UNDERSTANDING HYPER-GROWTH INTERNATIONAL ENTREPRENEURS: LOCATION ADVANTAGE INTERNATIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

ABSTRACT

This paper seeks the theoretical frameworks that might help us understand young, large, multinational entrepreneurial firms. We do this thro-ugh case analysis of such firms from the Middle East and North African region, first with a longitudinal case examination of one firm and then with nine further firms. Case data was matched to coding categories derived from conceptual ideas from three research domains: international entrepreneurship, location (L) factors from Dunning's OLI framework, and strategic management.

International entrepreneurship ideas fit well, but the often neglected 'L' aspects are also central. Important management process factors – often overlooked in international business research, but examined extensively in strategic management research are most important. These, especially of strategic entrepreneurship, link the background characteristics of international entrepreneurs and the strategic advantages of location that MNEs seek, and help us understand the strategic orientations and actions that lead to quite extraordinary international business performance.

Competitive paper

Understanding Hyper-Growth International Entrepreneurs:
Location Advantage International Entrepreneurship and Strategic Management

INTRODUCTION

As different types of international businesses have become evident in the world, different conceptualisations and frameworks have evolved in international business research to try to understand them. Increasing and varying patterns of world trade led to trade theories, the growth of large multinationals led to the OLI framework (Dunning, 1988; 1993; 1995; 1996; 1997) and to the use of transaction cost theory to examine organisational forms and location (Buckley and Casson, 1976). Internationalisation process theories have examined the time and location dynamics of internationalisation (Johanson and Vahlne, 1977), and more recently, international entrepreneurship has evolved as a major theme in response to the observation of young and entrepreneurial, though invariably small, international enterprises (Oviatt and McDougall, 2005).

Here we are beginning a process of analysing another form of international business – large multinational enterprises that are entrepreneurially led, new, and which have achieved such spectacular, rapid and recent growth that they can be characterised only as 'hyper-growth'. As a starting point we will take these to be firms with at least $10bn annual turnover, that are young, having achieved this within 10 years of, operating in more than 5 countries and across more than one of the world's regions. Companies such as Rupert Murdoch's New Corporation and Bill Gates' Microsoft are well known and well studied, but it is now only possible to examine these in hindsight, and they seem rare. But they are not rare: - it is just that in the west, we rarely recognise them, mainly because these companies are only rarely western, and almost never very public. They are invariably privately owned, and their ownership is often discrete, even hidden. Often, their home territories are inaccessible because of geography (such as Iceland or Singapore), often combined with language and cultural barriers (South-East Asia, Russia, the Middle East).

Our exploration here represents an early enquiry to identify theoretical frameworks and models that would help us to understand the international business choices made by these businesses in their rapid growth. Can other conceptual approaches be mixed with traditional international business approaches to meet this challenge? More specifically, we will pay special attention to three theoretical frameworks that would overtly have relevance, to see which helps our understanding most, in which ways, and how they fit together. Our particular type of firm is entrepreneurial and international so the first of these is that of international entrepreneurship (Oviatt and McDougall, 2005). Since they are also multinational enterprises with operations around the world that change their domicile and base of operations, the second is the classical international business research into location advantage (Dunning, 2009).

Further, we are trying to understand the success of firms with phenomenal growth, and not only their entrepreneurial characteristics or the causes and nature of their internationalization and in this, strategic management research can contribute. So strategic management research that has addressed the behaviour of successful entrepreneurial firms may well be of value. Here we will pay special attention to the notions from the resource based view of the firm (Barney 1991; Wernerfelt 1984) that Harris and Wheeler (2005) suggest to be particularly relevant for high growth international firms, and its recent development into what has been called 'strategic entrepreneurship' (Kuratko and Audretsch, 2009).

Following a pilot longitudinal study of one of the best known firms from the region, Orascom Telecom, a further nine case studies of entrepreneurial leaders of international firms interviewed between 2008 and 2009, are examined using templates drawn from these theoretical frameworks. Conclusions are then drawn concerning some characteristic features of hyper-growth multinational entrepreneurial firms; the theoretical models that can help us understand the phenomena, and future directions for research on the subject.

INTERNATIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

First coined by Morrow (1988) the term 'international entrepreneurship' (IE) was formalised by McDougall (1989) who defined it as 'the development of international new ventures or start-ups that, from their inception, engage in international business.' Since then, the notion has widened from an early emphasis on 'born global' or 'born international' firms; overall, the field tries to explain how early and rapid internationalisation of new ventures is possible (Autio 2005).

So Oviatt and McDougall (2005) have more recently redefined their notion of international entrepreneurship as 'the discovery, enactment, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities—across national borders—to create future goods and services'. Further, they have presented a model of how the speed of entrepreneurial internationalization is influenced by a number of forces. International entrepreneurship begins with an entrepreneurial opportunity, but then is fostered or hindered by a number of forces that collectively determine the speed of internationalization. Improvements and developments in technology fosters international entrepreneurship by presenting new opportunities. New digital technologies have made high quality and rapid communication feasible in every country in the world and reduced the cost of transportation and communication, enabling rapid internationalization of many entrepreneurial opportunities (Oviatt and McDougall, 2005). Competition can motivate internationalization, when entrepreneurs take pre-emptive rapid internationalization, fearing exclusion from international markets by larger established competitors if they initially compete only in their home country (McDougall et al., 1994; Oviatt & McDougall, 1995).

But there are mediating and moderating forces as well. The entrepreneurial actor perceives opportunities, and threats that they face, through the lens of their personal knowledge and experience and their psychological traits and orientations to, for example, risk (Oviatt et al., 2004). These perceptions mediate the way that the internationalization takes place through the entrepreneur's decision making. The knowledge available to them, and the networks of relationships that they have also act to moderate the nature and extent of their internationalization, and the re are Environmental and industry conditions, that affect the speed of international involvement.

While Oviatt et al. (2004) see all these influences to be mediated by the perceptions and decision making approach of the entrepreneurial actors, Zahra & George (2002) portray the mechanism slightly differently. For them, organizational factors, which include the characteristics of the entrepreneurial actors, directly influence international entrepreneurial behaviour, but moderated by environmental and strategic factors. Notwithstanding these differences, this overall perspective sees international entrepreneurship to be entrepreneurial behaviour that is moderated by the individual characteristics of an entrepreneur in combination with a range of environmental factors within the location of their activity.

So the focus of this stream of research is in understanding who it is that develops new ventures internationally, and how they do it, but not where, or why they may be successful. The research recognises the importance of location advantages but in not such a specific way as the OLI theory that has seen this as a main element, so we will turn to this next. Further, while international entrepreneurship research notes the centrality of unique resources, it is not specific concerning what these are (other than 'knowledge and networks') not how they work. This has been the focus of strategic management research for many years, particularly the resource based view of the firm, to which we will turn thereafter.

LOCATION ADVANTAGE IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS RESEARCH

The main focus of OLI research has been to understand FDI flows, in volume and direction rather than understand the behavior of particular types of firms. Further, issues of location advantage have rarely considered in empirical research of of international entrepreneurs, whose development are invariably typified as following from the home territories and follow the networks and network relationships of the founders. Here, however, we are examining large (if new) multinational enterprises, for which the issue of location advantage is well recognized to be highly relevant to the direction and scale of growth of these businesses. Arguing that location (L) advantage to be a neglected factor in international business research, Dunning (2009) notes how

> .. a greater appreciation both of the changing locational requirements of mobile investments, and of how, in the case of those markets partnership with firms either to improve markets (i.e., by a 'voice' strategy), or to replace these markets (by an 'exit' strategy). With the growing importance of knowledge-related infrastructure, and accepting the idea of sub-national spatial units as nexus of untraded interdependencies (Storper, 1995), this presents both new challenges and opportunities to both national and regional governments in their macro-organizational and competitive enhancing policies.

He identified variables that appeared to influence the location of value added activities of MNEs from the 1970s to the 1990s, according to whether the firms are seeking resources, strategic assets, markets or efficiencies. Firms seeking resources are interested in the availability of local partners, the local promotion of knowledge and the availability of capital-intensive resources to exploit. Those seeking strategic assets are interested in ways of accessing different cultures, institutions and systems whether it be through direct investement or through engagement with local firms.

But it would initially seem to be market seeking and efficiency seeking variables that would influence the locational development of young high-growth businesses, because these would still be exploiting rather than (at least yet) seeking resources or strategic assets. Market seeking firms are keen on high quality local infrastructure, and good local institutional competence that will help them do work, with favourable economic policies being pursued by host governments. Efficiency seeking firms avoid obstacles to local working, and local competitiveness to be encouraged with the upgrading of personnel skills with appropriate educational and training programmes. These investing firms look to pursue new initiatives, helped by there being an entrepreneurial environment and one that encourages cooperation within and between firms. Here, specialized spatial clusters (e.g. in science and industrial parks) can help foster co-operation and, more generally, make specialized factor inputs to be available.

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT: RESOURCES, NETWORKS AND LEADERSHIP

Based on the precepts of 'Austrian' economics, going through the work of Schumpeter (1942) and Penrose (1959) (Hill and Deeds, 1996; Rugman and Verbeke, 2002), the resource-based view (RBV) of the firm has evolved over the past quarter century now to be the predominant paradigm of strategic management research. It is concerned with firm's unique tangible and intangible resources (Wernerfelt, 1984) in which competitive advantage arises from the development of unique, organization-specific configurations of resources (Collis, 1991; Grant, 1991). The RBV has been argued to provide a better representation of the actual strategy approaches of successful entrepreneurial firms, in comparison with approaches to strategy based on the analysis of markets, competition and competitors (Jenkins and Johnson, 1997). So strategic management involves accessing unique and appropriate combinations of resources, and configuring and using them in unique ways (Peteraf, 1993; Collis and Montgomery, 1995).

The resource-based view has always emphasized two important characteristics of strategic resources: uniqueness and unreplicability. Tangible 'hard' resources such as finance and physical capital are rarely either, so intangible 'soft' resources are normally seen to be the key areas for gaining strategic advantage. There appear to be three broad types of these within firms: knowledge, networks and processes. It is in the very difficulty of developing these intangible 'soft resources', that are difficult to exchange, copy or purchase, that strategic advantage resides (Hall, 1992). Most research has focused on knowledge, within which it is not codified 'facts' that are as important as tacit knowledge, and understandings concerning how to do things in different circumstances and contexts.

The second are the key internal and external personal and business relationships that can be within the firms or in relations with other firms, such as within business networks. Strategic management and international business research has been concerned with relational resources and its development and use both within firms (e.g. Blyer and Coff, 2003) and between firms (e.g. Koka and Prescott, 2002), in network relationships. Internationalization and international market development has long been recognized as being associated with the network of firms, and the relational resources that reside within them (e.g. Ford et al, 2003;). These relationships can be, particularly for the young internationalizing firm, some of the most valuable resources of all (Harris and Wheeler, 2005).

This leads to the third broad area, the management processes that enables knowledge to be developed and shared between people inside and outside the firm so that new business opportunities can be developed and favorable outcomes achieved. Here, a recent stream of strategic management has been concerned with the management and performance of entrepreneurial firms (Kuratko and Audretsch 2009). ‘Strategic entrepreneurship’ research attempts to combine strategic management’s focus on the extent that firms establish and exploit competitive advantages within a particular environmental context, with entrepreneurship research’s examining of how competitive advantages are gained through product, process, and market innovations.

This entrepreneurial and strategic leadership sees growth firms adapting their behaviours and exploiting opportunities (Kuratko & Audretsch 2009). Entrepreneurship’s dominant logic (Morris et al., 2008) is in its promotion of agility, flexibility, creativity, and continuous innovation. It can be reflected in strategic renewal, sustained regeneration, domain redefinition, organizational rejuvenation, and business model reconstruction (Covin & Miles 1999). Highly entrepreneurial strategy is not obvious: discovering unique positions in the marketplace is difficult, as is breaking away from established ways doing things. So entrepreneurial strategies appear risky, especially when first implemented (Kuratko 2009).

So we are concerned now with the management and leadership of the firm; entrepreneurial leadership can be defined as the entrepreneur’s ability to anticipate, envision, maintain flexibility, think strategically, and work with others to initiate changes that will create a viable future for the organization (Kuratko 2007). As Wright (2009) notes:

> Strategic Entrepreneurship has been defined as involving the identification and exploitation of opportunities, while simultaneously creating and sustaining a competitive advantage. Idiosyncratic knowledge of management and entrepreneurs represents a key resource for firms, especially for opportunity recognition. The nature of compensation for management poses important issues for strategic entrepreneurship since it can influence their time horizons and hence their strategic behaviour.

If these leadership processes are difficult for competitors to understand (and therefore to imitate), therefore, they can become a unique intangible asset then the firm can create a sustainable competitive advantage (Kuratko 2009).

METHODOLOGY

This study is an exploration of the relevance and usefulness of the three conceptual frameworks outlined above, and their interrelationships, to an understanding of the development of hyper-growth entrepreneurial MNEs, an extraordinary and under researched type of businesses. Here we are studying businesses originating from the Middle-East and North African (MENA) region, a particularly rich area in which to study this phenomenon since there appears to be many companies of this type (as will be seen), with many economies in the region have been developing very rapidly in recent years. The region's countries also have very diverse political and institutional frameworks and cultures. We are specifically studying what we will call hyper-growth firms, and since the level of growth of our subject s is more rapid than in firms studied hitherto, we will define these for our sample frame to be firms achieving at least $US 10bn within 10 years of foundation.

The use of a case analytical approach has long been argued to be an appropriate way to uncover underlying relationships between concepts within complex empirical settings (Yin, 1984). Figure 1 shows the stages of the research. The work began with a single pilot case study examination of a well-known MENA firm, Orascom Telecom, which is presented next. This was followed by the identification of further case firms who would fit our definition of 'hyper growth enterprises' in two ways. Secondary sources, such as the financial media and internet searching were scoured to find possible companies, and through networking processes: in the Middle East, successful entrepreneurs are typically well-known to one another through a range of social and family, as well as business ties, and through these, access and agreement to participate in the research process was solicited. Of 28 businesses identified to fall within the population frame, by virtue of being high growth entrepreneurially led firms, 14 immediately agreed to participate in this exploratory study and 10 were then subjected to analysis. This is a number that Eisenhardt (1989) suggests is likely to be sufficient to lead to data saturation in qualitative case analysis. Descriptive data on these cases and their patterns of development are shown in Table 2.

Considerable focus was placed in this study on collecting data in different stages according to principles suggested by Yin (1994), and particularly on gathered data from both secondary and primary sources, to enable data triangulation. It was considered essential in these entrepreneurial firms to achieve as high a degree of data triangulation of primary data sourced from interviews as possible, because of the possibility of respondent exaggeration. Secondary data included external official documents (e.g. annual reports, stock-exchange listing documents etc), internet sites (of both the firms themselves and of external bodies such as stockbrokers), written and visual media documents (e.g. newspaper reports and television programmes) and internal documents and archival data (e.g. firm histories).

Our interview informants are the top-level owners/board members/managers responsible for decision making, and an a-priori assessment that they were entrepreneurial managers was re-evaluated in a post-hoc independent coding process. Usually, the CEOs in each firm were

Stage I:	Pilot Firm Approach	Firm Identification from secondary sources
Stage II:	Pilot case interviews and triangulation	Interviews of CEO, managers and employees from within pilot firm. Textual analysis of company documents and triangulation with secondary sources.
Stage III:	Case firm identification and checking	Firm Identification from secondary sources Checking of fit to sample frame through secondary sources
Stage IV:	Personal follow-up	Identification of 14 further entrepreneurial leaders and soliciting of interviews
Stage V:	Interviews	100-350 minute interviews of 10 entrepreneurial leaders at their firm headquarters, with between 2 and 4 other managers
Stage VI:	Data coding	Coding of data against coding categories from the OLI & International Entrepreneurship frameworks
Stage VII:	Analysis	Analysis of adequacy of explanation and observation of gaps
Stage VIII:	Data recoding	Recoding of data against coding categories from the Strategic Management research framework
Stage IX:	Overall analysis & re-evaluation	Analysis of adequacy of explanation and observation of gaps
Stage X:	Conclusions	Implications for International Business research at firm level

Figure 1: The research design

included, who would clearly be driving entrepreneurial forces, but it was clear that in these firms, much of the actual entrepreneurial activity is actually pursued by others: the growth of the firms has been such that there is an entrepreneurial team as much as an entrepreneur, so it was necessary also to interview others in each team. For this reason, between two and four other driving entrepreneurial directors of the businesses were interviewed as well, to both triangulate the primary data and to provide richer insight into the firms' management processes. Extended interviews using open questions that allowed for probing and discussion of issues was the main method of data collection. As Yin (1994) notes:

> The use of extended questioning and discussion with entrepreneurial managers with a free flow of response generates rich data and unravels the complexity and holistic nature of management issues and decision.

The interviews ranged from 90 minutes to 180 minutes in length. The interview was structured to explore the issues and thinking of these entrepreneurs in as non-directive way as possible (Harris, 2000). In outlining the historical development of the firm, the 'story telling' approach of Magretta (2002) was used. After an outline and an assurance of full confidentiality, the entrepreneurs were asked to describe his enactment of the entrepreneurial opportunity that they had faced and how they had exploited it. Interviewees were then asked

Table 1: The case firms – descriptive data.

Case	Internat-ional from:	Home country	Industry	Revenue $bn	% non-domestic (est.)	Main Markets
A. Orascom Telecom Holding	1998	Egypt	Telecoms	$ 4.7bn	77%	Egypt Algeria Tunisia Pakistan Bangladesh, sub-Saharan Africa, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Italy Greece, N. Korea
B. DP World	2005	UAE	Ports etc	$11.2bn	83%	UAE, India, Malaysia, Singapore, Korea, Hong-Kong, UK, Australia, Ireland, Norway, Egypt, other North Africa
C. Heikma Pharma	1992	Jordan	Pharma	$ 2.3bn	90%	MENA region, USA, whole EU, Australia
D. Al Faisal Holding	1998	Qatar	Various	$ 2.0bn	60%	Qatar UAE, Egypt, Algeria, India, Malaysia, Singapore, UK, USA, Australia
E. Ezz Steel	1998	Egypt	Steel	$ 3.8bn	64%	MENA region, whole East Europe, sub-Saharan Africa,
F. Al Sweedy Cables	2000	Egypt	Cables	$ 2.2bn	68%	MENA region, whole East Europe, sub-Saharan Africa, UK, France
G. Protec	2005	Qatar	Energy services	$ 0.8bn	100%	MENA region, whole East Europe, sub-Saharan Africa,
H. Al Huda	2000	Qatar	Construction	$ 2.2bn	100%	MENA region, sub-Saharan Africa,
I. Orascom Construction Industries	2000	Egypt	Cement & Construction	$ 2.4bn	85%	MENA region, USA, whole EU, East Europe, sub-Saharan Africa, South-east Asia, Australia
J. Orascom Hotels & development	2001	Egypt	Town development	$ 3.6bn	80%	MENA region, Switzerland

open ended questions that first explored the primary objectives for firm, the strategic decision process, and the major obstacles and challenges faced during planning and implementation. Then the firm's overall corporate strategy for international market participation was discussed and the overall types of entry mode and technology types transferred. The overall approaches of co-operation and collaboration were then discussed before the interviewees reflected on the most important things that they had learned in their experience in beginning foreign operations.

Other questions were addressed as well. The importance of the role of knowledge of the foreign market and its intensity was investigated as an influencing factor determining the speed of entrepreneurial internalisation (Oviatt & McDougall, 2005). Interviewees were asked how network relationships affected the process of growth and international development, and about the strengths of those relationships. The network size and density was examined, and the entrepreneurs were questioned as to how accepting they were of initiatives introduced by others.

By coding interview transcripts and secondary data against data categories derived from streams of international business research, it was possible to interpret of the case data within paradigms of understanding that, a-priori, appeared to have relevance. The results of this coding against those from the international entrepreneurship, location advantage and strategic entrepreneurship are presented here.

There were some limitations in this study, some of which are being addressed in the developing research programme, but others of which are an inevitable consequence of the subject of study. Gaining access to the phenomenon under study requires gaining extended access to the particular individuals who are the leaders of these firms, which is not easy. So this is a representative but not randomly selected sample of these types of firms, since these foirms are relatively rare and the respondents had to have personal trust in the principle researcher for the deep access required to be available. It was also not possible to record (and so transcribe) the extended discussions with the data subjects, because this would have inevitably constrained and distorted the free-ranging and open discussion required.

PILOT CASE: ORASCOM TELECOM

Orascom Telecom was founded in 1998 and is now among the largest network operators operating in emerging markets, with 82 million subscribers, a world market share of approximately 32 per cent, and turnover of $US 4.7bn.

International entrepreneurship at Orascom Telecom

An Egyptian, Naguib was educated in a German school and Swiss university, before returning to his family’s construction business as a qualified and experienced engineer. Keen to establish his own business, and to use his technical knowledge and interests, he began a new line of business supplying telephone systems and networks for businesses and hotels. He soon saw a new opportunity when a contract was offered to provide mobile telephony throughout Egypt, and was determined to beat European operators who would inevitably compete for the license. By then, he knew the political and commercial context, and contacted and organized with others within the network of his family’s business relationships to create a company with the necessary technological and infrastructure skills to submit a winning bid. This won, he has used this capability subsequently to win and keep licenses in other territories as new opportunities have been presented. Naguib declares his vision now:

> To become one of the world’s leading telecom operators providing the best quality services to our customers, value to our shareholders and a dynamic, challenging and fun environment for our employees.

Location Advantage at Orascom Telecom

Egypt was a pioneer country within the MENA region for privatization and liberalization. This provided the competence for Naguib to pursue opportunities in other countries where liberalizing governments have since been opening their infrastructures to competitive contacts with suppliers from elsewhere. This has been in countries eager to improve the quality of their nation's infrastructure, and to encourage competitiveness as an economic policy, and to collaborate with private companies in doing so rather than operating state monopolies. An effect of these policies has often been to encourage a new culture of entrepreneurialism which has presented Naguib with a favourable host environment. The entry modes have been various, depending on the local conditions, from Greenfield FDI in Algeria (where there were no potential local collaborators) to acquisition FDI in Italy and joint ventures in most other territories.

Strategic Management at Orascom Telecom

Naguib was on the hunt for new opportunities from the very beginning, and this has never changed. In this competitive bidding environment, however, this has required technical innovation to address complex geographic challenges, and clear competitive advantage over the large MNEs (VodaPhone, Orange, AT&T) with whom he has been competing. He created a culture of innovation and openness to new thinking within his company, which included hiring and rapidly promoting young people in a way unusual in Egyptian society.

Table 2: The global development of Orascom Telecom Holding

Year	Development
Sept. 1998	Company Founded for Egyptian Market
Sept. 1999	Acquires 65% of Fastlink, Jordan.
April 2000	Acquires 38.6% of Mobilink, Pakistan.
May 2000	Acquires 80% of Telecel, Zimbabwe, Cote d'Ivoire, Benin, Gabon, Chad, Burundi, Togo, CAR, Zambia, Congo Brazzaville, Burkina Faso, DRC and Uganda.
July 2000	Capital increase and listing at Cairo, & Alexandria & London Exchanges
Sept. 2000	New license, Sabafon, won in Yemen.
Nov. 2000	Telecel's acquires new GSM 900 license in Niger.
Jan. 2001	Acquires Motorola stake in Fastlink (Jordan), Mobinil (Egypt), & Mobilink (Pakistan), and increased its stake in Fastlink to 92%, Mobinil to 31%, & Mobilink to 69%.
Feb. 2001	New license, SyriaTel, won in Syria.
July 2001	Won Algerian license to run the second GSM network Djezzy GSM, Algeria.
Feb. 2002	Djezzy (Algerian network) goes live, wins 350,000 subscribers and 70% market share
March 2002	OT led consortium wins 2nd GSM License in Tunisia for US$ 454 million.
Oct. 2002	Naguib Sawiris (Chairman) becomes CEO of GSM Association CEO Board (Turkey)
Dec. 2002	Launch of Tunisiana, the 2nd GSM operator in Tunisia.
Oct. 2003	OTH (Iraqna) wins bid to operate GSM license for Iraq's Central Region & Baghdad.
Sept. 2004	Acquires 100 % of GSM operator in Bangladesh
March 2005	In an Egyptian consortium OTH wins 15-year license for fixed line network in Algeria.
Dec. 2005	Acquires 19.3% interest in Hutchison Telecom from HWL.
May 2006	Forms joint venture (Orascom Telecom WiMAX) with Intel Capital (VC arm of Intel Corp) for a new WiMAX (Wireless Interoperability for Microwave Access) investment.
Dec. 2006	Forms new holding company Weather Investments II to own OTH, Weather I (Wind (Italy) and Tallas (Greece))
Nov. 2008	Acquires investment in N. Korea and forms Joint Venture. First IJV in country.

He was focused on his vision and the main targets this implied, but was very flexible and adaptable in the tactical approached employed. To maintain flexibility, adaptability and the scope to realise new opportunities within each territory, separate companies were created for each stage of the mobile telephone delivery system, so that, for example, Mobiserve, which constructs the masts, now also contracts to other parties.

For these different strategic tasks, he resourced the necessary human capital and strategic relationships. For example, he brought in Khaled Bichara by buying out Khaled's company (LINKdotNET) the largest private Internet Service Provider (ISP) in the Middle East. He appointed him not only COO of the new Italian business, Wind Telecomunicazioni, but also board member of Tellas S.A., his Greece business. This appointment has completely restructured the mobile telephony business in Italy, making it, since September 2005, the third largest operator. A former fund manager with Wharton business school and Boston Consulting Group background, Hassan Abdou, was recruited to create and head up a holding and investment company (Weather Investments II):.

Pilot Case Analysis: Orascom Telecom

The entrepreneurial opportunity was presented very soon after the entrepreneur started in business, and there clear response here to new technology and a proactive reaction to changes. There is an entrepreneurial vision, and an entrepreneurial approach to its initial pursuit. It beat more established telecom MNEs into fast-growing telephony markets by being quicker to move and to learn, and being more oriented to collaborate with others. But the subsequent phenomenal growth of the firm can be little explained by the notions on international entrepreneurship.

Egypt's liberalization its telecoms gave massive learning advantages to Orascom, here a home country advantage that it could then employ elsewhere with liberalising telephony. While government economic policies, in the main, were changing to focus entrepreneurial activity, and this often influenced location decisions, the availability of other firms of infrastructure in each country was not always present. Entrepreneurial thinking may be at work and interacting with locational decision-making in a somewhat different way than we might expect in non-entrepreneurial firms. Perhaps institutional and infrastructural weaknesses can represent opportunities, not threats for entrepreneurial firms. Location advantages can be seen, by international entrepreneurs, in a different way.

Networks of relationships were fundamental these networks had been developed in the family business activity but a proactive approach to developing new networks was also evident. Networks were built up to meet the newer opportunities, they did not previously exist. But the firm has built up a large bank of intangible resources: capabilities of working and collaborating in otherwise hostile business envioronments, networks of business relationships that enable it to react quicly and rface risks, and a system of management that fosters creative entrepreneurial behaviour at all levels within the firm, with distributed responsibility and authority, and a massive attention to training and development of its managers and employees.

FINDINGS: INTERNATIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE 10 CASES

Table 3, below, presents data from the ten cases that concern the paradigms of international entrepreneurship. These are now drawn together within the core notions identified (above) to that stream of thinking

Entrepreneurial opportunity

All entrepreneurs were driven by the observation of an entrepreneurial opportunity derived from established work, knowledge and skills and their international experiences. But it happened at very different stages. Protec was established because of an entrepreneurial opportunity that rescued the career of a well qualified engineer, and at Orascom Telecom, it was presented soon after the entrepreneur started in business. In Heikma, it took 13 years and at El Sweedy and OCI, it awaited a new generation of family management.

Enabling force of technology

Most of the firms benefited from advances in technology, for example technologies that have improved communications to every country in the world. Orascom telecoms and DP world had immediate wordwide operations demanding this type of service day and night. The rapid internationalization of Heikma, El Sweedy and OCI, relied on the increased speed of communication and transportation of goods internationally.

The motivating force of competition

Even though nearly all the firms were pioneers in their businesses, they were all working in industries with large and effective competitors. OHD pioneered a new concept of town development on the Red Sea, but wanted to realise the opportunity before other international developers could move in. Competition is a motivating force in its threat, more than in its

Table 3: International Entrepreneurship in the case firms

CASE:	International entrepreneurship evidence:
A. Orascom Telecom Holding	Keen to establish his own business, negotiated a contract for supplying telephony to the whole of Egypt. Proactively networked from his family relationships to create an organization with the necessary technological and infrastructure skills Has used these capabilities to win and keep licences in other territories as new opportunities have been presented**.**
B. DP World	By 2005, Bin Sulayem had developed a very wide range of businesses including a number of ports businesses but was then presented with an opportunity to acquire the international terminal business of CSX Corporation. Its presence in Asia (Hong Kong, China), Australia, Germany, Dominican Republic and Venezuela would transform the firm into a significant global business, based on exporting the success of his earlier businesses internationally. But real expertise in international ports operations was needed, and networked to find a new CEO, Mohammed Sharaf, with over 20 years' experience in transport/ logistics having started in the Port of New York/New Jersey. This networking approach it is at the heart of the business, and not just for acquiring expertise & talent.
C. Heikma Pharma	Samih Darwazah founded Hikma in 1978 in Amman, Jordan, as a branded pharmaceuticals business for the MENA Region. He saw, from his experience within Jordan, the opportunity for developing pharmaceutical operations in other countries based on core skills in low cost sourcing and manufacturing. This vision has continued with in 1992 the opportunity to acquire a generic pharmaceuticals business in the US, and then with the establishment of an injectable pharmaceutical operations in Portugal. Since then, the company has expanded significantly, both organically and through acquisition. It is now a pharmaceutical MNE that develops, manufactures and markets of a broad range of generic and in-licensed pharmaceuticals.
D. Al Faisal Holding	What originally began as a small local company called Gettco Trading, initiated by a young Qatari with a modest start-up capital, has become a worldwide, multi-million dollar enterprise with an extensive range of business activities. That modest entity is now under a major holding company initiated by the same Qatari. Sh. Faisal Bin Qassim Al Thani who has become one of Qatar's private sector's economic pillars.
E. Ezz Steel	Bight and ambitious Ahmed Ezz seize the opportunity of a booming construction industry in Egypt establishes Al Ezz Steel Rebar "ËSR" which acquires the giant ESM and begins long steel production. Another opportunity arises so ESR goes Public and acquires stake in Al Dekheila Company and becomes EZDK
F. Al Sweedy Cables	Son enacts opportunity of construction boom in Egypt and starts differentiated products to add to regular family line of activity. He excels through the forces of internationalisation and expands family business to cover 110 countries from all over the world
G. Protec	In fear of imprisonment in Egypt, Dr Sami M. Kaseem accepts job for US $4000 profit in Doha Qatar. He then exploits this opportunity by establishing Protec which develops to be a leading organization and one of the biggest companies in the Gulf Area
H. Al Huda	Enacts an opportunity to establish his private company in Engineering after working as an engineer in Doha governorate. Exploits this opportunity using his networks to expand his company's activities to the Oil and gas sector in Qatar. His entrepreneurial perception influenced his cross border very successful investment
I. Orascom Construction Industries	Keen to develop his new ideas, Nassef Sawiris takes over management of OCI, and he embarks upon an ambitious diversification strategy through investments in complementary businesses such as cement and building materials
J.Orascom Hotels & development	Samih is a true visionary and the driver behind the company's ongoing success. He enacted the opportunity of establishing the first beach town in Egypt. His fluency in Arabic, English and German enabled him to exploit, expand and broaden OHD's development to be the biggest owner of Hotels in Egypt ,and internationally to cover countries across three continents.

actuality. For El Sweedy and Heikma, the task was pre-emptively rapidly to scale up the international market from a technological opportunity: if they had built only their domestic market first, large established MNE competitors would prevent their international growth.

The mediating perception of the entrepreneur

Three traits emerge from the cases in the ways that the entrepreneurs think that influences their decision-making. They are visionary, they base their vision on their years of experience, but they take calculated risks in realising their dreams. It was Samih Derwazah's vision for an international low cost pharmaceutical firm drove Heikma's acquisition of firms in the USA and Portugal, and it was Sultan bin Selim's international experience and his risk orientation that enabled him to see how acquiring CSX and P&O maritime would deliver his dream for DP ports becoming the world's premier ports operator. Faisal Al Thani's experience showed him how he could take Al Faisal Holdings into new disciplines and territories: risky and competitive, but where he could win.

The moderating forces of knowledge

International growth thereafter, however, happened very fast, and it relied in every case on the deep knowledge of the industry – not only of the entrepreneur himself, but also on knowledge that was deliberately accessed and resourced by means of strategically recruiting people that would fill knowledge groups, or forming business relationships with such people. Nearly all the firms head-hunted new managers with *both* deep technical knowledge *and* strategic management experience in their industrial sectors. The only exception was Protec telecoms, where rescue came from the founder's own knowledge and qualifications.

The moderating forces of networks

Networks of relationships were fundamental to the development of all the businesses, as has commonly been found in entrepreneurial firms. These networks had been developed in previous business activity but in each case, a proactive approach to developing new networks was evident. The networks were based on family (Oraccom telecom, El Sweedy and OCI), political (Ezz Steel, DP world and Al Faisal holdings and Al Hulda) and customer ties (Heikma, OHD and Protec).

Cross-border involvement

Overall, we have clear evidence that these are truly international firms. Non-domestic involvement ranges from 60% (Al Faisal Holdings) to 100% (Protec and Al Hulda) (Table 1).

LOCATION ADVANTAGE IN THE 10 CASES

Table 4 presents data from the ten cases that concern the location advantage from the OLI framework. These are now drawn together within notions associated with OLI research.

Host and home country

The home country of eight of the ten case companies all presented clear home country advantages for the establishment of a new MNE, with the potential to gain competitive advantage in many territories. We have seen how Egypt's liberalization its telecoms gave massive learning advantages to Orascom that it could then employ elsewhere. UAE was a major port location for DP world, providing a massive knowledge advantage. The liberal

Table 4: Location Advantage in the case firms

CASE:	Location Advantage Characteristics:
A. Orascom Telecom Holding	As pioneer country within MENA for privatization & liberalization, Egypt provided a competence for Naguib to pursue opportunities in other countries with liberalizing governments. These new culture of entrepreneurialism encouraged has also presented favourable host environments. The entry modes have been joint ventures in most territories, but with greenfield and acquisition FDI in some.
B. DP World	The massive and growing Dubai and UAE port business home base presented an environment that encouraged new business growth, a culture of entrepreneurialism, and skills in port operations, financing, and marine servicing. Dubai free trade port has fostered strong networks: collaboration between different businesses in related industries within Dubai is normal, within a highly competitive business environment. International growth builds on these location characteristics, through entry modes that includes acquisition, joint ventures & greenfield FDI.
C. Heikma Pharma	The original home territory of Jordan offered few host country advantages; the business entered the US market through acquisition in 1992. From there it developed capabilities, to export to Eastern Europe (1994), and receiving FDA approval (1996). In 1997 the firm built a greenfield factory in Portugal to manufacture injectable pharmaceutical products for MENA Region and the EU, taking advantage of investment incentives, low costs, and new pan-European legislation. In the following year the Jordanian facility gained MHRA approval to sell products in the UK.
D. Al Faisal Holding	Home Country rules and regulation helped Al Faisal to establish itself as a leading trading and investment company. The host country regulations presented favourable environments, and most of the international activity was Greenfield and acquisition FDI
E. Ezz Steel	Encouraged by the new laws and regulations Al Ezz Exports 55% of its production to Europe and 28% to the MENA region
F. Al Sweedy Cables	With 23 production and manufacturing facilities in 12 different countries ; and with sales in 110 countries El Sweedy has pursued efficiency seeking FDI (Removal of obstacles, Competitiveness encouraged and co-operation enhancement) and strategic asset seeking FDI: Entry mode, access to different cultures, institutions and systems.
G. Protec	Home country regulations were unfavourable, which drove Dr Sami Kassem to a new host country with appealing regulations and efficiency seeking FDI incentives: Removal of obstacles, Competitiveness encouraged and co-operation enhancement.
H. Al Huda	Home and Host countries, both helped AL Huda Engineering establish itself locally and internationally as a major lead Engineering firm in MENA region
I. Orascom Construction Industries	Host countries regulation enables Nassef to Acquire Contrack International in USA to undergo all institutional projects in the Middle East and Central Asia financed by US AID, naval and American Corps of Engineers. As well as Belgium BESIX Group which undertakes major commercial, industrial and infrastructure projects throughout Europe, northern and central Africa and the Middle East.
J.Orascom Hotels & development	Home country laws enabled Samih to acquire the land initially at preferential prices. Samih was invited by a number of host countries to develop similar beach and mountain towns, being offered encouraging tax incentives, ease of finance and operations

trading policies in Jordan, and the considerable domestic demand for low cost medicines presented good domestic demand base for Haikma and a stable environment in which to build up the capability to, and knowledge of how to operate a low cost medicines business.

But the host country locations were chosen according to specific advantages within each, in a deliberate and strategic and not wholly entrepreneurially opportunistic way. For example, Portugal because offered Haikma the lowest cost entry into the EU, which had recently become a desirable market for low cost medicines supply. The entrepreneur had to build his operations there from scratch. Similarly, when Orascom Telecom expanded into new countries, networks of business relationships were built up to meet them, they did not previously exist. Encouraging host country regulations in many territories enabled OCI, Ezz Steel and El Saweedi to expand production and sales operations worldwide.

Institutional competence and liberal economic policies that remove obstacles

In four of the firms, general host firm advantages often outlined in OLI research were clear host attractions, but for as many firms (as in Orascom Telecom) the choice locations (e.g. Algeria, Afganistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Zimbabwe) appeared to have none of these supposedly attractive features. Nevertheless, they were excellent market opportunities for the firms studied. For these entrepreneurs, these types of advantage are often personal rather than general. For Dr Sami Kassim of Protec, Quatar offered one clear host advantage over his home country of Egypt, where he would have been imprisoned if he had remained, as well as institutional competence and liberal economic policies that have enabled him to flourish.

Infrastructure quality

Some of the firms clearly sought generic attractions such as this, such as Heikma's expansion into the USA, UK and Portugal, and DP world'd expansion into Singapore, Hong Kong and the UK. But for as many firms, a lack of infrastructure (in countries like Algeria, Afganistan, and North Korea) presented an opportunity for developing it.

Co-operation enhancement

Regulations requiring cooperation with local partners, often governmental, appeared to offer benefits to these young entrepreneurial firms. ODH has benefited from Swiss laws that offer tax incentives to foreign developers who collaborate locally to develop new towns and tourist areas. Quatar's regulations have encouraged Al Huda and Protec to form partnerships with strong local firms that have worked to their advantage.

Entry modes

These international entrepreneurs used many types of entry mode from greenfield FDI through joint ventures to agent led export, in the various territories and no clear pattern is observable: the entrepreneurial approach seems more opportunistic.

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT IN THE 10 CASES

Table 5, below, presents data from the cases concerning the strategic management of the firms, and these are now summarised in headings reflecting strategic thinking in entrepreneurial firms.

The capturing and exploitation of resources:

Overall, these entrepreneurial firms had almost nothing to begin with. Their starting resources were their own skills, and the people that they knew. In each firm, the core resources that they were seeking to build and exploit were human: in skills and expertise, in the networks of relationships, and in the trust held within their personal relationships. From these foundations, the firms have continued to grow to acquire other resources.

The use and development of knowledge and skills

All the entrepreneurs in these cases were highly, usually internationally educated before they began their businesses, and this orientation to knowledge underpins their businesses. For example, their investment in their own knowledge and skills is reflected in the investment that they make in recruitment and in training, which is to an extent often not usually associated with entrepreneurial firms. As a result, these firms have high levels of technical competence not in relation to their home nations but compared to their global competitors.

The development and employment of networks and relationships

Human networks and relationships are not just the origins of these firms; they are the basis of their subsequent success. The networks are external; the trustful relationships are mainly internal. Ahmed Ezz is one of the most powerful men in Egypt and his network of friends, businessmen and policy makers act as one of the most influential resources. His appointment as head of the parliament's budget committee reflected his position as head of the ruling party. Its examination of new anti-trust regulations ensured that such regulations, which would have severely harmed his steel operations were never approved. DP world's growth has benefited considerably from the close relationship between its chairman, Sultan bin Selim and former US president Bill Clinton, which helped overcome US Congress objections to strategic US assets falling into middle eastern hands.

But trustful internal relationships, reflecting the focus on human capital and skills, are important as well. For example, when OCI disinvested its cement businesses to Lafarge, its CEO Nassif Sawris ensured that all his managers stayed with him; they were subsequently employed developing of a network of fertilizer production operations in the MENA region.

The continuous search for new sources of competitive advantage

The pro-activity and vision of the developments pursued by these firms is not of the type normally associated with international entrepreneurship. The scale of DP world's massive acquisitions of CSX & P&O maritime put it in a scale position to compete wordwide in the transportation industry. Similarly, OCI in Cement and El Sweedy in cables acquired 32 and 22 factories respectively to dominant industry positions worldwide. Other moves were strategic but less dramatic. Haikma grew in the USA and Portugal to develop competitive

Table 5: Strategic Management in the case firms

CASE:	Strategic Management Characteristics
A. Orascom Telecom Holding	Hunting for new opportunities from the beginning, based on skills as a qualified and experienced engineer knowledge from educational background in Germany and Switzerland and from the family construction business. A core competence is technical innovation to address complex geographic challenges, and clear competitive advantage over large MNEs. Processes instituted for encouraging innovation & openness to new thinking. Focused on vision & main targets, but flexible & adaptable in the tactics employed. Separate companies created in each territory for each stage of the telephone delivery system and young leaders were headhunted to undertake different strategic tasks.
B. DP World	Bin Sulayem's vision is now 'to enhance our position as a leading global port operator, recognised for quality, service and customer satisfaction.' The firm's growth vision (80% capacity growth anticipated by 2017) links external focus with its core competences and internal capability development in both skills and relationships. The acquired CSX brings a South Korea base for expansion in growth markets including India and China, towards developing a comprehensive portfolio of ports linking the Americas, Asia and Middle East. The 2006 P&O Maritime Services acquisition adds a related value added business as well to its port operations that will be rolled-out worldwide. From the outset it has relied upon team work, commitment and leadership by its people for its growth.
C. Heikma Pharma	A qualified pharmacist with a US masters degree, Samih Darwazah developed within Jordan core skills in sourcing and in low cost manufacturing, not the interest of other pharmaceutical MNEs. Its combining this with quality products and sales and marketing capability made it the lowest cost manufacturer in the Middle East, and the only FDA approved manufacturer in the Arab world. Analysis showed need for low cost medicines also for poorer people in countries such as the US: a perception that became a new strategic opportunity. Now 3 strategies combine developed capabilities with carefully analyzed opportunities: A, to consolidate a strong market position in the MENA region through new products, geographic markets and market share. B, to develop a clear lead in injectables (R&D focuses on technically challenging products such as injectables, complex formulations, unstable compounds and sustained release tablets and capsules). C, opportunistic product development in the US in high margin, niche products (104 new products pending approval and another 133 under development).
D. Al Faisal Holding	Faisal Al Thani, a young Qatari with a modest start-up capital, has become a worldwide leader of multi-million dollar enterprise with an extensive range of business activities. This due to his ability to anticipate, envision and work with others to initiate change. Also the development and employment of networks and relationships played an important role in capturing and exploitation of resources.
E. Ezz Steel	Ezz is one of the most powerful men in Egypt and his networks of friends, businessmen and policy makers acted as one of the most influential resources. Investing in People by education and continues on job training gave his organisation a very favourable reputation
F. Al Sweedy Cables	A clear competitive advantage arises from a long history in manufacturing coupled up with low cost skilled labour. A key ability in technical innovation to address challenges in different countries, enabling product differentiation.
G. Protec	Sami's used his PHD in Engineering and extensive training with the American Corp of Engineers from when he first arrived in Doha 4 years ago to avoid imprisonment. Using this knowledge and skill, with a continuous search for new sources of competitive advantage, and constantly innovating makes him owner of one of the biggest companies in the Gulf.
H. Al Huda	Al Huda has sought to capture and exploit of resources through the development and employment of networks and relationships: as in the firm's turning point when it obtained a key oil and gas field. Going international reflected a continuous search for new sources of competitive advantage
I. Orascom Construction Industries	OCI aggressive investments in cement factories in 32 countries world-wide focused on scale advantage; its divestment (with a profit and 22% of Dufour, a French Cement MNE) and acquisition of Abraaj Capital fertilizer production operations reflects focus on human resources and potential rather than markets, and a strategic proactivity for growth in the higher value construction business
J.Orascom Hotels & development	The foundation of growth to be world leader in hotel and tourism is investment in personnel: hiring talented and experienced managers, education, service training, and entrepreneurial team leadership. Strategic approach of locking-in customers, competitors and complementors.

advantage for a global niche, and Protec's representation of other high-tech firms in the Middle East helped it to acquire a regional market position.

The essentiality of innovation

Innovation is a key element of these firm's growth, but it can be managerial innovation as well as technical. Technical innovation is often important, and this is typically in a strategic move to differentiate. El Sweedy historically had been working in the mature industry of steel electric cables, but had invested to develop new types of optical fibre cables, fibreglass poles and specialist cables for uses in telephony, control, instrumentation and fire resistance. Heikma similarly has focused its innovation to deepen its competitive advantage in the injectable pharmaceutical industry worldwide, and have 104 new products pending FDA approval and another 133 under development in the USA.

The sense of unity and coherence

While the sense of strategic coherence was most clearly evident in Orascom Telecom, it could also be identified within all the other case firms in one way or another. In all these firms, the managers all seem to be very clear as to the strategic direction of the firms, and have the freedom to act on the basis of that understanding: the entrepreneurial vision is distributed rather than focused within the head of one person. Helping this, it is normal in these firms for managers to have shareholdings, and to display considerable loyalty to the firms and to each other.

Strategic leadership for generating and sharing a viable vision for the firm

The characteristic feature of each and every one of these firms was that while the original entrepreneurial ideas grew within the head on one person, in their subsequent growth, not just the enactment of tat vision, but the reinvigoration and further development of the vision and the strategies that would pursue them have taken place not by those leaders alone, but within entrepreneurial teams that those individuals have developed to lead the companies. Leadership here is not about one man operations. It is leadership by well educated, carefully selected, and meticulously trained entrepreneurial teams who share their firm's vision because they have been a part of generating it. While these individuals were central to the creation of the firms, most of them now claim that their firms could now continue without them. The teamwork bonds are strong and that strength is based on trust and mutual interest: all the members are shareholders.

DISCUSSION

The background to the early development of these entrepreneurial businesses matches very well the factors that we have come to expect from ten years of international entrepreneurship research the focus of which has been to identify the characteristics of international entrepreneurs and their firms. In both, and in the entrepreneurs approach to developing new business opportunities, we find close match. For example, the basis of these entrepreneur's businesses is in their own personal knowledge (tacit and codified) and in the networks of relationships available for them, and that they develop to meet their entrepreneurial visions.

These are their unique intangible resources, as Harris and Wheeler (2005) noted. International entrepreneurship thinking captures the early origins of these international entrepreneurs and their speed of internationalization (Oviatt and McDougall, 2005) quite sufficiently.

International entrepreneurship also recognizes the role of vision, but perhaps not the sheer scale of vision that we see in these firms. The entrepreneurs we have examined have gone far beyond merely being successful international entrepreneurs, having rapidly moved beyond smallness. They have become the chairmen and CEOs of major multinational corporations, and are making decision choices that reflect location decision theory that has long been developed to understand multinational growth.

So we see the *process* of decision making does not seem to reflect either traditional views of ‘entrepreneurial decision making’, nor the international business process approaches often characterised as, either, the ‘Uppsala’ School (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977) or the ‘born global’ (Rennie, 1993). These firms do not do things gradually. They do them rapidly, but strategically – with a clear vision from the beginning and coherent strategic moves to get to that vision. The businesses that are built are economically and strategically organized to exploit an evident market opportunity and to do it in a way that creates a sustainable competitive advantage in many countries. None of the companies are global, and were certainly not born global. But they were born to be multinational, and rapidly became so.

Here, however, we must note that these businesses have not *evolved* in a stage-like way from being entrepreneurial companies to being multinational entrepreneurial companies. They have been formed with that destiny in mind. There are two important consequences of that. First, location decisions have been made from the very beginning, and location advantages have been fundamental to the success of the firms from the very beginning. Some MENA countries benefit from considerable location advantages; others from massive disadvantages. Multinational entrepreneurs move from those that don’t have them to those that do, and therefore, their growth reflects those advantages.

Second, location advantages are exploited opportunistically, in an entrepreneurial way, rather than being planned. We see no patterns of mode of entry. If there is an opportunity for transformational change through FDI acquisition that is what is pursued. If it is for a partnership, then so be it. And if there is an advantage from a loose partnership association, then that is the mode of market entry. Mode of entry choice decisions seem to be made in entrepreneurial MNEs in quite different ways to other MNEs.

The location advantage focus is on the country locations that attract foreign direct investment. We do not normally associate these factors with the decision-making of entrepreneurial firms, for whom the presence of networks of relationships, and specific firm knowledge would be expected to be much more important. While government economic policies, in the main, were changing to encourage entrepreneurial activity, and this often did influence location decisions, the availability of other forms of infrastructure in each country was not always present. Location advantages is seen, by the international entrepreneurs studied here, in a different way.

In these firms, locational advantage *is* important, but it is important in an entrepreneurial way. These entrepreneurial firms see opportunities to gain, for example, first mover advantage by entering locations with infrastructural deficiencies that they know how to overcome: these represent opportunities, not threats. Being quicker to move and to learn, and being more oriented than non-entrepreneurial firms to collaborate with others, they can be faster to enter and exploit market gaps before more established firms can do so.

In spite of the effective overview that international entrepreneurship literature provides us to explain the growth of these firms into successful MNEs, it does not yield us a clear perspective on the leadership and on the strategic behaviour of these firms, aspects that emerged very strongly in the narratives of our cases. We have clear evidence here that the strategic management literature that pays attention to these aspects is necessary to gain a full understanding of these firms behaviour.

We have already seen a departure from short-term opportunism in these entrepreneurial firms. They are all working to a long-term vision. They are all responding to long-term trends in their industries. And they are all responding to vast changes in the geographical scope of those industries. In short, they are not only operating internationally, as international entrepreneurs. They are also thinking and acting strategically. They all are focused on the means to achieve competitive advantage for a sustainable period, and develop strategies for doing that. In this respect, they do not reflect traditional notions of entrepreneurial behaviour, and certainly not of small business behaviours.

Their ways of strategic thinking reflect in many ways the orientations for strategic entrepreneurship outlined by Meuleman et al. (2009). For these firms, creativity and innovation lie at the root of their strategic behaviour, in which they are always searching for new ways of gaining competitive advantage worldwide. The resource focus is clear: the development and use of a variety of unique and unreplicable resources is evident in all the firms, and these resources are in their deep knowledge and industry expertise and in the networks of relationships that are important not only for the birth and early development of the firms, but throughout.

But we find that a much stronger web of internal relationships than we had expected from the strategic entrepreneurship literature (Kuratko and Audretsch, 2009; Meuleman et al., 2009): these firms do not remain one man bands for long. The founders distribute leadership to those that they trust, and they distribute it fully completely in their development of entrepreneurial teams. We find that this process is intrinsic to the strategic management for growth that the founders enact: they work with others to initiate the changes that will create a viable future for the firm.

CONCLUSIONS

International entrepreneurship and locational advantage concepts come from the repertoire of international business research. Their focus is on the firm and the firms' environments. Strategic Entrepreneurship research has an entirely different heritage: - it is from strategic management, whose focus is on the management of the firm, and the way in which the managers make decisions and carry them out. The entrepreneurs in this study behave entrepreneurially: - that is no surprise. But they also show the most strategic thinking associated with well developed multinational enterprises.

It is this study of a different form of international business that has enabled us to combine these three conceptual frameworks, tentatively, but possibly for the first time (figure 2). The conceptual linkages are clear, particularly in their common focus on entrepreneurial behaviour. But their subjects of study are and have been entirely different. International Entrepreneurship research focuses on the characteristics of the individuals and their firms. Location research focuses on the characteristics of the territories in which they work. The newer stream of strategic entrepreneurship research (Kuratko and Audretsch, 2009) a particularly relevant new growth budding from a long heritage of strategic management research that focuses on the processes of management that firms pursue.

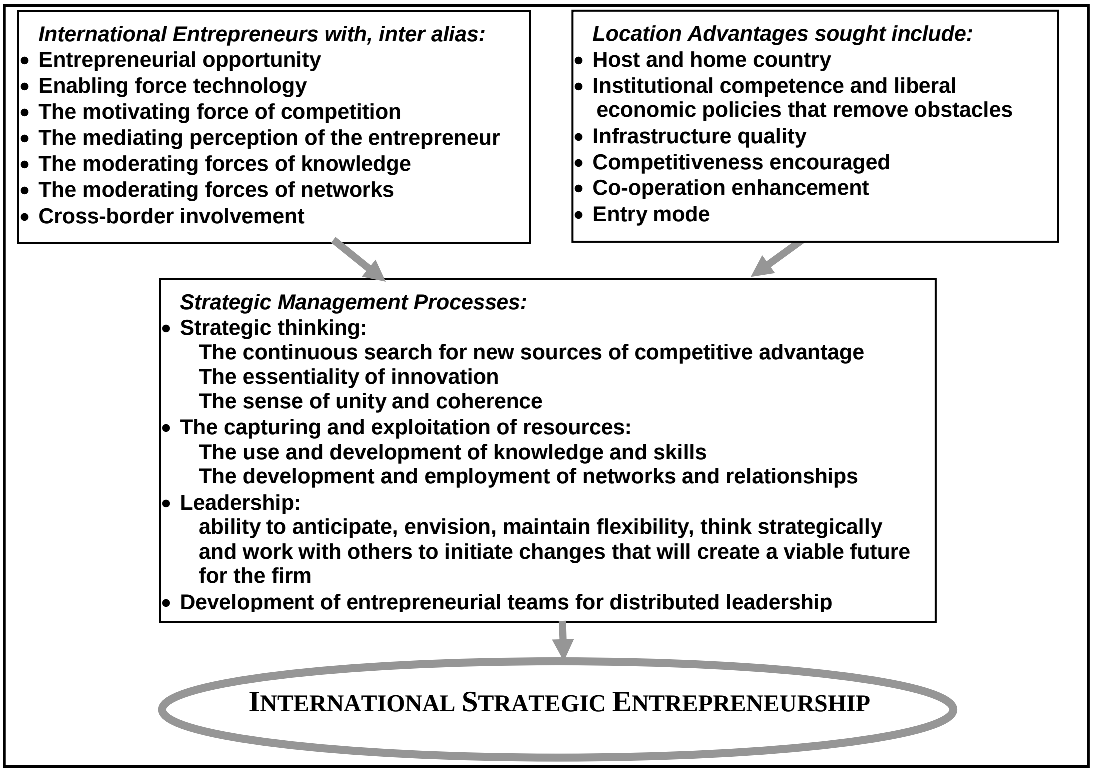

Figure 1: A framework for international strategic entrepreneurship

Our contribution is in identifying the way in which these three conceptual frameworks fit together, but we have also found something else: we have identified another important aspect of the strategic development of these hyper-growth firms, and maybe for the first time. This is in the process of distributed entrepreneurial leadership that the founders enact from the early days of their firms. It is here that the roots of the successful development of these firms from the realms of international entrepreneurs to being the architects of hyper-growth multinational enterprises may well lie. The leadership roles that are so important for the identification of strategic opportunity, the development of coherent strategies and their enactment through action that the pace of development cannot be maintained without undue pressure on a single person, in these hyper-growth firms this role is adopted and enacted by entrepreneurial teams

Overall, we conclude that strategic management matters to a degree often underestimated by international business scholars, and it matters a lot. International entrepreneurship research is now recognizing the important personal and individual characteristics that lie behind the international growth of young businesses that traditional theories failed to explain. Location is important, and as Dunning (2009) noted in his last paper, it matters more than has usually been recognised.

But this international business work fails to recognise important processes, intangible resources and decision orientations that lead some individuals to create and develop major new enterprises on an international scale. These are elements that have been the preoccupation of strategic management research for many years, but where there have also been significant recent developments.

This paper contributes by identifying a number of these elements from within the strategic management literature, and builds on recent contributions in strategic entrepreneurship within this area (e.g. Kuratko and Audretsch, 2009; Meuleman et al., 2009). Future research into international firm growth might benefit from the idea, long established in strategic management research (Pettigrew, 1992), that context, process and action are inextricably linked. These aspects have separately been studied in international business research. Perhaps the time has come to put them together.

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