country M as the subtext. The mission states that Eastern is "*committed to providing a truly international education, inspiring our students, producing world-leading research and benefitting the communities around our campuses in UK, Country C and Country M*". This is reinforced in its mission to be the first choice for students who want a top quality international education. The strategy foregrounds the teaching and learning aspects of its work above its research agenda.

It is clear both from public materials and the interviews that all four universities despite sharing many contextual similarities are developing distinctive strategic responses to their market development away from home and hence to their international strategies.

Resources

This enquiry is about what characterizes a university's international strategy, what are its aims and how are they realized? The four universities in this study have very different approaches to their international work. To what extent is this a conscious strategic choice for the universities and how has it come about?

What is a university?

This study conceptualizes universities as a complex organizational form with elements of both bureaucracy and professional organization resulting in a more or less loosely coupled structure. The way the university is conceived is clearly important for the conception of strategy which implies unity of purpose. Questions of organizational structure and how to mobilise the various parts of it were a major theme throughout the discussions and it is clear that a significant resource is used to best activate the internal processes and structures regardless of the activities directed towards the external environment.

How do the actors within these systems view their organizational forms? All interviewees had no difficulty referring to one organization whether it be 'the university', 'Northern', 'Eastern', 'we', - the sense of identity within one organisation is strong. Most interviewees used 'we' occasionally interspersed with the city name 'Northern' or 'Western' throughout the conversation.

*It's funny when you ask people about **Northern** it's amazing how there's quite a lot of poor awareness of the online side. N1*

... another thing that is interesting about **Northern** is that the relationship with L has enabled **us** to grow quite a big online business that's enabled **us** to do that because. N1

... the **university** [Western] has a big impact on the...on city life and of course now that **we've** got. W1

However, within this unifying body there exist many units of analysis whether they be faculties, schools, research groups, professional services, individuals or committees. A large part of the discussion in all interviews concerned how these parts interact, communicate and reach common purpose.

*I think we had pretty good systems, pretty closely knit structures between the **campuses** [Country M and Country C] and **Eastern**. E2*

... you're drip feeding the plan into the system **because the collegiate side of the faculty** is going to take longer to catch on. Again, entirely reasonably because 90% of **their** day is taken up by doing their academic work. Whereas 90% of **your** day is taking up with this issue. N3

... under my predecessor Douglas the thinking changed I mean he and X turned it round and said well actually no what we'll do is let **schools** decide. E3

... although we say we are one university the truth is we are actually **three universities** with three different planning cycles and three different owners if you like. Although the Eastern University UK is the academic owner across all three campuses, we are not the business owner across all three campuses. We are a shareholder with those in Country C and Country M. E1

*I think there was a kind of **faculty** feeling that you were speculating. It was a suspicion of a capitalist. N3*

It is clear that the professional culture allows considerable autonomy to the parts and no-one referred to any of the parts as ever being required not to do something.

Yeah, I think that was leadership and vision, but the debates with schools, to the best of my knowledge, were persuasive and exploratory. I don't know if there were any thumb screws. I don't think so. You can't do that to academics. You can't. N1

Why an international strategy?

According to the Resource Based View, the question of *why* engage in a particular course of action is a simple one. The organization is in search of the key resources that are vital to its survival. So, the question then becomes concerned with the identification and prioritization of base resources. This study aims to surface the main concerns of a group of experts in

internationalization and to understand what key resources and capabilities are crucial in the construction and implementation of the international work.

Clearly, a complication in this work is the complexity and competing needs of the parts as well as the whole. This analysis will disentangle some of these issues. This study is concerned with strategy. Strategy implies a coherent 'whole institution' approach with a clear sense of shared purpose. The universities in this study expressed many answers to the question *why?* In the interviews, many points of view were expressed about the purpose and aims of the four universities' international work varying from financial to reputation to social good. For some of the interviewees there is a history of engagement by different parts of the university which has only recently been pulled together strategically.

The testimonies of the expert group reveal several candidates for key resources.

Revenue

The core resource for the majority of the corporate world is revenue. This is demanded by shareholders, owners, employees and the organisations themselves to fuel further growth. Seen from outside, the UK higher education sector is often assumed to be driven by economic issues with much concern about the levels of fee charged to students and the particular premium on overseas students and their heightened fee levels. However, most within the sector would deny this is the primary motivator.

At best, revenue can be seen as a factor of production. It does not meet the VRIN criteria (Pan *et al.*, 2007) outlined in the literature review for resources – it is valuable and arguably rare but is not inimitable nor non-tradeable.

Often, at the level of recruitment of international students, revenue is high on the list of priorities.

... it's inevitable the revenue is vital, some faculties, some schools, some activities are heavily dependent on the revenue generated by particularly taught postgrad international activity. C2

However, revenue is not a straightforward resource. In some cases, it can be counterproductive to focus solely on the revenue motive. For example, a pure economic motive for most universities would currently lead them to focus their student recruitment activities on one or a few key markets, with Country C at the top of the list. In common with the corporate world over-reliance on one source of a key resource leads to fragility. However, uniquely to universities, over-reliance on a key resource can lead to a further complication which devalues the resource. The abundance of Chinese students has led to situations whereby classes on the home campus in UK are dominated by one nationality with some reported cases of classes composed uniquely of Chinese students. This is seen as undesirable from many standpoints,

particularly that of being able to give all international and home students a diverse and international experience.

*I think longer return in terms of impact on student experience for **all** audience groups; it's not good for us to have so many students from Country CE4*

however, we've been in a fortunate position in Central in that for really quite a long time the message top down has been quality above quantity and diversity above just going for straight revenue from Country C for example C2

A further complexity of universities as revenue seeking institutions is that not all students, as a key source of revenue, are equally valuable.

...well science and engineering would go to a halt if it wasn't for the international PhDs (...) then if you haven't got the engines of research actually doing the work then actually creating the output... C2

So, the recruitment of international students impacts on the capacity of a university to engage in specific research areas and so is a means to an end as well as a goal in itself.

In addition, good students are worth more than less good students irrespective of the propensity to pay.

...and because the intake was so strong when these people came to Northern they were much easier and cheaper to teach than recruiting at random across. Country C N3

Apart from everything else it changed the recruiting strategy. We no longer recruited in what I used to call open field recruitment in Country C because there was no need to do that. It also alerted people to the fact that working with established partners was a better way of doing it than recruiting randomly through agents from other universities that you didn't really know. N3

In the UK higher education context there is a further complexity of revenue as a resource. Revenue can be obtained in a number of ways – as student fees (home or overseas), as research funding, as philanthropy and in other ways. However, most of these sources of funding are proscriptive on how they can be employed and hence are qualified or asset specific.

Another key type of resource mentioned was funds that could be used freely in international expansion without conditions of use

No, there's another loop in this. In order to get permission to do this in Northern and to persuade both senate and council, I wanted to be able to say I wasn't using any resources which could have been used in Northern to develop this site. We went to L. N3

For other stakeholders in the sector, revenue is a supporting rather than a primary resource. Revenue is clearly important but also is the quality of the

customers attracted. In the same way, as positional goods see their custom as important so do universities.

... for L the driver is financial whereas for us our drivers are not I mean there is financial sustainability for sure but there are lots of other reasons for doing that so if you look at X (campus) you know there are some major benefits certainly there are students but there is also the you know the brand in Country C so although it's not our campus it's been hugely beneficial to us in terms of people knowing about X (campus) in Country C huge importance in terms of Government relationships and you know I think a really important learning experience for us too. N1

Clearly, revenue is a complex resource with a great deal of asset specificity involved in the context of higher education. Transaction cost theory considers this asset specificity as a further source of 'friction' in the system (Martins, 2010) as different types of revenue need to be raised for different reasons increasing the complexity within the system. In RBV, certain types of revenue are 'more valuable' than others for example research funding is highly competitive and sought after between universities.

Management and leadership

An often-quoted resource was management and leadership.

... if you're getting into a business, universities are run too lean. We just don't have the resources. You've actually got to really find the managing resources. Either by appointing inside or by going outside and appointing, hence the external partner thing. N3

This concern seemed to be particularly keenly felt at the senior levels. It is clear that the lack of management resource is a constraint on international activity. For such large and complex projects as major campuses or partnerships senior staff time was particularly important.

I think it was leadership and I think it was also very fortunate that the leader who pushed things through senate and council was able to engage very strongly. E2

There were many references to the positive effect felt when a Vice Chancellor was fully engaged in the international strategy.

... the focus of the vice-chancellor has a massive impact on that as well. E4

... but you can't buy in another vice-chancellor, an extra vice-chancellor. E2

Other senior administrative roles were also seen as crucial.

... L back filled the chief operating officer's job in Northern to allow me to release X (...) full time onto the Country C development, so that when we were setting up the university, I had my registrar and chief operating officer

*working full time on the new university, and we back-filled Northern (...)
Absolutely crucial... N3*

The lack of suitable and deployable senior leadership was considered a major drawback to any substantial international project. Central was considering a campus proposal in Country M which came with considerable funding attached to it. They looked seriously into the proposal and put considerable effort on the initial feasibility of it but decided against it partly because research funding was not assured (although it was verbally promised) from year 2 onwards but also due to a lack of capacity amongst the senior team.

... the other one was the internal .. to deliver it because what the then Dean ..was very keen to make sure he did was to be actively involved in it and what he and the senior management team didn't want to do was to simply advertise for a new provost(...).this might be a priority but at the moment these ones outweigh it. C1

It seems that the most senior leadership in a university represents a rare and valuable resource, in RBV terminology, that is difficult to supplement. There is normally only one vice-chancellor and it is difficult to conceive of an organizational form that would allow the top leadership to be divided in this way. In theory, it should be relatively straightforward to increase the second strata of leadership, the deputy or pro- vice chancellors, but in practice this also seems to be difficult. Central was unwilling to take on another dean or provost specifically to run the international project as this would then pose problems of integration with existing academic structures.

Student recruitment

It is clear that student recruitment is crucially important as a resource for universities. N3 expressed the motivation for Northern 's work in establishing its Country C campus as a combination of building of confidence for the University as a whole and as a way of securing its positioning with regard to student recruitment for the coming decades.

That was one thing very much in my mind, "What can I do to give the university confidence again? What can I do to take it outside itself to make it think it can play on the global stage?" The other one was a worry. We were very dependent, again it goes back to the Chinese community, we were very dependent on Chinese students for our overseas intake. At the time when other universities, this was before a lot of UK universities had concentrated in Country C . We looked a bit vulnerable if the market suddenly(...) Not even suddenly but 10 years, 15 years, that's what was in my head, started to decline. Started to tail off. N3

Research funding

Bearing in mind the discussion about the key resource of revenue, it is important to consider the special position of research funding as a vital

resource for research-intensive universities whose reputation is measured more in research performance than in its teaching.

Country C is hugely important for us for tapping into research funding either EU UK or Chinese sources and similarly India starting from a much smaller base but we know that will be important in future, Brazil not one of our markets for the moment but again very good strengths - lots of funding going in from industry and public sources so actually you know working with institutions in Brazil and developing those partnerships helps us to project further down. N1

International experience

N2 stresses that one of his clear aims is internationalization at home – that is ensuring that students on the Northern campus get a thoroughly international education. This implies the search for a particular type of resource – access to the languages and cultures of others.

... we are also working on the assumption that for British students and indeed for students from other countries with a similar sort of background to Britain monolingualism is a disability, monoculturalism is dangerous and so (...)we're looking to introduce languages and opportunities for language learning into the curriculum. N2

... we are trying to break down the monoculturalism by the international relationships within the university and the curriculum, breaking down the monolingualism by giving people the opportunity to study languages within the curriculum and also giving them opportunities to study abroad. N2

Summary of key resources

Throughout the interviews there were many substantial (more than a passing reference) mentions of 'resources' identified explicitly or implicitly by the interlocutors. In this study we have to consider the following as contenders:

Leadership – 7 mentions

Funding – 6 mentions

International experience – 5 mentions

Research funds – 3 mentions

International students – 2 mentions

Staff – 2 mentions

Quality students – 2 mentions

Investment

Infrastructure

Research staff

Income

Expertise

Campus

Time

PhD Students

Reputation

Organizational culture

Using the VRIN framework (Pan et al., 2007) on these we can separate them into factors of production and resources in the RBV sense (Teece et al., 1997). Revenue and students in themselves do not constitute non-substitutable and inimitable resources. However, the overall student mix – quality, diversity, split between undergraduate/ postgraduate and research and other aspects of the profile - constitute part of a university's identity and is unique to that university.

The key resources, in RBV terms, the university seeks are thus:

- **high quality students:** the reputation of a university is related to the quality of the students and their achievements in terms of grades and employability;
- **high quality staff:** reputed researchers attract research funding, research partnerships and directly contribute to the reputation of a university; high quality professional staff ensure smooth and effective processes within the university and high quality teaching staff attract good students;
- **people skills:** management, professionalism and leadership all contribute to an efficient and effective university;
- **organizational culture:** every organization has a unique culture which works for or against it to differing degrees;
- **international experience:** the ability to offer all students on campus an international experience is considered valuable by universities and attracts students;
- **reputation:** the university's reputation is a goal in itself but also helps secure good staff, students and funding;
- **investment:** the ability to raise investment when needed allows universities to embark on significant ventures such as overseas campuses;
- **research funding:** for a research-intensive university, research funding is crucial and allows it to conduct the research that will contribute to its reputation.

Each of these factors contributes to the profile and uniqueness of the university and ultimately affects its reputation. In RBV terms, these resources are essential to the university and help create the organization it is. In themselves, these are static. It is the university's ability to secure these resources that becomes the key dynamic part of the model.

Capabilities

According to the RBV and its derivative Dynamic Capabilities theory, strategy mainly concerns positioning an organization so it is able to access its key resources easily and to defend its position into the future. Capabilities, usually defined as specific bundles of resources, are the means by which an organization achieves this. A number of actual and desired capabilities were expressed or inferred by the practitioners in this study.

Conducting the orchestra – the role of the international team

The capabilities that are seen as crucial to the development of the universities' international strategies are analyzed in the following section of this study. There were around 14 contenders for capabilities expressed by the experts including, in order of frequency of significant mention, reliable processes (61); partnerships (31); delivery (9); student recruitment (8); instilling values and culture (6); leveraging relationships (5); international research (4); research funding (4); campus management (4); leadership (3), mobility (2); international experience (2), revenue and qualification development.

This quantitative analysis of responses is a simplification of thematic areas that occurred throughout the interviews extracted from complex and often embedded discourse. The interviews were designed to allow respondents to freely express their views around the key thematic areas of distinctiveness of their university; organization of international functions; main goals and evaluation mechanisms; resources and resource constraints; risk and strategic approaches. Below are the more detailed areas of questioning:

- Who is involved in the creation of international strategy?
- What mechanisms and fora exist to plan, debate, craft, interrogate and evaluate international strategy?
- What are the goals and values of the university and how do they guide strategy formulation?
- What metrics are used to measure success?
- How are resources secured?
- How do universities leverage available resources to develop an overseas engagement strategy?
- What constraints on action exist and how are these dealt with?
- How do perceptions of negative and positive risk affect these?
- What strategic models are developed?

The interview format used – open-ended questions – aimed to surface tacit knowledge about the priorities and prepossessions of the experts who were interviewed. Each thematic area was developed through the discussion, sometimes over a considerable time period – up to 20 minutes for some topic areas. This necessarily means that although there was a central thematic area being examined there were numerous side remarks, contextual references and other discursive complexities. Often more than one theme was developed within the same section of discourse. Nevertheless, it is useful to analyse the interviews in this way and to note the sheer preponderance of process throughout the interviews reflecting undoubtedly the difficulty of coordinating strategic action through university organizational structures.

The expert interviews covered a range of 'capabilities' that the university possessed or was aiming to develop. The analysis in this section of the study looks at these responses in more detail and reconfigures the capabilities

according to the frequency of the mentions and also the coherence between mentions around specific parts of the general competencies.

Fairly generic Dynamic Capabilities have been defined by various writers and these have been used as the starting point for this analysis providing a framework of categories that could be tested against the actual remarks of the interviewees. For example, Mascarenhas et al (1998) identified three types of competencies in their study of multinationals: superior technological know-how (a deep understanding of a subject area); reliable processes and close relationships with external partners (Mascarenhas et al., 1998). Butler and Soontiens (2015) in their analysis of Curtin's offshore activity define a range of lower and higher level Dynamic Capabilities and relate these to the ability to integrate into strategic nets offshore. The ability to effectively engender partnerships being a key component of these (Butler and Soontiens, 2015).

Building on the insights from Butler and Soonties and using Mascarenas generic capabilities as a starting point the discussions were analyzed into categories of capability mentioned. By far the most commonly cited was establishing reliable processes and delivery mechanisms (mentioned 70 times in the interviews. On further examination, within this category, a very significant number of mentions were around the education of the university about internationalization and how to benefit from it and promoting internationalization generally. Therefore, this capability has been separated out as a distinct area of capability specific perhaps to universities and additionally includes the instilling of values and organizational culture (6 extra mentions) as this was coherent with the ability of the international team to champion internationalization and instill common values towards its goals.

The second most common comments concerned building partnerships and relationships (36 mentions). A considerable number of the issues were around the establishment of sustainability within this category and the element of reputation building. Overall, the comments were highly cohesive amongst the different commentators and so this is a relatively well-defined area of capability. The vast majority of the comments concerned partnerships for the purpose of research and therefore for the purposes of this analysis the four other mentions of research activity have been subsumed in this category.

Other areas of capabilities were fairly clearly defined but were far less frequently brought up by the interviewees and tended to be used as examples of a broader point. The three that were most frequently quoted were the development of the international student experience (including mobility), ensuring sustainable student recruitment, and managing campuses.

Overall, it seems that processes, promotion of internationalization and partnership development were the 'big challenges' for the universities and international teams were concerned either because of their difficulty or importance. Other capabilities such as student recruitment were seen as very important but overall less of a challenge. For this reason, the capabilities are divided into two levels – 1 and 2 with the Level 1 priorities being the more challenging.

Level 1 Capabilities

- Establishing and running reliable processes
- Educating the university as a whole and promoting internationalization
- Developing sustainable and reputation enhancing partnerships

Level 2 Capabilities

- Developing the international student experience
- Ensuring sustainable student recruitment
- Managing campuses and offices overseas

Level 1 Capabilities

Establishing and running reliable processes

Given the complexities of university structures and decision making processes – the loosely coupled nature of the organization – clearly the development of reliable processes and structures is a crucial factor of success. All interviewees devoted a considerable amount of time to the mechanisms that help build unity of purpose towards international work, allow effective decision making and smooth implementation. This is clearly a crucial theme in the work of internationalization.

Initially I found this predominant weighting on internal processes surprising. The questions gave the respondents a lot of scope to discuss their externally focused work but the interviews were dominated both in number of mentions and length of responses to the internal world of universities. However, applying transaction cost theory to universities as complex organisations partly professional and partly bureaucratic, provides a reasonable explanation of why this should be so. Transaction cost theory is concerned with the real world of transactions breaking with more classical economics traditions of rational decisions in situations of perfect information (Martins, 2010).

At both Western and Northern recent restructures had reduced the number of strategic academic units by condensing departments and schools into faculty structures. All interviewees reported structures within the academic units to champion and coordinate international work recognising the need to balance central and local initiatives. This was thought to be easier in the larger academic structures such as the college system established at Western.

*... we moved to a new system of many many many different **departments** into **6 large** colleges and like most universities now those colleges could be you know generating 40 million pounds a year, they're big sort of operations.
W1*

Strategic decision making

Dealing with the complexity of university structures takes considerable energy. The first 20 minutes of the interview with the Director International at Central were used to explain how the structure of international work was managed within the university. She clearly had to wrestle with a lack of structures that would have enabled international issues to be discussed at a strategic level.

Central :

*... there wasn't actually a high level **strategic** forum for **specifically** talking about internationalization. C1*

Eastern :

... we don't have an international committee at the university of any formal sort. Although we have now established an informal co-ordination group for internationalization, it has only really met a couple of times, it is still very much early days. E1

Western

*... if you think about the governance of the of internationalization, the way it's the great thing about Western, it's got a very **devolved** system, it's not bureaucratic and the university has tried to move away from committees. W1*

In the absence of such a strategic forum it was necessary to follow very convoluted consultative and decision making processes.

... and it filters stuff going up to Senate essentially and it won't fit by and large it then goes straight to the VC exec. group filtering down to what is the faculty management group which is chaired by the VC and involves all the deans, and ISG in itself involves all the pro-vice chancellors, vice chancellor, deputy vice chancellor, myself, the marketing director... C1

Despite the clearly deeply felt conviction in devolved structures, this complexity clearly acted as a brake on the coordination of international activity and created a significant difficulty in coordinating international activity. In transaction cost theory this would be interpreted as friction within the system and any capabilities that can be developed to efficiently reduce this friction can be considered as a significant asset for that university and a source of advantage in its struggle for resources.

... you can imagine what it's like trying to set up the meetings with all those people. C1

Embedding internationalization

The interviewees frequently referred to processes of embedding internationalization within the framework of the university academic structures as a way of building engagement across the diverse structures of the university; of building responsibility for delivery at the academic level and of matching the activity to where the budget is controlled. The process of embedding decision-making and engagement within the academic structures seems to apply to all the universities interviewed and seems to have been a

fairly recent development away from a more centralized approach to international affairs in the recent past.

In the olden days, the international strategy belonged to the international office. The international office was at the centre of internationalization strategy. Anything international give or take came through the international office. What we have been doing throughout the university for quite some time is embed internationalization so it becomes a part of all of our jobs whichever office you may be in. (...)The disadvantage of that is trying to know who is doing what in all countries and all areas. Managing that is proving to be more difficult although we are at the very early stages of it. E1

E1 at Eastern points out that, although this embedding is a good thing for engagement, it raises the question of managing knowledge and knowing who is doing what where. This feeds into the education role of the international team and this will be discussed below.

The embeddedness is often referred to as devolution.

*... if you think about the governance of internationalization, it's the great thing about Western as it's got a very **devolved** system, it's not bureaucratic, it's not the university which tries to move away from committees. W1*

This aim of embedding internationalization is also reflected in the way each university has integrated statements about international objectives in their overall institutional strategic plans. This is in line with the comments made by all the experts about the way internationalization was being 'mainstreamed' throughout the institutions.

	Mentions	Where
Western	Our objective now is to be consistently ranked in the top 10 in the UK and the top 100 in the World	Intro para 2
	Our focus now is on planning for the future, building our networks, across business, education and other sectors and collaborating with other leading universities in the UK and beyond.	Intro para 4
	Partnering with a select group of leading international universities is central to Western 's future... Enriching our world-leading research is at the heart of this strategy pooling the best of our knowledge and resources beyond geographical borders. We are now exploring how we could extend our presence overseas but the essence of our strategy is bringing the best and brightest staff and students to our Western and City C campuses.	Intro para 6
	If these remain the ingredients for success then I am sure Western has a great future as a world-class university.	Intro para 9
	A leading international university, we undertake groundbreaking research and deliver a world class student experience in a campus environment of outstanding natural beauty	Our mission sent 2
	An international dimension permeates all aspects of University life. Through our networks and selective partnerships, we welcome international peoples and cultures to Western and export our research and scholarship to the World. We actively support the academic and social integration of international staff and students. Together, we	Key characteristics 7

	<p>produce research with global impact and enhance the 'Western Experience'. Our expanding global connections of research, business partners and alumni enable Western 's sphere of opportunity and influence to grow year on year.</p> <p>Our ambition is to be recognised as a university of global standing. Already in the top 200 in the world rankings, we have a strong platform for success with major research partnerships established with world leading institutions, and with over 4,000 international students from over 130 countries already studying at Western. The development of our international reputation entails being recognised for world-leading research, deepening relationships with key strategic partners and attracting the most talented staff and students from across the world to an institution where the international dimension permeates everything we do.</p>	<p>Internationalisation section intro para 1</p>
Central	<p>.. equipping them [students] to succeed in a competitive global employment market</p> <p>We will also make a step change in the quality, volume and impact of world-leading research</p> <p>The University will also extend its international reach, ensuring that the impact of our education, research and alumni community is globally relevant</p> <p>To increase the University's international reach, ensuring that the impact of our education, research and alumni community is globally relevant</p>	<p>Intro para 2</p> <p>Intro para 3</p> <p>Intro para 7</p> <p>Intro to section 5: International</p>
Northern	<p>...will enhance our reputation and position the institution on a global platform. We will be Northern -centric but globally connected</p> <p>The Northern University is a globally-focused institution ...</p> <p>As a distinguished 21st century university, we will have global reach and influence .</p> <p>Positioning ourselves as a global university</p> <p>We are operating in a global higher education environment where there is tough competition for the best talent. In the last five years, we have established X- Northern University in partnership with X University in Country C offering Northern degrees and forging new research relationships. Through our partnership with L Online Education, we were the first UK institution to offer a programme delivered wholly online. Using these models for further growth and building on our experiences we are excited about the potential to position ourselves as a global university offering distinctive international experience for staff and students.</p>	<p>VC's foreword para2</p> <p>Statement of purpose sent 1</p> <p>Vision sent 1</p> <p>Key priorities 2</p> <p>Section 2 intro para sent 1-4</p>
Eastern	<p>Recruiting and retaining researchers who can deliver world-changing research on global problems</p> <p>We have a unique global footprint, with our campuses in Country M and Country C the value of which is becoming ever more apparent in our globalised world.</p> <p>At the Eastern University we are committed to providing a truly international education, inspiring our students, producing</p>	<p>VC's intro para 4</p> <p>VC's intro para 5</p> <p>Mission sent 1</p>

	<p>world-leading research and benefiting the communities around our campuses in the UK, Country C and Country M. Our purpose is to improve life for individuals and societies worldwide.</p> <p>To be widely recognised as the first choice of: students who want a top quality, international education, researchers who want the best opportunity to make a significant global impact</p> <p>Internationalization is at the heart of this University. We have been described by The Times as 'the closest the UK has to a truly global university' due to our campuses in the UK, Country C and Country M, which act as a host to a genuinely global academic community in all three countries.</p>	<p>Vision sent 1 and bullets 1 & 2</p> <p>Section 5 - Global Reach intro para 1</p>
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Balancing the strategic with wider engagement is clearly a delicate balancing act and the balance needs to be made at different levels.

.. three policy PVCs (...) so it becomes quite a conundrum really because you've got the three, particularly for research you know. It's so embedded in faculties no one wants lots of policy PVCs sticking their noses in. N1

The distributed nature of the resource also makes accounting for internationalization difficult.

... how is international resourced ? (...) In my view trying to unpack that within an institution like Northern is flipping hard..... the investment for partnerships is actually being made by the faculties and I think you know what we're really trying to do here is to devolve things down as much as possible. N1

In most cases budget expenditure is delegated to the Dean level so it is held within academic structures at departmental level.

Distributed international roles

The dynamic tension between a central international effort and the devolution of international responsibilities throughout the university is felt across all the university functions. For example, in terms of the student experience it would be reasonable to assume that the aim for international and domestic students is to have a homogenous student experience with the same standards of service and care provided throughout. Having the student experience of international students managed by the international team could lead to different standards of care and attention between home and international students even though it is clear that international students may have a different set of needs and expectations than home students. W1 described how Western had a variety of systems to ensure international affairs were effectively dealt with in all departments.

... no the interesting thing is we do summed posts across the university ...so there is a person in the international student support team who is paid out of our payroll and reports to us. Similarly (...) we fund three posts in

Admissions out of our budget and we give quite a lot of money out to different professional services in order to help them internationalise. W1

Having international staff dispersed into the various professional services helps ensure that the needs of international students are taken into account throughout the university but without sacrificing homogeneity of overall services.

... now various divisions would have people within them who may have an international angle to what they're doing so we might have a dotted line type of arrangement, so for example look at our Development and Public Relations office they've got an international officer. W1

However, clearly balancing the roles and responsibilities of such staff is not straightforward.

... if you're talking about embedding it in every single service you've got across the institution they need to be part of it and on the back of that when the strategy was first developed we developed a very long action plan for each of those areas so we embedded internationalization and we had a list of 10 or 12 core objectives and those sit underneath that C1

These roles when embedded within the professional services help develop international aspect to those services that take into account the needs of, for example, international students on the home campus.

In addition, there appear to be many techniques developed for ensuring that the academic structures play a full part in externally focused internationalization. Western University, after restructuring its multiple departments into a 6 College system, created a specific role responsible for various external functions including internationalization.

... each college has an ERICA - that's a system college manager who deals with many different things in external relations. ERICA stands for External Relations Internationalization Communications and Alumni. It's quite a big job but they've got resource brand internationalization (...) we can pick up the phone and say to somebody you know what's going on here in the College of Engineering with regards to Brazil. W1

Northern-established a system of international leads within each faculty.

... but the thing is you can't centrally impose it so what we have done now is that we've actually changed our international structures quite a lot to accommodate just this problem so within each of the faculties now we have international leads. N1

Governing devolved authority

NCE described a process of learning and adaptation in establishing planning and target setting within an increasingly decentralized structure.

... under my predecessor D the thinking changed, I mean he and C turned it round and said well actually no what we'll do is let schools decide. E3

However, it was soon evident that schools, knowing *resources follow targets (NCE)* would set over-ambitious targets, recruit staff against the targets but then fail to meet them.

... we've actually been focusing much more of our attention on saying to people you're never going to get that number so bugger off you're not having them (...)what's the evidence that you're going to get them. You're going to increase our marketing but you failed to meet every target in the last five years.E3

So here the role of the international office became to challenge the targets set by the faculties and therefore to demand more detailed rationales for these which would lead to more realistic and sustainable planning and thereby tackling deeper issues like the quality of the student experience.

... so that got the schools to own international student targets and therefore to start to think also about the international student experience. E3

This establishment of a carefully balanced target setting exercise and the resultant acceptance of responsibility for the contributory factor of student experience is clearly an important step in the establishment of a reliable and responsible process.

Communications

All the universities reported spending considerable time on internal communications, particularly in meetings with academic teams. Eastern reported that, although there was a very strong technical communication platform, this was not welcomed by staff and face-to-face communication was preferred.

We have got fantastic work space where we put lots of documents which people can go in and amend and so on. Staff surveys show most staff hate the workspace. (...) but people want face to face interaction instead. They need to go to a department or school and engage with them, present to them (...)Trying to do this electronically does not work. E1

Clearly, the development of reliable internal processes is a major concern for all the international teams and takes a considerable portion of their attention and resource. In transaction cost terms, the friction involved in trying to develop strategic action in a loosely coupled organization is enormous. This then also gives us a clue about the ability of universities to out-compete their peers. If we, as TCT suggests, perceive organizational competitiveness as the ability to reduce friction in the system, then there is a real opportunity for universities to do this if they get the processes right. The complexity of the processes makes this capability unique to each university and difficult to imitate. However, there seem to be clear lessons for what is good practice and what is not and, therefore, some of that can be adopted fairly straightforwardly.

This outcome sits well with other parts of the literature. Back in 1995 King was arguing that enhancing global performance depended on an enhanced corporate ability to create strategic alliances and joint ventures which argued against the current collegial structures and was likely to take universities closer to the commercial or corporate organizational model and hence would by extension mean that developing effective internal systems as a waystage would be crucially important (Roger King, 1995).

Educating the university as a whole and promoting internationalization

All interviewees claim to play a missionary role in educating the university as a whole about internationalization. The international team feels it is their responsibility to create enthusiasm for internationalization, to make academic departments aware of opportunities and to guide these departments in the structuring and implementation of appropriate international responses.

*The role of an office like ours is to apply in terms of **facilitation** and in terms of **introduction** to make them **aware** of various things in terms of complementary resourcing. (...) that kind of **brokering** that kind of (...) **enlightening** in many ways I think does light a few sparks to catch flame. W1*

In devolved structures, given the nature of knowledge sharing, building a learning environment is difficult and without a shared knowledge of the current activity and plans it is difficult to become more strategic.

The disadvantage of that is trying to know what in all countries you are doing in all areas. Managing that is proving to be more difficult although we are at the very early stages of it. E1

Under a devolved operation it is clearly important to manage organizational learning and knowledge management. At Northern, they tackled this issue through faculty get-togethers that allowed cross-faculty dissemination of knowledge.

... we've started to get international groups within each of the faculties so if you take for example health and life sciences faculty we have got sort of an international champion from each of the institutes and you've got a group that meets on a quarterly basis. We've just introduced these sort of faculty get-togethers to bring the three faculties together to share information and look at cross cutting opportunities or projects which we need to work together on. N1

In some cases, the international funding of certain professional services posts was seen explicitly as a way of educating and leading the service into internationalization.

... we fund three posts in Admissions out of our budget - you know we give quite a lot of money out to different professional services in order to help them internationalize. W1

Developing the international culture

With the clear difficulty of effective formal structures, a shared culture is even more important so that each academic department and professional service shares an approach to internationalization and acts in a coherent manner towards, for example, the needs of international students on the home campus.

... it's coming effectively bottom up kind of across all streams because one of the core elements right from the word go and the first one that's up there is embedding it in everything we do (...) it's culture, it's everything we do which means students, staff, everything. C2

Developing a shared international culture adds a layer of complexity to any major international activity. Involving a wide range of staff and stakeholders is complex. In the case of developing campuses overseas, this complexity translates into a considerable expense because of the need to involve all sections of the university community in a distant development.

The airlines must have thought they'd hit a goldmine when we had campuses, because we really flew people backwards and forwards. Heads of schools, members of schools, research teams, student union, people engaged in administration and management at all levels, the council when there were celebrations, we went over properly and did it with twenty or so of us. I think we threw money as well as effort into it. E2

The educational and challenge role of the international team was often repeated. The emphasis was on the need to encourage the development of internationalization and strategic thought within academic units rather than trying to impose this way of thinking from outside the faculty structure.

... getting people to think about where are the best countries, getting people to think about the way research is changing and to try and be a bit more strategic about it within their groups. N1

This process, to be effective, needed to find ways of integrating into existing faculty structures and therefore to become part of their business as usual.

... so what we are trying to do, and you know it's an interesting process, is to think how do you get a more integrated approach to a particular country or region and particularly when so much stuff is bottom up and so I think we're getting there now. N1

However, this learning and educating process always seemed to be within the confines of the university itself. There were no mentions on bringing in outside expertise or encouraging colleagues to develop their own internationally focused skills through attendance at conferences or training programmes. N3 mentioned the only example where respondents referred to learning from external organisations – in this case from the marketing professionalism of an external partner.

They were very polished. They had a huge staff as well. One of the things that woke Northern up too, I think earlier than other universities, was the possibilities of professionalizing. I remembered talking (...) to some of my colleagues at other universities and they were saying, "We don't need professional help. We understand our markets. We understand," and I was thinking, "Oh no you don't. No, you do not understand your markets", in the way that L did. There was a huge amount that you had to learn. N3

The communication and encouragement element of the international team is far from easy and E1 complains that through a staff survey he found that:

Nobody has read the strategic plan. I am exaggerating but 15% of the University had not. E1

But getting the communication right has multiple benefits:

It helps with brand awareness. Helps with your international student recruitment. It helps with your engagement and, because outward mobility is at a series of different levels, it helps with your research strategy and business engagement. E1

The ability to build a sense of enthusiasm for the international work and to encourage productive engagement with the processes across the academic and professional structures within universities is clearly a key part of an effective strategic approach. This is a major concern for those interviewed and takes a considerable portion of their time and energy. All interviewees stressed that the major concern was to engage the academic teams in the strategic international work. This is strongly related to the preceding capability of setting up reliable processes but is also distinct in needing a different set of micro-skills on the part of the international team. Getting this process right magnifies the productive engagement of the university using the relatively limited resource of the international team to leverage a disproportionate effect throughout the university. This is a major contribution to the competitiveness of a university in the international sphere.

Developing sustainable and reputation enhancing partnerships

Apart from reliable processes and effective engagement across the university, the single most important capability reported is the ability to create sustainable and reputation enhancing partnerships. This fits well with the strategic network theory discussed in the literature review where securing your place in a new overseas environment involves integrating with a new 'strategic net' and, as discussed by Butler and Soontiens (2015), is a crucial set of university capabilities.

Close relationship with external parties

The disproportionate influence of a single relationship is reported in many of the interviews and helps the strategic internationalization process in multiple ways. Very often, a major international project such as a campus evolves out of an alumnus or staff relationship.

Then I had a conversation with the then head or president of the Beijing University of Post Intelligent Communications(...) He suggested the possibility of a giant campus, and we looked at various sites in Beijing so that was a possibility (...) At that point we started to look around and one of the things that happened was Henry X, one of the 2 people on the faculty who were keen on this, had connections with W and so did the then Chinese minister for higher education, Y,(...) We were keen to talk to W because Y as minister was a former president of W (...) the other man in question, Michael Z, also had particular links and X told us they were interested in a link. N3

Similarly, the Country M the king was thought to be a key factor in the concept for Eastern 's campus in Country M:

Country M,I don't think it's a folk tale at all, but of course the Country M n king was a Eastern alumni in the beginning(...)That was certainly a connection and that connectivity came out. E2

Research focus

To be internationally engaged can be a significant contribution to one of the most frequently expressed capabilities of the universities studied - that of producing world-class research. Research was mentioned very frequently as a prime motivating activity and source of reputation throughout all the interviews and is an integral part of the relationship and partnership building activities. N2 explains the contribution of international activity to research by saying that we have now moved past the point where much research of world class value is done within a single country; and that when a problem crosses borders there is likely to be different kinds of information in different places. This capability therefore becomes a clear priority both for the international strategy and the strategic approach of the university as a whole.

... in Rwanda there are significant problems with cattle because during the genocide most or all of the native cattle were killed and eaten (...) and European cattle are not coping well with the tropical climate (...) any research done to solve the veterinary problems of these cattle will simultaneously need to draw upon the local knowledge of the parasites and the climate and so on and so forth and the circumstances in which the animals are used, and also has to draw upon the knowledge of what European cattle are used to and the kind of conditions they have genetically been programmed as it were to deal with in terms of selective breeding. N2

There was widespread recognition that the importance of research had increased and that universities had realized that the process of securing research partnership and funding, which had long been seen as a 'lone scholar' type pursuit, needed managing.

I think for research as a whole, although it still is bottom up, there is a much more bigger strategic driver than there was in the past and it's a much more managed process. N1

However, this perceived need to centralize and to strategically coordinate research partnerships and fund applications was a balancing act with the

parallel need to ensure accountability and ownership at the point of activity i.e. the researchers themselves.

... we wanted to really push on the research side of our international strategy but we needed to give more ownership to faculties to do that and we also need you know to make our research and (...) committee accountable for making sure we are delivering on that agenda as well and I think within the international committee we had the international student stuff as always. N1

Closely related to the ability to create powerful research alliances is the ability to raise research funding which in itself partly depends on the partnership building function as the acquisition of 'critical mass' or substantial research potency through networks of research centres.

... because getting research funding has become much more competitive and because we are looking, everyone is looking, to build up their critical mass. N1

Developing sustainability in partnerships

Sustainable partnership development involves a considerable effort over time. In partnership, development there is an element of *success-breeds-success* so the more partnerships a university has the easier it becomes to build more. There is also a reputational angle whereby the universities associated with impact on reputation. This has led to prolific 'MoU signing' in some cases whereby partnerships are collected but rarely fully developed. Western is clearly aware of this and is resistant to signing an MoU too early in the process.

... we don't sign MoUs anymore like that now we're in the position where we get a lot of people coming wanting to sign MoUs and we don't do it. W1

There is a balance to be struck between supporting the development of partnerships that could become substantial and resisting the 'MoU badge' approach.

*... if an individual academic wants to have a partnership with somebody we will **support** it but we will support it only if they can make a justifiable case as to why it's got some wider impact. W1*

N1 referred to this MoU culture as a sort of cultural relations activity and also stressed the need to move beyond this approach into deeper more sustainable relationships.

The sorts of partnerships we want to have I think more importantly it's about how we develop and use those partnerships because I think there are so many institutions that see partnerships as some sort of cultural relations activity. (...) But actually really what we are expecting from each of our partnerships is you know we are looking for research collaboration, we are looking for dual PhDs, we looking to make sure that people do start applying for bigger research grants and it builds up. N1

The need to develop a more strategic approach to partnership development was stressed at Western in relation to the use of a very limited resource – the VC's time.

*... if you want to send your VC off around the world it's an awful lot of effort or you have to be careful you can turn up to a place and meet and greet and whatever and go home with nothing or nothing happens (...) a **lot** of ground work has to be put in before the vice chancellor is brought in. W1*

Research cooperation is clearly not easy to foster and sustain. Various techniques were reported which helped in this respect. N1 describes how this capability to run international research can be developed and sustained through partnerships that involve co-supervision of doctoral students.

... our sort of model if you like for partnerships is really around trying to connect the PIs at this institution and the overseas institution, and actually we invest in studentships- what we are trying to do is have co-supervision arrangements, dual PhDs at quite an early stage because if you've got a PhD student working across the institutions then it keeps the cooperation on track. N1

However, funding PhD is both expensive and a long-term approach to developing research cooperation. The university therefore looks for ways they can share the cost or mitigate the expense.

... to have co-supervision doing dual PhD arrangements is very good (...) with the research institutions (...) We send our students to work in the lab for 2 years (...) and the research institutes tend to have money so again they will pay. Our principle for operating is that we will pay for the costs of the students whilst they are in the UK, the partner pays when they are overseas. N1

Building the capability to nurture international research links and to build larger research engagements across borders is a complex capability that has several components. There is the ability to horizon scan and spot potential opportunities, to identify potential projects at home that could be broadened out, the need to make colleagues aware of opportunities, an ability to create the appropriate motivations and above all sensitivity and tact in leading a horse to water and also encouraging it to drink. Likewise providing travel grants may not help because these are already available through other channels. Carefully balanced incentives, such as access to schemes that can provide doctoral students as well as awareness raising opportunities, requires skills to be properly executed.

... well actually all the investment for partnerships is actually being made by the faculties and I think you know what we're really trying to do here is to devolve things down as much as possible ... N1

Central started off by offering small incentives through seed-corn grants to their own researchers. Over time they realized that this would help grow potentially larger and more important research projects but that it may be

difficult further down the line to secure the sort of research funding that would make the project sustainable into the future. They then started thinking about the likely funding sources before investing in the project at an early stage.

Now we're at this point where we're beginning to say, "Let's fund fewer, but try to make sure that the things that we do fund, we already have an idea of where that's sustainable funding's coming from," whether it's a foundation or an NGO or it's in partnership with industry. C3

As reported above, the international offices are playing both a facilitative and an educating role.

It's the structure in the university always about pushing things down, getting people to think about where are the best countries, getting people to think about the way research is changing and to try and be a bit more strategic about it within their groups. N1

Developing the capability to nurture international research links is a core concern of all the universities in this study. It is expressed as the primary international objective in Western 's strategic plan and is an expressed priority in Eastern 's and Northern 's strategic plans. Building research partnerships takes time and patience as well as engagement from those concerned. Each time a valued researcher or connection is engaged that also adds to the credibility of the whole project.

You build one block at a time. "This is an area of strength that we've got," and that sort of persuades another piece to come into the picture, if you like, and then you can build across that. C3

Critical mass was often mentioned with respect to research funding – getting an impressive coalition or research institutions together attracts interest and builds the likelihood of success.

It's how you persuade those groups that there is an opportunity, (...) they're not going to come to us and talk to us just as the Central University, but they will come and talk to us if we're eighteen universities from around the world and maybe a few more, and they've got us all together in a room where they can actually see. C3

Building the network

The ability to build effective partnerships of this nature needs considerable knowledge and connectivity.

We have a Centre for Climate Change and Economic Policy (...) and the director for that sits on all sorts of governmental panels. It's about saying to him, "Actually, what does your centre do on these bits about urbanization about food or water security that might have some cross-over with these people who are looking at global animal health, these people here who are looking at agriculture? (...) If you like, where we're trying to get to is to develop a kind of premiere team football club. C3

The accounts that the interviewees give around how research relationships are nurtured underline the complexity of the role in trying to develop research linkages and build on these. At Northern, they feel that global university networks are not of much help as relevant experts are widely dispersed but Central particularly values its membership of the World University Network (WUN), which is a research-focused global network of universities.

What we've done at Central is we're building capacity. (...) sector hooks, which are meant to be more about knowledge transfer of areas, so we have one for food and nutrition, for example. Water at Central has a hook. There's also elements of nutrition. Where we're at is we're building that critical mass of expertise (...) We're deliberately looking for output-driven academics who have a profile that will help to promote the university. Using that, then, to say to the WUN partners, "We have these people involved. Do you have people of a similar (...) similar leading researchers that you would like to bring to it?" Then, once we've, again, developed the next layer of critical mass, (...)when you talk to those researchers, they say, "Yes, I'm very happy to do that, but I also have these links in Africa or in India, and can I bring these people in? Because if we're going to talk about climate change or food security, then we absolutely need to be involving these contacts that we have in Tanzania or Botswana. It's good to use the WUN to have this snowball effect and to gather a bit of momentum. C3

Again, the international offices are making judgments not only about the quality of the researchers they have but also about their ability to deliver outputs that would be valued as part of a greater team.

Clearly, different international teams favour different mechanisms to develop their networks and access to potential research partners. However, the ability to do this effectively and to engage the relevant researchers in the process is critical to the ability to build the critical mass that is necessary to secure both substantial funding and reputational benefit.

Reputation

Part of the complexity of arranging such partnerships is the difficulty that every institution is trying to work with those higher up in the league tables and the more desirable partners may look down at their suitors. The difficulty of trying to work with institutions ranked higher than your own is also reflected in the discussions at Central:

We know that a lot of universities out there, especially in Asia, will say, "Where are you in the league tables". C3

The interviewees reported various strategies to deal with this basic issue. These involve spotting the kernel of what could be a larger project and gradually building up around this. Sometimes, it may be a particular one-to-one relationship that exists, as in the case of Northern leveraging a star ophthalmology researcher who was a Northern graduate to build a wider engagement with HK University which otherwise would have been difficult to court as an institution.

we don't want to partner with institutions that are not in the top you know the Russell Group equivalent say in each of those countries. (...) cold calling doesn't really work for an institution like Northern. Its tap on the door of Hong Kong University at VP level probably won't work with Northern because we're not good enough but actually with HK University we set up a really good relationship; (...) we've got somebody in ophthalmology, a real star researcher in ophthalmology in HK is a Northern graduate and also worked at Northern, so actually through that relationship we've been able to build wider connections with HK University. N1

Central used its connections in a similar way to build bridges out of a climate change and economic policy initiative. This involves a clear sense of the resources available at the home institution - the researchers that are available, what their work concerns and how they rank or are likely to be perceived by their peers.

We know that a lot of universities out there, especially in Asia, will say, "Where are you in the league tables," before they.... The only way we can counteract that is to share a holistic view of what we have on offer, and that means talking to the academics here. C3

N3 reported that he was able to leverage the aspirations of his partners to help create the Country C campus.

We had a number of things which just made life easier. Not necessarily with senate and with council initially, but longer term they did. That was the fact that X wanted to move to S and L wanted to go into Country C. You put these 2 things together and we had 2 very strong partners, as it were, who had a motive for doing this as well as we did. N3

All those involved in nurturing large projects report needing a great deal of tact and diplomacy, as well as using whatever motivating circumstances they could gather.

Yeah, there was. That is a diplomatic mission in itself where you have to reassure all along the way and even if you have a plan out there, you're drip feeding the plan into the system because the collegiate side of the faculty is going to take longer to catch on. N3

The interviewees made it clear that nurturing the research culture towards bigger, better and more international is a complex process that takes considerable expertise to do well and considerable time to see the results. The interviewees each outlined approaches to the task that differed in important respects, such as the focus on established global university networks or not. In competitive theory, such complex processes are prime levers for creating competitive advantage that is not easily imitated. The capability to be able to spot potential research projects and researchers and to match these to appropriate partners so that they can be grown into substantial research programmes that will secure sustainable funding and build reputation is a key capability for research intensive universities and clearly is a major priority for the international teams in this study. Again, the complexity of the process and the difficulty of accessing and nurturing

appropriate partners make this a complex and difficult to imitate process that can help secure considerable competitive advantage for universities.

Level 2 Capabilities

Developing the international student experience

... we really have a duty to make sure that every student who comes is transformed for the good by the experience. N2

All interviewees expressed considerable concern for the international environment on the home campus.

The second thing we're trying to do is create a truly international environment within the university itself with a balance of – we haven't achieved yet – a number of different nationalities but all sharing the culture and affecting the curriculum. N2

Michael expresses the view that Northern wants to actively work to broaden the minds of home students towards internationalization and away from mono-lingualism and mono-culturalism.

So we are also working on the assumption that for British students and indeed for students from other countries with a similar sort of background to Britain's mono-lingualism is a disability, mono-culturalism is dangerous and so (...) we're looking to introduce opportunities for language learning into the curriculum – we've got a plan currently going through the various planning processes for introducing during the year the availability of Mandarin for every non-clinical degree. N2

A welcoming campus environment is seen as a crucial part of the international mix, but this should be the starting point of a mix of international which includes all aspects of student life.

... it's the city that it's in and the fact that it's a great atmosphere and that students have a great time here it does tend to come down to the way we are integrating teaching and research in a very real way for students on programmes and the inter-disciplinarity of what we are doing in learning and teaching and in research but in a sense as well that sits then within internationalization. C2 & C1

A major part of the provision of an international experience is the ability to promote mobility of students so that they spend periods at overseas locations away from the home campus. The Eastern team has managed to attain a relatively high percentage of outward mobility and claims that the campuses in Country M and Country C help in that they build the confidence of the students to try a period abroad.

Everybody talks about the campuses. It gives those who are less confident at travel (...) I was doing some work on outward mobility and the categories of students that went, and you're thinking of those who perhaps haven't got the background or the socio-economic grouping or whatever to go off by

themselves to U21, whereas if you and your mates are going to Country M for a term that's having your hand held, and the same people you might have seen in your engineering, you might see there. I think that made a very good step for our home students. E2

However, there are difficulties in facilitating mobility.

... there are sticking points and the sticking points typically are in schools and departments where the curriculum doesn't allow students to have long periods out or it's difficult for them to find an exact fit and match with curriculum. E4

It is clear that mobility is not possible for all students and so the claim that internationalization is beneficial to all students needs to be maintained throughout all home campus activities. N2 from Northern felt that the future lies more in reaching out with distance learning than in mobility outwards or inwards itself.

... we are very committed to that, the third element is to say that the future lies not in bringing students into the country but in taking education out to the people who want it. N2

Ensuring sustainable student recruitment

To a certain extent, one of the most important core elements of international strategy, the recruitment of international students, is taken a little for granted.

I am responsible for getting full time degree students to the university internationally ... I think if we're really honest about it that's not really a massive part of what we would ever talk about under our internationalization strategy, sometimes to my great frustration because if I don't deliver. E4

Clearly each university has targets for international students as they are central to revenue predictions and therefore budgeting.

... there are recruitment targets, I mean for example to get to 4000 international non-EU students by 2015. W1

But there was a general lack of attention given to this aspect in the discussions. This is possibly because research intensive universities are getting a healthy number of international students and the marketing and development processes have been well established and run to a certain extent without requiring major senior leadership involvement.

... within each of those to have a certain target and mostly that was done in terms of student recruitment through market share and where Central was particularly successful was in taught Postgrad recruitment where it was 2nd or 3rd in the UK in terms of its market share. Very high actually in terms of what it wanted to bring and it didn't mind if that slipped a little bit as it wanted to bring up PGR and UG to an extent because they didn't have a massive undergrad department. C1&2

But generally, the strategic emphasis of the international teams was not on student recruitment itself but more 'interesting' aspects of internationalization.

While I still think that recruitment is very much at the center in the sense that if you don't get recruitment you don't have the income to do more interesting stuff. E1

For universities with campuses, the picture is more complex both in terms of coordinating marketing and student recruitment activity and in avoiding contradictory messages and objectives.

... and in terms of managing relationships and working with colleagues the last thing they want is for us to cannibalise the kind of number that they worked very hard to get so I think inter campus transfer mobility is something that we are working on and again it's moved on a great deal in recent years but it's not as straight forward as it should be. E4

In common with other internationalization issues, the international team works hard to build engagement from the academic teams.

... and again it depends on individuals and some schools are just much better at it than others - we are better... so my biggest frustration at the moment is that I cannot get engagement from engineering as you know there are critical faculty. I've tried high routes, medium routes, grass roots level contacts and for whatever reason I can't get people to buy-in but again from a pure recruitment perspective there are massive missed opportunities in engineering and we've just taken our eye off things completely. E4

Another quite important concern was over-reliance on particular markets with Country C usually singled out as the single biggest contributor of students.

*... but you know a third of our international student intake is from Country C and despite all of the economic demographic every indicator going says that that will level off but it's not levelling off and for us because we've got an overseas campus in N and it looks like we're going to have another one in S and the volume of incoming mobility from Country C for us is just going to get more and more (...) I think in terms of longer term impact on student experience for **all** audience groups it's not good for us to have so many students from Country C. E4*

There is concern that internationalization strategies have moved too far towards the opposite extreme away from the old recruitment strategies and now there is not enough concern for the details of the recruitment strategy.

... she couldn't believe that there were no more specific pure recruitment targets stated whereas you know you could go to another university with less evolved strands of internationalization and they probably would talk very very clearly and openly about you know very specific recruitment targets, possibly even by study level and possibly even by break down. E4

Managing campuses and offices overseas

For those universities that run campuses at a distance there was a whole new capability to develop – that of running academic activity at a distance. Again, this capability was built up through a learning process over time.

... I think we in hindsight (...) could have done better, lots of things that we learned and the longer we are out there the more we learn not just about relations but actually about how you manage relationships across 6000 miles (...) - we've got better structures, we've got again as an illustration when I went out to part of the team to set up the campus the message was very much like you're going and we don't expect to see you back until you've done your job so this was an off you go come back when you've finished. It was never said like that but that was the feel; no discussion, no provision, no budget in terms of frequent visits back and things like that, whereas now you know I'm moving out to Country M next year and you know my expectation would be that I would be back to the UK four times a year. E3

As with all processes, the learning curve effects are seen as important.

I don't think we'd appreciated how important that was; you know we've got a much more regular flow of people and all of those things so what became set as an old pattern for the earlier adopters of a sort of slightly arm's length relationship was less strongly set for the later adopters I think. E3

N1 describes how over time the set of relationships between the home and overseas campuses evolved. The core structure was that faculties had responsibility for their subject area whether that be in the UK, Country C or Country M. However, the basic model needed adaptation according to circumstances so when a department in the overseas campus was too small to function alone it was combined and this then led to ambiguous structures.

*... we set up an international studies programme in Country C which was a mixture of history and politics so there's the division of international studies which belongs to both history and politics or belongs to **neither** history and politics - do you see what I mean. E3*

By and large the unified faculty structures across three campuses seem to work for Eastern.

I mean the school level is mostly straight forward, the international studies one is probably the oddity, the faculty level is a bit more (...) awkward and the academic structures I think are probably still better aligned than the (...) administrative structures. E3

Whereas academic structures seemed to integrate fairly well across campuses it was evident that administrative structures did so less well.

... for the overseas international recruitment the structures are very different

so the international officer at the Country C Campus, for example, doesn't have the same remit as the international office here which means that actually international recruitment in Country C is done by the admission office and doesn't have a reporting line. The Country M campus is more direct and it mirrors the UK campus more closely so in that respect it's easier. E4

The home campus professional team has a slightly ambiguous role to play with no direct authority over the campus they are supposed to cooperate with and nurture the recruitment activities of the new campus.

N campus particularly which would have been quite new to international recruitment assuming that they just do whatever we do and that would get students to Country C whereas obviously actually what they need to do is develop a completely different recruitment strategy and targeting strategy, different agents but they're trying to piggy back on everything that we did(...) but they are getting better and I think more experienced. E4

This supportive role clearly takes more resource than had been anticipated and a certain amount of adjustment to the respective roles of each institution as it became clear that the new campus needs more guidance than had been planned.

*... we've got a new senior international officer post in February this year and I made part of that post have responsibility for better liaison as part of the overseas campuses (...) If we want to make sure that activity in a particular market is relatively joined up we have to lead it from here we have to **constantly** be in communication with the colleagues at the overseas offices. E4*

All aspects of setting up and running a new campus are fresh challenges to be faced. There is considerable adaptation to ensure building design conform to local regulations and N3 stresses this for the design of laboratories in particular but also other building processes necessitate a full-time expert located there.

I particularly remember that with bio sciences because the first time we were going onto wet lab stuff and all the difficulties of designing labs and all the health and safety stuff which we had to get involved in. That was interesting too. We had somebody full time out there looking after the building side of it. N3

Working in a joint venture environment meant adapting to considerable differences in cultural and educational approaches necessitating a lot of work in connecting the two and ensuring that each partner's standards were met. This means a very different learning experience for Northern and Eastern.

interestingly in Country C with our XN venture what we're looking at there is a university which is co-founded by two universities with very different cultural and educational backgrounds - XN being the other partner - we overwhelmingly control the curriculum and are responsible for academic standards. However, there are quite a lot of features in assessments and also in the first year where XN has a very significant influence; indeed in the VC (they call it the VC) the president is himself from X. N2

The development of a significant presence overseas consumes an enormous amount of the home campus's resource, especially in terms of senior management but also at other levels of the organization. It adds many complications in the organization of faculty and professional services and is a highly expensive addition to travel and administrative costs. However, operating an overseas campus opens up areas of capability that are simply not available to universities without a significant overseas presence. Knowledge of local systems – regulatory, legal, economic, social and employment - is unlikely to be equaled in any other activity overseas and the ability to integrate into local strategic networks is unlikely to be accessible in other ways. Northern capitalized on these networks not only for the university but for the City of Northern as well.

NE from knowing about our university in S (city) came to me in frustration about Northern city council failing to capitalize on the twinning arrangements between S and Northern. He said, "You, the university, chip in some money, I'll chip in some money, and we'll establish an office in S to promote cross investment between S and Northern", so we did. N3

Cumulative advantage

The international teams made several references to cumulative advantage that accrues as a policy or process is followed over time. This fits closely with both the learning school and capabilities approach strategic theory. These advantages may or may not have been foreseen at the early stages of development. Such advantages are discussed with regard to having established a campus in Eastern's case.

The fact of having a campus situated in Country M and in Country C allows Eastern to compete for research funding it would otherwise not be eligible for. An example of how this has contributed to Eastern's research strength is the Crops for the Future project that was moved from the UK to the Country M campus and accesses Country M research funding. The project researches under-utilized food crops. The centre also houses the first doctoral training centre for Eastern Country M campus (the home campus has c 19). Another advantage of hosting the development here is the climate advantage of housing greenhouses in a semi-tropical environment which need far less heating costs than a UK situation would allow.

... although in that sense we would have an edge over others because by virtue of being in Country M, in Country C we've got access to Country M research funding and I've got people there who know how those systems work and we've got people leading on the research side. We've got a vice provost for research. E3

The campus also allows access to know-how and local strategic networks – a crucial part of developing integration into overseas value networks.

... so we do have research support officers at the campuses and the people there will have experience of local funding. Also of course, and this is particularly true in Country M, we've employed quite a number of Country M n

academics who are used to getting funding from their other roles. In Country C, (...) we have appointed quite a lot of returning C (nationals) so again you've got a sense of people who if they don't know their way round the system they know how to find out. E3

There is also evidence that having overseas campuses contributes to know-how which in itself is a competitive strength. In the first place this local expertise can help navigate local issues more effectively, such as the ability to manage funding applications locally.

... if you say actually well you need to contribute towards driving research activity in Country M and Country C so that moves you to think beyond the UK context it's then a much easier step to go and think oh yeah and you also need to think about how you might get research grants in Korea or Brazil. E3

However, an additional benefit is that competencies thus gained may be generalizable and thus provide a competitive advantage beyond the local context. This is a cumulative and perhaps unforeseen advantage.

I think we have that good combination of people we've seconded from here who are academic leaders on the research side and locally employed people who understand the system and because we're there we can access funds that others can't, but I think it gives you a sense that you can now go looking elsewhere, I mean go and talk to the PSG in Brazil or go and talk to DST in India. E3

This unique position also draws attention and sets Eastern apart in research funding bids allowing distinctive prominence in UK bids as well as access to Country C and Country M funding.

"Our network of campuses across three countries provides us with a unique platform for research. Our Energy Technologies Research Institute (ETRI) is concentrating its international activity in Country C, and at our N campus we have recently launched the Centre for Sustainable Energy Technologies (CSET), which is researching new and renewable energy solutions for building design and construction" Eastern Internationalisation p 5

E3 also offers evidence of emergent benefits of having established campuses overseas in helping embed internationalization throughout the University. This is a further cumulative advantage that helps to leverage capabilities further.

... some of this may have been easier because of the campuses as if you're pushing and saying to the graduate school that it's not just here but you're also responsible for Country M and Country C ; and in research and graduate services you've also got a responsibility there and that may encourage people to engage but it also makes it easier to start saying well actually it's not just Country M and Country C it's internationally. E3

And the contribution to staff excellence is commented on in the strategic plan. What does a campus in Country M and Country C contribute to staff excellence?

"An equally cosmopolitan body of staff bring an international perspective to teaching, learning and research." Eastern Internationalisation p12

Do capabilities match the resources required?

The Dynamic Capabilities approach assumes an order relationship between the capabilities leveraged and deployed and the resources that are key to the institution. The resources identified by the experts interviewed and refined through the VRIN framework (Pan *et al*, 2007) are as follows:

- high quality students;
- high quality staff;
- people skills;
- organizational culture;
- international experience;
- reputation;
- investment; and
- research funding.

This study identified eight key resources for a successful international strategy. Normally in Dynamic Capabilities theory we would expect the capabilities to be prioritized to reflect the importance of the resources. In the accounts of the capabilities that the university leverages and seeks to develop, the experts interviewed mentioned many of these. It was clear that they saw high quality students, organizational culture, international experience, reputation and research funding as important and devoted considerable amounts of their time and energy to developing capabilities that support the acquisition of these vital resources.

However, there was much less attention paid in the interviews to the acquisition and nurturing of high quality staff and people skills. Clearly, each university has a strategy for the attraction of high level competent staff at all levels but it does not seem to be strongly related to the international role.

Throughout the discussions there was little mention of learning from outside the university. Northern clearly saw the professionalism of their partner, L Education, in fields such as marketing and business development as important. There were some mentions of processes and approaches improving over time and mentions of the educational role of the international team towards the whole university. However, apart from the L example, there were no explicit mentions of learning and development as an international team and no mentions of using resources outside the university for learning, training and development.

Investment was most often mentioned by Northern in the context of its Country C campus but it was also mentioned by Western in terms of the creation of the International Western theme.

Clearly one of the biggest issues faced by the international teams is how best to arrange processes to support widespread engagement in internationalization and place responsibility and accountability at the most efficient place in the organization, but also remain efficient and effective at strategic decision making. This seems to be a dynamic balance that depends on many factors – most of them deeply human. Getting it right means a considerable advantage for the institution in its ability to act strategically yet with widespread buy-in. In all cases, it consumed a large part of the resources of the international team. In some cases, it was clearly problematic and acted as a substantial brake on action.

Throughout the interviews there was little discussion of online work with the notable exception of Northern. The interviews were conducted at the end of 2012 which was ‘the year of the MOOC’ and yet it was only Northern that discussed online and distance education as part of the international mix.

The interviews revealed a significant difference in attention to the Level 1 capabilities over the Level 2 set of capabilities. This can perhaps be explained by the levels of challenge involved in the processes and culture of internationalization within universities as well as the partnership seeking ability. It may also be influenced by what is considered new and exciting in the sector – away from what was considered rather commercial and old-fashioned i.e. student recruitment. The comment *that “ ... if you don't get recruitment you don't have the income to do more interesting stuff ...”* (E1) is rather telling in this context. This then leads us into the argument about the search for distinctiveness in strategy, for example: Eastern’s campus system, Northern’s online presence, and Western’s International Western campaign.

However, this lack of strategic attention to fundamental resources is worrying and a source of risk. In the conceptual world of disruptive innovation, it would suggest areas of core competence that are subject to potential disruption. And in the normal run of competitive strategy it also suggests areas that are subject to being outmaneuvered.

Developing capabilities for the future – distinctiveness?

Throughout the interviews a number of motivations and goals were expressed. Normally these were not necessarily all-institution goals but milestones on the way. Occasionally a larger goal was expressed. Sean mentioned the Western KPI of getting into the top 100 in the world by 2015, a goal they thought very far-fetched at the time of the interview with him in 2012 – but at the stage of writing this up, Western has achieved this goal.

... there is a KPI for example that by 2015 we should be in the top 100 in the world rankings. Unfortunately there's another 500 universities (...) but again we're making progress on that we are now in the top 200 in both rankings and going up each year. W1

What are the other universities aiming for? In this section I explore how each university is trying to achieve its own distinctive goals.

The development of new capabilities

In Christenson's analysis(2000), genuine disruptive innovation can only occur in incumbent organizations through the creation of an autonomous sub-unit within an institution. Novel and potentially next-generation capabilities can be developed in this way. The externalization of international functions can fulfill this role. At Northern, the setting up of a purely online teaching function may have been impossible with the current staffing structures at the University:

... the tutors are all employed by L - and that works well because we recruit students from all round the world. We get good tutors and the whole support structure is very good. You couldn't do that with the staff here and I think that's where it kind of works well. N1

Similarly, at Western, the establishment of an I (Company) implant for pathway students leading up to their university study would perhaps have been difficult to achieve internally as I (Company) has different staffing structures and role descriptions that suit this level of teaching but are otherwise difficult to achieve within a conventional university.

The establishment of XN campus also follows this logic. The model allowed the granting of a dual degree - Northern and a Country C degree that other campus models have not been able to achieve. The establishment of this partnership follows for Northern a greater strategic imperative that responds to changing patterns of international teaching. N2 sees a clear evolution of activities from those centred on bringing people to Northern to ones around taking education to the world. For this reason, they have developed a strong online capacity in order to innovate for the future.

... future lies in, not in bringing students into the country but in taking education out to the people who want it. L3 12.27

Externalised or internalised capabilities

Externalised	Blend	Internalised
	XN <i>Northern</i>	N <i>Eastern</i>
Northern Online		
I (COMPANY) <i>Western</i>		

Agents <i>All Universities</i>	Sannam S4 (a facilitative structure in India) Agent conference	Local Office <i>Eg Western Bangalore</i>
Confucius Institute <i>Northern</i>		Language provision

In the case of off-shore campuses, the disruptive innovation argument would be that students who prefer to travel to a providing country's home campus are likely to inhabit a different value network than those that seek an international education in their home country. Therefore, an appropriate response to this value network would be an independent campus with flexibility to meet the expectations of this value network. At this point it is constructive to compare the Eastern approach to the Northern approach. The Northern approach was to create a new institution with independent governance as a joint venture with a similar institution to itself. The Eastern approach is to replicate its home campus to the greatest extent possible overseas and to impose the same governance and values on its 'clone'. Under Christensen's analysis it is more likely that the Northern version should prosper and grow in its value network. Eastern's approach is sustainable innovation whereas Northern's may prove to be disruptive.

Externalised projects are quite limited with Northern demonstrating the strongest use of this approach. The capabilities built up through this approach are quite distinctive – Western's use of a substantial pathway provider housed in an independent building on the Western campus is unique in this set of four universities, as is Northern's relationship with L which provided at crucial junctures the online function, investment and senior leadership. However, as these capabilities are often developed at arm's length it is difficult to know how they will evolve – if L was to back away from Northern would its online provision collapse?

Distinctive Dynamic Capabilities

All four universities shared a concern with the level 1 capabilities and saw these as critical to their universities international future.

As discussed, the level of complexity and human nature of the mechanisms involved in the establishment and running of reliable processes and the embedding of an international culture throughout the university make considerable demands on the skills of the international teams. Therefore, they are themselves a source of distinctiveness and inimitability within a broad framework of similar aspirations towards effective consultation and decision making; knowledge sharing and devolution of authority.

All four universities also shared a similar level of concern with the third level 1 capability of partnership building. In common with the first two, the

development of partnership building capability is highly prioritized. Each university has also developed a distinct approach to the establishment and building of prestigious and productive research focused networks which may or may not utilize existing networks, such as the W Network for Central and U Network for Eastern. The ability of campuses to play a role in the location and funding of research, as well as credibility with local partners, stakeholders and funding agencies, is crucially important for Northern and Eastern.

Of the Level 2 capabilities, all four universities stressed the importance of creating the international experience on the home campus and securing sustainable student recruitment. Northern and Western stressed this aspect perhaps most of all

“An international dimension permeates all aspects of University life. Through our networks and selective partnerships, we welcome international peoples and cultures to Western and export our research and scholarship to the World. We actively support the academic and social integration of international staff and students.” Western Strategic Plan p.7

The final capability of managing campuses overseas is unique to Northern and Eastern and also distinctive for each of them as the basic campus model differs considerably between the two.

Bounded reality

This study clearly demonstrates that achieving a coherent and integrated international strategy takes considerable skill and expertise and is highly demanding on key resources – particularly that of staff. There are strong limits to what can be achieved and a major undertaking such as developing a new campus can only be achieved slowly and with great care. In more than a decade of international activity the four universities have achieved only three major campuses between them and the online capability developed by Northern has not been matched by any of the others. To undertake a major internationalization objective such as this is the work of a decade and should not be undertaken lightly as it is likely to sap resource away from other potential endeavors.

Contribution to knowledge and conclusion

Returning to my fictional character, Professor Brown, what has she concluded from this set of discussions with her peers. She has taken note of the absolute importance of getting internal processes right and ensuring that both consultative and decision making processes are appropriate and effective but at the same time she is aware that this is a game of diminishing returns and that a Pareto point of best compromise needs to be established as the danger of becoming predominantly inwardly focused is very real. She has noted the importance of developing the capability of being able to develop appropriate partnerships and the added capacity a concrete presence in important target markets can add to know-how and relationships to this end as well as the credibility this can add to the ability to build partnerships and access research

funding. She has also noted the ongoing danger that what the university is good at will continue to be a source of advantage and that focusing on what is difficult or topical can mean that the crucially important areas of sustainable recruitment of the best possible students and the creation of a truly international experience on campus are starved of strategic attention. Finally, she notes that she is taking on a leading role in an organization that largely depends on the knowledge and skills of its staff for its future and that recruitment of appropriately talented people is the starting point for this but the development of key skills in this respect is potentially the most important investment the university can make.

Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusion

In the previous chapter, I presented the corpus of data and used my theoretical framework to analyse it. At the beginning of this study I lay out an argument that context of higher education in the United Kingdom that seeks to work strategically across national boundaries is challenging and becoming more so. The recent EU referendum result compounds an already complex picture of guarded globalisation whereby the barriers and threats to cross border work are increasing and competition for the best students and staff as well as for the most prestigious partnerships and alliances is stiff and becoming stiffer. Added to this, higher education as a sector is confronting significant technological innovation which allied to changing stakeholder expectations makes plausible the threat of disruptive innovation of the type that has transformed the music and publishing industries to the detriment of many incumbent actors in the sector.

Contemporary research-intensive universities have a complex and demanding challenge in responding strategically to the opportunities and challenges of the environment they work in. This study of experienced practitioners in four such UK universities demonstrates a considerable variation in how they respond to these challenges. Although all the universities studied prioritise the development of similar capabilities of reliable internal processes, education of the university as a whole in internationalization, and the development of sustainable and prestigious partnerships, they do so in very distinct ways. This may be a result of the inherent complexity and therefore the multiplicity of choices within each area of capability and may also reflect deeply entrenched values and philosophies.

In this context, we would expect to see those involved in strategy design and implementation in universities to be greatly concerned with the positioning of their institutions with respect to a competitive market for higher education and with respect to the possibility of alternative models of higher education that could supplant them. For this reason, I started my research project with strategic theory that addresses these issues such as Michael Porter's industry organisation work or Clayton Christensen's work on disruptive innovation. Instead, the evidence from this study suggests that internally focussed activity accounts for a very large part of the preoccupations of the international teams and significant externally focussed activity tended to be concentrated in very few projects such as campuses with long gestation times and the choices made at early stages in these projects help explain the diversity of approach between universities.

Summary of findings and the theoretical basis

This study uses the lens of RBT coupled with Dynamic Capabilities as a lens and focus for an analysis of the motivations, constraints and tools of international teams within universities. One clear advantage of using RBT is

that it makes few prior assumptions about the organisational form or structure which in the case of universities is a problematic issue (Teece, 2010). Any organisation, however loosely coupled or whatever structure it uses to manage its affairs is in need of resources and is thus according to RBT resource driven. In the discussions with the experts a variety of key resources were mentioned and these showed no marked variation between the institutions of the study. All the universities in the study were interested in the best students and staff, and in research funding and prestigious partnerships. Also important was people skills including leadership, reputation, investment and organisational culture. Various writers in RBT have pointed out (Pan et al., 2007) that resources come in various degrees of importance and rarity and the more distinctive the resource sought the more important it becomes as a driver of strategy. To the RBT purist, strategy is all about the securing of sources of valuable resources (Barney et al., 2001). To the universities in the study, international students are a valuable resource but ability to pay the international fee was not the main requirement but rather their academic ability and likelihood of success which is an important contributor to various public measures of success and in turn contributes to reputation. So, it is with RBT which allows us to circumvent the problematic area of unit of analysis and organisational form. If a university is a viable organisational form, then RBT tells us that its survival as an organisation is contingent on its ability to access the resources it needs. This approach offers an answer to a particular issue and bone of contention in the sector which is one of purpose. There has been much debate about what motivates universities – with claims that one extreme or another is the primary driving force be it economic or otherwise. RBT offers a more nuanced approach in that all the key resources are necessary and therefore allows plurality of purpose. Investment is necessary, student fees are necessary as are many other components of a successful research-led university.

RBT has been used extensively in the analysis of strategy. A typical application is reported in Paiva, Roth and Fensterseifer (2007) where manufacturing strategy is analysed according to the ability to construct and deploy both internally focussed and externally focussed knowledge to enhance manufacturing strategy. The development of cross functionality was positively associated with the ability to build and channel internally focussed knowledge and this was more or less strongly associated with the ability to understand and integrate externally focussed knowledge. There are clear parallels with our university world here and the preoccupation already noted with the development of cross-functionality through the building of reliable processes and one important outcome of the manufacturing strategy paper is that this sort of cross-functional integration relates to a resource based orientation. This is important as it suggests that the preoccupation with reliable processes could be seen as an important step on the way to a more effective resource based orientation which in time could lead to a better match between capability development and resources sought in such universities.

This example highlights the close relationship between RBT and various theoretical approaches to the questions of how to secure the vital resources. In fact, this addition to RBT allows a more dynamic model whereby

organisations structure themselves to be adept at securing their key resources. Many studies therefore combine RBT (Hamel, 2002; Hamel and Prahalad, 1994) (Paiva et al., 2008)(Mascarenhas et al., 1998) with competency or capabilities approaches as these then take the 'why' question forward into the 'how' domain. In Butler and Soontiens (2015) the Dynamic Capabilities approach is used to study how universities build connectivity into the 'strategic net' of customers, suppliers, intermediaries and other stakeholders in the target market and document how the understanding of the process allowed Curtin University to move from a rather passive actor within this net to an initiator and pro-active role as creator and leader of a strategic net. I would suggest that the universities in this study could likewise benefit from using the combination suggested in my methodology of RBV and Dynamic Capabilities to better appreciate the key resources they should prioritise and the focus of their energies towards building Dynamic Capabilities that help them secure these resources currently and into the future.

Main research questions – response

My study has been undertaken to find answers to the following research questions:

How do the international teams within universities create and guide international strategies?

- What are their priorities?
- What challenges need to be addressed and how?
- What distinguishes each university's strategy?
- Why do the strategic approaches of each university differ?

The practitioners in this study call attention to all the key resources that a research-intensive university in the UK context seeks – the best staff and students; a set of people skills including leadership; an international experience for students; an appropriate organisational culture and different types of funding for research and development. All of these contribute to the reputation of a university which is clearly of very high importance to all the practitioners. The interviews also call attention to the development of Dynamic Capabilities that allow the universities to be more effective in securing these key resources.

However, the interviews throw light on a set of priorities and pre-occupations that is not proportional to the importance of the resources and the development of Dynamic Capabilities to secure these. Chief amongst these is the development and maintenance of internal processes which occupied the longest parts of the discussions; recurred throughout the conversations and was clearly front of mind for most of the respondents. Second in importance was the ability to build prestigious and effective international partnerships primarily for research activity. The development of the capabilities to recruit the best international students and the development of the international

student experience for all the student body occupied a far lesser amount of the discussion and was given far less attention. The development of the capability to attract the best staff and develop internal skills such as leadership and intercultural ability was hardly mentioned at all.

In this way, the study offers a snapshot of what the international teams see as important and urgent which does not readily map onto the strategies as expressed in the literature of the universities and as may have been expected. It does point very clearly to the challenges faced by the teams and offers various approaches to tackling these challenges. Again, considerable amounts of explanation were offered about how the practitioners engage across the university and build reliable systems and processes as well as how they go about building partnerships.

The organisational nature of a university, whether it is described as a loosely coupled organisation or a combination of a bureaucratic and professional model point to the complexity of structure and thus of processes that must be run through it. Transactional cost theory helps us understand why the bureaucratic component of the university structure, with lower transactional friction struggles with the professional or loosely coupled structure which by dint of its distributed power structures entails higher transactional friction. This is evidenced in the discussions through references to widely distributed sources of funding; the relative autonomous control over time and allocations, especially in research and research related activity of individual academics and the relative autonomy of academic structures within the university. The RBV and Dynamic Capabilities model used in this study throws light on how the international teams struggle with this dynamic and how the very human and political nature of their own capacity to influence and shape is very much front of mind.

This study provides some evidence for why the strategies of the four universities differ. At first sight we would not expect such a variety of approach from four English universities, all in the Russell Group of research-intensive universities, all governed by the same funding and regulatory guidelines, all metropolitan universities outside of London and all with similar reputational aims of moving up the global league tables.

The two universities with significant international campus activity overseas have seen the student numbers on their campuses rise considerably so that taken together the three campuses are now the size of an average British University. The rationale for embarking on campuses was expressed in similar ways – to secure a presence for research and student recruitment in the fastest growing region of higher education in the world. Yet even between these two universities there is considerable difference of approach. The base model for the campuses is entirely different. Northern University entered into a joint venture partnership with an equivalent overseas university producing a more autonomous entity and Eastern University aimed to replicate its own university in its overseas campuses. Northern University claimed a philosophical difference in approach based on its history of nurturing local colleges into universities. However, what is clear is that neither university

could take the risk, or would be allowed by their governance to take the risk, of investing in the infrastructure and both used well-placed contacts, staff, alumni or close partners to develop local solutions to this issue. So, the out-turn of type of partnership may have been happenstance. This chimes with the work quoted earlier in the thesis of Butler and Soontiens (2015) which examines the importance of developing strategic nets in target international markets. New entries to a market need to develop their strategic networks through easily accessible channels.

All the respondents cited the enormous amount of resource, and particularly senior leadership resource, needed to establish a campus. The sheer scale of the demand on for example the Vice Chancellor and Deputy meant that no such operation could be easily undertaken in the several formative years of the process. Indeed, a campus seems to be a project that extends beyond a decade until the point it becomes self-sustaining. Central University indicated that it backed away from a campus project and lack of senior leadership time as a major factor in the decision. Northern University was only able to undertake the development of its online offer by contracting out a large amount of its operation and agreeing backfill of the Deputy post, involved in the C campus, to oversee home operations. So, the availability or lack of key resources, and in particular of senior leadership, explains to a large extent the path taken with respect to large scale projects and this combined with the happenstance of individual relationships and networks being used to solve commonly held problems, such as the need for another key resource – investment, could help determine the path embarked upon originally while path dependency then cements the course of action into a timescale measured in decades.

Indeed, it was clear throughout the discussions that international strategy for universities needs to be measured in decades. The Prior VC of Eastern University did not like to travel and did so extremely rarely and although he moved on nearly a decade ago this may help to explain the singular approach that Eastern has towards internationalisation which is to bring the world to Eastern rather than to invest in outreach. Similarly, it is intriguing to note that the two universities in this study who chose not to invest in campus activity made better progress in the league tables throughout the period of study. The Dynamic Capabilities analysis demonstrated that both campus oriented universities were developing capabilities not shared by the other two at this time and indeed benefited from generalizable capability development such as the ability to source research funding internationally. A further study could focus on whether the benefit of these capabilities comes into play over a longer timescale such as the following decade?

In summary, the priorities of attracting the best staff and students, building prestigious partnerships and through these and other means building the reputation of each university were fairly equally shared amongst the four teams. The core challenge was internally focussed – marshalling a complex organisation into strategic action and much attention was given to building systems to address this. Each of the four universities took a very distinctive path in their internationalisation strategy. Large internationally focussed

projects such as campuses needed to overcome problems of start-up investment and this was achieved through contacts and partnerships that were unique to each university. Once the project was set in motion, path dependency and lack of sufficient key resources such as leadership helped ensure that each project was the main focus of the university concerned for a long period of time. Hence, each university developed their own distinctive approach to the same set of problems that equally faced all four.

The application of the theoretical lens – usefulness and limitations

This study contributes to knowledge in several ways. Its main impact is the application of strategic theory, developed mainly with the corporate world in mind, to the world of universities and thus complements a very sparse literature in this respect. Indeed, the application of this body of theory and in particular, TCT, RBT and Dynamic Capabilities, shines a light on the nature of universities as complex and in some ways, contradictory organisations. The evident struggle that actors face to overcome internal 'friction' and produce strategic results for the university comes out very plainly in the corpus of interviews. Secondly, the interviews reveal a lack of cohesion between the resources that seem to be important for the universities and the attention to the relevant capabilities that would secure access to these resources in the future.

Finally, as an additional contribution to the literature, the extent to which the participants prioritized internally focused activity and particularly the ongoing building of reliable systems supplies evidence that universities have not become the commercially oriented new managerial institutions that is sometimes supposed and rather a very considerable amount of autonomy and decision making around the establishment of international activity is reported to be with the academics within faculties and schools.

This study is quite unusual in its content and approach. There are few studies that apply strategic theory to universities and those that do are often concerned with a single case study. It is undoubtedly problematic extending strategic theory to an organisational form as difficult to define as a university with its complex set of aims and plurality of organisational cultures. Indeed, of the four universities studied there was evidence of only one part of strategic theory in application which was a development of the Balanced Scorecard approach. However, strategic approaches that do not assume a highly coherent organisational form and clearly stated organisational aims offer promise in this respect. For this reason, transaction cost theory which makes no assumption about organisational form is a useful starting point and resource based theory which allows for multiple and even contradictory aims seems to work well in the university context. Dynamic Capabilities theory builds on the RBT base to provide a framework that could help universities focus their attention on building a capacity to better secure the vital resources they need to fulfil their missions into the future. I believe that this approach offers promise both in terms of sense-making and in strategic decision-

making. While all respondents were aware of the key resources they needed, and all were engaged in building competency in internally focussed projects, few gave equal weighting to building a balanced range of externally facing competencies necessary to secure the set of resources into the future. It is in this context that I believe a dynamic competencies approach could help the international teams achieve clearer balance and prioritisation of their strategic approaches.

The study clearly shows the daily struggle that actors in the international work of universities face in developing a common sense of purpose amongst colleagues across the university and in channelling action and resource deployment strategically. It highlights the difficulties faced in this high transactional 'friction' to focus on external opportunity and results in an overly internally-focussed preoccupation amongst those charged with the development and implementation of strategic action. It suggests that those universities developing overseas campuses and physical presence are developing capabilities that other universities are not doing. This is likely to stand them in good stead for their future although it may be that these advantages become apparent over a timescale measured in decades rather than in years. Developing a physical presence across borders develops two crucial resource flows – that of international students and, also of access to a diversified and more international set of research funds. Indeed, unintended and unanticipated outcomes included the development of a capability to understand and access local overseas research funds not only in the country of the physical presence but more generally.

The application of the empirical approach – usefulness and limitations

As the research project progressed my understanding of the process of strategy creation and implementation within universities improved greatly and during this process my expectations and assumptions were challenged in several ways. I was surprised by the extent to which the main actors were concerned and preoccupied with predominantly internally focussed issues. I also faced difficulty assessing the resource inputs to internationalisation. Metrics such as staff and student numbers were easily accessible but some of the key inputs such as the cost of staff time and travel, in fact perhaps the biggest input to internationalisation, was extremely difficult to assess as travel budgets are largely devolved into academic units and staff involved in internationalisation are often not recognised formally in this role. Indeed, the standard workload models differentiate teaching and research as well as other activities but make no attempt to classify these as internationally or domestically focussed.

The picture that started to emerge therefore was one of a more disorganised and challenging environment than I had imagined where the process of strategy creation and implementation is one where the main actors struggle greatly to organise the organisation to act strategically and where the

knowledge of and control over resources is patchy. Instead, strategy becomes a very human and political process of influencing and nurturing. To work with industry organisation strategic theory, it is necessary to assume a certain organisational coherence of thought and action at least at the level of strategic business units. The difficulty of defining the organizational form and hence unit of analysis of a university works against this sort of strategic analysis.

This study offers the chance to 'pop the hood' and look into the working of the engine of internationalisation at the human and political level of its main actors. It gives us a perspective on this work from the actors themselves and follows their own thinking about what it means to create and implement strategy. It is an intersubjective view of strategy which communicates at two levels. One level is a face-value account of the actions and processes at work in the four universities and the second is an implied and implicit account of priorities and pre-occupations which reveals itself in two ways – through the time spent on various aspects and in the priorities given to the subject matter and examples quoted. In being an account of what happens it does not necessarily tell us what does happen merely what the participants tell us happens. There are of course a large number of subjective influences on these accounts. However, the resulting accounts from the two levels and from the variety of actors interviewed complement each other and the interpretations developed offer us insights into strategy creation and implementation that are coherent within the sample and test well against peer scrutiny. As Karl Popper cautions us, better interpretation is likely to follow but the interpretation offered here is a coherent and relevant analysis that helps understand the realities of strategy creation and implementation and sets out a number of propositions that could be further challenged in future studies. An obvious example that would warrant study is the proposition that there is an imbalance of internally and externally focussed activity in most strategy creation and an ethnographic or similar study could test this proposition more fully. Similarly, this study suggests that although over a ten-year time frame, the two universities that have developed overseas campuses have done less well in the overall rankings than the two others, they are likely to be better placed in the coming decade to do well. A more quantitatively based study over this time-period would be able to test this suggestion.

Contribution - academic and practical – possible avenues for future research

The complexity and difficulty of orchestrating strategic action in the dispersed, loosely structured nature of universities means that the international teams give an enormous amount of attention to developing reliable processes which is necessarily an internally focused activity. If done well, this capability allows universities to be both devolved and strategically effective. It is therefore a crucially important capability. However, some of these processes act as a considerable brake on the efficiency and effectiveness of the internationalization machinery. In addition, it also has the perhaps unintended outcome of distracting the international team's efforts away from what is important and towards what is difficult with the result that some areas of

crucial importance to the university, such as student recruitment, get less strategic attention than they deserve.

It is also clear that universities are capable of significant projects towards internationalization but are severely limited, mainly through appropriate staff resources, in how many such projects they can take on and therefore are similarly distracted by the implementation of significant projects from other opportunities. These projects then become part of a developing path dependency which can have both negative and positive outcomes. Those that choose, for example, to invest in overseas campuses gain as a result access to an expanded capability in their ability to access international strategic networks and operate at a distance but it is questionable what effect this will have on the main preoccupation of the university in enhancing its own reputation. In this very small sample, the university with the least inclination towards campuses has shown the greatest progress in the THE world rankings. Timescales in these developments are long – a major campus seems to need at least 10 years to become properly established. It is therefore apparent that success cannot be measured in short units of time and seeing the success of internationalization on core university mission may take well over a decade.

Perhaps, most of all, this study demonstrates the art and science of leading international strategy at the level of its professional staff and it is clear, that people skills are at the core of success. Disturbingly, there was little evidence, beyond tangential references to a good recruitment strategy, that any of the universities had a coherent and pro-active people development skills programme to support their international strategy. Development of the skills of the main actors in international, be they within the core international team or international leaders within faculties, seems to be something, that is built solely through experience. A further clear conclusion is that universities suffer from a severe lack of senior leadership capacity with major new projects constrained by the availability of the Vice Chancellor and Deputy. Some attention to the organisational structure could help address this lack. Additionally, it seems that there is little opportunity to profit from experience, theory and knowhow outside the narrow sector where the main actors interact. As indicated in the literature review, the body of literature on strategic theory applied to higher education is very limited and throughout the interviews there were no references to strategic theory at all and no accounts of interacting with other sectors or exposure to thoughts and experience from these. The main conclusion here is that a little more investment in the development of the skills and knowledge of the international team and international champions would be well made.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this thesis, I introduced Professor Brown as a fictional incoming Pro-Vice-Chancellor to a research-intensive university in the UK. Professor Brown finds herself taking over leadership of the development and implementation of a strategic plan for the university that addresses internationalization.

As a first step in taking over this role she scans the horizons to better understand the challenges and opportunities presented in the global higher education landscape and its context. Demand for higher education and the need for world changing research is evidently strong and getting stronger. Universities have played these and many other roles throughout modern history and their ancestors stretch back into antiquity. However, the world is also faced with complex challenges and problems, the promise of a more integrated and connected world through a benevolent globalisation is far from the reality of an increasingly contested global space leading to a new era of guarded globalisation where national frontiers are gaining in importance and the barriers to international work are intensifying. At the same time the UK, in its second place in the world for attractiveness for international students, its world-renowned research culture and its vibrant transnational education, is increasingly facing reversals in this position of privilege. The trend is towards the global south where higher education sectors are mobilising effectively. And in the mix, is the threat of disruption to the entire sector as new forms of higher education vie for prominence and the question of *what is a university* and *what is it for* is often debated.

Professor Brown inherits an international approach and strategy that she only partly understands as she was not a part of the context that produced it. In talking to colleagues and stakeholders, she finds a multiplicity of aims, philosophies and goals that are not completely coherent. In order to organise her thinking and therefore sensibly guide it towards the future she searches the literature for a theoretical strategic basis for making sense of how the university has got to where it is and how it can chart a path forwards from here. Trawling the strategic literature brings her to the resource based view as a theoretical approach that is appropriate to the analysis of the complex organisational form of a university. Its relationship to the external environment and its derivative Dynamic Capabilities help to guide her thinking about the future and the processes, mechanisms and ultimately capabilities that need to be honed and employed to move the institution forward.

At this point, Professor Brown decides to take a read-out of the current state of the art in internationalization amongst her peers and so she reaches out through her network to a set of experienced professionals in a variety of leading roles at peer universities in the UK. She uses her status as a fellow professional to engender a trusting and sharing relationship to help access a knowledge set that has been built over decades of experience and is therefore subtle, deeply held and largely tacit. Her enquiry is structured around the questions of what is distinctive in each university's approach and then delves in to the why and how of creating and implementing international strategy. The resulting conversations are as varied as those with her colleagues. They reveal a great deal of expertise amongst peers in the daily struggle to build a coherent approach to international matters in an organisation that is far from coherent. Their approach is as much art as science and there never seems a perfect 'way of doing things' as the work involved in setting up reliable institutional processes and building a shared understanding of international opportunity and challenge is a deeply human

endeavour that relies on constant communication, good relationships and the willingness to participate by all involved. A similarly human enterprise is at work as her peers travel the world seeking out and nurturing the links that could lead to powerful and prestigious research partnerships, flows of international students and building their knowledge of the various environments or 'markets' where the university seeks to develop its visibility and relevance.

It becomes apparent through the conversations, and using the theoretical RBV lens, that the peer universities are constantly in search for a limited set of key resources. Many contenders for these resources are mentioned such as 'revenue', 'students' and 'reputation'. Professor Brown uses the VRIN (Valuable, Rare, In-imitable, Non-substitutable) framework (Pan et al., 2007) to isolate and better define the most important of these and develops the following *list: high quality students; high quality staff; people skills; organizational culture; international experience: reputation; investment and research funding*. It is the search for these resources, whether explicitly acknowledged or not, that sets the criteria for international endeavour and thus starts the process of building an institutional international strategy. However, she realises that the resource set is a basis for action (the *why*) but not in itself a way forward to strategic action (the *how*). It is here that the work on Dynamic Capabilities is important. These capabilities are the means, by which an organisation secures access to key resources now and into the future and the dynamism of the model allows for an organisation to hone its craft as it moves forward.

The conversations with her peers also give space to explore the *how* of international strategy and it is in this way that Professor Brown can tease out the way that her peers conceptualise the 'capabilities' they employ and seek to develop (without referring to the terminology or approach of the theoretical analysis). It becomes evident during these conversations that there are two sets of capabilities expressed, with the first set occupying front of mind and the second set receiving considerably less attention in the free flow of the conversations. The first set of capabilities is expressed as: *establishing and running reliable processes, educating the university as a whole and promoting internationalization, developing sustainable and reputation enhancing partnerships*. The second set is *Developing the international student experience, ensuring sustainable student recruitment, managing campuses and offices overseas*. Professor Brown wonders whether factors such as level of difficulty or importance may influence the evidently stronger concern with the first set, or alternatively that the second set are performing well with less attention, but also acknowledges that there may be an element of 'to do more interesting stuff' (NVR) that guides the prioritisation of action. In other words, there may be dysfunctional motivators that give more prominence to certain types of capability over others even though the resource sets the capabilities address may be equally important for the long-term health of the university.

Looking at the resources identified and the capabilities being developed leads Professor Brown to think that all the key resources do not seem to be adequately addressed by the capabilities being developed and there are gaps

where key resources are not being adequately addressed by these capabilities. This is perhaps where a theoretical analysis of this nature could help her peers better balance their efforts and focus more equally between the two sets of capabilities and address areas where little attention is being given, such as the development of people skills within the international teams and their academic supporters within the university. As far as the conversations are evidence of distribution of relative importance to the various mechanisms that address the *how* part of the strategy it seems that some elements, such as sustainable recruitment of students and development of the international experience on the home campus, that are of crucial importance to the university are relatively neglected and this is a cause for some concern. The establishment of processes within the university seems to take an inordinate amount of a very limited resource – the people skills within the international teams and active ‘internationalisers’ within the academic structures. This seems to be an area where Pareto thinking may be beneficial in that it can never be a perfect set of processes and communications within the university and therefore knowing when the optimum level of efficiency is nearly achieved is important so that resources can then be channelled elsewhere.

It is also clear to Professor Brown through these conversations with peers that each university has chosen and continues to choose a very distinctive path. The complexity of the work involved in coordinating a complex organisational form or trying to build links to other similarly complex structures elsewhere means that each university builds up its own distinctive and unique set of capabilities and resources. It is also evident that any major international project, such as setting up a campus overseas, is the work of a decade and demands considerable parts of a very limited resource set – particularly in people skills with the senior management and academics with a propensity to work internationally being particularly squeezed. The four peer universities she consulted, Western, Central, Northern and Eastern, have produced a very small number of such major strategic initiatives over the last decade with the main ones being three campuses, one online programme, and one student pathway implant. Having embarked on such a project, path-dependency becomes a powerful force and new capabilities build up around the chosen path further distinguishing the university from its peers.

Finally, if her university is to survive and prosper in the contested global space it exists in, the capabilities the university develops need to be able to respond to the challenges the future may bring, especially those that could be disruptive to the higher education sector through new approaches to teaching and learning, different ways to accredit learning and the increasing involvement of non-university structures in research. The conversations revealed very little preparation for this contested future. The experimentation with different campus models, the design of new student pathways and the experimentation with online programmes are where these new capabilities are being developed and where future competitiveness may lie but the overarching tone of all the conversations was not this ‘distant’ future but a much closer future of the short and medium term.

Reflecting on the conversations, Professor Brown can't help thinking that an enormous amount of effort is being directed inwards into internal processes and activities, whereas there was relatively little attention being given to a more outward focused vision and set of actions to support it. The complexity of 'making things happen' seems to produce a snowstorm of activity but a lack of clear direction. She resolves to work towards discussing and making explicit for her university a clearly articulated set of key resources and, also a set of capabilities that support these in order to share with her colleagues an explicit set of answers to the questions of *why* and *how*. She also resolves to ensure all colleagues involved in internationalization get the training and development they need and are exposed to ideas from the sector and beyond so that there is a conscious development of their own people skills within the university and an awareness of future challenges and opportunities. She makes a note in her diary to start this process as soon as possible thinking at the same time, that perhaps it may need to wait until after the Vice-Chancellor's China trip next month.

In introducing Professor Brown as the fictional central actor in this investigation, I brought a clear sense of focus to this study. Professor Brown allowed me as the investigator to stand back and consider a set of human interactions and processes through eyes other than my own thus helping foreground the subjectivities of the actual participants in the interpretation process that is as Schwandt et al (2007) maintain 'intersubjective'.

This project has been a transformative experience as I reoriented my career from senior leadership within the British Council to strategic roles in the university sector. It has allowed me to develop my understanding of strategic theory and apply this in the context of the higher education sector. It has also allowed me to develop an active role in the sector as a contributor to conferences, seminars and round-tables and a writer for journals and handbooks with an original theoretically informed approach to strategy that audiences tell me they find useful. It has also given me a very human understanding of international work within universities and the pressures and challenges faced by the main actors. This in turn suggests approaches that could be helpful for these colleagues and is now becoming a significant part of my professional role.

I believe this study gives a useful framework for colleagues in strategic international work to critique and improve through studies focussed on their own institutions. I believe it empowers them to nurture over time a more harmonious and balanced set of capabilities that their own university can lever to assure a sustainable future within the scope of its values and mission.

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Annexe 1 – Transcript analysis

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Transcripts analyses

A = Aims (Impact, evaluation, goals, KPIs etc)

B = Resources (Staffing, funding, investment etc)

C = Capabilities (emergent dynamic capabilities as per analysis in the main body)

H = Historical (references to ‘how things were’)

D = Bringing things together, inter-relatedness

Timing: the timing column locates the excerpt within the overall transcription it belongs to. The figures are minutes and seconds.

Northern

N3

Timing	Theme	Analysis
	Possible C venture C staff Rationale for a venture Key contacts in Country C	A- Aims B- Staff C- Relationships
4.00	Partnership development process	C- Relationships
8.00	Role of L Investment Internal consensus	B- Investment C- Partnerships, Processes
14.00	Research capability	C- Research
	Northern City	C- Partnerships
16.00	Online development	C- Delivery
18.00	Dual degree development	C- Qualifications
20.00	Building laboratories Biosciences motivators – students and labs	B- Infrastructure
22.00	Student intake to Northern Recruitment strategy Quality of students	B – Students, Quality students C- Recruitment
24.00	L marketing capability	C-External capability, Partnerships
	Externalised services Human resources – leadership	B- Leadership C- Partnerships
30.00	Bringing faculties on board	C - Processes
32.00	Financial situation at Northern	

N1

Timing	Themes	
	Distinctiveness Research Online provision Worldwide distribution	A Aims C- Research, Delivery
8.00	XN Contrast with Eastern model Capacity building and philosophy	C- Delivery, Values
11.00	Student transfers from XN Global network and philosophy Comparison with Eastern – visibility Research funding overseas Research strengths	B- Research funds C- Recruitment, Delivery, Research funding
17.00	Research embeddedness	C- Processes
	Structure and steering the strategy	C- Processes
21.00	Main strategic pushes Positioning Tapping research funding	A- Strategic levers, Position C- Research funding
	International leads in faculties	C- Processes
23.00	International Board structure	C- Processes
25.00	Becoming more strategic	C- Processes
27.00	L – learning but also lack of fit	C- Partnership
	Appropriacy of L partner?	C- Partnership

32.00	L role in online Research partnerships Mechanisms for research partnerships – Japan , Taiwan	C- Partnership
38.00	Internal resourcing International team size and funding Partnership facilitation	B- Funding C- Processes, Partnership
41.00	Securing reputed partners Building research partnerships Value of global networks such as WUN?	C-Partnership
50.00	Research collaborations – Africa and Asia	C- Partnership
52.00	International team functions – raising awareness, facilitating	C- Processes
53.00	Success indicators	A Targets

N2

Timing	Themes	Analysis
	Distinctiveness Philosophy - ethics	A Aims C- Values
	International research Raising research competence	C- Research
	International environment Internationalisation ranking	B- International experience
6.00	Monoculturalism, monolingualism Student exchange Summer school – C	C- International experience
12.00	Student experience The future – reaching out overseas Online	C- International experience C- Delivery
15.00	Partnership with L	C- Partnership
20.00	Northern's capacity building history	H C- Partnership
	XN campus philosophy	C- Partnership development
30.00	Campus model recognition vs Eastern	
32.00	Economic model - campus	C- Partnership, Revenue generation, Recruitment
35.00	Singapore venture	C- Partnership
38.00	Campus management	C- Campus management
41.00	Risk and management of risk	C- Processes
45.00	Risk and standards	C- Processes
48.00	Development of research on campus	C- Research development

Western

W1 &2

Timing	Theme	Analysis
	Distinctiveness Evolution of Western's approach Investment in international functions	H B- Funds C- Processes
5.00	Western 3 strategic foci Impact on the city – economic Understanding of University role in city	A- Aims, Impact C- Partnership
11.00	Building international awareness of Western – publications India example Summer schools	A- Impact C - Delivery
17.00	Wider involvement in international strategy Organisational structure Embedding of internationalisation ERICA roles	C- Processes
21.00	Common action teams Collegial approach	C- Processes
22.00	Implementation and monitoring of strategy	A- Evaluation
28.00	Relation of internationalisation to strategic university goals Role of VC Organising VC visits	A- Goal relevance B- Leadership C- Processes
33.00	MoUs and agreements Policing role of international team Partnership development – India	C- Partnerships, Processes
37.00	Bangalore office role	C- Delivery
40.00	KPIs Rankings Reputation and profile Responsibility for student experience Internationalisation sponsored roles	A- Evaluation, Impact C- Processes
45.00	Fee income Student number targets	B- Income A- Targets
49.00	Getting buy-in Overseas partnerships	C- Processes, Partnerships
53.00	Risk Brazil, India, Country C Diversification	C- Processes

Eastern

E4

Timing	Theme	Analysis
	Role in the internationalisation process Articulation agreements and numbers of students through feeder routes	C- Processes, Partnerships, Recruitment
4.00	IPGCE	C- Delivery
7.00	Overseas campuses Inter-campus mobility Regional advisory networks and academic engagement	C- Delivery, Processes
12.00	Main market regions and regional networks operations Devolution of internationalisation objectives Academic led engagement	A- Target markets C- Processes
20.00	Issues with key markets and academic engagement	C- Processes
23.00	Bio-sciences – good examples of engagement	C- Processes
26.00	KPIs and student population on campuses Lack of clear recruitment targets	A- Evaluation
31.00	Dominance of C students Risk factor Lack of diversity KPI	C- Recruitment A- Targets
33.00	Structures for student recruitment in campuses Building capacity on campuses	C- Recruitment, Processes
37.00	Sponsored students switch from UK to Country M campus Petronas students – good students	B- Good students C- Recruitment
40.00	Difficulty of devolved authority Influence and impact of VC	C- Processes B- Leadership

E2

Timing	Themes	Analysis
	Distinctiveness VC and vision Multi-campus model? Rationale and vision UG reactions to study abroad	A- Vision B- Leadership
4.00	Leadership Senior management capacity Stakeholder engagement Academic engagement SU as internationalisation driver	B- Leadership, Management C- Relationships, Processes
8.00	Reputation for internationalisation Multi-cultural challenges –fees International reputation as marketing tool	A- Reputation
10.00	Reliable systems Investment	C- Processes
12.00	Why Country M and Country C? Key contacts Rationale for Country M	A- Regional foci C- Relationships

	C Chancellor Campuses 'demanding'	
16.00	Financial rationale? Research grants access Effect on student recruitment	A- Rationale B- Research funds
18.00	Philosophy vs Northern Integration with UK academic life Northern less risky?	A- Philosophy
22.00	Outward mobility Research partnerships Opportunities for academic staff Attracting staff?	B- International experience, International staff C- Mobility
26.00	Leadership and engagement Motivations for engagement The International Office	B- Leadership C- Processes

E3

Timing	Themes	Analysis
	PVC internationalisation – experience	
5.39	Evolution of Eastern approach Target setting Embedded approach Managing student experience	H C- Processes
	Relationship with schools Benefit of campuses	C- Processes
11.00	Research activity Research funding	C- Research funding
15.00	Evolution of approach Integration between campuses	H C- Processes
16.00	History Relationships with campuses	H C- Processes
20.00	Relationships of academic programmes across campuses	C- Processes
22.00	Evolution of marketing approach across campuses	H C-Processes
26.00	Coordination of research bids Pakistan example – TNE to PhD Difficulty of building up partnerships	C- Processes, Partnerships
29.00	People skills Mapping activity against regions Regional groups Persuasion and influencing	B- Staff C- Processes
32.00	Research – important regions Building research partnerships through PhD supervision	C- Research partnerships
39.00	Philanthropy, social responsibility Brazil Country C Country M	C- Values
41.00	Student Volunteering Social responsibility – nursing school Social responsibility that doesn't happen	C- Values B- Time
44.00	Social responsibility – developing PhD capacity	C- Values
49.00	Posting to Country M	

E1

Timing	Theme	Analysis
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4.00	Distinctiveness KPIs Targets Recruitment, mobility	A- Aims B- Students, international experience
	Mobility and campuses	B- Campus C- Mobility
	Historical approach	H
	Organisation of international	C- Processes
8.00	Role of Schools – budget holders PVC responsibilities	B- Funds, Leadership
12.00	Student satisfaction	C- Processes
16.00	Strategy School strategic approaches, devolvement	C- Processes
18.00	Change in plan ownership	H
	Influencing schools	C- Processes
20.00	Budget	B- Funds
22.00	Lack of over-arching internationalisation committee	C- Processes
24.00	Governance	C- Processes
28.00	Risk, Country C	C- Processes
30.00	Outward mobility contribution to other aims	D- Inter-relatedness
32.00	Sharing the vision, lack of buy-in Sharing tool	C- Processes
34.00	Division of responsibilities	C- Processes
38.00	Campuses - ownership	C- Campus, partnerships
42.00	City S campus	C- Campus, Partnerships
46.00	Influencing to build partnerships	C- Processes, Partnerships
48.00	Using internal knowledge – who is who	C- Processes

Central

C1

Timing	Theme	Analysis
	Organisation of international function	C- Processes
4.00	Strategic partnerships Embedding of internationalisation International steering group	C- Partnerships, Processes
12.00	Governance and decision making Complexity of decision making	C-Processes
20.00	Embedding internationalisation KPIs	A Targets C- Processes
22.00	Strategic partnerships – Osaka etc Key strategic priorities Japan working group – cohesive regional approach	A Targets C- Partnerships, Processes
26.00	Historical approach to strategy and evolution of approach Capabilities for the future WUN	H A- Aims, Future capabilities C- Partnerships
28.00	Funding partnerships Resource constraints – experts in short supply Accelerating partnership development	B- Funds, Experts C- Partnerships

C2

Timing	Themes	Analysis
	WUN – 50% work Using WUN	C- Partnerships
	Researchers and WUN	B- Output – driven Research staff C- Processes
4.00	Building critical mass in partnerships Research funds League tables	C- Partnership B- Research funds
8.00	Building partnerships and credibility Components of partnership building	C- Partnerships
14.00	Strategic priorities Key regions	A Aims
16.00	Brazil	A Targets B- Funds

C1&3

Timing	Themes	Analysis
	Role	
	Revenue Student recruitment – quality vs quantity	B- Funds A Targets
5.00	Student composition Importance of international students Dependency on international students	B- International students C- Recruitment
8.00	Embedding approach Internal communications	C- Processes B- International experience

	Student experience	
11.40	Distinctiveness Bottom-up processes Culture	A Aims C- Processes C- Values
16.00	Key comparator universities	A - Competitiveness
17.00	Attractiveness of Central International experience	B- International experience
21	Integrated visits Relationships Leadership and knowledge	C- Processes, Relationships
24.00	Difficulty of measurement KPIs	

C1 (2)

Timing	Themes	Analysis
	Leadership of international	C- Processes
3.00	Strategy Map Balanced Scorecard	A Targets
	Strategy and VCEG KPIs – gold measures	C- Leadership A- Targets , evaluation
9.00	Aim – League tables Incremental improvement	
11.00	Innovation	
12.30	Innovative processes – work groups	C- Processes
	Rankings Leadership Second-level leadership	C- Leadership
17.00	Time taken to embed processes	C- Processes H
20.00	International processes – embedding	C- Processes
22.00	Comparators and competitors	A Targets
26.00	Country M campus project	C- Campuses
	Senior visits Research funding	B- Research funds, Leadership C- Leadership

Annexe 2 – Tim Gore Publications

Edited Books

- Going Global: Fourth volume with M Stiasny 2015 (in print - Emerald Group Publishing Ltd)
- Going Global: Third volume with M Stiasny, 2014 (Emerald Group Publishing Ltd)
- Going Global: identifying trends and drivers of international education with M Stiasny, 2013 (Emerald Group Publishing Ltd)
- Going Global: The Landscape for Policy Makers and Practitioners in Tertiary Education with M Stiasny (Emerald Group Publishing Ltd), 2012 (ISBN:978-0-85724-783-4) 230 pgs UK
- Brand Research, with L Nafees and O Krishnan (ISBN: 0230-32870-9)(Macmillan Publishers) New Delhi, 2010

Chapters in Books

- Structural Implications of MOOCs: Low grade tremors? In From Books to MOOCs? Emerging Models of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Portland Press 2016
- Do Networks Work? In Going Global: identifying trends and drivers of international education with M Stiasny, 2013 (Emerald Group Publishing Ltd)
- Innovative higher education, ACU yearbook, 2015

Articles in Peer Reviewed Journals

- The Academia Europaea & The Wenner-Gren Foundations Conference, Emerging Models of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: From Books to MOOCs? Wenner-Gren Center, Stockholm: Forthcoming
- Fishing Expedition: Successful ventures abroad depend on finding markets that fit. Research Fortnight April 9th 2014.
- Higher Education Across Borders: Models of Engagement and Lessons from Corporate Strategy. The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, 2012
- Doing Business with India. The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, January 2011
- Global research collaboration, lessons from practice for cross-border partnerships from the India-UK strategic alliance. The Observatory of Borderless Education, October 2008

Conference Papers and Presentations

- The Academia Europaea & The Wenner-Gren Foundations Conference, Emerging Models of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: From Books to MOOCs? 21 - 23 May 2015 Wenner-Gren Center, Stockholm

- Evolving directions and blurring lines for online education - developing an organisational strategy, International seminar on online higher education, Online Business School, Barcelona 2014
- HEGlobal TNE: an illustrated view: Panel member at HEGlobal event, London British Council, October 2014
- HEGlobal TNE: an illustrated view: Panel member at HEGlobal event, Edinburgh British Council, September 2014
- Fast forward into the future – an increasingly international and online education sector; Euprio, Innsbruk September 2014
- Understanding MOOC impacts What works and how to value it: Neil Stewart Associates, Dexter House, June 2014
- Convenor, chair and presenter: Transnational Higher Education - developments and trends: Going Global, Miami. 29th April 2014
- The student experience in international education- is inclusivity a distant goal? Going Global Miami. 1 May 2014
- Pedagogy: MOOCs and blended learning opportunities and challenges. Gulf Education Conference London. 1 April 2014
- Ways of assessing and dealing with new market opportunities. International Higher Education Forum, London 20 March 2014
- Keynote address on the future of the Further and Higher Education Sectors at the Global Education Strategy Forum February 2014
- Keynote address on the future of Higher Education and Internationalisation at the University of Nottingham Partnership Forum, February 2014
- Keynote address on the future of internationalisation at the University of Glasgow International Day, December 2013
- Plenary opening address on disruptive innovation in higher education at the University of London, Leadership Foundation and Observatory on Borderless Higher Education MOOCs conference in January 2014
- Keynote address on Massive Online Open Courses at FIED conference, Universite Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris, June 2013
- Challenges and rewards of developing an overseas partnership network, Business Forum International, London, June 2013
- Models of Transnational Education, British Council Conference, Athens, April 2013
- Aspects of students' international identity, Asia Pacific Association of International Educators, Hong Kong, March 2013
- Models of Transnational Education, Going Global Conference, Dubai, March 2013
- Online and open-access learning in higher education, MOOCs, new pedagogies and business models, London, January 2013
- Approaches to learning technology - Bring Your Own Device, BETT Conference, London, January 2013
- The Future of Global Higher Education closing keynote at Inside Government Conference: Internationalising HE in the UK, 14th June 2012

- Using empirical evidence and data solutions to support international education strategies, British Council workshop at NAFSA, Houston, USA, Sunday 27th May 2012, presenter
- International Partnerships; Transnational Education Neil Stewart Associates, London 16th April 2012, plenary address: TNE Models of Engagement and Risk
- Internationalising Higher Education in the UK: Globalising Knowledge and Skills Inside Government, London, 14th June, closing plenary address
- Observatory on Borderless Higher Education Global Forum 2012, Kuala Lumpur, April 2012, plenary address: Risk and Reputation