

De-globalisation in Practice: New Zealand Strategists' Interpretations

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Abstract

This research investigates strategists and their interpretations and actions as a result of the contemporary de-globalisation phenomenon. Specifically de-globalisation refers to economic and political influences inhibiting interdependence within nations. The aim of this research is to study de-globalisation and its impact upon New Zealand strategy practitioners within internationally operating organisations. De-globalisation has recently received attention within international business literature and the phenomenon's macro implications are well-documented. The research gap this study identifies is to what extent de-globalisation impacts organisational strategy and its relevant actors. A strategy practice research paradigm offers a renewed approach to strategy research, focusing upon the everyday sayings and doings of strategy. An integration of a macro phenomenon such as de-globalisation and practice based strategy is a unique blend of academic influences. The researcher conducted a total of six semi-structured interviews with strategy practitioners from a range of New Zealand exporting organisations. The transcripts from the interviews were analysed using a qualitative content analysis. The process sorted excerpts of the data into larger expected and emergent thematic groups. Actors' accounts of strategizing in a de-globalisation environment supply the researcher with a range of approaches, perspectives and organisational responses to this phenomenon. This content is used to answer how senior strategists are characterising de-globalisation events, how they have observed changes within strategic activity in response and identify to what extent do they consider the future strategic implications of de-globalisation. The discussion reveals aspects about practitioners interpretations and strategic considerations that have emerged within an environment subject to the implications of de-globalisation. It is hoped that the study can contribute to both respective academic literatures and be informative for practitioners.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

As the forces associated with globalisation have accelerated considerably over the latter half of the twentieth century, a global infrastructure for information exchange, collaboration and economic integration has emerged. Globalisation, a concept referring to a period of increasing global connectedness and integration (Berry, Guillén, & Hendi, 2014; Peng, 2011), has been facilitated by cross-national political relationships and technology. These factors have driven economic growth on an unprecedented scale where modern organisations have become accustomed to operating within a globally networked economy. However, recent economic and political events have challenged these trends and global business orientations. The 2008 global financial crisis (GFC), the destabilisation of economic unions and rise of nationalist values in Western nations are all argued to be indicative of a period of de-globalisation (Livesey, 2018; Van Bergeijk, 2018). De-globalisation refers to a period or trends of global economic contractions through decreased connectedness and share of economic activities (Van Bergeijk, 2018). There are many theories surrounding trends or ‘waves’ of globalisation and the economic and social implications have long been debated (Kobrin, 2017).

Subsequently, globalisation has been acknowledged in relevant literature as a key environmental influence upon the strategies and operations of multinational organisations. Peng (2011) describes the pendulum perspective of globalisation. From this perspective globalisation is considered a fragmented economic/political trend occurring in waves throughout history (Berry et al., 2014; Peng, 2011). Through this approach, globalisation and de-globalisation are not considered contemporary phenomena as their manifestations predate modern economics. However, there are uncertain implications for modern businesses, which have exploited and become accustomed to the benefits of a globally integrated economy. A compelling argument can be made regarding the feasibility of increased economic disintegration, where the costs might outweigh the benefits of independent national markets (Kobrin, 2017). In an environment where newly imposed political regulations restrict and fragment integrated networks, future challenges and scenarios become harder to predict and strategies are less certain to succeed.

Multinational organisations are subject to volatile political and economic conditions and require immense capability and resources to adapt their strategies to account for these difficulties (Kobrin, 2017). To provide a means to cut through the traditional complexity associated with global strategy, this thesis will study strategy from an everyday, people focused perspective. In accordance with the practice turn in social studies, strategy as practice shifts the emphasis of strategy studies back to people (Whittington, 1996). Investigations into strategy practice uncover and consider the taken for granted aspects of strategy; such as the day-to-day activity, stories and routines of strategizing (Whittington, 1996). Applying a sociological perspective to strategy allows researchers to approach the practice as not a process, but an activity: an activity deeply embedded within organisations and societies, subject to implications enforced by external factors (Whittington, 2007).

This thesis seeks to provide a current practice-based perspective on the phenomena of de-globalisation, an avenue that has received less attention within international business literature. An acknowledgement and understanding of the processes of how strategists interpret environments is required. Seidl and Werle (2018) allude to the importance of sensemaking capabilities within an organisation when interpreting complex environments. Sensemaking refers to a continuous process of interpretation and action (Weick, 1995), and this sociological concept has had a profound influence on strategy as practice literature. Proponents of sensemaking focus once again upon social processes individuals adhere to in organisations (Weick, 1995), aligning with the paradigm of strategy as practice. Additionally, researchers have called for an enlarged agenda for strategy as practice research, acknowledging a need for an increased awareness of human and non-human actors (Seidl & Whittington, 2014). This, paired with the studies of sensemaking and phenomena of de-globalisation, make for an exploratory and original investigation into strategic management. The following concepts and other related ideas will be discussed in greater details in the literature review.

1.2. Summary of Research Objectives

The overall objective of the thesis is to gain a managerial perspective on the phenomena of de-globalisation and its impact upon strategizing activity. Through the literature review, it will be apparent that de-globalisation has yet to be considered from a practice perspective. Likewise, the field of strategy as practice is typically separate from such phenomena. Despite

investigations on the practical application of sensemaking in organisations and calls for more open epistemological calibration in strategy as practice (SP) research (Seidl & Whittington, 2014), there is little coverage on the implications of de-globalisation on practice. Therefore, the research questions the thesis seeks to answer, focus upon interpretation and activity which aligns with SP research paradigms:

- A) In what ways, if any, do strategic leaders of New Zealand exporting firms characterise current de-globalisation events?*
- B) How have senior strategy practitioners observed day-to-day strategizing activities change in response to recent de-globalisation events?*
- C) What are senior strategic decision makers doing to plan for the future when responding to de-globalisation events?*

Through these three primary research objectives, the researcher will attain a perspective upon interpretations of de-globalisation, actual strategic activities being carried out and future implications. The thesis will provide current understanding from a New Zealand perspective to practicing strategists.

1.3. Research Methodology

Semi-structured interviews are used to capture qualitative interview data; the philosophical assumptions, topic and research questions deem this method the most suitable. These interviews are conducted in New Zealand based exporting organisations with individuals who operate at a strategic level. Participants from organisations are considered across multiple sectors to attain a broad understanding of strategic interpretations. Data are presented from six semi structured interviews with senior level employees of an organisation that meet the relevant selection criteria. All data from the interviews were transcribed by the researcher and analysed through a conventional content analysis. This method for analysis categorises textual data into categories and themes, unveiling discernible themes across transcriptions (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

1.4. Project Justification

The results and discussion of the thesis are intended to have theoretical implications for the international business and strategy as practice fields. Seidl and Whittington (2014) advocate

for an enlarged agenda of SP research. Exploring the phenomena of de-globalisation from a strategy as practice perspective is intended to uncover the covert relationship between larger political/economic and everyday social practices. Whittington (1996) points out that strategy is often treated as something an organisation ‘has’ rather than something an organisation ‘does’, a discrepancy an SP perspective attempts to rectify. Studying phenomena and concepts synonymous with contemporary international business literature provides an opportunity to study their implications on an everyday level. Furthermore, this research is intended to be useful for strategy practitioners. Strategy as practice naturally provides a medium for academic/practical crossover (Whittington, 1996). By uncovering the de-globalisation approaches and interpretations of practitioners, this research hopes to offer valuable perspectives for internationally operating organisations.

1.5. Thesis Outline

The thesis is made up of five chapters, followed by a list of references and appendices. Chapter one, the introduction, provides a general summary of the thesis. The academic context and key concepts are introduced, followed by a discussion of the research objectives. The methodology utilised is then identified and the intended academic and practical contributions are outlined.

Chapter two, the literature review, presents a summary of all the relevant literature pertaining to the thesis topic. The first section focuses upon international business literature surrounding globalisation and multinational strategy frameworks. The second section identifies the parameters of the strategy as practice area of study and draws connections between the two fields. The chapter clarifies the research gap this thesis will fill.

Chapter three, the methodology, introduces the method used in the thesis for capturing and analysing data. The chapter covers the underlying research epistemology, the use of semi structured interviews and the application of conventional qualitative content analysis. Each is discussed in detail along with their limitations and ethical considerations.

Chapter four, the findings, presents the key takeaway concepts from the semi structured interviews. The key themes are discussed and excerpts from the interview are provided.

Chapter five, the discussion and conclusion, will analyse the findings critically and answer the research questions. The thesis will then conclude by discussing the relevant contributions and suggestions for future research followed by the limitations of the thesis.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

The following literature review seeks to identify and clarify concepts and theories relevant to the study. The first section introduces the concept of globalisation and its theoretical background within relevant literature. The antonymous phenomenon, de-globalisation; is also explained in depth along with its possible implications in society. The relevant international business frameworks and arguments concerning globalised organisational strategy are discussed for further context around existing strategic knowledge. The following section will uncover the strategy as practice research paradigm and its usefulness when examining strategy from a practitioner's perspective. The sociological concept of 'sensemaking' is analysed to draw connections with SP theories when interpreting the environment. Key narratives and concepts from each of these areas will be explored in order to establish the parameters of the thesis research.

2.2. Globalisation

2.2.1. Concept Introduction

Providing a universal definition to the concept of globalisation is a challenging academic proposition as the many facets and implications make the phenomenon very complex. Globalisation continues to be explored and debated amongst academics and practitioners alike. Within international business literature, globalisation is most commonly referred to as a set of forces or activities increasing integration and connectivity across economies, cultures and borders around the world (Berry et al., 2014; Peng, 2011). This is a commonly accepted international business perspective on globalisation. There are, however, many contrasting theories on the origins and manifestation of the phenomenon in society. Theorists argue that globalisation is a contemporary circumstance facilitated by technological advancement (Kobrin, 2017). Conversely, others argue the extent of globalisation is driven and affected by the increasingly integrated global political and economic conditions (Witt, 2019). Some speculate globalisation emerged thousands of years ago in the Roman Empire with the importing of Chinese silk (Peng, 2011). These theories and perspectives contributing to knowledge surrounding the phenomena, will be examined in the following sections.

2.2.2. Globalisation Perspectives and Implications

Globalisation, as cited above, is said to be a set of forces that increase connectivity and cause a convergence across borders. Proponents of globalisation look to the integration of cultures, technology and people as well as greater economic growth and living standards (Peng, 2011). Negative perceptions of globalisation often involve the adverse economic and human implication caused by it, including job uncertainty and increased power given to multinational enterprises (MNEs) (Peng, 2011). Berry et al. (2014) argues that globalisation is not a discernible, continuous trend but one that is fragmented and happens in waves, referred to as the pendulum view of globalisation. Witt (2019) speculates that waves of globalisation correspond to influential changes in the global political and economic environment. This aligns with the common belief that the modern era of technology-driven-globalisation started post-World War II (WWII), when Western nations formed trade blocs in order to facilitate foreign investment (Peng, 2011). Berry et al. (2014) state that while globalisation has facilitated increased competition and trade on a global scale, it also encourages the growth of unique characteristics amongst economic systems. The ambiguous and interactive nature of globalisation has manifested in a number of different events and periods across the 21st century.

For much of the 20th Century from WWII onwards, globalisation and economic integration was prevalent, not only in Western countries, but in traditionally closed economies such as China, Eastern Europe blocs and India (Peng, 2011). Bremmer (2014) cites a rise in the popularity of capitalism in emerging economies, the most notable of these being Brazil, Russia, India and China. These emerging economies along with South Africa are formally recognised as BRICS (Peng, 2011). Western MNEs have pursued opportunities in BRIC countries and now many of them boast a considerable presence in these emerging markets. Events in the early 2000s, however, have caused a disruption in the relentless expansion of capitalism. Through global recession, this expansion has slowed rapidly and left both governments and businesses to re-consider their priorities (Bremmer, 2014). Critics and researchers describe a narrative consistent with a pendulum perspective and cite that modern events have been the catalyst for the beginning of a new era of globalisation (Bremmer, 2014; Peng, 2011).

This new era ultimately may change the underlying constructs for political systems and business. As countries re-think their priorities politically and economically, it is evident that

MNEs must proceed with caution, which Bremmer (2014) labels as ‘guarded globalisation’. This is the change in orientation for national governing bodies and the likely implementation of locally advantageous policies, which has been particularly apparent in BRIC nations (Peng, 2011). Such nations have seen a resurgence in state capitalism. A significant example is the exclusion of American information and tele-communications companies, Google and Facebook being banned from operating throughout China. It is implied that this era of ‘guarded globalisation’ coinciding with the rise of information technology has contradicting effects for political systems and business (C. Meyer & Kirby, 2012). MNEs will face increased pressure from local business and unfavourable policies when entering new markets (Bremmer, 2014). Unveiling this narrative, depth and context to the pendulum view of globalisation, it also highlights some unique traits of this present era.

2.3. De-globalisation

2.3.1. Concept Introduction

The phenomena of globalisation, its connotations and implications has long been considered within academic knowledge. De-globalisation, often considered an opposite to globalisation, is grasped with far less familiarity due to its emergent nature. The two antithetical concepts are closely integrated through the globalisation pendulum discussion (Peng, 2011). It is well known that economies go through peaks and troughs due to a plethora of reasons, however unique and ambiguous circumstances have inspired an increased research focus into their underlying causes. De-globalisation is often considered in economic terms as a period of widespread downturn resulting in a decreased connectedness among nations (Van Bergeijk, 2018). Other definitions refer to de-globalisation as a process resulting in weakening interdependence among nations (Witt, 2019). The 2008 GFC, along with rising nationalist values and the de-stabilisation of economic unions has had a highly disruptive influence upon economies (Livesey, 2018; Van Bergeijk, 2018). However, there are multiple barriers for nations becoming increasingly independent of one another. Kobrin (2017) suggests that recent technological changes have rendered a state of economic independence for a nation as unrealistic. The technology driven organisation of international production and value chains has resulted in making re-transitioning back to protected national market orientations as impractical (Kobrin, 2017). In a globally networked economy, integrated information flows

and production chains have succeeded closed economies in being the most efficient means for economic growth.

2.3.2. Emergence and Implications

However, with recent economic, social and political events, it is debatable whether de-globalisation is a passing trend or the beginnings of a long-term reversal of a globally networked economy (K. E. Meyer, 2017). The emergence of de-globalisation has been heavily facilitated by Donald Trump, Brexit and other right-wing political movements, resulting in the rise of nationalistic sentiments among many countries (Kobrin, 2017). Proponents of an anti-globalisation perspective point to the numbers surrounding economic dislocation and income inequality in OECD countries. As a result, profound anti-immigration sentiments and perceived loss of national identity have arisen (Kobrin, 2017; K. E. Meyer, 2017). Subsequently, economic integration is increasingly associated with the thoroughly negative implication that MNEs have more influence on governments and consumers (K. E. Meyer, 2017). A dis-integrated global economy is now considered impractical in this view as a result of inefficiencies. Yet profoundly anti-globalisation sentiments continue to flourish across these countries.

In the midst of these growing political, economic and social tensions, the future is uncertain as to how these contradicting forces develop. While economic indicators provide a somewhat limited perspective, declining foreign direct investment flows for several years now is consistent with weakening economic independence (Witt, 2019). In the wake of this, firms must choose appropriate internationalisation strategies carefully. Guarded globalisation (Bremmer, 2014) or the emergence of de-globalisation represents a re-consideration of values and priorities for countries; and therefore, businesses must find ways to accommodate this (K. E. Meyer, 2017). Agendas driven by relentless expansion must be re-configured and MNEs must consider the impact of their strategies upon a wider range of societal stakeholders (K. E. Meyer, 2017). A high degree of interplay between politics and business exists in this period of de-globalisation (Witt, 2019), and international business research has the opportunity to explore this relationship. While modern de-globalisation is an emergent phenomenon, the rational and economic foundations for this concept has existed in international business literature for a long time.

2.4. International Business

Strategic methods for international organisations and frameworks relevant to organisations are present within international business literature. While this research does not study de-globalisation from an international business perspective, there is reason to revise the previous related research. The globalisation arguments presented above are very much from an international business standpoint (Berry et al., 2014; Peng, 2011). Exploring international business literature helps reveal operational strategic frameworks in the wake of retaining globalised or localised strategy. These two paradigms retain a closeness to globalisation and de-globalisation. As this research will be inquiring into strategic activity, insight from international business knowledge is essential for understanding the business implications of de-globalisation.

2.4.1. Global Strategy

International business literature has a number of works focusing in on key strategic orientations, theories and frameworks regarding MNEs global operations. These insights offer important historic MNE global strategy perspectives as well as how these have changed dramatically through just a short period of time. This may shed light on the reasoning and rationales behind organisations strategies in times of global integration and disintegration. In order to achieve competitive success internationally, an organisation must place itself in an environment consisting of the correct factor conditions, demand conditions, related industries and firm characteristics (Porter, 1990). Historically, firms have had limited ability to manipulate the conditions within their relevant environments. This generally manifests in ways such as; sourcing labour and production in areas with lower minimum income levels, operating in regions with tax exemptions and gaining access to markets with potential for significant growth (Porter, 1986). Herein lies the underlying historical rationale for organisations to globalise their operations.

The Twentieth Century was characterised by widespread globalisation throughout established and emerging nations and saw massive increases in MNE trade and investment (Kobrin, 2017). When strategies are integrated and co-ordinated over multiple nations, this allows global organisations to achieve cross-border synergies in their operations (De Wit, 2017). More efficient transference of information and increases in the exchanges of goods and services across borders have steadily increased the potential benefit gained from such strategies. One of

the key assumptions and success factors for a globalised strategy is the breakdown of cultural barriers, resulting in an increasingly homogenous set of consumer characteristics (De Wit, 2017). These were commonly held assumptions in an era where nations around the world were being increasingly integrated through investment, partnerships and culture. However, through these assumptions MNEs have left themselves vulnerable to disruptions within these countries (Prahalad & Lieberthal, 1998). MNEs attempting to implement a global strategy must consider the different political and economic circumstances throughout varying regions (Douglas & Wind, 1987), and this may result in them having to re-configure their global strategies and operations.

2.4.2. Localisation

Globalised strategies have been widely criticised by strategic management authors. The strategic tension or paradox between a globalised and a predominantly multi-domestic orientation is pervasive throughout international business literature where strategy is concerned. To fully understand the strategic paradox between a localised and globalised strategy, one must delve into the reasoning behind the two perspectives. When presenting counter-arguments to globalisation, Porter (1986) explores the underlying reasons industries globalise in the first place. He explains that organisations often switch to global operations when efficiencies can be gained by carrying out a set of activities across borders. If firms are to effectively globalise, there must be some economies of scale achieved by operating globally. Utilising a globally integrated strategy leaves an organisation at risk from local competitors with the advantages of region-specific knowledge and flexibility (Porter, 1986). Furthermore, Porter (1990) cites that the foundation of successful global organisation is within a uniquely driven localised strategy. National environments must consist of the correct conditions for MNEs to emerge and thrive.

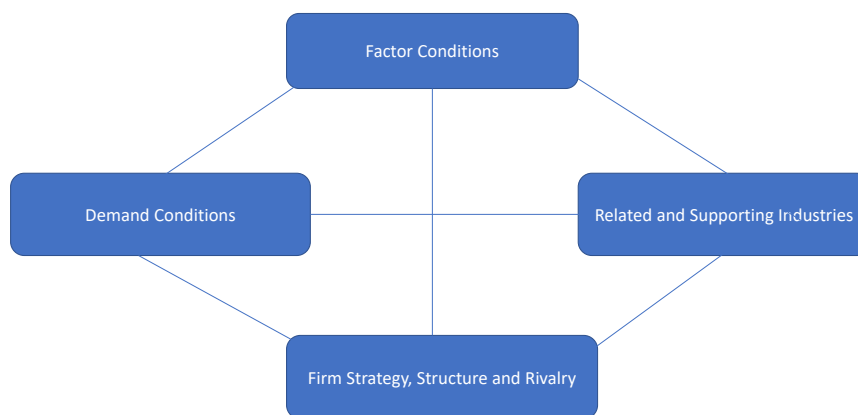


Figure 1. Porters Diamond Framework. Adapted from ‘The competitive advantage of nations’ Porter (1990)

The framework shown in Figure 1 illustrates the paradoxical relationship between a globalised and localised strategic orientation. For an organisation to compete internationally they must have created and sustained a highly localised strategy initially (Porter, 1990). This assumption has been subsequently challenged by the concept of ‘born global firms’ which are organisations that trade overseas from their initiation (Knight & Cavusgil, 2005). International organisations starting through this means have been facilitated through technology and communications. The emergence of these ‘borderless entities’ now challenge localisation and country specific strategies (Knight & Cavusgil, 2005).

In a connected world of diverse business landscapes, external factors are different within each political and economic system. Birkinshaw, Morrison, and Hulland (1995) argue that to gain a balanced view of globalised strategy, organisations must consider both competitive forces and structural forces. ‘Competitive forces’ refer to the generic strategies employed by businesses in a particular industry where ‘structural forces’ are understood as economic and political pressures for and against global integration (Birkinshaw et al., 1995). It is worth pointing out that these pressures vary from industry to industry as each are subject to unique conditions across different regions. Rosenzweig and Singh (1991) suggest it is prudent for global

organisations to view different branches of their operations as a differentiated set of structures and practices. Some MNEs structures and processes should pertain to local conditions and others should be globally integrated to retain some degree of consistency throughout the organisation internationally (Rosenzweig & Singh, 1991). When taking both competitive and structural forces into consideration, organisations can gain a thorough understanding of the key liberators of competitive advantage and economies of scale in an industry (Birkinshaw et al., 1995).

Factor conditions of specific countries have led to far more favourable organisation environments in regions around the world. For much of the Twenty-First century due to increased connectivity facilitated by technology, the momentum behind globalisation has been gathering force. Highly specific skills and knowledge have led to the birth of economic clusters in different region areas around the world, each boasting high concentrations of specialised skills and knowledge (Porter, 1998). Porter further argues that globalisation has accelerated this process with many strategic headquarters and manufacturing centres of multinational enterprises moving to countries exempt of taxes, tariffs and other benefits. While this is a global process, this provides the foundation for competitive advantages to be heavily localised, thus taking away from the benefits of globalisation. The more these economic clusters grow, the wealth of knowledge and innovation becomes increasingly concentrated, resulting in a highly spatial distribution of specific business clusters. The above collection of globalisation and localisation arguments have resulted in a renewed international business focus on making sense of these developments.

2.4.3. International Business Frameworks

The competing demands for global integration and local responsiveness are still prevalent for MNEs and contemporary international business frameworks uncover some of the underlying tensions. There are two competing economic pressures swaying organisations' strategy. These are; 1) the pressure for cost reduction, and, 2) the pressure for local responsiveness (Peng, 2011). Cost reduction pressures call for MNEs to globally integrate and achieve greater economies of scale through altering their value chain processes (Peng, 2011). In contrast, local responsiveness pressures refer to the need for MNEs to tailor their strategies and products for local consumer needs and preferences around the world (Peng, 2011). These two pressures are represented on the axis of the integration-responsiveness framework shown below.

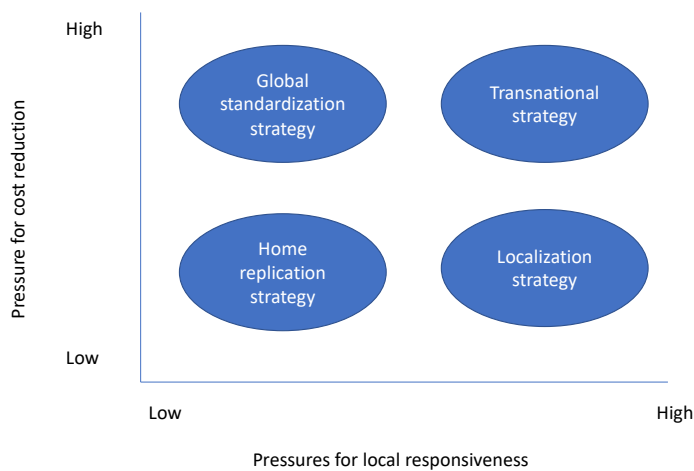


Figure 2. The Integration-Responsiveness Framework. Adapted from ‘Global’ Peng (2011)

The framework identifies four strategic choices dependent on the influence of the pressure for cost reduction and local responsiveness. The two localised orientations, the home replication strategy and the localisation strategy, are advantageous when there is no pressure for cost reduction. Both of these strategies are favourable when no significant efficiencies can be achieved through sourcing and allocating resources globally (Peng, 2011). On the other side of the spectrum, pressure for cost reduction is high with the two globalised orientations: the global ‘standardisation’ strategy and ‘transnational’ strategies. Standardisation refers to the development and distribution of the same products to multiple regions. Transnational strategies refer to balancing both cost pressures with responsiveness. The integration-responsiveness framework developed by Peng (2011) is a popular interpretation of the choices for organisations where globalising forces are ambiguous.

Contrary to the thoroughly MNE focused integration-responsiveness framework (Peng, 2011), Dawar and Frost (1999) present a framework prescribing ways local competitors can gain and maintain inherent advantage over MNEs in emerging markets as shown in Figure 3. MNEs have sought out lucrative opportunities in emerging markets (BRIC) due to their political

liberalisation (Bremmer, 2014; Peng, 2011). In an environment where MNEs boast significantly more financial, human and technological resource, Dawar and Frost (1999) suggest existing local competitors can not only survive but thrive in their home economies. Two parameters define the strategic response of local organisations; 1) strength of globalising pressures in an industry, and, 2) the firm’s internationally transferrable assets.

		Competitive Assets	
		Customised to home market	Transferable abroad
Pressure to globalise in the industry	High	Dodger: Focuses on a locally oriented link in the value chain, enters a joint venture or sells out to a multinational.	Contender: Focuses on upgrading capabilities and resources to match multinationals globally, often by keeping to niche markets.
	Low	Defender: Focuses on leveraging local assets in market segments where multinationals are weak.	Extender: Focuses on expanding into markets similar to those of the home base, using competencies developed at home.

Figure 3. Positioning for Emerging-Market Companies. Adapted from ‘Competing with giants: Survival strategies for local companies in emerging markets’ Dawar and Frost (1999)

This framework focuses on strategic outcomes possible for local companies where the threat of competition with MNEs is imminent. For companies without transferrable assets, the choice to compete with MNEs depends on pressures to globalise within an industry. Firms with easily transferrable assets have the option to either contend with MNEs or expand into markets of similar characteristics. The BRIC emerging markets have their own unique economic and consumer characteristics and local companies can use this knowledge.

Contrary to the popular country specific views outlined by main stream international business texts (Peng, 2011; Porter, 1990), other literature suggests MNEs should focus on regional blocks (Arregle, Miller, Hitt, & Beamish, 2013). The integration responsiveness framework

proposed by Peng (2011) alludes to the notion of standardisation and transnational strategies; however, Arregle et al. (2013) developed a more region specific perspective. They discuss an important and growing stream of international business literature referred to as the ‘semi-globalisation’ perspective. Under a semi-globalisation lens, countries are grouping into regions of similar economic and business characteristics, providing a framework for MNEs to maintain local responsiveness whilst operating globally (Arregle et al., 2013). More often than not, popular models of globalisation focus on the MNEs impact upon a host country and its institutions, which may not reflect firms’ strategic practice accurately. Expanding into countries in close proximity with one another offer firms the opportunity to exploit region bound firm specific advantages when carrying out globalisation activities. Additionally, ignoring regional effects upon globalisation can result in a fragmented understanding of MNE economic and strategic decisions. Modern perspectives on globalisation continue to be increasingly complex as international business environments grow in uncertainty.

International business literature offers a context for the implications of de-globalisation. As this study is concerned with strategy in international organisations in the wake of de-globalisation, having a perspective on the patterns and operations utilised is necessary. The frameworks of Peng (2011) and Porter (1990) offer popular strategies for determining factor conditions in countries. Other contemporary frameworks offer perspective upon firm strategies to retain local responsiveness while having global capabilities (Arregle et al., 2013). These frameworks help to form a knowledge of strategy activity in international organisations and how it is influenced by de-globalisation.

2.5. Strategy as Practice

The main focus of this research centres around gaining insight into how decision makers in New Zealand (NZ) firms are interpreting events related to de-globalisation. This is certainly of relevance to the field of international business, and is also strongly aligned with the SP paradigm. Whittington (1996) defines SP in very practical terms, saying the new direction for research is finding out how strategy is carried out. He states, “*practice is concerned with the work of strategizing – all the meeting, the talking, the form-filling and the number-crunching by which strategy actually gets formulated and implemented*”. For a relatively new academic field there has been an ever-increasing amount of focused development within SP literature. Whittington (1996) acknowledges the many potential possibilities for exploring strategy from

the practitioner perspective. The theoretical and practical connections between the two academic fields mentioned above is sparsely researched. The following section will present a relevant summary of SP literature and identify trends in the field.

2.5.1. Theoretical Background

Recent discussion within the field of strategic management has undergone a practice turn, giving new direction to strategy literature (Whittington, 1996). Vaara and Whittington (2012) refer to the term ‘practice’ as the embedded nature of human agency, which has been the focus of many recent sociological studies. After a stream of influential published works in the late nineties and early 21st century, SP brought this trend to the forefront of strategic management (Vaara & Whittington, 2012). Historically, strategy literature has focused on macro level trends and performance output (Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009). An economic and financial driven analysis of strategy is a product of a strategy content era in literature and academics have since changed focus to explore strategies micro-processes and people’s activity. The distinctive features of the field compared to other strategy work is its grounding within sociology theory, practitioner focus and methodological shift (Vaara & Whittington, 2012). Rather than treating strategy as phenomenon outside the organisation and something economics-based, SP academics seek to explore it at a grounded, everyday level. Mainstream strategy research explores humans as rational-economic actors; however, SP studies investigate the sociological aspects of practitioners (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011). This ‘practice turn’ has directed strategy research away from the macro levels and organisation big picture actions, towards the everyday discourse and narratives of strategy.

Despite being a fairly new research direction within strategic management, SP is gaining momentum in its contribution to the discipline’s continued theoretical development. The field’s sociological foundations and methodological shift from other strategy fields have led to a number of different avenues for practice research. Seidl and Whittington (2014) conducted a review of the emergence of SP as well as the different branches of literature that have developed. The study identifies strategy as the outcome of narrative construction by actors in organisations, strategy as a reflection of cultural norms and strategy as an ecology of differing discursive practices (Seidl & Whittington, 2014). Each of these popular syntheses of SP literature reflect the well-known dichotomy between theory and practice, or, the sayings and doings of strategy. Seidl and Whittington (2014) conclude by acknowledging the progression

of the current literature but suggest a move towards different ontologies in order to gain further traction from SP.

2.5.2. Terminology

As established previously, there is an emphasis towards the sayings and doings of strategy as influenced by the field's 'practice turn'. Scholars in SP treat and approach different terms and jargon with fine attention to detail, as terms that would be considered synonymous by lay people, in fact have very specific meanings. Another important aspect of SP is the notion of 'praxis' which refers to the actual activities of organisational actors (Johnson, Langley, Melin, & Whittington, 2007). 'Praxis' is derived from the term practice, the only difference being that practice is grounded within theoretical and discursive interplay, whereas praxis is purely based on action in reality. It is also important to acknowledge the differences between 'practice' and 'practices' when looking at strategy through this lens. 'Practice' refers to an actual activity or event of strategy; whereas 'practices' refer to routinised norms or traditions, such as the everyday formalities and procedures of strategy (Jarzabkowski, 2004). 'Practitioners' of strategy in SP are individuals of any role and delegation with involvement in strategy praxis (Whittington, 2006). Praxis, practices and practitioners and the interactive relationship between the three aspects of SP are a key framework to derive meaningful findings. Jarzabkowski (2004) states that SP should encompass all of these 'practice' related areas, both the way strategy is 'constructed' and the actual activity action itself.

2.5.3. Contemporary Research Focus

The SP field also stresses the importance of grasping the factors external to the firm affecting strategic activity and performance in an organisation. Narrative and discursive perspectives of SP are informed by the make-up of individuals in the organisation. However, Seidl and Whittington (2014) emphasise we should not overlook the impact of wider societal aspects. In outlining an organisational theory perspective on SP, the literature identifies the critical aspects of 'micro isolationism' within past SP studies. According to organisational therapist Herepath (2014), the macro level trends in economies such as politics and socio-cultural factors influence the strategic arena on a national and global context. One of the strongest aspects of the SP field is the attention placed on what is taken for granted within an organisation, known as the micro level praxis (Seidl & Whittington, 2014). These larger societal influences have somewhat limited coverage. Studying these perspectives offer an open calibration for SP literature,

however they require acknowledgement of a wider scope of social theories. An understanding of how strategists interpret environments is required, which leads to another relevant aspect of strategic management literature; that is, sensemaking.

2.6. Sensemaking

The concept of sensemaking is derived from social theory and has had substantive coverage in SP literature. Sensemaking is an extensive academic field in its own right and has been explored through many different applications of social theory. Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld (2005) define sensemaking as “*the ongoing retrospective development of plausible images that rationalise what people are doing*”. A connection made by Balogun, Jacobs, Jarzabkowski, Mantere, and Vaara (2014) as well as Fenton and Langley (2011), is the relationship between SP discourse and sensemaking. Balogun et al. (2014) explore the numerous discourses that relate to SP and due to the concept’s sociological focus, sensemaking is a good fit. Balogun et al. (2014) refers to sensemaking as a phenomenon that occurs throughout every level of an organisation and is subject to change depending on the firm’s context. This “*cyclical on-going process of interpretation and action*” (Balogun et al., 2014), has a profound impact upon strategy discourse. Sensemaking often manifests itself in the way individuals construct their own realities and the way they communicate within an organisation (Balogun et al., 2014). The theoretical lens of sensemaking provides a useful sociological link and applications to SP. As a key focus of inquiry for this thesis is actors accounts and interpretations, drawing upon ways individuals make sense of their environments is a key consideration of this research. Awareness of these factors enables the researcher to inquire into what forms practitioners’ perceptions and understandings of de-globalisation.

2.6.1. Sensemaking in Practice

There are a range of studies where sensemaking frameworks are utilised as a theoretical lens within SP research. The common denominators between the studies are a collaborative approach for meaning construction and a new environment characterised by uncertainty. Balogun et al. (2014) point out that sensemaking studies of strategy development are “*an issue of talk and communication*”. This aligns with the popular critical discourse and narrative paradigms for SP research, where strategy development is a product of the unique manifestation of these social processes within an organisation (Balogun et al., 2014). Through

the social process of change, surprise and upheaval, individuals interact to develop new understandings and interpretations of the stimulus around them (Weick, 1995). As strategic environments are becoming increasingly complex and ambiguous, strategy practitioners are presented with the challenge of making useful interpretations of environmental information (Thomas, Clark, & Gioia, 1993). Weick (1995) makes the assumption that when individuals are placed within an uncertain environment, an effort is made to consciously interact amongst one another to make shared interpretations of new phenomena. Investigating SP through a sensemaking perspective enables researchers the ability to study strategy through both internal and external dimensions of the organisation.

2.6.2. Sensemaking and Environmental Interpretation

Sensemaking has been applied within multiple strategy studies allowing researchers great utility when studying social and strategic processes within an organisation. Balogun and Johnson (2004) explored the lateral processes within an organisation, finding that increased collaboration and dialogue amongst managers helped organisations develop increased sensemaking capability. Framing sensemaking as a capability encourages an increased focus on the way the concept manifests within an organisation. Part of an organisation's sensemaking capability refers to a capacity to construe its external environment in a meaningful way (Neill, McKee, & Rose, 2007). Thomas et al. (1993) identify three aspects of sensemaking; scanning, interpreting and responding. In this context, interpretation refers to the comprehension of information and fitting this into an applicable meaning structure (Thomas et al., 1993). The interpretations of decision makers have direct consequence to the framing of strategic issues within organisations. The notion that strategic actors interpret information within their environment not only identifies sensemaking as a key organisational capability, but it also links de-globalisation with the interpretive frame of SP.

Seidl and Werle (2018) apply sensemaking to address the way managers in organisations deal with complex and ambiguous problems concerned with strategy. Large, complex and pervasive problems within an organisation require a diverse range of sensemaking actors to approach and diagnose issues (Seidl & Werle, 2018). They refer to the concept of requisite variety within an organisation, which relates back to Weick (1995) and his original theorisations surrounding sensemaking. There are three main facets to sensemaking within individuals; a cue, a frame and a connection (Weick, 1995). A 'cue' refers to an issue or event that individuals experience

and attempt to make sense of. A ‘frame’ is an individual’s knowledge structure informed by their experiences and knowledge (Weick, 1995). In order to make sense of stimuli, individuals draw upon frames to interpret cues enabling a connection to be made between the frame and the cue (Weick, 1995). When dealing in a firm that operates in multiple industries, an organisation pools available expertise to make a more complex sensemaking network (Seidl & Werle, 2018). In other words, increasing the diversity of frames within an organisation helps its ability to solve complex problems. Different people possess different frames based on their socialisation and experiences (Weick, 1995), therefore increasing internal variety augments an organisations capacity to interpret cues (Seidl & Werle, 2018). This study shows that actors partaking in strategic approaches to sensemaking within an organisation can improve their capacity to solve a wider range of issues.

2.6.3. Sensemaking and Strategy Tools

SP literature has a significant amount of research related to the concept of sensemaking and how strategy practitioners utilise this to interpret frames in the environment. Eisenhardt (1989b) identifies the increased urgency for robust and accurate decision-making capabilities in uncertain environments. Actors attempting to make sense of ambiguous phenomena is central to the strategy making process (Eisenhardt, 1989b; Kaplan, 2008). Recent SP studies have investigated the methods used to interpret the environment. A prominent fixture within an organisation is the implementation of strategy tools within strategic planning processes (Spee & Jarzabkowski, 2009). ‘Tools’ are rational frameworks mostly developed within the strategic planning era and comprise a range of techniques used to support decision making within an organisation (Jarzabkowski & Kaplan, 2015; Spee & Jarzabkowski, 2009). Regularly used tools include Porters frameworks, the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis and Boston Consulting Group Matrix. SP work however, is often critical of the use of tools within organisations, citing that the rational basis of them is an inhibitor of creativity (Jarzabkowski & Kaplan, 2015). It is also pointed out that use of tools is shaped by social and political contexts within an organisation and this often detracts from the purpose of the strategy tools (Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009). The application of rationality in strategy tools to interpret the environment is misaligned with the practical focus of SP, giving reason for their critical reception within the literature.

Alternative methods for interpreting the environment and strategic planning are also assessed within SP literature. Hodgkinson and Wright (2002) assess the practical utility of the scenario planning framework, a popular strategic tool. Scenario planning is the hypothetical application of strategic planning towards realistic future scenarios for the organisation (Hodgkinson & Wright, 2002). Over-reliance upon rational mental models of strategy leaves an organisation at risk of ‘strategic inertia’ where there is failure to notice changes in the environment (Hodgkinson & Wright, 2002). Strategy workshops and their implications have also received exposure with SP literature. A strategy workshop comprises of planning taking place off-site and seeks to stimulate constructive debate regarding organisational development (Healey, Hodgkinson, Whittington, & Johnson, 2015). Involvement in strategy workshops is a means to start strategy discussions and facilitate collaborative strategizing and is an important ‘strategic episode’ to incorporate (Healey et al., 2015). Investigation of strategy workshops highlighted the imperfections of strategy conception and illustrated that outcomes were often influenced by social dynamics, indicative of an SP perspective. Scenario planning and strategy workshops are both adaptive frameworks that are conducive to the sensemaking characteristics proposed by Weick (1995). A sensemaking perspective of SP provide critical insights into the usefulness of popular strategy tools and frameworks for interpreting the environment.

The utilisation of tools and mental models within strategy processes, offer popular frameworks for strategists to make decisions in uncertain environments. It is important to acknowledge sensemaking within the process of interpreting cues from the environment. Also, the frames utilised within strategy discussion offer insight into the mental decision-making processes made by the practitioners. Sensemaking enables the researcher an ability to gain a perspective upon the mental decision making behind interpretation and action in a practitioner. While strategy tools provide insights into potential ways practitioners initially formulate strategy in uncertain environments.

2.7. Conclusion

Presented above is a breakdown of relevant literature pertaining to three distinct academic fields related to strategic management. The international business field, characterised by the frameworks of Arregle et al. (2013); Peng (2011); Porter (1990), and the narrative of the globalisation phenomena is introduced and critiqued in general terms. Contemporary SP literature is then introduced, and the dichotomy between theory and practice is discussed

(Whittington, 1996). The sensemaking theories of Weick (1995) are then considered in relation to SP literature. SP based research on environmental interpretation are then explored, detailing an analysis of rational frameworks (strategy tools) and interpretive approaches used by practitioners. While international business literature stresses the importance of developing frameworks (Arregle et al., 2013; Peng, 2011), and increased macro level understanding of globalisation (Kobrin, 2017); SP focuses upon a practice perspective (Whittington, 1996). Perceiving strategy as a practice has ontological implications, moving the focus away from strategy as a firm competence to strategy as managerial skill (Whittington, 1996). Studying international business phenomena from an SP perspective is a different approach, but one that will offer practical understanding of interpretations and actions in response to de-globalisation.

This research will focus upon studying NZ strategy practitioners' approaches and interpretations of relevant globalising forces or de-globalisation in the present day as they affect business practices. Studying how this phenomenon manifests at an everyday organisational level makes practical and academic sense. Strategy is a social activity and has a complex way of affecting all facets of an organisation (Whittington, 2007). An advantage of studying this particular topic from an SP perspective is the field's general acknowledgement of embeddedness within a wider set of connections and relations (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011; Whittington, 2007). Treating strategy in this sense allows researchers to appreciate the wider implications of strategizing practices. Characteristics of international business have the potential to be qualitatively different with the considerations de-globalisation has brought to the fore (Witt, 2019). Seidl and Whittington (2014) convey the need for SP to employ flatter ontologies and being inclusive of both human and non-human actors; local and distant. Studying de-globalisation events under the SP lens would highlight the deeply embedded relationship between the larger political/economic structures and everyday social practices. An enlarged scope of SP research offers potential for innovations for practicing strategists and overall progression within the academic field (Seidl & Whittington, 2014).

3. Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The objective of this study is to gain knowledge and enhance understanding of how organisation strategists are interpreting recent de-globalisation events. An interpretivist approach is an epistemology which enabled the researcher to collect and analyse the data, thus providing the most effective means to study from a practical perspective. Utilising a qualitative design, semi-structured interviews were conducted. The participants were individuals with strategic delegation in New Zealand based exporting organisations. The interview questions were developed to investigate relevant SP themes and considerations and the semi-structured framework provided a consistent yet reflexive approach for gathering data. Results from interviews were collated through a process of transcription and analysed through a qualitative content analysis process where key emergent findings were grouped into thematic categories. Aspects of the limitations within the methodology are discussed throughout the chapter. This study received ethical approval from the ethics committee of the University of Canterbury Human Ethics committee as shown in the Appendix.

3.2. Philosophical Assumptions

The research scope of this thesis draws upon a diverse body of management, international business and sociological theory. Therefore, it is important, to identify the particular philosophical basis upon which it is grounded. This research examines de-globalisation and the subsequent impact on strategy practices through an interpretive epistemological position. Johnson et al. (2007) identified a need to get closer to strategy practices to further understand the social processes in which they are conceived. An interpretivist epistemology allows the researcher to undertake an exploratory approach to gathering and disseminating information around de-globalisation. Specifically, the study focuses on individual strategists' interpretations of de-globalisation, applying the notion that perceptions of phenomena are influenced by an individual's subjective experience (Chua, 1986). The epistemological fit for interpretivism and SP has a robust base. Its effectiveness when studying ambiguous phenomenon makes the approach an appropriate one for this research.

Another theoretical position which resonates through international business literature (Piekkari, Welch, & Paavilainen, 2009) is the positivistic tradition. Positivism refers to an epistemological position that views social reality through an application of scientific rationality (Bryman & Bell, 2015). In research, the application of positivism often involves using theory to generate hypotheses for testing, advocating the use of specific approaches to research design, collection and analysis (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Piekkari et al., 2009). The frameworks of global strategy orientations presented in seminal literature by Porter and Peng are examples of positivist research within international business. However, Piekkari et al. (2009) pointed out that recent sociological studies have been critical of the continued application of positivist research, and argued that international business literature should adopt a more pluralistic approach. In doing so, this would enable the generation of new knowledge by studying a more diverse range of actors within strategy. A commonly referenced flaw in positivist epistemologies is the apparent dichotomy between theory and practice, separating the generation of knowledge from a practical basis (Chua, 1986). Therefore, because a positivist view of theory and rationality is limited when studying emerging phenomena, this approach was considered inappropriate for this study.

The emergence of the SP orientation represents an important change in epistemological direction for overall strategy literature. The ‘practice turn’ in strategy was given momentum through the common academic perception of the gap between theory and practice in organisational strategizing (Jarzabkowski, 2004). The SP approach has inspired an increased focus from researchers instilling investigation toward new phenomenon (Whittington, 1996). This has shifted the focus away from traditional positivist management approaches resulting in a diverse application of epistemological orientations (Johnson et al., 2007). SP was essentially established from an interpretivist epistemology and influential literature mostly adheres to interpretivism or close variations (Johnson et al., 2007). Interpretivism is a logical alternative to the positivist approach as it is built on the assumption that individuals interpret phenomena differently based on their subjective views of reality (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Chua, 1986). An interpretivist epistemology and its open-endedness are inherently aligned with the ‘practice turn’ in social sciences and SP (Johnson et al., 2007). In conclusion, an interpretivist methodology provides a useful construct to study the social processes underpinning the behaviours of practicing strategists.

3.3. Research Objectives

The review of relevant international business and SP literature provided details of specific knowledge gaps and areas of limited coverage. The review of international business literature revealed a variety of theories concerning the nature of globalisation and its resulting impact upon organisations. The aforementioned frameworks of country specific conditions (Porter, 1990), and rational perspectives of firm orientations to globalisation (Arregle et al., 2013; Peng, 2011), provide a detailed business context to contemporary globalisation. However, the tendency to treat strategy as something an organisation has, as opposed to something an organisation does (Jarzabkowski, 2004), compresses the clarity of current literature in identifying other ambiguous or relevant elements. SP literature calls for ‘focus upon strategy actors’ (Jarzabkowski, 2004; Whittington, 1996) encouraging an enlarged and more interpretive agenda for strategy research. This is an important distinction as there is minimal analysis of how contemporary globalisation actually impacts the day-to-day strategizing of firms. It is relevant to acknowledge the value of the social theory ‘sensemaking’ (Weick, 1995), and its influence upon facets on SP (Johnson et al., 2007). An awareness of how socialisation processes impact interpretations of uncertain environments is critical for understanding the activity of strategizing (Weick, 1995). Social processes informing strategists interpretations and intentions within international business environments do fall within the realm of SP.

Studying de-globalisation from an SP perspective has potential to provide contemporary and unique insights into both the phenomena itself and strategy practices. Seidl and Whittington (2014) allude to a broader research focus for SP, stressing that micro practices have substantive unexplored linkages with larger economic and societal structures. Exploring the relationship between de(globalisation) and practitioners may provide greater understanding of how adaptive strategy making takes place within organisations. The following research questions will consider strategy from an SP perspective; with the understanding that strategy is an individual competence or profession (Whittington, 2007). The epistemological fit with the research focus upon strategy makers’ interpretations of de(globalisation) provides an effective way for exploring relevant phenomena. Awareness of larger phenomenon in uncertain contexts that Seidl and Whittington (2014) discuss will also be established in the nature of the research questions. In conclusion, the research questions will meet the interpretive paradigm of SP research, while also addressing the embedded nature of the of de-globalisations impact on practice.

3.3.1. Research Questions:

There are three relevant research questions each pertaining to an underdeveloped or unexplored area of the relevant literature. The first pertains to the primary research question of the thesis; revealing how strategists are interpreting de-globalisation events. The first research question is as follows.

A. In what ways, if any, do strategic leaders of New Zealand exporting firms characterise current de-globalisation events?

This research question adheres to an individual subjective strategizing focus advocated by SP literature (Whittington, 1996). However, the question reflects a necessary acknowledgement of macro political and societal structures, aligning with a contemporary research direction of SP (Seidl & Whittington, 2014). There is also potential to unveil key characteristics about de-globalisation's implications for internationally operating organisations. International business literature reflects a macro-level understanding of de-globalisation. This research question will add a practical perspective to developing strategy literature in international business.

The second research question emphasises the need for understanding strategy as a day-to-day activity (Whittington, 1996), and as a profession (Whittington, 2007).

B. How have senior strategy practitioners observed day-to-day strategizing activities change in response to recent de-globalisation events?

A recognition of everyday practices changing under different industry and macro level circumstances adds a temporal aspect to SP literature. The first research question focuses upon interpretation, whereas the second focuses upon actionable results. It's important in SP research to understand how strategists use their interpretations to approach and realise actual strategic activity within an organisation. Enquiring about the organisation's strategy activity also helps move the interview away from an individual perspective and towards an organisational standpoint. The inferences and wider implications embedded into these research questions facilitate a depth of discussion, greater understanding and appreciation of how strategy practices evolve in changing contexts.

C. What are senior strategic decision makers doing to plan for the future when responding to de-globalisation events?

The final research question examines the extent managers and decision makers are orienting their activities/strategies towards the future. Through the accounts of contemporary international business literature, the global networked economy is in a current state of uncertainty and change (Bremmer, 2014; Kobrin, 2017). It is important to assess how organisations are using their processes to create sense from these events. The characteristics of sensemaking (Weick, 1995), frames and cues, can be further elaborated upon when exploring both present and future organisational strategies.

These three research questions have been derived from the preceding literature review and have been identified as knowledge gaps in each of the relevant academic fields. Each question follows an interpretivist epistemology; taking into consideration subjective accounts of knowledge. They form the basis for the data collection methods prescribed for the following thesis research.

3.4. Research Design

3.4.1. Qualitative Research

As previously noted, this thesis utilises a qualitative research approach for data collection and analysis. A qualitative approach unites with an interpretivist epistemology in its facility to affirm how individuals make sense of their social systems (Bryman & Bell, 2015). It is important to get closer to objects of study through qualitative research (Antwi & Hamza, 2015), which aligns with an interpretivist paradigm (Johnson et al., 2007). Qualitative studies view human behaviour as something constructed through a process of socialisation creating different realities and perspectives (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). An important aspect of this research is influenced by Weick (1995), and his social theory of sensemaking, describing an individual's process for understanding unknown phenomena through their own values and assumptions. Sensemaking and SP studies, as previously discussed, primarily rely on qualitative approaches to generating new knowledge and perspectives (Johnson et al., 2007). While the international business literature (through which the phenomena of globalisation has been studied) in general

adopts quantitative approaches, a qualitative method is far more appropriate for the SP framework of this study.

Johnson et al. (2007), supply general guidelines for designing research methods that have the potential to appropriately capture data to reveal SP related dimensions. For the most part, SP utilise qualitative methodology while framing the research from a interpretivist epistemology (Johnson et al., 2007). In order to explain related phenomena and its overall effect upon individual action, researchers must employ techniques that unveil drivers of individual strategy behaviour. Commonly utilised qualitative techniques include different varieties of interviews focus groups and naturalistic observation (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). Suitably qualitative research has an open ended focus enabling researchers to utilise methodologies that exemplify and investigate the subjectivity of individuals (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). Jarzabkowski and Whittington (2008) stress that SP research must capture the unfolding, fluid, ever-changing nature of strategy. Exploring the activities and routines of strategy has become increasingly accessible with the development of technology; however a blanket of confidentiality regarding sensitive information limits the ability of researchers to access the full scope of practice and activity (Jarzabkowski & Whittington, 2008). SP research has a long tradition of exploring actions and interactions of actors through the most practical means possible.

3.4.2. Interviews

In considering the traditional SP research orientations, this thesis utilised semi-structured interviews. An interview is a common qualitative technique where the subject shares knowledge, experience and insight relevant to the researchers questions (Mack, 2005). A semi-structured interview comprises at least two key aspects; a degree of standardisation usually apparent in a structured interview schedule and the interviewer having the ability to ask further questions in response to significant responses (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Interviews have been a widely used technique amongst early SP studies due to their ability to capture individuals' knowledge and interpretations about events and phenomena (Johnson et al., 2007). The interviews were carried out with key strategic decision makers within six New Zealand based exporting organisations. Six interviews were deemed to be an appropriate number by the researcher. Yin (2003) explains that six to ten participants allow the researcher the ability to conduct cross case analysis while accounting for theoretical replications within the data. Only six interviews were conducted due to the difficulty of finding appropriate participants and the

time constraints of a master's thesis. Four of the interviews were conducted face-to-face, the other two were done through skype video call and all six were approximately an hour long in duration. Brief notes were taken by the researcher during the interview and an audio recording captured the entirety of the dialogue.

3.4.3. Interview Schedule

An interview schedule was utilised within the interviews themselves to provide a degree of structure and standardisation during their duration. The quality and relevance of the interview questions have a significant affect upon the implementation of the method and the subsequently collected data (Kallio, Pietilä, Johnson, & Kangasniemi, 2016). Conducting insightful and revealing interviews requires researchers to construct interview questions through relevant contexts and literary backgrounds (Horton, Macve, & Struyven, 2004). Further questions were also asked to clarify or elaborate further on a particular topic or scenario. Kallio et al. (2016), states that interview schedules should reveal the main themes of the research in a progressive and logical manner. As the focus of the research is layered and complex, the resulting interview schedule used a combination of approaches to introduce these to interviewees. The businesses activity and global operations were explored within the first section of the interview, issues around de-globalisation were later prompted within the interview. This adheres to a general rule of thumb that interviews should first break the conversational 'ice' before delving into more complex issues (Kallio et al., 2016). This is also done with the intention of avoiding unwanted bias surrounding media-influenced perspectives on de-globalisation. In this case the interview schedule was designed to capture SP related organisational information in accordance to the methodological principles set out by Jarzabkowski and Whittington (2008). SP research attempts to bridge the gap between theory and practice by drawing upon sociological insights into practice. The finalised interview schedule attempts to address the sociological elements of strategy and is shown in the Appendix.

3.4.4. Selection Criteria

To capture the desired perspectives from practicing strategists, a strict yet reflexive criterion was applied to participant selection. Six participants were chosen by the researcher, this is done to account for theoretical replication within the research (Yin, 2003). This is aligned with the suggested parameters suggested by Johnson et al. (2007) for SP research, where smaller numbers of cases should be selected to be studied in greater depth. Theoretical sampling is

undertaken in order to select cases that will either replicate or extend emerging theories within the academic field (Eisenhardt, 1989a). Due to the exploratory nature of the research, participants were selected on the basis that they fulfilled theoretical categories set by the researcher, as there was little defined selection criterion in relevant literature. Therefore, based on the parameters of SP and de-globalisation literature the researcher sought to interview participants from New Zealand based exporting companies.

Constructing a set of theoretical categories is important when determining an appropriate selection criterion for the desired research participants (Eisenhardt, 1989a). In order to uncover perspectives surrounding de-globalisations impacts upon strategic practices within New Zealand businesses, the correct individuals within organisations must be approached. Participants were selected upon the basis that they were firstly, in the employment of a New Zealand based exporting organisation. More specifically, desired participants occupied a role responsible for strategic decision making related to international operations within these organisations. While it was preferred that participants were Christchurch based, the possibility of other New Zealand locations was not ruled out, as online interviews could be conducted. The particular job title of the desired interview participants remains unspecified within the selection criteria as a range of employees within an organisation may have strategic delegation. Chief Executive Officers, business unit managers and department managers were examples of desired individual roles that the researcher sought to interview. Desired participants within the primary, technology and manufacturing industries were approached by the researcher. Prospective participants were selected through both the researchers' and the senior supervisors' personal networks. These industries are suitable for gaining a comprehensive perspective as they represent a range of New Zealand's key exports. This criterion provided the researcher a chance to uncover the perspectives of practitioners who had further exposure to the impacts of de-globalisation within their line of work.

3.4.5. Interviewees

To interview strategy practitioners, an understanding must be clear about what professional individuals were suitable candidates. Strategy practitioners exist across all layers of an organisation and influence a range of organisational effects and interests (Whittington, 2007). The traditional view that strategizing activities occur exclusively at a top management level of an organisation, is contrary to an SP perspective. This view excludes the everyday praxis of

key strategic actors such as middle managers and external consultants (Whittington, 2007). Given the parameters of the research, managers of a department operating within an international industry as well as executives were considered suitable candidates. In total, six interviews were conducted with practitioners of varying levels of seniority and experience with a broad range of strategy roles; this is detailed in table 1 below.

Table 1

Interviewee Profiles

Reference:	Strategy Role(s):	Industry of Organisation(s):	Gender:	Interview Method
Practitioner A	CEO, Board Member: Primary relevant experience was in heading a large established multi-national organisation.	Primary Industry	Male	Skype
Practitioner B	CEO, Board Member: Particular experience at establishing international operations within emergent companies.	Primary Industry	Male	Skype
Practitioner C	Department Manager: Headed up the international business department of a large New Zealand agriculture organisation	Primary Industry	Male	Face to face
Practitioner D	CEO: Leading an organisation that traded in over 120 countries for over 15 years.	Manufacturing	Male	Face to face
Practitioner E	Business Unit Manager: Managed a team in charge	Information technology	Male	Face to face

	of designing, marketing and selling a product in over 65 countries.			
Practitioner F	Department Manager. The Marketing manager of an innovative New Zealand company. Demonstrated significant experience within distribution networks.	Manufacturing	Male	Face to face

Fortunately, these interviewees comprised of individuals with different roles and levels of experience in New Zealand exporting organisations. The range of industries represented by the practitioners captured some of New Zealand’s key exporting markets. This allowed the researcher to attain a helpful indicator of New Zealand strategy practitioners’ perceptions and responses to de-globalisation. Another advantageous trait of the participant group is the scope of roles which the strategy practitioners occupy. As strategy practice and activity is pervasive throughout all levels of an organisation (Whittington, 2007), the researcher sought to speak to individuals with different roles. The practitioners occupy a mixture of senior leadership and management positions, allowing the researcher to have access to accounts of strategy throughout different levels of each organisation.

3.4.6. Limitations

While semi-structured interviews offer great opportunity to capture an individual’s thoughts on a particular topic, there are potential limitations. Firstly, researchers must be mindful that the situation and setting in which the interview occurs may influence unconscious bias in interviewees (Diefenbach, 2009). This situational context includes the behaviour of the interviewer, as an interview is a social interaction. An interviewer must be aware of any unconscious influence they are having while interacting with an interviewee. Subtle social cues such as body language, intonation and responses can directly influence the interviewee and their responses (Opdenakker, 2006). Interviewer alacrity and awareness was critical, especially as some related topics to de-globalisation could potentially lead to unproductive discussions

around general world events and politics. The interview schedule was designed specifically to mitigate the risks of this occurring. The researcher started the interview by asking questions related to the organisations international business development. This focus steered the conversation towards strategy related considerations. De-globalisation was brought into the interview through timely prompts and questions later, once this key focus had been established.

Another concern regarded to what degree the individual's account of the organisations strategic agenda was post-rationalised. A semi-structured interview provides a reflexive research method for gaining insight on an individual's perspective on a particular topic (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). The ability of interviews to observe strategy practices is limited, as the researcher is not observing the organisation at all, instead the researcher is presented with a rationalised account of events. Current SP research methodologies provide more focus on ways that give the researcher the chance to immerse oneself in an organisation (Johnson et al., 2007). In order to minimise a risk of post-rational bias within interviews, the interview schedule used prompts and suggestions to elicit a current, future facing view of strategic activity. It is worth noting that accounts of strategic actors (a key selection criterion for this thesis) are critical in gaining a perspective on strategic matters (Orbuch, 1997).

While interviews don't necessarily capture the immersion aspect of SP, they do reveal key actors accounts and interpretations of events and phenomena and the underlying drivers behind action. There are influential SP related studies that utilise interviews as a primary source for data collection (Darbi & Knott, 2016; Sarkar, Osiyevskyy, & Clegg, 2018; Tripsas & Gavetti, 2000). While other ethnographic methods are included in these studies, such as document analysis, interviews are the most prominent source of data, strengthening their applicability for SP research. Ethnographic methods such as document analysis and observations were excluded from consideration due to the time constraints of a master's thesis. Narrative type accounts presented by individuals are an invaluable subject of inquiry for researchers, as this can reveal understandings around behaviours (Orbuch, 1997). A focused inquiry around individuals' accounts of organisational strategic behaviours provide a useful perspective for SP, hence the selection criterion of interviewing individuals with strategic delegation.

3.5. Data Analysis

3.5.1. Transcription

Audio recordings and interview notes were taken by the researcher to capture data from interviews. The first step in the data analysis process was to organise the data obtained from the interviews for analysis. Transcription is a technique central to qualitative analysis as it captures talk and language (Davidson, 2018). The interview transcripts were completed by the researcher. Transcriptions were completed following each interview in order to develop and refine the interview/transcription process. The name of the interviewee, organisation and any other relevant personnel were encrypted to meet privacy and ethical obligations. Completed transcripts were sent to the interview participant for them to review and edit any commercially sensitive or other information. Participants were asked to return an edited transcript at their earliest convenience within two weeks. Five of the participants declined the offer to edit their final interview transcript. The remaining interviewee returned an edited version of the interview transcript within the two-week deadline.

3.5.2. Content Analysis

This thesis used content analysis to process and understand the data collected from the interviews and subsequent transcriptions. Content analysis refers to an approach to understand data held within documents through a process of grouping text into pre-determined categories (Bryman & Bell, 2015). SP research mostly utilises methodological approaches grounded within interpretivism, such as critical discourse analysis, narrative analysis and ethnographies (Johnson et al., 2007). Content analysis has its origins within positivist quantitative research, where texts are studied through the dual lens of frequency and objectives (Altheide, 1987). More recently the parameters of content analysis have been refined to explore text in not only a statistical sense but to assist in the interpretation of meaning and communication (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). A qualitative approach to content analysis is a research method to facilitate the subjective interpretation of the context of textual data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The data collected in this project was explored through a qualitative content analysis (QCA) to uncover meaning in the transcribed text of the semi-structured interviews.

QCA offers a systematic and analytic approach for exploring textual data while allowing for emergent and reflexive interpretations for the researcher (Altheide, 1987). Pre-determined

categories and variables are used to guide initial data analysis, however throughout the exploration others are expected to emerge (Altheide, 1996). This acknowledgement of emergent themes adds an ethnographic component to the research (Altheide, 1996), making QCA suitable for SP inquiries. Research inquiries studying strategy from a sociological perspective using a content analysis approach through a structured NVivo analysis (Darbi & Knott, 2016; Sarkar et al., 2018; Tripsas & Gavetti, 2000). These studies provide validation and context regarding the use of QCA in an SP study. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) observe that QCA's open-ended nature leads to a number of different analysis methods commonly employed by researchers. Depending on the research context, QCA models can be adjusted to account for the degree of inductive or deductive reasoning being applied within the data analysis (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). Conventional content analysis refers to an approach attempting to describe phenomenon and is useful where theories and literature pertaining to a topic are limited (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The interpretive approach being utilised in this thesis, along with the semi-structured interview transcripts as the source of data, make conventional QCA an appropriate option for data analysis.

3.5.3. Qualitative Content Analysis Process

Consistent with the interpretive nature of QCA, it's worth noting the reflexive and adjustable process in which the researcher followed. While all the tasks mentioned below were completed for every transcript, there was no step by step process followed. For example, the researcher considered the methods that assisted the emergence of categories within an interview. In a conventional content analysis, where the researcher determines themes and categories inductively, the data must be read through and organised (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). As the written transcripts were read through, the researcher began a process of open coding where written notes were recorded while reading the text. Subsequently, the researcher recorded brief thoughts and expectations before and after the interview to establish a set of expected and emergent themes from the interview. This is an important step as these first impression notes and headings are used to generate themes and categories from the data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Thematic categories emerging from the transcript readings were grouped under larger headings based on common themes emerging from each of the transcripts.

Using clusters of coded data to determine themes or concepts is a key step in generating themes, theories and ideas from textual data (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Saldaña, 2009). These larger

thematic groups were defined from the characteristics of their sub-groups and used as a coding schedule. This coding schedule was then applied in a subsequent analysis of each of the transcripts. Going through the data twice, once without codes and then again with emergent codes allows the researcher to structure data logically in order to sort the categorical and abstract terms (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013). A fuller account of the coding process is given in the next chapter on study findings. A code is often utilised by qualitative researchers to provide a summative attribute to a set of textual data (Saldaña, 2009). The coded data was then compiled and analysed through NVivo software in order to provide the researcher a visual representation. Initial codes relating to dimensions of SP were determined by the researcher and other codes emerged from the data. An acknowledgement for emergent themes within the interview transcripts ensured the data analysis method was consistent with the interpretive SP epistemology. Throughout this process the researcher returned to SP research themes and concepts to make sense of and challenge interpretations emerging from the interview data. The categories and themes that arose from the conventional QCA are discussed in the following chapter.

3.6. Ethical Considerations and Confidentiality

This thesis research adheres to the human ethics guidelines set out by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee. All data collection was undertaken after ethical approval from the Human Ethics Committee had been received. In accordance with these guidelines, all information, data and knowledge were treated by the researcher as confidential through the transcription, analysis and discussion stages of the thesis. Additionally, all sensitive data and information specific to an organisation received at any stage during interactions with a participant was stored securely by the researcher until the project's completion. Physical and digital data was deleted after five years in accordance with ethical guidelines. All measures to protect information and identity were declared to research subjects upon confirmation of their participation. Participants were made aware that the research was published on the University of Canterbury library website. Approval from the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee is shown in Appendix.

Audio recordings of interviews and their resulting transcriptions were confidential and stored securely throughout the duration and upon completion of the study. Copies of interview transcriptions were emailed to interviewees upon completion. Participants were offered two

weeks to edit or delete any information from the transcription. Upon transcription all interview dialogue was coded to strengthen confidentiality for the participants and organisations. All audio and transcription were stored on a secure server within the University of Canterbury in accordance to the Human Ethics Committee guidelines. Participants were informed and acknowledged this process.

3.7. Conclusion

This chapter identifies the selected methods and philosophies underpinning this research. An interpretivist frame is utilised for the research. The subjective nature of sensemaking and SP literature was an appropriate epistemological fit for this project. The overall objective of the thesis was to develop an interpretive answer to the three research questions. Semi-structured interviews were selected as the method for data collection due to the suitability of this approach when collecting individuals accounts, opinions and knowledge relevant to the topic. The semi-structured nature of an interview is advantageous as it offers a degree of standardisation and variability in the data set. A content approach to analysis was determined to be the most suitable due to its application in sensemaking literature. Sensemaking is central to the interpretation and method of analysis. The parameters of the methods chosen were discussed in detail along with the limitations. Finally, the ethical and confidentiality considerations were identified and met.

4. Research Findings

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the key findings from the content analysis of the semi-structured interviews. These are organised under the prevailing macro themes emerging from the analysis. Each emergent theme is linked back to the purposes of the research, and illustrative statements from the interview transcripts are provided for further context. The researcher refers to extracts from the interviews throughout the chapter to add depth to the interpretive process of this research. This chapter leads into the subsequent discussion chapter, where the results are interpreted in depth.

4.2. Key Themes

The analysis of interview transcripts brought about expected and previously unconsidered key themes. Four relevant macro themes were present within the interview transcripts as well as sub themes within these larger categories. As mentioned within the methodology, themes relevant to SP and international business literature were pre-determined to an extent. A subsequent acknowledgement for emergent themes was considered throughout the transcription process. The four macro themes are identified and defined in the table below. Details regarding how each theme emerged are also included. Specific examples pertaining to each theme and the sub themes are discussed in the next sections of the chapter.

4.2.1. Macro Themes

The four macro themes represent themes apparent within the interview transcripts. They were determined through a process of line by line coding and subsequently assigning core groups of findings under larger thematic groups. These four macro themes; how they are defined for the purposes of the study and description of how they came about within the findings are provided in table 2 below.

Table 2

Macro Themes and Definitions

Macro theme:	Definition for the purpose of the study:	Description of emergence:
1. De-globalisation	Any relevant dialogue concerning the phenomena or trends relating to a business's exposure to de-globalisation. This could include political discourse or the practitioner's relevant opinion.	The central topic of the thesis research, this was an expected theme to be present in the interview transcripts.
2. Making sense of de-globalisation	Any dialogue pertaining to the methods used by practitioners to gain a mental grasp of ambiguous external factors.	A key dimension of SP. The interview schedule drafted by the researcher had two questions specifically focused upon interpretation.
3. External environment developments	Any dialogue pertaining to the development of a market for reasons dissociated from de-globalisation.	Heavily related to the international business dimension of the research. External environmental developments are a key strategy consideration for the practitioners interviewed.
4. Risk management	Strategies or conversation relating to the notion of mitigating risk in overseas markets.	Key emergent theme as an implication of de-globalisation.

4.2.2. Sub Themes

Within the macro themes, there were a number of distinctive subcategories relevant to one another that came up during the interviews. These themes were labelled during the initial line by line coding and were eventually grouped into the larger thematic groups as shown above. Definitions within the purposes of the study and which thematic groups each sub themes falls into are show in the table below.

Table 3

Sub Themes and Definitions

Macro Theme	Sub Themes	Description
De-globalisation	Practitioners perspectives	The practitioner's personal perspectives upon the phenomenon's impact on organisations and strategy.
De-globalisation	Impact upon strategy	The operational and technical implications of de-globalisation upon strategy.
De-globalisation	Removal from everyday practice	De-globalisations apparent detachment from everyday practice as expressed by practitioners.
Making sense of de-globalisation	Sensemaking amongst practitioners	Frames of reference and past experience drawn upon by practitioners to interpret uncertain phenomena.
Making sense of de-globalisation	Organisation methods for interpretation	The practices implemented by organisations to interpret de-globalisation phenomena and thereby conceive strategy.

4.3. Practitioner and Organisational Background

Upon commencement of the practitioner interviews, the researcher's initial questioning focused on setting the scene around a strategy focused discussion. This prompted dialogue surrounding key characteristics of the organisation's international strategy and activity. These factors were not directly attributable or relevant to de-globalisation, however they provided necessary context for the researcher to draw meaningful interpretations from the transcripts. The details below systematically present relevant contextual information upon the practitioners and their respective experiences and organisations.

4.3.1. Practitioner A

Practitioner Profile

Practitioner A has significant experience within international multinationals. In his career, Practitioner A was the CEO of a large European multinational in the primary industry. He has applied this knowledge and practice to a well-known New Zealand company of a similar nature.

Industry Profile

The industry is a high-volume primary industry operation. The business is highly susceptible to the regulatory constraints or other countries, including their exporting laws and trade restrictions.

Competitive Landscape

Dialogue regarding the organisation's competitors was rarely mentioned in response to any of the initial questioning. However, the practitioner stated that competitors were much larger and had more established operations. This made entry into overseas market difficult.

Presence within International Markets

The organisation traded throughout the Asia Pacific region. However, trading within other countries was mostly dependent upon gaining appropriate licenses.

4.3.2. Practitioner B

Practitioner Profile

Practitioner B had board experience and CEO level roles on primarily start-up companies within the primary sector. His academic background included a master's degree in marketing.

Industry Profile

The organisation is in the primary industry and exports high value products to three overseas markets. The Practitioner identified supply chain efficiencies and exporting regulations as key factors affecting business.

Competitive Landscape

The practitioner spoke at length about an incumbent's perspective in regard to competitors. Strategies concerned differentiating their offerings from that of their much larger competitors.

Presence within International Markets

Upon achieving a desired market share within the New Zealand Market, Practitioner B had assisted the expansion of the organisation into Australia, India and the U.K.

4.3.3. Practitioner C

Practitioner Profile

Practitioner C occupied a department manager role for several years. In his time in the management role he had overseen the businesses product development and international growth.

Industry Profile

The organisation had to deal with countries that had different phyto-sanitary standards. Due to this, there is significant investment into the research and development of products that are applicable to multiple markets.

Competitive Landscape

The Practitioner referred un-specifically to a range of overseas competitors. A good deal of their business overseas was done through independent retailers.

Presence within International Markets

A large proportion of the organisation's international trading took place in Europe. Practitioner C gave proportional estimates. The practitioner estimated that Europe accounts for 40-50% of their international business, North America around 10%, South America 18%, Asia about 10% and South Africa the remainder.

4.3.4. Practitioner D

Practitioner Profile

Practitioner D has been the CEO of this large New Zealand based manufacturing organisation for over 15 years. During this time, he led the business through the 2008/09 GFC.

Industry Profile

The organisation supplied parts to large multinational original equipment manufacturers. This industry is highly susceptible to changes in currency and overseas import regulations.

Competitive Landscape

The organisation had much larger competition with increased economies of scale in China and Vietnam.

Presence within International Markets

The practitioner stated that approximately 35% of the organisations international business took place in the U.S and 25% in Europe.

4.3.5. Practitioner E

Practitioner Profile

Practitioner E has an extensive background in managing software teams. He has occupied the role of managing the business unit for three years.

Industry Profile

Being a technology organisation, Practitioner E cited that the ‘borderless’ nature of their product allowed the business to be based anywhere. The headquarters are in Christchurch and the organisation had a U.S based branch.

Competitive Landscape

Practitioner E didn’t refer to the challenges presented by competitors during the interview. However, the practitioner spoke that the company was constantly scanning related organisations for opportunities to collaborate to develop a wider breadth of products.

Presence within International Markets

While the practitioner didn’t specify the exact markets, the organisation traded solely overseas to over 80 countries.

4.3.6. Practitioner F

Practitioner Profile

Practitioner F has been involved with the organisation for over five years. He has an extensive background within marketing and sales management roles. An MBA in strategic management made Practitioner F more than familiar with academic aspects of strategy.

Industry Profile

The practitioner identified the unusually long sales cycle as a key characteristic of the organisations’ manufacturing related industry. The practitioner also identified macro political trends as a key influence upon their business’ strategy and sales.

Competitive Landscape

The organisation had two significant international competitors. However recently, a key competitor had gone through financial hardships due to relying too much upon products in one sector. This had encouraged the organisation to diversify the range of sectors they operated within.

Presence within International Markets

The organisation export products into 120 countries through 53 distributors. There is a focus on growing distributions network by 4-5 per year.

4.4. De-globalisation

As the key phenomenon explored in this research, de-globalisation and the practitioner's perspectives on the matter were a primary focus of the interviews. It is worth noting the researcher was careful when prompting discussion around de-globalisation. While any discussion around de-globalisation was sought for, the researchers' goal was to keep the focus directed towards strategic implications and not stray toward the practitioners' personal opinion on the related political coverage. That said, dialogue from the transcripts relating to de-globalisation is varied and covers a wide range of context in the interviews. The practitioner's responses brought an array of subthemes to the researchers' attention. These sub theme heading represent emergent themes based on the interview data. The letters in bold beside the selected transcript excerpts are used as references in the written interpretations below.

4.4.1. Practitioners' Perspectives

“De-globalisation, I mean it's almost impossible because you're trying to predict something that's very unclear even in the politicians' minds as to what's going to be the outcome”. (Practitioner B) **B1**

“But an organisation like this, shouldn't even exist in New Zealand. I mean the reason they exist is through history and as soon as you have got big enough on the New Zealand market, you become an exporter. And when you become an exporter you're working on the use of globalisation”. (Practitioner D) **D1**

In response to questions about the phenomenon of de-globalisation, practitioners were quick to address the high degree of uncertainty amongst its implications. B1 illustrates the practitioners view that de-globalisation is a tricky barometer in which to base strategic objectives upon. What's apparent in this statement is an immediate reference to the larger political aspects of

de-globalisation. Perhaps B1 is reflecting the practitioner's perception of a separation between de-globalisation and organisational consideration. Practitioner D stated that New Zealand exporting organisations historically were highly dependent on the influence of globalisation. D1 potentially suggests that the contemporary phenomena de-globalisation is currently an inhibiting factor for New Zealand exporting organisations.

4.4.2. Impact Upon Strategy

“And so, we could do a trial in one country, prove that our product was suitable and have it on the EU catalogue and with Brexit, of course it meant that the UK is now no longer part of the common catalogue list. So, all of a sudden we had to do trials within the UK as well”. (Practitioner C) **C1**

“Yeah, I mean, deglobalisation it's an interesting concept... So, when my sales director is sitting down having a conversation with a large multinational retailer, they don't talk about de-globalisation. What he's talking about this specifically, what can you do for me this morning? And that's when you get into you know, labelling issues, uh, this particular ingredient not permitted, uh, this ingredient has to be labelled this way rather than this way”. (Practitioner A) **A1**

“The globalisation within the US, very interesting for us, because we are selling to (censored) who have a factory in America... but there are a whole bunch of pieces that are manufactured in China... and with this new tariff China is becoming more expensive... I'm bidding on a lot of work at the moment because of the US tariffs”. (Practitioner D) **D2**

“Those are the kind of things that de-globalisation actually has an effect upon, but it doesn't have a major effect. It's just an impact on reactionary rules”. (Practitioner F) **F1**

When the practitioners were subject to further strategy-related questioning by the researcher, there was a common theme amongst their responses. Both the C1 and A1 statements refer directly to de-globalisations influence on regulatory constraints in the practitioner's respective industries. From the practitioner's perspective this is indicative of de-globalisation's manifestation amongst everyday strategic practices. F1 further validates this position and states that de-globalisation primarily has an impact upon reactionary rules. This is potentially a consequence of the relative scale of the organisations in New Zealand and the nations exposure to de-globalisation. D2 goes into detail about gaining favourably from a changing reactionary factor within the industry. Changes in these regulatory constraints have profound financial and operational implications for these organisations. It is clear that this is where practitioners see de-globalisation having a direct impact upon their strategies. While changes in regulations can equate to little, they can also dictate organisations decisions within international markets. D2 is an example of an emergent opportunity coming about from a change in regulation. Conversely C1 refers to a situation where political change has brought about increased requirements to enter the UK market. A practicing strategist has limited ability to plan for emergent situations such as these and often strategic actions tends to be reactive in response. Based on the dialogue retained from the practitioners, de-globalisation has a discernible impact upon reactive aspects of organisational strategists.

4.4.3. Removal from Everyday Practice

“Well, it's like, I'm not quite sure how do you equate it to something that's actionable. Even if there's say, the index went up a bit or down a bit, what does it mean to action change? You know does it mean we stop doing this? (Practitioner E) E1

“That's, that's just the nature of that particular situation. Factors outside of your control, because once there's a new administration, this could change again. You know, so yeah a president can only be in office for eight years. (Practitioner F) F2

“But we see that as a temporary thing and we are unable to influence that, all we can do is work around it. So we have to look at areas of control versus influence and that

is not an area we can control. It's really why we don't plan ahead in that regard because everything can change at a whim". (Practitioner B) B2

Subsequent statements from the practitioners go on to express a separation of the de-globalisation phenomena from everyday practice. De-globalisation enables substantial changes on the external environments of businesses, however when contemplated from a practice perspective, practitioners considered the phenomena from a temporal and influential standpoint. For the purposes of the discussion, this separation illustrates the notion that de-globalisation isn't present in everyday strategy practices. This perspective was made apparent through various comments made by practitioners identifying the level of influence de-globalisation has upon practice. Practitioner E in statement E1 points out that the indicators of de-globalisation are difficult to translate into strategy practice. E1 reflects a high degree of strategic ambiguity associated with de-globalisation. This subsequently backs up earlier statements concerning how de-globalisation doesn't trickle down to everyday strategic discussion. The discrepancy has some interesting implications for practicing strategists, as this phenomena clearly has a discernible effect but one that's reasonably far removed and hard to measure. B2 and F2 illustrate the practitioners acknowledgement of a lack of control over de-globalisation factors. While political factors are of course not areas able to be influenced by organisations, this once again re-enforces the earlier statements about de-globalisation primarily affecting re-active measures of strategizing. F2 also illustrates Practitioner F's perspective that de-globalisation may largely be a temporary trend, subject to abrupt changes, such as a new political administration. This is again consistent with the volatile nature of globalisation and explains to some extent practitioners laissez faire approach.

In conclusion, practitioners explained responses to de-globalisation were for the most part re-active and mostly concerned regulatory constraints. Subsequently, the implications of de-globalisation offered organisations chances to seize unique opportunities and subsequently, they contributed significant strategic resource in order to take advantage of this. The reasons behind practitioners' responses to de-globalisation related questions will be covered in the discussion chapter.

4.5. Making Sense of De-Globalisation

An integral dimension of the SP framework, was the practitioners interpretation of de-globalisation effects. This was explored in depth by the researcher. Discussion around strategic interpretation involved a couple of different frames within the interviews, the practitioners own sensemaking frames and the organisation wide processes. Both of these facets added significant richness to the qualitative data in relation to uncovering the strategic implications of globalisation. The researcher drew upon the interviewees own experience and used their accounts to determine how organisations reacted to de-globalisation.

4.5.1. Sensemaking amongst Practitioners

“Yeah, so downturn happens that um, the more kind of prevalent thing that companies do is they downsize... We did something different, we actually turned around to customers and said now more than ever is where technology solutions can help you be productive in tough times” (Practitioner E) E2

“There are opportunities and threats, so what we’re trying to do is take every opportunity we can get and prepare ourselves for a downturn, because I personally think there will be a downturn again... So, we are marketing really heavily trying to gain new customers to offset what we think will be a slowdown”. (Practitioner D) D3

Sensemaking refers to the frames and environmental queues drawn upon by individuals to make interpretations and decision in uncertain environments. Throughout the interviews the researcher was listening for practitioners to reveal frames they used to interpret de-globalisation. Practitioner D and E when explaining their interpretations of de-globalisation, made direct comparisons to the GFC in 2008/09. While this event emerged through very different circumstances, the conscious frame of reference made by the practitioners was a sustained period of economic downturn. Both E2 and D3 refer to previous experience practicing strategy in this past period of economic downturn. E2 describes how periods of economic downturn brought about the organisations customer focused product strategy. Anecdotes such as this are clear mental comparisons between the two economic/political

events. D3 details Practitioner D's perspective regarding a future economic downturn. This statement goes on to reveal that the organisation is appropriately planning for such an occurrence and strategizing accordingly. In order for practitioners to interpret an uncertain environment as a result of de-globalisation, they have drawn upon a frame of reference with common characteristics.

4.5.2. Organisation Methods for Interpretation

"I'd say that the most valuable insights we get is the continuous qualitative input, um, that we get from ourselves and teams of talking to customers every day. So it's informal frequency of communication and we have a weekly sales call and it's all about the health of the business you know clients generally feeling optimistic and wanting to buy more stuff and string projects that they're getting or not. And that to me, I look for those signals that are more implicit". (Practitioner E) E4

Um, but you know, I think it's really a lot of it comes down to talking to customers and visiting markets. That's how you gain that market intelligence. There's nothing really formal or anything like that. It's really a lot of its experience or gut feel from the trader as well". (Practitioner C) C2

"And political wasn't really one of the criteria we would look at and regulation wasn't really one of the criteria either, it was much more strongly focused on consumer retail and supply chain economics". (Practitioner B) B3

As a natural progression from practitioners sensemaking frames regarding de-globalisation, the researcher inquired into the extent to which this occurred at an organisational level. The practitioners expressed a focus placed upon an informal means of strategizing. It is worth noting that Practitioners F, D and C all mentioned their organisations received assistance from New Zealand Trade and Enterprise to assist in making sense of external phenomena. With this as a supplement, both E4 and C2 detail a thoroughly customer focused approach for disseminating information within different markets. Both practitioners emphasised the

importance of communicating frequently with end users and using that information to develop knowledge and make actionable changes. B3 reveals that other specific factors in the industries including consumer trends utilised lead indicators of appropriate strategic practices. These statements once again back up the apparent ‘removal from practice’ theme in this study, as in this case political factors of de-globalisation aren’t regularly considered in conceiving strategy. It is clear the practitioners in this study favour face-to-face interaction and other informal methods for making sense of uncertain environments. This may once again be due to the smaller scale of organisations in the study, however it could also be indicative of strategists acting upon reactive aspects of strategy.

4.6. External Environment Developments

Focused conversation with strategy practitioners will prompt responses regarding all significant strategy influences including de-globalisation and other indirectly related phenomena. As mentioned earlier in the findings chapter, factors such as the influence of consumers have a more direct impact upon strategy. This relates to the influence of continually evolving macro trends upon organisation strategy.

“So of all the things that make us evolve and change, the things that make us change the most are that constantly changing consumer demands and looking for new things and the need to actually excite them and give them new ideas and new tastes. Much more than external factors like, you know, uh, political or legal or other factors”. (Practitioner B) **B4**

“And so what we’re definitely seeing is that actually, uniqueness stands out, innovation stands out... that’s to me, how I think de-globalisation has materialised itself and that sort of consumer perspective and then that creates an opportunity. (Practitioner A) **A2**

“Um, you know, that whole geopolitical thing which I keep coming back to, was a massive growth for us in the Asia market and has basically turned that business around to now being a large percentage of our revenue”. (Practitioner F) **F3**

“Because for us, we’ve always got to have a buyer, so you’ve got to understand what the buyer wants. And they might have the same or different pressures than you have, so it’s a

lot of being in market and feet on the ground so to speak and getting in there and sitting around a table discussing things with them". (Practitioner C) C3

Discussion around other strategy influences resulting in market changes over time reveal a certain embeddedness of de-globalisation and external macro trends. Consistent with the notion that end-users provide a key sensemaking platform for practitioners, their needs and preferences were key for developing strategy. It was re-iterated that a proactive stance on consumer tastes and preferences held priority over monitoring political/economic situations. B4 and C3 state that buyer preferences from a strategic standpoint are more influential than political and legal factors. C3 re-iterates that a key process for interpreting de-globalisation phenomena is retaining a closeness to customers. This statement also reveals priorities for practitioners in regards to influential factors effecting strategy. These methods are utilised to primarily understand the needs and wants of customers and strategize accordingly. This is perhaps representative of a more direct influence upon the organisation strategic outcomes. As referenced earlier, there is a perceived sense of removal of de-globalisation and strategy.

Practitioner F extends this notion by discussing how global tensions have subsequently caused a dramatic increase in military, infrastructure and environmental spending. F3 details the organisation seizure upon the emergence of geo-political trends in Asia. A lengthy sales and product life cycle and an industry resistant to instability has given the organisation capabilities to forecast and seize upon opportunities arising from the geo-political landscape. A2 interestingly, argues that de-globalisation has materialised itself by creating opportunities for small, innovative businesses. Now more than ever, according to practitioner A was a time where emergent incumbent businesses could stand out against the crowd through innovative customer facing strategies. While B4 and C3 talk about consumer demand as a separate factor, A2 claims that de-globalisation has had an impact upon consumer behaviour. This is consistent with the SP notion that strategy practice is immersed into external phenomena.

4.7. Risk Management

A key component of the thesis research was uncovering methods of organisational response to de-globalisation and the challenges it presents. Once the researcher had covered the organisation and individual perspectives upon de-globalisation, the questions turned to focus

on the actionable response. This led the conversation away from individual interpretation and focused more upon the organisation's future strategic considerations. One of the key emergent themes that were apparent in these questions was the consideration of strategizing to mitigate risk. Each interviewee mentioned the concept of risk or a similar notion explicitly, highlighting the importance of the activity in times where industries are faced with multiple pressures from many different sources. While there were some common threads within the interview discussions relating to risk, there were more differences than similarities amongst the practitioners. The talk of 'risk' for the most part related to increasing the organisation's capability to remain resistant to shocks within the marketplace. The methods which the organisations employed are discussed below.

“Because for us, we've always got to have a buyer, so you've got to understand what the buyer wants ... and they might have the same pressures or they might have different pressures, the only way you get that is by talking to the customer. So it's a lot of being in market, and feet on the ground, so to speak and getting in there and discussing with them”.
(Practitioner C) **C4**

“Brexit is forcing us to be really succinct, as we believe that entering a market is from a local manufacturing perspective ... there's much more value within maintaining brand identity and great relationships with customers... so we will put our people on the ground to meet with international customers and develop that relationship... so those skills are vital for us”. (Practitioner B) **B5**

“So 10 years ago we realised that we were selling to a few segments already. We hadn't segmented the marketplace as such, we were just selling to those places for different application and then we looked at that said, look, you know, these can be fit to segments and we should really drive our strategy around the segments... So, the more segments, the more diversification you have, the less risk have as opposed to putting all your eggs in one basket”. (Practitioner F) **F4**

“So what we’re trying to do is seek out every opportunity we can get, we are marketing heavily trying to gain new customers to offset what we think will be a slowdown due to North American tariffs”. (Practitioner D) D4

An important element of SP related inquiries is a perspective on actual practice consequences of a certain factor. The practitioners alluded to heightened degrees of risk and reward within their respective industries. The opportunities presented by de-globalisation has in some cases been highly favourable for organisations, however, due to the phenomenon’s unpredictability a strategic acknowledgement and plan for risk is vitally important. These ideas are backed up by the practitioners and they revealed some of the common ways of dealing with international risk.

As mentioned above, a key method for practitioners to interpret the implications of de-globalisation upon their industries was to engage in conversations with end users. C4 identifies their organisation to not only understand the needs of the customer, but to identify market trends and pressures. This subsequently allows the organisation to remain as risk adverse as possible. Likewise, the practitioner in B5, also expressed that maintaining relationships with consumers was especially important when off-setting the risks presented by supply chain issues as a result of Brexit. These two practitioners’ organisations had fairly similar approaches to managing risk across international markets. In scenarios where organisations typically have longer sales process and less flexibility with the development of their product, organisations tackled volatilities and unpredictability with a different approach. D4 expresses that trading to multiple businesses within different industries was a desired approach. Practitioner D subsequently stated that the organisation’s biggest customer was only eight percent of overall business volume. While having the advantage of a naturally segmented industry, Practitioner F spoke about how the organisation had leveraged this favourably. This diversification allowed for volatilities affecting one particular segment to not be a critical factor as the organisation had other core business to rely on. While these organisations were generally less reactive when concerning product development, the lengthy sales process allowed practitioners the luxury of being able to plan accordingly for risks associated with de-globalisation.

4.8. Conclusion

This chapter presented the primary findings of the research. Qualitative data was compiled through NVivo and organised into sub themes and subsequent macro themes. The objective of this process was to reveal the information gathered from the interviews undertaken by the researcher. The findings uncover a range of practical and industry focused perspectives upon de-globalisation phenomena and related considerations for practitioners.

De-globalisation itself, presents high degrees of risk and opportunity for the New Zealand businesses interviewed while also facilitating technical regulatory requirements. Macro trends and subsequent implications created opportunity for well positioned businesses, and, while very hard to plan for, practitioners unveiled some of the methods organisations used to interpret de-globalisation phenomena. It was found that retaining a closeness to international markets helped organisations be responsive to unpredictable phenomena. Practitioners went into great detail about the external environment strategy influences they were subject to while operating internationally. While factors such as commodity pricing, and consumer tastes and preferences may be significantly influenced by de-globalisation, there are a many factors to take into consideration. More often than not, economic indicators such as this were more predictable signals of market activity practitioners relied upon. A New Zealand industry situation for each of the organisations from a strategic sense had a significant influence upon how the practitioners framed their strategic discussions. The practitioners discussed at length how New Zealand's unique circumstances impacted their approach to international markets and the competitive landscape. In response to de-globalisation, the interviews revealed a focus upon strategies mitigating risk as a result of de-globalisation. These approaches and perspectives regarding de-globalisation will analysed in-depth in the discussion chapter, which will focus upon answering the three primary research questions.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Introduction

The objective of this thesis research was to study de-globalisation through a strategy-as-practice lens, investigating both the perspectives of practitioners and the resulting influence on practice. Semi-structured interviews with six senior strategists from New Zealand firms across three national industry groups revealed key themes to elaborate upon. Previous strategic assumptions held by practitioners and business orientations held by organisations have been challenged by de-globalisation. Practitioners spoke about a range of reactive measures to mitigate apparent risks of de-globalisation. The approaches may be indicative of common strategic challenges across New Zealand. The discussion will investigate how practitioners are interpreting de-globalisation, the lasting impact of de-globalisation and how the phenomenon has impacted strategic action. The points of the discussion are a natural progression from the interpretations emerging from the qualitative content analysis. The research questions will be addressed when relevant findings are discussed and compared to related assumptions from relevant literature. Finally, the relevant contributions of the thesis, the limitations of the research and recommendations for future studies will be discussed.

5.2. Discussion and Analysis

The following discussion is split into three major sections which group and analyse the relevant findings together. The first section will investigate the findings relevant to practitioner interpretations of larger phenomena which will facilitate interpreting their perspective of de-globalisation. The discussion will examine the practitioners' personal perceptions on de-globalisation and the discussion reveals underlying attitudes and approaches to the phenomenon. The following section will investigate the last impact of de-globalisation upon strategy. The final passage considers the action consequences of de-globalisation as described by the practitioners. This line of inquiry will review the actionable strategic changes in response to de-globalisation. This structure for the discussion has been utilised by the researcher to make meaningful interpretations of the data captured, rather than simply answering the research questions. However, the three primary research questions will be addressed across these two sections to consolidate the overall research contribution. The first research question attempts

to investigate de-globalisation from a practical sense and gain a direct understanding of the perceived larger business implications. The second question endeavours to steer the focus of inquiry towards day-to-day practices and uncover how the aforementioned interpretations have translated into tangible outcomes. Lastly the final research question, assesses to what extent the practitioners perceive the implications of de-globalisation will have a lasting impact. The researcher analyses the practitioners' responses and the wider implications of their answers to these research questions.

5.2.1. Interpretation of De-globalisation

Overall, the practitioners illustrated that the implications of de-globalisation were pervasive across the industries and international markets. Examining practitioners' responses in relevant contexts can shed light upon their underlying interpretations of the phenomenon and the ensuing micro strategy practices implemented. The practitioners referred multiple times to the impact de-globalisation has upon politically imposed regulations to their specific industries. On more than one occasion, anecdotes from past periods of economic downturn were drawn upon and practitioners discussed the strategies utilised in those situations. Weick (1995) proposes that individual sensemaking is informed through discursive and interactional settings and is subsequently facilitated through shared meaning. While the subsequent transcripts offer a temporal snapshot of an individual's perspectives, they reveal important information about practitioner interpretations of de-globalisation. The fact that de-globalisation has elicited experiences from the GFC is potentially indicative of the practitioners making a mental comparison between the two economically influential periods. The subsequent reactive strategizing and risk management discussions were indicative of appropriate counter measures for any negative scenarios.

The researcher specifically facilitated discussion around related phenomenon within the context of strategizing and thus investigating underlying motivations for decision making within the organisation. Strategy is a construct founded within talk and communication (Balogun et al., 2014). New Zealand business environment factors were at the forefront of strategy discussion within the interviews and used as a significant framing device for the practitioners. While this may be obvious given that they were from New Zealand organisations, the advantages and limitations were significant to each practitioner. An acknowledgement of the need to retain value with New Zealand and keep their workforce pre-dominantly local is

indicative of this perspective. This notion, along with the subconscious comparison to the most recent period of economic downturn (the GFC) are indicative of New Zealand practitioner interpretations of de-globalisation. This identifies with the concept that the talk and language of strategy often influences the tangible practice outcomes (Balogun et al., 2014). In summary, the overt interpretations appear representative of the individual practitioners' previous experience and the sensemaking constructs available to them. These broader interpretations provided a solid platform for the researcher to explore the following micro strategies employed by each practitioner.

5.2.2. Lasting Impact of De-globalisation

In anticipation of the future, practitioners expressed forward thinking perspectives regarding prevailing industry specific and global trends. Practitioners articulated a range of influential global trends which would be significant considerations in future oriented strategy formation. Within the manufacturing and software industry, practitioners stated that aging infrastructure and climate change had a significant impact upon the firms external strategic environment. This has subsequently encouraged firms to constantly monitor these influences and revisit current strategies and products. Within the primary industry, practitioners referred to the changing demands of consumers, in particular a need to be more environmentally conscious and to develop solutions to cater towards the demands to diversify. A noticeable element of the interview text was practitioners' eagerness to draw links across global trends which illustrates the need to be aware and open to other influences as well as de-globalisation. For example, Practitioner A stated that de-globalisation has provided a platform for innovation among small businesses, or, Practitioner F explaining that geo-political events are part of their strategic considerations. The emergence of these external strategic considerations within the interviews and potentially highlight their relative strategic importance over and above de-globalisation. The related interview discussion highlights the embedded relationship between strategy and external macro phenomena (Seidl & Whittington, 2014).

The attention placed upon related global trends is indicative of the critical characteristics practitioners are anticipating to be future considerations. From the New Zealand Practitioners perspective, de-globalisation isn't seen as a long-term future consideration as the interviewees expressed speculation about the phenomenon's lingering impact. De-globalisation however, presents an emergent array of challenges and opportunities while facilitating the advance of

global economic and societal trends. Within international business literature, de-globalisation is considered to be either a permanent or temporary change in the global business landscape (Kobrin, 2017). Views adhering to the pendulum would argue de-globalisation is a temporary fluctuation in globalisation drivers (Peng, 2011; Witt, 2019). The perspectives presented by the practitioners were consistent with the angle that globalisation represents a temporary change in the global economy. References to changing political administrations and greater strategic attention given to external global trends is perhaps indicative of this perspective. These accounts express that de-globalisation is susceptible to immediate impacts such as changes in economic regulation and political agendas. This indicates that the pendulum view of globalisation may be applicable to the practitioners perspective. Acknowledgements of the nature of the phenomena from the practitioners, helps to highlight the embeddedness of de-globalisation and its subsequent trickle-down effect to practice.

5.2.3. Strategy Practice

A key aspect of this study focused upon the practice level implications of de-globalisation. Practitioners' accounts identify a discernible extent of separation of macro phenomena and everyday strategy practices. This separation is the noticeable indirect nature of the exchange between de-globalisation and day-to-day outcomes. In many scenarios, practitioners stated that changes in regulatory constraints were an inevitable consequence of de-globalisation and organisations were limited in their ability to strategize and plan in advance. To avoid a 'micro-isolationist' frame of SP this research sought to explore the nature of the exchange between de-globalisation and strategy practice. Seidl and Whittington (2014) suggest that macro level trends such as politics, economics and culture have a significant impact upon micro level practices. The findings revealed that discussion of strategic considerations wasn't often framed from a de-globalisation angle. This may be representative of businesses focusing upon more pressing day-to-day issues. It is possible that this is simply a characteristic of the organisations scale and level of exposure to de-globalisation phenomena. The limitations discussed by the practitioners above are an inevitability of de-globalisation, however, there were a range of practices discussed to mitigate the emergence of environmental uncertainties.

These New Zealand based organisations used a wide range of techniques and external help to assist them in formulation of strategy. Practitioners identified the planning and leveraging of risk management practices as a key strategic focus. While this may be an example of thorough

practice from the practitioners, the proportionate strategic focus upon risk may be heightened in this period of de-globalisation. Decision making in uncertain environments relies upon robust and accurate decision-making processes (Eisenhardt, 1989b). Utilising long sales cycles, contractual agreements with customers and a diverse breadth of products are characteristic of industry-imposed measures to approach risk. Common methods of environmental interpretation for strategy practitioners such as popular tool frameworks or workshops (Jarzabkowski & Kaplan, 2015), were not referred to by practitioners at any stage. The lack of mention of these common methods might be indicative of generic tools focus upon organising thoughts as opposed to the process of strategizing itself. Their exclusion may also be representative of a smaller scale of organisation being researched. The implementation of the above strategic practices suggests an embedded relationship has a discernible influence upon factors that affect everyday practice. While this exchange might not be direct, the practitioners' reference to these factors are indicative of the trickle-down effect de-globalisation has to practice.

5.3. Research Contributions

This thesis focuses upon a practitioner's perspective of de-globalisation and the activities that have arisen as a result of this phenomena. The findings from this research contribute to an international business understanding of de-globalisation and responds to the need for SP to acknowledge the relationship between external macro phenomena and everyday practice (Seidl & Whittington, 2014). The application of sociological practice-based approaches such as the new directions proposed by Whittington (1996), and the concept of 'sensemaking' (Weick, 1995), to an international theory adds new dimensions to both fields of knowledge. Previous research on de-globalisation examines how this reality has emerged and speculates upon the future economic consequences (Kobrin, 2017; Livesey, 2018; Van Bergeijk, 2018). International business theories such as the 'waves of globalisation', 'guarded globalisation' and the concept of localisation offer context and perspective upon strategic orientations towards de-globalisation (Bremmer, 2014; Peng, 2011; Porter, 1990). While the combination of these sources effectively explains de-globalisation from a macroeconomic perspective, the implications upon business strategies have been under-explored. This thesis has been the first to bridge de-globalisation with SP related theories from a distinct New Zealand perspective. Therefore, this thesis offers a practical perspective upon NZ business implications of de-globalisation and the resulting influence upon strategic activity.

5.3.1. Strategy as Practice

The first step of an assessment of de-globalisation from an SP perspective provides further evidence that larger phenomena can be effectively studied under this lens. In the past, it has been acknowledged that SP studies are hindered by ‘micro-isolationism’ (Seidl & Whittington, 2014). The research effectively utilises SP approaches to de-globalisation, illustrating that the practice perspective can be applied from a wider scope. Through exploration of actors’ accounts, the researcher was able to make conclusions about the nature of the relationship between de-globalisation and day-to-day strategic activity. Examples of these include the contradicting statements about the degree of separation between de-globalisation and everyday practice and the subsequent activities implemented. For all the practitioner’s statements about de-globalisation affecting factors outside of their control, each of the resulting methods used to interpret strategy hinted that the phenomenon was an area for concern. Immediate comparisons to the GFC and heightened focus upon mitigating risk are examples of practitioner’s interpretations and activity in the wake of de-globalisation. From an academic perspective this offers a more open calibration for studying international business phenomena as well as widening the scope of SP research.

5.3.2. International Business

Strategic management related research within international business literature contributes a rich array of theories and frameworks for practicing strategists to utilise and make sense of uncertain phenomena. Globalisation represents an increasing inter-connectedness amongst nations and is commonly characterised as a phenomenon occurring in ‘waves’ thus illustrating periodical shifts in momentum (Peng, 2011). For the same reason SP literature endeavours to shift attention back to people (Whittington, 1996), there is separation between this literature and industry practice. This study applies a practical influence on this phenomena and excerpts from the interview transcripts support the pendulum view of globalisation. This inquiry also addresses as to whether or not de-globalisation represents a permanent change or temporary shift to macro business environments (Kobrin, 2017). Accounts from the practitioners suggest that they believe de-globalisation is a temporary occurrence with profound regulatory strategic implications. This application of a practice-based lens allows the researcher to address this disparity between academic concepts and practitioners and draw conclusions relevant to both areas.

5.3.3. Practical Contributions

The practical contributions this thesis offers, comes through the understanding that can be derived from the practitioner's accounts of de-globalisation and strategy. From a management perspective and more specifically a strategy practitioner perspective, this research concerns methods for interpretation and action in response to de-globalisation. For example, NZ organisations prioritising retaining a closeness with end users in different international markets, re-emphasises the importance of direct market engagement over wider political and economic analysis. Engaging in activities such as meeting customers face-to-face, having mobile sales teams and having regular follow-up discussions with consumers are characteristic of organisations wanting to limit uncertainty. This thesis provides anecdotal examples of practices designed for a de-globalisation landscape. SP research is inherently oriented towards contributing to practitioner knowledge. The findings from the research offer strategic perspectives that can be applied within a de-globalisation landscape or similar re-orientations of international markets.

5.4. Research Limitations

Like all academic inquiries, this research was subject to limitations of varying natures that are worth acknowledging when interpreting the outcome of the thesis. There were limitations from a methodological standpoint as well as within the selection criteria and recruitment of participants. The scope and topic of the research also proved difficult to execute within a New Zealand environment.

5.4.1. Methodological Limitations

As briefly discussed within the methodology chapter, limitations arose around the epistemological fit between SP research and the method for gathering data within the thesis. While the semi-structured interviews presented an effective means to gain strategic actors accounts of de-globalisation phenomena, they are somewhat limited in gaining insight to the everyday practices of strategy. Conducting multiple semi-structured interviews was the most effective means to gain insights into actor's accounts, but temporal and practical aspects of strategy were not examined as closely. SP research has trended in directions that give researchers the ability to immerse themselves within organisations (Johnson et al., 2007).

While this research doesn't follow this trend, examining practitioners accounts still presents valuable knowledge particularly as the questions utilised by the researcher inquire specifically to uncover everyday practices. The interviews also gave the researcher an opportunity to study a greater breadth of industries and situations, widening the scope and availability of findings. Another methodological limitation is inherent in the representativeness of an individual account and the tendency to stray towards post-rationalisation. This was a pressing issue as post-rationalised narratives can lead to in-accurate versions of events and subsequently impact the research validity. Subsequently limited inferences are able to be drawn from individual accounts of organisation level activity. The interviewees dialogue offers some insight into de-globalisation in practice but has limited capability to capture actual strategic responses. Timely prompts were used within the interview schedule to keep the topics of inquiry relevant to the research as well as questions related directly to business implications.

5.4.2. Scope of the Research

This thesis has been completed as a partial fulfilment for the requirements of a Master of Commerce. As a result of this, time constraints were imposed upon the researcher resulting in the exclusion of various SP methods of inquiry. A method designed to capture everyday practices in response to de-globalisation as well as evaluating temporal change within strategy making were not considered. This was partially due to the researchers limited access for extended inquiry within organisations, but pre-dominantly time constraints influenced the achievable methods for data collection. Additionally, the researchers access to organisations large enough to be subject to the diverse range of de-globalisation implications was limited being based within NZ. While NZ exporters are certainly exposed to volatilities in overseas markets, access to larger MNEs may potentially increase diversity of research findings in relation to de-globalisation. The resulting inquiries were focused upon relatively small NZ organisations with a comparatively diminished strategic outlook on de-globalisation. The overall scope of the research was influenced by constraints enforced by the business environment within NZ as well as the time restrictions of the master's thesis. While these did have an influence on the businesses interviewed and the chosen methods for inquiry, an appropriate and valuable contribution was still made for SP literature given the methods and organisations available.

5.5. Recommendations for Future Research

Building on the limitations of the study, this thesis identifies opportunities where the core research paradigms can be explored within further contexts. Through observation and acknowledgement of the study limitations, the researcher compiled potential avenues to be explored within the future.

Opportunities lie within the methods utilised for gathering data, whether it be from exploring actors accounts or through other means. To provide a breadth of NZ based practitioner perspectives, the research interviewed practitioners within multiple organisations. A more focused inquiry on one industry or even one organisation with a case study or action research approach may yield fascinating exploratory results. Observation techniques to capture the intricacies of strategy praxis up close would allow researchers the opportunity to study the implications of de-globalisation on strategy from a more grounded level. Applying the principles of this study within one organisation and utilising a grounded research technique would allow researchers to investigate the manifestation of this phenomenon more specifically. An exposure to the daily activities of strategy reflects the need for SP research to get closer to organisations.

Another suggestion concerns the scale of the organisations studied within this research. Given the researcher was limited to New Zealand organisations, there were limited businesses from which to choose participants. Having access to organisations with a larger international presence and a higher degree of ‘borderless’ operations would allow researchers to study businesses with a more direct exposure to de-globalisation. While New Zealand is still subject to volatilities in the international market, America or the European Union would provide perhaps heightened perspective on de-globalisation in countries that are influencing the phenomenon. Studies carried out in organisations in the America or Europe would perhaps shed light on different considerations in the wake of de-globalisation. It was found that New Zealand practitioners referred to pre-dominantly reactive measures for strategizing around de-globalisation. Studying organisations on a larger scale may have different implications for the degree of control they have over de-globalisation situations. This would provide a different set of implications for practicing strategists and the organisations prevailing strategies.

This study has also illustrated the effectiveness of using practice-based principles to study external phenomena. For the field of SP to remove itself from a ‘micro-isolationist’ lens, the scope of future inquiries must include external phenomena (Seidl & Whittington, 2014). As this study has effectively demonstrated an embedded relationship between strategy practice and de-globalisation, there are a range of opportunities to continue this line of inquiry. While de-globalisation itself has arisen through unforeseen and unique circumstances, other political, economic phenomena has implications upon strategy. A similar research design could be utilised to study the relationship between practice and economic and political influences and indicators. Political events such as specific trade negotiations and trading blocs are referred to by practitioners as influential upon strategizing. Studying the subsequent influence upon practice would contribute to the growing coverage of SP related research.

5.6. Conclusion

This chapter restates the initial research questions and uses information from the findings to answer these questions. The researcher answers each of the research questions one by one, exploring the accounts of the strategic practitioners. The subsequent section concludes the thesis by re-visiting the research purpose and how useful answers to the research questions proposed were successfully realised. The academic and practical contributions of the research findings are identified and discussed. Limitations of the study are then addressed and followed by recommendations for future research in related fields.

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7. Appendices

7.1. Human Ethics Approval



HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE

Secretary, Rebecca Robinson
Telephone: +64 03 369 4588, Extn 94588
Email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz

Ref: HEC 2019/09

6 June 2019

Matthew James Good
Management, Marketing and Entrepreneurship
UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

Dear Matthew

The Human Ethics Committee advises that your research proposal “(De)globalisation in Practice: New Zealand Strategists’ Interpretations” has been considered and approved.

Please note that this approval is subject to the incorporation of the amendments you have provided in your email of 21st May 2019.

Best wishes for your project.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. Sutherland'.

Dr Dean Sutherland
Chair
University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee

7.2. Information Sheet and Consent Form



Department of Management, Marketing, and Entrepreneurship

Telephone: +64 33693709

Email: matthew.good@pg.canterbury.ac.nz

Date:

HEC Ref: [Enter when approval given for your study]

De-Globalisation in Practice: New Zealand Strategists' Interpretations

Information Sheet for *name of organisation*

Greetings. My name is Matthew Good, and I am a postgraduate student at the University of Canterbury working towards the completion of my Master of Commerce in Management. This course is co-ordinated by the University of Canterbury Department of Management, Marketing and Entrepreneurship. The final requirement of the master's degree is the submission of a research thesis in a relevant subject area. The aim of my research thesis is to obtain an understanding of key strategic decision makers interpretations of recent (de)globalisation events and how they influence an organisation's everyday activity. De-globalisation refers to the process of diminishing political and economic interdependence across global regions.

It is my ambition that this research will provide a greater qualitative understanding of how decision makers in NZ exporting firms interpret and respond to such events. Your relevant experiences, opinions, and knowledge would be of considerable benefit to understanding a strategy practitioners' interpretations and perceptions of the contemporary strategic environment.

Your contact details were supplied to me by an appropriate delegate. You are formally invited to participate in this research project. If you choose to take part in this study, your involvement in this project will be taking part in an interview for a period of approximately 50-60 minutes but no longer than an hour and a half. Interviews will be scheduled for a time that suits you and will be conducted face to face. Interview audio will be captured on a personal recording device. The option for a break or discontinuation of the recording can be requested by you at any time during the interview. In the performance of this interview, there are no risks to you as an individual.

All interviews will be transcribed, and you will be sent the transcription of the interview to review, to correct and amend as necessary. Once the transcription has been compiled it will be emailed to you for reviewing. Please return the transcript at your earliest convenience within two weeks.

Participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. You may ask for your raw data to be returned to you or destroyed at any point. If you withdraw, I will remove information relating to you. However, once the analysis of raw data starts it will become increasingly difficult to remove the influence of your data on the results. The analysis of data to this thesis will start during May this year. Should you not reply to my initial email I will assume you are uninterested in participating.

The results of the project may be published, but you may be assured of the complete confidentiality of data gathered in this investigation: your identity will not be made public. To ensure confidentiality, all physical data and consent forms will be kept in a locked set of drawers in a key card accessed room at the University of Canterbury. These drawers are only accessible to the researcher. All digital data files will be kept on a password protected personal computer only accessible to the researcher. All transcriptions of interviews will be coded through the use of pseudonyms to protect identity. I, the researcher and my supervisor will be the only individuals with access to both physical and digital data. A thesis is a public document and will be

Matthew J Good

available through the UCLibrary.

As the findings of this thesis may be of interest to you and your organisation, I, the researcher can arrange for a copy to be sent. Please indicate to the researcher on the consent form if you would like to receive a copy of the thesis.

The project is being carried out as a requirement for a Master of Commerce by Matthew Good under the supervision of Dr Paul Knott who can be contacted at +6433693709 or paul.knott@canterbury.ac.nz. He will be pleased to discuss any concerns you may have about participation in the project.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, and participants should address any complaints to The Chair, Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz).

If you agree to participate in the study, please can you complete the consent form and return to the researcher Matthew Good via email or before the start of the interview. I will be in contact upon receiving your consent form to arrange an interview time. An exact date and time of the interview can be arranged at a time that best suits you.

Kind Regards,

Matthew Good
matthew.good@pg.canterbury.ac.nz



Matthew J Good



Department of Management, Marketing and Entrepreneurship
Telephone: +64 33693709
Email: matthew.good@pg.canterbury.ac.nz

De-Globalisation in Practice: New Zealand Strategists' Interpretations
Consent Form for *name of organisation*

- I have been given a full explanation of this project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- I understand what is required of me if I agree to take part in the research.
- I understand that participation is voluntary, and I may withdraw at any time without penalty. Withdrawal of participation will also include the withdrawal of any information I have provided should this remain practically achievable.
- I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and supervisor and that any published or reported results will not identify the participants or their institution. I understand that a thesis is a public document and will be available through the UC Library.
- I consent to the interview being recorded by the researcher on a personal recording device.
- I understand that all data collected for the study will be kept in locked and secure facilities and/or in password protected electronic form and will be destroyed after five years.
- I understand the risks associated with taking part and how they will be managed.
- I understand that I can contact the researcher Matthew Good (matthew.good@pg.canterbury.ac.nz) or supervisor Paul Knott (paul.knott@canterbury.ac.nz) for further information. If I have any complaints, I can contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)
- I would like a summary of the results of the project.
- By signing below, I agree to participate in this research project.

Name: _____ Signed: _____ Date: _____

Email address (for report of findings, if applicable): _____

Please return a scanned copy of the consent form to Matthew Good at matthew.good@pg.canterbury.ac.nz

Matthew J Good

7.3. Interview Schedule

Matthew Good

Interview Schedule:

Introduction:

Firstly, thank you for giving up your valuable time to contribute to my research. In order to provide more detailed context to the purpose of the interview, I have prepared a short extract outlining the key themes this research draws upon and the how they inform the thesis objectives. This along with the information sheet should help give you further clarity on the nature of interview you will participate in.



The diagram above is a strategic management model explaining different external factors that influence an organisation. Essentially, my thesis research focuses upon contemporary international economic and political factors and how these have influenced strategy development practices in New Zealand based organisations.

The interview will explore how NZ exporting organisations have responded to recent global economic/political events from a strategic perspective with respect to the international markets in which they operate. While greater political or economic events are certainly relevant, this interview will focus predominantly upon how these events have affected the organisation's everyday practices. Gaining a practical/manager's perspective will provide invaluable insights and will assist me greatly in fulfilling my research objectives. I very much appreciate your time and the opportunity to discuss these topics with you.

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Matthew Good

Questions:

1. Please provide a little background information on your company's history and its activity overseas?
 - a. What are your key exporting markets?
 - b. How did these opportunities arise?
 - c. What characteristics makes these markets desirable?

2. Could you give me a sense of the relative importance of various international markets to the business?

3. From your own experiences and through the activities of the organisation, what do you regard as key strategic differences between the domestic NZ industry and your key overseas markets?
 - a. Could you elaborate on how the organisation has dealt with the evolution of a specific international market?

4. Can you think of any particular times/circumstances where the organisation decided to grow or retract their presence within a particular market?
 - a. What was the reasoning behind this decision and was it related to any of the factors in the above diagram?

5. Have there been instances that you've been involved in personally where activities/decisions of the organisation have been affected by larger political or economic circumstances?
 - a. Can you elaborate on what led to the decision/change of activity?

6. From your knowledge, what and how have recent global economic/political developments influenced the organisation's strategic decision making?

7. What do you and other managers within the organisation do to interpret and monitor economic/political events that can influence strategy?

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Matthew Good

8. Does the organisation's strategic planning process (if there is one) include consideration of how these events could develop in years to come and the implications they could have upon the organisation?

9. What do you personally think of the way your organisation interprets and responds to these events?
 - a. What is done well or what could be done better?
 - b. For the aspects that have worked well thus far, do you think they will continue to work well, given the kinds of challenges you expect to emerge?

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